

# Town of Lenox, Massachusetts

# Master Plan

Adopted June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021



# Acknowledgements

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## **Lenox Land Use Director and Town Planner**

Gwen Miller, AICP

## **Lenox Master Plan Steering Committee**

Allyn Burrows - Shakespeare & Company

Adam Davis - Shakespeare & Company

Pam Kueber - Planning Board Chairperson

Kate McNulty Vaughan - Planning Board, Affordable Housing Trust

Marybeth Mitts - Select Board, Affordable Housing Trust, Lenox Library

Julianne Monteleone - Lenox Memorial Middle & High School

Elliott Morss - Finance Committee Chairperson

Rob Murray - Lenox Chamber of Commerce President

Olga Weiss - Historical Commission, Community Preservation Committee, Affordable Housing Trust

Suky Werman - Lenox Environmental Committee

Isabella Williams - Lenox Memorial Middle & High School

## **Berkshire Regional Planning Commission**

Thomas Matuszko, AICP - Executive Director

Philip V. Arnold - Community Planner

Laura Brennan - Economic Development Program Manager

Mark Maloy - GIS, Data, & IT Manager

Source of cover image: Lindsey Schmid – Church on the Hill

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# Executive Summary

## Background & Purpose

The development of the *Town of Lenox: Master Plan* began in 2018 and was completed in 2021. Massachusetts General Law Chapter 41 Section 81D states, *a planning board established in any city or town under section eighty-one A shall make a master plan of such city or town or such part or parts thereof as said board may deem advisable and from time to time may extend or perfect such plan*. This document expands upon Lenox's existing Master Plan from 1999 and serves to guide the planning process over the next 10-20 years. It examines all aspects of the Town and provides a comprehensive analysis of Lenox's people, land, economy, culture, and infrastructure. The Lenox Master Plan will work in conjunction with *Sustainable Berkshires: Community Strategies for a Sustainable Future* and the Town's current *Open Space and Recreation Plan*.

## Process

The Lenox Master Plan was created through data collection and a public outreach process to gauge the needs of the Town on the ground level. This grassroots process has been guided by community engagement initiatives and the Lenox Master Plan Steering Committee: a volunteer group comprised of local board and committee members, town staff, and engaged Lenox residents. The strengths and challenges facing the Town are identified using data sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Lenox's Assessors' Office.

## How to Navigate this Document?

This plan contains a wealth of priority topics - ranging from land use to transportation - that are organized into individual chapters. Each chapter begins with brief background information followed by a vision statement that describes the desired future condition of Lenox regarding that particular topic. The background information and vision statement provide context that illuminate strengths and challenges faced by the Town. Following the vision statement are the priority topics that will be covered in the chapter. It is important to highlight the most pressing issues early on, so the focus of the chapter is clear. Next is supporting data that enforces the importance of the topics mentioned. Each chapter concludes with detailed recommendations that will direct the planning process going forward.

## Goals, Objectives, & Action Items

Lenox's vision is how the Town would like to see itself in the future and the goals, objectives, and action items detailed in this plan are how that vision will be realized. In every chapter, there is a sequence of recommendations beginning with a broad vision, then a series of more specific goals towards the vision, and specific actions that need to be performed. The chapters included in the Lenox Master Plan are as follows:

- Demographics plan element which identifies current conditions and trends over time seen in Lenox's people, housing, and economy.
- Land use plan element which identifies present land use and designates the proposed distribution, location and inter-relationship of public and private land uses. This element shall relate the proposed standards of population density and building intensity to the capacity of land available or planned facilities and services. A land use map illustrating the land use policies of the municipality shall be included.
- Economic development element which identifies policies and strategies for the expansion or stabilization of the local economic base and the promotion of employment opportunities.
- Open space and recreation element which provides an inventory of recreational and resources and open space areas of the municipality, and policies and strategies for the management and protection of such resources and areas.
- Housing element which identifies and analyzes existing and forecasted housing needs and objectives including programs for the preservation, improvement and development of housing. This element shall identify policies and strategies to provide a balance of local housing opportunities for all citizens.
- Historical and Cultural Resources element which provides an inventory of the significant natural, cultural and historic resource areas of the municipality, and policies and strategies for the protection and management of such areas.
- Services and facilities element which identifies and analyzes existing and forecasted needs for facilities and services used by the public.
- Transportation and Circulation element which provides an inventory of existing and proposed circulation and transportation systems.
- Implementation program element which defines and schedules the specific municipal actions necessary to achieve the objectives of each element of the master or study plan. Scheduled expansion or replacement of public facilities or circulation system components and the

anticipated costs and revenues associated with accomplishment of such activities shall be detailed in this element. This element shall specify the process by which the municipality's regulatory structures shall be amended so as to be consistent with the master plan.<sup>1</sup>

## Summary of Recommendations

This section of the plan provides an at-a-glance look at priority goals by topic, suggested priority actions and potential resources or programs to assist in implementation. Greater detail toward implementation is provided in the Implementation Chapter.

Items of particular relevance (as demonstrated through their repeated appearance in unique plan elements) include maintaining the look and feel of Lenox even while promoting new growth and development opportunities; welcoming new residents and economic opportunity; growing resilience in the natural landscape as well as in the local economy; welcoming new residents and new businesses by supporting and creating new infrastructure; promoting and celebrating cultural assets; growing recreation opportunities for residents and visitors of all ages and life stages; creating new and strengthening existing physical connections between attractions through-out Lenox, and being a proactive leader in municipal management and operations. Many of the priority goals and topics are already being acted upon in some form or another.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter41/Section81D>

**Land Use**

VISION: LAND USE IN LENOX IS SUSTAINABLE, CONTRIBUTING TO THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE COMMUNITY AS A PLACE TO LIVE AND VISIT FOR PEOPLE OF ALL BACKGROUNDS THROUGH BALANCED PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF EXISTING ASSETS AND THE PLACE-BASED, SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF SUITABLE AREAS.

Priority Goals	Suggested Priority Actions
<p>GOAL LU 1: PROTECT, ENHANCE AND CELEBRATE LENOX'S ABUNDANCE OF NATURAL, HISTORIC, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES.</p>	<p>Identify preservation versus recreation opportunities. Purchase identified significant conservation/recreation land. Continue to work with local and regional partners to manage and promote conservation efforts and recreation opportunities.</p>
<p>GOAL LU 2: PROTECT LENOX'S SMALL-TOWNWAY OF LIFE WHILE ENHANCING EQUITY.</p>	<p>Promote year-round, workforce housing in all Lenox neighborhoods through ZBL amendments. Promote public, inclusive land use in all Lenox neighborhoods, especially in the village neighborhoods. Ensure all residents can access and enjoy public lands and public spaces.</p>
<p>GOAL LU 3: ENSURE RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND OTHER PHYSICAL CHANGES TO LENOX LANDSCAPES AND NEIGHBORHOODS.</p>	<p>Promote biodiversity on public lands through habitat management and restoration. Support recommendations from Columbia University students' sustainability reports.</p>
<p>GOAL LU 4: DESIGN A COMMUNITY TO WELCOME NEW RESIDENTS OF ALL BACKGROUNDS.</p>	<p>Reduce minimum lot size, maximum lot coverage and setback requirements for adaptive re-use projects. Allow by right uses based on market potential (work with economic development specialist).</p>
<p><b>Potential Collaborations and Resources</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State grant opportunities:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ PARC</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing maps indicating priority conservation areas</li> </ul>

- LAND
- Mass Wildlife
- Housing Choice program
- 40R program
- Site Readiness programs
- Ongoing work w/ partners like Mass Audubon and BNRC
- Community Preservation Act

**Economic Development**

VISION: LENOX WILL STRENGTHEN ITS SUPPORT OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY AND SEEK APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITIES TO DIVERSIFY ITS ECONOMY.

Priority Goals	Suggested Priority Actions
GOAL ED 1: SUPPORT AND REVIVE THE TOURISM INDUSTRY TO HELP RESTORE OVERALL ECONOMIC GROWTH.	Continue to pursue and promote pandemic recovery.
GOAL ED 2: MARKET LENOX'S HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE TO ATTRACT YOUNG PROFESSIONALS AND FAMILIES.	Year-round marketing, particularly to groups likely to relocate to Lenox.
GOAL ED 3: DIVERSIFY THE LOCAL ECONOMY.	Ensure universal cell coverage and high-speed, affordable internet for all.  Focus business recruits non goods-producing businesses and workers who can telecommute.  Site readiness.

**Potential Collaborations and Resources**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● State funding resources: DHCD, CDBG, Mass Cultural Council, MassDevelopment, etc.</li> <li>● 1Berkshire</li> <li>● Lenox Cultural District</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lenox Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>● Town of Lenox can lead infrastructure improvements (ongoing wireless communications zoning bylaw work, municipal broadband efforts in other communities)</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

**Open Space & Recreation**

VISION: THE TOWN OF LENOX WILL CONTINUE TO BE A PROACTIVE STEWARD OF ITS NATURAL LANDSCAPE AND RESOURCES WITH ADDITIONAL FOCUS ON CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND FURTHER PROMOTE THE USE OF ITS OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL AMENITIES, ESPECIALLY DURING THE WINTER MONTHS.

Priority Goals	Suggested Priority Actions
GOAL OSR 1: PROMOTE YEAR-ROUND OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND EMPHASIZE ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE DURING THE NON-SUMMER SEASONS; PARTICULARLY WINTER.	Highlight existing recreational facilities in Lenox for year-round awareness and use.
GOAL OSR 2: EXPAND THE STRONG CONSTITUENCY OF OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ADVOCATES THROUGH EDUCATION AND COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS.	Build community - between partner organizations, amongst residents.
GOAL OSR 3: CONNECT NEIGHBORHOODS, OPEN SPACE, AND RECREATIONAL AREAS.	Increase environmental awareness and knowledge.
GOAL OSR 4: PROTECT AND AUGMENT WATER RESOURCES.	Regional projects where possible.
GOAL OSR 5: PROTECT NATIVE PLANT AND WILDLIFE HABITATS WHILE CONTROLLING INVASIVE SPECIES ON PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROPERTY.	Regional projects where possible. Management of existing properties. Expanding opportunities for all residents - particularly seniors, those w/ mobility challenges.
Potential Collaborations and Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lenox Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• 1Berkshire</li> <li>• Lenox Land Trust</li> <li>• Regional conservation organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional recreation organizations</li> <li>• State agencies as applicable (DCR, DEP, Fish &amp; Wildlife)</li> <li>• Private landowners</li> </ul>

**Housing**

VISION: LENOX WILL INCREASE THE VARIETY OF ITS HOUSING STOCK TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEEDS OF EXISTING RESIDENTS AND PROVIDE MORE HOUSING OPTIONS TO ATTRACT NEW RESIDENTS.

Priority Goals	Suggested Priority Actions
<p>GOAL H 1: INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF HOUSING AFFORDABLE FOR YOUNG, FIRST-TIME HOME BUYERS.</p>	<p>Grow financial resources to support activities and programs of the Affordable Housing Trust Using Town-owned and private land, develop small-scale, neighborhood-compatible deed-restricted home-ownership opportunities.</p>
<p>GOAL H 2: INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF MIXED-INCOME HOUSING OPTIONS - IN OR NEAR COMMERCIAL AREAS AND VILLAGES - TO SUPPORT THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND PROMOTE THE PRINCIPLES OF SMART GROWTH.</p>	<p>Amend the Zoning Bylaw to support housing in different shapes, sizes, etc. that will support households and families of all life stages.</p>
Potential Collaborations and Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property owners of larger, prime for development/re-development parcels near or within neighborhoods identified in the FLU Map as ideal for housing growth.</li> <li>• Regional housing organization (like Central Berkshire Habitat, Construct, Berkshire Housing)</li> <li>• Other local housing trusts</li> <li>• Mass Housing Partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional employers</li> <li>• Community Land Trust model as a concept</li> <li>• Community Preservation Act</li> <li>• Surcharge on luxury real estate transactions</li> <li>• Planning Board</li> <li>• Earmark percentage of local Short-Term Rental, marijuana or other revenue (tourism) for housing initiatives annually</li> </ul>

### Historical & Cultural Resources

VISION: LENOX WILL CONTINUE TO PRESERVE AND PROMOTE ITS HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES THAT ENRICH THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

Priority Goals	Suggested Priority Actions
GOAL HC 1: USE MUNICIPAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES TO ENSURE THE CONTINUED SUCCESS OF THE TOWN'S HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ECONOMY.	Adopt an "Arts Overlay Zoning District"
GOAL HC 2: PROMOTE ADAPTIVE REUSE OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND PROPERTIES IN SUPPORT OF THE TOWN'S HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ECONOMY.	Adopt a comprehensive wayfinding scheme throughout Lenox linking history and culture. Continue to encourage public art in the village and elsewhere. Continue to encourage adaptive re-use of historic/cultural sites of significance. Implement a local shuttle for both visitors to and employees of cultural anchors.
GOAL HC 3: IMPROVE BOTH HOUSING AND TRANSIT TO MAKE JOBS IN THE CULTURAL SECTOR MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR WORKERS.	Develop workforce rental housing units on properties owned by cultural institutions.
GOAL HC 4: FURTHER INTEGRATE HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES WITH OTHER AMENITIES.	Use public art as a means of integrating the Town's historical and cultural heritage with outdoor recreation.
Potential Collaborations and Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mass Cultural Council</li> <li>• Massachusetts Downtown Initiative</li> <li>• Lenox Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Lenox Cultural District</li> <li>• Lenox Planning Board to amend Zoning Bylaw accordingly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local destinations</li> <li>• Tourism revenue (or Short-Term Rental/Marijuana revenue)</li> <li>• Business Improvement District (BID)</li> </ul>

**Services & Facilities**

VISION: THE TOWN OF LENOX WILL PROVIDE AND IMPROVE HIGH-QUALITY AND ACCESSIBLE SERVICES TO RESIDENTS OF ALL AGES, INCOME LEVELS, AND NEEDS. THE TOWN WILL REMAIN COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT (1) LENOX CHILDREN RECEIVE FAIR AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES; (2) OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT ARE FREQUENT AND ACCESSIBLE TO CHILDREN, ADULTS, AND SENIORS ALIKE; AND (3) TOWN-OWNED PROPERTIES ARE WELL-MAINTAINED, ACCESSIBLE, AND OPERATED IN WAYS THAT ARE FISCALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE.

Priority Goals	Suggested Priority Actions
<p>GOAL SF 1: CONTINUALLY IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL QUALITY OF LENOX PUBLIC SCHOOLS.</p>	<p>Renovate and modernize school facilities, stay current with teaching and learning trends. Regional approach to increase course offerings and expand STEM education. Increase access to voc-tec education. Establish partnerships with cultural organizations.</p>
<p>GOAL SF 2: ENSURE THAT LONG-TERM PLANNING INITIATIVES ACCOUNT FOR MAINTENANCE, OPERATION, AND – WHERE APPLICABLE – EVENTUAL REPLACEMENT OF CURRENT FACILITIES.</p>	<p>Pro-active capital planning and asset monitoring and valuation.</p>
<p>GOAL SF 3: INCORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION INTO THE PLANNING AND MAINTENANCE OF MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND SPACES.</p>	<p>Monitor municipal GhG emissions. Incorporate practices and materials into municipal operations that curb GhG emissions. Reduce water treatment cost. Replace the Wastewater Treatment Facility. Create a modern Public Safety Complex.</p>
Potential Collaborations and Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MassDOT Complete Streets</li> <li>• DCHD Downtown Assistance Program</li> <li>• Local businesses and organizations</li> <li>• Lenox Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional and local large employers</li> <li>• 1Berkshire</li> <li>• MassTrails</li> </ul>

## Transportation & Circulation

VISION: THE TOWN OF LENOX WILL HAVE A TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION NETWORK THAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF ITS RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

Priority Goals	Suggested Priority Actions
GOAL TC 1: CONTINUE TO PROMOTE A TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT EXPANDS MOBILITY FOR ALL AND INCREASES ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT AND LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES.	<p>Continue to implement traffic calming measures: in the village center particularly, and on Walker Street, East Street between Walker and Housatonic Street.</p> <p>Continue to promote multi-modal improvements through-out the town (shared-use and pedestrian path).</p> <p>Increase parking capacity in village center—for tour buses as well as regular parking stalls.</p>
GOAL TC 2: CONTINUE TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE TRANSPORTATION FOR SENIORS AND THE PHYSICALLY DISABLED.	Expand COA shuttle service and increase number of handicapped parking stalls in village center.
GOAL TC 3: SUPPORT LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSIT.	Create a local shuttle to and from transportation hubs (train stations, bus stations and airports).
GOAL TC 4: CONTINUE EXCELLENT MAINTENANCE OF THE TOWN'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.	<p>Inventory town assets digitally.</p> <p>Monitor condition of infrastructure.</p> <p>Be pro-active in maintenance, replacement and improvement.</p>
Potential Collaborations and Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MassDOT Complete Streets</li> <li>• DCHD Downtown Assistance Program</li> <li>• Local businesses and organizations</li> <li>• Regional and local large employers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1Berkshire</li> <li>• Lenox Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• MassTrails</li> </ul>

## Implementing the Plan

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

## Preface

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

The Census Bureau conducts a host of surveys and programs, but this report relies heavily on the Decennial Census and the American Community Survey. The Decennial Census is mandated by the U.S. Constitution to count each resident of the country every ten years on the year ending in zero. The Decennial Census questions account for population, age, gender, race, and some basic questions about housing. Since the goal is to reach every resident and the questions asked are easily quantifiable, the information gathered comes with a high degree of accuracy. Once the results of the 2020 Decennial Census become available at the municipal level, the 2010 Decennial Census data presented herein will be updated.

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

It should also be noted that this report was developed during the COVID-19 pandemic that began impacting the United States in the beginning of 2020. COVID-19 has affected virtually every aspect of the socio-economic milieu on a global scale. Despite the widespread impacts, there are limited data sources that track short-term changes caused by the pandemic. This report accounts for fluctuations in unemployment and home sales and contains information gathered from local businesses and residents. Aside from these topics, the data presented in this report treats COVID-19 as a statistical anomaly.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Welcome to Lenox!

The Town of Lenox is located in Western Massachusetts, centrally located within Berkshire County. Lenox has a total area of 21.7 square miles; less than 3% is water. The Town's east and west borders are mountainous and converge in a central valley where most residents live. Lenox shares borders with five other Berkshire municipalities; City of Pittsfield to its north, Town of Washington to its east, Towns of Lee and Stockbridge to its south, and Town of Richmond to its west.

In 1750, Lenox was settled as part of neighboring Richmond and was named Yokuntown after an indigenous chief. In 1767, Yokuntown was split from Richmond by Charles Lenox and received the name used today. Lenox has transitioned from its early industries in iron, marble, and glass to become a cultural hub that is greatly supported by tourism. In addition to the natural landscape, art and cultural amenities, and food and shopping destinations; visitors are attracted to Tanglewood which is the summer home to the Boston Symphony Orchestra.



Drawn by J. W. Barber—Engraved by S. E. Brown, Boston.

### LENOX, MASS.

The above is a southern view of the public buildings. The first building seen on the right is the Town-House; the next building, three stories in height, is Wilson's Hotel; the next building north is the Court-House, near which is another public house, to which the jail is attached. The Congregational Church is seen on an elevation in the distance. The spires of the Episcopal Church are seen between the Town-House and Wilson's Hotel.

## 1.2 What Does this Plan Address?

This plan addresses a wide range of issues and priorities as expressed by the Town through community engagement initiatives, the volunteers of the Lenox Master Plan Steering Committee, town authorities, and selected stakeholders. When assessing a town as a whole it is important to look at strengths that need to be maintained or improved and deficiencies that need to be corrected to prepare for future changes the Town will experience in order to plan accordingly. These topics are then analyzed through the lenses of social demography, land use, economic development, open space and recreation, housing, history and culture, public services, and transportation.

## 1.3 About Master Plans

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

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

### **How Does the Master Plan Relate to Existing Town Plans and Documents?**

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

## 1.4 Methodology of this Plan

All master plans begin by explaining how they work, how they are organized, and what they aim to achieve. This is because master plans tend to be lengthy documents, so it is crucial that the audience has a good grasp on what they are about to read. While master plans are largely used by municipal

officials, they are ultimately public documents and need to be easily understood by anyone who decides to read one.

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

The succeeding chapters delve into specific topics that consist of recommendations and supporting data. Additionally, these chapters provide a tiered order of how Lenox's vision will be achieved.



Source: Linda Duval Sullivan – The Mount

### **Vision**

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

### **Goals**

Goal statements go into detail on the different strategies Lenox will need to pursue in order to make the vision a reality.

### **Objectives**

Objectives are specific strategies the Lenox will pursue to achieve the goal.

### **Actions**

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

## **1.5 The Planning Process**

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

- The Lenox Master Plan Steering Committee
- Public forum
- Informational meetings
- Stakeholder interviews

## 2. Demographics

Lenox's population has remained around 5,000 residents since the 1980s. At a time when much of Berkshire County has experienced protracted population loss, Lenox has maintained its population count. According to the UMass Donahue Institute, total population is forecasted to decline by approximately 10% by 2040. While the total population count has remained stable, Lenox has shown notable demographic changes, particularly in terms of age.

Since the year 2000, the Town's population has aged steadily. Median age has climbed from 46 years old to 55 years old. Moreover, half of the Town's residents are aged 55 and over while school-aged children now comprise only 17% of the population.

As the population continues to age, demands on municipal services and the frequency thereof will change. Municipal services will continue to be affected by the Town's population and demographic changes. The Lenox Public School District is increasingly reliant on School Choice to populate classrooms while its Emergency Medical Services are receiving a greater frequency of calls from senior citizens. It is important that the Town plan for the future of these services in accord with population and demographic trends.

Lenox is also experiencing demographic shifts regarding income. Lenox is renowned for its cultural and natural amenities that appeal to higher income earners looking for a second home or a retirement destination. In the years since 2000, the Town has seen an increase in the number of households earning over \$100,000 and significant increases in households earning \$200,000 or more. While the influx of residents with higher earnings is largely positive, this can lead to increased pressure on accessible and affordable housing for the local workforce and long-time residents.

### **VISION**

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*THE TOWN OF LENOX SEEKS TO PRESERVE ITS BLEND OF RURAL CHARACTER AND URBAN AMENITIES WHILE BECOMING A MORE DIVERSE POPULATION THAT IS INCLUSIVE OF FIRST-HOME OWNERS, YOUNGER PEOPLE, AND FAMILIES.*

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## 2.1 Priority Demographic Topics

This chapter demonstrates characteristics and trends that will have dramatic impacts on the long-term vision for the community. Lenox's population is aging. Diversity has declined. The community is gentrifying. The median age of Lenox residents is rising, the death rate is greater than the birth rate, the new population tends to be older and the number of affluent households has grown. The continued growth of older age cohorts is the most significant of these trends - with widespread effects such that it may well be considered the paramount concern to the Town and perhaps the largest impediment to the sustainability of Lenox.

An aging population challenges the long-term sustainability of Lenox in a number of ways. An increasing number of older residents may create increased strains on public resources, like emergency responders, while there are less working age people to fill these roles. Less people who are working age will lead to a diminished workforce and ultimately a deteriorating tax base. Fewer residents of childbearing age may result in fewer-school aged children being raised in Lenox. This could impact the number of students in the Lenox school system, creating challenges to the long-term quantity and quality of classes, athletics, and extracurricular activities.

Many of the older age cohorts that either already live in Town or are moving to Lenox tend to be wealthy. This contributes the local tax base and helps maintain and improve a high caliber of services and infrastructure for all residents and visitors of all ages. Additionally, the local economy is boosted when these residents spend money at different restaurants, lodging sites, and attractions throughout Lenox. Retired residents are well represented on municipal boards and committees and contribute to the governance of the community in a variety of ways.

If Lenox hopes to attain its vision of being a diverse community, it is important that the Town take proactive steps towards becoming more age-friendly community, as well a community welcoming and inclusive to residents of all incomes and all cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Lenox can decide to counter the regional trend and become a community known for its growing, diversifying population. Age-friendly communities are livable and provide ample work and leisure opportunities, comprehensive transportation and communication infrastructure, appropriate and affordable housing, and promote opportunities for social participation and civic engagement for residents of all ages.

## 2.2 Population

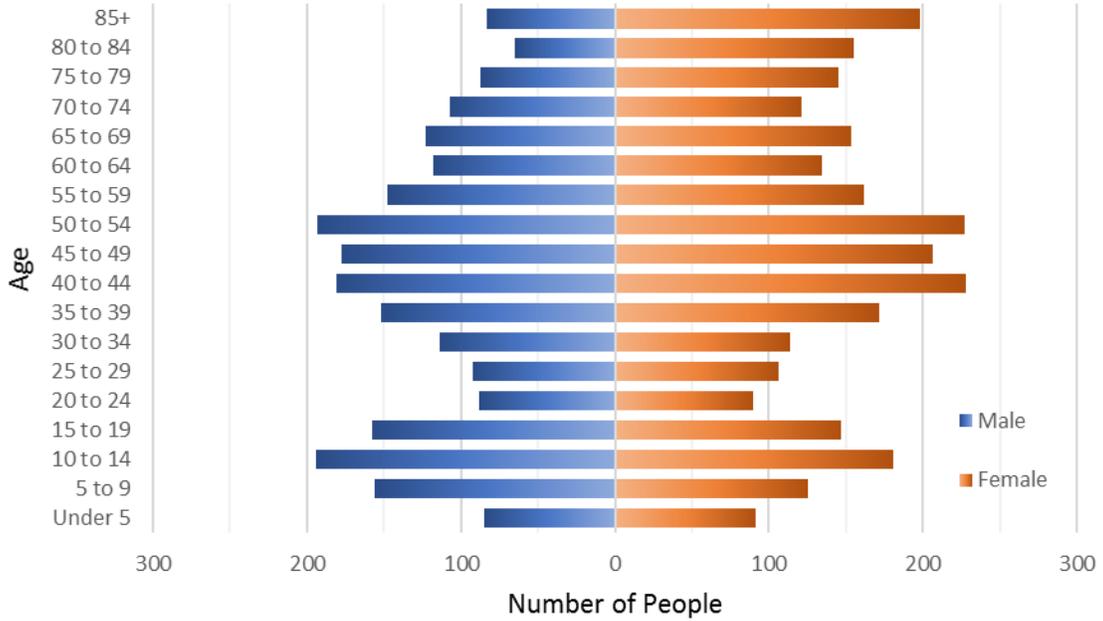
The population of Lenox has remained around 5,000 for decades. The 2017 American Community Survey from the U.S. Census Bureau estimates 4,994 residents in Lenox. This indicates a slight decline (fewer than 100 residents) since the Town's last master plan in 1999. The total population decrease is marginal, especially over a twenty-year period. Although the overall population has not significantly changed, the breakdown of age groups by gender demonstrates how Lenox's residents have changed since the last master plan.

During the period of 2000-2017, Lenox has experienced decline in almost every age cohort below the age of 55 with the exception of residents ages 20-29. In 2017, the population under the age of 20 was only 17% of Lenox that explains the decline in residential enrollment in Lenox schools. The recent increase of 20-29 year olds residing in Lenox may be attributed to in-migration of young professionals, an increase of college graduates returning to live at home, or high school graduates who never left Lenox after earning their diploma.

When comparing the breakdown of age and gender from the time of Lenox's last Master Plan until now, the key takeaways are:

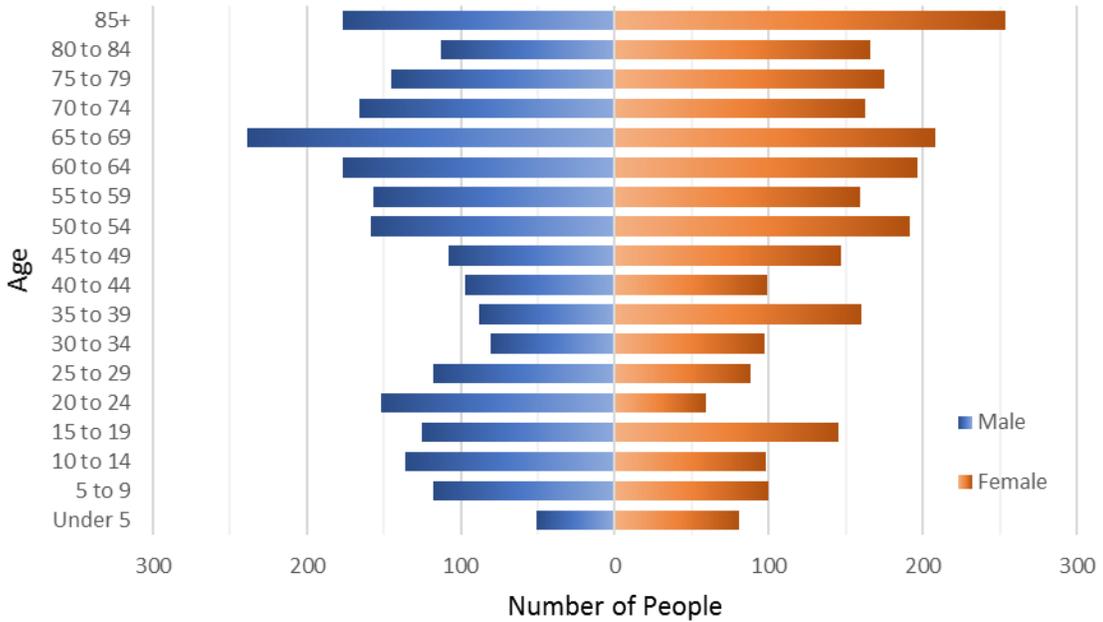
- Median age has increased from 46 years old to 55 years old;
- The population of male residents increased from 2,322 to 2,406;
- The population of female residents decreased from 2,755 to 2,588;
- In 2017, the largest age cohort was comprised of females age 85 and older; and
- In 2017, the smallest age cohort was comprised of males under 5 years old.

Figure 2.1 - Age Cohorts by Gender (2000)



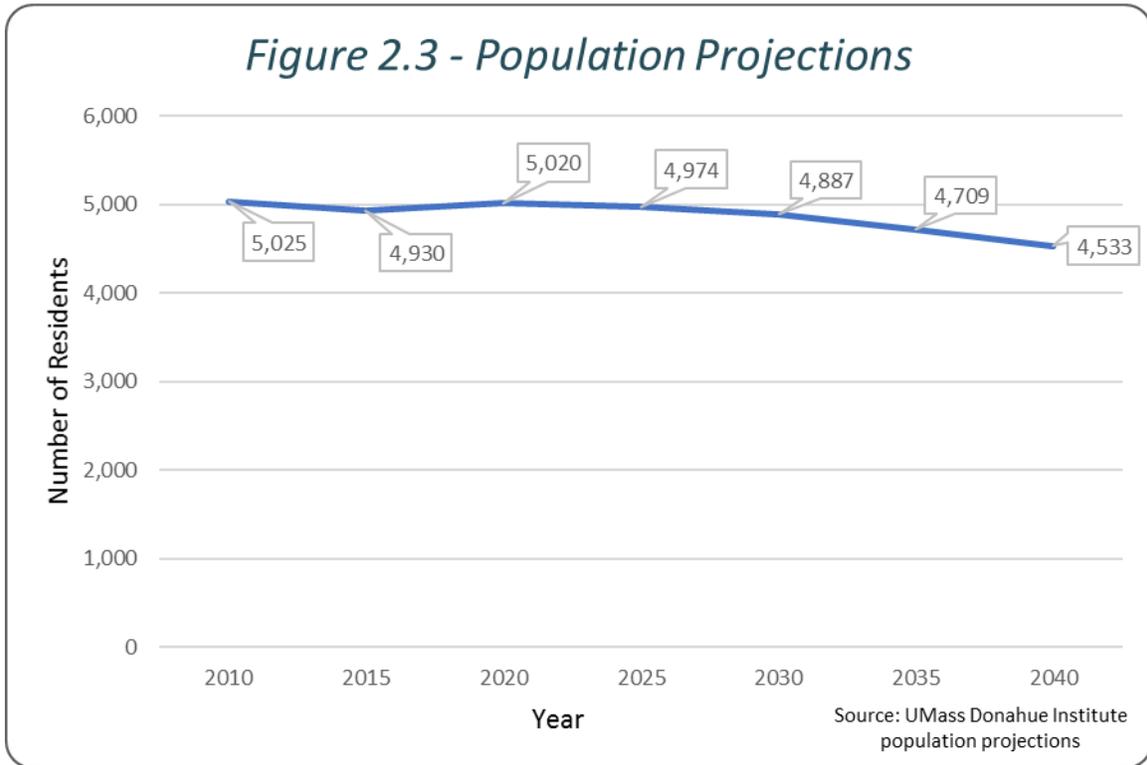
Source: U.S. Decennial Census 2000

Figure 2.2 - Age Cohorts by Gender (2017)



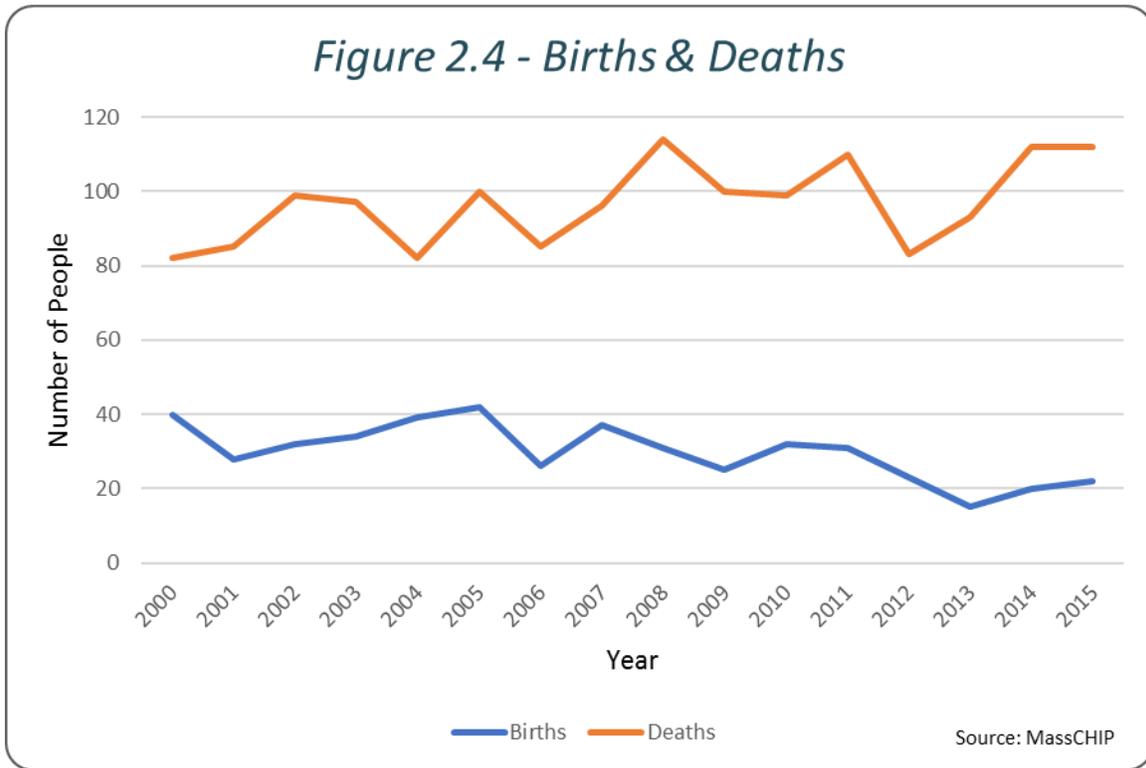
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2017 ACS 5 year estimates

The following chart depicts data generated from the UMass Donahue Institute that forecasts the population decline in Lenox up to the year 2040. UMass Donahue Institute’s population projections are based on such local and regional trends as deaths, births, and migration patterns.



If the current trend of population aging continues and is not countered with an influx of new and younger residents, a decline in population is inevitable. As the older age cohorts continue to grow, it can be predicted that annual death rates will greatly increase in the coming years.

For the period of 2000-2015, there have been 3.51 deaths to every birth in Lenox. This indicates that the steady population in Lenox is not due to a balance of births to deaths. Instead, the death rate has been offset by an influx of new residents. This statistic has nothing to do with age but rather the total number of people moving to Lenox. While the population total is steady, the influx of people moving to Lenox tend to be in older age cohorts which may exacerbate pressures that an increasingly older population can place on a community and its resources.



In 2017, the Census Bureau estimated a total population of 4,994 in Lenox. Of those residents, 4,388 had lived in the same home for over one year. The remaining 606 people had migrated to the Town during the previous twelve months. These new residents moved to Lenox from other towns or cities within Berkshire County (278), from another county but still from within Massachusetts (205), moved from another state (106), or moved to Lenox from another country (17). These figures are rolling averages over a five-year period that are calculated through the 2013-2017 American Community Survey. Since Lenox has low birth rates and high mortality rates, the relatively stable population is supported by a high rate of migration. It is important to note that migration figures include group quarters and all group quarters have high turnover of residents.

A group quarters is a place where people live or stay, in a group living arrangement that is owned or managed by an entity or organization providing housing and/or services for the residents. This is not a typical household-type living arrangement. These services may include custodial or medical care as well as other types of assistance, and residency is commonly restricted to those receiving these services. People living in group quarters are usually not related to each other. Group quarters include such places as college residence halls, residential treatment centers, skilled nursing facilities, group homes, military barracks, correctional facilities, and workers' dormitories.

Source: 2010 American Community Survey/Puerto Rico Community Survey Group Quarters Definitions

Lenox has several large senior living facilities that account for a significant percent of the people migrating to Lenox. The three predominant senior living facilities in Lenox are; Kimball Farms, Devonshire Estates, and Mount Carmel. Kimball Farms has 150 units for Independent Living, 48 units for Assisted Living, and 26 units for their Life Enrichment program. Devonshire Estates is exclusively an Independent Living facility and has 110 apartments and 20 cottages. Mount Carmel is a Skilled Nursing facility with 32 double rooms and 5 singles. The vast majority of the units available are single occupancy but couples living together in these facilities does occur but it is uncommon. There is high demand for these units and the facilities are usually close to capacity. Combined, these facilities account for over 400 residents of Lenox.

Senior living facilities have a high turnover of residents not just due to mortality rates but also because of the capacity of these facilities. For example; someone moves to Lenox to live in an Independent Living community, as they age they decide to transition to Assisted Living, they discover that this service is at capacity at the community where they already live, and finally are forced to move to a facility that can better accommodate them that is outside of Lenox. The average of about 600 people moving to Lenox between 2013 and 2017 will seem high because it would not necessarily be reflected in statistics such as home sales or employment. The number of senior living facilities and the volume of residents that they house also explains why the largest age cohort in Lenox in 2017 was women age 85 and older.

Another way to examine migration is to look at the years when people moved into their homes. The following table details when both renters and homeowners moved to Lenox. Roughly 5% of Lenox's population has migrated to the Town since 2015 which speaks to the volume of new residents. Conversely, 35% of Lenox residents moved in before the year 2000. This is important to note because the remaining 65% of Lenox residents have migrated to the Town since the adoption of the last master plan.

**Table 2.1 - Household Tenure**

Year Householder Moved into Home	Percent of Total Households	Number of Renter Households	Percent of Renter Households	Number of Owner Households	Percent of Owner Households
2017 or later	11%	132	17%	120	8%
2015 to 2016	13%	170	22%	129	9%
2010 to 2014	22%	358	46%	143	10%
2000 to 2009	23%	53	7%	459	31%
1990 to 1999	12%	34	4%	232	16%
1989 and earlier	20%	38	5%	410	28%

Source: 2017 American Community Survey Table S2502

Many of the people migrating to Lenox tend to be in older age cohorts and more affluent. This presents several benefits to the Town. An influx of residents at higher income levels creates a demand for the more expensive housing that already exists within Lenox. This demand is preferential compared to listed properties sitting vacant for extended periods of time. These new residents also greatly contribute to Lenox’s tax base that directly leads to improved public services and infrastructure. Even if many people migrating to Lenox are not actively part of the workforce (retirees), they still contribute by spending money at local eateries, cultural and recreational sites, and retail stores. While there are serious concerns with an aging population, there are also the benefits that an older, more affluent population can provide.

## 2.3 Income

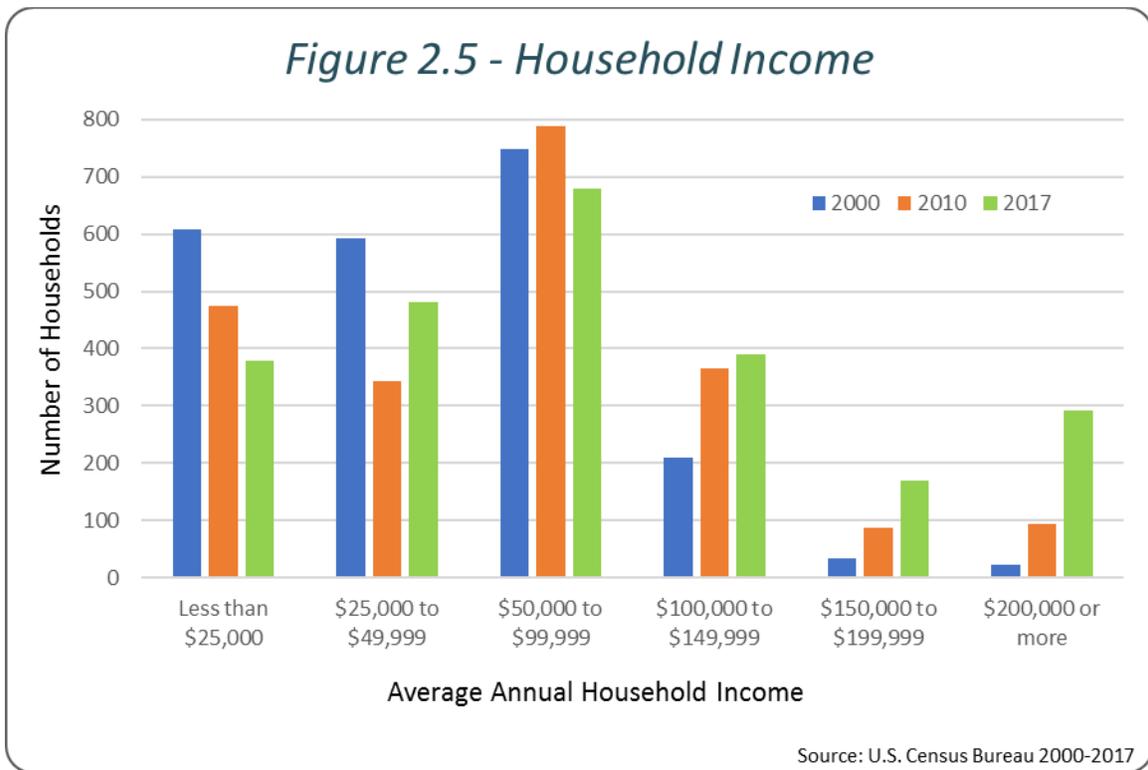
Lenox has experienced substantial increases among high earning households in recent years. According to the US Census, in 2000 there were 22 households in Lenox earning more than \$200,000. By 2017, that number had grown to 292 households. Likewise, the number of households earning between \$100,000-\$149,999 and \$150,000-\$199,999, grew by 86% and 400%, respectively. During the same period, the number of households earning less than \$100,000 annually declined by 21%. Even accounting for inflation, these changes are significant.

The following table and chart provide a more comprehensive overview of income trends in Lenox since the year 2000. The number of households has stayed relatively steady since the Town’s last master plan while income has risen. More notably: households with earnings of \$200,000/year or greater comprise 12% of the total population of Lenox.

Table 2.2 - Household Income

Year	Number of Households	Median Household Income	Mean Household Income	Per Capita Income	Households Earning \$200,000+
2017	2,390	\$68,492	\$101,867	\$49,332	12%
2010	2,153	\$60,604	\$74,265	\$32,288	4%
2000	2,213	\$45,581	\$53,335	\$23,263	1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000-2017



The population of moderate-income households has remained relatively stable, rising by 3% from 2010 to 2017 while low-income households declined by a total of 3% over the same period. The population in Lenox receiving Food Stamp/SNAP benefits has increased over time, from the low thirties (34) in 2009 to 182 in 2017. The number of residents served by WIC has declined over the last decade, though the number of WIC estimated eligible residents has increased.

Looking at families living in or below poverty, the trend has been favorable in Lenox: fewer residents age 65 and over report living below poverty, as do fewer school-aged children in the community, and residents between the ages of 16 and 64.

Though the information from the Lenox School District is reported for all students, not just resident students, it indicates an increase in students from low-income families, from 95 in 2010 to 152 in 2014. In the past (as recently as the Lenox Housing Production Plan) staff has indicated that the proportion of low-income students is equal between resident students and students “choicing-in” from other communities. There was also an increase in the number of students receiving free lunch, from 36 in 2009 to 125 in 2014. Another indicator is the number of students who are considered “economically disadvantaged”. This has ranged from 128 in 2015 to 121 in 2019, with a peak in 2017 of 139 students.

## 2.4 Household & Family Composition

Since 2000, the total number of households in Lenox has been fairly stable. It has increased by 178, with the lowest number reported in 2011 (2,084). Of the 2,390 households reported in 2017, 1,217 were family households. The average household size declined from 2 to 1 between 2000 and 2017. The average family size has remained regularly at two people over time. In both instances, the Lenox average is lower than that of the state. Unsurprisingly given the age composition in Lenox, the number of family households with children under the age of 18 has declined over time, peaking at 494 in 2009 and reported 274 in 2017.

## 2.5 Workforce

According to the 2017 American Community Survey, Lenox has the second lowest workforce participation rate in Berkshire at 55%. There are a couple of reasons this figure is relatively low compared to the rest of the county. First, the Census Bureau considers working age to be age 16 and over and almost a quarter of Lenox’s population is over the age of 75. Many of these people reside in Lenox but are retired and no longer actively contribute to the workforce. Of the population ages 75 and above, 12% participate in the workforce. Second, Lenox is heavily reliant on seasonal labor that creates significant fluctuations in workforce participation throughout the year. In 2017, the unemployment rate was 4.2%; an average of the entire calendar year. During peak season, unemployment rates in Lenox are typically under 4% but can exceed 5% during the non-summer months. If the jobs available in Lenox cannot be filled by residents, another option is to utilize the workforce of neighboring city of Pittsfield to help fill these vacancies.

The mean length of commute in Lenox is 21 minutes (as of the 2017 ACS), and workers who do commute travel within the county and beyond to larger metro areas such as Albany or Springfield. The mean commute time has increased overtime but remains lower than the state’s mean commute time.

This suggests that there are local workforce participants living in town. Lenox has a higher percentage of workers than the state who report working from home. This figure has increased from 204 in 2009 to 332 in 2017.

For those who do commute, most use their own vehicle and commute on their own. Interestingly, the number of workers who reported walking as their form of commute has decreased greatly since 2009 - from 190 in 2009 to 34 in 2017.

Educational attainment is higher in Lenox than the state. In 2017, 53% of Lenox adults 25 years old or more had at least a four-year degree. This reflects an increase from 50% in 2009. In 2017, the state percentage of adults age 25 years or older with at least a four-year degree was 42%.

## 2.6 Housing

Lenox has a diverse housing stock comprised of dwelling units that range greatly in size and price along with a good balance between older historic homes and newer units. This variety provides more options to current residents looking to relocate within the Town as well as prospective tenants and homeowners trying to move to Lenox. In 2017, 65% of the total occupied units in Lenox were owner-occupied and 35% were renter-occupied.

The most recent surveys from the U.S. Census Bureau account for 3,021 total housing units in Lenox. Of those, 2,390 are occupied and 631 are vacant. This seemingly large number of vacant units can be explained by the frequency of seasonal rentals in Lenox. Even if a dwelling unit is rented for a portion of the year and unoccupied for another portion of the year, the Census Bureau would categorize this as “rented, not occupied” and the dwelling would still be considered vacant.

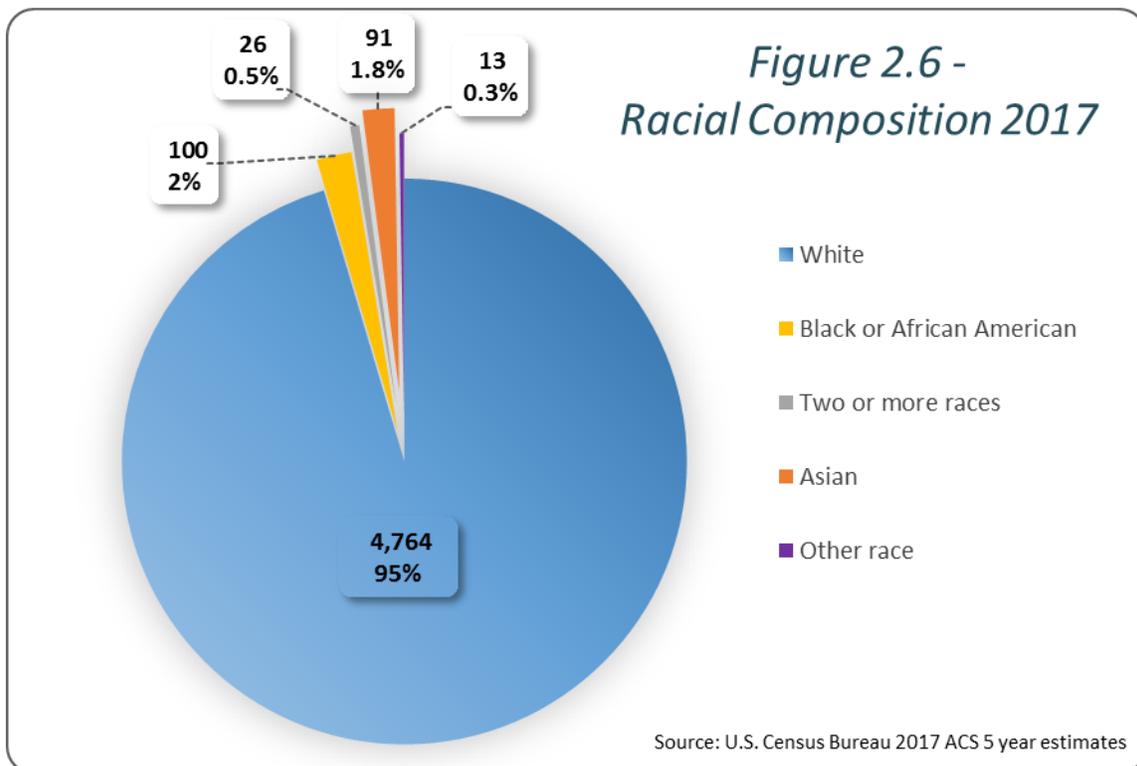
Of the 2,390 occupied housing units; 1,084 are one-person households, 814 are two-person households, 226 are three-person households, and 266 are households of four or more people. The most typical home in Lenox would be a 3-bedroom detached dwelling that only has one occupant who is over the age of 65. Lenox has had a very balanced ratio of family to non-family housing units. Over the last decade it has been almost an even 50/50 split. This high percentage of non-family units can be attributed to the high frequency of one-person households.

## 2.7 Nationality

Over time, the number of foreign-born residents in Lenox has increased, though the figure dropped dramatically in 2017. With this increase has come an increase in the number of residents who report speaking a language other than English at home. The Lenox School Department notes on its website: “Lenox continues to see a growing number of English Language Learners in our school system. The number of students meeting this criterion has nearly doubled in the last several years”. The services provided to meet this need includes ELL instruction, SEI training for classroom teachers, and translation and interpreting services for families. According to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 8% of the district students in Lenox report a first language other than English, with 2% being an English Language Learner. Twenty-six percent (26%) are listed as “High Needs”, while 16% are listed as “Economically Disadvantaged”.

## 2.8 Race & Ethnicity

Part of the vision for Lenox adopted in this plan is for the community to be diverse. Today, Lenox is not a racially, ethnically, or culturally diverse community. Lenox closely mirrors the racial structure of Berkshire County: over 90% of residents are white.



Since Lenox's last master plan in 1999, the racial makeup of the Town has been virtually unchanged. There are negligible changes in each racial group and much of those changes can be directly related to the basic population change from 2000 to 2017 when the Town went from 5,077 residents to 4,994. White residents decreased during this time period – by less than 2% - while Black or African American and Asian populations increased by about a percent. The most recent Census surveys indicated that there are no longer American Indian, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, or other Pacific Islanders in Lenox. However, there has been an increase over time of residents identifying as Hispanic or Latino. According to American Community Survey information, the population of Hispanic or Latino residents in Lenox declined from 160 in 2009 to 136 in 2015, and then increased to 305 in 2019. Tracking this information over time will be helpful, and could inform specific services or resources the municipality can consider providing to be welcoming and accessible in multiple ways.



Source: Linda Duval Sullivan – Lenox Station

## 3. Land Use

Land use in Lenox has been guided by the area's natural landscape and regulated through the use of zoning and non-zoning tools. Due to natural boundaries, such as the Taconic mountains to the west and the Housatonic River to the east, much of the Town's development has occurred north-south along and near Routes 7/20, 7A, and 20 in its central valley. Topography, wetlands, steep slopes and other natural constraints coupled with zoning have resulted in more than 80% of land in Lenox being undeveloped open space.

The primary use of developed land in Lenox is residential. Lenox is composed of eight distinct neighborhoods, each unique through land use patterns, density of development, connectivity and proximity to the town center or natural areas: The neighborhoods of Pleasant Valley, New Lenox, Eastover, Laurel Lake, and Tanglewood tend to be low-density and suburban or rural in character. The Gateway neighborhood, while not highly dense, is more suburban in character with its larger scale residential and commercial developments. Lenox Dale and Lenox Village are quintessential New England villages with single-, two-, and multi-family homes located within and around, a compact commercial Village Center. Lenox Dale also includes active and former industrial land use. Most commercial land use takes place along the Routes 7 and 20 corridor and in the Village Center.

The zoning map in Lenox has not changed dramatically since the 1940s. The Town contains four residential zoning districts. Each district is designed to promote varying degrees of density. Lenox does not have form-based zoning. The R-3A and R-1A districts, which require lots to be at least three acres and one acre in total area, respectively, allow the development of low-density, single-family homes. The R-15 and R-30 districts promote medium-density, single-family and multi-family village-style residential development. The C-3A and Gateway Mixed Use Development overlay districts allow for condominium and apartment-style complexes along the Route 7/20 corridor.

The Town hosts commercial and industrial land use in four distinct areas: The commercial C-1A, C-3A and C districts, and the Industrial I district. The C-3A and C-1A districts allow for larger commercial uses, such as gas stations and large-scale retail. These districts are situated along major roadways that run north-south through the town. The C district allows for smaller scale, higher density commercial uses that are typically found in vibrant, walkable Village Center. The C district is located in both Lenox Village and in the southern portion of Lenox Dale. The Town's two industrial districts are situated along

the Housatonic River. While still used for industrial purposes by active businesses, the I district contains several vacant sites that could be adapted for commercial reuse to meet the changing needs and desires of the Lenox Dale neighborhood.

Two things are likely to influence Lenox landscape and neighborhoods between now and the next Master Plan update. The first is climate change. The likely physical impacts to Lenox from climate change include an increase in temperature, an increase in growing season length, increased heavy, intense precipitation. An increase to average temperature will change snow patterns, impacting water supply and economic activity dependent on snowy winters. It will likely increase vulnerability to invasive species detrimental to natural resources, public health and agriculture. Drought conditions may be more frequent. Increased precipitation will likely increase flooding, road damage, dam failure, culvert washouts and stormwater management issues. A potential impact of climate change may be the influx of urban residents seeking respite from sea-level rise and the urban heat island effect. This could drive greater demand for residential land use. Lenox can be resilient to climate change through the continued protection and sustainable management of its natural resources and open space and the smart location, design and construction/renovation of built environment components. Lenox has a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Plan which goes into further detail about climate change vulnerability.

The second is the Rest of River remediation project. The Rest of River remediation will remove PCB-contaminated substrate from specific stretches of the Housatonic River in Lenox, beginning at New Lenox Road and continuing into Lenox Dale. It is likely that a secure landfill will be sited nearby in the Town of Lee where some of the removed PCB-contaminated material will be stored. The short-term impacts of the remediation will be felt through staging and implementation: frequent trips of large trucks and equipment on local roads and streets. It is not clear to what extent, if any, the Housatonic Railroad line will be used. Activity from project workers could benefit local businesses; and the post-remediation mitigation required of General Electric through a settlement agreement means Lenox will receive substantial monetary payment and physical improvements to any infrastructure impacted by the remediation. This is an opportunity to enhance and further residents' and visitors' connection to the Housatonic River and the landscape surrounding it through ecological restoration and recreation.

## **VISION**

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*LAND USE IN LENOX IS SUSTAINABLE, CONTRIBUTING TO THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE COMMUNITY AS A PLACE TO LIVE AND VISIT FOR PEOPLE OF ALL BACKGROUNDS THROUGH BALANCED PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF EXISTING ASSETS AND THE PLACE-BASED, SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF SUITABLE AREAS.*

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### **3.1 Priority Land Use Topics**

#### **BALANCING RICH NATURAL RESOURCES WITH SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT**

The Town should continue to sustainably manage natural resources through land use policies such as a local wetlands bylaw and its Scenic Mountain Act. Such policies allow for sensitive adaptive and new development or growth where appropriate. As depicted on the Future Land Use Map, there are certain areas in Lenox where strictly passive land use, such as conservation or recreation is the most appropriate land use. Conversely, there is land area where residential, commercial or a mix of uses is appropriate. The Future Land Use Map suggests where the Town promote re-development and growth, while protecting areas rich in natural and scenic resources.

#### **LEVERAGING HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES TO MEET CURRENT AND FUTURE NEED**

Lenox is proud of its historical and cultural heritage. The past is visibly present in individual properties and entire neighborhoods. Great Estate properties are an example of using historic buildings and campuses for 20<sup>th</sup> century hospitality uses. Worker housing developed around the mills of Lenox Dale is home today for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce who may commute a bit further afield for work or work from home. Former mill or other industrial buildings are unlikely to host paper making again, but offer new opportunity fit to the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond. This isn't limited to buildings or campuses; it includes understanding infrastructure and how its quality and availability supports new development and re-development, which leads to the third priority topic below.

## DESIGNED TO WELCOME

The form and function of a community can serve current residents, attract visitors and appeal to new residents. Such is the case in Lenox. Lenox seeks to maintain its current physical form and development pattern to continue as an attractive place to live and visit. By encouraging adaptive re-use where feasible and encouraging place-based, low-impact design for new development where infill is possible, Lenox can also welcome investment - be it a young new family choosing to relocate to Lenox for its small-town lifestyle and schools, or an expanding or relocating business. The Future Land Use Map identifies where re-development and new development makes sense. The Town will work to ensure these areas are served by the best infrastructure available and can welcome re-development or sensitive new development. Infrastructure includes communication and information infrastructure, water and/or sewer and multi-modal transportation opportunities. Emphasis has been placed on housing to attract and support families of all life stages, sizes and backgrounds. Where and how this happens can be influenced through zoning and other land use requirements as well as infrastructure availability.

## 3.2 COVID-19 Related Impacts to Land Use

The COVID-19 pandemic has not altered the overall pattern or intensity of land use in Lenox. However, it has highlighted the appeal of Lenox as a place to live and visit for those seeking respite from urban environments. It has highlighted the ample recreational resources present in the town. Moreover, it has highlighted the potential of public and private spaces to enhance the vibrancy of the Village Center year-round to the benefit of small businesses, residents and visitors.

## INDICATORS TO TRACK

- ✓ New residential units permitted and constructed
- ✓ Number of outdoor dining permits/areas
- ✓ Number of requests to use town parks for public event/gatherings

### 3.3 Priority Land Use Goals

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lenox wants to support diversity and attract young families. Regional and local business entities express need for different types of housing than what is currently available in the community for successful worker recruitment and retention. Lenox offers much to the prospective resident, including high quality local services (particularly schools), a relatively low property tax, and ready access to both cultural and outdoor recreation activities throughout the year. New housing opportunities could better serve existing residents and would attract a greater diversity of future residents. More affordable housing options would create greater opportunity for younger people to move to Lenox. By focusing new housing in areas already served by public infrastructure and ensuring it fits in with the landscape and existing built environment, Lenox can set the groundwork for potential builders. This strategy can also be applied to new commercial and business opportunity in Lenox. Filling infrastructure gaps, particularly in communication technology, will help meet this goal.

(FOR THE COMPLETE LIST OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION ITEMS, SEE PAGE 68)



Source: Richard Hoebel – Lenox Tub Parade

### 3.4 Location & Context

Lenox encompasses a total area of 21.7 square miles, or approximately 13,861 acres. Bordering Pittsfield to the north, Washington and Lee to the east, Richmond to the west, and Stockbridge, and Lee to the south. Lenox is centrally located within Berkshire County.

**Table 3.1 - Land Cover**

Category	Acreage	Percent
Bare Land	46.4	0.3%
Commercial	123.9	0.9%
Cultivated	16.8	0.1%
Deciduous Forest	5,943.3	42.9%
Developed Open Space	1,214.9	8.8%
Evergreen Forest	3,183.2	23.0%
Grassland	430.0	3.1%
Industrial	10.7	0.1%
Mixed Use - Other	9.6	0.1%
Mixed Use - Primarily Residential	3.9	0.0%
Other Impervious	86.9	0.6%
Wetland	1,577.5	11.4%
Pasture/Hay	397.6	2.9%
Residential - Multi-Family	88.0	0.6%
Residential - Other	6.6	0.0%
Residential – Single-Family	174.5	1.3%
Right-of-way	257.7	1.9%
Scrub/Shrub	60.5	0.4%
Water	228.6	1.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,860.4</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Mass GIS 2016 data, published 2019

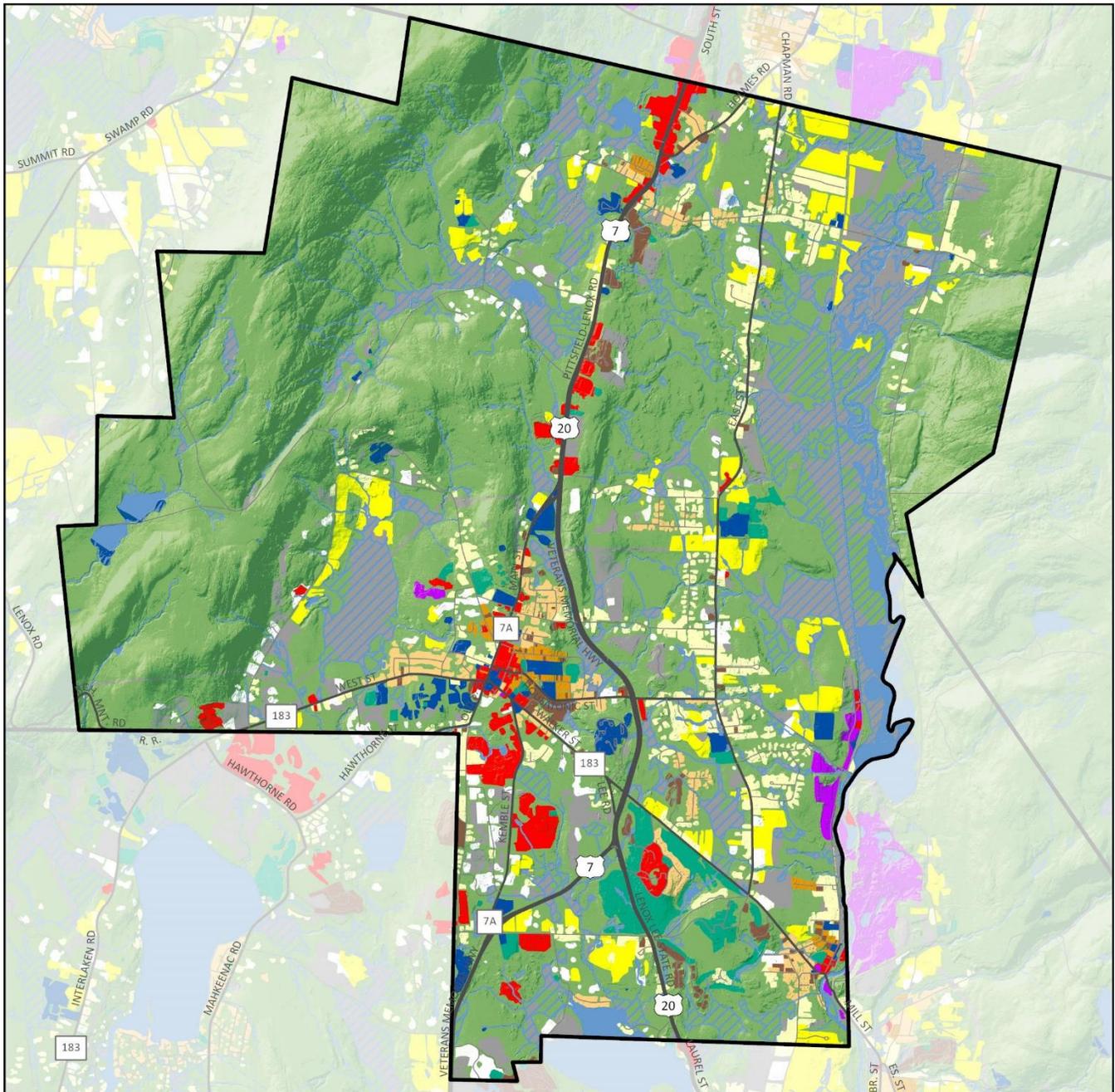
As of 2016, the most recent year for which Mass GIS provides data, 43% of the Town's 13,861 total acres is undeveloped deciduous forest. Approximately 6% of Lenox is developed. Of the 1,976.5 acres of developed land in Lenox, approximately 75% is in residential use, 6% is in commercial use, and less than 1% is in industrial use.

Lenox's high percentage of undeveloped land is likely attributable to the nearly 25% (3,472 acres) of its total acreage being protected open space, as shown in Figure 3.2. Much of the Town's protected open space, including town-owned and managed Kennedy Park and the Massachusetts Audubon Society's Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, is open to the public.



Source: Karen Romeo Legere – western end of Kennedy Park

Figure 3.1 - Current Land Use (2005) Map



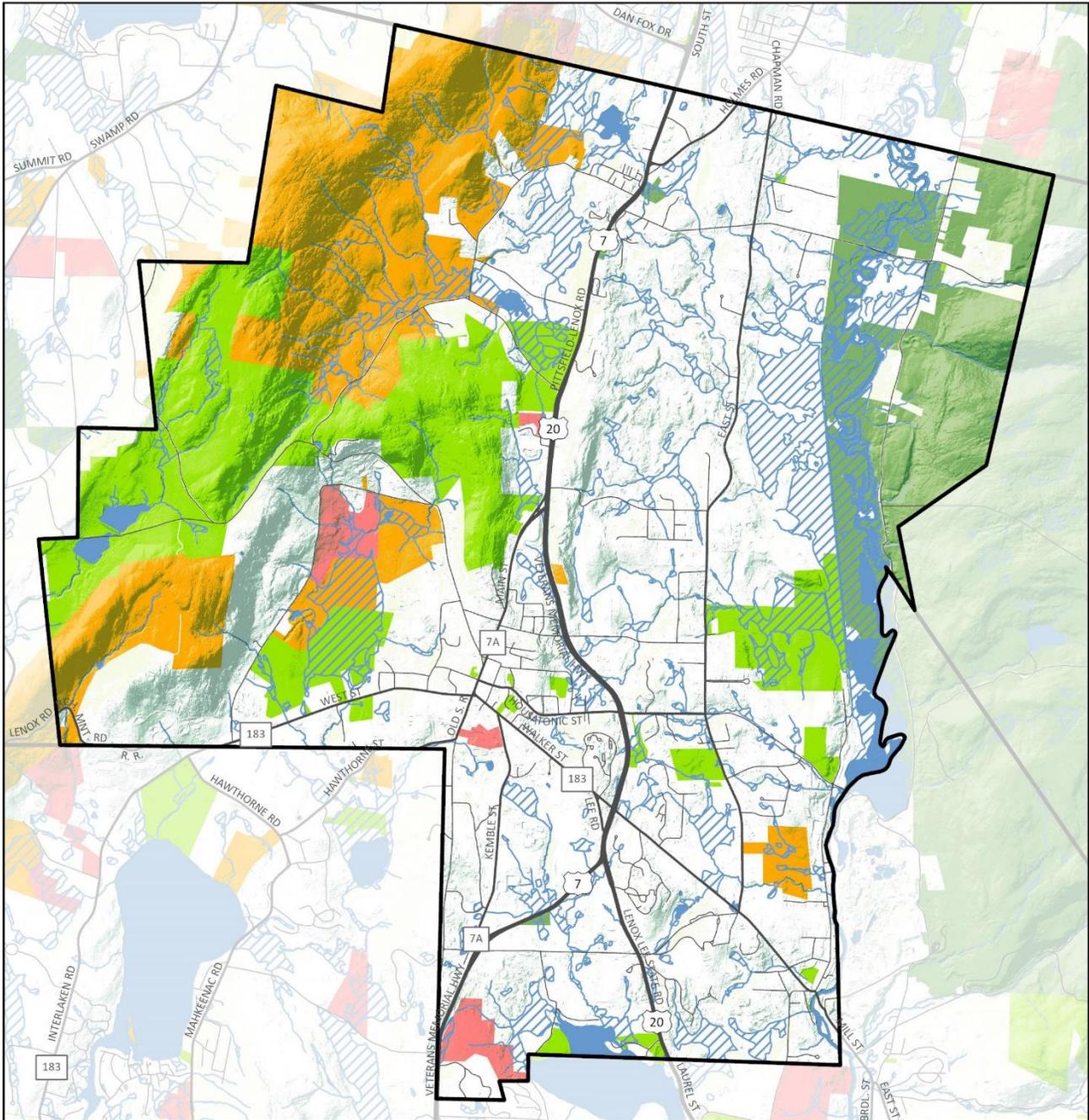
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|--|--|
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Agricultural                | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ffffcc; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Low Density Residential      |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: green; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Forest                       | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #e6f2ff; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Very Low Density Residential |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: red; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Commercial                     | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: blue; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Urban Public/Institutional      |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: purple; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Industrial                  | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #00b050; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Recreation                   |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: brown; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Multi-Family Residential     | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: gray; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Open                            |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: orange; border: 1px solid black;"></span> High Density Residential    | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #add8e6; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Water                        |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #f4a460; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Medium Density Residential |  |



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Figure 3.2 - Open Space Map



Protected Land

- State
- Municipal
- Land Trust
- Private



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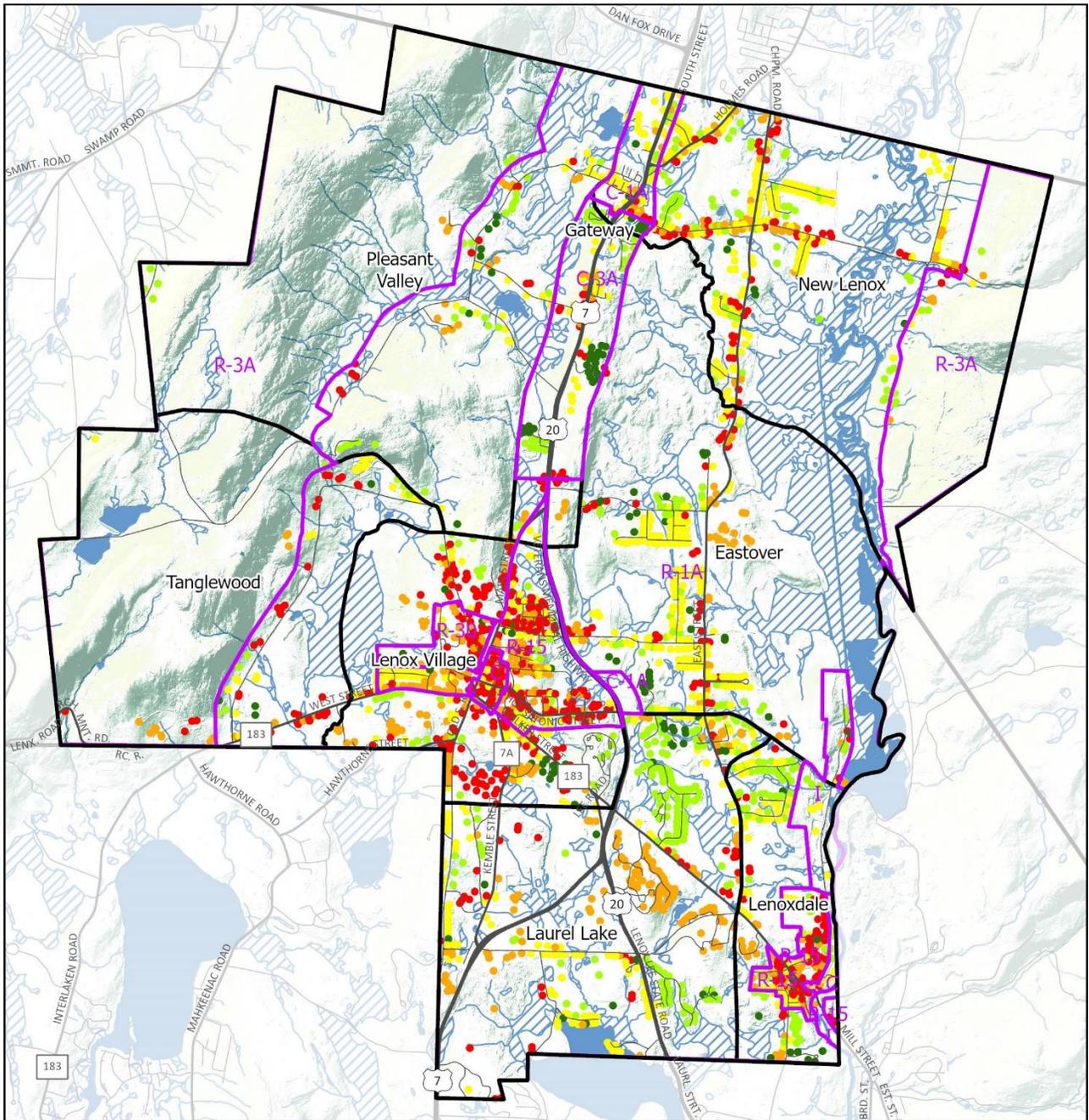
### 3.5 Topography, History, & Development

Much of Lenox's development during the 18th and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries occurred in the lower-lying portions of the valley, in what are now the neighborhoods of Lenox Village (central cluster), Lenox Dale (southwestern cluster), and New Lenox (horizontal cluster in the northeastern portion of the map). During the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, development began spreading among and beyond these neighborhoods, with much of the development occurring in the neighborhoods of Eastover and Laurel Lake. Development patterns also were influenced by the siting of State Highway Route 7/20 "the bypass" in 1949, and by town water and sewer siting.



Source: Jeff Vincent – looking east over Lenox

Figure 3.3 - Development Pattern Map



- |                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| Neighborhoods     | ≤1950 |
| Zoning            | ≤1975 |
| <b>Year Built</b> | ≤2000 |
| ≤1900             | ≤2016 |



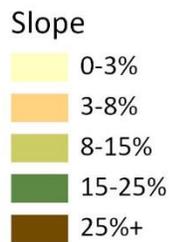
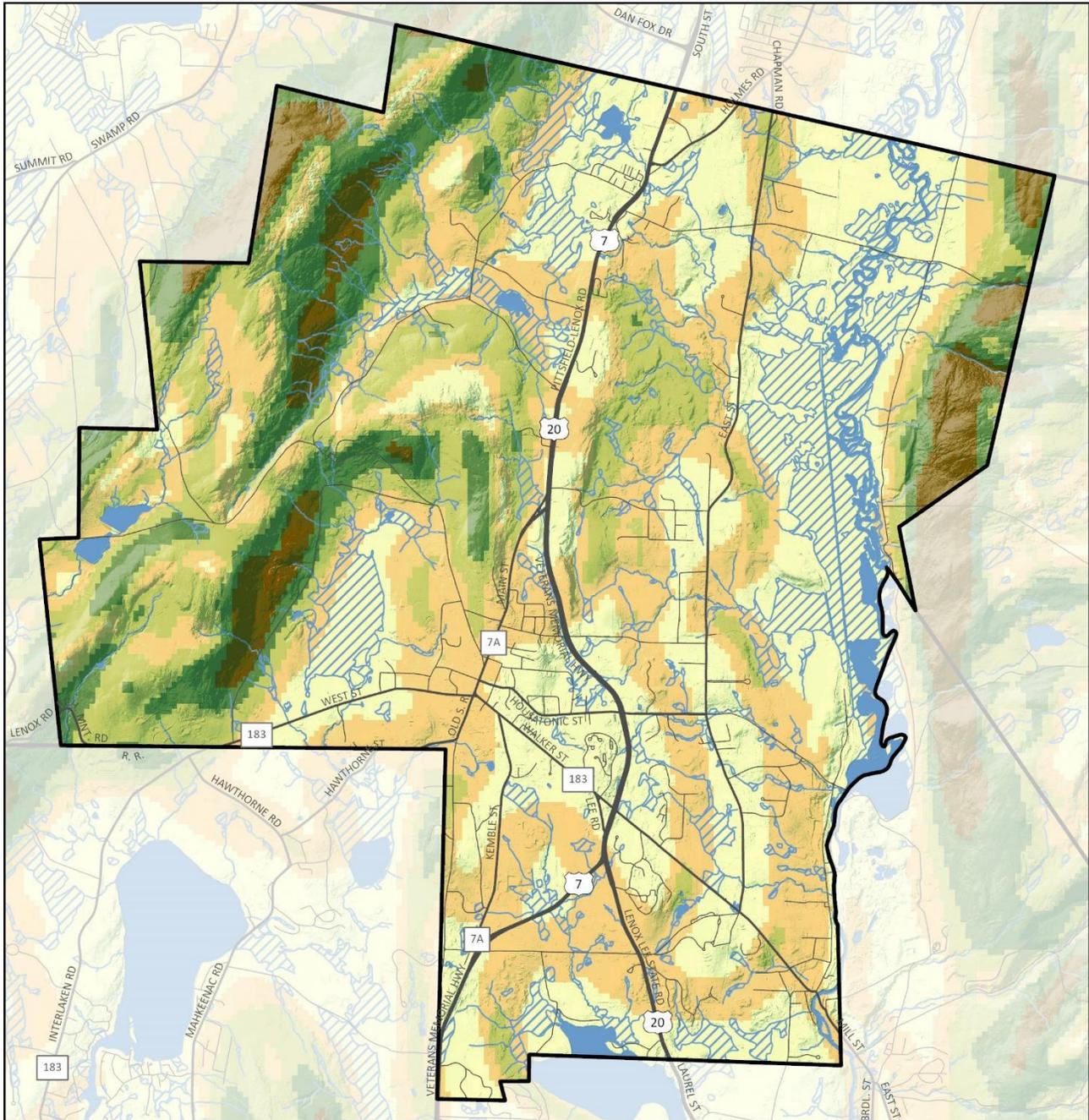
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Development in Lenox has been historically influenced by the Town's topography. The majority of development has occurred within the valley between October Mountain and the Housatonic River to the east and the Taconic Range to the west.

- **Housatonic River Valley:** Sitting between the Taconic Range to the west and October Mountain and the Housatonic River to the east is the vast and scenic Housatonic River Valley. This valley has been the site of the majority of the Town's development since its settlement in the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century.
- **October Mountain:** Rising at slopes exceeding 25% at the northeastern border of the Town is October Mountain. With 16,460 total acres, and crossing the borders of Becket, Lee, Lenox, and Washington, October Mountain is the Commonwealth's largest state forest.
- **Lenox Mountain:** Stretching north-south along Lenox's western border is the Lenox-Stockbridge range of the Taconic mountains, the highest of which - Lenox Mountain - rises to 2,139 feet.

Figure 3.4 - Slope Map



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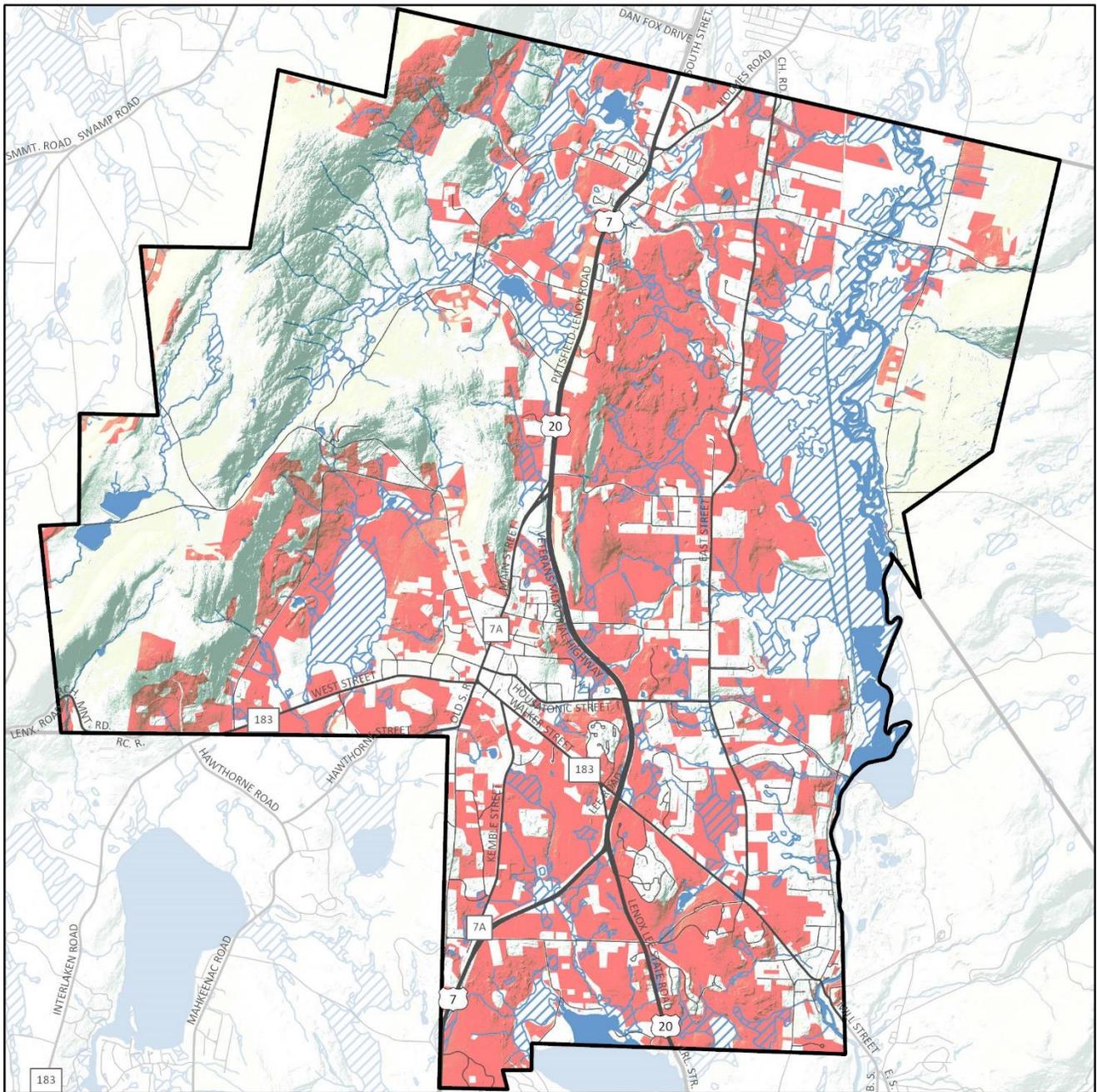
## **RECENT DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH IN LENOX**

Since the 1999 Master Plan, Lenox has experienced physical growth, mostly single-family homes in rural residential neighborhoods. Attempts to site higher density housing developments in these neighborhoods have not been successful, be it by the Town or by private developers. Approximately 300 new residential units have been built in Lenox since the last Master Plan, including high-end residential development adjacent to Great Estate properties as part of those development projects.

New commercial construction has been limited to the Route 7/20 corridor and Great Estate properties, with Village Center investment sporadic.

Developable area exists throughout Lenox. Concurrent with the Future Land Use Plan and community input, specific areas are identified for re-development or new development.

Figure 3.5 - Developable Land Map



Developable Land



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### 3.6 Neighborhoods

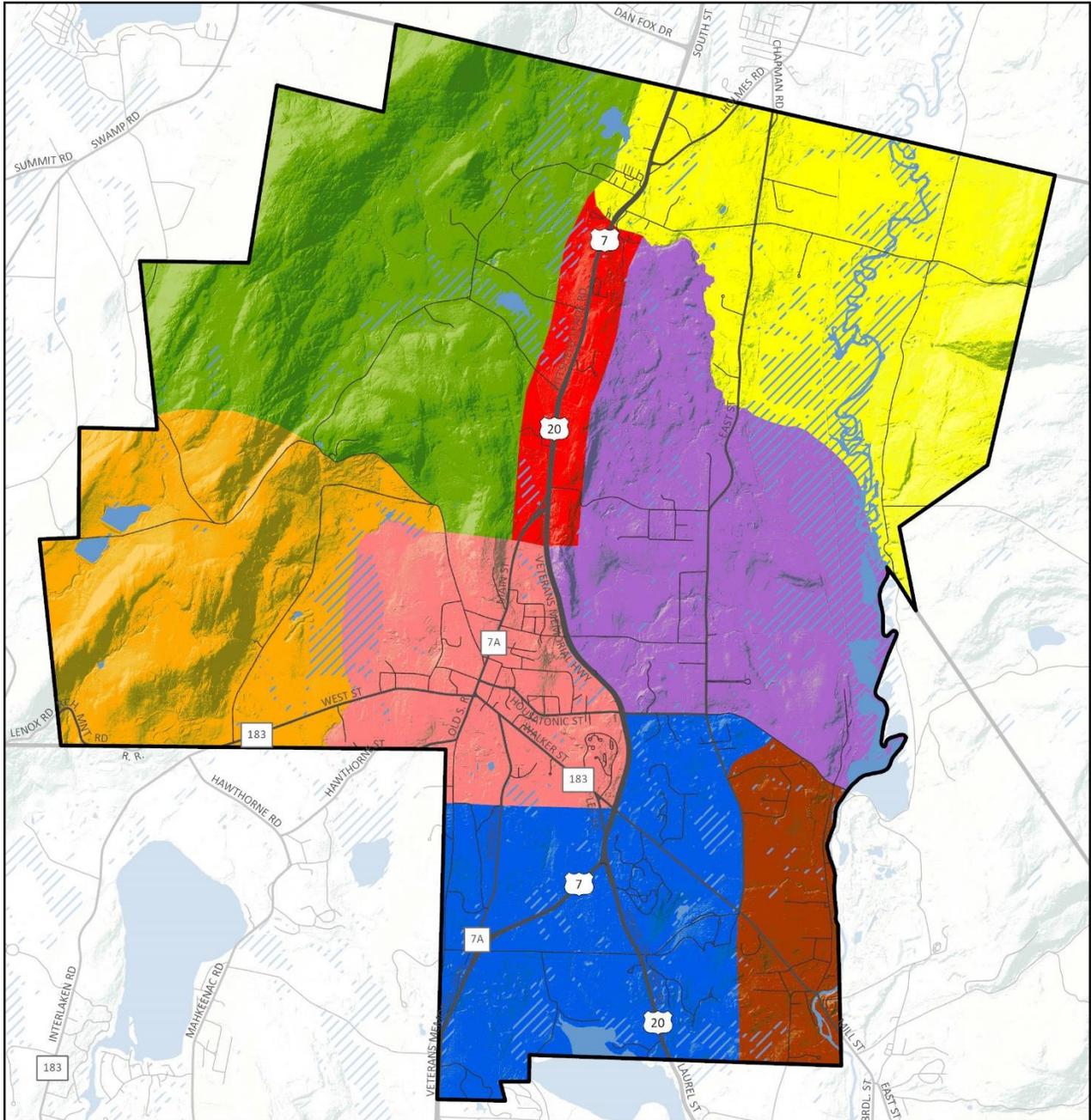
Lenox contains eight distinct neighborhoods, each with its own character and qualities. With varying development patterns, landscapes, and densities each neighborhood is unique unto itself, providing a different set of services, amenities and attractions to current and future residents.

The unique stories and conditions of each Lenox neighborhood present unique opportunities and challenges as the Town plans for the future.

Generally, the following actions in each neighborhood support the vision, goals and objectives laid out in this plan:

- Where suitable, add recreational amenities such as: small pocket parks, larger playground parks, new or improved access points to existing open space and recreation features, s
- Where suitable, connect neighborhoods and neighborhood areas via shared walking and bike paths.
- Where suitable, build or improve sidewalks or install side paths and other Complete Streets features, such as designated bike lanes, side paths.
- Allow for re-development or new, primarily infill development reflective of existing neighborhood form, pattern and design.
- Improve Town sewer in or extend Town sewer into areas identified as suitable for additional residential and/or commercial growth.
- Continue to review anticipated impacts of new land use on municipal resources, including public water supply.

Figure 3.6 - Lenox Neighborhood Map



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: purple; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Eastover    | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: brown; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Lenoxdale       |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: red; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Gateway        | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black;"></span> New Lenox      |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: blue; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Laurel Lake   | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: green; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Pleasant Valley |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: pink; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Lenox Village | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: orange; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Tanglewood     |



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**EASTOVER NEIGHBORHOOD**

Earning its name from the Gilded Age Great Estate built within its boundaries, the neighborhood of Eastover lies south of New Lenox. Like Pleasant Valley and New Lenox, Eastover contains a great deal of preserved open space, including Post Farm; a 213-acre, Town-owned parcel used by the public for outdoor recreation. Eastover also contains 80% of the Town’s agricultural lands. Moreover, these lands are temporarily preserved under Chapter 61. Eastover, however, remains a largely residential area. A large portion of the neighborhood remains unserved by municipal sewer.

The neighborhood contains 235 residential units, housing a total population of 727 people at a density of 0.34 people per acre. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of the neighborhood’s housing units are single-family homes. Much of Eastover’s development occurred during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as the median year built for single-family homes is 1959. The neighborhood also contains ten commercial and six industrial properties.

The Eastover neighborhood is identified in the 2019 Shared Use Path Feasibility Study as an integral area for a shared-use path stretching from the Lee border to the Pittsfield border.

Suitable future land use in the Eastover neighborhood includes natural resource protection, resource conversation and some employment/neighborhood use in the area closes to Lenox Dale use per the Future Land Use Map. The primary land use, however, will remain residential in order to maintain the rural character of the neighborhood.

**Table 3.2 - Eastover Neighborhood Land Use**

Category	Quantity
Single-family	230
Two-family	2
Multi-family	1
Condominium	0
Seasonal Homes (percent)	10%
Commercial	10
Industrial	6
Agricultural	8

Source: Lenox Assessors’ Office, 2017

**GATEWAY NEIGHBORHOOD**

The Gateway neighborhood lies between Pleasant Valley to the west and Eastover to the east just south of New Lenox Road. The neighborhood straddles the Route 7/20 corridor, containing 23 commercial properties.

The Gateway neighborhood is also residential but includes 23 commercial properties. There are 295 total housing units in the neighborhood, of which 275, or 93%, are condominiums—the neighborhood accounts for 49% of all condominiums in Lenox. The remaining 20 housing units are single-family homes. Sixty-one percent (61%) of Gateway’s housing units are used seasonally, giving it the highest percentage of seasonal homes of all Lenox neighborhoods.

**Table 3.3 - Gateway Neighborhood Land Use**

Category	Quantity
Single-family	20
Two-family	0
Multi-family	0
Condominium	275
Seasonal Homes (percent)	61%
Commercial	23
Industrial	1
Agricultural	0

Source: Lenox Assessors’ Office, 2017

The Gateway Neighborhood Area allows direct connection to Kennedy Park, Mass Audubon’s Pleasant Valley Sanctuary and lands on Lenox Mountain to the west. To the west, there is developable land, including Brushwood Farms. A limiting factor to future development is current sewer capacity due to the age and size of line.

Suitable future land use in this neighborhood includes commercial, resource conservation and natural resource conservation. Residential development can maintain the form exhibited at Lenox Woods. This compact form of development allows for larger area of open space to be protected. This could be replicated to the east side of Route 7 on the former Brushwood Farm property. There are large parcels

to the east of Route 7 identified as developable parcels. These would be well suited for residential development like at the Twelve Oaks condominium.

### LAUREL LAKE NEIGHBORHOOD

The Laurel Lake neighborhood lies south of Lenox Village. Straddling the neighborhood's southern border with the Town of Lee is Laurel Lake. The Laurel Lake neighborhood is also home to The Mount, novelist Edith Warton's Gilded Age Estate, now a museum and major cultural attraction. Given its scenic beauty and rich cultural history, the Laurel Lake neighborhood is attractive to seasonal residents.

Aside from open space and recreation, the primary land use in Laurel Lake is residential. The neighborhood contains 448 housing units; 61% are single-family homes and 38% are condominiums. Of its 448 housing units, 226, or 50%, are used seasonally. There are nine commercial properties in Laurel Lake, which account for 5% of the Town's commercial property stock.



Source: Lindsey Schmid – Laurel Lake

Suitable future land use within this neighborhood includes resource protection, two special districts and natural resource protection. The special districts are related to Fox Hollow and Miraval. The Town may work closely with these properties to ensure continued protection of historic resources and to help promote public enjoyment of the available open space and recreation opportunities. Working with The Mount will also help maintain and grow public access to unique cultural and natural resource opportunities within the neighborhood.

**Table 3.4 - Laurel Lake Neighborhood Land Use**

Category	Quantity
Single-family	274
Two-family	3
Multi-family	1
Condominium	170
Seasonal Homes (percent)	50%
Commercial	9
Industrial	0
Agricultural	0

Source: Lenox Assessors' Office, 2017

**LENOX DALE NEIGHBORHOOD**

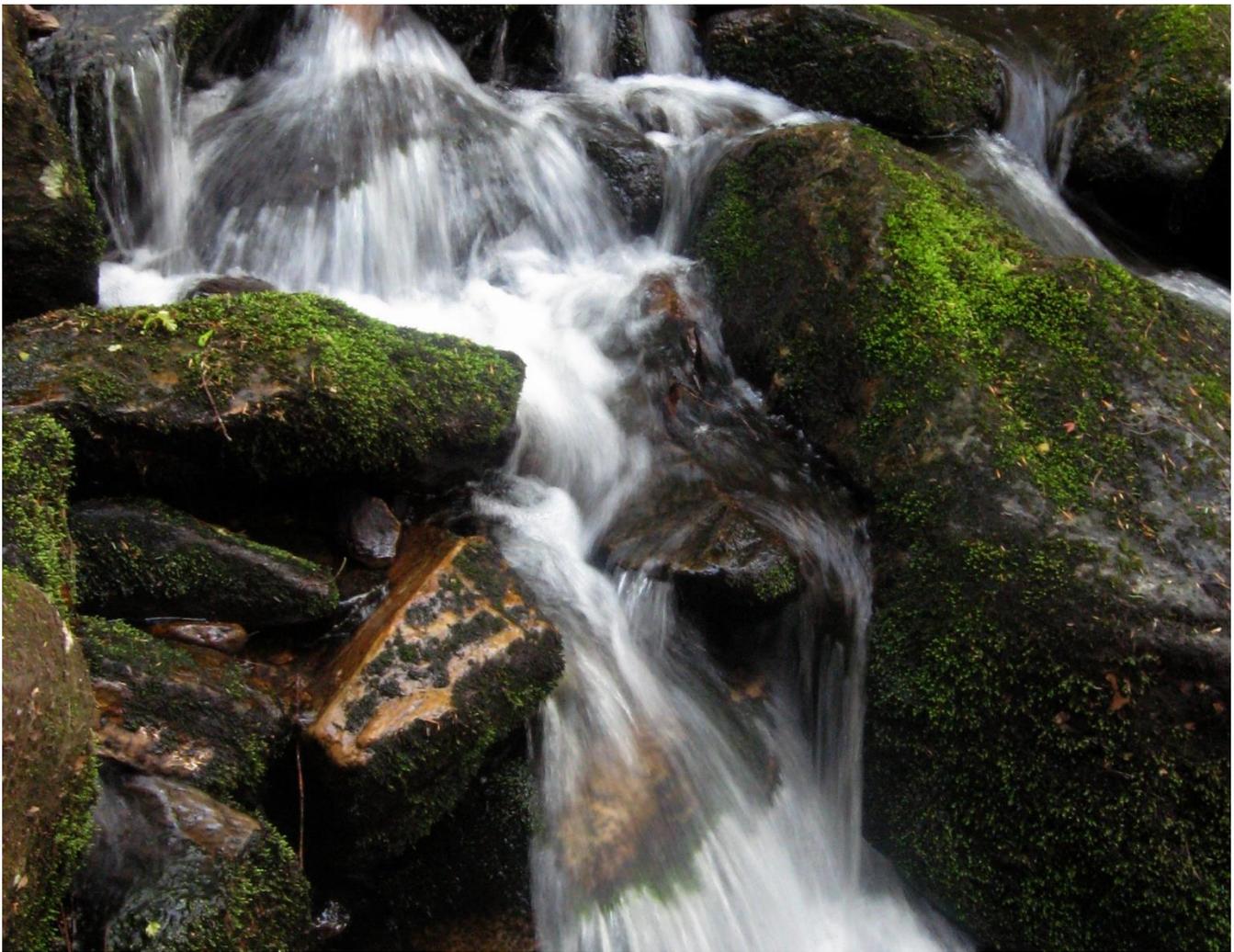
Formerly the center of industrial activities in Lenox, Lenox Dale is now a neighborhood containing a diverse array of uses and is home to many families and young professionals.

With a population of 581 people spread across 542 acres, Lenox Dale is the most densely populated neighborhood in Lenox, at 1.07 people per acre. Of the 247 total housing units in Lenox Dale, only 21, or 9%, are used seasonally, giving Lenox Dale a higher percentage of year-round residents than all other neighborhoods. The neighborhood also contains the second-highest share of two- and multi-family homes in Town, behind Lenox Village.

Beyond its residential uses, Lenox Dale is also home to twelve commercial and nine industrial properties. Several of the industrial properties, including the Niagara Mill, are currently vacant. Such properties may be candidates for adaptive reuse, to increase residential and/or commercial opportunities. Challenges to re-development and new development in Lenox Dale include limited or no

wireless coverage, lack of connection to the MassBroadband fiber optic network, and brownfield potential. All of these are solvable.

The 2004 Community Development Plan that describes Lenox Dale as a priority area for economic development in Lenox. It describes the neighborhood as providing a link to key industrial and river recreation points. It also makes links between economic development and recreation and other place-based assets: “Utilizing and developing this area for recreational purposes can also serve to bolster the economic development potential of the Village. Pedestrian based opportunities need to be enhanced in order to contribute to community interaction and quality of life. It also notes the assets of Woods Pond, the Housatonic River, and October Mountain State Park.



Source: Linda Duval Sullivan – gorge at Woods Pond

Lenox Dale contains access to Post Farm, October Mountain State Forest and land owned by BNRC. The Town also owns parkland open to the public. Lenox Dale is an essential neighborhood to a future shared-use path connecting from Lee to Pittsfield. The historic, gilded age rail station and some of the oldest homes in Lenox are in Lenox Dale. Workers for the mills and for the gilded age estates lived in Lenox Dale.

Lenox Dale will be directly impacted by Rest of River work, but also stands to directly benefit from the work and resulting mitigation projects. There are opportunities to create open space along the river and focusing commercial redevelopment farther to the south.

**Table 3.5 - Lenox Dale Neighborhood Land Use**

Category	Quantity
Single-family	214
Two-family	22
Multi-family	7
Condominium	0
Seasonal Homes (percent)	9%
Commercial	12
Industrial	0
Agricultural	0

Source: Lenox Assessors' Office, 2017

Suitable future land use in Lenox Dale includes neighborhood land use, employment land use and resource conservation. The zoning in Lenox Dale can be improved to create greater conformity for existing homes on smaller lots, and to encourage re-development or new development in the same scale and density as already exists. With easy access to town water and sewer, Lenox Dale is well situated to accommodate new residential development. Its legacy of industry provides ample space for new, job-generating business opportunities. It can be its own hub of access to outdoor recreation.

**LENOX VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD**

Lenox Village contains 50% of the Town’s commercial properties and 26% of its total housing stock. Additionally, 33% of the Town’s population resides in Lenox Village, at a density of 1.02 people per acre.

Of the 588 total housing units in Lenox Village, 440, or 75%, are single-family homes. Another 102, or 17%, are condominiums. Additionally, there are 32 two-family and 11 multi-family homes in the Village, accounting for the remaining 8% of its housing stock. One hundred and fifty three (153), or 26%, of the Village’s housing units are used seasonally.

In addition to its commercial and residential aspects, Lenox Village is rich with local heritage. Much of Lenox Village sits within the Town’s local historic district as well as being a national historic register neighborhood. Historic buildings within the Village include the Lenox Library, Lenox Town Hall, Ventfort Hall, and the Church on the Hill, among others. The neighborhood also hosts Lenox’s designated Cultural District.

**Table 3.6 - Lenox Village Neighborhood Land Use**

Category	Quantity
Single-family	440
Two-family	30
Multi-family	11
Condominium	102
Seasonal Homes (percent)	26%
Commercial	93
Industrial	2
Agricultural	0

Source: Lenox Assessors’ Office, 2017

Suitable future land use in the Village Center neighborhood includes neighborhood land use, downtown village land use, and special district land use. Re-development or new development in the Village Center should mimic existing density and be reflective of the rich historic character visible today. The Village Center can be a hub: within walking distance lies ample outdoor recreation access and ample cultural activity access. It is truly a mixed-income neighborhood as well. Households of all ages and incomes already live in the neighborhood thanks to its mix of affordable and market-rate rental units, single-family homes, and multi-family buildings. A suggested improvement to infrastructure is an internal, pedestrian path through the interior of the village; parallel to Church St. and Main St. but located between the two public ways. To maximize and further the density of retail, art, pedestrian and other activity in the village, closure of a street could be reviewed and implemented.

## NEW LENOX NEIGHBORHOOD

Bordering the neighborhood to the east known as Pleasant Valley, and comprising the Town's northeastern land, is the neighborhood of New Lenox. Like Pleasant Valley, much of New Lenox is permanently preserved open space, as the neighborhood contains the George Darey Wildlife Area. New Lenox, however, is also a more developed neighborhood than Pleasant Valley.

With a total population of 859 residents at a density of 0.33 people per acre, New Lenox is a largely residential neighborhood. Single-family homes are the predominant form of construction. New Lenox contains 325 housing units; 95% of which are single-family, and 10% of which are used seasonally. The majority of the neighborhood's residences were built along New Lenox Road and East Street during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to containing 14% of the Town's housing stock, there are also 31 commercial properties in the neighborhood, which represents 16.5% of Lenox's commercial stock.

New Lenox has ample open space and recreation opportunities: access to October Mountain State Forest, a boat launch, the meditation garden and walking path at St. Helena's, the George Darey Wildlife Management Area. The Lenox Gun Club is also in this neighborhood, and it is a critical area to a future shared-use path. The stretch of Housatonic River meandering through the neighborhood will be subject to Rest of River mitigation efforts.

Suitable future land use within the New Lenox neighborhood includes commercial, neighborhoods, resource conservation and natural resource protection. The commercial land use will be confined to the existing Rout 7/20 corridor. The neighborhood future land use spans both sides of Route 7 just until the beginning of the R-3 zone. There are pockets of higher density housing in this neighborhood. Where municipal water and sewer exist, the Town may consider replicating this density in a confined area. There is ample access to passive recreation, but residents have expressed interest in having a playground built.

**Table 3.7 - New Lenox Neighborhood Land Use**

Category	Quantity
Single-family	308
Two-family	3
Multi-family	0
Condominium	11
Seasonal Homes (percent)	10%
Commercial	31
Industrial	1
Agricultural	0

Source: Lenox Assessors' Office, 2017

**PLEASANT VALLEY NEIGHBORHOOD**

Located in the Town’s northwestern corner, Pleasant Valley is largely composed of permanently preserved open space. Much of the neighborhood’s land is preserved as the Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary; a 1,142 acre wildlife sanctuary with seven miles of hiking trails, operated by the Massachusetts Audubon Society. Land owned by both Lenox and the Berkshire Natural Resources Council, including some of the Town’s watershed land, extends the open space swath of this neighborhood.

With a total population of 272 people living among 3,055 acres, Pleasant Valley is a very low-density neighborhood, at 0.09 people per acre. Ninety-six percent (96%) of the neighborhood’s development is in the form of single-family homes, the median year built for which is 1964. Additionally, 29% of the neighborhood’s housing stock is used seasonally.

Suitable future land use in the Pleasant Valley neighborhood is natural resource protection and resource conservation. Low-density, low-impact residential is appropriate on remaining buildable land.

**Table 3.8 - Pleasant Valley Neighborhood Land Use**

Category	Quantity
Single-family	68
Two-family	1
Multi-family	0
Condominium	0
Seasonal Homes (percent)	29%
Commercial	2
Industrial	0
Agricultural	0

Source: Lenox Assessors' Office, 2017

**TANGLEWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD**

The Tanglewood neighborhood is home to the Tanglewood Music Festival, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Boston University Tanglewood Institute, and the Tanglewood Music Center, making it a destination for more than 350,000 annual visitors. The neighborhood is situated west of Lenox Village and south of Pleasant Valley. Much of the land within the Tanglewood neighborhood’s boundaries is either permanently protected or unprotected recreational open space. The remaining land is largely residential.

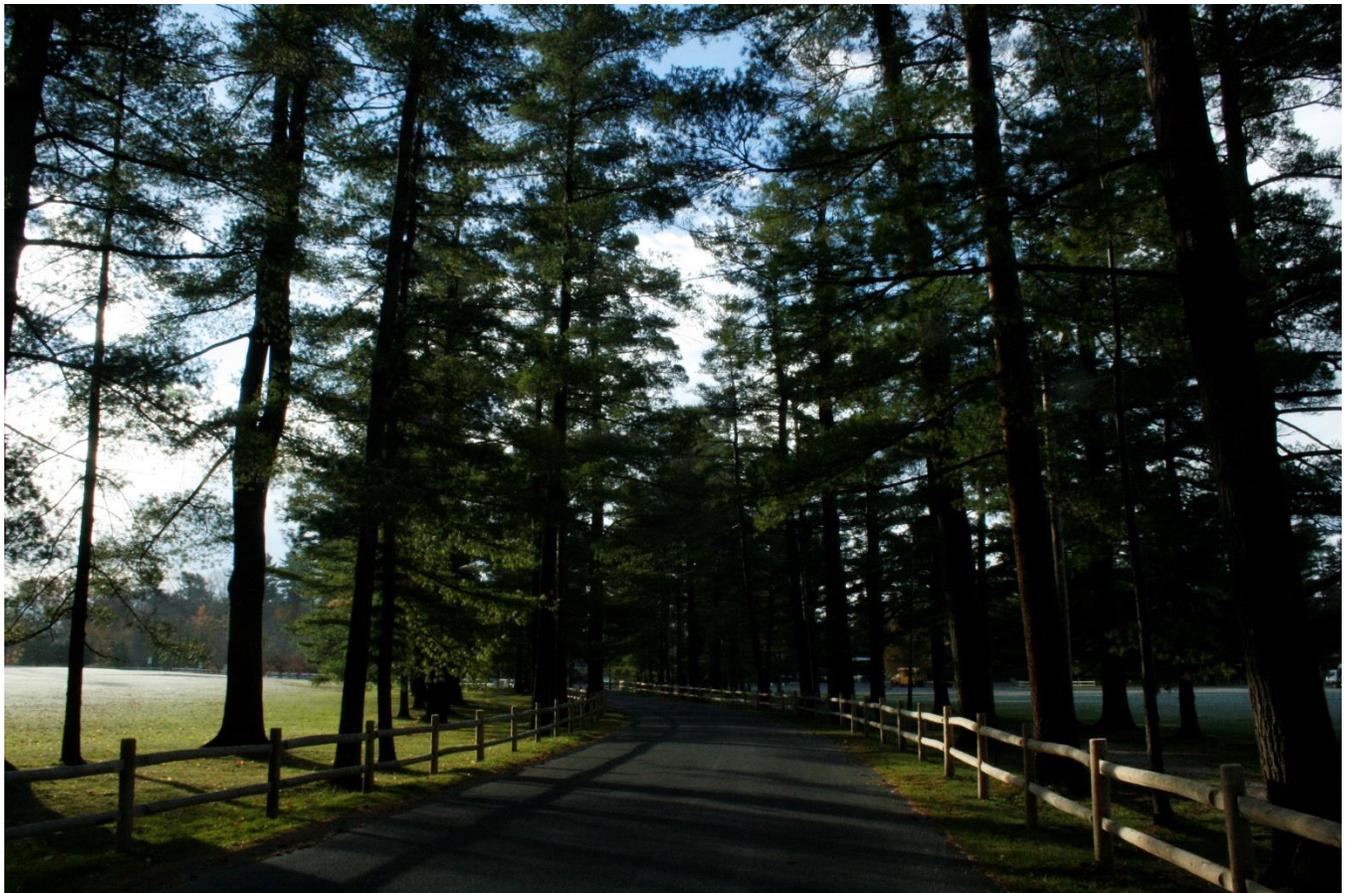
Of the non-residential properties in the Tanglewood neighborhood, seven are commercial and one is industrial, accounting for 4% and 5% of the Town’s totals for each use classification, respectively. All of the residential properties in the neighborhood are single-family homes, 39% of which are used seasonally.

Suitable future land use in the Tanglewood neighborhood includes residential, special district use and continued natural resource protection. The special districts include Tanglewood and the area along Cliffwood Street around Ethylwynde and the Lenox Club. Promoting public access to these cultural and historic resources is important, and partners of the Town – such as the Berkshire Natural Resources Council – that are already working on it. Residential land use remains low density except in the neighborhood areas where new residential use maintains the same density as exhibited, except where small-scale multi-family development is feasible.

**Table 3.9 - Tanglewood Neighborhood Land Use**

Category	Quantity
Single-family	46
Two-family	0
Multi-family	0
Condominium	0
Seasonal Homes (percent)	39%
Commercial	7
Industrial	1
Agricultural	0

Source: Lenox Assessors' Office, 2017



Source: Linda Duval Sullivan – Tanglewood, main gate

### 3.7 Zoning

The eight zoning districts within Lenox influence the form of its eight neighborhoods. In addition to its eight zoning districts are two overlay districts.

**Table 3.10 - Zoning Districts**

Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Overlay Districts
R-15, R-30, R-1A, R-3A	C, C-1A, C-3A	I	Open Space Flexible Development, Gateway Mixed Use Development

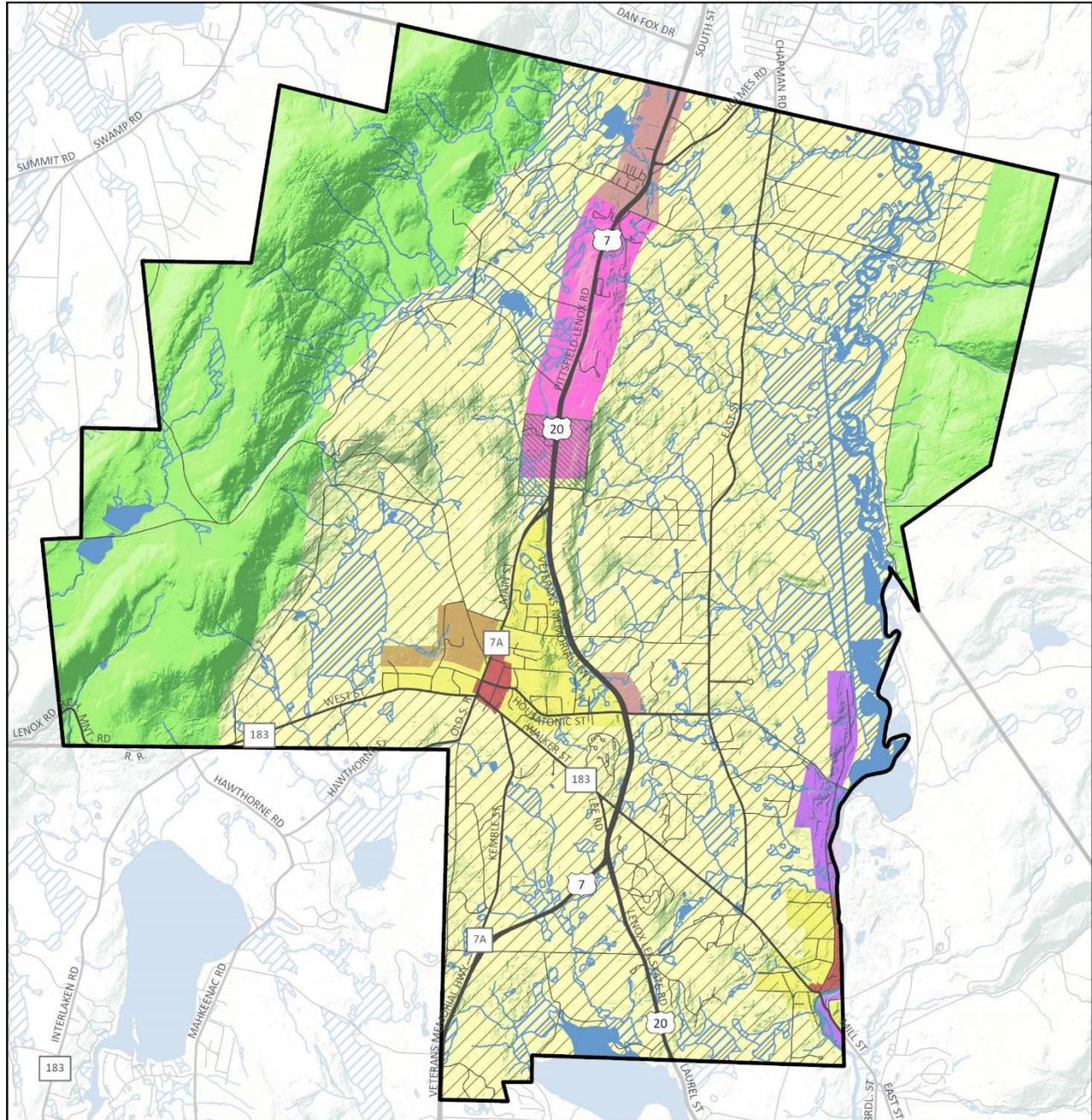
Source: Lenox Zoning Bylaw , 2018

Lenox first adopted zoning bylaws in 1969 which was predated by most of the development in town. This has resulted in pockets of neighborhoods that don't conform with zoning, but do reflect traditional development patterns and previous zoning schemes.

Buildings, land uses, and the spatial dimensions that existed prior to the Zoning Bylaw have helped shape the character of Lenox. The density of the Village houses, for example, now converted or adapted for commercial use, is reflected in the Bylaw dimensions for this now mixed-use neighborhood.

Zoning bylaws have established new standards that require different acreage, or street setbacks, and frontage requirements, etc. These bylaws are continually updated which has led to zoning changes seen after the Town's last Master Plan. The biggest changes were to zone for larger lots where the Town sewer was not available. The Town was also concerned about preserving the rural open-space fabric in certain zones. Subsequently, zoning for cluster developments was adopted to protect open space while also promoting new residential development.

Figure 3.7 - Lenox Zoning Map



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color: #8B0000; border:1px solid black;"></span> C    | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color: #FFFF00; border:1px solid black;"></span> R-1A  |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color: #C08080; border:1px solid black;"></span> C-1A | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color: #8B4513; border:1px solid black;"></span> R-30  |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color: #FF00FF; border:1px solid black;"></span> C-3A | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color: #32CD32; border:1px solid black;"></span> R-3A  |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color: #8A2BE2; border:1px solid black;"></span> I    | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, #ccc 2px, #ccc 4px); border:1px solid black;"></span> Gateway Mixed Use Development    |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color: #FFD700; border:1px solid black;"></span> R-15 | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(-45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, #ccc 2px, #ccc 4px); border:1px solid black;"></span> Open Space Flexible Development |



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**Table 3.10.1 - Zoning Districts**

Category		Min. Lot Size	Min. Frontage	Max. Building Coverage	Uses Allowed By Right*
Residential	R-3A	3 acres	200 ft.	10%	Detached, single-family dwellings
Residential	R-1A	1 acre	150 ft.	20%	Detached, single-family dwellings
Residential	R-30	30,000 sq. ft.	125 ft.	20%	Detached, single-family dwellings
Residential	R-15	15,000 sq. ft.	85 ft.	20%	Detached, single-family dwellings
Commercial	C	5,000 sq. ft.	75 ft.	75%	Single and multi-family dwellings, offices, retail, and mixed-use development
Commercial	C-3A	3 acres	300 ft.	20%	Offices, manufacturing
Commercial	C-1A	1 acre	200 ft.	30%	Offices, retail, restaurant, manufacturing, and assembly
Industrial	I	2 acres	200 ft.	35%	Offices, manufacturing, research, laboratory, printing, and storage

\*Other residential, commercial, or industrial uses may be allowed by right or by Special Permit by the Zoning Board of Appeals  
 Source: Lenox Zoning Bylaw, 2018

**RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS**

Lenox is divided into four distinct residential zones ranging from single-family three-acre lot zoning to 15,000 square foot minimum lot size with potential for multi-family housing

**R-3A District**

The R-3A District has the largest dimensional requirements, including three-acre minimum lot area and 10% maximum building coverage, of any Lenox zoning district. This district encompasses the western swath of Lenox and north-eastern area. It’s physical area is defined by Lenox Mountain and the large, contiguous swath of open space permanently protected by Mass Audubon, Lenox, and the Berkshire Natural Resources Council. Zoning is not the only limit to development here: natural constraints such as steep slope, elevation and wetland resources abound.

This district limits development to very low-density residential construction, protecting open space, and preserving the Town’s scenic beauty. Acreage minimums also were set considering the lack of Town sewer throughout much of this district.

That so few residences are located in the R-3A district is attributable to its zoning regulations and natural constraints.

### **R-1A District**

Requiring minimum lot areas of one acre, the R-1A encourages low- to moderate-density, suburban-style residential development.

The majority of Lenox is zoned R1-A. Parts of the neighborhoods of New Lenox, Pleasant Valley, Eastover, Lenox Dale, Lenox Village, and Tanglewood, and all of Laurel Lake, are included in the R-1A district. The R-1A district prohibits two-family and multi-family homes, allowing only single-family detached homes and related accessory uses. The entire area zoned R-1A is the Open Space and Flexible Development Overlay District.

### **R-30 District**

The R-30 zoning district enables village-style development by prescribing minimum lot sizes of 30,000 square feet, which drives greater residential density.

The R-30 district is a medium-density residential zoning district in Lenox Village. Extending westward from Main Street (Route 7A) toward Yokun Avenue, R-30 is, in terms of area, the Town's smallest residential zoning district.

The R-30 district differs from the R-3A and R-1A districts in that it allows two-family and multi-family homes by Special Permit.

### **R-15 District**

Located in and around Lenox Village and Lenox Dale, the R-15 promotes higher residential density via 15,000 square foot minimum lots.

In addition to allowing smaller footprints, the R-15 district promotes residential density by allowing two-family and multi-family homes, as well as townhouses, by Special Permit.

The R-15 zoning district has two locations within Lenox. The larger of the two locations is situated to the north of Walker Street between Yokun Avenue, just south and east of the R-30 district, and Route 20 to the west. The second R-15 district is located in Lenox Dale.

Technically a medium-density zoning district, the R-15 is Lenox's highest density residential district, as evidenced by the population densities clustered around Lenox Village and Lenox Dale, the neighborhoods in which the district is located. Lenox Village has a population density of 1.07 people per acre. In Lenox Dale, that figure is 1.02.

## **COMMERCIAL ZONING DISTRICTS**

In addition to its four residential zoning districts, Lenox also contains three separate commercial districts, each with varying dimensional requirements and allowed uses.

### **C District**

A commercial zoning district with two locations - in Lenox Village and Lenox Dale - the C district is quintessentially village-like in terms of character, with dimensional requirements designed to facilitate dense and walkable commercial village centers. In addition to allowing commercial uses, the C-district allows single-family homes, upper-story residential units in mixed use developments, two-family homes, and multi-family homes by right.

### **C-1A District**

The denser C-1A zone picks up at C-3A near New Lenox Road and runs north to the Pittsfield border. There is also a separate, small C-1A chunk on 7/20 between Hubbard and Housatonic Street, the fragment of some unique zoning some years ago.

With its one-acre minimum lot size, C-1A promotes greater density, larger scale commercial uses. Businesses operating in the district include roadside motels, hotels, regular and fast-food restaurants, automotive service and sales, gas stations, supermarkets, and big box retail. A number of other uses also are allowed in the C-1A

In terms of residential uses, the district allows upper-story residential units in a mixed-use development, elderly housing and care facilities, and multi-family dwellings by Special Permit. Non-conforming residential properties that predate zoning also exist in the zone, including the community's lone mobile home park.

### **C-3A District**

Making the transition from Lenox Village just after Route 7A meets Route 7/20, the C-3A district's three-acre minimum lot area promotes low-density commercial and residential developments. Running along

Route 7/20 from approximately New Lenox Road to East Dugway Road and includes the Gateway neighborhood area and a small portion of New Lenox.

The district contains several hotels, motels, and somewhat larger-scale commercial developments containing varying types of businesses such as retail and health care offices. The C-3A district also contains five relatively large residential developments, including; Devonshire Estates, a retirement community; Mount Carmel Care Center, a nursing home; and the condominium developments of Rolling Hills Condominiums, Lenox Heights, and Twelve Oaks Village.

### **INDUSTRIAL ZONING DISTRICTS**

The Town's industrial district is located along the Housatonic River in the Eastover and Lenox Dale neighborhood areas. This district contains a number of successful industrial operations. Commercial uses such as lumber and building supply yards, as well as oxygen storage and sales, also are allowed by right. Two-family, multi-family, and upper-story residential units in mixed use developments are all allowed by Special Permit, while single-family home are prohibited. The district also is home to the Berkshire Scenic Railway Museum.

### **OVERLAY ZONING DISTRICTS**

Overlay zoning districts are special zoning districts within existing districts, with restrictions and allowances that supersede those of the underlying zoning district. Lenox has adopted three overlay zoning districts, each with its own intended purpose: The Wireless Telecommunications Overlay District, the Open Space Flexible Development Overlay district, and the Gateway Mixed Use Development district.

#### **Wireless Telecommunications Overlay District**

Comprising five parcels near the junction of Route 7A and Route 7/20, the Wireless Telecommunications Overlay District (WTOD) was adopted to allow for the placement of wireless telecommunications facilities. The WTOD is the only district where such facilities are allowed, as a means of protecting the Town's scenic character. The limited nature of this overlay is attributable to the dearth of cellular service coverage in multiple Lenox neighborhoods.

#### **Open Space Flexible Development Overlay District**

Developed to preserve open space, natural, and historical resources, and to protect the value of real property, the Open Space Flexible Development District (OSFD), encompasses all of the R-1A

residential zoning district. It allows for a density bonus related to the amount of open space permanently protected in a cluster development. Since its adoption, it has been utilized rarely.

### **Gateway Mixed Use Development Overlay District**

Established to allow a diversity of residential, retail, office, entertainment, and open space in close proximity, the Gateway Mixed Use Development District (GMUD) is overlaid primarily on the southern portion of the C-3A district, slightly extending into the R-1A district. It includes the Lenox Woods mixed-use development on the west side of Pittsfield Road and land available for development on the west side.

### **Floodplain Overlay District**

The FPOD overlays 1982 Flood Insurance rate maps indicating 100-year water surface elevations. It requires a Special Permit for activity within the Overlay and requires review by the Inspections Department pursuant to state flood code.

## **ZONING TOOLS**

Within the current zoning bylaw exist common tools to provide the Town with detailed review of both re-development and new development. Within the C-3A and C-1A corridor, site plan review is required. A similar process to site plan review is the Special Permit process. Tools absent from the Lenox Zoning Bylaw include neighborhood based design standards or form-based code.

## **NON-ZONING LAND USE REGULATIONS**

Zoning is not the only tool for regulating land use in Lenox. Other tools include:

- **Scenic Mountain Act:** The alteration of land, including new construction, in area of steep slopes and exceeding 1,400 feet in elevation require special review and approval by the Lenox Conservation Commission.
- **Wetlands Protection Act:** Lenox does not have a local wetlands bylaw. Through the Conservation Commission it enforces the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act which limits the degree of land use relative to resource type and proximity.
- **Local Historic District:** Some of Lenox Village is a local historic district. This requires street-facing alteration to existing structures and new structures to be reviewed for appropriateness and approved.

### 3.8 Future Land Use

A Future Land Use Map is a visual expression of a land use plan intended to guide new development and redevelopment activities in a given locality or region. Lenox's Future Land Use Map was developed in conjunction with Berkshire County's regional plan, *Sustainable Berkshires*. The *Sustainable Berkshires* land use plan was developed using a multivariate (e.g., slopes, wetlands, current uses, etc.) model that also accounted for best practices. The model determined the optimal location for land use categories.

#### RESOURCE CONSERVATION

Areas identified as optimal for resource conservation are lands that are currently protected from development through conservation.



Source: Linda Duval Sullivan – Schermerhorn Park

## **NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION**

The Natural Resource Protection land use category includes areas where current development is minimal and density is low. Additionally, these are areas where natural resources exist and are or should be protected.

## **RESOURCE PROTECTION**

Areas identified for resource protection are those that are optimal for the development of recreation-based assets due to their proximity to lakes, mountains, and resorts.

## **NEIGHBORHOODS**

Neighborhoods are areas that are largely residential and ranging in medium to very high density.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

Areas identified as under the employment category are those that are best suited to serve as large employment centers, based on existing uses, access to infrastructure, and transit.

## **COMMERCIAL**

This category includes such uses as retail and professional services. Commercial districts are optimally located in close proximity to and along major roads and places where people are likely to agglomerate.

## **DOWNTOWN; VILLAGE**

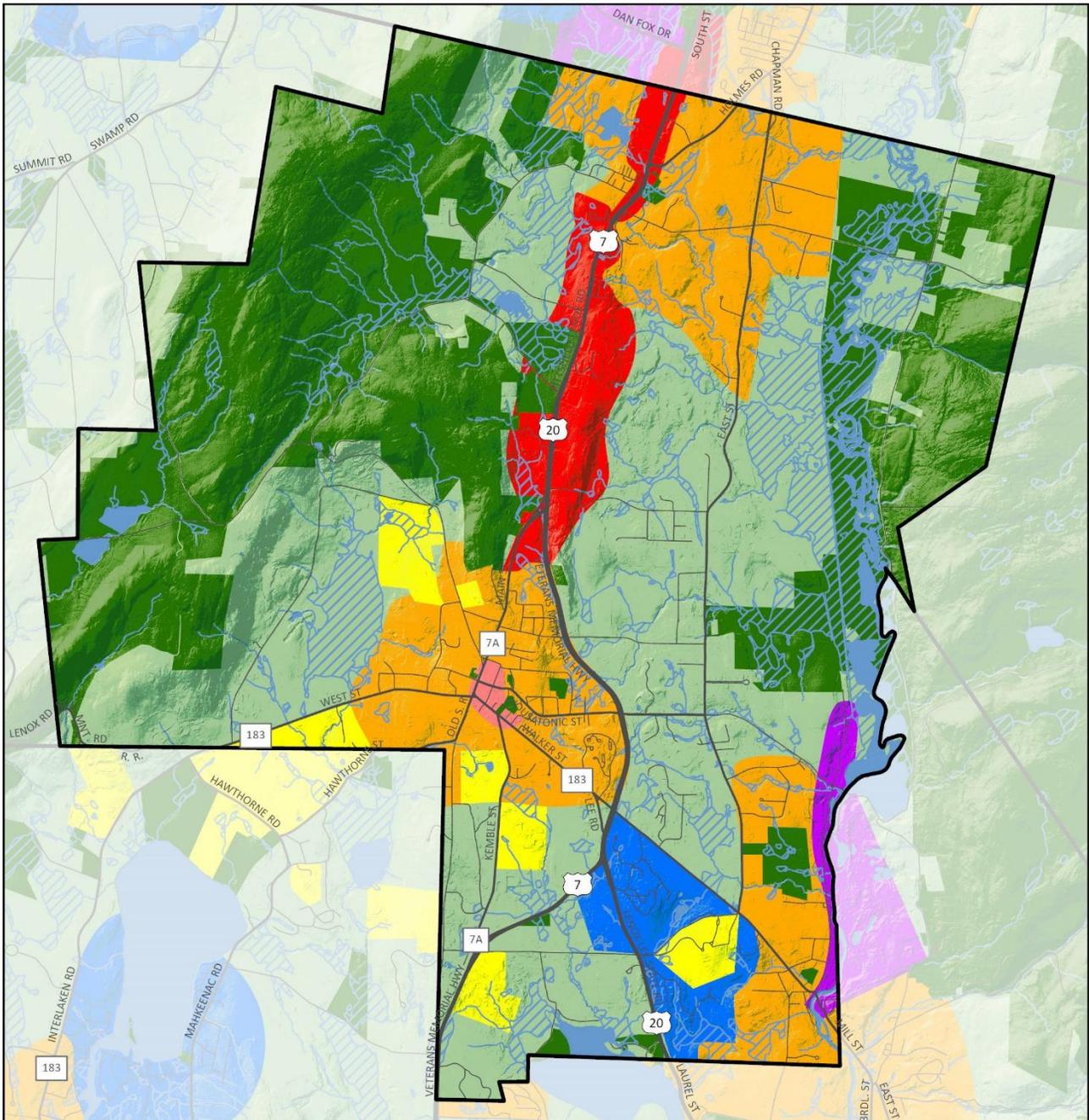
These are mixed used neighborhoods that are primarily residential in nature but contain an eclectic mix of small-scale uses at medium to very high densities.

## **SPECIAL DISTRICTS**

Special Districts are relatively self-contained areas where educational institutions, hospitals, airports, and cultural institutions are located. Special Districts exert a strong influence on surrounding areas and often serve as activity centers by large numbers of people. Lenox's Estate Preservation Area is a special district, for example.

Lenox's Future Land Use Map closely resembles its current zoning map. There are, however, actions the Town may take in continuance of promoting and protecting the quality of life for Lenox residents. Such actions are shown in the recommendations that follow and are described in the neighborhood descriptions of this plan.

Figure 3.8 - Future Land Use Map



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <span style="color: red;">■</span> Commercial         | <span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Special District                |
| <span style="color: pink;">■</span> Downtown; Village | <span style="color: lightgreen;">■</span> Natural Resource Protection |
| <span style="color: purple;">■</span> Employment      | <span style="color: darkgreen;">■</span> Resource Conservation        |
| <span style="color: orange;">■</span> Neighborhoods   | <span style="color: blue;">■</span> Resource Protection               |

0 1 2 Miles



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



### 3.9 Goals, Objectives, & Action Items

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

**Objective LU 1.1:** Protect unique and sensitive natural areas.

Action Item 1: Continue to work with local conservation partners to acquire and protect sensitive areas.

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

Action Item 3: Consider adopting a local wetlands bylaw.

Action Item 4: Adopt specific performance standards in zoning bylaws that ensure new development near sensitive areas use low-impact design and construction methods.

Action Item 5: Use the Future Land Use Map along with existing conservation strategy frameworks (e.g. Mass Audubon regional plan) to identify future conservation and preservation projects.

Action Item 6: Work with property owners to conserve priority properties through existing state programs and local resources.

Action Item 7: Work with local conservation partners to acquire or help acquire priority properties.

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

Action Item 1: Work with property owners to conduct market studies or feasibility analyses to identify best reuse scenario (business incubation, shared workspaces, etc.) for priority parcels such as Brushwood Farm, Niagara Mill and other similar sites.

Action Item 2: Update zoning to reflect ideal re-uses and new uses.

Action Item 3: Pursue neighborhood specific strategies as identified in this land use chapter.

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

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

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

Action Item 2: Promote public, inclusive land use in all Lenox neighborhoods, especially in the village neighborhoods

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

Action Item 4: Use wayfinding tools to promote access to public lands and public spaces

➤ **GOAL LU 3: ENSURE RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND OTHER PHYSICAL CHANGES TO LENOX LANDSCAPES AND NEIGHBORHOODS.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Action Item 6: Review the Scenic Mountain Act and determine if the properties it applies to can be expanded.

Action Item 7: Explore the viability of denser residential development to protect open space.

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

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

Action Item 2: Consider expanding where large-scale solar installations may be installed.

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

Action Item 4: Support recommendations from Columbia University students' sustainability reports.

**Objective LU 3.3:** Support recommendations identified in 2020 Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Action Item 1: Review Flood Plain Overlay District; update according to most recent flood plain maps and best practices.

Action Item 2: Adopt water resource overlay districts.

Action Item 3: Require use of permeable surfaces, reduced parking requirements, erosion and storm drainage mitigation, and green infrastructure tools in resource-sensitive areas and resource overlay districts.

Action Item 4: Adopt specific Low-Impact Development standards for all new development and all re-development projects.

**Objective LU 3.4:** Promote greater density development in future land use map neighborhood, commercial and industrial areas to avoid sprawl.

Action Item 1: Adopt a transfer of development rights policy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Action Item 1: Require LEED design and construction standards in private development projects.

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

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

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

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

Action Item 1: Remove restrictive housing density requirements from the Zoning Bylaw.

Action Item 2: Create clear neighborhood-based design standard for new residential development.

Action Item 3: Work with local developers to identify regulatory impediments to work-force housing development within the zoning bylaw and subdivision rules.

Action Item 4: Identify town-owned properties suitable for small-scale, deed-restricted home ownership development.

Action Item 5: Identify potential properties in Lenox to develop small-scale workforce housing while protecting viewsheds, natural resources and promoting access to existing and potential open space.

Action Item 6: Support innovative solutions for small-scale, infill-development for new residential opportunity.

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

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

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

Action Item 3: Create a shared-use path in East Lenox with spurs to other neighborhoods and attractions.

Action Item 4: Implement the shared-use path feasibility study conducted by Alta Design.

Action Item 5: Create a playground in New Lenox.

Action Item 6: Use Rest of River mitigation funds and restoration work to create new recreational opportunities along the Housatonic River.

Action Item 7: Consider making Roaring Brook Road in East Lenox a designated shared-use route.

➤ **GOAL LU 5: DESIGN A COMMUNITY OF WELCOME TO EXISTING AND NEW BUSINESSES.**

**Objective LU 5.1:** Ensure Lenox possesses excellent infrastructure for existing and potential businesses.

Action Item 1: Create universal wireless coverage in Lenox.

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

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

Action Item 4: Increase public parking in Lenox Village.

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

Action item 6: Update Estate Preservation Bylaw to increase the flexibility for re-use and preservation.

**Objective LU 5.2:** Provide existing and potential businesses with clear, concise use parameters and purpose.

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

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

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

Action Item 4: Propose regulations for private airfields.

Action Item 5: Consider extending Site Plan Review to all zones based on project size (area, unit #).

Action Item 6: Consider implementing neighborhood based design standards or form-based code.

Action Item 7: Reduce density requirements in industrial and commercial districts.

Action Item 8: Ease doing business in Lenox through clear, easy-to-use bylaws and standard requirements.

➤ **GOAL LU 6:** STRENGTHEN THE LIVING, BUSINESS AND RECREATIONAL ENVIRONMENT OF TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS IDENTIFIED IN THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN.

**Objective LU 6.1:** Invest in Lenox Dale.

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

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

Action Item 3: Adopt unique Lenox Dale zoning district to continue traditional density.

Action Item 4: Work with Berkshire Natural Resources council, the Lenox Land Trust and/or other recreation/conservation entities and private property owners to secure access to existing public lands.

Action Item 5: Implement recommendations from the 2017 Complete Streets Plan to fill sidewalk gaps and improve safety for all users on Lenox Dale streets.

Action Item 6: Promote shared streets by calming vehicular traffic by narrowing traffic lanes on Crystal Street.

Action Item 7: Improve crosswalk safety by placing in-street pedestrian signs, installing advance crosswalk signs and pedestrian signs at existing crosswalks, and studying the need for additional intersections and common pedestrian crossings.

Action Item 8: Improve multimodal linkages, such as sidewalks and bike lanes, between Lenox Dale's commercial district and open space amenities, as well as to its R-15 residential district.

Action Item 9: Improve multimodal linkages to Lenox Village by increasing and enhancing pedestrian and bicycle facilities between the villages.

Action Item 10: Improve multimodal linkages in New Lenox

Action Item 11: Continue to work with the Berkshire Natural Resources Council to support the High Road route through Lenox and promote connections to and from the Village Center and the High Road trail.

Action Item 12: In the Village Center neighborhood, create a kiosk for the land owned by the Town accessible via Hubbard Street and from War Memorial Field.

Action Item 13: Leverage Rest of River activity and funds to create recreation amenities along the Housatonic River.

Action Item 14: In Village Center, consider a street closure to create additional opportunity for outdoor programming and pedestrian activity.

**Objective LU 6.2:** Support year-round vibrant commercial and mixed-use neighborhoods.

Action Item 1: Through public-private partnerships, create new usable spaces for activity and programming.

Action Item 2: For identified priority development sites, update zoning to reflect desired re-use.

Action Item 3: Utilize state programs (site readiness, financial incentives, site remediation) to make site use feasible.

Action Item 4: Encourage private entity to create a business improvement district in both “C” districts - the Village Center and Lenox Dale.

Action Item 5: Remove impediments to mixed-use development within the zoning bylaw.

**Objective LU 6.3:** Increase Village Center housing opportunities.

Action Item 1: Adopt higher density zoning or adopt an overlay district as appropriate, reflective of historic development patterns, particularly in areas already served by municipal water and sewer.

Action Item 2: Incentivize residential adaptive re-use projects in Lenox Dale through increased density and simplified permitting.

Action Item 3: Allow multi-family housing development by right without onerous setback or buffer requirements, subject to clear, neighborhood-based design standards.

Action Item 4: Incentivize residential infill development.

Action Item 5: Encourage housing development on nonconforming lots.

## 4. Economic Development

Lenox is a fiscally stable, full-service town with a slow-growing local economy. The economy is largely supported through the Town's tourism and hospitality sector that has grown since the time of Lenox's last Master Plan. Visitor spending in hotels, restaurants, cultural institutions, retail stores, recreational sites, and on transportation has increased, and new amenities have been developed. Year-round facilities, such as the Linde Center at Tanglewood, aim to expand off-season programming to bolster tourism outside of the summer months.

Tanglewood is the primary economic driver of Lenox. With 350,000 concertgoers annually, Tanglewood acts as a catalyst for spending at local lodging, spas, restaurants, shops, theaters, and other attractions. For many visitors, a first trip to Tanglewood is also an introduction to the Town's wide array of leisure activities, which encourages return visits. A direct benefit of tourism for townspeople is the revenue collected through room and meals taxes; a non-residential revenue source that allows the Town to keep property taxes down while still providing high quality services for residents. (see Ch. 8: Services & Facilities.)

Lenox has a high concentration of second homes that have a significant effect on the local economy. According to a study published by Williams College, second homeowners attracted to the region by Tanglewood pay over \$13 million per annum in residential property taxes to communities in Berkshire County. Second homeowners provide an expanded customer base for Lenox businesses, both leisure and service-oriented. Patronage of cultural and historic venues is impacted positively, as are the fundraising needs of non-profits in the Town and surrounding region. Construction and renovation of second homes provides considerable business to residential builders and contractors. Part-time residents are also less likely to use services, such as police and fire, thus contributing to property tax revenue without utilizing a full-sized share of the services they support.

Lenox's management of finances and administration of services, including schools, roads, water, sewer, emergency services and facilities such as the library and community center, all contribute to creating an environment that attracts individuals and businesses to invest in Lenox. Additionally, the highly rated PK-12 public school system serves as an anchor for the local economy. This has proven to be a key factor for many professionals outside of the region who want to raise their families in the

Berkshires. A carefully managed school choice program boosts enrollment and ensures a robust curriculum and variety of extracurricular activities for students.

This chapter will examine Lenox's economic strengths and areas of opportunity to identify strategies to guide economic growth. Historically, Lenox has had a stable economy, but the Town's limited economic diversification could lead to vulnerability to the impacts of economic fluctuations that occur on a regional, state, national, and global level. The overarching goal of this chapter will be to capitalize upon Lenox's strengths while creating more variety in the local economy - especially in the form of small business growth – to make Lenox more economically resilient. This will sustain the high quality of life experienced in Lenox as well as attract new residents.

## ***VISION***

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*LENOX WILL STRENGTHEN ITS SUPPORT OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY AND SEEK APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITIES TO DIVERSIFY ITS ECONOMY.*

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Source: Linda Duval Sullivan – Memorial Day Parade

## 4.1 Priority Economic Development Topics

### **TOURISM**

Tourism is integral to Lenox and is supported by a strong cluster of cultural venues anchored by Tanglewood. Visitor spending generates revenue that enables a vibrant community that includes restaurants, retailers, and attractions. Lenox has seen substantial growth in the niche markets of weddings and health and wellness. Direct visitor spending produces more than \$2 million in tax revenues, and cultural organizations, outdoor activities, restaurants and shops contribute to a high quality of life for Lenox residents. Increasing tourism in non-summer months will expand job opportunities and rooms and meals taxes revenue.

However, tourism leads to large influxes of people that strain the capacity of the Town's infrastructure. While beneficial to the local economy, the arrival of visitors can create traffic congestion and parking demands that exceeds supply, particularly in summer. To preserve the positive effects of tourism, Lenox should explore solutions that balance the needs of residents and visitors. Analysis suggests focusing on increasing business outside of the summer season.

### **ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION**

Lenox's economy is concentrated in the Leisure/Hospitality sector. The next two most prevalent sectors are Education and Health Services and Trade, Transportation, and Utilities which both doubled in employment since the last Master Plan and which combined exceed the average monthly employment for Leisure/Hospitality in 2017. When compared against the region and state, economic diversification in Lenox is low. Economies that are heavily reliant on a single sector are at greater risk of recession and are more sensitive to market fluctuation. Diversification of the Lenox economy would mean increasing the number of establishments in the goods-producing domain and encouraging proposals that maximize benefit to the Town and that preserve the Town's natural, historical, and cultural assets along with its small-town pace of life and are in line with the goals and objectives of this Master Plan. Diversifying the Lenox economy will attract well-paying, more recession-proof, year-round jobs as well as attract new residents who move to Lenox for a high quality of life and may bring jobs and businesses with them.

### **NEW RESIDENTS**

Lenox has many attributes that appeal to prospective residents including natural, cultural, and historic resources, the Town's strong financial position, relatively low taxes, and its excellent public schools. New residents may launch businesses or find Lenox an ideal location from which to work remotely.

Lenox also has a great need for professionals skilled in construction and associated trades, as well as in nursing and health care. An increase in Lenox residents with children would help ensure the vitality of our schools and support new construction - both residential and commercial - positively affecting both business activity and real estate tax revenue. Continuing to invest wisely in infrastructure and services, prioritizing those projects that enhance the quality of life for residents and the Lenox experience for visitors, will help to keep the Town competitive.

## 4.2 COVID-19 Related Impacts to Economic Development

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic to the local economy – that is so dependent on travel, tourism, arts, entertainment, and hospitality – are likely to mirror or exceed the impacts of the 2008 recession. Since the public emergency declared by Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker in March 2020, the unemployment rate in Lenox peaked at 21.2% in June, returning to 7% by November. A steep decline in meals and rooms tax revenue is equally concerning. Lenox can help promote and support local businesses and attractions throughout the year, and help to diversify the local economy. The Town facilitated flexible dining areas in the public right-of-way and worked with private landowners to provide outdoor dining opportunities for local restaurants. Working with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, the Town secured funds to assist small, income-limited business owners adapt to the pandemic. An opportunity observed in the pandemic has been the migration of urban residents to Lenox who have their own businesses and/or are able to work remotely.

### INDICATORS TO TRACK

- ✓ Unemployment rate
- ✓ Meals and lodging tax revenue

### 4.3 Priority Economic Development Goals

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

Lenox historically attracts thousands of visitors annually, which drives the local economy. Tourists support local hotels, restaurants, cultural institutions, stores, and invest in Lenox properties.

Recognizing the unprecedented impacts of COVID-19, the Town should invest in strategic marketing to amplify the Town's appeal to key markets and revive growth during peak tourism season. This investment can also support efforts that enrich the visitor experience, benefit local businesses, and improve quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

- **GOAL ED 2: MARKET LENOX'S HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE TO ATTRACT YOUNG PROFESSIONALS AND FAMILIES.**

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

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

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

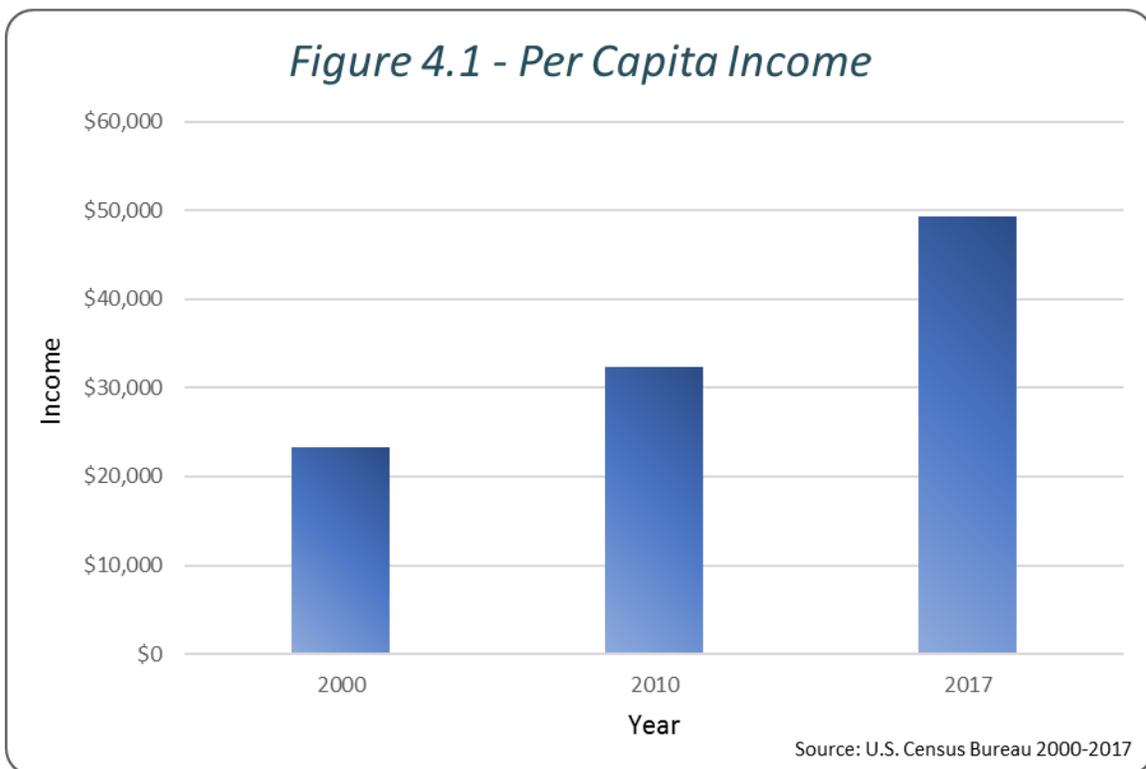
(FOR THE COMPLETE LIST OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION ITEMS, SEE PAGE 97)

## 4.4 Income & Employment

The income and employment statistics presented below provide insight into the financial position of the community’s residents. As an individual’s standard of living increases, so may their propensity for consumer spending. A greater likelihood for spending by residents may lead to increased stability and growth of the local economy.

**A note about data:** *Income and wage information in this chapter are presented as provided by sources, unadjusted for inflation. Where applicable, comparisons are made between unadjusted and adjusted figures. The two primary sources are the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Employment and Wage (ES-202) data are derived from reports filed by all employers subject to unemployment compensation laws, both state and federal.*

Per capita income is the average income earned, per person, in a given area. It is calculated by dividing the area’s total income by its total population. Between 2000 and 2017, Lenox’s per capita income rose from \$23,263 to \$49,332 (in raw figures this is an increase of 112% over 17 years and an increase of 70% when taking inflation into account) Lenox ranks fifth in the county for per capita income behind Alford, Richmond, Mount Washington, and Tyringham which are all much smaller towns.



## Definitions

### Income:

"Money income" is the income received on a regular basis including wages, salary, commissions, bonuses, and tips; self-employment income including proprietorships and partnerships; interest, dividends, net rental income, royalty income, or income from estates and trusts; Social Security or Railroad Retirement income; Supplemental Security Income (SSI); public assistance or welfare payments; retirement, survivor, or disability benefits; and any other income received regularly such as Veterans' (VA) payments, unemployment and/or worker's compensation, child support, and alimony. Money income **does not** include capital gains and lump-sum payments.

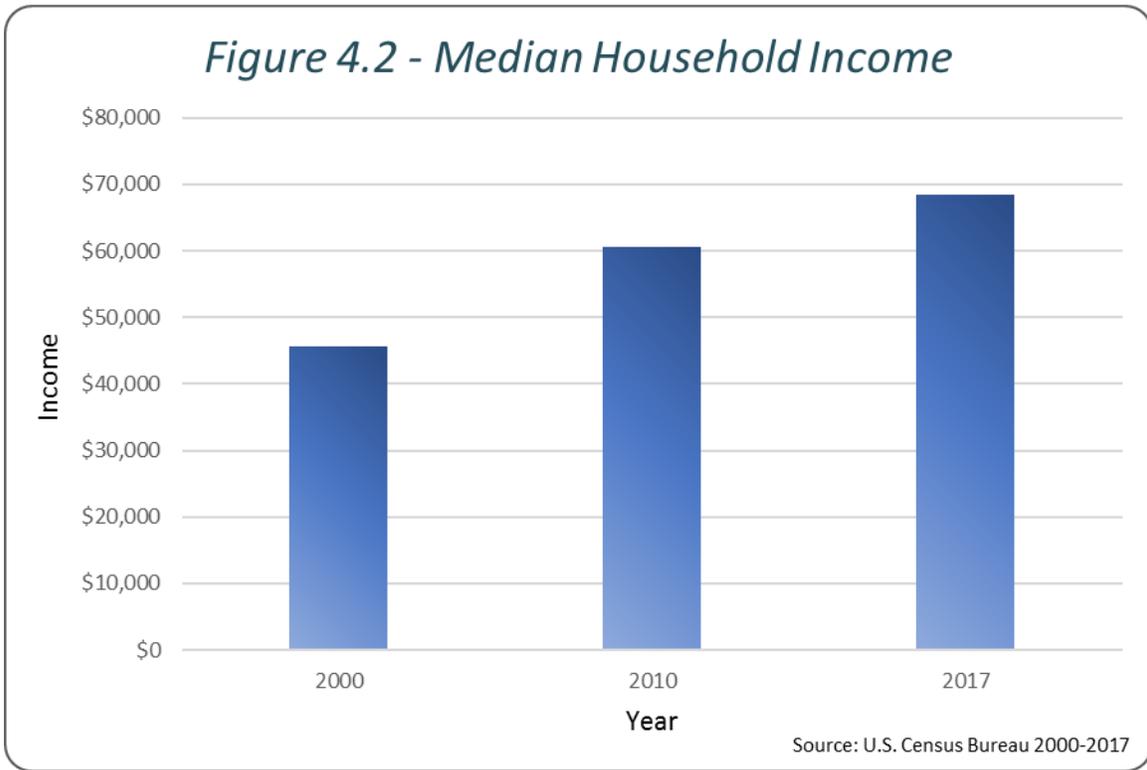
### Household Income:

Income in the Past 12 Months - This includes the income of the householder and all other individuals 15 years old and over in the household, whether they are related to the householder or not. Because many households consist of only one person, average household income is usually less than average family income.

### Median Income:

The median divides the income distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median income and one-half above the median. For households and families, the median income is based on the distribution of the total number of households and families including those with no income. The median income for individuals is based on individuals 15 years old and over with income.

Median household income in Lenox rose 50% from \$45,581 in 2000 to \$68,492 in 2017 while the inflation rate rose 42.3%. Of the 32 municipalities in Berkshire County, Lenox ranked 17<sup>th</sup> for median household income, yet came in well above the countywide median of \$55,190. The more earners in the household, the higher the income. Lenox is one of four towns in Berkshire County with an average household size less than two, meaning fewer people are contributing to household income than is the case in most towns.



Data for per capita and median household income as displayed in the graphs above is nominal (unadjusted). Consumer Price Index (CPI) data are as follows:

**Table 4.1 - CPI Percent Change**

Year	CPI	Percent Change	
2000	172.2	2000-2010	26.6%
2010	218.1	2010-2017	12.4%
2017	245.1	2000-2017	42.3%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2000-2017

The unemployment rate is calculated by dividing the number of unemployed persons by the labor force (the sum of unemployed and employed persons). Over the last decade, Lenox has experienced significant variations in its rates of unemployment. Some of these fluctuations follow national and regional trends but also demonstrate the seasonality of the Town’s workforce. The highest rates of unemployment were seen in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Table 4.2 - Unemployment Rates**

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2010	11.9%	10.6%	11.4%	10.7%	9.0%	8.3%	7.8%	7.3%	8.3%	8.2%	9.6%	9.4%
2011	10%	9.4%	9.1%	8.4%	7.0%	7.7%	7.2%	7.1%	6.5%	6.7%	6.4%	7.4%
2012	8.4%	7.7%	7.6%	6.9%	6.1%	6.7%	6.5%	6.1%	7.3%	7%	6.7%	8.1%
2013	8.8%	7.9%	7.7%	7.8%	6.7%	7.4%	7.4%	6.5%	7.7%	6.6%	6%	6.3%
2014	8.3%	8.3%	8.3%	7.4%	6.7%	6.2%	5.6%	4.6%	5.0%	5.1%	5.5%	5.9%
2015	7.4%	6.9%	6.6%	5.9%	5.5%	4.5%	4.5%	4.1%	5.2%	4.7%	4.8%	5.6%
2016	6.6%	6.2%	5.9%	5.2%	4.4%	4.6%	4.3%	3.2%	4.3%	3.5%	3.3%	4.3%
2017	5.1%	5.1%	4.8%	4.1%	4.3%	3.7%	3.9%	3.6%	4.2%	4.0%	3.6%	3.9%
2018	5.4%	5.5%	5.7%	4.6%	4.7%	4.4%	4.1%	3.7%	4.0%	2.9%	3%	3.5%
2019	4.6%	4.6%	4.1%	4.2%	3.7%	3.7%	3.2%	3%	2.8%	2.7%	2.4%	2.4%
2020	3.8%	3.5%	3.5%	19.7%	20.6%	21.2%	20.8%	14%	11.1%	8.3%	7.0%	

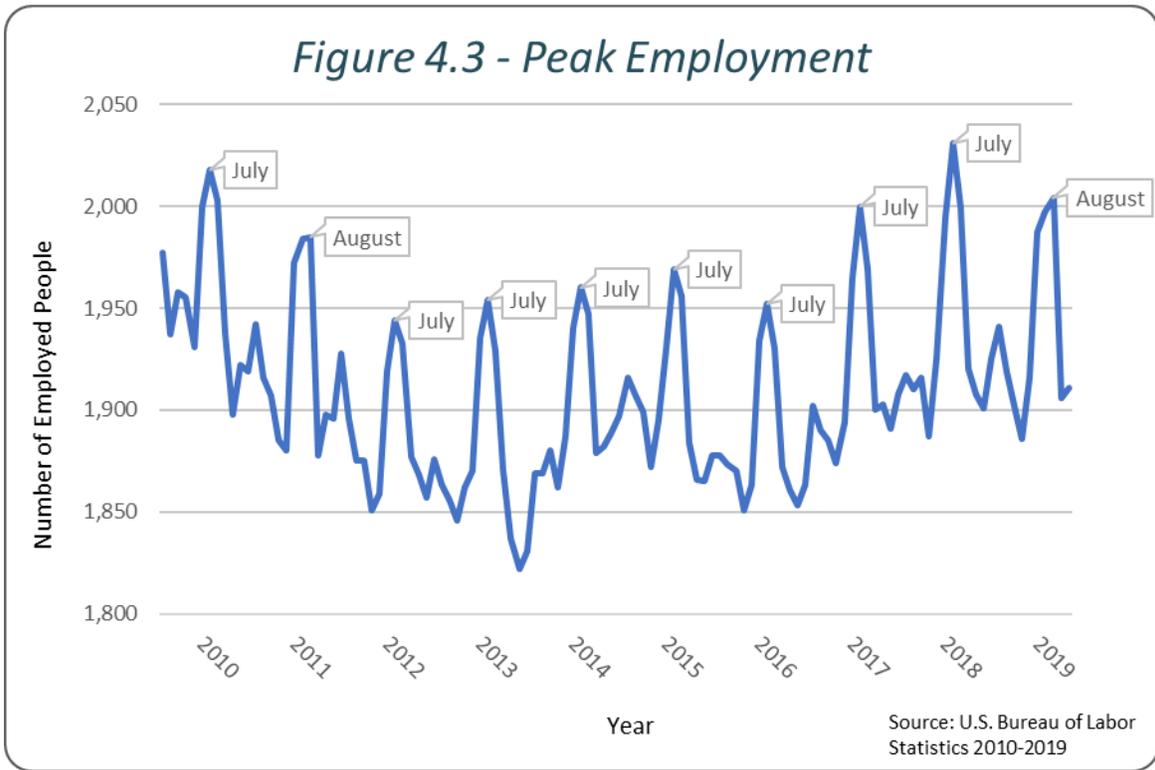
Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance, Economic Research Department, 2010-2020

**SEASONALITY**

The following chart mirrors the trends in unemployment rates but in the context of total employed people and the seasonality of their work. Since 2010, peak employment in Lenox has occurred in either July or August every year. The charts demonstrate the same decline in employment from 2013 to 2015, followed by a recent rebound in economic activity, and then a reduction in unemployment rate.

It is notable that overall, employment has become less seasonal. Newer, year-round jobs likely are in the Education and Health Services and Trade, Transportation, and Utilities sectors which have experienced significant growth since the last Master Plan. In 2001 Lenox had 1,190 more service jobs in the summer season than in the shoulder seasons and by 2017 this figure had dropped to 613 while overall employment rose 10%.

Part of the reason for the plateauing of revenues is that during the summer season, hotels and restaurants often are fully booked, especially during the weekends. In addition, as more hotel rooms and short-term rentals have been added, some degree of market cannibalization likely occurred. These issues, along with quality of life and overall market factors, suggest that any proactive efforts to grow tourism should be focused on getting more visitors in the non-summer seasons.



The following table shows the room tax share by quarter. The summer and fall months dominate with the little appreciable change in the non-summer seasons. In fact, the March-May share is declining.

**Table 4.3 - Room Tax Receipts**

Year	June-Aug	Sept-Nov	Dec-Feb	Mar-May	Total
2020	42.4%	48.3%	35.0%	9.3%	\$1,585,008
2019	36.2%	35.2%	16.0%	12.6%	\$1,811,572
2018	31.3%	36.6%	18.2%	13.9%	\$1,927,591
2017	32.4%	35.8%	17.1%	14.8%	\$1,857,336
2016	31.8%	36.9%	16.2%	15.0%	\$1,876,615
2015	31.7%	34.9%	17.8%	15.6%	\$1,913,670
2014	31.3%	35.0%	17.3%	16.5%	\$1,842,574
2013	30.5%	33.4%	18.8%	17.3%	\$1,763,191
2012	30.9%	35.6%	17.7%	15.8%	\$1,685,378
Average	32.0%	35.4%	17.4%	15.2%	\$1,834,741

Source: Lenox Town Accountant, 2012-2020

The following table provides quarterly data for meals taxes. Similar to the trend seen in room taxes; the March-May quarter has experienced a recent decline.

**Table 4.4 - Meals Tax Receipts**

Year	June-Aug	Sept-Nov	Dec-Feb	Mar-May	Total
2020	33.8%	35.9%	20.9%	9.4%	\$244,494
2019	31.4%	32.0%	19.6%	16.9%	\$269,377
2018	29.8%	31.7%	18.8%	19.6%	\$278,829
2017	31.3%	29.4%	21.1%	18.1%	\$282,258
2016	30.7%	33.3%	19.1%	16.9%	\$274,460
2015	30.7%	32.4%	20.0%	16.9%	\$257,105
2014	31.2%	30.9%	20.6%	17.3%	\$253,785
2013	31.1%	31.4%	18.9%	18.6%	\$240,045
2012	16.1%	37.2%	23.6%	23.2%	\$189,080
Average	29.0%	32.3%	20.2%	18.4%	\$2,044,939

Source: Lenox Town Accountant, 2012-2020

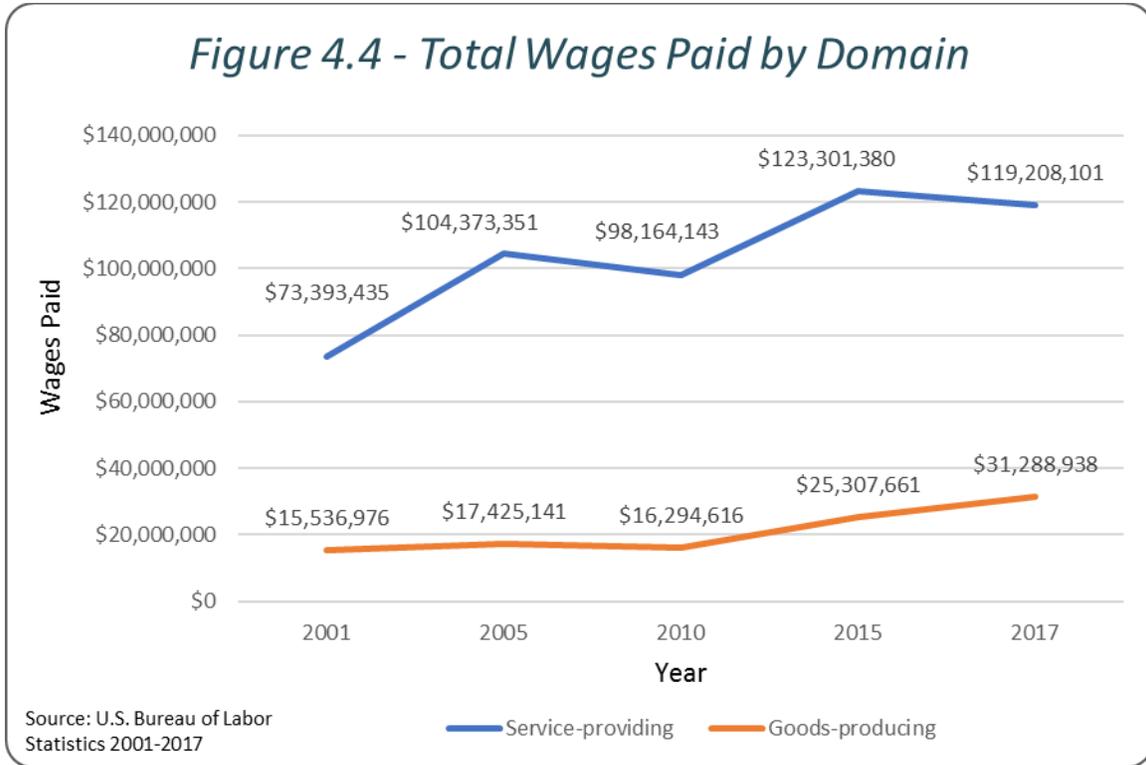
**DOMAIN ANALYSIS**

The Bureau of Labor Statistics divides economies into two domains: goods-producing and services-providing. Total wages paid by entities operating in Lenox rose across both domains from 2001-2017. The service-providing domain experienced 63% growth in total wages paid while the goods-producing domain experienced growth of 101%.

However, wage growth for jobs within Lenox did not keep up with inflation. In the 2001-2017 period, wages grew at a compound annual growth rate of 1.7% while prices increased 2.1%, meaning wage growth lagged behind inflation by nearly 25% each year.

In 2001, Lenox’s goods-producing domain paid total wages of \$15,536,976. This domain rose steadily through the recession reaching \$16,294,616 before accelerating to \$31,288,938 in 2017. The service-producing domain has also grown and paid total wages of \$73,393,435 in 2001. The service-producing domain then recovered, reaching \$123,301,380 by 2015 before dipping slightly in 2017 to \$119,208,101. Combined wages paid by both domains increased from \$88,930,411 in 2001 to

\$150,497,039 in 2017, a 69% increase over the past two decades but significantly lagging behind inflation.



### SECTOR ANALYSIS

From 2001 to 2017, the number of jobs available in Lenox grew 10% to 4,088, while available jobs dropped 0.9% countywide. Among 304 employers, new jobs were created mostly in Education and Health Services (664 new jobs from 2001-2005, then steady until 2017) and Trade and Transportation (424 new jobs, an 82% increase from 2015-2017). Between 2001 and 2017, the Lenox economy added 30 new businesses, equating to an 11% increase in the total number of establishments. The following table demonstrates the increase in establishments by sector in Lenox from 2001 to 2017.

Much of the overall growth in establishments can be attributed to the service-providing domain. During the years between 2001 and 2017, Lenox’s service-providing domain added 22 new establishments as compared to 8 in the goods-producing domain. The sectors demonstrating the largest percentage of growth are Education and Health Services (264%), Construction (77%), and Financial Activities (71%). Shrinking sectors include Other Services (-35%), which comprises automotive repair and laundry services among others, manufacturing (-20%), and Professional and Business Services (12%). The

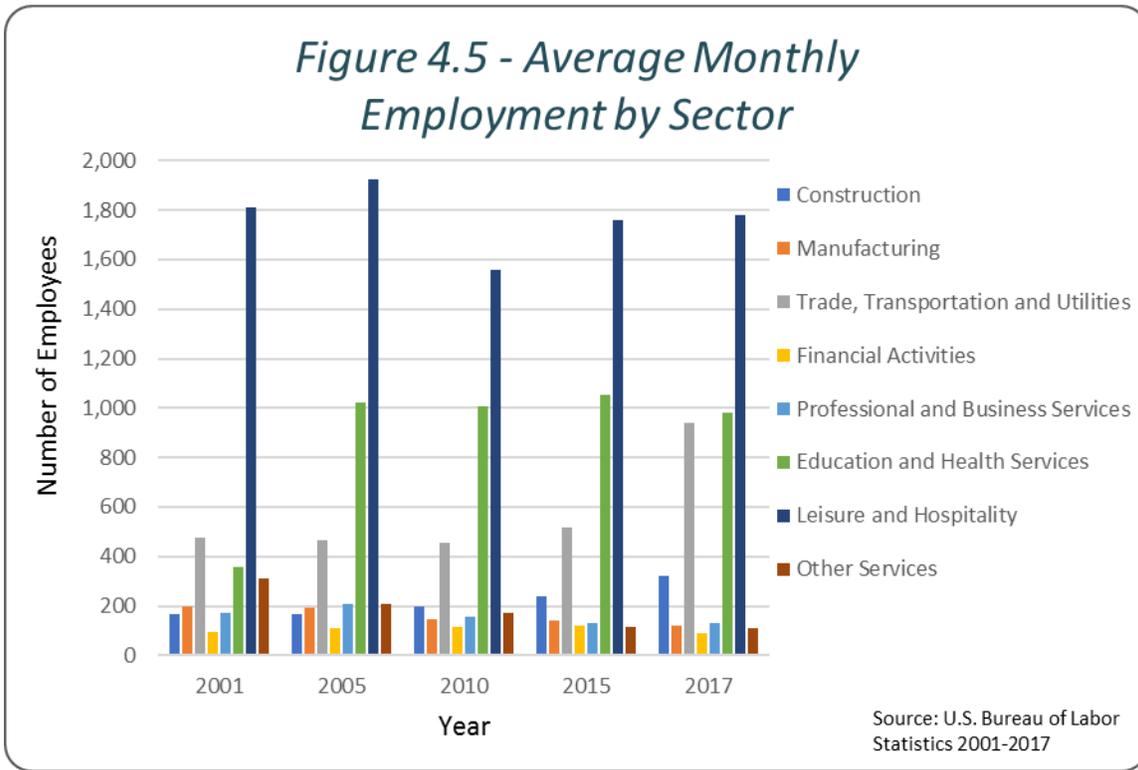
Leisure and Hospitality sector saw a 12% decline in the overall number of establishments during this timeframe (down to 57 in 2009) before returning to 65 establishments by 2017. Lenox's 11% increase in the overall number of establishments is commensurate with the countywide figure of 13%.

**Table 4.5 - Establishments by Sector 2001-2017**

Sectors	2001	2017
Construction	13	23
Manufacturing	10	8
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	64	65
Information	7	0
Financial Activities	17	29
Professional & Business Services	42	37
Education & Health Services	11	40
Leisure & Hospitality Services	65	65
Other Services	43	28
Total	272	295

Source: Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) 2001-2017

The largest sector in Lenox's economy (determined by average monthly employment) is Leisure and Hospitality. The Leisure and Hospitality sector comprises the arts, entertainment, and recreation and accommodation and food services subsectors. The second largest sector is Education and Health Services, which employs a monthly average of 982 workers, a 174% increase since 2001. Trade, Transportation, and Utilities also grew significantly and in 2017 had an average monthly employment (940) almost as high as Education and Health Services (982). The smallest sector in 2017 was financial activities at a monthly average of 89 employees, which represents a 7% decline from 2001. Other services (65%) and manufacturing (-40%) demonstrated the largest decline in terms of monthly employment.



## 4.5 Economic Diversification

Economic diversification is the process of shifting an economy away from a single income source toward multiple sources from a growing range of sectors and markets. Traditionally, it has been applied as a strategy to encourage positive economic growth and development. Economies centered largely on a single industry are at greater risk of decline compared to diversified economies. Economic diversification encompasses the recruitment of small goods-producing establishments. The small scale of these establishments would be appropriate to character of the Town.

Two thirds of employment in the Lenox economy is concentrated within three subsectors: Accommodations and Food Service (36.6%), Health Care and Social Assistance (18.7%), and Retail Trade (10.7%). While low diversification is not necessarily a negative indicator - as it does not speak to overall growth trends - it does present a degree of risk to the local economy. This risk is intensified when concentration occurs in lower-paying subsectors such as Food and Accommodations (\$508 average weekly wage in 2017) and Retail Trade (\$554 average weekly wage in 2017).

Lenox does benefit from the economic diversity of surrounding communities. According to the Lenox Housing Production Plan, 60% of Lenox residents work outside of Lenox (excluding the self-employed),

in a wide array of industries. These employees are less dependent on the tourism industry than workers employed within the Town.

### **FISCAL CONDITIONS**

For fiscal year 2018, Lenox's residential tax rate was \$12.14 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. This figure is down 0.6% and 8.7% from fiscal years 2017 and 2000, respectively. Of the 32 municipalities in Berkshire County, Lenox ranks 15<sup>th</sup> in terms of lowest residential tax rate.

For fiscal year 2018, the average assessed value of a single-family home (Lenox's predominant form of housing) was \$400,897. The average single-family tax bill in 2018, with a tax rate of \$12.14 per \$1,000, was \$4,867—fourth highest in Berkshire County.

In addition to taxing residential properties, the Town also charges a Commercial, Industrial, and Personal (CIP) property tax, which was set at a rate of \$14.98 per \$1,000 assessed value for fiscal year 2018. Beyond property taxes, another contributing factor to the relatively low tax rate is additional revenue sources.

Table 4.6 - Residential Tax Rates

Municipality	2018 Rate	Ranking
Hancock	\$4.48	1
Alford	\$5.14	2
Mount Washington	\$6.11	3
Tyringham	\$6.96	4
Monterey	\$7.38	5
Otis	\$8.28	6
Egremont	\$9.62	7
Stockbridge	\$9.76	8
Florida	\$10.39	9
New Marlborough	\$10.45	10
New Ashford	\$10.71	11
Becket	\$10.87	12
Richmond	\$11.75	13
West Stockbridge	\$12.13	14
<b>Lenox</b>	<b>\$12.14</b>	<b>15</b>
Cheshire	\$13.06	16
Sandisfield	\$13.29	17
Windsor	\$13.46	18
Hinsdale	\$13.95	19
Lee	\$14.63	20
Sheffield	\$14.74	21
Washington	\$14.83	22
Great Barrington	\$14.98	23
Clarksburg	\$15.31	24
Savoy	\$15.49	25
Williamston	\$17.94	26
North Adams	\$18.38	27
Peru	\$18.70	28
Dalton	\$19.91	29
Pittsfield	\$20.01	30
Lanesborough	\$21.40	31
Adams	\$22.21	32

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue, 2019

During fiscal year 2018, Lenox collected \$21,525,144 in total revenues. The Town’s revenues were composed of property, excise, and other taxes; charges and fees for service, licenses, and permits; state revenue; and a miscellaneous category.

From 2003 to 2018, total revenues in Lenox rose 43.9%. Revenues derived from all forms of taxes increased by 66.4% over the same period. The increase in tax revenue is largely due to the Town’s adoption of meals and rooms taxes and increases in assessed home values including new growth.

The combination of real and personal property taxes is the Town’s largest revenue source, comprising 82.9% of tax and 71.1% of total revenue. Another significant source of Town revenue is derived from the excise tax collected on rooms rented. Lenox charges an excise tax on hospitality businesses at a rate of 6% of gross revenue.

**Table 4.7 - Fiscal Year 2018 Revenue**

Source	Amount	Percent of Total Revenue
Taxes	\$18,459,261	85.8%
Service Charges	\$487,010	2.3%
Licenses and Permits	\$303,047	1.4%
State Revenue	\$1,932,482	9.0%
Revenue from Other Governments	\$24,481	0.1%
Miscellaneous	\$318,863	1.5%
Total Revenues	\$21,525,144	100.0%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue, 2019

**ASSESSED VALUES**

A valuable indicator of economic growth in Lenox is assessed property values. Table 4.8 provides Lenox property assessed values by category for the year 2019. Residential is the largest by far with commercial a distant second:

**Table 4.8 - Assessed Values (USD millions)**

Item	Total	Residential	Commercial	Personal	Industrial
Amount	\$1,249	\$975	\$202	\$35	\$9
Share	100%	78%	16%	3%	1%

Source: Town of Lenox Assessors' Office, 2019

Table 4.9 provides a breakdown on the amount invested annually in the categories of residential, commercial, personal, and industrial. Investment figures reflect new construction and substantial renovation of homes, retail, office, and other commercial spaces, and do not yet encompass the investment being made by Miraval, the former Cranwell property. It is notable that residential investments dwarfs all others, and that the recession impact on residential investments did not hit until 2010.

**Table 4.9 - Assessments (USD millions)**

Fiscal Year	All Property	New Investment	Market Growth
2019	\$1,248.6	\$35.6	\$12.7
2018	\$1,200.3	\$31.2	\$7.4
2017	\$1,161.7	\$11.7	\$11.1
2016	\$1,138.9	\$12.7	\$18.2
2015	\$1,108.1	\$12.9	-\$15.9
2014	\$1,111.1	\$13.5	-\$32.0
2013	\$1,129.5	\$14.6	-\$4.9
2012	\$1,119.8	\$9.4	-\$45.0
2011	\$1,155.4	\$8.5	-\$35.8
2010	\$1,182.7	\$11.5	-\$79.0
2009	\$1,250.3	\$36.7	-\$4.5
2008	\$1,218.2	\$36.5	\$12.5
2007	\$1,169.2	\$43.9	\$93.4
2006	\$1,031.9	\$20.1	\$41.1
2005	\$970.7	\$25.3	\$91.1

Source: Town of Lenox Assessors' Office, 2005-2019

There are two key reasons for changes in assessed values: the growth resulting from new property investments and the changing supply/demand pressures. Table 4.10 provides aggregate data on these two elements for Lenox’s residential, commercial, personal and industrial property, and indicates that Lenox properties were affected by the global recession. Between 2009 and 2015, supply/demand imbalances resulted in assessment losses of \$217 million. In fact, total property assessments did not return to pre-recession levels until 2019.

**Table 4.10 - Investments**

Fiscal Year	Residential	Commercial	Personal	Industrial
2019	\$27,093,684	\$1,503,016	\$5,597,796	\$1,438,900
2018	\$18,379,150	\$10,447,100	\$1,777,569	\$599,800
2017	\$8,550,755	\$1,382,545	\$1,805,050	\$0
2016	\$10,164,386	\$994,714	\$1,399,898	\$96,200
2015	\$7,301,550	\$1,855,750	\$3,732,508	\$0
2014	\$7,541,010	\$2,266,660	\$3,708,030	\$25,800
2013	\$5,654,343	\$5,091,057	\$3,894,316	\$0
2012	\$4,265,099	\$3,229,001	\$1,874,660	\$0
2011	\$5,997,715	\$146,385	\$2,334,086	\$15,400
2010	\$7,798,879	\$1,347,921	\$2,326,105	\$0
2009	\$28,416,075	\$4,473,525	\$3,768,669	\$0
2008	\$31,089,785	\$3,949,955	\$1,458,717	\$0
2007	\$33,390,654	\$8,788,556	\$1,324,729	\$402,100
2006	\$18,719,570	\$391,930	\$878,176	\$89,600
2005	\$22,931,695	\$520,100	\$1,772,182	\$40,400

Source: Town of Lenox Assessors’ Office, 2005-2019

**TAX LEVY**

A municipality’s property tax levy is the revenue it is allowed to raise through taxation of real and personal property. Massachusetts law, Proposition 2½, limits tax levies via two constraints. First is the levy ceiling. Municipalities in Massachusetts cannot levy more than 2.5 percent of the total full and fair cash value of all taxable real and personal property in the community. Secondly, the levy limit

constrains a municipality’s ability to increase the maximum amount it levies from year to year. Sound fiscal planning requires municipalities to be cognizant of their excess levy capacity (the difference between their actual levy and their levy limit) and their override capacity (the difference between the maximum levy limit and the levy ceiling). Table 4.11 demonstrates Lenox’s tax levy, levy limit, excess levy capacity, and override capacity for fiscal year 2018.

**Table 4.11 - Fiscal Year 2018 Levy Status**

Levy limit w/o debt and capital exclusions	\$16,892,223
Maximum levy limit	\$16,892,223
Total tax levy	\$15,248,743
Excess levy capacity	\$1,643,480
Excess as a % of maximum levy	9.7%
Levy ceiling	\$30,007,314
Override capacity	\$13,115,091
Override capacity as a % of levy ceiling	44.0%
Total assessed value	\$1,200,292,570
Tax levy as % of assessed value	1.3%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue, 2019

Across Berkshire County’s 32 municipalities, the average excess levy capacity is \$550,756, while the average override capacity is \$4,569,859, whereas in Lenox those figures are \$1,643,480 and \$13,115,091, respectively.

Many Berkshire County municipalities are approaching their levy limits and, in some cases, even ceilings. As a community approaches its levy limit, its ability to raise revenues commensurate with expenditures is reduced. These circumstances affect a municipality’s ability to invest in and provide services. In addition to high property assessments, common aspects among many of the municipalities with greater capacities are vibrant tourism economies and strong hospitality industries.

**REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS**

Virtual workers, independent business owners and small businesses have a choice of where to locate. The following table compares Lenox with other like municipalities across selected characteristics. In general, comparisons are to other towns and cities in Berkshire County selected by size and status as a

full-service municipality (ownership of facilities like schools, water, sewer, public safety, and public works). It is notable that Lenox ranks among the highest in the county in municipal spending per capita, and 26% higher than the state on average, while still having a modest property tax rate.

**Table 4.12 - Municipal Statistics**

Municipality	Population	Median Household Income	Median Age	Res. Property Tax Rate FY 2019
Lenox	4,994	\$68,492	55	\$11.95
Lee	5,796	\$66,599	44.5	\$14.78
Great Barrington	6,917	\$56,124	44.9	\$15.72
Pittsfield	43,289	\$46,871	43.5	\$19.42
Williamstown	7,623	\$77,340	29.9	\$18.05
Dalton	6,657	\$60,406	49	\$19.48
Adams	8,211	\$49,777	45.8	\$21.39
North Adams	13,212	\$38,774	43.1	\$19.11
Massachusetts	6,789,319	\$74,167	39.4	\$15.48
Municipality	EQV* Per Capita	Municipal Spending Per Capita	High School Rankings	Bond Rating
Lenox	\$247,897	\$5,065	32	Aa2
Lee	\$167,040	\$3,877	124	Aa3
Great Barrington	\$207,084	\$4,091	198	Aa2
Pittsfield	\$80,032	\$3,604	180	A1
Williamstown	\$132,810	\$2,867	80	Aa1
Dalton	\$91,651	\$2,630	181	Aa3
Adams	\$60,722	\$2,015	259	AA-
North Adams	\$57,567	\$3,339	217	A1
Massachusetts		\$4,017		Aa1

Source: (1) ACS 5-years 2013-2017 averages (2) Berkshire realtors (3) patch.com (4) DOR Municipal Data Bank (5) Mass from massbondholder.com; USNWR

\*Equalized Valuation (EQV) is an estimate of the full and fair cash value (FFCV) of all property in the Commonwealth as of a certain taxable date. EQVs have historically been used as a variable in distributing some state aid accounts and for determining county assessments and other costs.

## 4.6 Goals, Objectives, & Action Items

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

**Objective ED 1.1:** Take immediate steps to revive and stabilize peak season tourism (July, August, and October).

Action Item 1: Utilize the Opening Committee (led by the Town Manager) to recommend solutions, monitor progress, and adapt plans.

Action Item 2: Launch target-marketing program to draw visitors to Lenox during the 2021 peak season months. (Repeat as necessary)

Action Item 3: Review the shared use of public and private land for outdoor dining in Lenox Village during 2020 and implement a plan to make key elements permanent.

Action Item 4: Get quick-response COVID-19 tests to performing arts groups to screen guests and bolster ticket sales.

Action Item 5: Create marketing materials customized to promote outdoor activities available during the peak season months including walking, hiking (detailed guide), biking, swimming, kayaking, canoeing, water skiing, tai chi, tennis, pickleball, picnicking, outdoor spaces and parks, and house and garden tours. Improve parking in underserved access points.

Action Item 6: Improve communication within the local business community.

Action Item 7: Hold frequent networking events for local business owners.

Action Item 8: Hold quarterly forums for local business owners and town staff and boards.

Action Item 9: Match state funds for the recently established Cultural District to encourage cross promotion of businesses and increase awareness of off-season activity.

Action Item 10: Review permit process for destination wedding venues; consider increasing number allowed per year.

Action Item 11: Build a self-serve, outdoor kiosk to hold marketing materials that can be staffed during selected periods.

Action Item 12: Create dedicated tour bus parking areas to better control automotive traffic and parking during peak season.

**Objective ED 1.2:** Promote long-term growth to Lenox’s tourism industry, including during non-summer months.

Action Item 1: Encourage and fund viable proposals to increase tourism in the spring, fall, and winter seasons.

Action Item 2: Promote outdoor recreation opportunities available in the shoulder-season and winter to cultivate new audiences.

Action Item 3: Establish and pilot program for a Route 7 - Wassaic/Southeast shuttle service in partnership with surrounding municipalities during summer and fall; consider year-round service.

Action Item 4: Get involved in promoting passenger train service to the Berkshires from New York City and Boston.

Action Item 5: Work with local retail, dining, and cultural establishments to encourage year-round operation.

Action Item 6: Facilitate cooperation between Tanglewood’s Linde Center and neighboring institutions to expand shoulder season programming that draws residents and visitors to Lenox’s commercial areas.

**Objective ED 1.3:** Prioritize infrastructure projects that enhance the Lenox experience for residents and visitors.

Action Item 1: Continue to maintain and invest in essential services like water, sewer, roads, and other infrastructure.

Action Item 2: Increase the quantity off-street parking in and around Lenox Village.

Action Item 3: Study the feasibility of shuttle services between the C-3A and C-1A zoning districts and Lenox’s outdoor recreation amenities, cultural institutions, and commercial areas.

Action Item 4: Continue working to improve pedestrian conditions by eliminating sidewalk gaps, improving sidewalk conditions, calming traffic, and exploring shared use paths, as recommended in the complete streets plan.

Action Item 5: Continue efforts related to improved lighting and wayfinding throughout Lenox.

➤ **GOAL ED 2: MARKET LENOX'S HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE TO ATTRACT YOUNG FAMILIES AND PROFESSIONALS.**

**Objective ED 2.1:** Increase the number of remote workers living and working in Lenox.

Action Item 1: Market Lenox as a destination for remote workers and businesses.

Action Item 2: Ensure Lenox has resources for remote work (i.e., universal wireless coverage, quality internet, and networking and community engagement opportunities).

**Objective ED 2.2:** Facilitate the relocation of small businesses and remote workers to Lenox.

Action Item 1: Create a Lenox-specific marketing campaign to attract new residents, informed by current Lenox residents as well as 2020 Decennial Census data as it becomes available.

Action Item 2: Investigate strategic steps for Lenox schools - such as universal pre-kindergarten - to make the school system an even stronger attraction.

Action Item 3: Provide social connectivity opportunities for independent workforce participants and facilitate connections with online platforms that help make independent and remote work more viable.

Action Item 4: Participate in regional marketing efforts directed toward relocating workers and businesses.

Action Item 5: Ensure that bylaws are not overly restrictive regarding home businesses, particularly e-commerce operations.

Action Item 6: Obtain and analyze data regarding home-based businesses and telecommuters.

**Objective ED 2.3:** Capitalize upon the close geographic proximity to major employers in Pittsfield and great Barrington, as well as Albany and Springfield.

Action Item 1: Network with major employers to ensure Lenox is included in relocation services and resources by regional human resource departments.

Action Item 2: Work with regional agencies (e.g., Berkshire Regional Transit Authority, Berkshire, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, etc.) to increase access to transit for workforce participants.

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

**Objective ED 3.1:** Enhance Lenox’s technological capacity.

Action Item 1: Take steps to improve cellular telephone service.

Action Item 2: Continue to monitor developments in high-speed internet and be prepared to take steps to be competitive.

Action Item 3: Continue to monitor broadband technology and service to ensure optimal access town-wide.

**Objective ED 3.2:** Recruit more goods-producing businesses to Lenox.

Action Item 1: Task the applicable town authority and external partner with identifying suitable types of goods-producing businesses that could thrive in Lenox.

Action Item 2: Develop industry-specific recruitment materials that promote Lenox’s strengths and opportunities.

Action Item 3: Review tax increment financing policy and revise to ensure meaningful application of available benefits.

Action Item 4: Consider establishing financing improvement districts in strategic locations (e.g., Lenox Village, C-1A, and the Lenox Dale commercial and industrial districts).

**Objective ED 3.3:** Recruit businesses that full-time Lenox residents will utilize year-round.

Action Item 1: Conduct a market study for businesses that could attract year-round revenues from full-time residents

Action Item 2: Market potential business opportunities with incentives like tax increment financing.

**Objective ED 3.4:** Ensure that the Town's land use policy supports diverse businesses.

Action Item 1: Identify suitable parcels that could be used for manufacturing and other goods-producing businesses.

Action Item 2: Review uses allowed by right in C-1A and C-3A zoning districts. Consider allowing manufacturing by Special Permit under certain conditions or adopting light manufacturing overlay zoning district in one or more strategic locations.

Action Item 3: Adopt smart growth and starter home overlay zoning districts pursuant to M.G.L. c.40R in appropriate locations.

Action Item 4: Keep abreast of land use policy, best practices, and opportunities related to goods-producing businesses.

**Objective ED 3.5:** Invest in workforce development.

Action Item 1: Invest in scholarship programs to help Lenox students enter valuable professional trades based on labor force projections.

Action Item 2: Establish new - and advance existing - partnerships with regional workforce agencies (e.g., MassHire, 1Berkshire, etc.).

Action Item 3: Continue to invest in Lenox's high quality public education system.

Action Item 4: Collaborate with regional colleges and vocational schools to advance career opportunities in Lenox for students and recent graduates.

**Objective ED 3.6:** Work to reduce the cost of operating a business and working in Lenox.

Action Item 1: Participate in efforts to address rising energy costs.

Action Item 2: Work with regional authorities to increase equitable access to transit for workforce participants, especially those working second and third shifts.

Action Item 3: Increase deed-restricted housing opportunities for those earning 80% or less of area median family income.

## 5. Open Space & Recreation

Lenox is endowed with an idyllic natural landscape. Lenox's landscape is marked with such features as the Yokun Ridge at its western border, October Mountain State Forest and the Housatonic River on the Town's eastern side, as well as Laurel Lake at its southern border. This landscape has been largely preserved through the efforts of the Town, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and land trusts. Such efforts have resulted in 5,277.81 acres of protected open space, including Kennedy Park, the George Darey Wildlife Management Area, and the Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, among others. Lenox is ranked 11<sup>th</sup> out of the 32 Berkshire municipalities for most protected open space. These areas continue to be enjoyed by the Town's residents and visitors and serve as a habitat for numerous plant and wildlife species.

Lenox supports biodiversity through its array of land characteristics – ranging from densely wooded mountains to extensive wetlands. Twenty-one rare, threatened, or endangered species of plants and wildlife are found in Lenox in areas called Core Habitats. There are forty-nine separate Core Habitats in Lenox, ranging from vernal pools and wetlands to forests. The majority of Lenox's Core Habitats are located on protected land.

In addition to its vast and biodiverse protected land, Lenox also boasts numerous parks and outdoor amenities for recreational purposes. Kennedy Park is a 555.29 acre municipally-owned and managed park with a well-developed and utilized trail system. Located in the Lenox Village neighborhood are three smaller recreational parks, Lilac Park (1.18 acres), Ore Bed Park (1.08 acres), and Triangle Park (0.09 acres). These parks provide open recreational greenspace in and around the Town's vibrant commercial district and help to maintain the rural character that attracts so many residents and visitors to Lenox.

Lenox enjoys its rich inventory of natural resources, open space, and recreational amenities. As such, the Town has a long history of environmental stewardship and conservation efforts. These efforts remain a high priority for Lenox residents.

## VISION

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*THE TOWN OF LENOX WILL CONTINUE TO BE A PROACTIVE STEWARD OF ITS NATURAL LANDSCAPE AND RESOURCES WITH ADDITIONAL FOCUS ON CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND FURTHER PROMOTE THE USE OF ITS OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL AMENITIES, ESPECIALLY DURING THE WINTER MONTHS.*

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### 5.1 Priority Open Space & Recreation Topics

#### **PUBLIC ACCESS & AWARENESS OF OPEN SPACE AMENITIES**

Lenox abounds with open space and recreational amenities. Many amenities, however, are clustered in Lenox Village or located away from residential areas, such as Lenox Dale New Lenox, and Kennedy Park. To expand access to existing open space and recreational amenities, the Town should continue to establish new parks in underserved neighborhoods, as well as pedestrian and shared-use paths that improve interconnectivity of neighborhoods and amenities.

Lenox's open space and recreational features might also be better advertised to attract new residents and increase visitorship. As home to resorts like Canyon Ranch and Miraval, Lenox is already a destination for health and wellness. By providing wayfinding and increasing connections between key assets and open space amenities, Lenox could draw more residents and visitors into its parks. The Town could also develop a strategic marketing plan aimed at drawing more visitors to Lenox to experience its natural resources.

#### **PROTECTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

Lenox has an admirable history of land conservation and resource protection and continuing these efforts remain a priority. The Town should focus its efforts on protecting and augmenting its water supply to accommodate the changes in climate and the fluctuations in demand caused by seasonal tourism.

The Housatonic River and Woods Pond are two examples of scenic assets that have both been harmed by industrial pollution. Lenox will remain a participant in the development of collaborative plans to clean the Housatonic River. Similarly, Laurel Lake has experienced issues with high phosphorous levels, dissolved oxygen saturation, non-native aquatic plants, and destructive non-native zebra mussels.

Core Habitats are specific areas in which rare species, natural communities, and exemplary habitats have been observed. There are currently four Core Habitats throughout Lenox that are not fully protected. The Town will consider taking actions to secure protection for identified Core Habitats.

## 5.2 COVID-19 Related Impacts to Open Space & Recreation

The open space and recreation resources in Lenox are ample and diverse. During the pandemic, both municipal and non-municipal public lands provided a haven to residents and nonresidents, looking to nature and physical activity as an outlet from the pandemic's uncertainty. This translated to a very busy period for public lands, exhibited through increased trail use, trail wear, and use of amenities such as parking. Maintaining the quality of existing resources - such as hiking trails, mountain biking trails, parking facilities and wayfinding - and ensuring sensitive areas are protected from increased or heavy use is important. The Town can continue to support the efforts of entities such as BNRC, Mass Audubon, the Lenox Land Trust and The Mount as they seek to improve and expand trail networks near and adjacent to Town land.

### INDICATORS TO TRACK

- ✓ Trail use counts
- ✓ Area sign-ins
- ✓ User emergency assistance requests

## 5.3 Priority Open Space & Recreation Goals

- **GOAL OSR 1: PROMOTE YEAR-ROUND OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND EMPHASIZE ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE DURING THE NON-SUMMER SEASONS, PARTICULARLY WINTER.**

Lenox's open space and recreational amenities provide year-round attractions and therefore are primary assets. However, there are a host of activities that are available in Lenox during the non-summer months that are underutilized. These assets have the potential to provide for existing residents, attract new residents, and increase visitation. That potential is unlikely to be realized without creating broad awareness both within, and beyond, local and regional borders. The Town will consider developing a strategic marketing plan aimed at exposing residents and visitors to the available outdoor opportunities, especially during the winter months. There should be particular emphasis on increasing the accessibility of open space and recreation to seniors.

- **GOAL OSR 2: EXPAND THE STRONG CONSTITUENCY OF OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ADVOCATES THROUGH EDUCATION AND COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS.**

It is important that the Town continue to grow a strong constituency of advocates and partners to support its open space, recreation amenities, and natural resources. This can be achieved through educational initiatives, public events, and strategic partnerships with mission-based environmental organizations.

- **GOAL OSR 3: CONNECT NEIGHBORHOODS, OPEN SPACE, AND RECREATIONAL AREAS.**

Lenox is home to many natural and cultural amenities. The Town strives to improve connections between residential areas, commerce in downtown Lenox, and the array of outdoor activities to make travel from one destination to the next more contiguous.

- **GOAL OSR 4: PROTECT AND AUGMENT WATER RESOURCES.**

Lenox contains numerous water resources from larger bodies like Laurel Lake and the Housatonic River to vernal pools and wetlands. These water resources provide far-ranging benefits to the Town, including scenic beauty, flood protection, plant and wildlife habitat, and outdoor recreation. Additionally, it is important that the Town consider hazard mitigation strategies and the effects of climate to continue its efforts to preserve and protect its abundant water resources.

- **GOAL OSR 5: PROTECT NATIVE PLANT AND WILDLIFE HABITATS WHILE CONTROLLING INVASIVE SPECIES ON PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROPERTY.**

Lenox is home to numerous plant and animal habitats, including those of rare, threatened, and endangered species. The Town will consider expanding strategic efforts to inventory, monitor, and protect such habitats, especially considering the effects of climate change.

(FOR THE COMPLETE LIST OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION ITEMS, SEE PAGE 126)

## 5.4 Landscape Characteristics

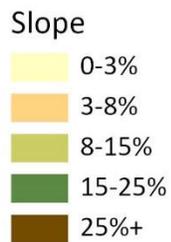
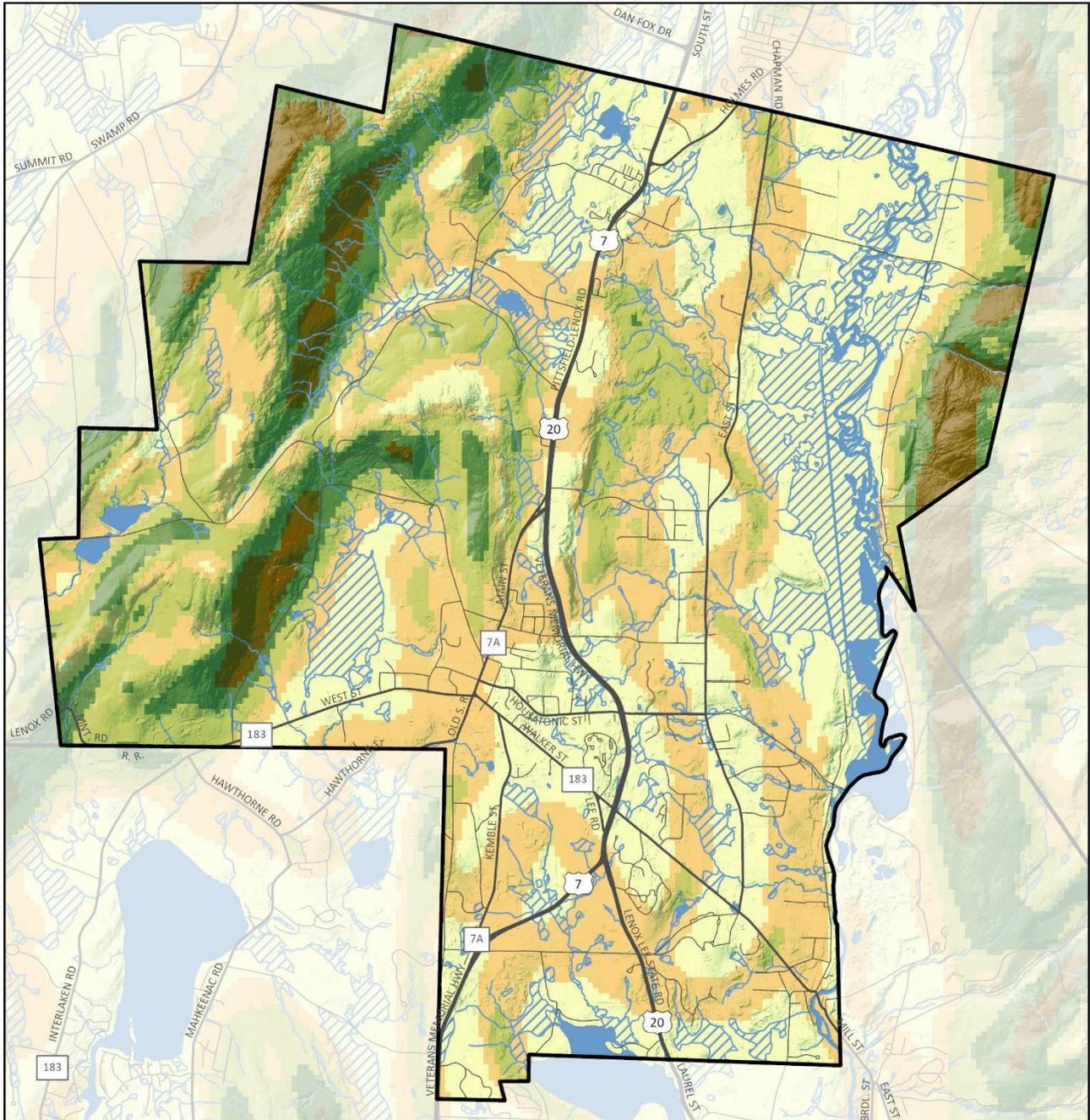
While one of the more populous and economically developed towns in Berkshire County, Lenox abounds with natural resources, open space, and outdoor recreational opportunities. The Town's eastern and western borders are formed by mountains with scenic vistas and undeveloped forestland on steep slopes. Lying below October Mountain, at the Town's eastern border, is the meandering Housatonic River, surrounded by its gentle valley and extensive wetlands. At the western border rises the Yokun Ridge and Kennedy Park. Such a unique blend of natural features affords Lenox's residents and visitors an opportunity to enjoy New England nature in its various forms.

The Town's natural landscape has allowed Lenox to evolve into a vibrant residential town with a strong economy while maintaining 86% of its total land area as undeveloped. Additionally, 5,277 acres in Lenox are under permanent or limited protection. This represents 38% of the Town's total land area. Much of Lenox's protected open space is used recreationally by the public.



Source: Karen Romeo Legere – groomed trail, Kennedy Park

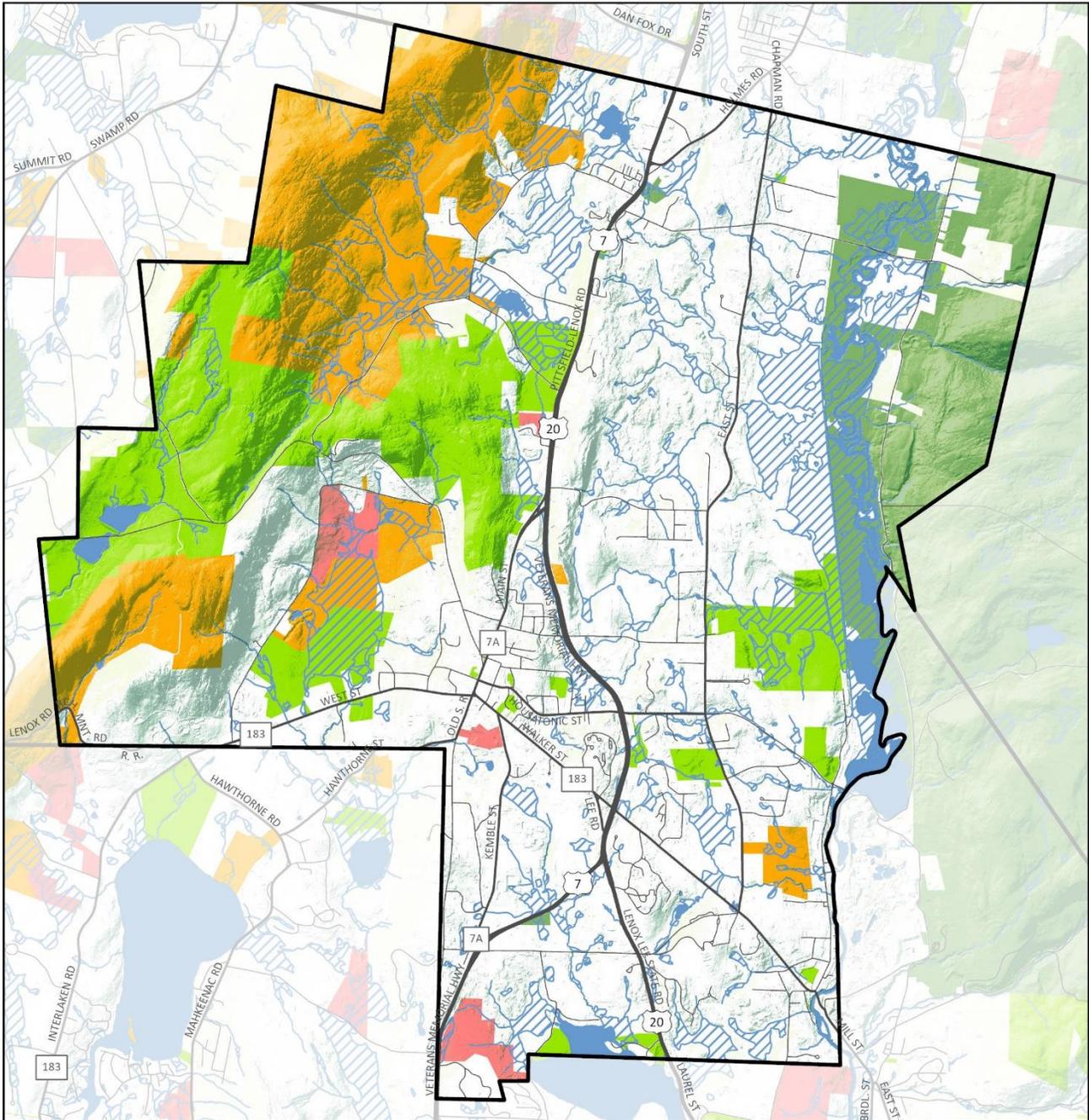
Figure 5.1 - Slope Map



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Figure 5.2 - Open Space Map



Protected Land

- State
- Municipal
- Land Trust
- Private

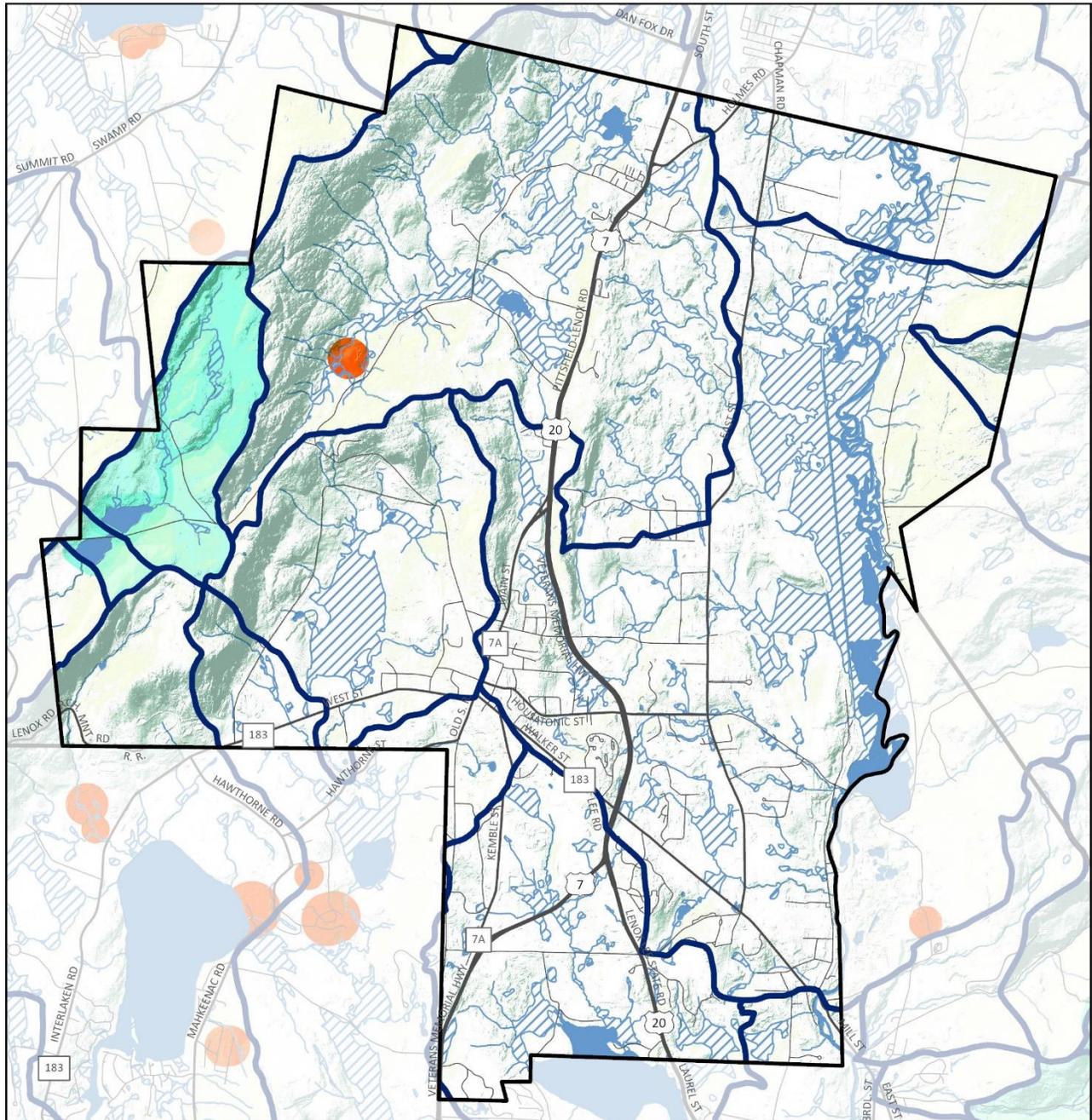
0 1 2 Miles



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Figure 5.3 - Hydrography Map



- Surface Water Protection Area
- Wellhead Protection Zones
- Wetland
- Open Water
- Stream
- Subwatersheds

0 1 2 Miles



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## HOUSATONIC RIVER

Lenox lies entirely within the Housatonic River watershed, which covers an area of 1,948 square miles. The river winds slowly north to south along the Town's eastern border at the foot of October Mountain. The river is lined with extensive wetlands to its west, which has prevented development along much of its banks. As it reaches the southern portion of Lenox near Lenox Dale, the river straightens, and wetlands are reduced along its banks, which allowed some businesses to harness its energy for industrial purposes.

Industry, however, has been detrimental to the Housatonic River. The Housatonic flows into Lenox from the City of Pittsfield. From 1932 through 1977, manufacturing facilities run by General Electric in Pittsfield released pollutants such as waste oil, PCBs, and dioxins into the river, its former oxbows, and Woods Pond - which lies just northeast of Lenox Dale. The Rest of River communities' settlement agreement with General Electric is pending final permit from the Environmental Protection Agency.

## LAUREL LAKE

Laurel Lake is fed by Sargent Brook and straddles the Town's southern border with Lee. The lake is among the Town's scenic assets and is enjoyed by residents and visitors for outdoor recreation. Laurel Lake has had issues with high phosphorous levels and zebra mussel invasion. Located on the northwestern shore of the lake is Edith Wharton Park; a 16-acre open greenspace. Laurel Lake is also the site of the Town beach. Due in part to Laurel Lake's scenic beauty and recreational opportunities, the area surrounding the lake is becoming an increasingly desirable place to live and vacation which has spurred housing development that now totals 224 year-round residences, 226 seasonal homes, and 170 condominiums.

## WOODS POND

Woods Pond is a dammed section of the Housatonic River straddling the Lenox-Lee town boundary. As a town-owned resource, the Pond is accessible to the public and is often used for canoeing and nature observation. Additionally, Lenox's only aquifer lies underneath Woods Pond. The aquifer is considered "medium yield"; yielding between 100 and 300 gallons of water per minute but is not a source of drinking water due to contamination.



Source: Linda Duval Sullivan – boat launch at Woods Pond

## WETLANDS

According to 2005 MassGIS land use data (the most recent year such data is available) 11% of Lenox's surface area is wetlands; totaling 1,543.2 acres of which 942.6 acres (61%) are non-forested and 591.6 (39%) are forested. Wetlands are scattered throughout the Town but the largest lie to the west of the Housatonic River and to the east of the Yokun Ridge. These wetlands vary in type - including bogs, marshes, and swamps - and provide several benefits for Lenox; such as, protecting the Town from floodwaters and supporting rare and endangered species.

## VERNAL POOLS

Vernal pools are small, seasonal wetlands. These water features provide important wildlife habitat and are breeding areas for amphibians and invertebrates. As of 2015, there are twenty certified vernal pools and thirty-three potential vernal pools in Lenox. Most of Lenox's vernal pools can be found along brooks and rivers, especially near the Housatonic River.

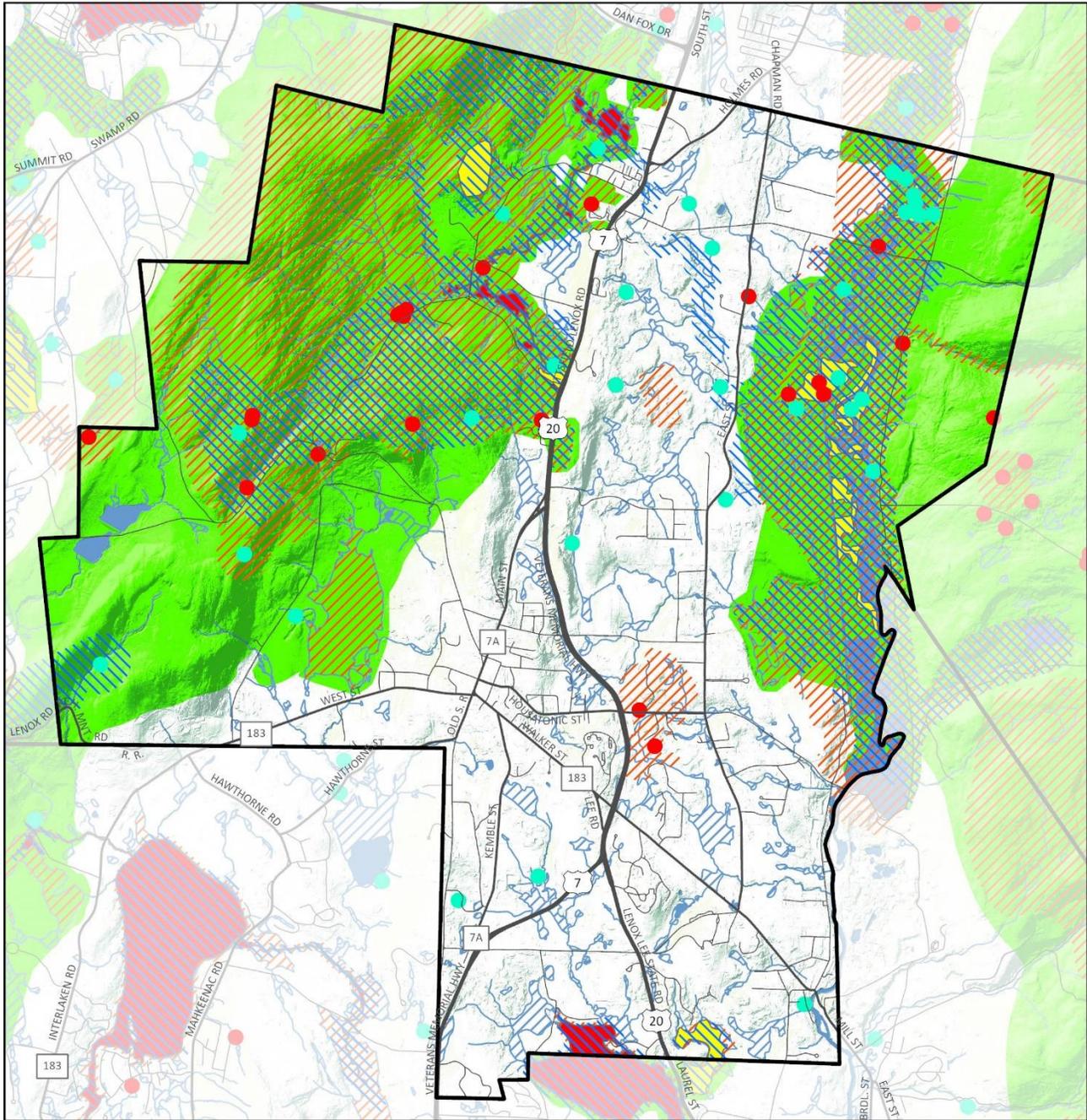
## **SUBWATERSHEDS**

Lenox contains seventeen subwatersheds, including the Yokun Brook, Lenox Mountain Brook, and Willow Book subwatersheds. Most significant among the Town's subwatersheds is the Lenox Mountain Brook, which feeds the upper and lower Root Reservoirs from which the Town draws its drinking supply.

## **FLOOD HAZARD AREAS**

Very few areas within the Housatonic River's 100-year floodplain have been developed in Lenox. Moreover, the Town and its community are protected from flooding by the Housatonic River's extensive wetlands. Significant portions of wetlands remain intact with the 100-year floodplain. These wetlands are likely to absorb and slow floodwaters thereby reducing the hazard in the event of abnormally high rainfall.

Figure 5.4 - Unique Habitats Map



- Certified Vernal Pools
- Potential Vernal Pools
- ▨ Priority Habitats of Rare Species
- Living Waters Core Habitats
- Natural Communities
- ▨ BioMap2 Core Habitat

0 1 2 Miles

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To help communities conserve important habitat areas and to promote biodiversity in Massachusetts, the Department of Fish and Game, through the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP), developed two complementary planning projects; BioMap2 and the Living Waters. These data-driven projects delineate Core Habitats that identify the most critical sites for biodiversity conservation across Massachusetts.

## **PRIORITY HABITATS**

Identification of priority habitats is based on the known geographical extent of habitat for all state-listed rare species, including plants and animals. Priority habitats can be found in Lenox along the Housatonic River and in the forests at the Town's eastern and western boundaries.

## **CORE HABITATS**

Core Habitats identify specific areas in which rare species, natural communities, and exemplary habitats have been observed. Protection of these areas is considered necessary to promote the long-term persistence of biodiversity. Lenox contains 5,033 acres of Core Habitat, 52% of which is currently protected. BioMap2 identifies three types of Core Habitats: Forest Cores, Wetland Cores, and Aquatic Cores.

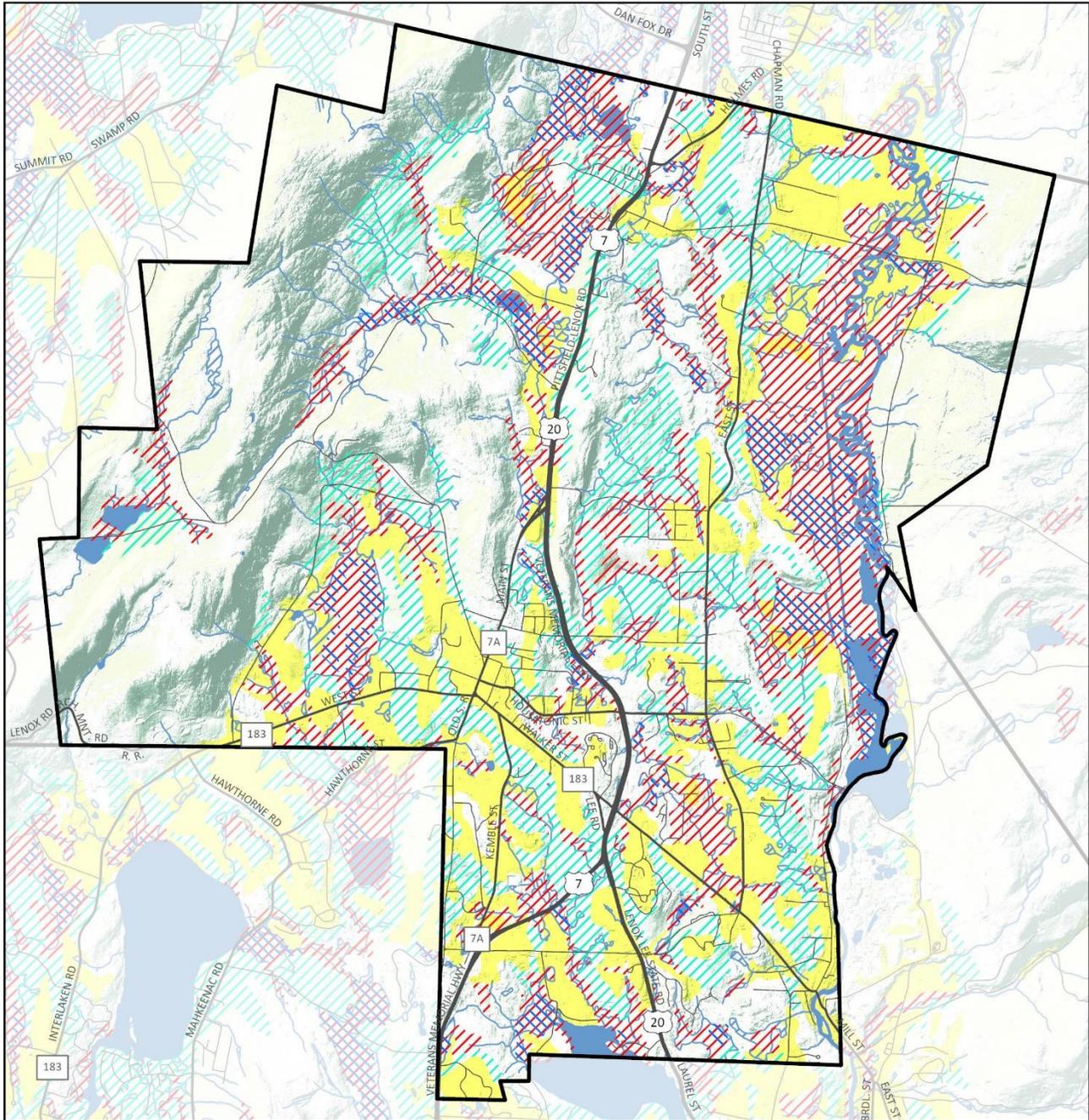
Forest Cores are defined as large, intact forests that provide critical habitat for woodland species. Lenox contains two Forest Cores on its eastern and western borders. Much of the Town's Forest Cores are situated on protected land in either Kennedy Park or October Mountain State Forest. In addition to its two Forest Cores, Lenox also contains seven Wetland Cores and 14 Aquatic Cores, many of which are also situated within currently protected areas.

86% of Lenox's total area is undeveloped. Moreover, 38% of the Town's area is protected open space. As such, Lenox is able to protect and promote unique habitats and biodiversity. The Town will aim to protect certain Core Habitats, as show in Figure 5.4, that are currently unprotected and at risk of development.

## **FOREST LAND**

Lenox, like much of Berkshire County, is predominantly forested. 63% of the Town's total area is forested while another 4% is forested wetland. Lenox's forests are typically mixed deciduous/coniferous, with a higher percentage of conifers and sugar maples growing at higher altitudes. Deciduous trees, such as red and silver maple, black and green ash, bur oak, and American elm, tend to be found growing in the floodplain.

Figure 5.6 - Soils Map



-  State and Locally Significant Soils
-  Unique Soils
-  Hydric Soils
-  Prime Agricultural Soils



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Lenox’s landscape underwent dynamic change during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Throughout the 1800’s, New England’s vast forests were harvested for timber, leaving open land for agriculture and development. Lenox was no exception and experienced widespread deforestation. Most of the land that was cleared during the 19<sup>th</sup> century has since reverted to forest or has been used for development. Another impediment to agriculture in Lenox is its extensive network of wetlands. Wetlands typically contain hydric soil that is permanently or seasonally saturated with water. Water saturation leads to anaerobic conditions in which most agricultural crops do not thrive causing little productive agriculture in Lenox.

Open land - whether used as cropland, pasture, or otherwise - comprises 7% of the Town’s total area. Fields play an important role in the ecosystem. Open land that is neither developed nor forested, mimics natural forest clearings and provides the basis for a habitat consisting of rodents, birds, and small mammals. Such animals are a critical food source for larger predators, including foxes, coyotes, and birds of prey. In addition to providing habitat, Lenox’s open lands serve to support plants such goldenrod and Queen Anne’s lace, and to maintain the Town’s pastoral landscape.

**THREATENED, & ENDANGERED SPECIES**

Lenox has extensive wetlands and forests that are home to threatened (T) and endangered (E) animals and plants, as well as those of special concern (SC).

**Table 5.1 - Threatened & Endangered Species**

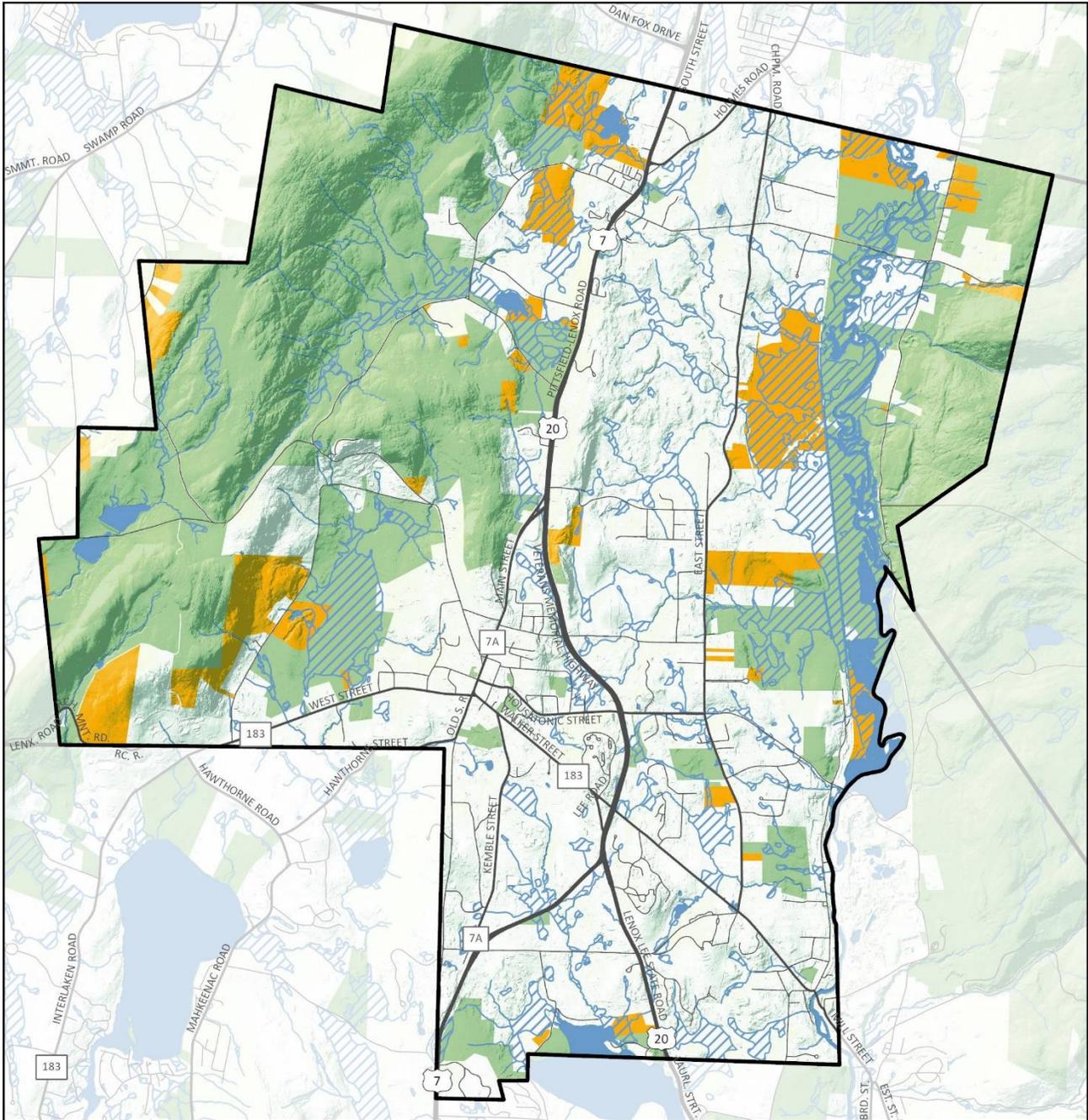
Scientific Name	Common Name	Description	Habitat	Status
Marstonia lustrica	Boreal Marstonia	A freshwater snail	Springs, streams, and lakes	E
Erora laeta	Early Hairstreak	A lycaenid butterfly	Mature hardwood forests with beech trees	T
Pieris oleracea	Mustard White	A pierid butterfly	Forested and non-forested wetlands	T
Gomphus quadricolor	Rapids Clubtail	A darkly colored dragonfly	Clear, cold streams and rivers with intermittent sections of rock	E
Ambystoma jeffersonianum	Jefferson Salamander	A large, grey/brown salamander	Relatively mature deciduous and mixed deciduous-coniferous forests	SC
Glyptemys insculpta	Wood Turtle	A medium-sized turtle	Slow-moving, mid-sized streams with heavily vegetated banks	SC
Botaurus lentiginosus	American Bittern	A medium-sized, brown ground-dwelling heron	Freshwater marshes, meadows, fens, and bogs	E

			dominated by emergent vegetation	
<i>Galinula chloropus</i>	Common Moorhen	A duck-like swimming bird without webbed feet	Large, freshwater or brackish marshes	SC
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald Eagle	A large predatory bird with prominent white head and yellow beak	Coastal areas, estuaries, and larger inland waters	T
<i>Sorex palustris</i>	Water Shrew	A large, long-tailed shrew	Swift-moving, rocky-bedded stream banks	SC
<i>Boechera laevigata</i>	Smooth Rock-cress	Spoon-shaped, sparsely hairy leaves	Rich, rocky deciduous forests	SC
<i>Carex alopecoidea</i>	Foxtail Sedge	Herbaceous, grass-like plant	Wet meadows and river floodplains	T
<i>Carex backii</i>	Back's Sedge	Herbaceous, grass-like plant	Dry, rich woodlands	E
<i>Carex bushii</i>	Bush's Sedge	Herbaceous, grass-like plant	Moist woods, wet meadows, dry fields, and prairies	E
<i>Carex castanea</i>	Chestnut-colored Sedge	Herbaceous, grass-like plant	Wet meadows and river floodplains	E
<i>Carex grayi</i>	Gray's Sedge	Herbaceous, grass-like plant	Swamps, marshes, banks, and wet meadows	T
<i>Carex hitchcockiana</i>	Hitchcock's Sedge	Herbaceous, grass-like plant	Rich woodlands	SC
<i>Carex tetanica</i>	Fen Sedge	Herbaceous, grass-like plant	Calcareous meadows and fens	SC
<i>Carex formosa</i>	Handsome Sedge	Slender, grass-like plant	Wet wooded areas	T
<i>Claytonia virginica</i>	Narrow-leaved Spring Beauty	Early spring wildflower	Rich forested floodplains	E
<i>Conioselinum chinense</i>	Hemlock Parsley	Perennial herb in the parsley family	Swamps, bogs, and meadows	SC

Source: Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife, 2012

The Town's undeveloped lands are home to twenty-one animal and plant species that are considered by the Commonwealth to be rare, threatened, or endangered. Among the endangered species in Lenox are wildflowers, grasses, birds, and turtles. The majority of rare, threatened, and endangered species in Lenox are found in or near wetlands and forests, many of which are currently protected from development.

Figure 5.7 - Undeveloped Land Adjacent to Protected Land Map



- Protected land
- Unprotected Undeveloped Land

0 1 2 Miles



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Despite there being 5,277.81 acres of protected open space in Lenox, there remains opportunity to increase the Town’s inventory thereof. There are 1,017.6 acres of unprotected and undeveloped land in Lenox. Much of this land remains undeveloped due to impediments to development, including, lack of road frontage, steep slopes, and hydric soils. The Town will consider protecting open land that is adjacent to existing protected open space that is either too wet or steep to develop and/or lacking road frontage, especially parcels that contain Core Habitats.

## 5.5 Protected Open Space

There are 5,277.81 acres of protected open space Lenox. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of Lenox’s protected open space is town-owned and used for recreational or unknown purposes and as water supply protection areas. The Commonwealth owns 39% of protected open space and another 20% is owned by land trusts.

**Table 5.2 - Summary of Protected Land**

Ownership	Acres	Percent of Total Protected Land
State	1,080.97	20.5%
Municipal	2,023.35	38.3%
Land Trust	2,063.36	39.1%
Private	110.13	2.1%
Total	5,277.81	100%

Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, 2019

Open space is defined as private or public land that has not been developed for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes. Open space is typically used for conservation, recreation, and other municipal purposes, such as water supply protection.

### STATE-OWNED PROTECTED OPEN SPACE

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts owns thirteen parcels totaling 1,080.97 acres in Lenox. The majority of state-owned land is protected as either the George Darey Wildlife Management Area or October Mountain State Forest, both of which are protected in perpetuity.

**MUNICIPAL PROTECTED OPEN SPACE**

Lenox owns forty-seven parcels of protected open space totaling 2,2023.4 acres. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of town-owned protected open is protected in perpetuity. Significant town-owned protected open space includes Post Farm (222.2 acres), Parsons Marsh (169.8 acres), Kennedy Park (555.3 acres), and Edith Wharton Park (12.4 acres), as well as the Root Reservoir Watershed (939.5 acres).

**LAND TRUST-OWNED PROTECTED OPEN SPACE**

Two land trusts own a significant amount of protected open space in Lenox. The Berkshire Natural Resource Council (BNRC), a region-wide land trust, owns 960.8 acres, including Lenox Mountain. All of BNRC’s land is protected in perpetuity for conservation and recreation. Full public access is extended to all BNRC properties. And, The Massachusetts Audubon Society owns and stewards the Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, which totals 1,102.6 acres. The Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary is protected in perpetuity for conservation and is fully-accessible to the public.

**5.6 Recreation**

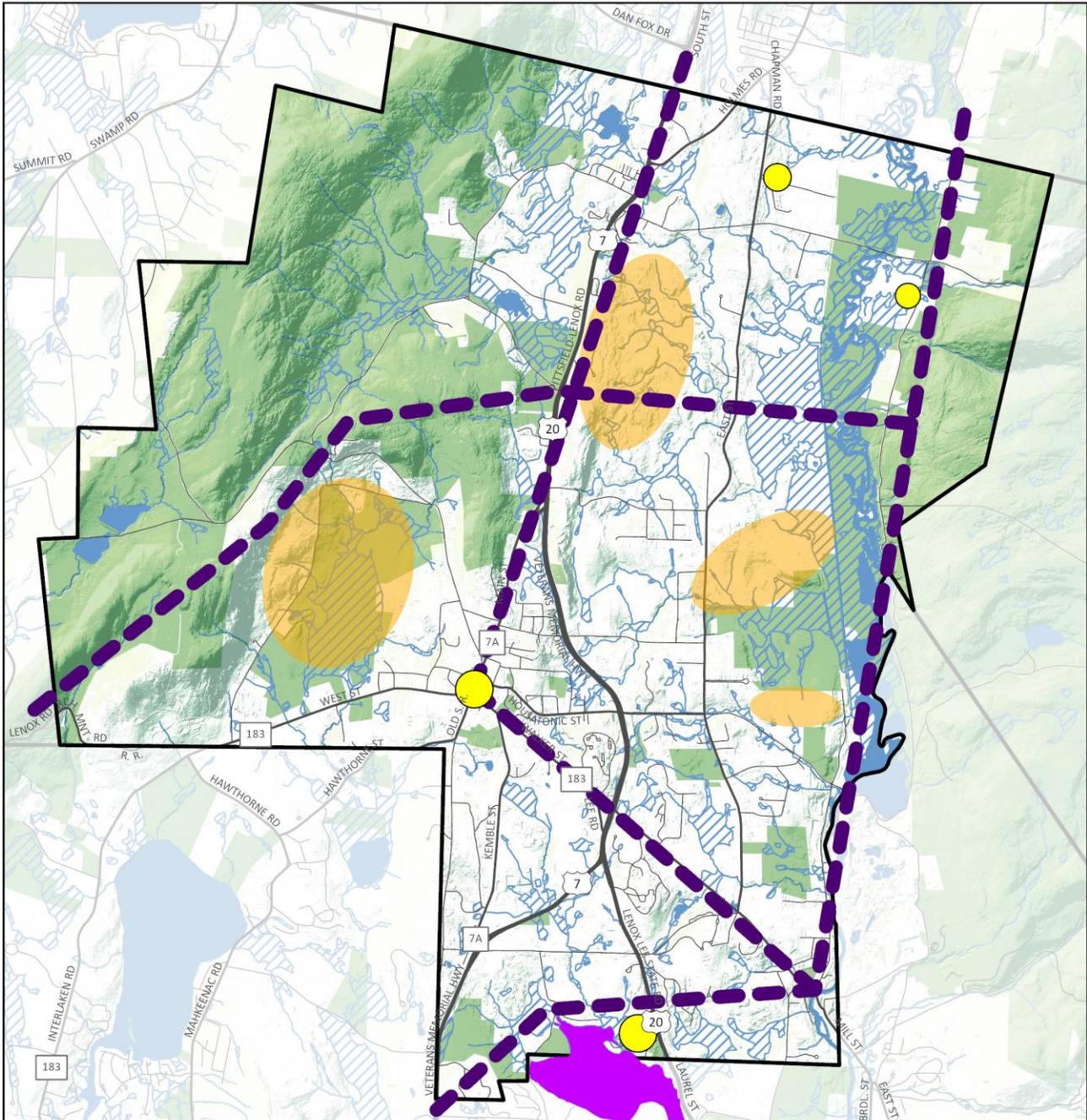
Lenox contains numerous amenities for outdoor recreation. The Town owns thirteen parcels of recreational open space, totaling 584 acres. The majority of Lenox’s primarily recreational open spaces are found in or near Lenox Village, including Kennedy Park, Triangle Park, and Lilac Park. Access to open space and recreational opportunities is thus limited for residents residing outside Lenox Village.

**Table 5.3 - Recreational Sites**

Site Name	Owner	Primary Purpose	Level of Protection	Acres
Edith Wharton Park	Town of Lenox	Recreation	Perpetuity	12.4
Kennedy Park	Town of Lenox	Recreation	Perpetuity	555.3
Lilac Park	Town of Lenox	Recreation	Perpetuity	1.2
Morris Elementary School Fields	Town of Lenox	Recreation	Limited	10.2
Ore Bed Park	Town of Lenox	Recreation	Perpetuity	1.1
Tillotson Park	Town of Lenox	Recreation	Perpetuity	3.9
Triangle Park	Town of Lenox	Recreation	Perpetuity	0.09
Post Farm	Town of Lenox	Conservation	Perpetuity	222.2

Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, 2019

Figure 5.8 - OSRP Actions



- Improve water quality
- Permanently protect core habitats
- Connect neighborhoods, open spaces, and recreational areas
- Expand and improve recreational opportunities
- Protected Open Space

0 1 2 Miles

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



**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT**

The Community Preservation Act was adopted under Massachusetts General Law in 2000. This Act creates a fund for municipalities to dedicate money towards open space preservation, preservation of historic resources, development of affordable housing, and the acquisition and development of outdoor recreational facilities. The fund is subsidized by a voter-authorized surcharge in property tax bills and through the statewide Community Preservation Trust Fund. The Community Preservation Trust Fund is subsidized by deed recording fees from all of Massachusetts. Between 2007 and 2019, there was a total of \$5,082,025.00 allocated to Lenox’s CPA fund. This includes projects that have either been cancelled or are still in progress. Of that total, 14.7% (\$745,000.00) have gone towards Open Space and Recreation projects.

The following table shows how these funds have been allocated towards open space and recreation since 2008.

**Table 5.4 - Community Preservation Act Allocations (2008-2019)**

Project Name	Year	Open Space	Rec.	Description	Status	CPA Total
Baker's Pond Restoration	2008	✓		Restore historic pond area	Project complete	\$60,000
Baczek Land Purchase	2009	✓		Purchase Open Space	Project cancelled	\$100,000
Open Space and Recreation Plan	2012	✓	✓	Hire a consultant to assist the Town prepare an update to the Open Space and Recreation Plan.	Project complete	\$20,000
Roche Reading Park Improvements	2014	✓		Roche Reading Park Improvements	Project complete	\$10,000
Community Center Basketball Court Restoration	2014	✓		Community Center Backyard Basketball Restoration (\$10,650 engineer costs & not to exceed \$64,350 for construction costs).	Project complete	\$75,000
Community Center Town Beach	2014	✓		Community center Town Beach Architectural Study	Project complete	\$8,000
Kennedy Park Improvements	2015		✓	The Town of Lenox will create a handicap accessible picnic area and restore a handicap accessible trail loop to full ADA compliance. If provided with matching funding from the State, they will also	Project complete	\$9,965

				address the invasive hardy kiwi in the park area.		
Open Space Reserve	2015	✓		The CPC voted to appropriate said funds to the Open Space Reserve for future land or conversation restriction acquisition.	Project complete	\$100,000
Town Beach Project	2016	✓		To equip the public beach on Laurel Lake with universal access and modernize the bathhouse. All are welcome at the beach, free of charge.	Project complete	\$169,290
BNRC Parsons Marsh	2017		✓	Building a parking area, trail and boardwalk to Parsons Marsh	Project complete	\$235,000
Community Garden	2018		✓	Community Garden in Lilac Park	Project complete	\$7,745
Shared Use Path	2018		✓	To fund a study of potential routes of a community wide shared use path to connect open space and recreational opportunities with cultural and historic sites in Lenox. The deliverable will be an implementation program including costs and land or easement acquisitions necessary to implement the route.	Project in progress	\$20,000
Yokun Ridge Trail	2019		✓	Creation of through-trail for hiking, connecting lands owned by ToL, BNRC and Mass Audubon - part of larger High Road Project.	Project in progress	\$50,000
Total Spent on Historical Preservation (Completed)						\$695,000
In Progress						\$70,000
GRAND TOTAL						\$765,000

Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, 2020

The 2015 update to Lenox’s Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) included specific recommended actions. The OSRP’s recommendations include, but are not limited to, improving water quality at Laurel Lake permanently protecting Core Habitats, improving connections between neighborhoods and open space and recreational areas, and expanding and improving recreational opportunities. These recommendations are depicted in Figure 5.8.

### **IMPROVING WATER QUALITY AT LAUREL LAKE**

Laurel Lake, home to Lenox's town beach, is a popular outdoor recreation area for residents and visitors and is surrounded by a growing neighborhood. Perhaps as a result of increased development and human activity, the Lake has recently had issues high phosphorous levels, dissolved oxygen saturation, non-native aquatic plants, and non-native zebra mussels.

### **PERMANENTLY PROTECT CORE HABITATS**

Lenox is home to forty-nine Core Habitats. Many of the Town's Core habitats are currently located on protected land. Four, however, are found on unprotected land. Moreover, with the exception of the Core Habitat located in the Eastover neighborhood adjacent to Route 7/20, the unprotected Core Habitats are located in largely undeveloped parts of town.

### **CONNECT NEIGHBORHOODS TO OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL AREAS**

Lenox abounds with open space and recreational amenities. Many such amenities, however, are clustered in Lenox Village or located away from residential areas, such as Lenox Dale and New Lenox, as is the case with Kennedy Park. To expand access to existing open space and recreational amenities, the OSRP recommends working towards establishing pedestrian and shared-use paths that improve connections between neighborhoods and amenities thereby increasing access. The OSRP also recommends developing new local trails and reducing sidewalk gaps throughout the Town.

### **EXPAND AND IMPROVE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Lenox's 2015 update to its OSRP includes recommendations to expand and improve recreational opportunities. Specifically, the OSRP recommends a new playground in New Lenox and additional recreation facilities in Lenox Village, including a dog park and a community garden, the latter of which has since been established. The plan also suggests a River Walk on the east side of the Housatonic River and increased access to Laurel Lake, including improvements to the lake's infrastructure.

## 5.7 Goals, Objectives, & Action Items

- **GOAL OSR 1:** PROMOTE YEAR-ROUND OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND EMPHASIZE ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE DURING THE NON-SUMMER SEASONS, PARTICULARLY WINTER.

**Objective OSR 1.1:** Inform the public about existing seasonal recreation facilities.

Action Item 1: Utilize search engine optimization to promote Lenox's open space and recreation amenities to those looking for things to do in the Berkshires.

Action Item 2: Create social media accounts (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, etc.) for Lenox open space and recreation amenities (such as Kennedy Park).

Action Item 3: Develop and expand trail maps for outdoor winter activities.

Action Item 4: Work with BNRC to include more Lenox trails in its Berkshire Trails smartphone application.

Action Item 5: Improve and increase all season signage, especially regarding winter recreational activities.

**Objective OSR 1.2:** Build on Lenox's reputation for health and wellness to attract new residents and visitors.

Action Item 1: Utilize the presence of Canyon Ranch, Kripalu, and Miraval to expand Lenox's reputation as a destination for health and wellness.

Action Item 2: Work with health and wellness resorts and the Lenox Chamber of Commerce to develop a marketing strategy aimed at bringing new residents and visitors to Lenox for open space and recreation opportunities.

Action Item 3: Work with the Lenox Chamber of Commerce to ensure that open space and recreation amenities are thoughtfully integrated into any future marketing plans.

Action Item 4: Work with health and wellness resorts to publicize and promote Lenox's open space and recreation amenities.

**Objective OSR 1.3:** Increase the accessibility of open space and recreation to seniors.

Action Item 1: Assess the ADA accessibility of Lenox's trails.

Action Item 2: Coordinate with the Council on Aging to assess if a shuttle/van could be used to transport seniors to and from open space and recreational amenities.

Action Item 3: Explore the feasibility of a senior fitness trail (as seen in Dalton, MA).

Action Item 4: Install more public benches throughout town that would serve as resting areas when traveling between recreational sites (e.g., going the up the hill from Shakespeare & Co.).

➤ **GOAL OSR 2:** EXPAND THE STRONG CONSTITUENCY OF OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ADVOCATES THROUGH EDUCATION AND COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS.

**Objective OSR 2.1:** Hold community-building activities.

Action Item 1: Continue to hold festivals, including craft fairs, Apple Squeeze, and Tub Parade and events supported by the Lenox Cultural District.

Action Item 2: Leverage and promote non-Town festivals and events, such as the Josh Billings RunAground Triathlon.

Action Item 3: Develop and promote a comprehensive online calendar of natural resource and outdoor recreation events on the Town of Lenox Website.

**Objective OSR 2.2:** Educate Citizens and Landowners.

Action Item 1: Increase the frequency and number of channels for communication with residents regarding estate planning and the conservation of natural and cultural resources.

Action Item 2: Provide landowners with clear guidance for contacting and negotiating with the Town regarding their land in terms of protection and public availability for open space and recreational purposes.

Action Item 3: Work with the Lenox Library and local and regional environmental non-profits to provide at least three lectures per year on environmental issues.

Action Item 4: Provide public information about the amount of protected open space in Lenox, how much of the Town is at risk of development, and the fiscal advantages of open space.

**Objective OSR 2.3:** Develop strategic partnerships.

Action Item 1: Partner with local schools, nonprofits, and businesses to preserve open space and increase recreational opportunities.

Action Item 2: Partner with local land conservation organizations to better leverage limited Town funds and volunteer hours toward the conservation of priority resource areas.

Action Item 3: Partner with open space and recreation committees in surrounding towns to address regional land conservation projects.

**Objective OSR 2.4:** Recruit volunteers to take on activities that interest them.

Action Item 1: Create a municipal Volunteer Coordinator position to recruit volunteers for open space and recreational initiative and efforts.

Action Item 2: Identify volunteer opportunities (e.g., funding research, grant writing, trail mapping, park cleanup, etc.).

Action Item 3: Seek funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to fund staff time and direct costs.

➤ **GOAL OSR 3: CONNECT NEIGHBORHOODS, OPEN SPACE, AND RECREATIONAL AREAS.**

**Objective OSR 3.1:** Ensure that Open space and recreation amenities are connected to cultural and other amenities and accessible to the public.

Action Item 1: Collaborate with cultural institutions and abutting property owners to develop a shared use path that connects the various amenities in Lenox thereby increasing awareness and use.

Action Item 2: Continue to invest in wayfinding within Lenox Village that directs the public toward trailheads and other recreational facilities.

Action Item 3: Continue to participate and invest in Complete Streets projects.

Action Item 4: Require new developments to provide pedestrian connections.

**Objective OSR 3.2:** Increase public access to open space and neighborhoods on foot or by bicycle.

Action Item 1: Create new recreational areas, such as pocket parks, in neighborhoods where access to outdoor recreational areas and open space are limited (e.g., New Lenox and Lenox Dale).

Action Item 2: Install bike lanes (where suitable) that connect neighborhoods to trail heads and other open space and recreation amenities.

Action Item 3: Continue to improve sidewalks and eliminate sidewalk gaps as recommended in the Complete Streets plan.

Action Item 4: Develop parking areas and increase the visibility of trailheads.

**Objective OSR 3.3:** Protect and improve existing trails.

Action Item 1: Inventory all trails - their conditions and needs for improvement.

Action Item 2: Develop a maintenance and improvement plan for all trails.

Action Item 3: Develop signage that clearly delineates official trails from unauthorized trails.

Action Item 4: Upgrade and increase trail signage.

Action Item 5: Expand existing trails where necessary to create a more contiguous trail network.

**Objective OSR 3.4:** Incorporate Lenox into regional trail efforts.

Action Item 1: Connect local trails to trail systems in other municipalities, such as improved access to October Mountain.

Action Item 2: Continue to support regional trail efforts such as the High Road that go through Lenox and traverse Town of Lenox land.

**Objective OSR 3.5:** Ensure that all facilities are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities act (ADA).

Action Item 1: Re-establish an active ADA Commission.

Action Item 2: Identify and prioritize facilities that need upgrading.

Action Item 3: Identify and apply for funding to make facilities accessible in priority order.

Action Item 4: Assess condition of ADA accessibility for each trail.

➤ **GOAL OSR 4: PROTECT AND AUGMENT WATER RESOURCES.**

**Objective OSR 4.1:** Protect wetlands and floodplains.

Action Item 1: Pass municipal wetlands protection bylaw.

Action Item 2: Work with neighboring municipalities to continue the Housatonic River cleanup.

Action Item 3: Amend subdivision regulations to include riparian buffer zones along streams and rivers.

**Objective OSR 4.2:** Certify uncertified vernal pools.

Action Item 1: Train local volunteers in vernal pool certification.

Action Item 2: Work with the Berkshire Environment Action Team (BEAT) and Mass Audubon.

**Objective OSR 4.3:** Reduce harmful runoff through enhanced stormwater management, low impact development and other means throughout Lenox.

Action Item 1: Establish reduced road sand/salt and reduced herbicide policies.

Action Item 2: Continue to distribute rain barrels and informational brochures to residents.

Action Item 3: Continue to hold hazardous waste disposal days to gather empty paint can and other household pollutants.

Action Item 4: Build a demonstration rain garden around a town facility.

Action Item 5: Develop a stormwater management plan that accounts for increased stormwater flows and plans for innovative reuse of stormwater, such as for gardens.

**Objective OSR 4.4:** Improve water quality at Laurel Lake.

Action Item 1: Contain invasive zebra mussels and explore science-based management solutions.

Action Item 2: Continue to test for water quality.

**Objective OSR 4.5:** Encourage a regional approach to the management of Laurel Lake and work with property owners to maintain adherence to state policy and regulations.

Action Item 1: Facilitate and enable property owners and watershed stakeholders to work closely with respective Conservation Commissions to meet state requirements for management of the Lake.

Action Item 2: Improve communication between the Town, the Town of Lee, and the Laurel Lake Preservation Area Association to better coordinate management efforts.

Action Item 3: Develop a pamphlet describing threats to water quality.

Action Item 4: Apply for 604B money to study lake management.

Action Item 5: Emphasize issues related to solid waste disposal.

Action Item 6: Inform the public about proper use and maintenance of septic systems and improper disposal of toxins to begin reducing phosphorous levels in Laurel Lake.

Action Item 7: Increase awareness of reducing the use of fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides.

Action Item 8: Hold neighborhood/town-wide discussions to distribute pamphlets and inform homeowners on threats to water quality.

Action Item 9: Develop a cable access program and use the Town's website to disseminate information describing threats to water quality.

Action Item 10: Continue educational campaign for boaters (brochures, signs) about how to reduce the spread of invasive lake species.

- **GOAL OSR 5: PROTECT NATIVE PLANT AND WILDLIFE HABITATS WHILE CONTROLLING INVASIVE SPECIES ON PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROPERTY.**

**Objective OSR 5.1:** Monitor habitats of endangered species, rare wildlife, and invasive species.

Action Item 1: Continue to bring all stream crossings up to compliance with DEP stream crossing guidelines for wildlife management.

Action Item 2: Train volunteers to observe and analyze wildlife behavior.

Action Item 3: Facilitate a partnership between the Department of Public Works, the Conservation Commission, Mass Audubon and other mission-based organizations to develop plans to monitor and protect habitats.

Action Item 4: Spread awareness of invasive species and strategies to control them through public forums and educational outreach to homeowners and property managers.

**Objective OSR 5.2:** Permanently protect core habitats and critical natural landscapes with CPA funds or by encouraging landowners to adopt conservation restrictions.

Action Item 1: Protect a wildlife corridor connecting the east and west sides of town between Route 7/20 and East Street north of East Dugway Road.

Action Item 2: Protect uplands west of Parsons Marsh.

Action Item 3: Protect uplands west of the Housatonic River.

**Objective OSR 5.3:** Maintain an up-to-date inventory of lands of conservation interest, including town-owned and private lands.

Action Item 1: Update open space and recreation parcels list annually.

**Objective OSR 5.4:** Monitor and reduce the spread of hardy kiwi.

Action Item 1: Continue program to eradicate hardy kiwi in Kennedy Park.

Action Item 2: Identify metrics to measure efficacy of program.

Action Item 3: Share results of the program with other communities.

Action Item 4: Work to have hardy kiwi listed as an invasive plant in Massachusetts.

- **GOAL OSR 6:** MAINTAIN A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR EXISTING TOWN-OWNED RECREATION FACILITIES.

**Objective OSR 6.1:** Coordinate management and maintenance program for existing town-owned recreation facilities.

Action Item 1: Maintain an up-to-date management and maintenance plan for each public recreation facility.

Action Item 2: Identify responsibilities for management of existing facilities, and clearly identify and express use rules and regulations.

Action Item 3: Cleanup / upgrade the boat launch at Laurel Lake.

- **GOAL OSR 7:** SECURE FUNDING TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTIONS AFOREMENTIONED.

**Objective OSR 7.1:** Apply for grants to assist town acquisition of properties.

Action Item 1: Apply for funding through the Commonwealth's Parkland Acquisition and Renovations for Communities (PARC) program.

Action Item 2: Apply for Federal Land Conservation fund.

Action Item 3: Apply for local bank town grant program.

Action Item 4: Provide information and data to the Capital Improvement Committee to prioritize funding for the priority projects identified.

## 6. Housing

With 3,021 total housing units, Lenox contains a diverse housing stock where homes vary greatly in size, age, style, and price. The majority of homes in Lenox were built before 1940 but there has been fairly steady development over the decades since. About 300 new homes have been constructed in Lenox just since the last master plan, many located in the northeast corner of town in New Lenox. These homes contrast the early 20<sup>th</sup> century aesthetic and offer a more suburban design that includes subdivisions and single-family homes on smaller lots.

The predominant housing style in Lenox is the single-family detached home, 56% of all housing. The second most prevalent form of housing are multi-family structures that contain twenty or more units. These buildings largely used for senior housing, comprising about 17% of the total housing stock.

The median home value in Lenox is \$350,000, which is higher than housing values in many other municipalities within Berkshire County.

A significant concern for Lenox is its aging population. The Town offers a variety of deed-restricted and affordable units for its senior population in buildings located in the Village Center allowing seniors to walk to local services and amenities.

Lot sizes in the Village and surrounding neighborhoods require a minimum of 5,000 to 15,000 and 30,000 square feet for residential buildings, there are many homes within the same district located on larger parcels.

With the concerns over an aging population and diminishing workforce of young professionals, a paramount goal must be to provide more housing affordable for prospective first-time home buyers, and housing that extends rental opportunities.

### ***VISION***

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*LENOX WILL INCREASE THE VARIETY OF ITS HOUSING STOCK TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEEDS OF EXISTING RESIDENTS AND PROVIDE MORE HOUSING OPTIONS TO ATTRACT NEW RESIDENTS.*

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## 6.1 Priority Housing Topics

### SENIOR HOUSING

Roughly a third of Lenox's senior population is housing cost-burdened; defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as a condition in which low or moderate income households spend more than 30% of their gross income on housing. For every subsidized senior housing unit there are 2.64 housing cost burdened seniors - a primary indicator of need. While not all seniors will face the same cost burden, many want to "age in place" but may be challenged to find housing that can accommodate their needs.

### RENTAL HOUSING

The Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) offers a group of indicators to determine a community's rental housing needs:

- Rental vacancy rate below 5%,
- Rental housing stock that constitutes less than 30% of the community's total housing stock,
- 30% or more of renters housing cost burdened.

Lenox's rental vacancy rate is above the 5% threshold at 9.9%. Rental occupied housing stock declined and 36.8% of renters are housing cost burdened.

### ACCESS TO OWNERSHIP

According to Lenox's Housing Production Plan (HPP), for a moderate-income, first-time home buyer the price point is \$174,719. This figure is well below the median home value of \$350,000 and the lack of homes available for a moderate income buyer presents a significant barrier to prospective Lenox residents.

## 6.2 COVID-19 Related Impacts to Housing

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the needs of cost burdened households and families in Lenox. Households lost jobs and have struggled to or been unable to pay for rent or mortgages. The Housing Trust provided emergency rental assistance, which assists tenants and landlords in this uncertain time. The short-term impact is housing insecurity and the compromised health and safety of families as they lose housing. This has been mitigated by the state eviction stay, but could worsen when that ends. Housing is now understood as a public health and safety measure. To help maintain a safe and healthy housing stock now and into the future, diversifying the kind of assistance given to homeowners and

landlords is important as they seek to stabilize the housing stock. Rental assistance will also continue to be important.

### INDICATORS TO TRACK

- ✓ Requests for emergency rental assistance
- ✓ Assistance provided
- ✓ Number of foreclosures

## 6.3 Priority Housing Goals

- **GOAL H 1: INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF HOUSING AFFORDABLE FOR YOUNG FIRST-TIME HOME BUYERS.**

Housing in Lenox is in high demand and often unattainable for median-income or middle income earning households. In response, the Affordable Housing Trust created a grant program to aid first-home buyers, by “piggy-backing” onto a Federal Home Loan Bank Program (FHLB) aimed at those buyers. Lenox can expand upon this effort to increase housing attainability by easing the eligibility requirements for grant program, promoting infill development on vacant nonconforming lots for deeded affordable housing eligible units, and reducing regulatory restrictions on accessory apartments to allow elder residents the opportunity to “age in place” more affordably.

- **GOAL H 2: INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF MIXED-INCOME HOUSING OPTIONS - IN OR NEAR COMMERCIAL AREAS AND VILLAGES - TO SUPPORT THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND PROMOTE THE PRINCIPLES OF SMART GROWTH.**

People are attracted to living near commercial areas for the convenience they provide. Lenox should continue easing regulations related to multi-family housing, upper-floor residential units in mixed-use developments, and other innovative means to increase the housing stock without altering the character of neighborhoods, especially historic housing.

(FOR THE COMPLETE LIST OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION ITEMS, SEE PAGE 150)

## 6.4 Trends & Conditions

### HOUSING STOCK

According to the 2017 ACS, there were an estimated 3,021 total housing units in Lenox, representing an 11.4% increase in housing units since 2000. From 2000 through 2017, Lenox experienced:

- 16.26% increase in 1-unit, detached dwellings;
- 169% increase in 1-unit, attached dwellings;
- 2-unit dwellings declined by 73%;
- 44% increase in dwellings containing 20 or more units; and
- 31.7% decline in mobile homes.

While most types of housing increased since 2000, the number – and availability – of duplexes and mobile homes decreased.

**Table 6.1 - Housing Units**

Type of structure	2000	Percent of total housing stock	2017	Percent of total housing stock
1-unit, detached	1,457	53.7%	1,694	56.1%
1-unit, attached	51	1.9%	137	4.5%
2 units	187	6.9%	50	1.7%
3 or 4 units	168	6.2%	169	5.6%
5 to 9 units	133	4.9%	135	4.5%
10 to 19 units	305	11.2%	289	9.6%
20 or more units	349	12.9%	504	16.7%
Mobile Home	63	2.3%	43	1.4%
Total:	4,713	100.0%	5,038	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000, 2017

The most common dwelling in Lenox is a single-family, detached, 3-bedroom house making up 31.2% of the total housing stock.



Source: Alison Sneider – Fall on Yokun Ave.

## RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS & PERMITTED USES

There are four residential zoning districts in Lenox, each is defined by the minimum allowed lot area required for building:

- R-3A: Minimum lot area of 3 acres (primarily located to the west and north of the Village);
- R-1A: Minimum lot area of 1 acre (largest zone, surrounds village districts at Rte. 7/20 commercial districts);
- R-30: Minimum lot area of 30,000 square feet (slightly less dense neighborhoods near Villages);
- R-15: Minimum lot area of 15,000 square feet (Village and Dale, early historic settlement).

Detached single-family units are the only housing type permitted by right in all residential districts. Multi-family housing is allowed by right in the Commercial District, which covers the commercial areas in the neighborhoods of Lenox Village and Lenox Dale. Two-family and multi-family homes are either prohibited or allowed only by Special Permit in all other zoning districts.

**Table 6.2 - Schedule of Residential Uses**

District:	R3A	R1A	R30	R15	C3A	C1A	C	I
Detached single-family dwelling	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
Two-family or duplex dwelling	N	N	BA	BA	N	N	BA	BA
Townhouse	N	N	N	BA	BA	N	N	N
Multi-family dwelling	N	N	BA	BA	BA	BA	Y	BA
Seasonal renting of rooms	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Bed & Breakfast / Inn	BA	BA	BA	BA	BA	BA	BA	BA
Open Space Flexible Development	N	PB	N	N	N	N	N	N
Upper-story units in a mixed use development	N	N	N	N	BA	BA	Y	BA
Extended care nursing facility, assisted living or congregate care	N	BA	BA	BA	BA	BA	BA	N

Source: Town of Lenox Zoning Bylaw, 2018

Of Lenox’s total housing stock, 79% of total units are occupied and the remaining 21% are vacant. This is considered a moderate number of unoccupied or vacant units compared to Lenox’s neighboring municipalities; Lee (19%), Pittsfield (11%), Richmond (23%), Stockbridge (45%), and Washington (17%). Much of this housing is used seasonally, not available for full-time residency. Many rental properties in Lenox are seasonal rentals, which typically restrict tenants from continuous, reliable housing.

In 2017, there were a total of 2,390 occupied housing units in Lenox. Of those 2,390 units, 65% were owner occupied and 35% were renter occupied. Of the 828 total rental units in Lenox, 15% are seasonal rentals and about 6% are vacant. What is notable is that there has been a 27% increase in seasonal use from the time of Lenox’s last Master Plan until 2017.

There are over 400 rental units in the \$500 to \$1,000 range in Lenox making up 54.9% of the entire rental market. There are rentals at higher price points but not nearly as many as the \$500-\$1,000 range. Of the 736 occupied rental units, a third (34%) are paying 35% or more of their income on rent. With a rental vacancy rate of 9.9%, it can be assumed that many of the renters in the lower price range are there to stay. This greatly limits rental availability.

The majority of homes in Lenox – 755 of the total 3,021 – were built in 1939 or earlier.



Source: Lindsey Schmid – winter on Christian Hill

**Table 6.3 - Property Values (2019)**

Assessed Property Value	Parcel Count	Percent of Total
\$100,000 or less	348	12%
\$100,001 - \$250,000	727	25%
\$250,001 - \$500,000	1,157	40%
\$500,001 - \$1,000,000	503	17%
\$1,000,001 - \$3,000,000	155	5%
\$3,000,001 and up	30	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,920</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Town of Lenox, Assessors' Office FY2020

Since the Town's last master plan in 1999, 64% of the householders in Lenox moved in. This is significant because it emphasizes that while there are plenty of people moving to Lenox it can be inferred these newer residents tend to be in older age brackets, "retiring" to a new locale and/or a second home.

**Table 6.4 - Year Householder Moved Into Unit**

Assessed Property Value	Owner-Occupied	Renter-Occupied
Moved in 2015 or later	40	124
Moved in 2010 to 2014	204	480
Moved in 2000 to 2009	571	107
Moved in 1990 to 1999	298	99
Moved in 1980 to 1989	189	18
Moved in 1979 or earlier	260	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,390</b>	<b>828</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2017 ACS 5 year estimates

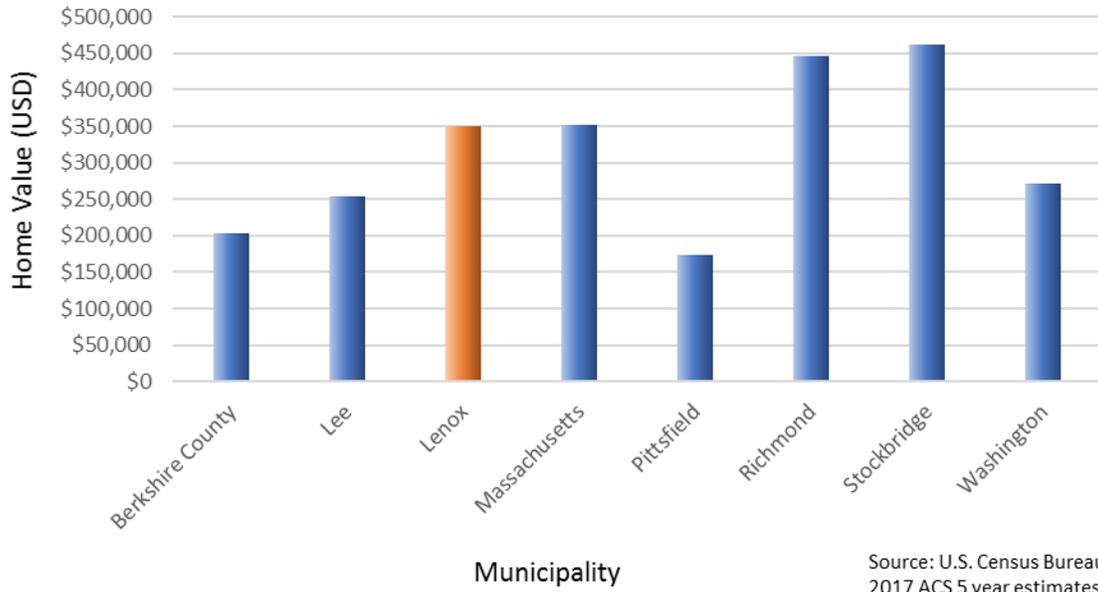
## HOME VALUE & SALES

As of 2017, median home value in Lenox was \$350,000. This figure is in the mid-range compared to Lenox's neighboring municipalities, to Berkshire County, and the Commonwealth as a whole. This value has increased dramatically (almost doubling in value) since the time of Lenox's previous Master Plan when median home value was \$177,700. Fluctuations in median home value, by year, are detailed in Figure 6.2, which demonstrates a drop in value in the wake of the 2008 housing crisis followed by a fairly steady climb to the estimated value in 2017.

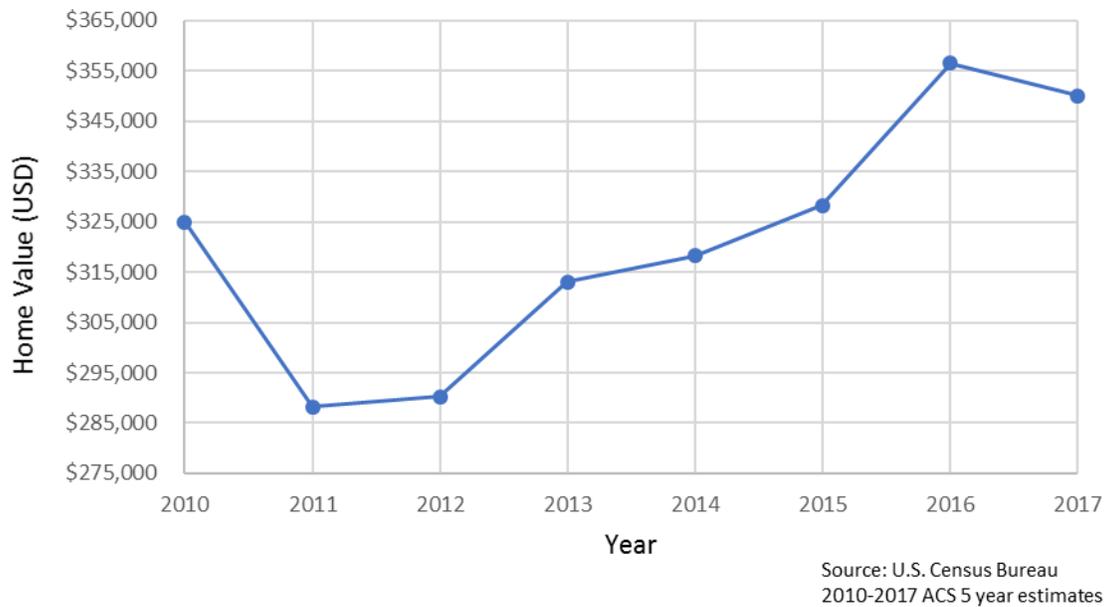
The median sales price of a home in Lenox is higher than in neighboring Lee, Pittsfield, and Washington, but below Richmond and Stockbridge. Notably, the average median sales price in Lenox exceeds the median for both Berkshire County and the Commonwealth. In 2000, 49 single-family homes sold in Lenox. The median sales price of those homes was \$235,000.

While sale prices of single-family homes have yet to fully recover to pre-recession levels, by 2017 the median sales price rose to \$345,000 - the sixth highest in Berkshire County - far in excess of the \$174,719 that, according to the Lenox Housing Production Plan, a Lenox-area moderate-income household could afford to purchase.

**Figure 6.1 -  
Median Home Value (2017)**



**Figure 6.2 -  
Median Home Value Trend (2010-2017)**



## 6.4 Housing Issues

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) catalogues housing issues in communities nationwide from data gathered by the Decennial Census and American Community Survey (ACS).

There are three categories of housing issues for which HUD provides data:

1. income distribution,
2. housing problems, and
3. housing cost burden.

Income distribution is based on HUD Area Median Family Income (AMI), a metric used to determine Fair Market Rents and income limits for HUD-funded programs. Essentially, Area Median Income (AMI) is the median family income, adjusted for household size, within a given area – Berkshire County AMI – and is updated annually by HUD.

Housing Issues include an incomplete kitchen, incomplete plumbing facilities, more than one person per room, and/or cost burden greater than 30%.

Housing Cost Burden is the ratio of housing costs to household income. A household whose housing costs exceed thirty percent of income is considered housing cost burdened.

### **Definition**

Income in the Past 12 Months - Income of Households: This includes the income of the householder and all other individuals 15 years old and over in the household, whether they are related to the householder or not. Because many households consist of only one person, average household income is usually less than average family income. Although the household income statistics cover the past 12 months, the characteristics of individuals and the composition of households refer to the time of interview. Thus, the income of the household does not include amounts received by individuals who were members of the household during all or part of the past 12 months if these individuals no longer resided in the household at the time of interview. Similarly, income amounts reported by individuals who did not reside in the household during the past 12 months but who were members of the household at the time of interview are included. However, the composition of most households was the same during the past 12 months as at the time of interview.

The median divides the income distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median income and one-half above the median. For households and families, the median income is based on the distribution of the total number of households and families including those with no income. The median income for individuals is based on individuals 15 years old and over with income. Median income for households, families, and individuals is computed on the basis of a standard distribution. – U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

**Table 6.5 - Income Distribution**

Income Category	Owner	Renter	Total	Percent
Household Income ≤ 30% AMI	180	285	465	19%
Household Income > 30% to ≤ 50% AMI	235	155	390	16%
Household Income > 50% to ≤ 80% AMI	150	155	305	12%
Household Income > 80% to ≤ 100% AMI	165	125	290	12%
Household Income > 100% AMI	790	205	995	41%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,525</b>	<b>925</b>	<b>2,450</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Out of the 1,450 households whose incomes are below 100% AMI:

- 32% are extremely low-income;
- 27% are very low-income;
- 21% are considered low-income; and
- 20% are moderate income.

Based on the data available, 47% of Lenox households are considered low-income by HUD. This appears high, but this statistic is inflated by a combination of seniors living on fixed incomes and a number of regional and local jobs in low wage occupations (retail, personal services, accommodation and food services, arts, entertainment and recreation, etc.).

According to HUD, 36% of Lenox households experience one of the four housing issues. Of the 880 total households affected by housing problems, 55% of them are renters. Moreover, 52% of all renters in Lenox experience at least one housing problem. For homeowners, this figure is 26%.

Housing cost burden is the ratio of housing costs to household income. For renters, housing cost is the sum of contract rent and utilities, or gross monthly rent. For homeowners, it is the total of select monthly costs; mortgage payments, utilities, insurance, property taxes, and association or condominium fees, if applicable. A household, whether a renter or homeowner, is considered by HUD to be housing cost burdened when monthly housing costs exceed 30% of monthly household income. In 2015, 31% of households had month housing costs exceeding 30%, while 67% of Lenox households are not housing cost burdened.

**Table 6.6 - Cost Burden Overview**

Income Category	Owner	Renter	Total	Percent
Cost Burden ≤ 30%	1,115	545	1660	67%
Cost Burden > 30% to ≤ 50%	165	120	285	12%
Cost Burden > 50%	195	265	460	19%
Cost Burden not available	50	0	50	2%
Total	1,525	925	2,450	100%

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

One measure to determine whether or not a community is experiencing a deficit regarding affordable housing is whether or not its Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) is equivalent to 10% of its total year-round housing supply. Currently, Lenox’s SHI comprises 7.2% of the housing stock.

**Definition**

The Subsidized Housing Inventory is used to measure a community's stock of low-or moderate-income housing for the purposes of M.G.L. Chapter 40B, the Comprehensive Permit Law. While housing developed under Chapter 40B is eligible for inclusion on the inventory, many other types of housing also qualify to count toward a community's affordable housing stock.

Chapter 40B of Massachusetts General law establishes a basic presumption that communities provide at least 10% of housing affordable to low or moderate income households. And it includes provisions that allow an affordable developer a unified permitting process (Comprehensive Permit) that subsumes all permits normally issued by multiple town boards in communities below 10% statutory minimum.

Each community's SHI lists those housing units available – some specifically for seniors, and other families and disabled people who are income-qualified and cost-burdened, in need of affordable housing that the marketplace has not produced in communities.

In MA communities the SHI lists housing units designated as affordable and deed-restricted, which ensures their continuing affordability by restricting rents or the resale value (of ownership units) in “perpetuity”.

## 6.5 Indicators of Housing Needs

The Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP), a quasi-public agency supporting affordable housing, uses a number of indicators to determine a community's needs for housing across three types of housing; rental housing, affordable housing, and senior housing (Housing Needs Workbook, 2003).

According to MHP, indicators of a rental housing deficit include:

- a rental vacancy rate below 5%;
- more than 30% of renters are housing cost burdened (see above for definition); and
- a rental housing stock that constitutes less than 30% of the community's total housing stock.

MHP suggests that there is a senior housing deficit in a community when the ratio exceeds 2:1, i.e. when there are twice as many housing cost burdened seniors as there are subsidized senior housing units.

### **RENTAL HOUSING NEEDS**

In 2017, 37% of Lenox renters were housing cost burdened. This indicator is above the 30% threshold used by MHP to determine housing need. For the same year, median rent in Lenox was \$845, which is 5% higher than the countywide median rent. This could explain the rental vacancy rate of 9.9%, which is roughly double MHP's 5% threshold.

**Table 6.7 - Rental Housing Needs**

Year:	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Rental Unit Vacancy Rate	11.7%	15.9%	13.2%	13.9%	14.7%	9.5%	6.9%	9.9%
% Cost Burdened Renters	40.3%	48.7%	48.4%	46.6%	44.1%	43.1%	41.4%	36.8%
% Rental Housing Stock	27.3%	24.8%	31.0%	28.5%	32.0%	33.9%	35.4%	30.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010-2017 ACS 5 year estimates

Lenox’s Housing Production Plan notes that “housing values in Lenox generally run quite a bit higher than what a household at the Town’s median household income could afford to buy” (HPP, 2017; pg. 29). The HPP continues to note that the percentage of School Choice students has risen while total enrollment has remained stable, which indicated that the Town’s population of school-aged children has declined. The authors state: “Lenox housing costs present a high barrier to families that would probably choose Lenox as a place to live—if they could find housing they can afford”. The HPP states that an increase in the supply of rental units may lower rental housing costs and attract more families to Lenox, as well. Overall, Lenox does not have appropriate housing for people earning local prevailing wages. If Lenox wants to be an economically diverse community, the Town has a housing problem.

**SENIOR & AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEEDS**

Chapter 40B establishes for Commonwealth cities and towns a goal that 10% of total housing stock is deed restricted affordable housing. According to Lenox’s Housing Production Plan, as of 2017, Lenox’s SHI comprised a total of 172 units, or 6% of the Town’s total year-round housing stock. Lenox would need approximately 130 additional deed restricted affordable housing units to reach the goal of 10% of the entire housing stock.

According to the American Community Survey, Lenox has 386 cost burdened households where the householder is 65 years or older and a total of 146 senior housing units. The ratio between cost burdened seniors and subsidized senior housing units is 2.64:1 - meaning there are 2.64 cost burdened seniors living in Lenox for every subsidized senior housing unit. This indicates that there may be a need to increase subsidized senior housing units in Lenox.

Table 6.8 - Senior and Affordable Housing Needs

Development Name	Location	Housing Type	Subsidizing Agency	Senior Housing	SHI Units
The Curtis	6 Main St.	Rental	DHCD	Yes	54
Turnure Terrace	Old Stockbridge Rd.	Rental	DHCD	Yes	48
n/a	45 Golden Hill Rd.	Rental	DHCD	No	4
n/a	West St.	Rental	DHCD	No	8
The Curtis	11-13 Church St.	Rental	DHCD	No	8
Cameron House	109 Housatonic St.	Rental	MHP/DHCD	Yes	38
DDS Group Homes	Confidential	Rental	DDS	No	12
Total Units:				146	172

Source: Lenox Housing Production Plan, 2017

## 6.6 Lenox Housing Initiatives

Lenox has been proactive regarding housing issues, concerns, challenges, and opportunities. There are several municipal authorities implementing housing strategies currently at work in Lenox. They include:

- Lenox Housing Authority
- Affordable Housing Trust & Committee
- Community Preservation Committee
- Planning Board

Each of the above entities has taken charge of different initiatives aimed at resolving issues related to housing in Lenox.

### LENOX HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Lenox Housing Authority manages and maintains the majority of the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory units, including 102 units that are reserved for senior housing. The Housing Authority also manages units intended for occupancy by disabled and low-income families.

### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST & COMMITTEE**

Established via Chapter XXIV of the Town of Lenox Bylaws, the Housing Trust & Committee is a seven-member board charged with “providing for the preservation and creation of affordable housing in Lenox for the benefit low- and moderate-income households.” The Housing Trust & Committee has undertaken efforts to increase the accessibility of housing in Lenox to low- and moderate-income households through two primary initiatives.

The first is the Housing Trust & Committee’s first-time homebuyer’s grant program. Funded by the Federal Home Loan Bank fund and in partnership with regionally-headquartered banks, this program provides first-time homebuyers with a grant of up to \$10,000 or five percent of the total cost of the home. The program operates under two primary restrictions: a) grants are only available to households earning less than or equal to eighty percent the area median family income; b) only homes purchased for \$280,000 or less are eligible. The program was enacted in 2010 and has since issued eight grants.

Secondly, The Housing Trust & Committee had a role in the issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Town-owned Sawmill Brook property at the corner of Route 7 and Housatonic Street. The RFP yielded a viable proposal that, if developed, would increase the Town’s percentage of Subsidized Housing Inventory closer toward the Chapter 40B goal of ten percent.

### **COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**

The Community Preservation Committee oversees the Town’s Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds. Expenditure of CPA funds are restricted to Historic Preservation, Community Housing, and Open Space/Recreation projects. Community Housing has been an area of focus for the Community Preservation Committee, as it provided funding to the Affordable Housing Trust, as well as toward the purchase of the Sawmill Brook Property.

### **PLANNING BOARD**

The Lenox Planning Board maintains and amends the Town’s Zoning Bylaw. The Planning Board has addressed or attempted to address housing issues through zoning amendments. In recent years, the Planning Board has recommended adoption of such tools as the Town’s Accessory Dwelling Unit Bylaw and its Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw. In addition, the Town adopted a zoning bylaw for short-term rentals as a means of maintaining accessible housing cost levels.

## 6.7 Goals, Objectives, & Action Items

- **GOAL H 1: INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF HOUSING AFFORDABLE FOR YOUNG, FIRST-TIME HOME BUYERS.**

**Objective H 1.1:** Ensure that the Affordable Housing Trust has adequate resources to support its mission and efforts.

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

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

Action Item 3: Adopt special legislation to create a seasonal and weekend rentals excise tax; a portion of which would be allocated to the Affordable Housing Trust.

**Objective H 1.2:** Help expand the Affordable Housing Trust's first-time homebuyer grant program.

Action Item 1: Expand program to household earning between 80% and 100% AMI.

Action Item 2: Work with regional financial institutions and real estate agencies to raise awareness of the program throughout the region.

- **GOAL H 2: INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF MIXED-INCOME HOUSING OPTIONS - IN OR NEAR COMMERCIAL AREAS AND VILLAGES - TO SUPPORT THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND PROMOTE THE PRINCIPLES OF SMART GROWTH.**

**Objective H 2.1:** Encourage the development of apartments over commercial spaces in Lenox Village and Lenox Dale.

Action Item 1: Adopt the following bylaw language:

*Dwelling units shall be permitted above the first floor of a building in which all of the ground floor space is used for nonresidential purposes, provided that: 1. The sum of all residential floor space does not exceed 70 percent of the total floor area of the building; 2. The minimum gross floor area for each dwelling unit shall be 770 square feet; and 3. There shall be 1.5 parking spaces per two dwelling units unless the Planning Board grants a Special Permit to waive the residential parking requirement.*

Action Item 2: Consider increasing the maximum height limit for buildings in the C and C-3A districts from two stories and 35 feet to 2.5 stories and 35 feet by right and 3 stories and 40 feet by special permit.

**Objective H 2.2:** Encourage the development of freestanding residential buildings along Route 7.

Action Item 1: Clarify the requirements for creating multi-family dwelling on the same premises as commercial buildings. Consider adding to 9.5 of the Zoning Bylaw a section providing regulations for horizontal mixed-use developments.

Action Item 2: Horizontal mixed use development bylaws typically include several provisions. Lenox should add the following to 9.5 of the Zoning Bylaw:

1. Maximum percentage of gross floor area that can be used for residential purpose;
2. Use of floor area ratios to establish the maximum allowable gross floor area in the development as a whole;
3. Requirement for residential buildings to be located behind commercial buildings, separated by landscaped areas, pedestrian facilities, and off street parking, or interspersed with commercial buildings directly facing the street; and
4. Design standards—preferably in a set of guidelines that are referenced but not located in the Zoning Bylaw.

**Objective H 2.3:** Explore creative ways to develop new housing.

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

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

Action Item 3: Identify areas throughout the Town where pocket neighborhoods - a type of planned neighborhood comprising a grouping of smaller residences - would be a viable option for new housing. Master Plan outreach has identified Lenox Dale and the commercial districts along Route 7/20 for this purpose.

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

➤ **GOAL H 3: ESTABLISH LENOX AS A DESTINATION FOR FAMILIES.**

**Objective H 3.1:** Establish new density standards for multi-family dwellings and townhouses in Section 9.1 of the Zoning Bylaw that would encourage the creation of affordable units.

Action Item 1: Amend 9.1.1 to reduce the buffer area between buildings, accessory uses or outdoor activity areas and abutting properties from 200 feet to 100 feet.

Action Item 2: Amend 9.1.2 to apply the ZBA Special Permit process to multi-family dwellings in the R-30, C-3A, and I districts.

Action Item 3: Amend 9.1.2 to allow multi-family dwellings by right subject to site plan review, design and other performance standards in the R-15 and R-30 districts, as well as the Gateway Mixed Use Overlay District.

Action Item 4: Amend section 1 of 9.1.3 to reduce dimensional requirements in the R-15 and C-3A Districts as follows:

Density Standard	R-15	C-3A
Minimum Lot Frontage	100	125
Minimum Lot Width	100	125
Minimum Front Setback	35	50
Minimum Side, Rear Setback	25	25
Maximum Height, stories	2	2.5/3
Maximum Height, Feet	35	35/40
Maximum Building Coverage	25%	30%

Action Item 5: Amend section 2 of 9.1.3 to reduce minimum land area required for each multi-family units and townhouses from 10,000 and 15,000 (respectively) to 7,500 square feet. Allow higher densities by Special Permit.

Action Item 6: Amend section 3 of 9.1.3 to reduce the required setback between buildings from 40 feet to 20 feet.

**Objective H 3.2:** Create housing incentives and marketing efforts that would attract families to Lenox.

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

Action Item 2: Explore the feasibility of establishing a home mortgage program similar to the Detroit Home Mortgage model that aims to help homebuyers purchase and rehabilitate distressed properties. Collaborate with local financial institutions and foundations to offer qualified borrowers a second mortgage for renovations and improvements.

Action Item 3: Work with the Lenox Chamber of Commerce, Berkshire, and recently relocated resident families to develop a marketing strategy that targets families.

Action Item 4: Develop and deepen relationships with real estate agencies and regional employers to promote Lenox as an option for relocating employees and their families.

➤ **GOAL H 4: DEVELOP MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR SENIORS AND RETIREES.**

**Objective H 4.1:** Amend the Zoning Bylaw to encourage the creation of accessory apartments.

Action Item 1: Amend the Table of Uses, Subsection H, to make accessory dwelling units located inside single-family homes a by right use in all residential zoning districts and the C districts (not C-1A or C-3A).

Action Item 2: Consider amending Section 9.2 (Accessory Dwelling Unit) of the Zoning Bylaw to allow detached accessory dwelling units by right in the R-3A.

Action Item 3: Consider establishing design guidelines for detached accessory dwelling units, to maintain the character of Lenox neighborhoods.

# 7. Historical & Cultural Resources

Lenox has a rich history and a vibrant cultural landscape. The Town's historical and cultural resources are preserved and promoted through municipal tools and concerted efforts of local organizations, individuals, and regional agencies. Attractions such as Tanglewood, Shakespeare & Company, and the Lenox Library draw visitors and contribute to the high quality of life experienced by Lenox residents.

Lenox has proactively sought to preserve and protect artifacts of its past. This includes written materials in addition to historic buildings and landscapes. Historic preservation efforts, such as the Estate Preservation Area and Historic District bylaw, have proven to maintain community character and contribute to the Town's positioning as a cultural destination.

Lenox is home to cultural institutions such as Ventfort Hall and The Mount. Lenox Village contains the highest concentration of galleries and cultural businesses in Berkshire County. The Town holds numerous events, such as the Apple Squeeze, gallery walks, and public theater and music performances that attract residents and visitors while celebrating its historic and cultural resources.

The relationship between the Town and its historical and cultural resources is vital. Lenox's historical and cultural resources draw visitors to Lenox and help attract new residents, thereby advancing the Town's economy and the quality of life it offers. The Town in turn supports cultural entities and historical assets by employing tools for preservation and promotion. While the Town's historical and cultural landscape is strong and vibrant, it is not without its challenges. Lenox's historical and cultural resources would be further supported by increasing collaboration between cultural and historical entities, integrating historical and cultural resources with other amenities, and by demonstrating how historical preservation can spur economic development.

## **VISION**

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*LENOX WILL CONTINUE TO PRESERVE AND PROMOTE ITS HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES THAT ENRICH THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.*

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### **7.1 Priority Historical & Cultural Resources Topics**

#### **CONTINUE AND LEVERAGE EXISTING COLLABORATION**

Increasing collaboration between the Town, its historical and cultural entities, and those within the Berkshire County region may lead to an even stronger and more vibrant Lenox. Lenox's historical and cultural landscape is anchored by several large institutions that frequently hold events and performances. These events are integral to the Town's economy and facilitating collaboration between institutions can help attract more visitors throughout the year and better manage the influx of visitors during the peak season.

#### **CONTINUE INTEGRATION WITH OTHER AMENITIES**

Historical and cultural resources are not the only amenities in Lenox. There are a diverse array of assets and resources in the Town, including shopping, dining, and outdoor recreation. The Town can leverage all of its resources through integrative means, such as improved wayfinding, innovative marketing techniques, thoughtfully designed shared use paths, and strategically located public art. Integrating all Lenox has to offer stands to improve the experience of visiting and residing in Lenox thereby further designating Lenox as a destination town.

#### **RECOGNIZE HISTORIC PRESERVATION AS A CATALYST FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The unique combination of Great Estates, cultural amenities, and the historical New England character of its villages distinguishes Lenox from other popular destination towns. Because of tourism, Lenox has grown since the turn of the millennium. Increased tourism has led to subsequent development of condominiums, hotels, and resorts. In order to maintain the unique combination of assets that attract visitors and residents, the Town should continue, if not increase, investment in the preservation of historical and cultural assets.

## 7.2 COVID-19 Related Impacts to Historical & Cultural Resources

Lenox is known for cultural resources. Its largest cultural entity, Boston Symphony Orchestra's Tanglewood, did not open in 2020. Shakespeare and Company, The Mount, Ventfort Hall, the Frelinghuysen Morris House and Studio, art galleries, and other cultural entities and businesses in Lenox were directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Impacts were experienced in ticket sales and reduced visitor-ship, and through the lay-off and furlough of staff at all levels. This directly impacted Lenox, too. Stakeholders spoke to the magic of live arts performance in Lenox on a summer's day and evening, and eagerly await a return to normal when it is safe to do so. A challenge highlighted was local internet capacity, which dictates the ability of some organizations to successfully pivot to web based programming and education. If people cannot come to Lenox, how can Lenox share its history and culture with them? In terms of historical resources, it is important to not let financial impacts of pandemic lead to the deterioration of significant buildings and landscapes.

### INDICATORS TO TRACK

- ✓ Visitorship
- ✓ Ticket sales
- ✓ In-person versus virtual programming

## 7.3 Priority Historical & Cultural Resources Goals

- **GOAL HC 1: USE MUNICIPAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES TO ENSURE THE CONTINUED SUCCESS OF THE TOWN'S HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ECONOMY.**

Lenox's historical/cultural economy is a primary driver of the Town's success. The Town should consider deploying the various tools and resources at its disposal to support and advance the historical/cultural economy. Strategic investments in the Lenox Cultural Council, public art, and the Cultural District, especially in terms of wayfinding and promotion, will better designate Lenox as a cultural destination. Additionally, the Town can improve the quality of life for working artists and cultural business by creating arts overlay zoning districts in strategic locations such as portions of Lenox Village and Lenox Dale.

- **GOAL HC 2: PROMOTE ADAPTIVE REUSE OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND PROPERTIES IN SUPPORT OF THE TOWN'S HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ECONOMY.**

Adaptive reuse of historic buildings for strategic purposes can advance the Town's historical/cultural economy. The Town should provide incentives for developers to adapt historic buildings for uses as artist live/workspace and mixed use developments. Adaptive reuse projects may attract more working artists and artisans to Lenox while preserving historically and architecturally significant buildings thereby enhancing an already vibrant cultural landscape.

- **GOAL HC 3: IMPROVE BOTH HOUSING AND TRANSIT TO MAKE JOBS IN THE CULTURAL SECTOR MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR WORKERS.**

Cultural institutions like Tanglewood and Shakespeare & Company - as well as the myriad smaller but no less significant businesses and organizations - draw thousands of visitors to Lenox each year. However, these organizations operate on limited margins while still depending on a talented and reliable workforce. Lenox should attract cultural workers by developing workforce housing on land owned by or near cultural institutions. Working to facilitate greater connections and partnerships between itself, cultural organizations, and educational institutions might also bring an influx of cultural workers into Lenox.

- **GOAL HC 4: FURTHER INTEGRATE HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES WITH OTHER AMENITIES.**

Lenox is known not only as a destination for history and culture but for outdoor recreation and health and wellness, as well. By strategically integrating its historic and cultural resources with other amenities, the Town can promote increased visitation and appreciation of all it has to offer visitors and its residents. Strategic integration can be enhanced through improved wayfinding, establishing multimodal paths that connect amenities, and holding cultural events in public spaces.

(FOR THE COMPLETE LIST OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION ITEMS, SEE PAGE 181)

## 7.4 Historical Resources

For much of its history, Lenox has proactively sought to preserve and celebrate its historical heritage. The Town has sought official designations through the National Register of Historical Places, the Massachusetts Historic Register, the Historic District Act, local bylaws, and Historical Preservation planning among others to enhance its historical/cultural stature. Heritage tourism has helped distinguish Lenox as a destination and, in turn, serves to buoy the Town's economy.

Nine properties in Lenox are listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Properties listed on the NRHP are those that are deemed historically significant under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

On the National Register of Historic Places are historically significant religious properties, Church on the Hill and Trinity Episcopal Church; Lenox Academy, a former school building that now serves as the home of the Town's social club; the Lenox Railroad Station, located on banks of the Housatonic River in the Lenox Dale neighborhood; and several historically significant residences.

**Table 7.1 - National Register of Historic Places**

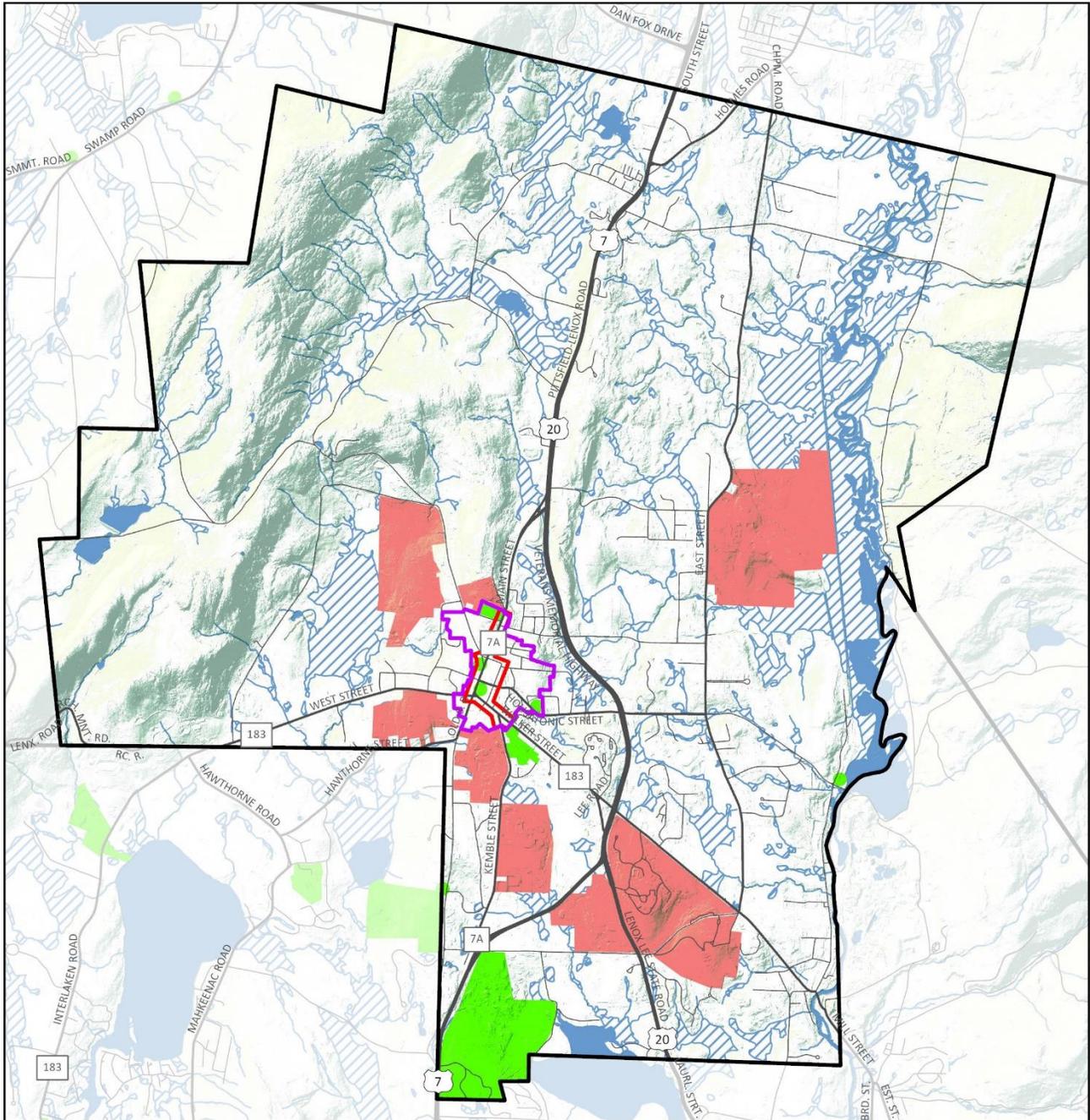
Property Name	Acreage	Status	Status Date
Lenox High School	3.9	Listed	8/25/2004
The Mount	198	Listed	11/11/1971
Lenox Library	0.9	Listed	4/3/1973
Church on the Hill	6	Listed	9/30/1982
Lenox Academy	0.9	Listed	9/30/1982
Elm Court	96.6	Listed	12/30/1985
Lenox Railroad Station	0.9	Listed	6/16/1989
Ventfort Hall	12.5	Listed	3/5/1993
Trinity Episcopal Church	1.4	Listed	4/4/1996

Source: National Register of Historic Places, 2019

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Lenox became a destination for wealthy urbanites. Gilded Age luminaries such as Edith Wharton, George and Sarah Morgan (sister of J.P. Morgan), and the Vanderbilt family constructed large residences, now known as Great Estates, in Lenox. Several of Lenox's Great Estates have been repurposed as museums, bed and breakfasts, and other uses that attract tourism, serve educational purposes, and preserve the Town's heritage.

In addition to the nine properties listed on the NRHP, Lenox has 384 properties listed on the Massachusetts Historic Register, including several of the Great Estates. The Town's Estate Preservation Area zoning bylaw has aided the preservation the Great Estates.

Figure 7.1 - Historic Properties Map



- Proposed Historic District
- Local Historic District
- National Historic Sites
- Great Estates



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



**ESTATE PRESERVATION AREA ZONING BYLAW**

The Estate Preservation zoning bylaw defines an estate preservation area as a property or building listed in the table below. The bylaw is intended to encourage preservation and restoration of architectural and landscape features of estate preservation areas by affording use flexibility and a bonus density system to such properties.

**Table 7.2 - Estate Preservation Properties**

Property Name	Building Type/Name	Location
Bellefontaine	Mansion	Kemble St.
Belvoir Terrace	Main Building	Cliffwood St.
Blantyre	Main Building	East St.
Cranwell	Cranwell Hall, Wickham Hall, Berchman's Hall	Lee Rd.
Ethelwynde	Main Building	Yokun Ave.
Elms	Main Building	West St.
Springlawn	Basset Hall, Schermerhorn Hall	Kemble St.
Wayside	Main Building	Yokun Ave.

Source: Lenox Zoning Bylaw , 2017

Lenox adopted its Estate Preservation Area zoning bylaw as a means to “encourage the preservation and restoration of the original features and character of buildings inherited from the estate system of the turn of the century” (Lenox Zoning Bylaw, p.56). The bylaw additionally provides for the preservation of the open space, vistas, stonework, gardens, and recreation facilities that accompany such buildings. The bylaw utilizes use flexibility and a density bonus system as a means to achieve the objective of encouraging preservation and restoration of the Town’s privately-owned Great Estates.

The Estate Preservation Area Zoning Bylaw is intended to allow for a symbiotic coexistence between economic development and historical preservation. Economic development and historical preservation are often perceived to be at odds, as if development requires abandonment of the past. By essentially trading use flexibilities and density bonuses for preservation of historically significant places, the bylaw allows for adaptive reuse of such sites. For instance, Springlawn - once a home - is now under consideration with a developer for development of high-end condominiums, improving the property’s value and increasing the number of possible housing units in Lenox. Springlawn is just one such example among many.

## **HISTORIC DISTRICT BYLAW**

The Historic District is a geographical area comprising the commercial district of Lenox Village. The District was created to preserve the distinctive characteristics of significant places.

In accordance with the Historic Districts Act (MGL Ch. 40C), Lenox adopted its Historic District bylaw to promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public through the preservation and protection of buildings that are either historically or architecturally significant. The bylaw requires that “no building or structure within the Historic District shall be constructed or altered in any way that affects its exterior appearance” (Lenox Historic District Bylaw, pg. 1). The Historic District’s boundaries are shown in Figure 7.1 (indicated by the red boundary lines) and in Figure 7.2.

In addition to establishing the physical boundaries of the district, the bylaw also establishes the Historic District Commission. The Historic District Commission is the public body that oversees the provisions of the Town’s Historic District Bylaw. The Commission is tasked with preserving the historic exterior architecture of properties within the Historic District.

Figure 7.2 - Historic District Map



 Local Historic District

0 500 1,000 Feet



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**HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLANNING**

The Town’s 2018 Historic Preservation Plan seeks to incorporate historic preservation into the strategies and initiatives that will shape Lenox’s future. There are eight broad goals shown in the following table.

**Table 7.3 - Historic Preservation Plan: Eight Broad Goals**

<b>Goal 1</b>	Make historic preservation & community character central to Lenox's quality of life.
<b>Goal 2</b>	Use Lenox's historical identity as a core element of the Town's economic development strategy.
<b>Goal 3</b>	Make Lenox's historic preservation program a model of best practices.
<b>Goal 4</b>	Fully integrate historic preservation into Town programs and processes.
<b>Goal 5</b>	Use planning & growth management as a means of enhancing community character.
<b>Goal 6</b>	Strengthen the relationship between historic preservation and land conservation, environment, and sustainability.
<b>Goal 7</b>	Heighten public appreciation of Lenox's history & historic resources through storytelling & other means.
<b>Goal 8</b>	Make full use of programs available for historic preservation and community enhancement.

Source: Lenox Historic Preservation Plan, 2018

In 2018, the Lenox Historical Commission adopted a community-wide Historic Preservation Plan. The plan offers recommendations for strategic historic preservation under five categories:

- Creative Economy and Historic Preservation;
- Planning & Land Use;
- Land Conservation & Trails;
- Historic Preservation Program; and
- Interpretation & Outreach.

The plan provides a thorough analysis of the Town’s history, historical resources, and recommendations by which the Town can leverage the preservation of its historical resources for economic development. Several recommendations have been incorporated herein.

**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT**

The Community Preservation Act was adopted under Massachusetts General Law in 2000. This Act creates a fund for municipalities to dedicate money towards open space preservation, preservation of historic resources, development of affordable housing, and the acquisition and development of outdoor recreational facilities. The fund is subsidized by a voter-authorized surcharge in property tax bills and through the statewide Community Preservation Trust Fund. The Community Preservation Trust Fund is subsidized by deed recording fees from all of Massachusetts. Between 2007 and 2019, there was a total of \$5,082,025.00 allocated to Lenox’s CPA fund. This includes projects that have either been cancelled or are still in progress. Of that total, 58% (\$2,941,315) has gone towards Historic Preservation projects.

The following table shows how these funds have been allocated towards Historic Preservation since 2007:

**Table 7.4 - Community Preservation Act: Lenox Allocations for Historical Preservation**

Project Name	Year	Description	Status	CPA Total
Historic Lenox Library building	2007	Pay the annual debt service incurred on a ten year bond for the purpose of purchasing the Historic Lenox Library building.	Project complete	\$1,500,000
Lenox Community Center	2008	Window Project	Project cancelled	\$50,000
George Bisacca Cannon Restoration	2008	Restore important landmark (Bisacca Cannon) in Lilac Park.	Project complete	\$5,000
Lenox Housing Authority Curtis Porch Restoration	2008	Restore the porch at the historic Curtis Hotel a converted 54 unit affordable housing project.	Project complete	\$15,000
Westinghouse Streetlamp Project	2008	Restore historic Westinghouse Streetlamps on Church Street.	Project complete	\$100,000
Church on the Hill Restoration	2008	Restore historic steeple	Project complete	\$17,000
Lenox Housing Authority Curtis Porch Restoration	2009	Roof Restoration	Project complete	\$15,000
Library Exterior Renovations	2010	Roof, roof balustrade and window shutter restoration.	Project in progress	\$50,000

## Town of Lenox, Massachusetts: Master Plan

Lenox Housing Authority Curtis Porch Restoration	2010	Continued work on the restoration of the historic Curtis Building porch. The Curtis Building is a housing authority building.	Project complete	\$50,000
Form B - Historic Inventory Forms	2010	Hire Historian to prepare Form B - Historic Inventory Forms.	Project complete	\$7,800
Berkshire Scenic Railway/Town of Lenox	2011	Restore historic scenic vista at the Berkshire Railway Museum.	Project cancelled	\$100,000
Lenox Housing Authority Curtis Porch Restoration	2011	Continued work on the restoration of the historic Curtis Building porch. The Curtis Building is located in the Lenox Historic District and is a Lenox Housing Authority property.	Project complete	\$50,000
Lenox Historic Street Signs	2011	Restore the historic streets signs in the Lenox Historic District.	Project complete	\$8,000
Lenox Housing Authority Curtis Porch Restoration	2012	Final phase of the Curtis Porch Restoration.	Project complete	\$28,000
Church on the Hill Restoration	2012	Steeple Restoration - Bell Tower Restoration.	Project complete	\$45,300
The Mount - Restoration of the historic Stable	2012	The restoration of the exterior of the Stable at the Mount.	Project complete	\$50,000
Church on the Hill Cemetery Restoration Plan	2012	Prepare a Master Conservation Plan for the Church on the Hill Burying Grounds.	Project complete	\$20,000
Roche Reading Park Restoration	2012	The Town purchased the Library and Roche Reading Park with CPA funds. The Village Improvement Committee will use the funds to begin work on the restoration of the Park.	Project complete	\$20,000
Ventfort Hall - Elevator	2012	Construction of an exterior elevator to make the resource more functional. The CPC and Town Meeting require that matching funds be raised prior to releasing funds to Ventfort Hall.	Project cancelled	\$20,000
The Mount - Restoration of the historic Stable	2013	The Mount - Historic Stable Restoration Phase 2	Project complete	\$30,000
Church on the Hill Cemetery Restoration Plan	2013	Church on the Hill Cemetery Restoration Work Phase 1	Project complete	\$75,000
Lenox Fire Company Fire Truck Restoration	2013	Restoration of the 1932 Buffalo Stewart Fire Truck. CPA funds to pay for parts and specialized labor for the restoration project. General labor and work to be donated by Fire Company members as in-kind donation.	Project complete	\$18,500
Lenox Fire Company Fire Truck Restoration	2014	Restoration of antique American LaFrance Pumper fire truck that private Lenox Fire Co. owns	Project complete	\$50,000
Church on the Hill Cemetery Restoration Plan	2014	Church on the Hill Cemetery Restoration Phase II	Project complete	\$66,000

## Town of Lenox, Massachusetts: Master Plan

Ventfort Hall Master Plan	2015	Ventfort Hall will complete a Master Facilities Plan to identify all of the existing challenges to full code compliance and identify a prioritized improvement plan to bring the building into full code compliance.	Project complete	\$23,490
St. Martin's Hall Phase I	2015	Shakespeare and Company will secure the envelope of St. Martin's Hall, a central building of their campus to prevent further deterioration and begin crafting a master plan for its renovation and reuse.	Project complete	\$20,000
Church on the Hill Cemetery Restoration Plan	2015	The Town of Lenox will continue the stabilization and restoration of gravestones at the Church on the Hill Cemetery.	Project complete	\$25,000
Old Court House Cupola	2015	Replicate and place a new version of the historic cupola on the former county court house.	Project cancelled	\$27,750
Lenox Library Step Repair	2015	The Lenox Library will remove its worn, uneven marble steps located at the front of the building on main Street and replace with similar marble steps installed in a manner to avoid impacts of weathering that have made them unstable in recent years.	Project complete	\$20,000
Town Beach Project	2016	To equip the public beach on Laurel Lake with universal access and modernize the bathhouse. All are welcome at the beach, free of charge: Lenox residents, visitors and residents of other towns	Project complete	\$169,290
The Mount Stable Phase 2	2017	Finalize building envelope restoration including window replacement	Project complete	\$75,000
Ventfort Hall	2017	Masonry Stabilization Efforts	Project complete	\$30,000
Trinity Church	2018	To assist with the restoration and repointing of the western elevation of the church building which is on the National Historic Register.	Project in progress	\$41,000
The Mount	2018	To assist in restoring the 3,100 square foot terrace at the mansion.	Project complete	\$75,000
Frelinghuysen Morris House	2018	To restore a veranda on the National Register Modern architecture building housing the art collection and open to public tours.	Project complete	\$19,185
Frelinghuysen Morris House	2019	Restoration work on Patio 4 of this historic building, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2016.	Project in progress	\$25,000
<b>Total Spent on Historical Preservation (Completed)</b>		<b>\$2,668,565</b>		
<b>In Progress</b>		<b>\$75,000</b>		
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>\$2,743,565</b>		

Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, 2020

## 7.5 Cultural Resources

Lenox is a small town with a wide array of world-class cultural offerings. With institutions such as Ventfort Hall, Shakespeare & Company., Tanglewood, and The Mount, among many others, Lenox is a nationally recognized destination for the arts and culture. The Town's cultural offerings, including visual art, music, theater, and the humanities, are enjoyed by both residents and visitors. Because the arts and culture are integral to Lenox's quality of life and its economy, the Town has sought to support cultural institutions, businesses, and organizations in a number of ways. These efforts include annual festivals, pursuit of a cultural district designation, and supportive zoning and land use policy.



Source: Lindsey Schmid – walled garden at the Mount

## CULTURAL DISTRICT

The Lenox Cultural District is approximately one half mile north to south, from Franklin Street to Walker and Kemble Streets. It spans west to east from property borders behind Main Street along the east side of Church Street. Cultural Assets, Historic Sites, Creative Economy businesses, and community and economic development partners within district borders are identified here. Note that multiple partners located outside of district borders will also be actively involved in district activities and promotion. There are also many retail, lodging, and dining venues within and surrounding the district that directly benefit from the concentration of assets in the following map.

Table 7.5 details which organizations are part of Lenox's Cultural District and corresponds with Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3 - Cultural District Map



 Cultural District



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



**Table 7.5 - Organizations Included in Lenox's Cultural District**

1. Lenox Historical Society	26. Brava
2. Berkshire Classic Leather and Silver	27. 33 Main
3 Robert Wilk Sculpture	28. Art and Chocolate Gallery
4. Laurie Donovan Designs	29. Lenox Chamber of Commerce
5. Firefly	30. Edward Acker Photography
6. What a Gift	31. Joan Ciolfi Gallery
7. Sohn Fine Art	32. Olde Heritage Tavern
8. MacKimmie Co.	33. Purple Plume
9. Nejaime's Wine Cellars	34. design managerie
10. Concepts of Art Judaica	35. Lenox Library
11. Tom Fiorini Sculpture Garden	36. Towne Gallery Framing
12. The Gifted Child	37. The Wit Gallery
13. Glad Rags	38. Hoadley Gallery
14. DeVries Fine Art	39. Shooz
15. Colorful Stitches	40. Charles Flint Antiques
16. Lenox Coffee	41. Patisserie Lenox
17. 4forArt Gallery	42. Lenox Town Hall
18. Lenox Apple Squeeze	43. Lenox Cultural Council
19. Annie Selke Shop	44. An American Craftsman
20. Lenox Print and Mercantile	45. Gateways Inn
21. The Bookstore & Get Lit Wine Bar	46. Lenox Community Center
22. Casablanca	47. Kemble Inn
23. Scott Barrow Photography	48. Table Six Restaurant
24. Shots Cafe	49. Trinity Episcopal Church
25. OLIVA!	

Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, 2019

There are major cultural institutions that exist outside of the borders of the Lenox Cultural District. They include:

- Shakespeare & Company
- Tanglewood
- Boston University Tanglewood Institute (BUTI)
- Ventfort Hall
- The Mount
- Frelinghuysen Morris House and Studio
- Mass Audubon's Pleasant Valley

State-designated cultural districts are enabled by Section 58A of Chapter 10 of the Massachusetts General Laws and are intended to:

- Attract artists and cultural enterprises to a community;
- Encourage business and job development;
- Establish tourist destinations;
- Preserve and reuse historic buildings;
- Enhance property values; and
- Foster local cultural development.

The Lenox Cultural District contains three blocks of Lenox Village extending just west of Main Street and to south along Walker Street and turning briefly down Kemble Street. The district's northern boundary runs parallel to Franklin Street while its eastern boundary follows Church Street. This area contains numerous art galleries, and cultural amenities including Lenox Library, the Lenox Historical Society, Church on the Hill, Trinity Episcopal Church, and several restaurants. In developing the Cultural District, it was recognized that many of Lenox's premier cultural attractions fall outside of the district's physical boundaries: The Mount, Shakespeare and Company, Tanglewood, Ventfort Hall and the Frelinghuysen Morris House and Studio. Lenox is not just a limited cultural district, but a cultural community and the convening of these organizations into one initiative offers great synergy and potential going forward to accomplish the goals of this Master Plan along with the goals of the Cultural District, including cross-programming, improved wayfinding, improved connectivity, and improved marketing over time to further establish Lenox as a vibrant year-round destination.

Receipt of the Cultural District designation benefits the arts and culture in Lenox in several ways. It will further avail Lenox to state resources that can be used to leverage existing and future cultural entities and events. Designation also establishes the Lenox Village downtown as the nexus of a broader cultural community thereby improving coordination and increasing collaboration between the Town and independent cultural entities. Since its official designation in 2019, the Cultural District has been an active presence, coordinating activities with the Chamber of Commerce and members to create and promote cultural activities throughout town and particularly in the village. Lenox received funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) for programs and activity; Lenox matches these funds. In addition, technical assistance is provided by the “Shared Economic Development Planner” through the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.

**LENOX CULTURAL COUNCIL**

With an allocation of \$4,400 from the MCC and total budget of \$5,579, The Lenox Cultural Council supported numerous community-based artists and cultural entities in 2017.

**Table 7.6 - Grantees Supported by the Lenox Cultural Council**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Projects</b>
Barrington Stage Company	Youth Theater Program
Berkshire County Historical Society	Writing at Arrowhead
Berkshire Lyric Theater	School Chorus at Ozawa Hall
Berkshire Music School	Painted Piano Project
Berkshire Pulse	Intro to Dance In-School Program
Cantilena Chamber Choir	MLK Concert
Roger Tincknell	Children's Songs & Singing Games
Community Health Programs	Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary Field Trip
MUSICDance.edu	From Jazz to Hip Hop
Sharon Lazerson	Intergenerational/Cross Cultural Chorus
Intergenerational Playshop	Cabin Fever by Jeanne Bassis
IS183 Art School of the Berkshires	Arts within Reach Scholarship Program
Julie Stepanek	Learn Ukulele with Julie
Mass Audubon Berkshire Sanctuaries	Bird Walks at Pleasant Valley
Lenox Library	Nutshell Playhouse
Pittsfield Shakespeare in the Park	
Shakespeare & Company	2018 Fall Festival of Shakespeare
The Marble Collection	High School Arts Magazine
WAM Theater	Season of Events
West Stockbridge Chamber Players	Concert

Source: Town of Lenox Annual Report, 2017

The Lenox Cultural Council is a municipal board Lenox composed of appointed volunteers. The Council is enabled by the MCC’s Local Cultural Council Program (LCC), which was established by MGL Ch.10 S. 58. The LCC is the largest grassroots cultural funding network in the nation. Through the LCC, local cultural councils receive allocations from MCC and redistributes funds among grantees as a means of supporting community-based artists and cultural entities.

The Lenox Cultural Council’s 2017 MCC allocation totaled \$4,400. An additional \$179 was rolled over from the previous year’s allocation for a total fiscal year 2017 budget of \$4,579. The Council received thirty-two grant applications requesting a total of \$15,220. Of the thirty-two applicants, twenty received grants in support of specific projects from the Council. Grantees ranged from organizations such as Shakespeare & Company and IS183 Art School of the Berkshires to individual artists.

**CULTURAL EVENTS**

Events celebrating the arts and culture are regularly held in Lenox. These events serve to celebrate the Town’s rich cultural heritage and to support its present and future. Cultural entities, whether large performance venues, small retail galleries or educational non-profits, must draw people in to thrive. Lenox strives to institute annual seasonal event programming designed to benefit cultural, historical, and economic development concerns throughout the Town. One measure often employed in Lenox as a means of creating agglomeration for the benefit of cultural (and other) entities is events programming.

**Table 7.7 - Lenox Cultural Events**

Coordinating Entity	Event
Lenox Chamber of Commerce	Apple Squeeze
ArtLenox	ArtWeek
Lenox Library	Historic Concert Reenactment
Trinity Church	Free Performances
Lenox Community Center	Contra Dances
Lenox Community Center	Art Exhibits
Lenox Community Center	Plays
Ventfort Hall	Tea & Talks
Making Spirits Bright Festival	Pop-up Performances

Source: Town of Lenox, 2019

## LENOX CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Entering its 40<sup>th</sup> year, the Lenox Apple Squeeze is a two-day street festival held annually in Lenox Village at the end of September in celebration of the apple harvest. The Apple Squeeze includes family and children-oriented festivities, musical performances, and nearly 150 local vendors selling food, crafts, and other wares. The Lenox Chamber of Commerce also hosts the Making Spirits Bright Festival, a three-day festival held in December.

### ArtLenox

ArtWeek is a statewide, ten-day event held annually at the end of April. The event is supported by the MCC and Massachusetts Office of Tourism. In 2018, ArtWeek was held in Berkshire County for the first time. As part of the festivities, ArtLenox, a locally-supported, arts and culture non-profit, organized a gallery walk through Lenox Village. Over the course of four hours, gallery walk participants made scheduled stops at seven galleries located in Lenox Village.

## LENOX LIBRARY

The Lenox Library is the definitive source for correct historical information on Lenox. In addition to maintaining its collection of books and media, the Lenox Library hosts public programming. These events focus on the arts and culture, as well as local history. During 2018, the Library offered 377 programs. Among the cultural events held by the Library was a reenactment of a concert performed by long-time Boston Symphony Orchestra conductor, Leonard Bernstein in the Library's reading seventy-five years ago. Due to high demand the concert was simulcast to an overflow crowd in the Lenox Town Hall auditorium.

## TRINITY CHURCH

Trinity Church hosts several free musical performances in partnership with cultural entities. Partners include; the Cantilena Chamber Choir, the Boston University Tanglewood Institute (BUTI), and the Curtisville Consortium. The Cantilena Chamber Choir is a Berkshire County-based a cappella choir that has been in residence at Trinity Church since 2010. BUTI, a summer training program for aspiring high school-age musicians, holds performances by students at the Church throughout the summer months, as does the Curtisville Consortium, a chamber music group.

## LENOX COMMUNITY CENTER

The Town's Community Center contributes to Lenox's cultural offerings. Located within the proposed Cultural District, the Community Center hosts programs such as contra dances, art exhibits, and plays - all of which are free and open to the public.

**VENTFORT HALL AND GILDED AGE MUSEUM**

In addition to providing a historical resource connecting Lenox’s present to its past, Ventfort Hall also hosts a *Tea and Talks* series based on literary interests and architecture of the Gilded Age, as well seasonal holiday programs and events.

**7.6 Land Use Policy & Zoning**

The Town’s vibrant arts and culture scene is supported by its land use policy and zoning bylaws. By employing residential and commercial use flexibility in the C district, which covers the commercial parts of Lenox Village and Lenox Dale, the Town supports and promotes working artists and cultural businesses.

**Table 7.8 - Schedule of Uses**

Zoning District	R3A	R1A	R30	R15	C3A	C1A	C	I
Two-family or Duplex Dwelling	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
Upper-story Units in mixed-use developments	N	N	N	N	BA	BA	Y	BA
Private Nonprofit Libraries	BA	BA	BA	BA	BA	BA	BA	N
Private Nonprofit Museums	BA	BA	BA	BA	BA	BA	BA	N
Live Theater	N	N	N	N	BA	BA	BA	N
Retail Store	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N
Mixed Use Development	N	N	N	N	BA	BA	Y	N
Custom Manufacturing of Goods Sold at Retail on the Premises	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	BA	Y
Home Occupation	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N

Source: Lenox Zoning Bylaw , 2018

**RESIDENTIAL USES**

Multi-family dwellings, as well as upper-story residential units in mixed use developments, are permitted by right in Lenox’s C district. Two-family and duplex structures may be approved by Special Permit. Working artists and cultural businesses are aided by zoning regulations that permit more housing options in commercial districts. Artists, cultural businesses, and the Town all benefit from more flexible zoning in two ways; (1) two-family homes and duplexes and upper-story residences in mixed use developments increase residential density thereby putting more people on the streets, which may in

turn increase economic activity; and (2) generally, the cost of living in two-family and duplex dwellings is lower than in single-family homes, thereby reducing the cost of living for artists and proprietors of cultural businesses.

### **EDUCATIONAL USES**

Lenox allows non-profit libraries and museums by Special Permit in the C district. This supports entities with the mission of preserving, promoting, and sharing cultural knowledge and experiences. Additionally, museums and libraries serve as attractions drawing people to, and distributing them throughout, the commercial district thereby increasing foot traffic and encouraging more local spending.

### **PLACES OF PUBLIC ASSEMBLY**

Lenox's zoning bylaw permits live theater by Special Permit in the C district. Live theater adds to the Town's cultural landscape and serves to attract people and encourage additional spending. It also contributes to the Town's reputation as a cultural destination.

### **RETAIL BUSINESS & CONSUMER SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS**

Lenox's zoning bylaw allows retail stores and mixed use developments by right in the C district. This supports working artists and cultural businesses, as evidenced by Lenox Village's high concentration of galleries. Additionally, mixed-use developments generally include residential units, which promotes increases in economic activity thereby furthering the support of cultural businesses.

### **INDUSTRIAL USES**

Custom manufacturing of goods sold at retail on the premises is allowed by Special Permit in Lenox's C district. Zoning provisions benefits working artists and craftspeople by allowing them to produce and sell goods under one roof in an area frequently visited by consumers.

### **ACCESSORY USES**

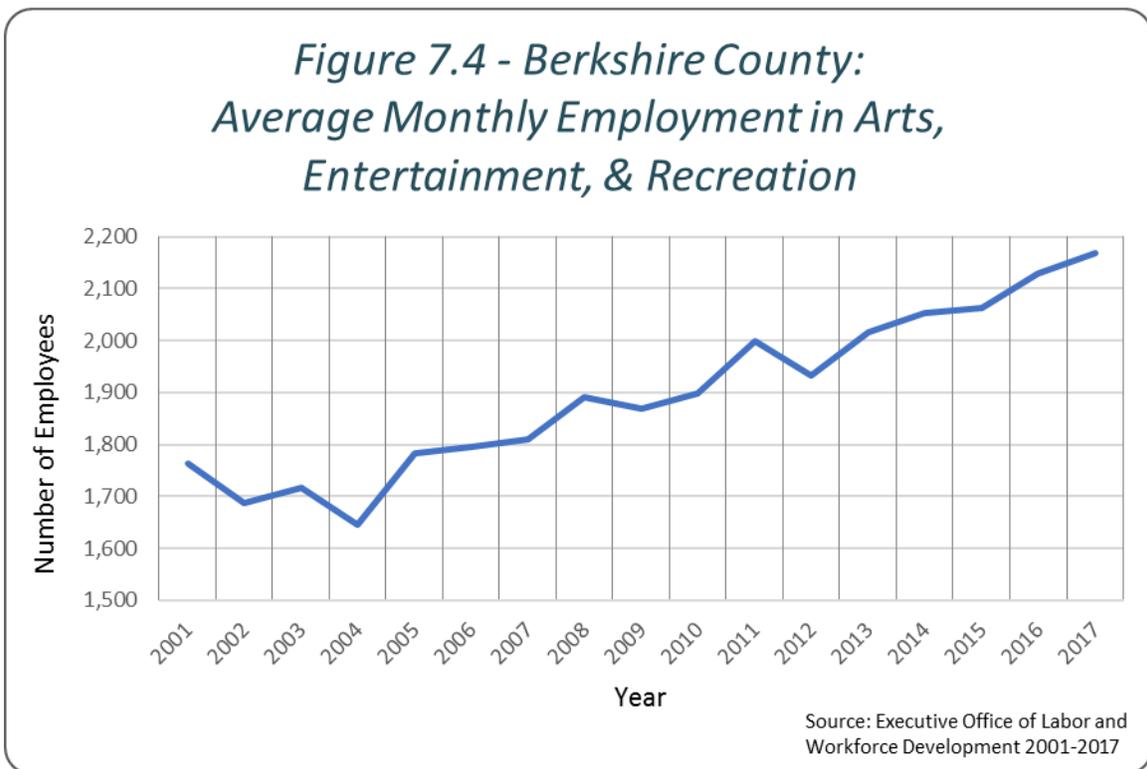
Lenox's zoning bylaw allows home occupations as an accessory use by right in all zoning districts, including the C district. The Town's zoning bylaw defines a home occupation as:

*“Self-employed resident occupants in their private homes working at an occupation which is limited to the home, carried forth at the home, employing no more than one non-resident . . . Home occupation does not include any retail establishment.”*

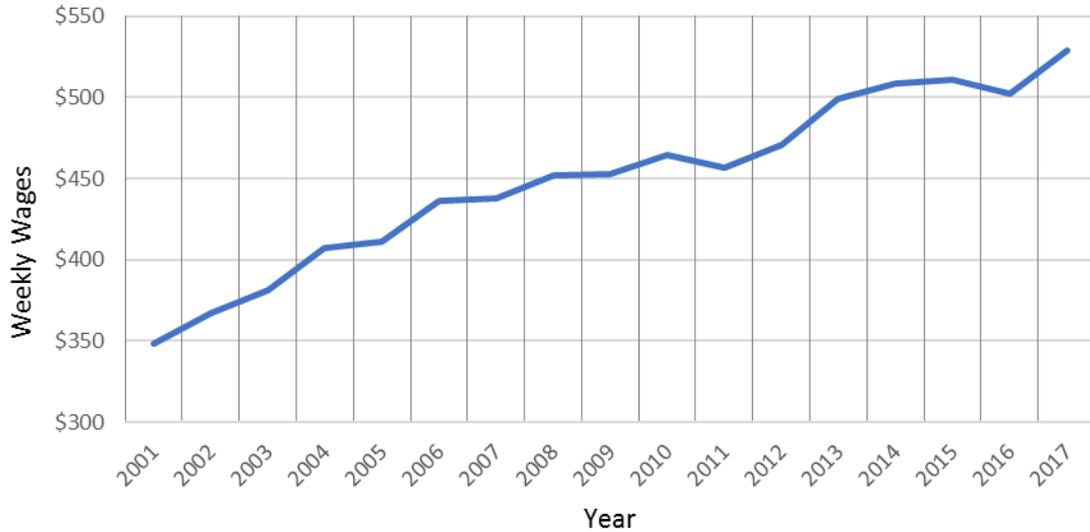
Provisions like this benefit working artists and craftsmen by allowing them to use their home as a place of business, as opposed to being required to rent a studio, thereby reducing the costs and increasing the viability of their businesses.

### 7.7 Workforce Challenges for the Historical & Cultural Economy

Despite growing employment in the historical/cultural economy throughout Berkshire County, attracting, developing, and retaining a strong and talented workforce remains a challenge for Lenox’s cultural institutions. Leaders of cultural institutions have noted that they struggle to attract and retain top-level talent. Wages in the cultural sector are not high enough to live in Lenox given the available housing stock and it is difficult to commute from other, more affordable, municipalities.



*Figure 7.5 - Berkshire County: Weekly Wages in Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation*



Source: Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development 2001-2017

Another challenge facing the historical/cultural economy is the lack of affordable rental housing accessible to the workforce. Despite weekly wages within the arts, entertainment, & recreation sector - a proxy for the historical/cultural economy - rising by 52% between 2001 and 2017, wages remain low. As of 2017, wages in this sector averaged \$529 per week, countywide, whereas that figure across all industries was \$881 per week. The average weekly wage of a historical/cultural economy worker does not provide for the high cost of living in Lenox. Cultural institutions have cited the lack of rental workforce housing as an impediment to hiring and growth.

There are, however, tools and resources the Town can employ to ameliorate the workforce challenges facing its historical/cultural economy. These tools and resources are described in the pages that follow.

## 7.8 Goals, Objectives, & Action Items

- **GOAL HC 1: USE MUNICIPAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES TO ENSURE THE CONTINUED SUCCESS OF THE TOWN'S HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ECONOMY.**

**Objective HC 1.1:** Explore adoption of a strategically located “Arts Overlay Zoning District”.

Action Item 1: An “Arts Overlay Zoning District” is a land use tool used to create optimal conditions for a thriving historical and cultural economy. Research best practices and examples of existing arts overlay zoning districts throughout the Commonwealth (Cambridge, Fall River, Somerville, etc.).

Action Item 2: Collaborate with cultural institutions and local/regional working artists to determine the appropriate land use parameters of the overlay district (affordable live/workspaces, studios, performance venues, etc.).

Action Item 3: Determine where in the Town an “Arts Overlay Zoning District” would be optimal (e.g., portions of Lenox Village, Lenox Dale, and Laurel Lake).

Action Item 4: Engage residents (cultural workers and others) at all phases of the process.

**Objective HC 1.2:** Continue supporting community-based arts and humanities projects.

Action Item 1: In 2017, The Lenox Cultural Council received total requests of \$15,220, more than three times its budget. The Town should match a percentage of the MCC’s allocation to the Lenox Cultural Council to maximize the number of project grants.

Action Item 2: Consider collaborating with cultural entities to develop and host a monthly community-based art festival during the shoulder seasons that celebrates the Town’s heritage and historical and cultural economy with performances, exhibits, and gallery walks.

**Objective HC 1.3:** Proactively support the Town’s designated Cultural District.

Action Item 1: Invest in advanced wayfinding that directs residents and visitors to the Cultural District from Route 7/20 and from the Cultural District to amenities beyond its boundaries.

Action Item 2: Develop materials to promote the Cultural District.

Action Item 3: Task an appropriate municipal department, board, commission, or committee with establishing a strong presence on social media platforms to effectively broadcast and raise awareness of the Cultural District.

Action Item 4: Work regionally to create a common events calendar to raise awareness of events.

Action Item 5: Consider providing matching funds to any MCC grant or allocation made to support the Cultural District.

➤ **GOAL HC 2: PROMOTE ADAPTIVE REUSE OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND PROPERTIES IN SUPPORT OF THE TOWN'S HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ECONOMY.**

**Objective HC 2.1:** Encourage adaptive reuse of historic properties for artist live/workspaces and workforce housing.

Action Item 1: Identify and catalogue potential candidate properties.

Action Item 2: Incentivize developers to participate in adaptive reuse projects.

Action Item 3: Establish public/private partnerships with authorities who stand to benefit from adaptive reuse.

Action Item 4: Determine proper course of action for redevelopment regarding individual candidate properties.

Action Item 5: Leverage adaptive reuse projects with other municipal tools, e.g., arts overlay districts.

➤ **GOAL HC 3: IMPROVE BOTH HOUSING AND TRANSIT TO MAKE JOBS IN THE CULTURAL SECTOR MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR WORKERS.**

**Objective HC 3.1:** Support and facilitate the development of workforce rental housing units on properties owned by cultural institutions.

Action Item 1: Incorporate workforce rental housing units on properties owned and operated by cultural institutions as a by right arts-related accessory use when fewer than six units and by Special Permit when more than six-units in future arts overlay zoning district bylaw.

Action Item 2: Allow the development of rental artist live/workspaces by right on properties owned by cultural institutions and by Special Permit on other properties.

Action Item 3: Provide incentives for adaptive reuse of underutilized buildings and/or space in existing buildings for workforce rental housing units.

**Objective HC 3.2:** Encourage and facilitate partnerships between educational and cultural institutions.

Action Item 1: Encourage and work with cultural institutions to develop partnerships for conjunctive programming (for-credit internships, apprenticeships, special courses, etc.) with regional colleges.

Action Item 2: Continue to nurture relationship between cultural institutions and Lenox Public Schools to leverage educational opportunities for PreK-12 students and inspire/foster an appreciation of the arts and culture.

Action Item 3: Explore ways cultural institutions can be incentivized to develop and enhance summer and winter programs (e.g., Boston University Tanglewood Institute) that could attract young artists to Lenox for educational and professional experiences including but not limited to music, theater, and literature.

**Objective HC 3.3:** Use available marketing channels to attract a young workforce to Lenox's historical and cultural economy.

Action Item 1: Incorporate young artists and cultural workers into Lenox's comprehensive marketing strategy as a target audience.

Action Item 2: Build advertising campaigns around profiles of young artists and cultural workers who found success in Lenox.

➤ **GOAL HC 4: FURTHER INTEGRATE HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES WITH OTHER AMENITIES.**

**Objective HC 4.1:** Use public art as a means of integrating the Town's historical and cultural heritage with outdoor recreation.

Action Item 1: Research best practices regarding public art and examples of strategies throughout the Commonwealth.

Action Item 2: Establish and populate a Public Arts Commission pursuant to Sections 82-84 of Chapter 41 of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Action Item 3: Develop a strategic plan for the use of public art that comprises guidelines for works of public art (medium, content, etc.) and identify optimal locations for installations (shared-use paths, parks, etc.).

Action Item 4: Consider various means by which the acquisition, commissioning, and maintenance of public art might be funded (e.g., Community Preservation funds, etc.).

Action Item 5: Develop events to celebrate the unveiling of public art installations.

**Objective HC 4.2:** Partner with cultural institutions to hold artistic performances in public parks.

Action Item 1: Explore and determine the feasibility of holding musical, theatrical, and/or cinematic experiences in the Town's open space facilities.

Action Item 2: Task a municipal department, board, commission, or committee with establishing partnerships with cultural institutions centered on public performances.

Action Item 3: Develop an events calendar and promotional materials for public performances.

**Objective HC 4.3:** Incorporate historic resources into ArtWeek and other events.

Action Item 1: Work with the Lenox Historical Commission to develop informative/educational gallery walk-like events that celebrate Lenox's history and historic assets.

Action Item 2: Create and make publicly available a promotional map of historical and cultural resources.

**Objective HC 4.4:** Increase multimodal linkages between historic and cultural assets and other amenities as well as residential areas.

Action Item 1: Work with cultural institutions, historic and open-space preservation groups, and property owners to plan a shared-use path that effectively connects as many of Lenox's many amenities as possible.

➤ **GOAL HC 5: MAINTAIN A BALANCED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION.**

**Objective HC 5.1:** Implement recommendations from the Town's Historic Preservation Plan that are consistent with this Master Plan.

Action Item 1: Support the Historical Commission in leading the implementation of recommendations from the Historic Preservation Plan.

Action Item 2: Implement recommendations through collaborative efforts.

Action Item 3: Work with willing and interested property owners and town boards, commissions, and committees to increase the number of properties and/or districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Objective HC 5.2:** Use multiple marketing channels to promote Lenox as a destination for heritage tourism to audiences outside the region.

Action Item 1: Work with the Lenox Library, the Lenox Chamber of Commerce, 1Berkshire, and other pertinent partners to develop a comprehensive marketing strategy.

Action Item 2: Support the Chamber of Commerce in the advancement of social media marketing capabilities.

Action Item 3: Promote the Town's historic resources through publications that specialize in historic New England homes and architecture.

**Objective HC 5.3:** Review estate preservation bylaw.

Action Item 1: Assemble a temporary committee comprising members of the Historical Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, the Planning Board, and owners, or their designees, of Estate Preservation Areas to review Section 8.9 of the Zoning Bylaw.

Action Item 2: Consider expanding the bylaw to cover additional properties of historic significance e.g., the Eastover property.

Action Item 3: Conduct the review with an eye toward increasing use flexibility in ways that meet the Town's for land use and historic preservation.

Action Item 4: Amend the bylaw to achieve the Town's land use vision, aid the underlying business models that support the ongoing maintenance of the Estates, and maintains the bylaw's original intent of historic preservation.

- **GOAL HC 6: ESTABLISH LENOX AS A MODEL FOR THE STEWARDSHIP OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND LANDSCAPES.** (For further detail, see Chapter 8 of the Historic Preservation Plan.)

**Objective HC 6.1:** Support the Historical Commission in its role to promote the recognition, preservation, and appropriate treatment of historic resources through organization, support, and engagement.

Action Item 1: Empower the Lenox Historical Commission to take responsibility for the overall leadership and coordination of the Town's historic preservation program as outlined in the Town's Historic Preservation Plan.

Action Item 2: Encourage and facilitate engaged relationships between the Historical Commission and other Town boards, commissions, and committees and their activities.

Action Item 3: Hire professional consultants with expertise in historic preservation, design, and engineering to provide guidance to town departments, boards, committees, and commissions.

**Objective HC 6.2:** Continue to inventory and improve documentation on the Town's historic resources. The Lenox Library staff can assist with this objective.

Action Item 1: Maintain physical and digital files with survey information and photographs of historic properties.

Action Item 2: Integrate the Town's historic resource inventory into Town planning documents and Geographic Information System (GIS) by lot number.

Action Item 3: Retain a qualified professional historic preservation consultant to assist the Historical Commission with the planning and implementation of historic resource inventory projects.

Action Item 4: Continue to upgrade older survey forms in the Town's historic resource inventory in accordance with the standards established for survey forms for Lenox Village 2011/12.

Action Item 5: Undertake a reconnaissance survey of historic resources in the eastern and northern portions of Lenox to identify, photograph and link resources to the Town's GIS database.

Action Item 6: Retain a qualified professional to undertake a comprehensive inventory of historic resources in Lenox Dale.

Action Item 7: Amend the demolition delay bylaw to address demolition by neglect. (Both Oliver Root House and Cozy Nook were lost recently).

Action Item 8: Create loans for property owners of historic homes for exterior repair. (Repaid at sale in several Massachusetts towns).

**Objective HC 6.3:** Document the Town's cottage era historic resources.

Action Item 1: Prepare a Multiple Property Documentation Form for Cottage Era historic resources.

Action Item 2: Prepare National Historic Registration nominations for Lenox Dale and Cottage Era resources in Lenox.

**Objective HC 6.4:** Enhance the process by which the condition of and activities relating to historic resources are monitored.

Action Item 1: Monitor activities that might negatively affect the preservation of historic resources.

Action Item 2: Create a process that monitors the condition of historic resources, involving the review and photographing of such resources on a 10-year cycle.

**Objective HC 6.5:** Draft and adopt bylaws and develop processes to protect endangered historical resources.

Action Item 1: Adopt an Affirmative Maintenance Bylaw developed collaboratively.

Action Item 2: Establish a Signage Review Subcommittee of the Historic District Commission to work with business owners and to review and approve sign permit applications within the historic district.

Action Item 3: Achieve Certified Local Government designation by the National Park Service and participate in the Massachusetts Historical Commission's statewide Certified Local Government Program.

**Objective HC 6.6:** Support the Historical Commission to provide guidance and information to town boards and commissions on issues where historical preservation is relevant.

Action Item 1: Consult the Historical Commission on issues related to historic preservation and community character.

Action Item 2: Expand membership of the Historical Commission to increase its ability to liaise effectively.

Action Item 3: Include the Historical Commission in the review of land developments and subdivision plans in an advisory capacity.

Action Item 4: As needed, hire a professional historic preservation consultant to advise the Historical Commission, the Historic District Commission, and other Town boards, commissions, and committees.

**Objective HC 6.7:** Develop a strong constituency of historic preservation advocates through public outreach. The Lennox Library staff can assist with this objective.

Action Item 1: Support collaboration between the Lenox Library, the Historical Commission, the Lenox Historical Society, and the Lenox Chamber of Commerce regarding the coordination and publicity of public programming on Lenox History and historic places by the Town's historical and cultural organizations.

Action Item 2: Maintain digital resources, such as a library of information and technical assistance for property owners on the maintenance and appropriate treatment of historic buildings and landscapes.

Action Item 3: Create a local preservation advocacy organization to provide the Town with a non-profit partner that can address historic preservation issues through private sector initiatives and in partnership with the Historical Commission and the Historic District Commission.

Action Item 4: Provide periodic workshops for town boards, committees, and commissions, and the public, on historic preservation techniques and appropriate treatments for historic buildings and landscapes.

**Objective HC 6.8:** Continue to maintain, manage, and steward town-owned historical resources.

Action Item 1: Incorporate historic preservation principles, processes, and conservation treatments into capital planning projects, site management, and site maintenance.

Action Item 2: Share best practices in preservation treatments and maintenance practices for the types of resources and issues being addressed with town staff.

Action Item 3: Provide preservation and conservation training to town construction and maintenance staff through workshops, videos, and on-site consultation.

## 8. Services & Facilities

Lenox is fortunate to have an abundance of natural, historical, and cultural resources. These attributes coupled with the Town's forward-thinking municipal administration and its highly engaged population allows Lenox to provide high-quality municipal services including public works, public safety, education, and opportunities for civic engagement and recreation.

Lenox is a full-service town. It provides high-quality Prekindergarten – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade education to local and regional students. The Lenox Public School District is recognized regionally and statewide as one of the state's top-performing school districts. Lenox operates a library that offers diverse programming and historical services in addition to its collection of books and media. Its Community Center hosts year-round programming for children, adults, and seniors. Other essential services, such as public safety and public works, keep the Town operational and safe.

Lenox is viewed as a destination and is greatly supported by its tourism industry. Its vibrant villages and array of cultural, historical, and outdoor recreation amenities attract visitors worldwide. Those visitors bolster Lenox's economy by supporting local lodging businesses, restaurants, retail stores, and other amenities. This spending in turn secures the Town's fiscal position and, through room and meal taxes, enhances the quality of its services. Lenox's financial capacity is apparent when looking at its spending on residents. The Town has the second highest per capita spending in Berkshire County at about \$5,000 per person.

In addition to a professional staff, the Town government also consists of a host of boards, commissions, and committees that are comprised of elected, appointed, and volunteering residents. These bodies contribute to the administration of the Town in a multitude of capacities, from executive to advisory. This combination of professional staff and engaged citizenry has resulted in attentive and responsible stewardship of Lenox's resources.

## VISION

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*THE TOWN OF LENOX WILL PROVIDE AND IMPROVE HIGH-QUALITY AND ACCESSIBLE SERVICES TO RESIDENTS OF ALL AGES, INCOME LEVELS, AND NEEDS. THE TOWN WILL REMAIN COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT (1) LENOX CHILDREN RECEIVE FAIR AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES; (2) OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT ARE FREQUENT AND ACCESSIBLE TO CHILDREN, ADULTS, AND SENIORS ALIKE; AND (3) TOWN-OWNED PROPERTIES ARE WELL-MAINTAINED, ACCESSIBLE, AND OPERATED IN WAYS THAT ARE FISCALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE.*

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Source: Linda Duval Sullivan – Tanglewood, back lawn

## 8.1 Priority Services & Facilities Topics

### **MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE QUALITY OF SERVICES**

Lenox provides services aimed at enhancing quality of life for residents and visitors of all ages. Presently, there are few measured services including emergency response times, the Town's Triple-A bond rating, and standardized test scores of its students. As the Town's demography shifts, it is important to track changes to accurately gauge Lenox's capacity for public services. The Town will continue investing in services - such as education, social programs, and public works - that will attract new residents and continually preserve and enhance the experience of living in Lenox.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

Among the first municipalities in Berkshire County to receive a Green Community designation, Lenox recognizes that the resources of its natural environment are integral to its attractiveness. The Town has undertaken a number of prior efforts to increase sustainability and mitigate future hazards caused by climate change and will continue doing so. These initiatives include the use of rain barrels, composting, and solar panels. While the Town has little control over the causes of and impacts wrought by climate change, it can take measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, unnecessary waste, and energy consumption, especially as it pertains to municipal facilities and technologies. Lenox's sustainability efforts will ultimately bring the Town closer to its aspiration of becoming carbon neutral as soon as feasibly possible.

Currently, Lenox does not have a measure of its carbon footprint. This master plan will suggest the adoption of a Sustainability Plan that will highlight strategies towards becoming carbon neutral. Lenox has the desire to become a leader in sustainability and recognizes that this will require continuous improvement of practices and measurement of the Town's environmental impact.

### **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING**

Capital improvement planning is a strategy that will assess Lenox's infrastructure to determine which town owned properties need physical improvements.

The IRS indicates what constitutes a real property capital improvement as follows:

- Fixing a defect or design flaw
- Creating an addition, physical enlargement or expansion
- Creating an increase in capacity, productivity or efficiency
- Rebuilding property after the end of its economic useful life

- Replacing a major component or structural part of the property
- Adapting property to a new or different use

Town Department leaders have noted that certain municipal buildings require capital improvement. Town infrastructure is not limited to buildings and also includes systems of transportation, sewage, water, communication, and electricity. Over the next five years, the Town has \$89 million requested for various capital improvement projects. The Town should develop a Capital Improvement Plan as a means of historical preservation, sustainability planning, and enhancing town assets.

## 8.2 COVID-19 Related Impacts to Services & Facilities

Municipal services have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, though not all. Public safety reported little impact to their daily operations and services. The Community Center and Library were forced to furlough staff and cut programs, though both found ways to continue serving the public. The Community Center, with volunteer help, was able to deliver free, hot meals to residents and provide space for remote learning. The water and wastewater department stressed the importance of cross-training staff to maintain capacity and keep services going even in a pandemic. Departments face challenges going forward to maintain level service, programming, and in most cases aging facilities with a reduced budget.

### INDICATORS TO TRACK

- ✓ Capital project funding and progress
- ✓ User numbers
- ✓ Change in water/sewer use

## 8.3 Priority Services & Facilities Goals

- **GOAL SF 1: CONTINUALLY IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL QUALITY OF LENOX PUBLIC SCHOOLS.**

Lenox Public Schools are among the most recognized for quality of education in the Commonwealth. The Town should seek to maintain and, where necessary, improve the quality of the schools. Efforts to expand place-based learning and internship opportunities will add quality experiences to the arts and humanities curricula. Investments aimed at modernizing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics facilities will also raise the ceiling for quality education.

- **GOAL SF 2:** ENSURE THAT LONG-TERM PLANNING INITIATIVES ACCOUNT FOR MAINTENANCE, OPERATION, AND - WHERE APPLICABLE - EVENTUAL REPLACEMENT OF CURRENT FACILITIES.

Lenox owns and operates thirteen buildings and several hundred acres of land. The Town should adopt a Capital Improvement Planning process that proactively assesses, prioritizes, and plans for the ongoing operation, maintenance, improvement, and eventual replacement of municipal facilities and properties.

- **GOAL SF 3:** INCORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION INTO THE PLANNING AND MAINTENANCE OF MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND SPACES.

Lenox will incorporate environment sustainability and climate change adaptation into the planning and maintenance of its facilities and space. Such planning could be as extensive and long-term as exploring the feasibility of combining anaerobic digestion with its wastewater treatment process or as short-term as promoting residential rainwater harvesting for non-potable uses. Each department head should come up with a plan to reduce carbon use and water consumption. This begins with benchmarking the Town's carbon footprint now and making definitive goals towards carbon neutrality that can be measured going into the future.

(FOR THE COMPLETE LIST OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION ITEMS, SEE PAGE 212)

## 8.4 Municipal Service Departments

Lenox has a total area of 21.7 square miles. Of that, 2.8 square miles (about 13%) are town-owned. The total value of this land is over \$23 million. The map on the following page provides an overview of where town-owned land is located and how this corresponds with its facilities.

### DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Comprised of four divisions of public services, the Department of Public Works (DPW) is responsible for the improvement and maintenance of the Town's infrastructure, which includes: roads; cemeteries; and systems for water treatment, water distribution, wastewater treatment, wastewater collection, and storm drainage. Additionally, the DPW responds to requests for assistance regarding infrastructure problems and water or sewer billing information. The Department also identifies large-scale, long-term needs pertaining to the Town's infrastructure.

#### Highway Division

The Highway Division of the DPW is tasked with the maintenance of the Town's roadways. The Highway Division is responsible for maintaining fifty-two miles of roads, approximately nine miles of sidewalk, twenty-two miles of storm drainage, and twenty-three miles of wastewater collection. Day-to-day operations of the division consist of clearing brush near roadways, tree removal and replacement, drain cleaning, litter pickup, maintaining street and traffic signage, street paving and repair, snow and ice removal, and equipment maintenance.

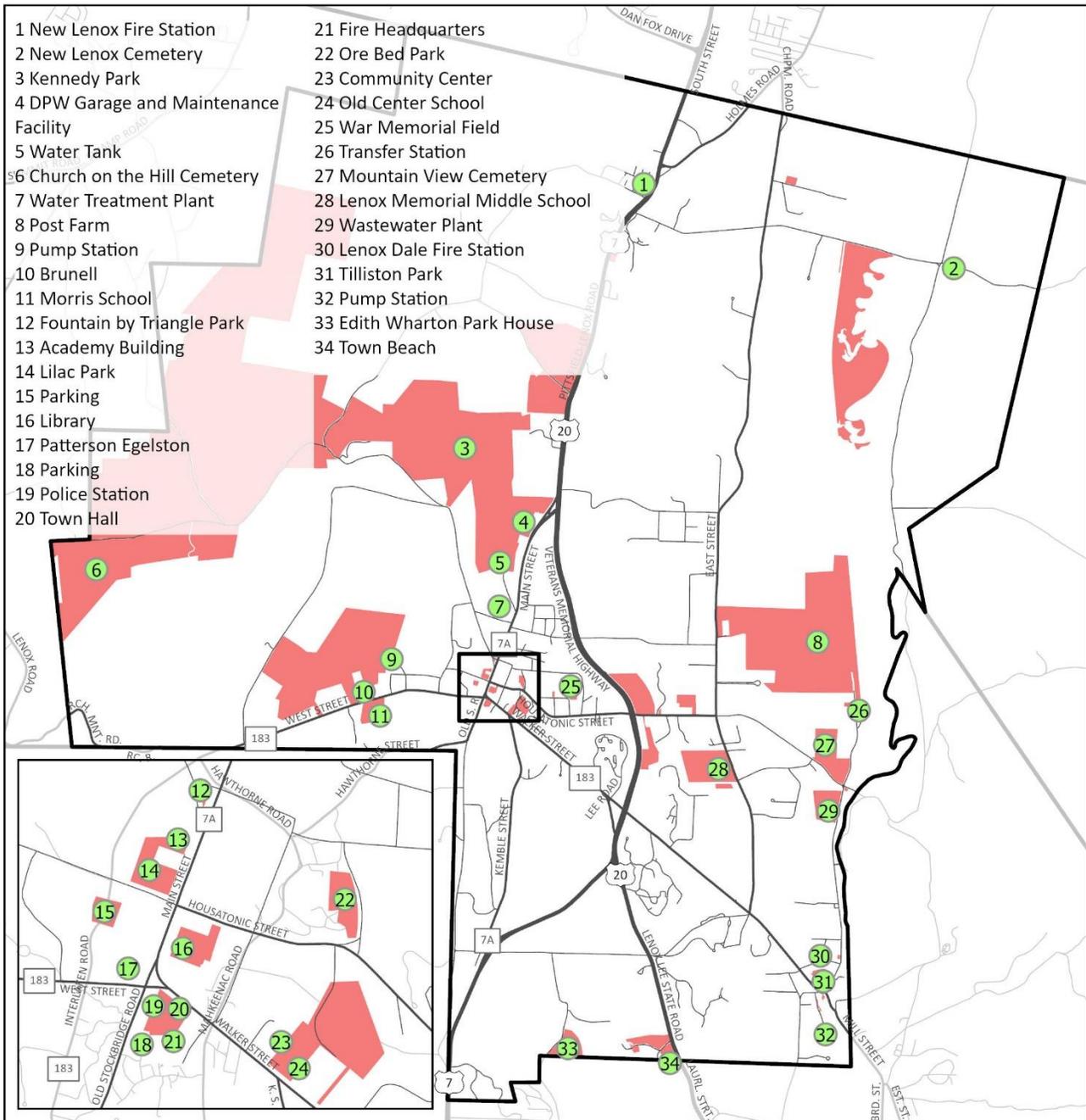
#### Cemetery Division

The Cemetery Division of the DPW is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Town's cemeteries. Lenox's three municipal cemeteries include Mountain View, Church on the Hill, and the New Lenox Cemetery. The Cemetery Division is additionally responsible for the maintenance of public space in both Lenox Village and Lenox Dale.

#### Water Division

The Water Division is responsible for the Lenox's water treatment and water distribution facilities and systems. The Town's water supply is derived from two reservoirs that are fed by the Lenox Mountain Brook watershed. The upper Root Reservoir holds 90 million gallons of water and the lower holds 60 million. Eighty percent of the year the reservoirs are overflowing, and water is returned to the Brook that continues to move water downstream.

Figure 8.1 - Facilities Map



- Town Facilities
- Town Owned Property



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



Drinking water is processed in a facility near the lower Root Reservoir. It is designed to treat an average daily flow of 730,000 gallons per day and a peak flow of 1.4 million gallons per day. Drinking water is processed using a Dissolved Air Floatation Treatment process before disinfecting it with chlorine. Fortunately, Lenox's water quality is high to begin with and requires minimal processing compared to other municipalities. Additionally, the treatment facility contains a laboratory where water - raw and treated - is tested in accordance with MASS DEP standards on a daily basis.

Based on the capacity of the watershed, the Commonwealth caps the amount of water that Lenox can capture into reservoirs for drinking water to .76 million gallons per day – or 277 million gallons per year. The Commonwealth can change this draw-down number depending on factors such as population and projected usage patterns and rainfall. In 2018 Lenox took .58 million gallons per day, putting the Town at 76 percent capacity utilization.

Peak demand for water occurs during the summer months. As in most cities and towns, increased demand during the summer is a result of warmer weather leading to increased residential and commercial consumption of water. Lenox, being a tourism destination, can draw as many as 17,000 visitors in a single day. Tanglewood has a total capacity of 21,200 people and a single event creates additional strains on not only water capacity but the capacity of public services as well.

To remedy such situations, Lenox is able to draw a daily average of 82,000 gallons per day and peak 430,000 gallons per day from Pittsfield's water supply. Their water has different characteristics than ours and has a more involved treatment process.

Departmental staff recommend finding additional sources of water in order to achieve water independence. Previous studies have looked at increasing the size of our existing reservoirs to hold more water ready for processing; other options also are available. It is recommended that a renewed review be undertaken to determine whether we would like to move ahead with securing additional, independent reserves of drinking water supply.

Departmental staff also recommend assessing replacement of our drinking water treatment plant. Our plant uses old technology, and parts are only available specially fabricated. A new state-of-the-art plant is estimated to cost \$11 million. Whether to move forward with such an investment requires further cost/benefit analysis that assesses continuing as-is with reactive fixes (including risk of catastrophic failure) vs. taking the proactive step of moving to a state-of-the-art processing plant.

The Water Division is also responsible for the water distribution system. The Division oversees the maintenance, repairs, and inspection of the distribution system, which includes 52 miles of water mains, two water storage tanks, and numerous main line valves, fire hydrants, and pressure reducing vaults. Like the drinking water treatment facility, the distribution system is beginning to show signs of age.

Approximately one quarter of the Town's water distribution system is composed of outdated pipe that tend to fail under high pressure. The Division is aggressively working to replace all of the outdated pipe in Town, section by section, over a period of time. Additional concerns related to water distribution include low pressure in higher elevations and adding an additional water main on Pittsfield Road.

It should be noted that the Water Division operates as an enterprise fund, meaning that its budget is supported by funds received from rates and fees.

### **Wastewater Division**

Like the Water Division, the Wastewater Division is an enterprise fund; the operations of which are funded exclusively by rates and fees. The Wastewater Division operates the Town's wastewater facilities. The Division has installed new pump stations that are designed to handle higher capacity flows.

The Wastewater Division operates a wastewater treatment facility located on Crystal Street, along the Housatonic River, in Lenox Dale. The Division also operates three pump stations on the west, east, and north sides of Lenox. The wastewater facility is designed to treat an average daily flow of 1.8 million gallons per day and a peak flow of 4.1 million gallons per day. As of 2015, the wastewater treatment facility was treating an average daily flow of 800,000 gallons per day, leaving ample capacity for growth.

One issue is inflow and infiltration, which is the seepage rainwater and/or groundwater into the wastewater system that can result in unnecessary costs to a municipality. Neither rainwater nor groundwater requires cleaning through the treatment process. Currently, the Wastewater Division is treating an average 383,000 gallons of rainwater/groundwater per day. This results in approximately \$70,000 of expenses annually. The Wastewater Division should create a plan to remedy its inflow and infiltration issues and have measurable benchmarks going forward.

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Fire Department**

Established in 1909 as a result of a devastating fire that destroyed a large portion of the downtown area, the Lenox Fire Department serves “to protect the lives and property of those within the Town by providing public education, performing fire safety inspection, and providing emergency response services” (Annual Report, 2017). The Department is currently headquartered at the Central Fire Station at 14 Walker Street.

As a means of reducing response times, the Fire Department operates two strategically-located stations in addition to the Central Station. The Lenox Dale Fire Station, built in 1936, is located at 26 Elm Street and houses two fire engines and an Incident Support Trailer. Located at 399 Pittsfield Road, and built in 1962, the New Lenox Fire Station houses one fire engine, one brush truck, a marine rescue boat, and two all-terrain vehicles.

The majority of requests for services received by the Fire Department in 2017 were medically related. This is an increase from earlier years and the Department attributes it to an increase in the population ages 65 and over. In 2017, the Department’s average response time (time of dispatch to time on scene of the incident) was four minutes.

**Table 8.1 - Requests for Service (2017)**

Fire Alarms	Fires	Service Calls	Rescues	Hazardous Conditions	Medical Calls	Good Intent Calls
222	40	59	120	51	1,135	17
<b>Total: 1,644</b>						

Source: Town of Lenox Fire Department, 2017 Annual Report

Medical calls represented 69% of all requests for service in 2017. According to the Department’s Chief, the majority of medical calls were received from or related to the Town’s senior population and the call volume is exceeding capacity. These requests for service have grown proportionately to the increase in the Town’s senior population. The combination of increased call volume and decreased human resources has resulted in rising mutual aid requests (assistance from neighboring or nearby municipalities).

As of 2017, the Fire Department was staffed by six career Firefighter/EMTs, fifteen part-time Relief Firefighters/EMTs, and thirty-seven Volunteer Firefighters. In addition to responding to requests for

service, the Department conducts fire prevention and building inspections and issues permits for burning. The Department also conducts weekly training to remain proficient in fire suppression, rescue techniques, and property preservation. The primary concerns to the Fire Department are its outmoded Central Station, increasing elderly call volume, and lack of volunteers.

**Figure 8.2 - Lenox Firehouse**



Built in 1910, the Fire Department is headquartered at 14 Walker Street next to Town Hall. It houses one first engine and one ladder truck. As is the case with the Police Station, the facility no longer meets the needs of the Department. The facility, having been built over a century ago, was designed for a different era. The dimensional configuration of the Station requires the Department to have every piece of equipment modified to fit in its bays. Such modifications can exceed \$100,000. Additionally, the Station provides little capacity for personnel, in terms of both office space and parking. Lastly, the building is not in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Police and Fire Departments have completed a feasibility study (publicly available) that examines alternative locations for the facilities and updated physical design to meet the needs to Fire and Police staff. The Chiefs of both Departments have indicated that locations on Pittsfield Road near the Marriott Hotel and on Housatonic Street are potential target locations for a new Public Safety headquarters.

**Police Department**

The Lenox Police Department is comprised of nine full-time positions and the Chief of Police. The Department also includes part-time Reserve Officers and Traffic Officers. The Department practices community-oriented policing. Such practices have led to a safer community, as evident by across-the-board reductions in arrests, offenses committed, and felonious criminal activities since 2010.

**Table 8.2 - Case Activity Statistics (2010-2018)**

<b>Years:</b>	<b>2010-2012 Average</b>	<b>2013-2015 Average</b>	<b>2016-2018 Average</b>
Total offenses committed	595	615	455
Total felonies	150	133	123
Total crime related incidents	191	133	105
Total non-crime related incidents	136	119	131
Total arrests (on view)	45	66	40
Total arrests (based on incident/warrants)	21	26	14
Total summons arrests	166	200	143
Total arrests	231	292	198
Total protective custody's	3	8	2
Total juvenile arrests	9	10	6
Total juveniles handled (arrests)	<1	0	0
Total juveniles referred (arrests)	9	10	6

Source: Lenox Police Department 2010-2018

The Lenox Police Station is located at 6 Walker Street in the basement of Town Hall. While the location on Walker Street, in the center of Lenox Village, generally allows for expedient response to calls, the facilities are inadequate for the Police Department’s physical infrastructure and facility’s needs. The current station lacks sufficient facilities for the proper storage of equipment and vehicles. The Station’s offices are also lacking in space for the Department’s personnel. Lastly, parking for Police cruisers is situated on Old Stockbridge Road, below the Monument Circle intersection with Main and Walker Streets.

Such a design requires cruisers responding to an emergency to navigate a confusing and sometimes dangerous two-stop intersection with little visibility of oncoming traffic, potentially slowing response time. Given the conditions of its current headquarters, the Police Department is working with the Fire Department on plans to design a new joint Public Safety facility.

### **LENOX PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Lenox is recognized, both regionally and statewide, for its high-quality schools. Lenox can boast nearly perfect high school graduation rates and over 90% of those students advance to higher education after graduation. Additionally, Lenox students consistently outscore the state average on standardized tests. These statistics are exemplary and represent one of the Town's greatest assets so the decline in student-aged residents and residential school enrollment needs to be addressed in this plan.

The Lenox Public School District operates at two locations. Morris Elementary School, which educates children grades PreK-5, is located at 129 West Street. The District's Middle and High School, Lenox Memorial, is located at 197 East Street.



Source: Karen Romeo Legere – LMMHS, upper field

According to the Town’s School Committee, repair and maintenance needs have risen in recent years. The rise in maintenance and repairs is as the Committee reports, likely due to aging buildings and budgetary allowances—for Fiscal Year 2017 operation/maintenance accounted for 9.22% of the District’s actual expenditures. The frequency of repairs competes for resources with technological and instructional improvements. This scenario may impede the District from keeping abreast with the fast pace of technological change in 21<sup>st</sup> century education, as evidenced by the High School’s science classrooms, which are the same as they were in 1966—the year Lenox Memorial was built. The following table demonstrates funding sources for Lenox schools:

**Table 8.3 - Funding Sources for Lenox Schools**

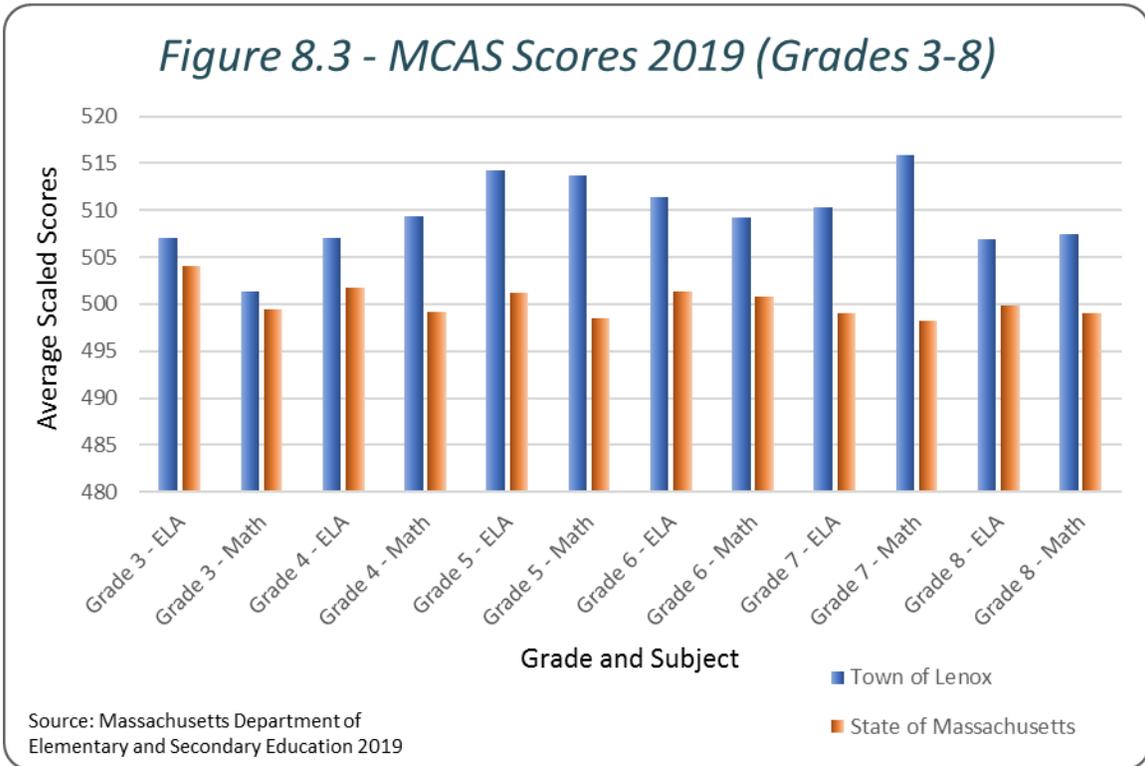
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>\$15,190,741</b>
Lenox property tax*	\$8,689,005
School employee benefits – reimbursed by Lenox taxes*	\$2,987,560
School Choice enrollment	\$1,434,685
State aid	\$1,252,465
Grants	\$340,000
School lunch – Federal/State reimbursement	\$250,000
Non-resident tuition	\$100,650
Vocational education – reimbursed by Lenox taxes*	\$85,000
Other income	\$51,376

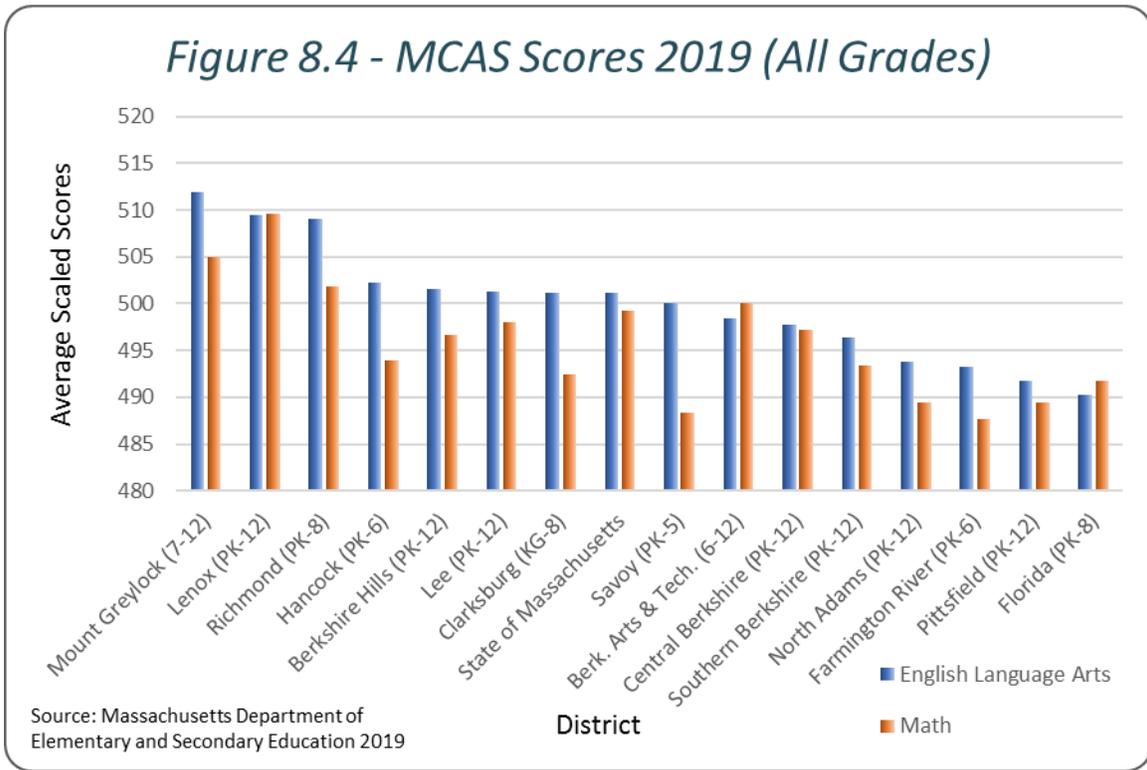
Source: Lenox Town Budget Overview, 2018

Governed by the Lenox School Committee, the Lenox Public School District operates an exceedingly high-quality, single-town municipal school district, serving approximately 760 students in grades PreK-12. Despite challenges resulting from a declining resident school-aged population, the District continues its long history of providing high-quality educational and extracurricular programming. This is proved by standardized test scores, graduation rate, and post-secondary enrollment.

The Department of Secondary and Elementary Education requires all Massachusetts public school districts to assess learning through standardized tests, known as the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). Students begin taking the MCAS in Grade 3 and continue every year until graduating high school. MCAS test scores are categorized, depending on the test, by either

*Exceeding Expectations, Meeting Expectations, Partially Meeting Expectations, and Not Meeting Expectations; or Advanced, Proficient, Needs Improvement, and Warning Failing.* The scoring of the MCAS ranges from 440 to 560. Grades 3 through 8 performed above state average on both English Language Arts and Math in 2019.



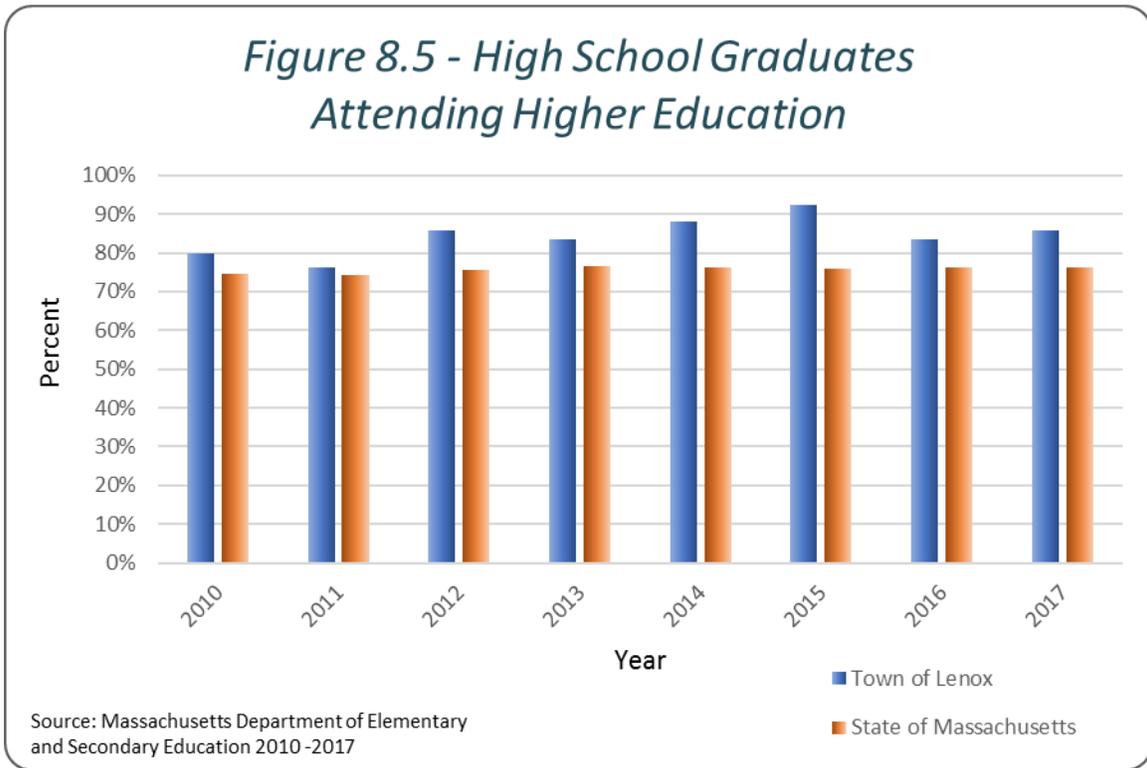


The District also outperformed the state average on Grades 5, 8, and 10 Science, Technology and Engineering tests and the Grade 10 Mathematics and English Language Arts tests.

In addition to high test scores on standardized assessments, Lenox Public School District also graduates its students at high rate. Lenox has consistently higher graduation rates compared to the State of Massachusetts. Dating back to 2010, the District has graduated 100% of its senior class three times—not once graduating less than 90% during the years 2010 to 2018.

Lenox not only outperforms the state average in terms of MCAS scores, but when it comes to graduation as well. Another metric for educational quality is the percentage of graduates attending higher education.

Not only do the District’s students graduate at a higher rate than the state average, they also attend higher education at a higher rate. The District has earned recognition for its provision of quality education, as demonstrated by Morris Elementary School’s status as a Blue Ribbon school and Lenox Memorial’s receipt of the Gold Medal in Rankings from US News & World Report in both 2016 and 2017.



Lenox invests heavily in its school district. Education is the largest category of expenditures, comprising 41.9 percent of the Town’s expenditures in 2018 as it has been for roughly two decades. This investment yields high-quality education of regional and national renown.

The most pressing challenge facing the District is declining residential enrollment. As a result of recent population trends and future projections, the District and the School Committee have begun exploring means to increase residential enrollment. The District has also been able to maintain a stable enrollment despite a declining local school-aged population via School Choice.

**School Choice**

According to U.S. Census, since 2000 the median age of Lenox residents has risen from 46 to 55 years old and the percentage of the population aged 55 and over has risen by 39%. The percentage of people ages 0-19 (a close proxy for school-aged children) has declined by 22%. This decline in population is mirrored by decline in residential student enrollment. Lenox’s total school enrollment has declined 13%, from 866 students in the 1999-2000 school year to 756 students in 2018-2019.

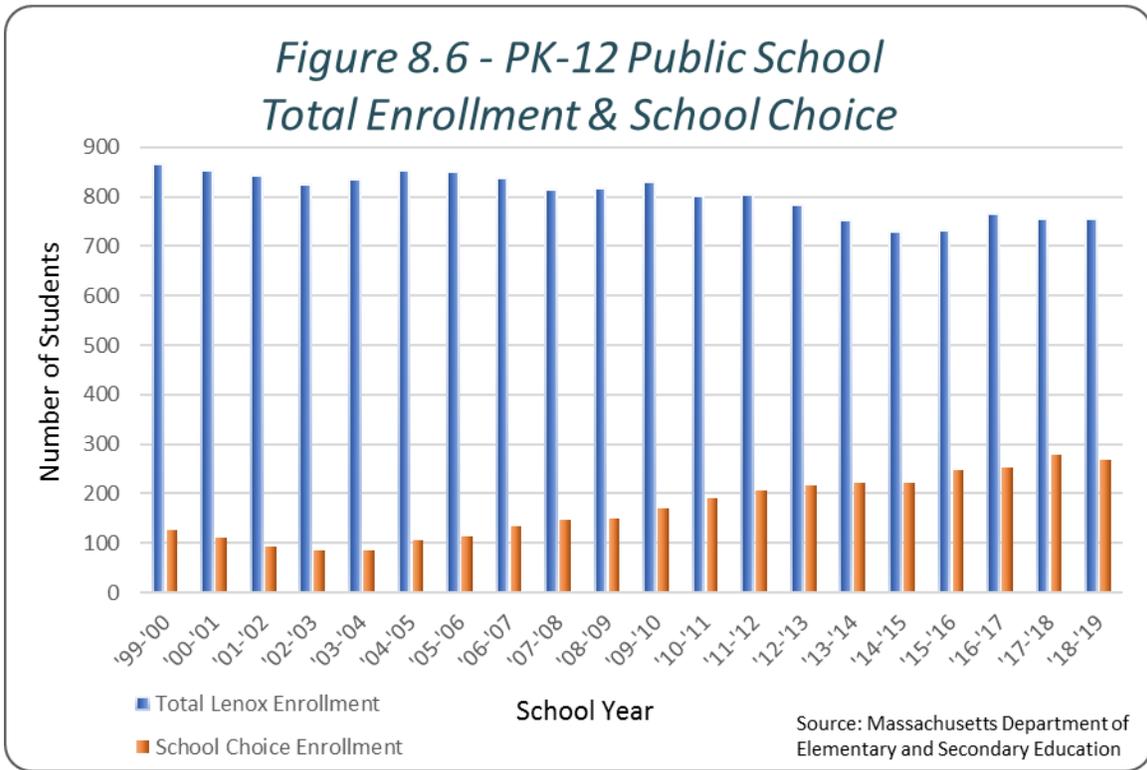
The decline in residential school enrollment in Lenox creates openings that can be populated with School Choice students. School Choice is a statewide program adopted in 1992 by which non-resident

students can attend public schools outside of their district after completing an admission process. The criteria are:

1. There must be a vacancy in the school, grade level, or particular program for which the applicant is applying. Every school year, the Principal will declare the availability.
2. The applicant must have a demonstrated record of good behavior and citizenship from their previous school.
3. The applicant must complete the application process.
4. Applications must be submitted before the specified deadlines.

The population of non-resident students utilizing School Choice to opt-in to Lenox public schools has more than doubled since the Town's last master plan. Presently, choice students account for 35.45% of total public school enrollment in Lenox. Municipalities can self-impose a threshold on the percent of School Choice enrollees their schools will accept, and Lenox has set the capacity for School Choice at 40% overall and any given grade cannot exceed 50%.

It is important to note that parents interested in utilizing School Choice so their children to attend a Lenox public school may not have this option because of this threshold. Consequently, they would be required to move to Lenox in order for their children to go to school in Lenox. This could lead to two scenarios: (a) more families move to Lenox thereby raising the Town's population of school aged-children; or (b) enrollment and school-aged population continues to decline and the threshold on School Choice is continually raised in order to populate Lenox's schools.



Enrollment in Lenox’s independent PK-12 school district dropped in 2014-15 but then increased again to historic levels tracked over 35 years. Enrollment currently is at or above the targets set by the School’s most recent Strategic Plan.

In the 2019-2020 school year, enrollment was bolstered by admitting nearly 40% of out-of-town students via School Choice. This mix of resident/choice students has evolved over 25 years of dealing with the state’s school choice policy, which in 1991-92 began enabling students to enroll in a district other than their own if spaces were made available by the “receiving” district.

The Lenox School Committee has set a guideline in place through the year 2020 that overall choice enrollment will not exceed 40% and that any given grade cannot exceed 50%. With the 40% cap now close to being reached.

In the past 10 years, Lenox paid off the bonds to fund both Morris and LMMHS renovations and additions. Maintenance is now required, but having the debt paid off is a significant achievement, especially since new high schools can cost \$75-\$100 million or more.

## COMMUNITY CENTER

The Lenox Community Center located at 65 Walker Street is the recent recipient of capital investment. The Town has renovated much of the building, with roof repairs scheduled. Additionally, the building's electrical system is outdated and in need of a complete replacement. The Community Center, in its Parks and Recreation role, is seeking funding to establish a Pocket Park (0.5 to one-acre park) in the New Lenox neighborhood.

Like the Library, the Lenox Community Center is a key part of the community. The Community Center administers the Town's parks and recreation spaces. It also hosts programs for residents, which provide year-round activities for children and adults, including numerous after-school and summer camp programs and regular social events for seniors coordinated by the Lenox Council on Aging. Since 2015, \$1,052,906 has gone towards renovation of the Lenox Community Center, including basketball courts, new siding and boiler, beach improvements, and better handicap accessibility. The beach improvements cost \$313,000 and included a new beach house; improved handicap accessibility with new boardwalk, driveway, and parking lot; grading the steep slope by the entrance; expanding the picnic area; and landscaping.

## LENOX LIBRARY

Situated within the historic second county courthouse on the Town's Main Street, the Lenox Library is a vital part of the community. The Library was founded in 1856 and has been in operation ever since. Through its services and collections, the Library serves as a store of information and knowledge, as well as a place of engagement for the community.

Recognizing the Library's significance to the community, Lenox bought the Library's historic building from the Lenox Library Association (LLA) in 2007. Then, in 2017, Lenox residents voted to approve a Memorandum of Understanding with the LLA under which the Town assumed responsibility for the Library's operations, budget, and library service staff. This decision came at a time when the building showed increasing need for capital improvements including flood prevention and repairing/replacing the heating and plumbing infrastructure. In return, the LLA contributes \$132,000 per year to the Library's operating budget and funds nearly all of the Library's public programs; the LLA also retained ownership of the Library's collections. The LLA's continued status as 501(c)(3) nonprofit also makes it eligible for grant funding.

In addition to maintaining the historical record of the Town and making its collections available to the public, the Lenox Library hosts a wide array of programs. This includes a Summer Reading program

that in 2017 was attended by over 2,000 people; a Distinguished Lecture Series; pre-concert Tanglewood Talks; weekly story times and special children’s events; and local history programs. The Library also hosts changing art exhibits in its Welles Gallery. The Lenox Library is a place where people gather and where knowledge is shared. As its National Register listing indicates, the Library building will continue to need investment and care to properly preserve its historic structure.

## **EXPENDITURES**

Lenox has a strong financial health. The Town has a high total property assessment and is able to use its tourism and hospitality industries to generate revenue. The Town’s high revenue collection affords it the ability to invest in services - such as public safety, public works, and education - that enhance the quality of life for Lenox residents and visitors.

The following table details Lenox’s expenditures for the fiscal years of 2010 to 2019 in relation to its services and facilities.

**Table 8.4 - Expenditures**

<b>Fiscal Year:</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>%Change</b>
General Government	\$730,047	\$795,753	\$949,876	\$975,584	\$888,450	22%
Police	\$818,601	\$808,667	\$814,484	\$871,134	\$882,211	8%
Fire	\$310,505	\$284,835	\$478,624	\$364,759	\$350,595	13%
Other Public Safety	\$84,148	\$87,322	\$92,897	\$98,219	\$116,851	39%
Education	\$8,242,567	\$8,235,938	\$8,383,642	\$8,552,727	\$8,743,084	6%
Public Works	\$1,284,385	\$1,735,423	\$2,586,217	\$2,122,828	\$2,845,451	122%
Human Services	\$118,176	\$115,087	\$133,166	\$157,296	\$160,237	36%
Culture and Recreation	\$517,200	\$579,769	\$509,187	\$583,749	\$605,422	17%
Fixed Costs	\$2,793,003	\$3,004,256	\$2,944,661	\$3,019,912	\$2,977,952	7%
Intergovernmental Assessments	\$333,287	\$324,808	\$341,254	\$296,052	\$388,583	17%
Other Expenditures	\$1,779	\$0	\$0	\$24,004	\$16,212	811%
Debt Service	\$1,875,541	\$1,615,662	\$1,733,875	\$2,744,670	\$1,746,963	-7%
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$17,111,249</b>	<b>\$17,589,531</b>	<b>\$18,969,895</b>	<b>\$19,812,947</b>	<b>\$19,724,025</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Fiscal Year:</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>% Change</b>
General Government	\$966,668	\$1,148,354	\$1,256,883	\$1,722,247	\$1,353,195	40%
Police	\$891,812	\$911,929	\$883,977	\$962,529	\$1,015,242	14%
Fire	\$317,675	\$582,572	\$484,223	\$438,642	\$1,143,640	260%
Other Public Safety	\$120,342	\$27,618	\$585,444	\$576,613	\$613,106	409%
Education	\$8,184,962	\$9,596,592	\$8,532,061	\$8,572,055	\$10,284,131	26%
Public Works	\$2,478,602	\$2,366,628	\$1,885,393	\$1,392,321	\$1,537,781	-38%
Human Services	\$161,457	\$164,005	\$205,468	\$205,510	\$216,427	34%
Culture and Recreation	\$690,951	\$640,456	\$770,248	\$847,541	\$707,275	2%
Fixed Costs	\$4,159,580	\$3,641,128	\$4,966,947	\$5,168,936	\$3,983,439	-4%
Intergovernmental Assessments	\$393,091	\$355,534	\$264,288	\$226,424	\$259,191	-34%
Other Expenditures	\$24,224	\$0	\$8,738	\$48,573	\$32,438	34%
Debt Service	\$1,285,611	\$901,127	\$858,480	\$301,000	\$287,000	-78%
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$19,676,990</b>	<b>\$20,337,959</b>	<b>\$20,704,167</b>	<b>\$20,464,409</b>	<b>\$21,434,884</b>	<b>9%</b>

Source: MA Department of Revenue – Division of Local Services 2010-2019

## 8.5 Goals, Objectives, & Action Items

- **GOAL SF 1: CONTINUALLY IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL QUALITY OF LENOX PUBLIC SCHOOLS.**

**Objective SF 1.1:** Invest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics facilities.

Action Item 1: Renovate and modernize science classrooms in Lenox Memorial Middle and High School to bring the facilities in line with 21<sup>st</sup> century educational facilities.

Action Item 2: Stay abreast of technological and teaching developments in STEM education.

Action Item 3: Work with neighboring districts to improve and increase the cost-effectiveness of STEM education via shared services, equipment, and technology.

Action Item 4: Explore the possibility of establishing an Advanced Placement consortium with nearby districts to increase course offerings.

**Objective SF 1.2:** Work with Lenox's cultural institutions to expand the school district's arts and humanities educational opportunities.

Action Item 1: Continue incorporating place-based learning strategies into history, art, music, and theater programs to integrate local cultural institutions into the classroom and the lives of students.

Action Item 2: Expand and promote existing internship programs whereby students are able to gain meaningful professional and academic experience.

**Objective SF 1.3:** Explore the feasibility and viability of increasing access to vocational education countywide.

Action Item 1: Work with countywide ad hoc committees to determine regional need/demand for vocational education in Berkshire County.

Action Item 2: Identify various models for delivering vocational education in Berkshire County. Such models could potentially include a regional school, a more efficient system for transporting students to existing vocational schools, a shared-services model, etc.

**Objective SF 1.4:** Work with the Lenox School Committee to create a strategic School Choice Plan.

Action Item 1: Determine if the 40% School Choice cap implemented by Lenox needs to be lowered, raised, or remain at 40% considering the repercussions on Lenox’s tax base.

Action Item 2: Support the Lenox School Committee in creating a transparent process that assesses and communicates a strategic School Choice Plan.

➤ **GOAL SF 2: ENSURE THAT LONG-TERM PLANNING INITIATIVES ACCOUNT FOR MAINTENANCE, OPERATION, AND NECESSARY REPLACEMENT OF CURRENT FACILITIES.**

**Objective SF 2.1:** Engage in proactive asset management planning in all aspects of municipal facilities.

Action Item 1: Adopt a capital improvement planning process that is vetted by the Permanent Buildings Committee and accounts for all municipal facilities in terms of inventory, needs, priorities, and scheduling.

Action Item 2: Adopt a proactive asset management protocol in all town departments that ensures facilities and equipment are maintained in timely and prioritized fashion.

Action Item 3: Annually assess all user fees charged by the town and compare them with the actual cost of town services and projected cost increases. Adjust user fees accordingly.

**Objective SF 2.2:** Continue exploring new opportunities for shared services and other means to reduce costs and increase quality of services.

Action Item 1: Evaluate, assess, and publicize shared services initiatives to date to determine feasibility and viability of expanding such efforts.

Action Item 2: Conduct studies to determine which departments can create efficiency through shared services.

Action Item 3: Utilize shared services to lower purchasing, capital, and other costs as possible.

Action Item 4: Create a Facilities Director position.

- **GOAL SF 3: INCORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION INTO THE PLANNING AND MAINTENANCE OF MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND SPACES.**

**Objective SF 3.1:** Enhance resilience and ability to mitigate potential damages from climate hazards.

Action Item 1: Utilize a broad and collaborative approach to updating the Town’s Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Action Item 2: Coordinate with state and federal agencies on State Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan development.

Action Item 3: Establish a process for information and data gathering.

Action Item 4: Find a suitable database or model database to monitor climate and potential hazard metrics, to improve planning and decision-making capacity.

Action Item 5: Identify and act upon low-cost/high-mitigation measures and initiatives.

Action Item 6: Identify and act upon synergies between town needs and state and federal programs to enhance opportunities for greenhouse gas emissions reduction.

Action Item 7: Incorporate temperature-reducing designs, such as shade-tree planting and green roofs into municipal facilities improvement plans.

Action Item 8: Develop a means at the Town or neighborhood level, such as check-ins and phone trees, to reduce the vulnerability of more isolated populations, including seniors and disabled.

- **GOAL SF 4: MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE DRINKING WATER, WASTEWATER, AND STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE.**

**Objective SF 4.1:** Maintain an adequate amount of high-quality drinking water.

Action Item 1: Enforce regulations in and around reservoirs, community wellheads, and potential high-yield quality aquifers.

Action Item 2: Locate additional town drinking water sources.

Action Item 3: Continue to test drinking water supplies.

**Objective SF 4.2:** Incorporate a long-term water study into a Capital Improvement Plan.

Action Item 1: Conduct a study of all water systems that projects water demand over a future 20-year period, accounting for projected population and tourism trends and potential effects of climate change.

Action Item 2: Implement the study findings to project future needs and plan for system upgrades, replacements, etc. and incorporate them into the capital improvement planning process.

**Objective SF 4.3:** Increase operational efficiency to reduce costs and overall environmental impact.

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

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

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

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

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

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

# 9. Transportation & Circulation

Lenox's transportation system provides for an array of modes and users: from higher speed state routes that move people throughout the region to smaller local roads and pedestrian ways that circulate people between the Town's residential and commercial areas. The Town's sidewalks and 81 miles of roadways are well maintained throughout the year, including during and after snowfall. Lenox actively strives to provide a transportation system that is safe, efficient, attractive, and accessible for residents and visitors of all ages and mobility.

Lenox continues to invest in the improvement of all aspects of its transportation system including road and sidewalk improvements and implementing shared-use paths. Numerous studies have been conducted in recent years to identify Lenox's strengths and weaknesses regarding transportation. They include:

- Downtown Transportation Management Study (2003)
- Main Street/West Street/East Street/Yokun Ave Speed Studies (2016)
- Main Street/West Street/ Walker Street Intersection Study (2003)
- Lenox Village Center Improvement Plan (2008)
- Lenox Shared Use Path Feasibility Study
- Complete Streets Plan (2016)
- Lenox Town Center Walk Audit (2016)
- Lenox Dale Walk Audit (2017)
- Community Development Plan (2004)
- Lenox Master Plan (1999)

These studies have highlighted the Town's walkability, especially in Lenox Village's commercial district, and its road maintenance as strengths.

The same studies identified such weaknesses as; inadequate lighting along pedestrian ways; sidewalk gaps between Lenox Village and Lenox Dale and along Route 7/20; intersection of Main Street, Walker Street, West Street, and Old Stockbridge Road; and limited transit options. In light of its recent studies,

the Town has already made improvements to sidewalks and high-crash intersections. Increasing access to transit is a regional challenge; one that requires partnership and collaboration between municipalities and regional agencies.

The Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA) provides public transit services in Lenox. In addition to BRTA, there are several local taxicab companies that serve Lenox and the surrounding area. Ride sharing services are present but in limited supply. Lenox has a vibrant economy largely supported by its cultural amenities and a strong hospitality sector. Many of these businesses rely on low-wage workers, as well as second and third shift schedules. Increased access to public and private transit would benefit the Town's workforce and bolster economic growth.

One regional initiative that could help improve transportation for low-wage workers is a potential Transportation Management Association (TMA). A TMA is often a non-profit organization dedicated to improving transportation within a given area, but can also exist as public-private partnerships between employers, transit providers, and businesses. TMAs typically utilize a shuttle service, or van and ride pooling. BRTA, BRPC, 1Berkshire and other organizations have been exploring potential TMA development in the Berkshires for some time.

Lenox invests in transportation planning and improvements to maintain and enhance the quality of its network of roads and sidewalks. As a result, Lenox residents and visitors enjoy walkable neighborhoods, as well as largely safe and well-maintained roads, which improves the quality of life for residents and visitors.

## ***VISION***

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*THE TOWN OF LENOX WILL HAVE A TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION NETWORK THAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF ITS RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.*

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## 9.1 Priority Transportation & Circulation Topics

### WALKABILITY

As a destination for visitors, walkability is a priority topic for Lenox. The Town has made numerous efforts to provide an increasingly safe and enjoyable experience for pedestrians including filling in sidewalk gaps on Walker Street, adding raised crosswalks to Main Street, and reducing motorist confusion at the intersection of Main Street, Walker Street, West Street, and Old Stockbridge Road.

Lenox is home to a number of restaurants and performance venues that attract people year-round but particularly in the evening during the summer months. Although a safe Town, improving the lighting in pedestrian areas would increase safety, enhance the pedestrian experience, and bring more people to commercial districts after dark.



Source: Richard Hoebel – pedestrian foot bridge at Woods Pond

While creating Lenox's *Complete Streets Plan*, "BRPC accompanied town staff on an evening walk through the Village Center to identify dark and poorly lit areas where lighting could be added. These areas include:"

- Lilac Park: near benches along the west side of Main St. and near the cannon
- Roche Reading Park: benches in front along the east side of Main St. and along the pathway leading to the parking lot behind the library
- Parking lot behind Olde Heritage Tavern / Library: in the back corner
- Near Furnace Park in Lenox Dale
- Walker Street: at benches southeast of the Curtis
- Ore Bed Road: along the road near Ore Bed Park

## CONNECTIONS

Lenox has a wealth of amenities from retail shopping and cultural venues to public parks and trails. These amenities, however, are often separated by several miles that often require residents and visitors to drive. Multiple forms of transportation that connect the Town's amenities would have social, economic, and environmental benefits.

## SAFETY & MAINTENANCE

With the adoption of its Complete Streets policy, Lenox has pledged to increase safety for all road users. The Town scheduled numerous projects to increase safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians. Lenox will continue to implement recommendations from the Complete Streets policy as well as analyze reported crash-clusters to take preventative action regarding hazardous intersections.

## ACCESS TO TRANSIT

Businesses operating in the areas of culture, hospitality, and tourism are often reliant on low-wage employees, as well as second and third shift workers. Lack of access to transit for these workers is a barrier to economic growth. The Town should consider working with local and regional partners to expand access to transit for Lenox's workforce.

## 9.2 COVID-19 Related Impacts to Transportation & Circulation

The COVID-19 pandemic has not altered transportation conditions, vision, or goals in the short-term. However, the decline in local revenue from reduced visitorship affects capital spending and generation of local match for some state grants. Increased non-car activity on local streets and roads has

highlighted need – whenever possible – to keep creating pedestrian and bike facilities and to continue filling in connectivity gaps.

### INDICATORS TO TRACK

- ✓ Pedestrian and cyclist number counts on public ways
- ✓ Resident survey – how many residents got outdoors by walking, running, or biking on public ways during the pandemic and what was their experience?
- ✓ Post-occupancy outreach to Walker Street residents – do they use sidewalk connection to the Village Center?

## 9.3 Priority Transportation & Circulation Goals

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

With vibrant cultural institutions, outdoor recreation opportunities, and a robust hospitality industry, Lenox attracts people for both leisure and employment. The Town would benefit from a transportation system that expands mobility for all and increases access to employment opportunities. The Town will continue to advocate and promote a transportation system that accommodates pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, and transit users, as well as regional east-west and north-south rail connections that link the Berkshires to New York City.

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

The population of adults over the age of 65 is growing. Such demographic trends are projected to continue through 2035. Lenox, through its Council on Aging and its Community Center, does an excellent job of providing for the transportation needs of senior citizens. The Town should continue its efforts to raise the quality of life for this population. Additional efforts the Town should undertake include; increasing access to transit; expanding the Council on Aging’s shopping excursion beyond one day per week; adding additional handicapped, charter bus, and general parking spaces in Lenox Village; and providing shuttle services that transport seniors and the handicapped to local events.

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

Lenox should implement a shuttle system that would connect residents and visitors with local attractions. Seamlessly traveling from shopping to restaurant to venue without use of a bicycle or car would mitigate traffic congestion, decrease demands on parking, and allow people to spend more time enjoying Lenox's attractions.

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

Lenox residents commend the Town for its excellent maintenance of its transportation system. The Town should consider developing annual strategic plans for road and sidewalk maintenance that prioritize projects and are connected to a Capital Improvement Plan.

(FOR THE COMPLETE LIST OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION ITEMS, SEE PAGE 241)

## 9.4 Trends & Conditions

### STATE ROADS

Lenox contains five state-maintained roadways, accounting for 16 miles of road and 20% of all roads in Lenox. The state roads in Lenox include principal arteries such as Route 7/20, Route 7, and Route 20, as well as minor arterials Route 7A and Route 183. Of the state roadways, the longest is Route 7/20, which runs north-south for 4.7 miles from the Pittsfield border until it diverges into Route 7 toward the southwest and Route 20 toward the southeast. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) also maintains two sections of Route 7A: from its entrance off Route 7/20 until it becomes Main Street and south along Kemble Street until it reconnects with Route 7/20. Lastly, MassDOT maintains Route 183 along Walker Street between Route 7A and Route 7/20.

Lenox, along with many other Berkshire municipalities, benefits greatly from the fact that its most well-travelled roadway is under the jurisdiction of MassDOT. This major roadway is likely to receive the most “wear and tear” of any in town and have some the greatest maintenance costs.

### LOCAL ROADS

Lenox maintains 53 miles of local roadways, accounting for 65% of all roads in the Town. These roads range in classification from minor arterials, such as Holmes Road and Walker Street, to collectors like East Street and Hawthorne Road. Other local roads vary from one-way urban streets like Housatonic Street to country roads that wind through undeveloped land.

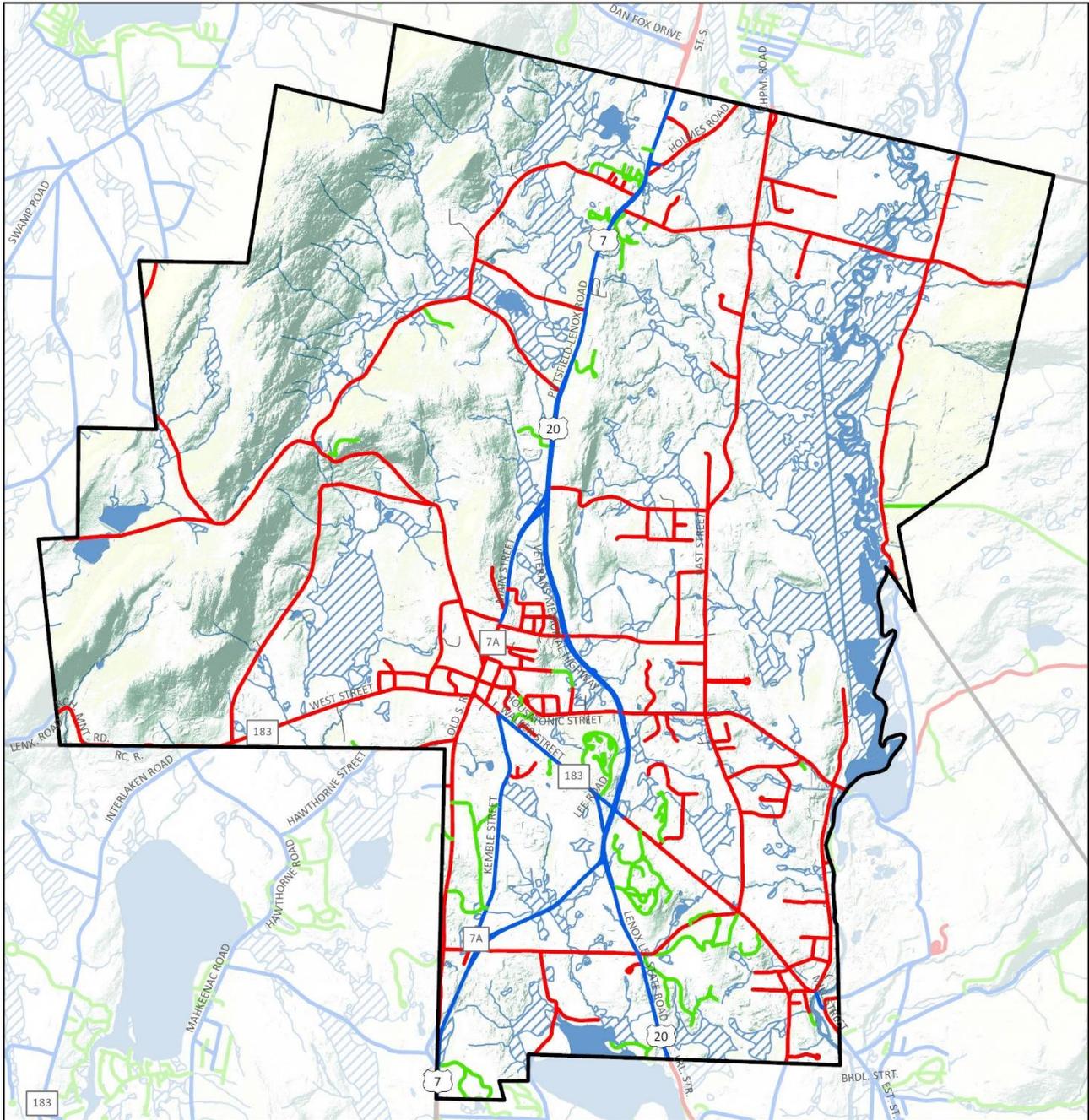
### PRIVATE ROADS

In addition to state and local roads, Lenox contains 12 miles of private roads, accounting for 15% of all roadways in town. Individuals or other authorities maintain private roads. The majority of private roads serve to divert traffic to and from residential subdivisions, commercial subdivisions, and hospitality resorts.

### ROAD JURISDICTION

Lenox contains approximately 81 linear miles of roadways. State roads comprise 16 miles (20% of total roadways), local road comprise 53 miles (65%), and private roads comprise 12 miles (15%). Figure 9.1 is a map of Lenox’s road network and Table 9.1 details the services provided by different classifications of roadways.

Figure 9.1 - Road Jurisdiction Map



Jurisdiction

- State
- Local
- Private



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



**Table 9.1 - Road Classification**

Classification	Services Provided
Arterial	Provides the highest level of service at the greatest speed for the longest uninterrupted distance, with some degree of access control.
Collector	Provides 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.
Local	Consists of all roads not defined as arterials or collectors; primarily provides access to land with little or no through movement.

Source: Lenox Complete Streets Plan, 2017

**BRIDGES & CULVERTS**

There are a total of 143 bridges and culverts in Lenox. The majority are town-owned (69%) and located on local roads (59%).

**Table 9.2 - Bridge Inventory**

Bridge ID #	Owner	Bridge Category	Over	Under	AASHTO Rating	Structurally Deficient
018	MUN	NBI	HWY New Lenox Rd.	Water – Housatonic River	82.8	No
017	MUN	NBI	HWY Mill St.	Water – Housatonic River	95.5	No
AWA	DOT	Rail	HWY Mill St.	RR - HRR	91.3	No
05m	MUN	NBI	HWY Roaring Brook Rd.	Water – Roaring Brook	38.5	Yes
ABR	DOT	BRI	US 20/US 7/Pittsfield	Water – Yokum Brook	76.2	No
50L	MUN	BRI	HWY New Lenox Rd.	Water – Yokun Brook	16.4	No
50M	MUN	BRI	HWY East St.	Water – Mill Brook	31.3	No
BU9	MUN	NBI	HWY New Lenox Rd.	Water – Yokun Brook	90.9	No
BK4	MUN	BRI	HWY Edgewood Dr.	Water – Yokum Brook	37.1	No
50N	DOT	BRI	US 7 @ STA 119	Water – Sawmill Brook	11	No
AVD	MUN	BRI	HWY W. Mountain Rd.	Water – Yokun Brook	39.9	No

Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, 2019

**AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC VOLUME**

MassDOT tracks the average daily traffic volume of certain roadways within municipalities. The Lenox roadway with the highest daily traffic volume is Route 7/20 the Town’s north-south principal arterial road. Traffic volumes are particularly high between the 7/20-7A junction and the Pittsfield border, in the Gateway district. There are two likely reasons for the surge of traffic in the Gateway on Route 7/20. One explanation is that neighborhood is zoned for large-scale commercial and residential developments; another is that it is the principal artery connecting Lenox - and towns to its south - to Pittsfield.

**Table 9.3 - Average Daily Volume**

Roadway	Location	Average Daily Traffic Volume
Route 7/20	North of Route 7A	35,198
Route 7/20	South of Holmes Road	31,707
East Dugway Road	North of Dugway Road	20,482
Route 7/20	North of Hubbard Street	20,358
Route 7/20	South of Route 7A	17,886
Route 7	North of Plunkett & Kemble Streets	11,191
Main Street	North of Taconic Ave	11,161
Route 7	at Lee	10,819
Route 20	at Lee	10,638
Holmes Road	at Pittsfield	8,686
Walker Street	West of Crystal Street	3,124
Walker Street	West of East Street	3,112
East Street	at Pittsfield	2,897
Kemble Street	Between Plunkett & Walker Streets	2,834
New Lenox Road	East of East Street	2,362
New Lenox Road	East of 7/20	2,199
E. New Lenox Road	at Pittsfield	1,594
New Lenox Road	East of E. New Lenox Road	1,233

Source: MassDOT, 2018

Other roadways with significant traffic counts are East Dugway Road, Holmes Road, and Main Street. East Dugway Road, which experienced an average daily traffic count of 20,482, is an east-west roadway connecting East Street to Route 7/20 and is likely utilized primarily by residents of the New Lenox and Eastover neighborhoods as a means of reaching Route 7/20. Holmes Road runs nearly parallel with Route 7/20 and provides alternative access between Lenox and Pittsfield. Lastly, the section of Main Street between the Route 7/20-7A junction and Taconic Street, which connects the Lenox Village commercial district with Route 7/20, experienced an average daily traffic volume just over 11,000. Roadways located in the southeastern portion of the Town tend to be the least utilized.

## 9.5 Modes of Transit

### **FIXED-ROUTE BUS SERVICE**

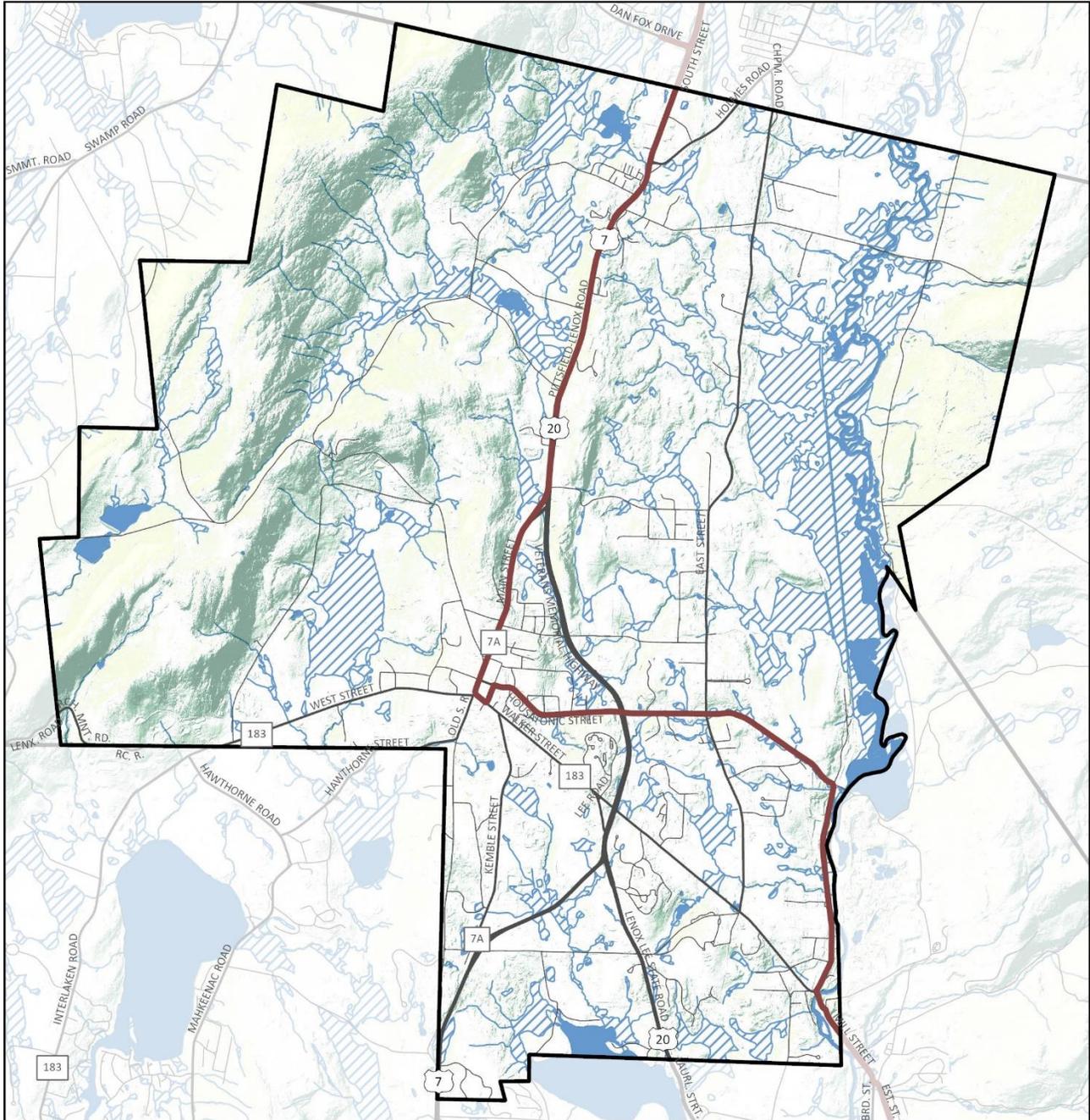
Public transit services in Lenox are provided by the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA). The BRTA runs a single fixed route bus service with terminals at the Intermodal Center in Pittsfield and the Lee Outlets in Lee. The fixed-route runs north-south from the Lenox-Pittsfield line into Lenox Village's commercial district before crossing the town east-west along Housatonic Street to access Lenox Dale via Crystal Street. BRTA buses operate Monday through Saturday from 6:00am to 6:00pm with headways of approximately one hour. Additionally, long-distance commuter/charter busses also provide service between Boston and New York several times per day.

Many of the jobs in Lenox are in the hospitality, arts, entertainment, and recreation sectors. Jobs in these sectors are often lower-wage, requiring second and third shift schedules. The lack of transit options during these hours presents a barrier to both employers and employees. Employees often struggle to find transportation to work and, in turn, employers struggle to fill positions. Expanded transit services would contribute to growth in the aforementioned sectors by increasing access to jobs.

### **PARATRANSIT**

The BRTA also provides on-demand paratransit services. Such services are available countywide and provide for elderly and disabled residents. The paratransit service requires application approval, advanced reservation, and a per-trip fee.

Figure 9.2 - Bus Routes Map



— Bus Route



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## PRIVATE TRANSIT

In addition to BRTA, there are several private transit providers operating in and around Lenox that provide services to the public. Currently, there are seven cab companies serving the Lenox area. Other transportation options available to Lenox residents and visitors are rental car companies as well as ride sharing services. Ride sharing services are available but limited.

## RAIL TRAVEL

Rail is not locally accessible in Lenox. Currently, the nearest passenger rail stations are in Pittsfield, MA; Greenfield, MA; Wassauc, CT; Albany, NY; and Springfield, MA. The Hudson Train Station also provides service to New York City and Boston. Regional efforts have been made to provide seasonal, weekend rail service connecting New York City to Pittsfield as a means of bringing visitors and second homeowners to the Berkshires.

Additionally, The Barrington Institute is spearheading the *Train Campaign*, which aims to bring back passenger trains to the area. Until 1972, passenger trains connected western Massachusetts to New York City and western Connecticut. This infrastructure is still present today. The Berkshire Line project proposes a passenger rail route that begins at Grand Central Station in New York City and ends in Pittsfield, MA. Along the way, there are proposed stops in Lenox and other nearby towns.

Although it would not provide a station in Lenox, an East-West Rail Study is currently underway by MassDOT. The study is examining the feasibility of passenger rail service between Boston and the Berkshires, and includes potential high-speed options. Moreover, a proposed weekend seasonal passenger rail service between New York City and the Berkshires, called the Berkshire Flyer, is in development. This service is modelled on the successful Cape Flyer in the Boston/Cape Cod area. The service should hopefully be running by the summer of 2021.

## AIR TRAVEL

Lenox, like many Berkshire County municipalities, is without an airport. Lenox's nearest regional airports are located in Pittsfield and North Adams. The nearest domestic and international airports are in Hartford, CT and Albany, NY.

## 9.6 Transportation Funding

### FEDERAL FUNDING

Federal funding for transportation projects is available to Massachusetts municipalities via the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). TIP is administered by regional planning agencies in conjunction with Metropolitan Planning Organizations. TIP-eligible projects include capital and non-capital surface transportation projects, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and other transportation enhancements, among others.

Lenox currently has two projects in TIP. A bridge replacement on Roaring Brook Road is scheduled for fiscal year 2021 and pavement, signage, and curbing improved on Holmes Road are undetermined.

### STATE FUNDING

Enacted in 1973, the Chapter 90 highway funding program entitles Massachusetts municipalities a reimbursement of documented expenditures on approved highway projects. Funds are provided via Transportation Bond Issues, which can be used for a variety of projects ranging from road improvements/repairs to municipal facilities such as salt sheds and parking garages. Chapter 90 funding is apportioned by a formula that factors in variables like road miles, population, and employment. For fiscal year 2019 Lenox received a Chapter 90 apportionment of \$284,116.

In addition to Chapter 90 funding, the Commonwealth provides grants for transportation improvements via its Complete Streets program. In order to be eligible for funding through Complete Streets, a municipality must - as Lenox has done - adopt a Complete Streets policy and develop a prioritization plan. Lenox received a Complete Streets grant to install raised crosswalks and make other traffic calming enhancements to promote walkability and pedestrian safety on Main Street.

### LOCAL FUNDING

One unique feature of Lenox is that it is home to much of the lodging in the county, as well as many restaurants. The Town has enacted a local option tax on both rooms and meals, which provides a source of income that supplements its residential and commercial tax base. A report by the Mass. Municipal Association (MMA) states that sales at Lenox restaurants bring an additional \$51 per capita

to the municipality annually, one of the highest levels in the state<sup>2</sup>. The Town also collects a 6% tax on lodging units; netting close to \$2 million annually which is approximately \$400 per capita.

These income streams allow Lenox to prioritize infrastructure, like its roads, in ways that many other Berkshire communities cannot afford to. This additional revenue also allows the Town to leverage other state and federal transportation funding, apply for competitive grants, and utilize staff for long term planning and project development.

## 9.7 Complete Streets

In 2016, the Lenox Select Board formally adopted the Town's Complete Streets Plan. The purpose of the Complete Streets Plan is to:

*“Accommodate all road users by creating a roadway network that meets the needs of individuals utilizing a variety of transportation modes. It is the intent of the Town of Lenox to formalize the plan, design, operation, and maintenance of streets so that they are safe for users of all ages, all abilities, and all income levels as a matter of routine.”*

Complete Streets is a transportation concept whereby municipalities are encouraged to enable safe access to roadways for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation. Complete Streets plans examine the vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle conditions within a municipality to determine improvements that optimize use for all modes of transit.

The Town adopted its Complete Streets Needs Assessment and Prioritization Plan in 2017. The plan sets seven goals and objectives that are intended to guide transportation planning in Lenox.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mma.org/nearly-half-of-mass-communities-have-adopted-local-option-meals-tax/>

**Table 9.4 - Complete Streets Plan: Goals and Objectives**

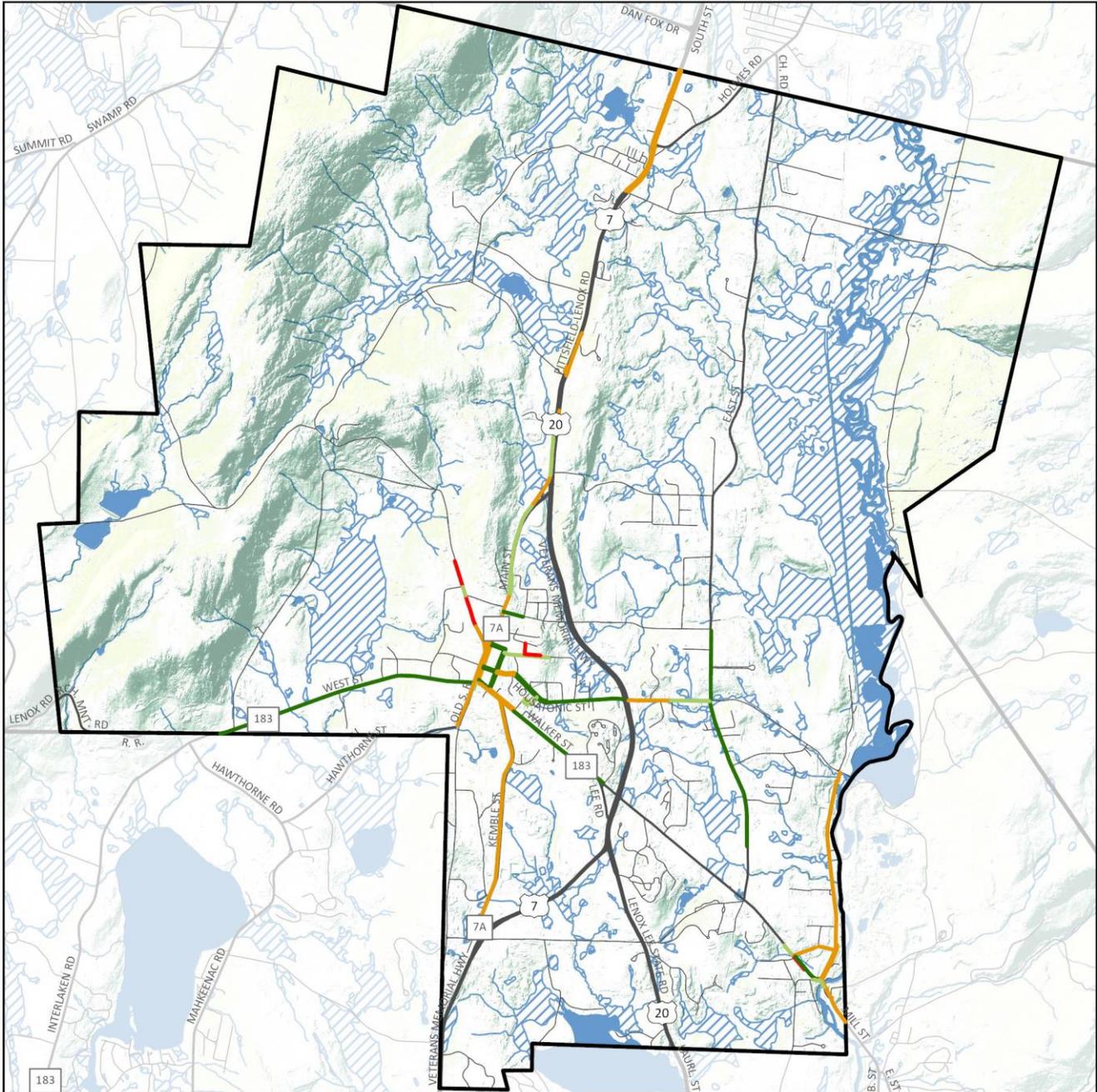
Goal	Objective
Connectivity	Provide transportation choices by improving system connectivity within and between modes.
Safety	Prioritize safety for all users of the transportation system.
Travel & Tourism	Prioritize projects that enhance walkability and bikeability for visitors to Lenox by ensuring adequate connections to town destinations.
Livability	Increase the livability of Lenox residents by improving access to active mode facilities and/or transit service in Lenox.
Context Sensitivity	Develop a multi-modal transportation system that is sensitive to the historic districts and rural/scenic character of Lenox.
Equity	Ensure Complete Streets projects are distributed equitably in Lenox.
Age Friendly	Ensure connectivity for residents of all ages to create a livable community for anyone aged "8 to 80."

Source: Lenox Complete Streets Plan, 2017

**PEDESTRIAN CONDITIONS**

Overall, pedestrian conditions in Lenox are very good. Many of the heavily traveled sidewalks are in good-excellent condition. There are, however, some areas in Lenox where sidewalk conditions could be improved. There are few sidewalk gaps in Lenox. The majority of the Town is well connected with sidewalks, with exceptions along Route 7/20 through the Gateway district, several short sections of gaps in Lenox Village, and along Walker Street between Lenox Village and Lenox Dale - a federally funding improvement project that is now complete. The following maps show both sidewalk condition and sidewalk gaps.

Figure 9.3 - Sidewalk Condition Map



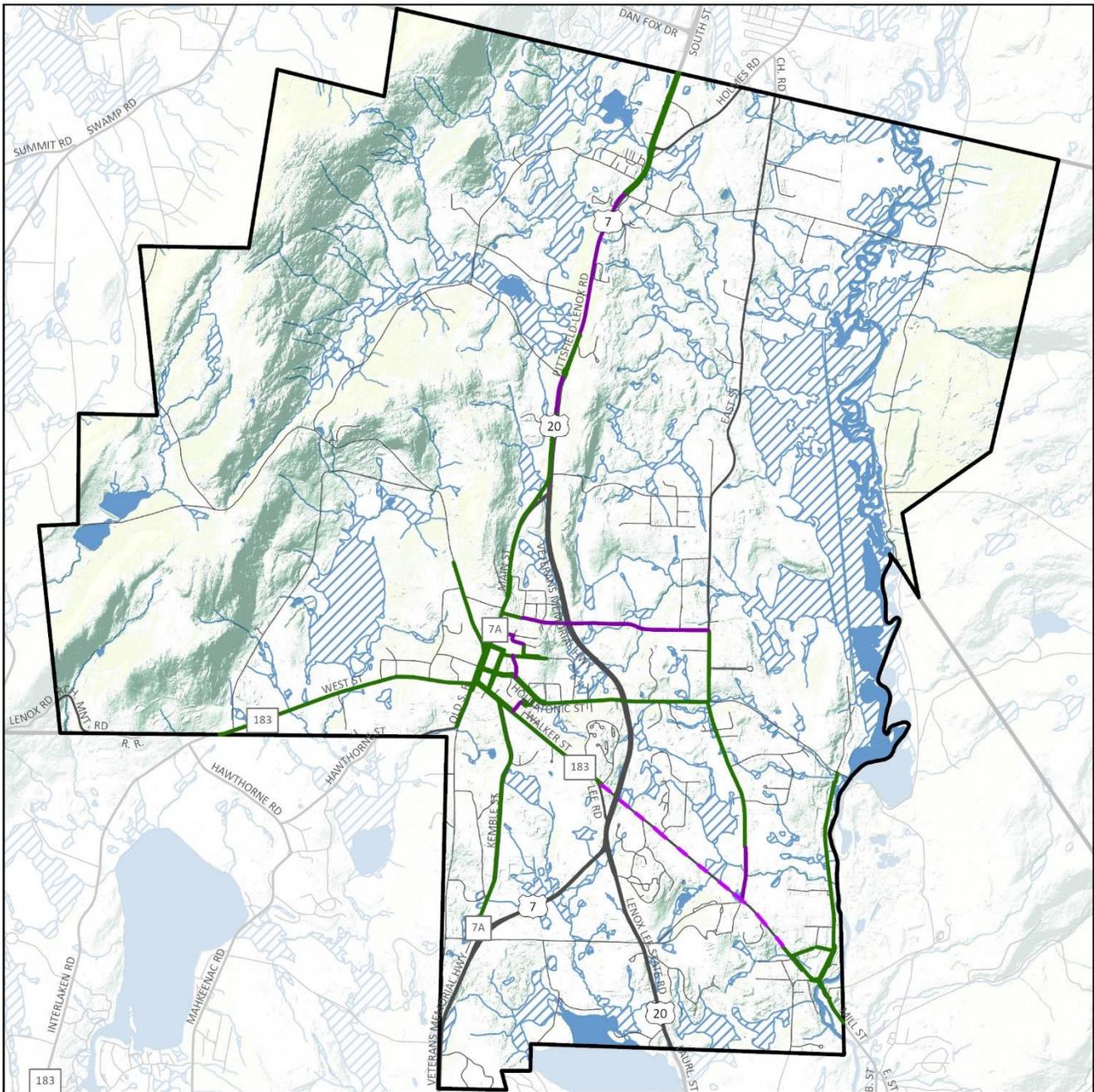
- Excellent
- Fair
- Good
- Poor



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Figure 9.4 - Sidewalk Gaps Map



- Existing Sidewalks
- Sidewalk Gaps
- Sidewalks in TIP



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Lenox has examined its pedestrian conditions in three separate studies. In 2016, walkBoston, along with town officials and residents, performed a walk audit of Lenox Village. walkBoston returned to Lenox in 2017 to perform a walk audit in Lenox Dale. Additionally, the Town’s Complete Streets Plan studied pedestrian conditions.

These studies found pedestrian conditions in Lenox to be generally adequate. Lenox Village is an exceedingly walkable neighborhood that provides pedestrian connection to surrounding amenities including Morris Elementary School and Tanglewood. There are small sidewalk gaps along Hubbard Street and on unnamed village roads. Walker Street, which connects Lenox Village to Lenox Dale, contains the longest continuous sidewalk gap in Lenox of approximately 1.4 miles. A project to fill in the Walker Street sidewalk gap was in TIP and has now been completed.

**BICYCLE CONDITIONS**

Bicycle conditions are ranked based on competency levels, which measures the degree of safety provided to cyclists by bicycle routes. Competency levels measure the degree of safety of bicycle routes. Higher competency levels are assigned to more dangerous routes. Danger and safety are measured by factors such as traffic volume, speed limits, and shoulder widths. Competency levels do not account for environmental factors, such as grade or inclement weather.

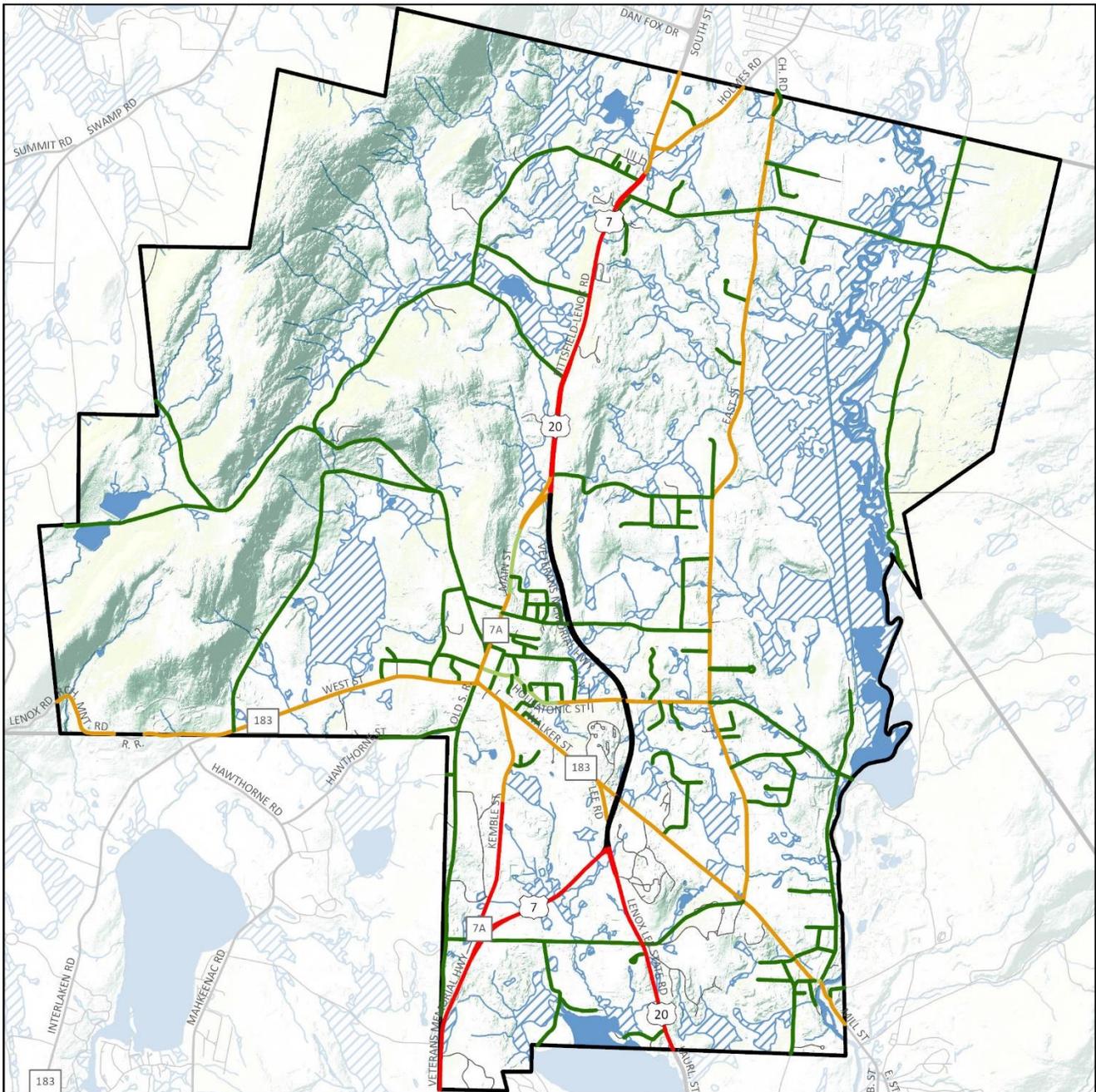
**Table 9.5 - Complete Streets Plan: Bicycle Competency**

Competency Level	Route Safety	Characteristics
Level 1	Safest Routes	Physical separation between cyclists and motorists.
Level 2	Safe Routes	Route is on a low-volume roadway.
Level 3	Moderately Safe	Speed limit is between 35-45 mph; roadway provides a 3' wide shoulder or bike lane.
Level 4	Unsafe Routes	Speed limit is between 35-45 mph; roadway does not provide a 3' wide shoulder or bike lane.
Level 5	Most Dangerous	Speed limits are greater than 45 mph.

Source: Lenox Complete Streets Plan, 2017

The majority of Lenox's village and country roadways are safe and accessible to all road users. Certain connector roads, however, are considered unsafe routes, according to competency levels of four. Such roads include Main, Walker, West, and Housatonic Streets. Roadways such as West Street, Housatonic Street, and Walker Street provide residents and visitors in other neighborhoods access to the Lenox Village's commercial district. Investments in bicycle conditions on the aforementioned roadways would improve multi-modal connectivity in Lenox.

Figure 9.5 - Bike Competency Map



**Bike Competency**

- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Limited Access



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**ROAD CONDITIONS**

Road conditions in Lenox are of exceedingly high quality across all four seasons. Lenox’s roads are predominantly paved and are well maintained. Lenox contains 81.3 miles of mostly well-maintained roads. 92% of Lenox’s roads are paved, which bodes well for the Town’s Complete Streets plan. Compared to gravel or stone surface materials, paved roads are more apt for multi-modal use because they can be striped. Striping serves to convey information, such as delineation of shoulder width, turning lanes, bike lanes, and passing restrictions. The ability to convey such information affords greater safety to users, even at higher speeds.

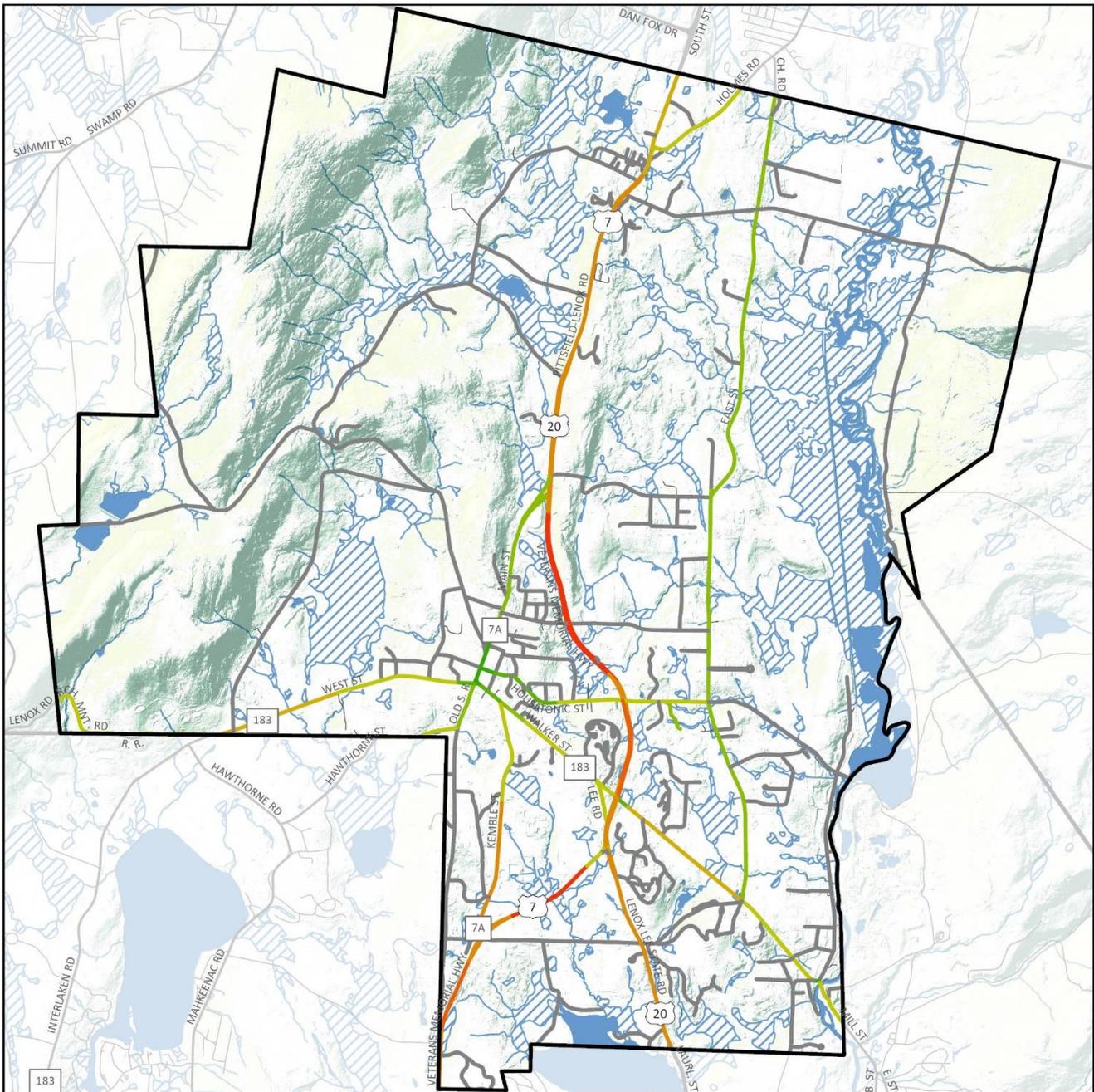
**Table 9.6 - Complete Streets Plan: Road Condition**

Surface Type	Mileage	Percent of Roads
Paved	71.5	91.8%
Gravel/Stone	6.2	7.9%
Unknown	0.2	0.3%

Source: Lenox Complete Streets Plan, 2017

The Town’s local roads wind through residential, commercial, or open space areas. With the exception of state roads, speed limits in Lenox are 40 miles per hour or lower. The highest speed limit (55 miles per hour) is on portions of Routes 7 and 7/20 while Route 7A on Kemble Street reaches 50 miles per hour.

Figure 9.6 - Speed Limit Map



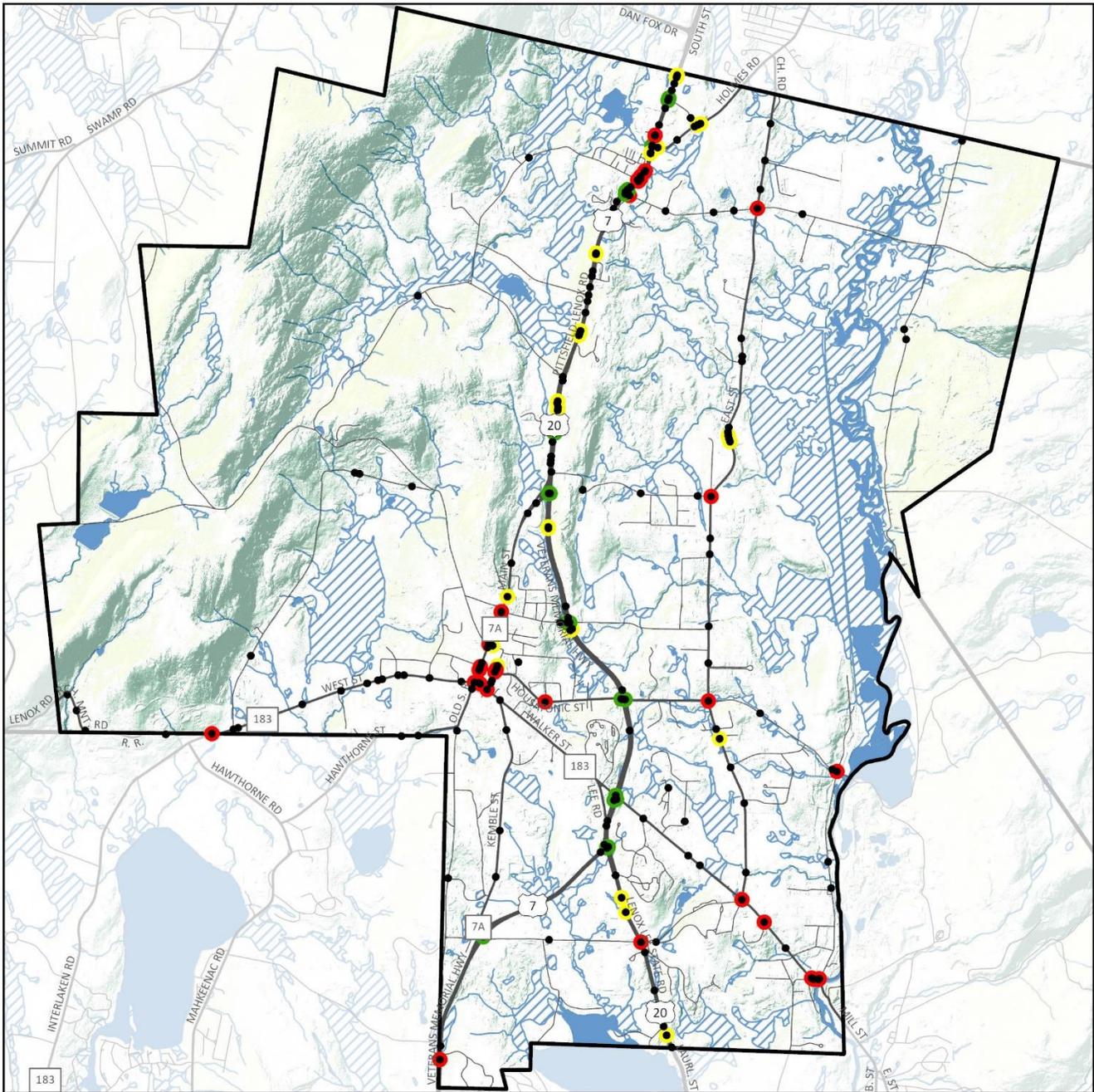
Speed Limit	Color
20	Light Green
25	Medium Green
30	Dark Green
35	Yellow-Green
40	Yellow
45	Orange
50	Red-Orange
55	Red
Unknown	Grey



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Figure 9.7 - Automobile Accidents Map



- Accidents
- Crash Cluster
  - Non Intersection
  - Signaled Intersection
  - Unsignaled Intersection



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Despite high-quality road conditions and generally low speed limits, crashes occur in Lenox. The majority of crashes in Lenox occur on state roads with high speed limits. Exceptions are the intersection of Route 7/20 and Hubbard Street and at the intersection of Main Street, Walker Street, West Street, and Old Stockbridge Road in Lenox Village.

From 2012 to 2014, there were 389 crashes involving a motor vehicle in Lenox. The majority of crashes took place on state routes with the largest crash cluster occurring on Route 7/20, north of its intersection with New Lenox Road. A smaller crash cluster is located at the intersection of Hubbard Street and Route 7/20. Due to the frequency and severity of crashes as well as a fatality in 2018, the intersection was closed from Hubbard Street.

Another regular site for motor vehicle crashes is the intersection of Main, Walker, and West Streets and Old Stockbridge Road in Lenox Village. While the frequency of crashes at this intersection is relatively high, the severity tends to be low due to the 20 mile per hour speed limit. The Town received funding to install bump-outs and a crosswalk on the Old Stockbridge Road portion of the intersection and installation has been completed. Such improvements should decrease confusion, increase visibility, and mitigate crashes.

MassDOT ranks crash clusters in the region based on the severity of crashes that occur within them. The top 5% of crash clusters within a region are eligible for federal Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding. The latest release of HSIP eligible crash clusters for 2014 to 2016 lists three in Lenox along Route 7. These include the intersection of Route 7 and New Lenox Rd., Route 7 and the Lenox Commons entrance, and Route 7 and Walker St. All of these locations are under the jurisdiction of MassDOT, which would be the authority responsible for any safety improvements.

## 9.8 Goals, Objectives, & Action Items

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

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

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

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

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

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

Action Item 1: Develop an attractive and easily understandable wayfinding system that guides visitors and residents using all modes throughout the Town.

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

Action Item 3: Study the feasibility, viability, and potential demand/use of a town-wide electric bike share system.

Action item 4: Continue making improvements to rights-of-ways that connect Lenox Dale to Lenox Village.

Action item 5: Improve bus linkages to rail stations in Wassauc, CT; Albany, NY; and Springfield, MA.

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

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

Action Item 2: Add stationary speed feedback signs at such locations as Walker Street, East Street (intersection with Hubbard Ave.), and East Street between Walker and Housatonic Streets.

Action Item 3: Add crosswalk bumpouts, raised crosswalks, and other traffic calming measures in Lenox Village where appropriate, particularly on Walker Street.

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

Action Item 1: Add pedestrian lighting to Main Street, Walker Street from Church Street east to the Community Center, and in public spaces, including Lilac Park, Triangle Park, Roche Reading Park, and the Village Center.

Action Item 2: Extend the sidewalk along Old Stockbridge Road from Hawthorne Street south to the Elm Court entrance since this is a particularly dangerous road for pedestrians.

Action Item 3: Make repairs to Main Street/Route 7A sidewalk.

Action Item 4: Add share the road signage and road striping to Undermountain Road that delineates the shoulder thereby calming traffic and making it safer for cyclists.

Action Item 5: Add new sidewalks and bike lanes where needed and suitable throughout the Town.

Action Item 6: Create a “Village Walk” between Franklin Street and Walker Street.

Action Item 7: Study the feasibility of establishing a designated space in Lenox Village where large, long-distance commuter buses can park for visitor arrival and departure.

Action Item 8: Consider the closure of village street(s) to promote pedestrian activity and a higher density of activity and attractions.

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

Action Item 1: Engage Berkshire Regional Transit authority and other regional agencies to develop solutions that increase access to and the frequency of transit services in Lenox, such as adding bus stops near residential and commercial centers and adding days of service.

Action item 2: Increase the number of, and add shelter to, the bus stops in the Town.

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

Action Item 1: Establish a shared use path between Crystal Street and Roaring Brook Road.

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

Action Item 3: Work with Historical District Commission and other relevant parties to ensure that added pedestrian lighting is sensitive to the Historic Districts.

Action Item 4: Adopt design guidelines that ensure the design of and materials used for shared use paths are in keeping with the character of the surrounding neighborhoods and environments.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Objective TC 3.1:** Implement a local shuttle service.

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

Action Item 2: Identify local destinations with high visitorship.

Action Item 3: Schedule efficient routes for the shuttle, especially during peak seasons and hours.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Action Item 4: Study feasibility and viability of an electric bike share program.

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

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

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

# 10. Implementation

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

The new Master Plan is over 300 pages long. It is chockful of information and ideas. In Lenox, plans do not sit on the shelf. There is a history of making concepts and ideas a reality, through local initiative, working with local and regional partners and accessing various grant programs and other funding opportunities.

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

The last update to the Lenox Master Plan was in 1999. It is strongly recommended that the Town not wait another twenty-two years to revisit this plan. Updating and tracking data and indicators identified in this plan will be useful in determining how things are changing in the community, and if policies and strategies are in fact successful in achieving community vision and goals.

An Implementation Committee can be a useful tool in helping to keep the plan active and its wide-ranging initiatives moving forward. The Town may wish to consider this going forward to help ensure the Master Plan remains relevant and involved in future decision-making.

## 10.1 Breaking Down the Implementation Table

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

## 10.2 Priorities

High priorities were identified throughout the planning process – beginning with early Steering Committee meetings, stakeholder interviews, Core Assessment Team meetings and concluding with the series of public workshops held through the winter of 2021. Community members expressed

preference and high interest in specific goals, objectives, and actions. These are identified in the plan and highlighted in the Implementation Table for ease of identification.

### 10.3 Timeline

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

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

### 10.4 Municipal Actions

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

### 10.5 Collaborations

Many hands make light work, and it is not feasible to have the Town take the lead on every single item in the Master Plan. The Town already collaborates with a number of local and regional organizations on items such as tourism promotion, the Cultural District, open space and recreation management. The Town can look to many of these as topic experts. In these cases, the Implementation Table identifies likely collaborators and partners who are already heavily engaged in the specific goal, objective, and actions or are potential partners.

**LAND USE**

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

**Objective LU 1.1: Protect unique and sensitive natural areas.**

Action	Timeframe	Cost	Priority	Municipal Action	Collaboration/Partners
Action Item 1: Continue to work with local conservation partners to acquire and protect sensitive areas.	Short-term	\$\$\$	High	Support non-profit organizations in Lenox.	Lenox Land Trust, Mass Audubon, Berkshire Natural Resources Council (BNRC)
Action Item 2: Use town funds to purchase priority conservation and recreation areas adjacent to existing public lands with permanent open space restrictions.	Short-term Mid-term Long-term	\$\$\$	High	Identify parcels. Town Meeting authorization and appropriation Grant seeking.	Select Board, Community Preservation Committee, Land Management Committee, Conservation Commission, Lenox Land Trust, Mass Audubon, BNRC
Action Item 3: Consider adopting a local wetlands bylaw.	Short-term	\$	Low	Local approval (Town Meeting, Cons Comm).	Conservation Commission
Action Item 4: Adopt specific performance standards in zoning bylaws that ensure new development near sensitive areas use low-impact design and construction methods.	Mid-term	\$\$	High	Local approval (Town Meeting).	Planning Board, Conservation Commission
Action Item 5: Use the Future Land Use Map along with existing conservation strategy frameworks (e.g.,	Short-term	\$	High	Buy-in from Town boards and committees as to	Land Management Committee, Conservation Commission, Mass Audubon,

Mass Audubon regional plan) to identify future conservation and preservation projects.				which properties are conservation versus recreation parcels.	BNRC, Lenox Water Department, Berkshire NEMBA
Action Item 6: Work with property owners to conserve priority properties through existing state programs and local resources.	Mid-term	\$	High	Get addresses from assessors, send out materials.	DCR, MDAR, MassWoods, Executive Office of EEA
Action Item 7: Work with local conservation partners to acquire or help acquire priority properties.	Mid-term/long-term	\$\$\$	High	Support acquisition projects. Initiate acquisition projects.	Lenox Land Trust, BNRC, Mass Audubon
<b>Objective LU 1.2: Use the Future Land Use Map to guide re-development and new development within Lenox.</b>					
Action Item 1: Work with property owners to conduct market studies or feasibility analyses to identify best reuse scenario (business incubation, shared workspaces, etc.) for priority parcels such as Brushwood Farm, Niagara Mill and other similar sites.	Mid-term/long-term	\$\$	High	Support funding. Outreach to property owners. Provide input for reports.	Land Use Department, Town Hall staff
Action Item 2: Update zoning to reflect ideal re-uses and new uses.	Ongoing	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board
Action Item 3: Pursue neighborhood specific strategies as identified in this land use chapter.	Ongoing	\$	High	Town Meeting. Support funding	Land Use Department
<b>GOAL LU 2: PROTECT LENOX'S SMALL-TOWN WAY OF LIFE WHILE ENHANCING EQUITY.</b>					

<b>Objective LU 2.1: Maintain year-round residential character and activity</b>					
Action Item 1: Promote year-round, workforce housing in all Lenox neighborhoods.	Short-term	\$\$\$	High	Zoning bylaw amendments. Funding Grant seeking.	Affordable Housing Trust & Committee, Regional housing entities, State housing programs/initiatives, Planning Board, Town Meeting
Action Item 2: Promote public, inclusive land use in all Lenox neighborhoods, especially in the village neighborhoods.	Short-term	\$	High	Highlight town properties. Highlight allowable uses.	Land Management Committee
Action Item 3: Ensure all residents can access and enjoy public lands and public spaces.	Mid to Long-term	\$\$\$	High	Evaluate ADA compliance.	Land Management Committee
Action Item 4: Use wayfinding tools to promote access to public lands and public spaces.	Short-term	\$\$	High	Seek technical assistance from DHCD's Downtown Initiative.	Cultural District, Chamber of Commerce, Select Board, DHCD's Downtown Initiative, Mass Cultural Council
<b>GOAL LU 3: ENSURE RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND OTHER PHYSICAL CHANGES TO LENOX LANDSCAPES AND NEIGHBORHOODS.</b>					
<b>Objective LU 3.1: Protect natural resources and areas from disruption.</b>					

Action Item 1: Promote biodiversity on public lands through habitat management and restoration.	Ongoing	\$\$\$	High	Keep up to date management plans on town property.	Lenox Water Department, Conservation Commission, Lenox Land Trust, Mass Audubon, BNRC, Kennedy Park Committee, Community Center
Action Item 2: Encourage participation in federal and state land management programs.	Ongoing	\$	High	Distribute information to property owners.	Land Management Committee
Action Item 3: Continue to limit development in flood plains.	Ongoing	\$	High	Enforce floodplain zoning bylaw; ensure floodplain maps are up to date.	Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board, Zoning Code Enforcement Officer
Action Item 4: Monitor presence of invasive species locally and regionally.	Ongoing	\$	High	Volunteer engagement and outreach.	Environmental Committee, Land Management Committee
Action Item 5: Control and remove invasive species on public lands.	Ongoing	\$\$	High	Seek grant funds. Obtain necessary permits.	Fish & Wildlife Habitat Management Grant Program, other state funds, Federal funds
Action Item 6: Review the Scenic Mountain Act and determine if the properties it applies to can be expanded.	Mid-term	\$	Low	Town Meeting.	Town Hall staff, Conservation Commission

Action Item 7: Explore the viability of denser residential development to protect open space.	Mid-term	\$\$	Medium	Support study funds Share information, such as comprehensive wastewater studies.	Town Hall staff, Planning Board, Land Management Committee
<b>Objective LU 3.2: Mitigate climate change impacts locally through innovative energy and municipal service technologies.</b>					
Action Item 1: Adopt neighborhood or small-scale renewable energy bylaws.	Short-term	\$	High	Identify suitable standards based on neighborhoods; bring to Town Meeting.	Planning Board, Environmental Committee
Action Item 2: Expand where large-scale solar installations may be installed.	Mid-term	\$	Medium	Identify suitable locations; bring bylaw amendments to Town Meeting.	Planning Board
Action Item 3: Consider neighborhood scale wastewater treatment and/or storage as alternative to private septic in neighborhoods prone to flooding if municipal sewer is not feasible.	Long-term	\$\$	Low	I.D. cost/benefit to connection to public system versus private system.	Department of Public Works

Action Item 4: Support recommendations from Columbia University students' sustainability reports.	Ongoing	\$-\$\$\$	High	Incorporate findings into design efforts regarding municipal infrastructure and facilities.	Department of Public Works, Permanent Building Committee
<b>Objective LU 3.3: Support recommendations identified in 2020 Hazard Mitigation Plan.</b>					
Action Item 1: Review Flood Plain Overlay District; update according to most recent flood plain maps and best practices.	Short-term	\$	High	Town Meeting. for ZBL amendment.	Planning Board
Action Item 2: Adopt water resource overlay districts.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Town Meeting.	Water Department, Planning Board, Tri-Town Health Department
Action Item 3: Require use of permeable surfaces, reduced parking requirements, erosion and storm drainage mitigation, and green infrastructure tools in resource-sensitive areas and resource overlay districts.	Medium-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board
Action Item 4: Adopt specific Low-Impact Development standards for all new development and all re-development projects.	Medium-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board

<b>Objective LU 3.4: Promote greater density development in future land use map neighborhood, commercial and industrial areas to avoid sprawl.</b>					
Action Item 1: Adopt a transfer of development rights policy.	Long-term	\$	Medium	Town Meeting.	Planning Board
<b>Objective LU 3.5: Support local agriculture and food systems to maintain agricultural lands and land use in Lenox</b>					
Action Item 1: Encourage existing farm(s) to enroll in Chapter 61A program	Short-term	\$	High	Promote program with pertinent landowners.	Board of Assessors
Action Item 2: Encourage existing farm(s) into APR program.	Short-term	\$\$\$	High	Promote program w/ pertinent landowners; share resources and funding opportunities.	Land Management Committee
Action Item 3: Allow for diverse food production scale and activity within residential neighborhoods in the zoning bylaw.	Ongoing	\$	Medium	Town Meeting.	Planning Board, Environmental Committee
Action Item 4: Reflect state protection of agricultural land use in local rules and regulations.	Ongoing	\$	Medium	Town Meeting.	Environmental Committee
<b>Objective LU 3.6: Encourage adaptive re-use of existing commercial and industrial sites and buildings.</b>					
Action Item 1: Reduce minimum lot size, maximum lot coverage and setback requirements for adaptive re-use projects.	Short-term	\$	High	Town Meeting	Planning Board

Action Item 2: Allow by right uses based on market potential (work with economic development specialist).	Medium-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board, Shared Economic Development Planner
<b>Objective LU 3.7: Make the built environment a tool to mitigate and adapt to climate change.</b>					
Action Item 1: Require LEED design and construction standards in private development projects.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Town Meeting.	Planning Board
Action Item 2: Integrate best building material, technologies and practices into municipal buildings and infrastructure.	Ongoing	\$-\$\$\$	Medium	Incorporate into bid documents, design, and engineering efforts.	Permanent Building Committee, Departments
Action Item 3: Consider innovative technologies and materials in public infrastructure projects.	Ongoing	\$-\$\$\$	Medium	Incorporate into bid documents, design, and engineering efforts.	Permanent Building Committee, Departments
<b>GOAL LU 4: DESIGN A COMMUNITY TO WELCOME NEW RESIDENTS OF ALL BACKGROUNDS.</b>					
<b>Objective LU 4.1: Remove zoning barriers to housing creation in areas identified in this plan as suitable for new housing.</b>					
Action Item 1: Remove restrictive housing density requirements from the Zoning Bylaw.	Ongoing	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board
Action Item 2: Create clear neighborhood-based design standard for new residential development.	Medium-term	\$\$\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board, Technical assistance via DLTA/other resources

Action Item 3: Work with local developers to identify regulatory impediments to work-force housing development within the zoning bylaw and subdivision rules.	Short-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board
Action Item 4: Identify town-owned properties suitable for small-scale, deed-restricted home ownership development.	Medium-term	\$\$\$	Medium	Develop and release RFP.	Select Board, Permanent Building Committee, Affordable Housing Trust & Committee, Community Preservation Committee
Action Item 5: Identify potential properties in Lenox to develop small-scale workforce housing while protecting viewsheds, natural resources and promoting access to existing and potential open space.	Medium-term	\$\$\$	High	Identify parcels. Reach out to owners. Provide funding; assist w/ seeking funding.	Affordable Housing Trust & Committee, Community Preservation Committee, Planning Board
Action Item 6: Support innovative solutions for small-scale, infill-development for new residential opportunity.	Ongoing	\$	High	Support can include zoning amendments, financial support, property conveyance, relief on utility connection fees, etc.	Select Board, Housing Trust, Planning Board, DPW, Construct, Inc., CDC of South Berkshire, Central Berkshire Habitat for Humanity, Private Developers

<b>Objective LU 4.2: Increase and promote neighborhood access to open space, shared use paths, and recreational opportunities.</b>					
Action Item 1: Work with local conservation partners to acquire and preserve public access to public lands.	Ongoing	\$\$\$\$	High	Identify opportunities. Identify funding support. Town Meeting appropriation and authorization.	Lenox Land Trust, Mass Audubon, BNRC, Land Management Committee, Community Preservation Committee, State grant opportunities
Action Item 2: Work with private landowners to create public access where suitable and desired.	Ongoing	\$\$\$\$	High	Adopt easements/CRs. Purchase in fee simple.	Land Management Committee, Community Preservation Committee, State grant opportunities
Action Item 3: Create a shared-use path in East Lenox with spurs to other neighborhoods and attractions.	Mid/long-term	\$\$\$	High	Work with landowners. Purchase land when possible. Purchase easements where necessary.	Land Management Committee, Select Board
Action Item 4: Implement the shared-use path feasibility study conducted by Alta Design.	Mid/long-term	\$\$\$	High	Select alignment. Pursue implementation.	Land Management Committee, Select Board

Action Item 5: Create a playground in New Lenox.	Mid-term	\$\$	Medium	Select location. Appropriate funds.	Land Management Committee, Community Center
Action Item 6: Use Rest of River mitigation funds and restoration work to create new recreational opportunities along the Housatonic River.	Long-term	\$\$\$\$	High	Identify concepts.	Land Management Committee, Select Board, Mass Audubon, BNRC
Action Item 7: Consider making Roaring Brook Road in East Lenox a designated shared-use route.	Long-term	\$\$	Medium	Town Meeting. to discontinue/aband on road. Appropriate funds to repair, grade and finish with desired material (gravel, airport mix, keep black- top).	Select Board
<b>GOAL LU 5: DESIGN A COMMUNITY OF WELCOME TO EXISTING AND NEW BUSINESSES.</b>					
<b>Objective LU 5.1: Ensure Lenox possesses excellent infrastructure for existing and potential businesses.</b>					
Action Item 1: Create universal wireless coverage in Lenox.	Short-term	\$	High	Amend zoning bylaw. Consider hosting infrastructure on municipal land.	Planning Board

Action Item 2: Conduct feasibility study of town extending broadband infrastructure and providing municipal internet service.	Medium-term	\$\$	High	Determine # of interested residents. Cost of implementation.	Select Board
Action Item 3: Improve or extend sewer lines to underserved neighborhoods.	Medium to long-term	\$\$\$	Medium	Implement comprehensive municipal wastewater plan.	Select Board
Action Item 4: Increase public parking in Lenox Village.	Medium to long-term	\$-\$\$\$	Medium	Identify parcels. Work with landowners.	Select Board
Action Item 5: Hire an economic development consultant to identify suitable re-use scenario and market specific, priority sites in commercial and industrial neighborhoods on the Future Land Use Map.	Short-term	\$-\$\$	High	Appropriate funds Issue Request for Qualifications.	Town Hall staff
Action item 6: Update Estate Preservation Bylaw to increase allowable uses.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Town Meeting.	Planning Board
<b>Objective LU 5.2: Provide existing and potential businesses with clear, concise use parameters and purpose</b>					
Action Item 1: Ensure zoning allows for desired uses in specific neighborhoods and on specific properties.	Medium-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board
Action Item 2: Adopt bylaws with clear, positive, affirmative language for the benefit of all users.	Ongoing	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board

Action Item 3: Ensure conformity between local bylaws, state and federal laws.	Ongoing	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board
Action Item 4: Propose regulations for private airfields.	Short-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board
Action Item 5: Consider extending Site Plan Review to all zones based on project size (area, unit #).	Short-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board
Action Item 6: Consider implementing neighborhood-based design standards or form-based code.	Medium to Long-term	\$\$\$	Medium	Town Meeting.	Town Hall staff, Technical Assistance, Planning Board
Action Item 7: Reduce density requirements in industrial and commercial districts.	Medium	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board
Action Item 8: Ease doing business in Lenox through clear, easy-to-use bylaws and standard requirements.	Ongoing	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board
<b>GOAL LU 6: STRENGTHEN THE LIVING, BUSINESS AND RECREATIONAL ENVIRONMENT OF TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS IDENTIFIED IN THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN.</b>					
<b>Objective LU 6.1: Invest in Lenox Dale.</b>					
Action Item 1: Work with the Lenox Dale neighborhood (residents, property owners, and prospective interests) to promote sustainable re-development and new development.	Ongoing	\$	High	Serve as liaison between neighborhood, developers, support sustainable, desired uses and methods.	Staff, Select Board, Pertinent permitting entities

Action Item 2: Work with property owner of Niagara Mill to identify and resolve re-development barriers.	Short-term	\$-\$\$\$	High	Town can seek grants and technical assistance. Appropriate funds Streamline permitting process. Waive or reduce tie-in/user fees. Provide tax incentives (TIF or STA).	Planning Board, State and regional resources
Action Item 3: Adopt unique Lenox Dale zoning district to continue traditional density.	Short-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board
Action Item 4: Work with Berkshire Natural Resources council, the Lenox Land Trust and/or other recreation/conservation entities and private property owners to secure access to existing public lands.	Ongoing	\$-\$\$\$	High	Town Meeting.	Land Management Committee, Select Board, Community Preservation Committee
Action Item 5: Implement recommendations from the 2017 Complete Streets Plan to fill sidewalk gaps and improve safety for all users on Lenox Dale streets.	Ongoing	\$-\$\$	Medium	Fund projects.	Department of Public Works, Town Hall staff

Action Item 6: Promote shared streets by calming vehicular traffic by narrowing traffic lanes on Crystal Street.	Short-term	\$	Medium	Implement advisory lane.	Department of Public Works
Action Item 7: Improve crosswalk safety by placing in-street pedestrian signs, installing advance crosswalk signs and pedestrian signs at existing crosswalks, and studying the need for additional intersections and common pedestrian crossings.	Mid to Long-term	\$\$	Medium	Identify locations. Conform with bylaw. Seek funding where applicable.	Department of Public Works, Land Use Department
Action Item 8: Improve multimodal linkages, such as sidewalks and bike lanes, between Lenox Dale’s commercial district and open space amenities, as well as to its R-15 residential district.	Short-term	\$\$	Medium	Fill in gaps identified in OSRP and Complete Streets Plan. Incorporate into capital plan and pavement management plan.	Department of Public Works, Land Use Department
Action Item 9: Improve multimodal linkages to Lenox Village by increasing and enhancing pedestrian and bicycle facilities between the villages.	Ongoing	\$\$\$	High	Repair sidewalks, as necessary. Install bike lanes as suitable. Install bike racks as suitable. Consider alternative “off-	Department of Public Works, State funding programs, Local appropriations

				street” routes where sidewalk and bike lanes are not feasible.	
Action Item 10: Improve multimodal linkages in New Lenox.	Medium-term	\$\$\$	Medium	Install bike lanes where feasible. Install sidewalk where feasible. Install a “side path” where bike lane or sidewalk is not feasible.	Department of Public Works, Land Use Department
Item 11: Continue to work with the Berkshire Natural Resources Council to support the High Road route through Lenox and promote connections to and from the Village Center and the High Road trail.	Ongoing	\$\$-\$	High	Support efforts.	Lenox Water Department, Select Board, Mass Audubon, BNRC
Action Item 12: In the Village Center neighborhood, create a kiosk for the land owned by the Town accessible via Hubbard Street and from War Memorial Field.	Short-term	\$\$	High	Place kiosk.	Select Board
Action Item 13: Leverage Rest of River activity and funds to create recreation amenities along and part of the Housatonic River.	Long-term	\$\$\$\$	High	Identify desirable activities and opportunities.	Select Board, Land Management Committee

Action Item 14: In Village Center, consider a street closure to create additional opportunity for outdoor programming and pedestrian activity.	Short-term	\$	Medium	Close street.	Town Hall staff
<b>Objective LU 6.2: Support year-round vibrant commercial and mixed-use neighborhoods.</b>					
Action Item 1: Through public-private partnerships, create new usable spaces for activity and programming.	Ongoing	\$-\$\$\$	High	Pursue cultural district program. Pursue internal village walkway.	Cultural District, Select Board
Action Item 2: For identified priority development sites, update zoning to reflect desired re-use.	Short-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board
Action Item 3: Utilize state programs (site readiness, financial incentives, site remediation) to make site use feasible.	Short-term	\$-\$\$	High	Apply for state programs and grant opportunities.	Town Hall staff
Action Item 4: Encourage private entities to create a business improvement district in both “C” districts - the Village Center and Lenox Dale.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Provide technical assistance and support.	Chamber of Commerce, Cultural District, Private businesses
Action Item 5: Remove impediments to mixed-use development within the zoning bylaw.	Ongoing	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board
<b>Objective LU 6.3: Increase Village Center housing opportunities</b>					
Action Item 1: Adopt higher density zoning or adopt an overlay district as appropriate, reflective of historic development patterns, particularly in areas already served by municipal water and sewer.	Medium-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board

Action Item 2: Incentivize residential adaptive re-use projects in Lenox Dale through increased density and simplified permitting.	Short-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board
Action Item 3: Allow multi-family housing development by right without onerous setback or buffer requirements, subject to clear, neighborhood-based design standards.	Ongoing	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board
Action Item 4: Incentivize residential infill development.	Ongoing	\$\$-	High	Town Meeting.	Tax incentives, Service fee incentives
Action Item 5: Encourage housing development on nonconforming lots.	Medium-term	\$	High	Adopt zoning bylaw (e.g., Duxbury example).	Planning Board

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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

#### Objective ED 1.1: Take immediate steps to revive and stabilize peak season tourism (July, August, and October).

Action	Timeframe	Cost	Priority	Municipal Action	Collaboration/Partners
Action Item 1: Utilize the Opening Committee (led by the Town Manager) to recommend solutions, monitor progress, and adapt plans.	Ongoing	\$-\$\$	High	Make recommendations to Select Board.	Opening Committee, Select Board, Department of Public Works, Chamber of Commerce, Cultural District
Action Item 2: Launch target-marketing program to draw visitors to Lenox during the 2021 and subsequent peak season months.	Short-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	High	Support Chamber of Commerce.	Chamber of Commerce
Action Item 3: Review the shared use of public and private land for outdoor dining in Lenox Village during 2020 and implement a plan to make key elements permanent.	Short-term	\$	High	Adopt policy.	Select Board, Department of Public Works, Public Safety, Business community
Action Item 4: Get quick-response COVID-19 tests to performing arts groups to screen guests and bolster ticket sales.	Short-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	Medium	Lend support, assistance as requested by arts groups.	Public-private partnership
Action Item 5: Create marketing materials customized to promote outdoor activities available during the peak season months including walking, hiking (detailed guide), biking, swimming, kayaking,	Short-term	\$\$	High	Share information w/ Chamber of Commerce.	Chamber of Commerce, Cultural District

canoeing, water skiing, tai chi, tennis, pickleball, picnicking, outdoor spaces and parks, and house and garden tours. Improve parking in underserved access points.				Use Cultural District events.	
Action Item 6: Improve communication within the local business community.	Ongoing	\$	Medium	Provide facilitation, technical assistance as requested.	Chamber of Commerce, Merchants Group
Action Item 7: Hold frequent networking events for local business owners.	Medium-term	\$-\$\$	Medium	n/a	Chamber of Commerce
Action Item 8: Hold quarterly forums for local business owners and town staff and boards.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	n/a	Town Hall staff, Chamber of Commerce
Action Item 9: Match state funds for the recently established Cultural District to encourage cross promotion of businesses and increase awareness of off-season activity.	Ongoing	\$	High	Seek grants.	Town Hall staff, Cultural District
Action Item 10: Review permit process for destination wedding venues; consider increasing number allowed per year.	Short-term	\$	Medium	Approve bylaw amendments.	Wedding venues, Planning Board
Action Item 11: Build a self-serve, outdoor kiosk to hold marketing materials that can be staffed during selected periods.	Mid-term	\$\$	Low	Fiscal support.	Chamber of Commerce
Action Item 12: Create dedicated tour bus parking areas to better control automotive traffic and parking during peak season.	Mid-term	\$\$	Medium	Fund study. Work w/ Town Engineers.	Town Hall staff, DPW, Select Board

<b>Objective ED 1.2: Promote long-term growth to Lenox’s tourism industry, including during non-summer months.</b>					
Action Item 1: Encourage and fund viable proposals to increase tourism in the spring, fall, and winter seasons.	Ongoing	\$\$\$\$	High	Fiscal support, technical assistance, partner.	Chamber of Commerce, Select Board, Cultural District, Town Hall staff
Action Item 2: Promote outdoor recreation opportunities available in the shoulder-season and winter to cultivate new audiences.	Short-term	\$	High	Support.	Chamber of Commerce, Cultural District, Land Management Committee, Lenox Land Trust
Action Item 3: Establish and pilot program for a Route 7 - Wassaic/southeast shuttle service in partnership with surrounding municipalities during summer and fall; considering year-round service.	Short-term	\$\$	High	Lead, partner.	Select Board, Chamber of Commerce, Cultural institutions, Hospitality entities, and wellness entities
Action Item 4: Get involved in promoting passenger train service to the Berkshires from New York City and Boston.	Short-term	\$	High	Partner, support.	Select Board, Chamber of Commerce, Cultural institutions, hospitality and wellness entities
Action Item 5: Work with local retail, dining, and cultural establishments to encourage year-round operation.	Mid-term	\$	Medium	Support.	Chamber of Commerce, Cultural institutions
Action Item 6: Facilitate cooperation between Tanglewood’s Linde center and neighboring institutions to expand shoulder season programming	Ongoing	\$\$\$\$	High	Support.	Chamber of Commerce, 1Berkshire, Cultural District

that draws residents and visitors to Lenox's commercial areas.					
<b>Objective ED 1.3: Prioritize infrastructure projects that enhance the Lenox experience for residents and visitors.</b>					
Action Item 1: Continue to maintain and invest in essential services like water, sewer, roads, and other infrastructure.	Ongoing	\$-\$\$\$	High	Fiscal support. Capital planning.	Select Board, Town Meeting, Permanent Building Committee, Departments
Action Item 2: Increase the quantity off-street parking in and around Lenox Village.	Ongoing	\$-\$\$\$	Medium	Fiscal support.	Select Board
Action Item 3: Study the feasibility of shuttle services between the C-3A and C-1A zoning districts and Lenox's outdoor recreation amenities, cultural institutions, and commercial areas.	Short-term	\$-\$\$	High	Fiscal support.	Public-private partnership
Action Item 4: Continue working to improve pedestrian conditions by eliminating sidewalk gaps, improving sidewalk conditions, calming traffic, and exploring shared use paths, as recommended in the complete streets plan.	Ongoing	\$-\$\$\$	High	Fiscal support.	Select Board, Land Management Committee, Department of Public Works, MassTrails, Complete Streets
Action Item 5: Continue efforts related to improved lighting and wayfinding throughout Lenox.	Short-term	\$\$	High	Fiscal support.	Select Board, Cultural District, Chamber of Commerce
<b>GOAL ED 2: MARKET LENOX'S HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE TO ATTRACT YOUNG FAMILIES AND PROFESSIONALS.</b>					
<b>Objective ED 2.1: Increase the number of remote workers living and working in Lenox.</b>					
Action Item 1: Market Lenox as a destination for remote workers and businesses.	Short-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	High	Fiscal support.	Select Board, Finance Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Cultural District,

					1Berkshire, regional employers
Action Item 2: Ensure Lenox has resources for remote work (i.e., universal wireless coverage, quality internet, networking, and community engagement opportunities).	Short-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	High	Fiscal support. Zoning Bylaw amendments. Explore feasibility of municipal internet.	Select Board, Finance Committee, Town Meeting
<b>Objective ED 2.2: Facilitate the relocation of small businesses and remote workers to Lenox</b>					
Action Item 1: Create a Lenox-specific marketing campaign to attract new residents, informed by current Lenox residents as well as 2020 Decennial Census data as it becomes available.	Short-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	High	Fiscal support.	Select Board, Chamber of Commerce, Cultural District, 1Berkshire
Action Item 2: Investigate strategic steps for Lenox schools - such as universal pre-kindergarten - to make the school system an even stronger attraction.	Ongoing	\$\$-\$\$\$	High	Fiscal support.	School Committee, Select Board, Finance Committee, Town Meeting
Action Item 3: Provide social connectivity opportunities for independent workforce participants and facilitate connections with online platforms that help make independent and remote work more viable.	Ongoing	\$\$-\$\$	High	Fiscal support.	Cultural District, Chamber of Commerce
Action Item 4: Participate in regional marketing efforts directed toward relocating workers and businesses.	Short-Term	\$\$-\$\$\$	High	Fiscal support.	Select Board, Chamber of Commerce Cultural District

Action Item 5: Ensure that bylaws are not overly restrictive regarding home businesses, particularly e-commerce operations.	Short-Term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board
Action Item 6: Obtain and analyze data regarding home-based businesses and telecommuters.	Short-Term	\$	Low	n/a	Town Hall staff
<b>Objective ED 2.3: Capitalize upon the close geographic proximity to major employers in Pittsfield and Great Barrington, as well as Albany and Springfield.</b>					
Action Item 1: Network with major employers to ensure Lenox is included in relocation services and resources by regional human resource departments.	Short-term	\$\$	High	Support materials and communications toward this.	Chamber of Commerce, Town Hall staff, elected officials
Action Item 2: Work with regional agencies (e.g., Berkshire Regional Transit Authority, 1Berkshire, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, etc.) to increase access to transit for workforce participants.	Short-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	High	Fiscal support.	Select Board, Chamber of Commerce, local employers
<b>GOAL ED 3: DIVERSIFY THE LOCAL ECONOMY</b>					
<b>Objective ED 3.1: Enhance Lenox's technological capacity.</b>					
Action Item 1: Take steps to improve cellular telephone service.	Ongoing	\$	High	Fiscal support. Town Meeting.	Planning Board
Action Item 2: Continue to monitor developments in high-speed internet and be prepared to take steps to be competitive.	Ongoing	\$	High	Fiscal support.	Business Initiative Committee, Town Hall staff

Action Item 3: Continue to monitor broadband technology and service to ensure optimal access town-wide.	Ongoing	\$	High	Fiscal support.	Business Initiative Committee, Town Hall staff
<b>Objective ED 3.2: Recruit more goods-producing businesses to Lenox.</b>					
Action Item 1: Task the applicable town authority and external partner with identifying suitable types of goods-producing businesses that could thrive in Lenox.	Short-term	\$\$	High	Fiscal support.	Business Initiative Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Select Board, 1Berkshire
Action Item 2: Develop industry-specific recruitment materials that promote Lenox’s strengths and opportunities.	Medium-term	\$\$	High	Fiscal support.	Business Initiative Committee, Chamber of Commerce
Action Item 3: Review tax increment financing policy and revise to ensure meaningful application of available benefits.	Medium-term	\$	Low	Research similar policies; amend accordingly.	Select Board, Business Initiative Committee
Action Item 4: Consider establishing financing improvement districts in strategic locations (e.g., Lenox Village C-1A, Lenox Dale industrial district, and Lenox Dale commercial district).	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Leadership.	Select Board, Business Initiative Committee, businesses
<b>Objective ED 3.3: Recruit businesses that full-time Lenox residents will utilize year-round.</b>					
Action Item 1: Conduct a market study for businesses that could attract year-round revenues from full-time residents.	Medium-term	\$\$	Medium	Fiscal support.	Business Initiative Committee, Select Board, Chamber of Commerce
Action Item 2: Market potential business opportunities with incentives like tax increment financing.	Ongoing	\$\$	Medium	Fiscal support.	Business Initiative Committee, Chamber of

					Commerce, Select Board, 1Berkshire
<b>Objective ED 3.4: Ensure that the Town’s land use policy supports diverse businesses</b>					
Action Item 1: Identify suitable parcels that could be used for manufacturing and other goods-producing businesses.	Medium to long-term	\$	Low to medium	Fiscal support. Staff support.	Business Initiative Committee, Chamber of Commerce, 1Berkshire
Action Item 2: Review uses allowed by right in C-1A and C-3A zoning districts. Consider allowing manufacturing by special permit under certain conditions or adopting light manufacturing overlay zoning district in one or more strategic locations.	Medium to long-term	\$	Low to medium	Fiscal support. Staff support.	Business Initiative Committee, Chamber of Commerce, 1Berkshire
Action Item 3: Adopt smart growth and starter home overlay zoning districts pursuant to M.G.L. c.40R in appropriate locations.	Medium	\$\$	High	Fiscal support. Staff support. Town meeting.	Planning Board, Affordable Housing Trust & Committee
Action Item 4: Keep abreast of land use policy, best practices and opportunities related to goods-producing businesses.	Ongoing	\$	High	Fiscal support. Staff support. Town meeting.	Planning Board
<b>Objective ED 3.5: Invest in workforce development.</b>					
Action Item 1: Invest in scholarship programs to help Lenox students enter valuable professional trades based on labor force projections.	Short-term		High	Fiscal support.	School Committee
Action Item 2: Establish new - and advance existing - partnerships with regional workforce agencies (e.g., MassHire, 1Berkshire, etc.).	Short-term		High	Fiscal support.	School Committee

Action Item 3: Continue to invest in Lenox’s high quality public education system.	Ongoing		High	Fiscal support.	School Committee
Action Item 4: Collaborate with regional colleges and vocational schools to advance career opportunities in Lenox for students and recent graduates	Short-term		High	Fiscal support.	School Committee
<b>Objective ED 3.6: Work to reduce the cost of operating a business and working in Lenox</b>					
Action Item 1: Participate in efforts to address rising energy costs.	Medium-term		Medium	Fiscal support. Policy Incentives.	Regional collaboration, Green Communities
Action Item 2: Work with regional authorities to increase equitable access to transit for workforce participants, especially those working second and third shift	Short-term		High	Fiscal support. Policy.	Select Board, Public/private partnership
Action Item 3: Increase deed-restricted housing opportunities for those earning 80% or less of area median family income.	Short-term		High	Fiscal support. Policy.	Affordable Housing Trust & Committee, Public/private partnership, Community Preservation Committee

## OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

### GOAL OSR 1: PROMOTE YEAR-ROUND OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND EMPHASIZE ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE DURING THE NON-SUMMER SEASONS; PARTICULARLY WINTER.

#### Objective OSR 1.1: Inform the public about existing seasonal recreation facilities.

Action	Timeframe	Cost	Priority	Municipal Action	Collaboration/Partners
Action Item 1: Utilize search engine optimization to promote Lenox’s open space and recreation amenities to those looking for things to do in the Berkshires	Short-term	\$	High	Staff support.	Chamber of Commerce, Land Management Committee
Action Item 2: Create social media accounts (e.g., Instagram, Facebook) for Town of Lenox open space and recreation amenities (such as Kennedy Park).	Short-term	\$	Medium	Staff support.	Chamber of Commerce, Land Management Committee
Action Item 3: Develop and expand trail maps for outdoor winter activities.	Short-term	\$\$	Medium	Staff support.	Land Management Committee
Action Item 4: Work with BNRC to include more Lenox trails in its Berkshire Trails smartphone application.	Short-Term	\$	Medium	Staff support.	Land Management Committee
Action Item 5: Improve and increase all season signage, especially regarding winter recreational activities.	Medium-term	\$\$	Medium	Staff support.	Land Management Committee

#### Objective OSR 1.2: Build on Lenox’s reputation for health and wellness to attract new residents and visitors

Action Item 1: Utilize the presence of Canyon Ranch, Kripalu, and Miraval to expand Lenox’s reputation as a destination for health and wellness.	Ongoing	\$	High	Support.	Business Initiative Committee, Chamber of Commerce, 1Berkshire
Action Item 2: Work with health and wellness resorts and the Lenox Chamber of Commerce to develop a marketing strategy aimed at bringing new residents and visitors to Lenox for open space and recreation opportunities	Ongoing	\$\$	High	Support.	Business Initiative Committee, Chamber of Commerce, 1Berkshire
Action Item 3: Work with the Lenox Chamber of Commerce to ensure that open space and recreation amenities are thoughtfully integrated into any future marketing plans.	Ongoing	\$	High	Support.	Business Initiative Committee, Chamber of Commerce, 1Berkshire
Action Item 4: Work with health and wellness resorts to publicize and promote Lenox’s open space and recreation amenities.	Ongoing	\$	High	Support.	Business Initiative Committee, Chamber of Commerce, 1Berkshire
<b>Objective OSR 1.3: Increase the accessibility of open space and recreation to seniors.</b>					
Action Item 1: Assess the ADA accessibility of Lenox’s trails.	Mid-term	\$	High	Lead.	Community Center, Conservation Commission, Kennedy Park Committee
Action Item 2: Coordinate with the Council on Aging to assess if a shuttle/van could be used to transport seniors to and from open space and recreational amenities.	Short-term	\$\$-\$	High	Lead.	Community Center

Action Item 3: Explore the feasibility of a senior fitness trail (as seen in Dalton, MA).	Short-term	\$-\$\$	High	Lead.	Community Center, Land Management Committee
Action Item 4: Install more public benches throughout town that would serve as resting areas when traveling between recreational sites (e.g., going the up the hill from Shakespeare & Co.).	Mid-term	\$-\$\$	Low		Select Board
<b>GOAL OSR 2: EXPAND THE STRONG CONSTITUENCY OF OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ADVOCATES THROUGH EDUCATION AND COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS.</b>					
<b>Objective OSR 2.1: Hold community-building activities.</b>					
Action Item 1: Continue to hold festivals, including craft fairs, Apple Squeeze, Tub Parade and events supported by the Lenox Cultural District	Ongoing	\$\$	Medium	Support.	Chamber of Commerce
Action Item 2: Leverage and promote non-Town (i.e. regional) festivals and events, such as the Josh Billings RunAground Triathlon.	Ongoing	\$	Medium	Support.	Chamber of Commerce
Action Item 3: Develop and promote a comprehensive online calendar of natural resource and outdoor recreation events on the Town of Lenox Website.	Medium-term	\$	Low	Support.	Cultural District, Chamber of Commerce
<b>Objective OSR 2.2: Educate Citizens and Landowners.</b>					
Action Item 1: Increase the frequency and number of channels for communication with residents regarding	Short-term	\$	High	Town Hall staff.	Land Management Committee, Lenox Land Trust

estate planning and the conservation of natural and cultural resources.					
Action Item 2: Provide landowners with clear guidance for contacting and negotiating with the Town regarding their land in terms of protection and public availability for open space and recreational purposes.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Town Hall staff.	Land Management Committee, Lenox Land Trust
Action Item 3: Work with the Lenox Library and local and regional environmental non-profits to provide at least three lectures per year on environmental issues.	Long-term	\$	Medium	Town Hall staff.	Lenox Land Trust
Action Item 4: Provide public information about the amount of protected open space in Lenox, how much of the Town is at risk of development, and the fiscal advantages of open space.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Town Hall staff.	Land Management Committee, Lenox Land Trust
<b>Objective OSR 2.3: Develop strategic partnerships.</b>					
Action Item 1: Partner with local schools, nonprofits, and businesses to preserve open space and increase recreational opportunities.	Short-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	High	Town Hall staff. Fiscal Support. Public/private Partnership.	Land Management Committee, Lenox Land Trust
Action Item 2: Partner with local land conservation organizations to better leverage limited Town funds and volunteer hours toward the conservation of priority resource areas.	Short-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	High	Town Hall staff. Fiscal Support. Public/private partnership.	Land Management Committee, Lenox Land Trust

Action Item 3: Partner with open space and recreation committees in surrounding towns to address regional land conservation projects.	Short-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	High	Town Hall staff. Fiscal Support. Public/private partnership.	Land Management Committee, Lenox Land Trust
<b>Objective OSR 2.4: Recruit volunteers to take on activities that interest them</b>					
Action Item 1: Create a municipal Volunteer Coordinator position to recruit volunteers for open space and recreational initiative and efforts.	Medium-term	\$\$	Low	Work w/ Assistant CAO to research, develop and post position as funding allows.	Town Hall staff
Action Item 2: Identify volunteer opportunities (e.g., funding research, grant writing, trail mapping, park cleanup, etc.).	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Support.	Town Hall staff
Action Item 3: Seek funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to fund staff time and direct costs.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Lead.	Town Hall staff
<b>GOAL OSR 3: CONNECT NEIGHBORHOODS, OPEN SPACE, AND RECREATIONAL AREAS.</b>					
<b>Objective OSR 3.1: Ensure that Open space and recreation amenities are connected to cultural and other amenities and accessible to the public.</b>					
Action Item 1: Collaborate with cultural institutions and abutting property owners to develop a shared use path that connects the various amenities in Lenox thereby increasing awareness and use.	Short-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	High	Town Hall staff. Fiscal Support. Town Meeting. Public/private partnership.	Land Management Committee, Property owners, MassTrails, Community Preservation Committee, PARC, LAND

Action Item 2: Continue to invest in wayfinding within Lenox Village that directs the public toward trailheads and other recreational facilities.	Medium-term	\$\$	High	Town Hall staff. Fiscal Support. Town Meeting. Public/private partnership.	Chamber of Commerce, Select Board, Cultural District
Action Item 3: Continue to participate and invest in Complete Streets projects.	Ongoing	\$\$-\$\$\$	High	Town Hall staff. Fiscal Support.	Select Board, DPW, Land Use Department
Action Item 4: Require new developments to provide pedestrian connections.	Ongoing	\$	High	Town Hall staff.	ZBA, Planning Board
<b>Objective OSR 3.2: Increase public access to open space and neighborhoods on foot or by bicycle.</b>					
Action Item 1: Create new recreational areas, such as pocket parks, in neighborhoods where access to outdoor recreational areas and open space are limited (e.g., New Lenox and Lenox Dale).	Short-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	High	Town Hall staff. Fiscal Support.	Community Center, Land Management Committee, Land Use Department
Action Item 2: Install bike lanes (where suitable) that connect neighborhoods to trail heads and other open space and recreation amenities	Medium to long-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	Medium	Town Hall staff. Fiscal Support.	Department of Public Works, Land Use Department, Complete Streets
Action Item 3: Continue to improve sidewalks and eliminate sidewalk gaps as recommended in the Complete Streets plan.	Ongoing	\$\$	High	Town Hall staff. Fiscal Support.	Department of Public Works, Land Use Department, Complete Streets
Action Item 4: Develop parking areas near and increase the visibility of trailheads.	Short-term	\$\$	Medium	Fiscal support. Public/private partnership.	Land Use Department, Land Management Committee, Local non-profit organizations
<b>Objective OSR 3.3: Protect and improve existing trails.</b>					

Action Item 1: Inventory all trails - their conditions and needs for improvement.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Support intern position.	Land Use Department, Land Management Committee
Action Item 2: Develop a maintenance and improvement plan for all trails.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Support intern position.	Land Use Department, Land Management Committee
Action Item 3: Develop signage that clearly delineates official trails from unauthorized trails.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Fiscal support.	Land Use Department, Land Management Committee
Action Item 4: Upgrade and increase trail signage.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Fiscal support.	Land Use Department, Land Management Committee
Action Item 5: Expand existing trails where necessary to create a more contiguous trail network.	Medium-term	\$\$	Medium	Fiscal support.	Land Use Department, Land Management Committee
<b>Objective OSR 3.4: Incorporate Lenox into regional trail efforts.</b>					
Action Item 1: Connect local trails to trail systems in other municipalities, such as improved access to October Mountain.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Fiscal support. Staff support.	Land Use Department, Land Management Committee
Action Item 2: Continue to support regional trail efforts such as the High Road that go through Lenox and traverse Town of Lenox land.	Medium-term	\$\$	High	Staff support.	Select Board, Land Use Department
<b>Objective OSR 3.5: Ensure that all facilities are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities act (ADA). Action Item 1: Re-establish an active ADA Commission</b>					
Action Item 1: Identify and prioritize facilities that need upgrading.	Short-term	\$	High	Staff support. Fiscal support.	Community Center, Land Use Department, Department heads
Action Item 2: Identify and apply for funding to make facilities accessible in priority order.	Short-term	\$\$	High	Staff support. Fiscal support.	Community Center, Land Use Department, Department heads

Action Item 3: Assess condition of ADA accessibility for each trail.	Medium-term	\$\$	Medium	Staff support. Fiscal support	Department heads, Land Use Department, Ad-Lib
Action Item 4: Pursue easements, conservation restrictions, or other protective measures on properties that need improved access.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Staff support. Fiscal support.	Town Hall staff, Pertinent committees/boards
<b>GOAL OSR 4: PROTECT AND AUGMENT WATER RESOURCES.</b>					
<b>Objective OSR 4.1: Protect wetlands and floodplains.</b>					
Action Item 1: Pass municipal wetlands protection bylaw.	Long-term	\$	Medium	Town Meeting..	Conservation Commission
Action Item 2: Work with neighboring municipalities to continue the Housatonic River cleanup.	Ongoing	\$\$	High	Time, financial support.	Town Hall staff, Rest of River Committee
Action Item 3: Amend subdivision regulations to include riparian buffer zones along streams and rivers.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Town Meeting.	Town Hall staff, Planning Board
<b>Objective OSR 4.2: Certify uncertified vernal pools.</b>					
Action Item 1: Train local volunteers in vernal pool certification.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Technical assistance.	Town Hall staff, Housatonic Valley Association, other conservation organizations
Action Item 2: Work with the Berkshire Environment Action Team (BEAT) and Mass Audubon.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Technical assistance, financial support.	Town Hall staff, pertinent committees/boards
<b>Objective OSR 4.3: Reduce harmful runoff through enhanced stormwater management, low impact development and other means throughout Lenox.</b>					

Action Item 1: Establish reduced road sand/salt and reduced herbicide policies.	Short-term	\$	Medium	Adopt bylaw.	DPW, Select Board, Lenox Environmental Committee
Action Item 2: Continue to distribute rain barrels and informational brochures to residents.	Ongoing	P	Medium	Be liaison between community and sponsoring entity.	DPW, Select Board, Lenox Environmental Committee
Action Item 3: Continue to hold hazardous waste disposal days to gather empty paint can and other household pollutants.	Ongoing	\$	Medium	Be liaison between community and sponsoring entity.	DPW, Select Board, Lenox Environmental Committee
Action Item 4: Build a demonstration rain garden around a town facility.	Short-term	\$	Medium	Incorporate into bid documents and designs.	Department heads, Select Board, DPW, Land Use Department, Lenox Environmental Committee
Action Item 5: Develop a stormwater management plan that accounts for increased stormwater flows and plans for innovative reuse of stormwater, such as for gardens.	Medium-term	\$\$	Medium	Work w/ hired engineers.	DPW
<b>Objective OSR 4.4: Improve water quality at Laurel Lake.</b>					
Action Item 1: Contain invasive zebra mussels and explore science-based management solutions.	Ongoing	\$	Medium	Work with pertinent state and local entities.	Laurel Lake Association Conservation Commission (Lenox and Lee)

Action Item 2: Continue to test for water quality.	Ongoing	\$	Medium	n/a	Laurel Lake Association
<b>Objective OSR 4.5: Encourage a regional approach to the management of Laurel Lake and work with property owners to maintain adherence to state policy and regulations</b>					
Action Item 1: Facilitate and enable property owners and watershed stakeholders to work closely with respective Conservation Commissions to meet state requirements for management of the Lake.	Long-term	\$	Medium	Support.	Laurel Lake Association, Conservation Commission, Lenox Environmental Committee
Action Item 2: Improve communication between the Town, the Town of Lee, and the Laurel Lake Preservation Area Association to better coordinate management efforts.	Long-term	\$	Medium	Support.	Laurel Lake Association, Town Hall staff, Conservation Commission, Lenox Environmental Committee
Action Item 3: Develop a pamphlet describing threats to water quality.	Short-term	\$	Low	Support.	Town Hall staff/intern, Laurel Lake Association, Conservation Commission, Lenox Environmental Committee
Action Item 4: Apply for 604B money to study lake management.	Short-term	\$	High	Support, technical assistance.	Town Hall staff, Conservation Commission, Laurel Lake Association, Lenox Environmental Committee
Action Item 5: Emphasize issues related to solid waste disposal.	Short-term	\$	Low	Support, technical assistance.	Town Hall staff, Conservation Commission, Laurel Lake Association, Lenox Environmental Committee

Action Item 6: Inform the public about proper use and maintenance of septic systems and improper disposal of toxins to begin reducing phosphorous levels in Laurel Lake.	Short-term	\$	High	Support, technical assistance.	Boards of Health, Tri-Town Health Department, Lenox Environmental Committee, Laurel Lake Association
Action Item 7: Increase awareness of reducing the use of fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides.	Short-term	\$	High	Support, technical assistance.	Boards of Health, Tri-Town Health Department, Lenox Environmental Committee, Laurel Lake Association, LMMHS Students
Action Item 8: Hold neighborhood/town-wide discussions to distribute pamphlets and inform homeowners on threats to water quality.	Short-term	\$	Low	Support, technical assistance.	Boards of Health, Tri-Town Health Department, Lenox Environmental Committee, Laurel Lake Association LMMHS Students
Action Item 9: Develop a cable access program and use the Town's website to disseminate information describing threats to water quality.	Medium-term	\$	Low	Support, technical assistance.	Boards of Health, Tri-Town Health Department, Lenox Environmental Committee, Laurel Lake Association LMMHS Students
Action Item 10: Continue educational campaign for boaters (brochures, signs) about how to reduce the spread of invasive lake species.	Ongoing	\$	Low	Support, technical assistance.	Boards of Health, Tri-Town Health Department, Lenox Environmental Committee, Laurel Lake Association LMMHS Students

**GOAL OSR 5: PROTECT NATIVE PLANT AND WILDLIFE HABITATS WHILE CONTROLLING INVASIVE SPECIES ON PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROPERTY.**

**Objective OSR 5.1: Monitor habitats of endangered species, rare wildlife, and invasive species.**

Action Item 1: Continue to bring all stream crossings up to compliance with DEP stream crossing guidelines for wildlife management.	Ongoing	\$\$\$	High	Support, funding, technical assistance.	DPW/Water Department, Land Use Department
Action Item 2: Train volunteers to observe and analyze wildlife behavior.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Support, technical assistance.	Land Use Department, Conservation Commission, Mass Audubon, BEAT, NHESP
Action Item 3: Facilitate a partnership between the Department of Public Works, the Conservation Commission, Mass Audubon and other mission-based organizations to develop plans to monitor and protect habitats.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Support, technical assistance.	Land Use Department, Conservation Commission, Mass Audubon, BEAT, NHESP
Action Item 4: Spread awareness of invasive species and strategies to control them through public forums and educational outreach to homeowners and property managers.	Ongoing	\$	High	Support, technical assistance.	Land Use Department, Conservation Commission, Mass Audubon, BEAT, NHESP

**Objective OSR 5.2: Permanently protect core habitats and critical natural landscapes with CPA funds or by encouraging landowners to adopt conservation restrictions**

Action Item 1: Protect a wildlife corridor connecting the east and west sides of town between Route 7/20 and East Street north of East Dugway Road.	Long-term	\$\$	Medium	Support, technical assistance,	Land Use Department, Lenox Land Trust, Conservation
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				fiscal support, lead as pertinent.	Commission, Mass Audubon, BEAT, NHESP
Action Item 2: Protect uplands west of Parsons Marsh.	Medium-term	\$\$\$	Medium	Support, technical assistance, fiscal support, lead as pertinent.	Land Use Department, Lenox Land Trust, Conservation Commission, Community Preservation Committee, BNRC
Action Item 3: Protect uplands west of the Housatonic River.	Medium-term	\$\$\$	Medium	Support, technical assistance, fiscal support, lead as pertinent.	Land Use Department, Lenox Land Trust, Conservation Commission, Community Preservation Committee, BNRC
<b>Objective OSR 5.3: Maintain an up-to-date inventory of lands of conservation interest, including town-owned and private lands.</b>					
Action Item 1: Update open space and recreation parcels list annually.	Short-term	\$	High	Lead.	Town Hall staff, Land Management Committee
<b>Objective OSR 5.4: Monitor and reduce the spread of hardy kiwi.</b>					
Action Item 1: Continue program to eradicate hardy kiwi in Kennedy Park.	Ongoing	\$\$-\$\$	High	Fiscal support.	Kennedy Park Committee, MassWildlife Habitat Management Grant Town Hall staff

Action Item 2: Identify metrics to measure efficacy of program.	Short-term	\$	High	Lead.	Town Hall staff, Kennedy Park Committee, Native Habitat Restoration, NHESP
Action Item 3: Share results of the program with other communities.	Short-term	\$	Medium	Lead.	Town Hall staff, Kennedy Park Committee, Native Habitat Restoration, NHESP
Action Item 4: Work to have hardy kiwi listed as an invasive plant in Massachusetts.	Ongoing	\$	Medium	Support.	Local, regional, and state conservation organizations
<b>GOAL OSR 6: MAINTAIN A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR EXISTING TOWN-OWNED RECREATION FACILITIES.</b>					
<b>Objective OSR 6.1: Coordinate management and maintenance program for existing town-owned recreation facilities.</b>					
Action Item 1: Maintain an up-to-date management and maintenance plan for each public recreation facility.	Short-term	\$	Medium	Lead.	Department heads, Select Board
Action Item 2: Identify responsibilities for management of existing facilities, and clearly identify and express use rules and regulations.	Medium-term	\$\$	Medium	Lead.	Department heads, Select Board
Action Item 3: Cleanup / upgrade boat launch at Laurel Lake.	Long-term	\$	High	Lead.	Department heads, Select Board
<b>GOAL OSR 7: SECURE FUNDING TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTIONS AFOREMENTIONED.</b>					
<b>Objective OSR 7.1: Apply for grants to assist town acquisition of properties.</b>					
Action Item 1: Apply for funding through the Commonwealth's Parkland Acquisition and Renovations for Communities (PARC) program.	Medium-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	Medium	Lead.	Department heads

Action Item 2: Apply for Federal Land Conservation fund.	Medium-term	\$\$	Medium	Lead.	Department heads
Action Item 3: Apply for local bank town grant program.	Short-term	\$	High	Lead.	Department heads
Action Item 4: Provide information and data to the Capital Improvement Committee to prioritize funding for the priority projects identified.	Medium-term	\$	Low	Lead.	Department heads

## HOUSING

### GOAL H 1: INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF HOUSING AFFORDABLE FOR YOUNG, FIRSTTIME HOME BUYERS.

#### Objective H 1.1: Ensure that the Affordable Housing Trust has adequate resources to support its mission and efforts.

Action	Timeframe	Cost	Priority	Municipal Action	Collaboration/Partners
Action Item 1: Maximize the allocation of Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds for affordable housing.	Short-term	\$\$\$	High	Lead.	Community Preservation Committee, Affordable Housing Trust
Action Item 2: Determine the feasibility of using town-owned sites for the development of affordable housing.	Short-term	\$-\$\$	High	Lead.	Town Hall staff, Affordable Housing Trust
Action Item 3: Adopt special legislation to create a seasonal & weekend rentals excise tax, a portion of which would be allocated to the Affordable Housing Trust.	Short-term	\$	High	Lead, Town Meeting.	Town Hall staff, Affordable Housing Trust, Finance Committee

#### Objective H 1.2: Help expand the Affordable Housing Trust's first-time homebuyer grant program.

Action Item 1: Expand program to households earning between 80% and 100% AML.	Ongoing	\$	Medium	Support.	Affordable Housing Trust
Action Item 2: Work with regional financial institutions and real estate agencies to raise awareness of the program throughout the region.	Ongoing	\$	High	Support.	Affordable Housing Trust

### GOAL H 2: INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF MIXED-INCOME HOUSING OPTIONS - IN OR NEAR COMMERCIAL AREAS AND VILLAGES - TO SUPPORT THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND PROMOTE THE PRINCIPLES OF SMART GROWTH.

#### Objective H 2.1: Encourage the development of apartments over commercial spaces in Lenox Village and Lenox Dale.

<p>Action Item 1: Adopt the following Zoning Bylaw language:                  Dwelling units shall be permitted above the first floor of a building in which all of the ground floor space is used for nonresidential purposes, provided that: 1. The sum of all residential floor space does not exceed 70 percent of the total floor area of the building; 2. The minimum gross floor area for each dwelling unit shall be 770 square feet; and 3. There shall be 1.5 parking spaces per two dwelling units unless the Planning Board grants a Special Permit to waive the residential parking requirement.</p>	Short-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board, Affordable Housing Trust
<p>Action Item 2: Consider increasing the maximum height limit for buildings in the C and C-3A districts from two stories and 35 feet to 2.5 stories and 35 feet by right and 3 stories and 40 feet by special permit.</p>	Short-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board, Affordable Housing Trust
<p><b>Objective H 2.2: Encourage the development of freestanding residential buildings along route 7.</b></p>					
<p>Action Item 1: Clarify the requirements for creating multifamily dwelling on the same premises as commercial buildings. Consider adding to 9.5 of the Zoning Bylaw a section providing regulations for horizontal mixed-use developments.</p>	Short-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board, Affordable Housing Trust

<p>Action Item 2: Horizontal mixed use development bylaws typically include several provisions. Lenox should add the following to 9.5 of the Zoning Bylaw:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maximum percentage of gross floor area that can be used for residential purpose;</li> <li>2. Use of floor area ratios to establish the maximum allowable gross floor area in the development as a whole;</li> <li>3. Requirement for residential buildings to be located behind commercial buildings, separated by landscaped areas, pedestrian facilities, and off street parking, or interspersed with commercial buildings directly facing the street;</li> <li>and 4. Design standards - preferably in a set of guidelines that are referenced but not located in the Zoning Bylaw.</li> </ol>	Short-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board, Affordable Housing Trust
<b>Objective H 2.3: Explore creative ways to develop new housing.</b>					
<p>Action Item 1: Amend zoning to allow small affordable units on vacant non-conforming lots.</p>	Short-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board, Affordable Housing Trust
<p>Action Item 2: Engage regional mission-based organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity and the Southern Berkshire CDC, to create infill development on lots identified as vacant, nonconforming, and potentially buildable.</p>	Medium-term	\$\$- \$\$\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board, Affordable Housing Trust

Action Item 3: Identify areas throughout the Town where pocket neighborhoods - a type of planned neighborhood comprising a grouping of smaller residences - would be a viable option for new housing. Master Plan outreach has identified Lenox Dale and the Commercial districts along Route 7/20 for this purpose.	Ongoing	\$	High	Support.	Affordable Housing Trust, Planning Board, Town Hall staff
Action Item 4: Engage mission-based organizations to develop viable plans for pocket neighborhoods in optimal locations.	Medium-term	\$\$- \$\$\$	High	Support.	Affordable Housing Trust, Planning Board, Town Hall staff
<b>GOAL H 3: ESTABLISH LENOX AS A DESTINATION FOR FAMILIES.</b>					
<b>Objective H 3.1: Establish new density standards for multi-family dwellings and townhouses in Section 9.1 of the Zoning Bylaw that would encourage the creation of affordable units.</b>					
Action Item 1: Amend 9.1.1 to reduce the buffer area between buildings, accessory uses or outdoor activity areas and abutting properties from 200 feet to 100 feet.	Short-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board, Affordable Housing Trust
Action Item 2: Amend 9.1.2 to apply the ZBA Special Permit process to multifamily dwellings in the R-30, C-3A, and I districts.	Short-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board, Affordable Housing Trust
Action Item 3: Amend 9.1.2 to allow multifamily dwellings by right subject to site plan review, design and other performance standards in the R-15 and	Short-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board, Affordable Housing Trust

R-30 districts, as well as the Gateway Mixed Use Overlay District.					
Action Item 4: Amend section 1 of 9.1.3 to reduce dimensional requirements in the R-15 and C3A Districts as follows: (See Page 152)	Short-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board, Affordable Housing Trust
Action Item 5: Amend section 2 of 9.1.3 to reduce minimum land area required for each multifamily units and townhouses from 10,000 and 15,000 (respectively) to 7,500 square feet. Allow higher densities by Special Permit.	Short-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board, Affordable Housing Trust
Action Item 6: Amend section 3 of 9.1.3 to reduce the required setback between buildings from 40 feet to 20 feet.	Short-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board, Affordable Housing Trust
<b>Objective H 3.2: Create housing incentives and marketing efforts that would attract families to Lenox.</b>					
Action Item 1: Increase funding for the Affordable Housing Trust's first-time homebuyer program so that more grants can be issued.	Short-term	\$\$- \$\$\$	Medium	Support.	Affordable Housing Trust, Town Hall staff, Community Preservation Committee, other funding opportunities/partnerships
Action Item 2: Explore the feasibility of establishing a home mortgage program similar to the Detroit Home Mortgage model that aims to help homebuyers purchase and rehabilitate distressed properties. Collaborate with local financial	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Support.	Affordable Housing Trust, Town Hall staff, Community Preservation Committee, other funding opportunities/partnerships

institutions and foundations to offer qualified borrowers a second mortgage for renovations and improvements.					
Action Item 3: Work with the Lenox Chamber of Commerce, 1Berkshire, and recently relocated resident families to develop a marketing strategy that targets families	Short-term	\$	High	Support	Affordable Housing Trust, Town Hall staff, Community Preservation Committee, other funding opportunities/partnerships
Action Item 4: Develop and deepen relationships with real estate agencies and regional employers to promote Lenox as an option for relocating employees and their families	Ongoing	\$	High	Support	Affordable Housing Trust, Town Hall staff, Community Preservation Committee, other funding opportunities/partnerships
<b>GOAL H 4: DEVELOP MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR SENIORS AND RETIREES.</b>					
<b>Objective H 4.1: Amend the Zoning bylaw to encourage the creation of accessory apartments.</b>					
Action Item 1: Amend the Table of Uses, Subsection H, to make accessory dwelling units located inside single-family homes a by right use in all residential zoning districts and the C districts (not C-1A or C-3A).	Short-term	\$	Low	Town Meeting.	Planning Board, Affordable Housing Trust
Action Item 2: Consider amending Section 9.2 (Accessory Dwelling Unit) of the Zoning Bylaw to allow detached accessory dwelling units by right in the R-3A.	Long-term	\$	Low	Town Meeting.	Planning Board, Affordable Housing Trust

Action Item 3: Consider establishing design guidelines for detached accessory dwelling units, to maintain the character of Lenox neighborhoods.	Long-term	\$	Low	Town Meeting.	Planning Board, Affordable Housing Trust
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## HISTORICAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

### GOAL HC 1: USE MUNICIPAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES TO ENSURE THE CONTINUED SUCCESS OF THE TOWN'S HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ECONOMY.

#### Objective HC 1.1: Explore adoption of a strategically located “Arts Overlay Zoning District”.

Action	Timeframe	Cost	Priority	Municipal Action	Collaboration/Partners
Action Item 1: An “Arts Overlay Zoning District” is a land use tool used to create optimal conditions for a thriving historical and cultural economy. Research best practices and examples of existing arts overlay zoning districts throughout the Commonwealth (Cambridge, Fall River, Somerville, etc.).	Medium-term	\$	high	Support, Town Meeting.	Planning Board
Action Item 2: Collaborate with cultural institutions and local/regional working artists to determine the appropriate land use parameters of the overlay district (affordable live/workspaces, studios, performance venues, etc.).	Medium-term	\$	high	Support, Town Meeting.	Planning Board
Action Item 3: Determine where in the Town an “Arts Overlay Zoning District” would be optimal (e.g., portions of Lenox Village, Lenox Dale, Laurel Lake).	Medium-term	\$	high	Support, Town Meeting.	Planning Board
Action Item 4: Engage residents (cultural workers and others) at all phases of the process.	Ongoing	\$	high	Support, Town Meeting.	Planning Board

#### Objective HC 1.2: Continue supporting community-based arts and humanities projects

Action Item 1: In 2017, The Lenox Cultural Council received total requests of \$15,220, more than three times its budget. The Town should match a percentage of the MCC's allocation to the Lenox Cultural Council to maximize the number of project grants.	Short-term	\$	high	Support, Town Meeting.	Select Board, Finance Committee, budget process
Action Item 2: Consider collaborating with cultural entities to develop and host a monthly community-based art festival during the shoulder seasons that celebrates the Town's heritage and historical and cultural economy with performances, exhibits, and gallery walks.	Ongoing	\$\$	high	Support.	Cultural District, Chamber of Commerce
<b>Objective HC 1.3: Proactively support the Town's designated Cultural District.</b>					
Action Item 1: Invest in advanced wayfinding that directs residents and visitors to the Cultural District from Route 7/20 and from the Cultural District to amenities beyond its boundaries.	Short-term	\$\$	High	Support, funding.	Cultural District, Chamber of Commerce, Town Hall staff
Action Item 2: Develop materials to promote the Cultural District.	Ongoing	\$	High	Support, funding.	Cultural District, Chamber of Commerce, Town Hall staff
Action Item 3: Task an appropriate municipal department, board, commission, or committee with establishing a strong presence on social media platforms to effectively broadcast and raise awareness of the Cultural District.	Short-term	\$	Low	Support, funding.	Cultural District, Chamber of Commerce, Town Hall staff

Action Item 4: Work regionally to create a common events calendar to raise awareness of events.	Medium-term	\$	low	Support, funding.	Cultural District, Chamber of Commerce, Town Hall staff
Action Item 5: Consider providing matching funds to any MCC grant or allocation made to support the Cultural District	Ongoing	\$	high	Support, funding.	Cultural District, Chamber of Commerce, Town Hall staff
<b>GOAL HC 2: PROMOTE ADAPTIVE REUSE OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND PROPERTIES IN SUPPORT OF THE TOWN'S HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ECONOMY.</b>					
<b>Objective HC 2.1: Encourage adaptive reuse of historic properties for artist live/workspaces and workforce housing.</b>					
Action Item 1: Identify and catalogue potential candidate properties.	Long-term	\$\$	Medium	Support; Town Meeting.	Cultural District, Lenox Cultural Council
Action Item 2: Incentivize developers to participate in adaptive reuse projects.	Long-term	\$	High	Support, Town Meeting.	Cultural District, Chamber of Commerce, Select Board, Finance Committee budget process public/private partnerships
Action Item 3: Establish public/private partnerships with authorities who stand to benefit from adaptive reuse.	Short-term	\$	High	Support.	Cultural District, Chamber of Commerce, public/private partnerships
Action Item 4: Determine proper course of action for redevelopment regarding individual candidate properties.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Support.	Cultural District, Chamber of Commerce, public/private partnerships
Action Item 5: Leverage adaptive reuse projects with other municipal tools, e.g., arts overlay districts.	Medium-term	\$\$	Medium	Support.	Cultural District, Chamber of Commerce, public/private partnerships

**GOAL HC 3: IMPROVE BOTH HOUSING AND TRANSIT TO MAKE JOBS IN THE CULTURAL SECTOR MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR WORKERS.**

**Objective HC 3.1: Support and facilitate the development of workforce rental housing units on properties owned by cultural institutions.**

Action Item 1: Incorporate workforce rental housing units on properties owned and operated by cultural institutions as a by right arts-related accessory use when fewer than six units and by Special Permit when more than six-units in future arts overlay zoning district bylaw.	Medium-term	\$	Low	Support.	Shared Economic Development Planner
Action Item 2: Allow the development of rental artist live/workspaces by right on properties owned by cultural institutions and by Special Permit on other properties.	Ongoing	\$	High	Support.	Existing TIF/STA Policy, Select Board
Action Item 3: Provide incentives for adaptive reuse of underutilized buildings and/or space in existing buildings for workforce rental housing units.	Medium-term	\$\$- \$\$\$	High	Support.	Cultural District, Chamber of Commerce, Select Board

**Objective HC 3.2: Encourage and facilitate partnerships between educational and cultural institutions.**

Action Item 1: Encourage and work with cultural institutions to develop partnerships for conjunctive programming (for-credit internships, apprenticeships, special courses, etc.) with regional colleges.	Ongoing/completed	\$	High	Support, Town Meeting.	Historical Commission, Town Meeting
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Action Item 2: Continue to nurture relationships between cultural institutions and Lenox Public Schools to leverage educational opportunities for PreK-12 students and inspire/foster an appreciation of the arts and culture.	Ongoing	\$	Medium	Support.	Cultural District, Lenox School District
Action Item 3: Explore ways cultural institutions can be incentivized to develop and enhance summer and winter programs (e.g., Boston University Tanglewood Institute) that could attract young artists to Lenox for educational and professional experiences including but not limited to music, theater, and literature.	Ongoing	\$	Medium	Support.	Cultural District
<b>Objective HC 3.3: Use available marketing channels to attract a young workforce to Lenox’s historical and cultural economy.</b>					
Action Item 1: Incorporate young artists and cultural workers into Lenox’s comprehensive marketing strategy as a target audience.	Short-term	\$\$- \$\$\$	Medium	Funding support. Leadership support.	Lenox Chamber, Select Board, Cultural District, Cultural institutions
Action Item 2: Build advertising campaigns around profiles of young artists and cultural workers who found success in Lenox.	Short-term	\$\$- \$\$\$	Medium	Funding support. Leadership support.	Lenox Chamber, Select Board, Cultural District
<b>GOAL HC 4: FURTHER INTEGRATE HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES WITH OTHER AMENITIES.</b>					
<b>Objective HC 4.1: Use public art as a means of integrating the Town’s historical and cultural heritage with outdoor recreation.</b>					
Action Item 1: Research best practices regarding public art and examples of strategies throughout the Commonwealth.	Short-term	\$	High	Support.	Planning Board, Town Meeting

Action Item 2: Establish and populate a Public Arts Commission pursuant to Sections 82-84 of Chapter 41 of the Massachusetts General Laws.	Short-term	\$	High	Support.	Planning Board, Town Meeting
Action Item 3: Develop a strategic plan for the use of public art that comprises guidelines for works of public art (medium, content, etc.) and identify optimal locations for installations (shared-use paths, parks, etc.).	Short-term	\$	High	Waive/reduce dimensional requirements. Connection, use fees where suitable.	Planning Board, Town Meeting
Action Item 4: Consider various means by which the acquisition, commissioning, and maintenance of public art might be funded (e.g., Community Preservation funds, etc.).	Ongoing	\$	Medium	Support.	Cultural District
Action Item 5: Develop events to celebrate the unveiling of public art installations.	Ongoing	\$\$	Medium		Cultural District
<b>Objective HC 4.2: Partner with cultural institutions to hold artistic performances in public parks.</b>					
Action Item 1: Explore and determine the feasibility of holding musical, theatrical, and/or cinematic experiences in the Town's open space facilities.	Medium-term	\$	High	Support.	Cultural District, Chamber of Commerce, cultural organizations, Lenox Cultural Council
Action Item 2: Task a municipal department, board, commission, or committee with establishing	Medium-term	\$	High	Support.	Cultural District, Chamber of Commerce, cultural

partnerships with cultural institutions centered on public performances.					organizations, Lenox Cultural Council
Action Item 3: Develop an events calendar and promotional materials for public performances.	Medium-term	\$	High	Support.	Cultural District, Chamber of Commerce, cultural organizations, Lenox Cultural Council
<b>Objective HC 4.3: Incorporate historic resources into ArtWeek and other events.</b>					
Action Item 1: Work with the Lenox Historical Commission to develop informative/educational gallery walk-like events that celebrate Lenox's history and historic assets.	Medium-term	\$	High	Support.	Cultural District, Chamber of Commerce, cultural organizations, Lenox Cultural Council
Action Item 2: Create and make publicly available a promotional map of historical and cultural resources.	Medium-term	\$	High	Support	Cultural District, Chamber of Commerce, cultural organizations, Lenox Cultural Council
<b>Objective HC 4.4: Increase multimodal linkages between historic and cultural assets and other amenities as well as residential areas.</b>					
Action Item 1: Work with cultural institutions, historic and open-space preservation groups, and property owners to plan a shared-use path that effectively	Short-term	\$\$- \$\$\$	High	Leadership. Support. Funding.	Town Hall staff, cultural organizations

connects as many of Lenox’s many amenities as possible.					
<b>GOAL HC 5: MAINTAIN A BALANCED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION.</b>					
<b>Objective HC 5.1: Implement recommendations from the Town’s Historic Preservation Plan that are consistent with this Master Plan.</b>					
Action Item 1: Support the Historical Commission in leading the implementation of recommendations from the Historic Preservation Plan.	Ongoing	\$-\$\$	High	Fiscal support. Town Hall staff.	Select Board, Historical Commission, Land Use Department
Action Item 2: Implement recommendations through collaborative efforts.	Ongoing	\$-\$\$	High	Fiscal support. Town Hall staff.	Select Board, Historical Commission, Land Use Department
Action Item 3: Work with willing and interested property owners and town boards, commissions, and committees to increase the number of properties and/or districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places.	Medium to Long-term	\$-\$\$	High	Fiscal support. Town Hall staff.	Select Board, Historical Commission, Land Use Department
<b>Objective HC 5.2: Use multiple marketing channels to promote Lenox as a destination for heritage tourism to audiences outside the region.</b>					
Action Item 1: Work with the Lenox Library, the Lenox Chamber of Commerce, Berkshire, and other pertinent partners to develop a comprehensive marketing strategy.	Short-term	\$\$	High	Support.	Town Hall staff, Select Board, Chamber of Commerce

Action Item 2: Support the Chamber of Commerce in the advancement of social media marketing capabilities.	Short-term	\$\$	High	Support.	Town Hall staff, Select Board, Chamber of Commerce
Action Item 3: Promote the Town’s historic resources through publications that specialize in historic New England homes and architecture.	Medium to Long-term	\$	Medium	Support.	Historical Commission
<b>Objective HC 5.3: Review estate preservation bylaw</b>					
Action Item 1: Assemble a temporary committee comprising members of the Historical Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, the Planning Board, and owners, or their designees, of Estate Preservation Areas to review Section 8.9 of the Zoning Bylaw.	Short-term	\$	High	Support.	Planning Board, Historical Commission
Action Item 2: Consider expanding the bylaw to cover additional properties of historic significance.	Short-term	\$	High	Support.	Planning Board, Historical Commission
Action Item 3: Conduct the review with an eye toward increasing use flexibility in ways that meet the Town’s for land use and historic preservation.	Short-term	\$	High	Support.	Planning Board, Historical Commission
Action Item 4: Amend the bylaw to achieve the Town’s land use vision, aid the underlying business models that support the Ongoing maintenance of the Estates, and maintains the bylaw’s original intent of historic preservation.	Short-term	\$	High	Town Meeting.	Planning Board

**GOAL HC 6: ESTABLISH THE TOWN OF LENOX AS A MODEL FOR THE STEWARDSHIP OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND LANDSCAPES.**  
**(For further detail, see Chapter 8 of the Historic Preservation Plan.)**

<b>Objective HC 6.1: Support the Historical Commission in its role to promote the recognition, preservation, and appropriate treatment of historic resources through organization, support, and engagement.</b>					
Action Item 1: Empower the Lenox Historical Commission to take responsibility for the overall leadership and coordination of the Town’s historic preservation program as outlined in the Town’s Historic Preservation Plan.	Short-term	\$	High	Support.	Town Hall staff, Historical Commission
Action Item 2: Encourage and facilitate engaged relationships between the Historical Commission and other Town boards, commissions, and committees and their activities.	Short-term	\$	High	Facilitate.	Town Hall staff, Historical Commission
Action Item 3: Hire professional consultants with expertise in historic preservation, design, and engineering to provide guidance to town departments, boards, committees, and commissions.	Short-term	\$\$	High	Support.	Town Hall staff, Historical Commission
<b>Objective HC 6.2: Continue to inventory and improve documentation on the Town’s historic resources. The Lenox Library staff can assist with this objective.</b>					
Action Item 1: Maintain physical and digital files with survey information and photographs of historic properties.	Ongoing	\$	High	Support.	Historical Commission
Action Item 2: Integrate the Town’s historic resource inventory into Town planning documents and	Medium-term	\$\$	High	Support.	Historical Commission

Geographic Information System (GIS) by lot number.					
Action Item 3: Retain a qualified professional historic preservation consultant to assist the Historical Commission with the planning and implementation of historic resource inventory projects.	Ongoing	\$\$	High	Support.	Historical Commission
Action Item 4: Continue to upgrade older survey forms in the Town's historic resource inventory in accordance with the standards established for survey forms for Lenox Village 2011/12.	Ongoing	\$\$	High	Support.	Historical Commission
Action Item 5: Undertake a reconnaissance survey of historic resources in the eastern and northern portions of Lenox to identify, photograph and link resources to the Town's GIS database.	Short-term	\$\$	High	Support.	Historical Commission
Action Item 6: Retain a qualified professional to undertake a comprehensive inventory of historic resources in Lenox Dale	Short-term	\$\$	High	Support.	Historical Commission
Action Item 7: Amend the demolition delay bylaw to address demolition by neglect. (Both Oliver Root House and Cozy Nook were lost recently).	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Support. Town Meeting.	Historical Commission
Action Item 8: Create loans for property owners of historic homes for exterior repair. (Repaid at sale in several Massachusetts towns).	Medium-term	\$\$- \$\$\$	Medium	Support. Funding.	Historical Commission, Select Board

**Objective HC 6.3: Document the Town's cottage era historic resources**

Action Item 1: Prepare a Multiple Property Documentation Form for Cottage Era historic resources.	Medium to Long-term	\$\$	High	Support.	Historical Commission
Action Item 2: Prepare National Historic Registration nominations for Lenox Dale and Cottage Era resources in Lenox.	Medium to Long-term	\$\$	High	Support.	Historical Commission
<b>Objective HC 6.4: Enhance the process by which the condition of and activities relating to historic resources are monitored.</b>					
Action Item 1: Monitor activities that might negatively affect the preservation of historic resources.	Ongoing	\$	Medium	Support.	Historical Commission
Action Item 2: Create a process that monitors the condition of historic resources, involving the review and photographing of such resources on a 10-year cycle.	Medium to Long-term	\$	Medium	Support.	Historical Commission
<b>Objective HC 6.5: Draft and adopt bylaws and develop processes to protect endangered historical resources.</b>					
Action Item 1: Adopt an Affirmative Maintenance Bylaw developed collaboratively.	Medium to Long-term	\$	High	Support. Town Meeting.	Historical Commission
Action Item 2: Establish a Signage Review Subcommittee of the Historic District Commission to work with business owners and to review and approve sign permit applications within the historic district.	Long-term	\$	Low	Support.	Historical Commission, Historic District Commission
Action Item 3: Achieve Certified Local Government designation by the National Park Service and	Ongoing	\$	High	Support.	Historical Commission

participate in the Massachusetts Historical Commission's statewide Certified Local Government Program.					
<b>Objective HC 6.6: Support the Historical Commission to provide guidance and information to town boards and commissions on issues where historical preservation is relevant.</b>					
Action Item 1: Consult the Historical Commission on issues related to historic preservation and community character.	Ongoing	\$	High	Communicate.	Historical Commission, departments other Boards/Committees, Town Hall staff
Action Item 2: Expand membership of the Historical Commission to increase its ability to liaise effectively.	Medium to long-term	\$	Low	Support.	Select Board, Historical Commission
Action Item 3: Include the Historical Commission in the review of land developments and subdivision plans in an advisory capacity.	Short-term	\$	High	Support.	Town Hall staff, Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Select Board
Action Item 4: As needed, hire a professional historic preservation consultant to advise the Historical Commission, the Historic District Commission, and other Town boards, commissions, and committees.	Ongoing	\$-\$\$	High	Support.	Town Hall staff, Historical Commission
<b>Objective HC 6.7: Develop a strong constituency of historic preservation advocates through public outreach</b>					
Action Item 1: Support collaboration between the Historical Commission, the Lenox Historical Society,	Ongoing	\$-\$\$	High	Support.	Cultural District, Chamber of Commerce, Lenox Library

and the Lenox Chamber of Commerce regarding the coordination and publicity of public programming on Lenox History and historic places by the Town's historical and cultural organizations.					
Action Item 2: Maintain digital resources, such as a library of information and technical assistance for property owners on the maintenance and appropriate treatment of historic buildings and landscapes.	Medium to Long-term	\$	High	Support.	Lenox Library, Historical Commission, Lenox Historical Society
Action Item 3: Create a local preservation advocacy organization to provide the Town with a non-profit partner that can address historic preservation issues through private sector initiatives and in partnership with the Historical Commission and the Historic District Commission.	Medium to Long-term	\$-\$\$	Medium	Support.	Historical Commission, Lenox Historic Society
Action Item 4: Provide periodic workshops for town boards, committees, and commissions, and the public, on historic preservation techniques and appropriate treatments for historic buildings and landscapes.	Medium to Long-term	\$-\$\$	Medium	Support.	Mass Preservation, Mass Historical Commission
<b>Objective HC 6.8: Continue to maintain, manage, and steward town-owned historical resources.</b>					
Action Item 1: Incorporate historic preservation principles, processes, and conservation treatments	Ongoing	\$\$- \$\$\$	High	Support. Incorporate into bid documents.	Town Hall staff, department heads, Permanent Building Committee, Select Board

into capital planning projects, site management, and site maintenance.				Design and engineering work.	
Action Item 2: Share best practices in preservation treatments and maintenance practices for the types of resources and issues being addressed with Town staff.	Ongoing	\$	High	Support.	Town Hall staff, Permanent Building Committee, departments, Historical Commission, Inspections Department
Action Item 3: Provide preservation and conservation training to town construction and maintenance staff through workshops, videos, and on-site consultation	Medium to Long-term	\$\$	Medium	Support.	Town Hall staff, Permanent Building Committee, departments, Historical Commission, Inspections Department

## SERVICES & FACILITIES

### GOAL SF 1: CONTINUALLY IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL QUALITY OF LENOX PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

#### Objective SF 1.1: Invest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics facilities.

Action	Timeframe	Cost	Priority	Municipal Action	Collaboration/Partners
Action Item 1: Renovate and modernize science classrooms in Lenox Memorial Middle and High School to bring the facilities in line with 21st century educational facilities.	Medium to Long-term	\$\$- \$\$\$	High	Support.	School Committee, Principals, Superintendent
Action Item 2: Stay abreast of technological and teaching developments in STEM education.	Ongoing	\$\$-\$	High	Support.	School Committee, Principals, Superintendent
Action Item 3: Work with neighboring districts to improve and increase the cost-effectiveness of STEM education via shared services, equipment, and technology.	Medium to Long-term	\$\$	High	Support.	School Committee, Principals, Superintendent
Action Item 4: Explore the possibility of establishing an Advanced Placement consortium with nearby districts to increase course offerings.	Medium to Long-term	\$	High	Support.	School Committee, Principals, Superintendent

#### Objective SF 1.2: Work with Lenox’s cultural institutions to expand the school district’s arts and humanities educational opportunities

Action Item 1: Continue incorporating place-based learning strategies into history, art, music, and theater programs to integrate local cultural institutions into the classroom and the lives of students.	Medium to Long-term	\$	Medium	Support.	School Committee, cultural organizations, Principals, Superintendent
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Action Item 2: Expand and promote existing internship programs whereby students are able to gain meaningful professional and academic experience.	Medium to Long-term	\$	Medium	Support.	School Committee, Principals, Superintendent
<b>Objective SF 1.3: Explore the feasibility and viability of increasing access to vocational education countywide.</b>					
Action Item 1: Work with countywide ad hoc committees to determine regional need/demand for vocational education in Berkshire County.	Short-term	\$	High	Lead.	School Committee, Principals, Superintendent, Town Hall staff
Action Item 2: Identify various models for delivering vocational education in Berkshire County. Such models could potentially include a regional school, a more efficient system for transporting students to existing vocational schools, a shared-services model, etc.	Medium to long-term	\$	High	Lead.	School Committee, Principals, Superintendent, Town Hall staff
<b>Objective SF 1.4: Work with the Lenox School Committee to create a strategic School Choice Plan.</b>					
Action Item 1: Determine if the 40% School Choice cap implemented by Lenox needs to be lowered, raised, or remain at 40% considering the repercussions on Lenox's tax base.	Medium to Long-term	\$	Medium	Support.	School Committee
Action Item 2: Support the Lenox School Committee in creating a transparent process that assesses and communicates a Strategic School Choice Plan.	Medium to Long-term	\$\$	Medium	Support.	School Committee
<b>GOAL SF 2: ENSURE THAT LONG-TERM PLANNING INITIATIVES ACCOUNT FOR MAINTENANCE, OPERATION, AND NECESSARY REPLACEMENT OF CURRENT FACILITIES.</b>					

<b>Objective SF 2.1: Engage in proactive asset management planning in all aspects of municipal facilities.</b>					
Action Item 1: Adopt a capital improvement planning process that is vetted by the Permanent Buildings Committee and accounts for all municipal facilities in terms of inventory, needs, priorities, and scheduling.	Medium to Long-term	\$	High	Lead.	Select Board, CAO, Finance Committee, Permanent Building Committee
Action Item 2: Adopt a proactive asset management protocol in all town departments that ensures facilities and equipment are maintained in timely and prioritized fashion.	Medium to Long-term	\$	High	Lead.	Select Board, CAO, Finance Committee, Permanent Building Committee
Action Item 3: Annually assess all user fees charged by the town and compare them with the actual cost of town services and projected cost increases. Adjust user fees accordingly.	Ongoing	\$	High	Lead.	Select Board, CAO, Finance Committee, Permanent Building Committee
<b>Objective SF 2.2: Continue exploring new opportunities for shared services and other means to reduce costs and increase quality of services.</b>					
Action Item 1: Evaluate, assess, and publicize shared services initiatives to date to determine feasibility and viability of expanding such efforts.	Medium to Long-term	\$	Medium	Lead.	Select Board, CAO, Finance Committee, departments
Action Item 2: Conduct studies to determine which departments can create efficiency through shared services.	Medium to Long-term	\$	Medium	Lead.	Select Board, CAO, Finance Committee, departments
Action Item 3: Utilize shared services to lower purchasing, capital, and other costs as possible.	Medium to Long-term	\$	Medium	Lead.	Select Board, CAO, Finance Committee, departments

Action Item 4: Create a Facilities Director position.	Medium to Long-term	\$\$\$	Medium	Lead.	Select Board, CAO, Finance Committee, departments
<b>GOAL SF 3: INCORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION INTO THE PLANNING AND MAINTENANCE OF MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND SPACES.</b>					
<b>Objective SF 3.1: Enhance resilience and ability to mitigate potential damages from climate hazards.</b>					
Action Item 1: Utilize a broad and collaborative approach to updating the Town’s Hazard Mitigation Plan.	Ongoing	\$-\$\$	High	Lead.	Town Hall staff
Action Item 2: Coordinate with state and federal agencies on State Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan development.	Ongoing	\$-\$\$	High	Lead.	Town Hall staff
Action Item 3: Establish a process for information and data gathering.	Short-term	\$	High	Lead.	Town Hall staff
Action Item 4: Find a suitable database or model database to monitor climate and potential hazard metrics, to improve planning and decision-making capacity.	Medium-term	\$	High	Lead.	Town Hall staff
Action Item 5: Identify and act upon low-cost/high-mitigation measures and initiatives.	Ongoing	\$	High	Lead.	Town Hall staff
Action Item 6: Identify and act upon synergies between town needs and state and federal programs to enhance opportunities for greenhouse gas emissions reduction.	Medium-term	\$-\$\$\$	High	Lead.	Town Hall staff

Action Item 7: Incorporate temperature-reducing designs, such as shade-tree planting and green roofs into municipal facilities improvement plans.	Short-term	\$-\$\$\$	High	Lead.	Town Hall staff, Permanent Building Committee, department heads
Action Item 8: Develop a means at the Town or neighborhood level, such as check-ins and phone trees, to reduce the vulnerability of more isolated populations, including seniors and disabled.	Short-term	\$-\$\$	High	Lead.	Town Hall staff, COA
<b>GOAL SF 4: MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE DRINKING WATER, WASTEWATER, AND STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE.</b>					
<b>Objective SF 4.1: Maintain an adequate amount of high-quality drinking water.</b>					
Action Item 1: Enforce regulations in and around reservoirs, community wellheads, and potential high-yield quality aquifers.	Ongoing	\$	High	Lead.	Water Department, Board of Health, Tri-Town Health Department
Action Item 2: Locate additional town drinking water sources.	Long-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	High	Lead.	Water Department, Town Hall staff, Select Board
Action Item 3: Continue to test drinking water supplies.	Ongoing	\$	High	Lead.	Water Department
<b>Objective SF 4.2: Incorporate a long-term water study into a Capital Improvement Plan.</b>					
Action Item 1: Conduct a study of all water systems that projects water demand over a future 20-year period, accounting for projected population and tourism trends and potential effects of climate change.	Short-term	\$\$	High	Lead.	Water Department
Action Item 2: Implement the study findings to project future needs and plan for system upgrades,	Medium-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	High	Lead.	Water Department, Permanent Building Committee

replacements, etc. and incorporate them into the capital improvement planning process.					
<b>Objective SF 4.3: Increase operational efficiency to reduce costs and overall environmental impact.</b>					
Action Item 1: Utilize innovative, energy-efficient technologies, and operational improvements to reduce costs and conserve water.	Ongoing	\$\$- \$\$\$	High	Support.	Water Department
Action Item 2: Study the feasibility of utilizing anaerobic digestion as a means of reducing energy consumption.	Short-term	\$	High	Support.	DPW, Town Hall staff
Action Item 3: Find alternative ways to repurpose biosolids to reduce transportation costs, landfill deposits, and overall environmental impacts.	Short-term	\$	High	Support.	DPW, Town Hall staff
Action Item 4: Explore cost-effective measures to eliminate chemical treatment of sludge, so as to allow for reuse and decrease land fill deposits.	Short-term	\$	High	Support.	DPW, Town Hall staff
Action Item 5: Develop a community outreach strategy aimed at helping residents find ways to reduce water consumption.	Medium to Long-term	\$	Medium	Support.	Water Department
Action Item 6: Consider using rainwater harvesting for non-potable purposes as a means of reducing demand and excess consumption of potable water. Rainwater harvesting can be employed and promoted at the municipal and residential levels.	Medium to Long-term	\$	Medium	Support.	Water Department

## TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION

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

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

Action	Timeframe	Cost	Priority	Municipal Action	Collaboration/Partners
Action Item 1: Continue efforts to calm traffic in and around the Lenox Village downtown area.	Ongoing	\$\$	High	Lead.	DPW, Police Department, Land Use Department
Action Item 2: Continue and expand efforts to develop multi-modal linkages between amenities such as shared use paths and implementing a car-share system.	Ongoing	\$\$- \$\$\$	Medium	Lead.	Land Use Department
Action Item 3: Increase wayfinding signage throughout the town to raise awareness of and to better direct residents to amenities.	Short-term	\$\$	High	Lead/support.	Land Use Department

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

Action Item 1: Develop an attractive and easily understandable wayfinding system that guides visitors and residents using all modes throughout the Town.	Short-term	\$\$- \$\$\$	High	Lead/support.	Town Hall, Chamber of Commerce, Cultural District, cultural attractions
Action Item 2: Install more bike racks and strategically locate bike racks throughout the Town, especially near trailheads, shared use paths, and in the Villages.	Medium-term	\$\$-\$	Medium	Lead/partner.	Town Hall

Action Item 3: Study the feasibility, viability, and potential demand/use of a Town-wide electric bike share system.	Ongoing	\$	High	Lead/partner.	Town Hall staff, BRPC, regional collaboration
Action item 4: Continue making improvements to rights-of-ways that connect Lenox Dale to Lenox Village.	Ongoing	\$\$- \$\$\$	High	Lead/partner.	Select Board, Department of Public Works, Land Use Department
Action item 5: Improve bus linkages to rail stations in Wassaic, CT; Albany, NY; and Springfield, MA.	Short-term	\$\$	High	Support.	BRTA, 1Berkshire, public/private partnerships
<b>Objective TC 1.3: Prioritize safety for all users of the transportation system.</b>					
Action item 1: Continue to monitor crash cluster data to identify which intersections and roads need redesign.	Ongoing	\$	High	Lead.	State police, local police, DPW, Select Board, Land Use Department
Action Item 2: Add stationary speed feedback signs at such locations as Walker Street, East Street (intersection with Hubbard Ave.), and East Street between Walker and Housatonic Streets.	Short-term	\$\$	High	Lead.	DPW, Police Department, Land Use Department
Action Item 3: Add crosswalk bump-outs, raised crosswalks, and other traffic calming measures in Lenox Village where appropriate, particularly on Walker Street.	Medium-term	\$\$	High	Lead.	DPW, Police Department, Land Use Department
<b>Objective TC 1.4: Prioritize projects that enhance walkability and bikeability for visitors to Lenox by ensuring adequate connections to town destinations.</b>					
Action Item 1: Add pedestrian lighting to Main Street, Walker Street from Church Street east to the	Medium-term	\$\$	Medium	Lead.	Town Hall, Complete Streets

Community Center, and in public spaces, including Lilac Park, Triangle Park, Roche Reading Park, and the Village Center.					
Action Item 2: Extend the sidewalk along Old Stockbridge Road from Hawthorne Street south to the Elm Court entrance since this is a particularly dangerous road for pedestrians.	Medium to long-term	\$\$- \$\$\$	High	Lead.	Town Hall, public/private partnerships, DPW, Land Use Department
Action Item 3: Make repairs to Main Street/Route 7A sidewalk.	Medium	\$\$	Medium	Lead.	DPW
Action Item 4: Add share the road signage and road striping to Undermountain Road that delineates the shoulder thereby calming traffic and making it safer for cyclists.	Short-term	\$	Medium	Lead.	DPW
Action Item 5: Add new sidewalks and bike lanes where needed and suitable throughout the Town.	Medium to long-term	\$\$	Medium	Lead.	DPW
Action Item 6: Create a “Village Walk” between Franklin Street and Walker Street.	Medium to long-term	\$\$- \$\$\$	High	Lead.	Select Board, Chamber of Commerce, Cultural District, private landowners, DHCD Downton Initiative
Action Item 7: Study the feasibility of establishing a designated space in Lenox Village where large, long-distance commuter buses can park for visitor arrival and departure.	Medium to long-term	\$\$	High	Lead.	Select Board

Action Item 8: Consider the closure of village street(s) to promote pedestrian activity and a higher density of activity and attractions.	Short-term	\$	Medium	Close street.	Town Hall staff.
<b>Objective TC 1.5: Increase the livability of Lenox by improving access to active mode facilities and/or transit services</b>					
Action Item 1: Engage Berkshire Regional Transit Authority and other regional agencies to develop solutions that increase access to and the frequency of transit services in Lenox, such as adding bus stops near residential and commercial centers and adding days of service.	Short-term	\$-\$\$	High	Lead/partner.	Select Board, public/private partnerships, BRTA
Action item 2: Increase the number of, and add shelter to, the bus stops in the Town.	Medium to long-term	\$	Medium	Support.	Select Board, BRTA
<b>Objective TC 1.6: Develop a multimodal transportation system that is sensitive to the historic districts and rural scenic character of Lenox.</b>					
Action Item 1: Establish a shared use path between Crystal Street and Roaring Brook Road.	Short to medium-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	High	Lead.	DPW, Land Use Department, Select Board
Action Item 2: Work with Lenox-based cultural institutions and landowners to connect amenities via shared use paths. Coordinate with Pittsfield, Lee and other communities to ensure interconnected pathways.	Short to medium-term	\$\$-\$\$\$	High	Lead.	Select Board, Land Use Department
Action Item 3: Work with Historical District Commission and other relevant parties to ensure that	Medium-term	\$\$	Medium	Lead.	Historic District Commission, Historical Commission, DPW, Land Use Department

added pedestrian lighting is sensitive to the Historic Districts.					
Action Item 4: Adopt design guidelines that ensure the design of and materials used for shared use paths are in keeping with the character of the surrounding neighborhoods and environments.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Lead.	Land Use, DPW, Land Management Committee, Historical Commission, Conservation Commission
<b>Objective TC 1.7: Ensure that improvements to the transportation system are equitably distributed throughout the town.</b>					
Action Item 1: Develop an implementation plan for improvements that equitably distributes projects Town-wide.	Short-term	\$	High	Lead.	Land Use Department, DPW, Select Board
Action Item 2: Maintain active engagement with residents from each of the Town’s neighborhoods to ensure that improvements are equitably distributed throughout the Town.	Short-term	\$	High	Lead.	Land Use Department, DPW, Select Board
<b>GOAL TC 2: CONTINUE TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE TRANSPORTATION FOR SENIORS AND THE PHYSICALLY DISABLED.</b>					
<b>Objective TC.2.1: Ensure that seniors and the physically disabled are able to access commercial areas for shopping</b>					
Action Item 1: Expand the Council on Aging’s transportation services so as to provide shopping excursions two days per week.	Short-term	\$	High	Lead.	Community Center, COA, Select Board
Action Item 2: Study the feasibility of increasing handicapped, charter bus, and general parking stalls, in Lenox Village.	Short-term	\$	High	Lead.	DPW, Chamber of Commerce, Select Board, Land Use Department
Action Item 3: Study the feasibility of providing shuttle services to cultural venues and events.	Short-term	\$	High	Lead.	Select Board, Land Use Department, DPW

<b>GOAL TC 3: LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSIT.</b>					
<b>Objective TC 3.1: implement a local shuttle service.</b>					
Action Item 1: Create parking areas near the periphery of the Town. Residents and visitors can park there and use the shuttle to navigate the Town without moving their cars or contributing to local traffic congestion.	Medium-term	\$\$	High	Lead.	Select Board, Land Use Department, DPW, public/private partnerships
Action Item 2: Identify local destinations with high visitorship.	Short-term	\$	Medium	Lead.	Select Board, Land Use Department, Chamber of Commerce, public/private partnerships
Action Item 3: Schedule efficient routes for the shuttle, especially during peak seasons and hours.	Medium-term	\$\$	High	Lead.	Select Board, Land Use Department, Chamber of Commerce, public/private partnerships
<b>GOAL TC 4: CONTINUE EXCELLENT MAINTENANCE OF THE TOWN'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.</b>					
<b>Objective TC 4.1: Ensure that roads and sidewalks continue to be maintained at the highest level through proactive strategic planning.</b>					
Action Item 1: Conduct annual updates on the condition of roads, sidewalks, bridges, culverts that can be used to identify and prioritize maintenance needs.	Ongoing	\$\$	High	Lead.	DPW
Action Item 2: Develop a Capital Improvement Plan that incorporates road and sidewalk projects.	Medium-term	\$	High	Lead.	DPW

Action Item 3: Develop an annual strategic plan to prioritize and schedule regular maintenance and more urgent repairs and improvements.	Medium-term	\$	High	Lead.	DPW
<b>Objective TC 4.2: Collaborate with regional transit and transportation agencies to expand service to, from, and within Lenox.</b>					
Action Item 1: Increase Lenox’s representation with regional transportation organizations.	Ongoing	\$	Low to medium	Lead.	Select Board
Action Item 2: Identify and advocate for local employer and workforce needs relative to transportation, such as potential creation of a regional Transportation Management Association (TMA).	Medium-term	\$\$	Low to medium	Lead.	Town Hall staff, Select Board, Chamber of Commerce
Action Item 3: Promote broader use of transit among residents and visitors.	Medium-term	\$	Low to medium	Lead.	Select Board, BRTA
<b>Objective TC 4.3: Explore innovative means to increase access to transportation.</b>					
Action Item 1: Form an ad hoc transportation committee, the primary task of which is to find innovative means to increase access to transportation.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Lead.	Select Board
Action Item 2: Identify how other, similar communities, deal with transportation issues.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Lead.	Town Hall staff
Action Item 3: Study the feasibility of utilizing alternative vehicles (e.g., Council on Aging vans, school vehicles, etc.) to provide transit opportunities outside of BRTA hours of operation.	Medium-term	\$	Medium	Lead.	Town Hall staff

Action Item 4: Study feasibility and viability of an electric bike share program.	Ongoing	\$	High	Partner.	Regional collaboration
<b>Objective TC 4.4: Support regional efforts to provide east-west and north-south rail access in the region.</b>					
Action Item 1: Work with local cultural institutions, hospitality companies, and regional organizations to effectively market and promote passenger rail as an option when visiting Lenox.	Short-term	\$	High	Support.	Town Hall staff, Chamber of Commerce, Cultural District, Cultural attractions, hospitality entities
Action Item 2: Support regional initiatives, such as the Train Campaign, East-West Rail study and the Berkshire Flyer, that aim to connect the Berkshires to New York City and Boston via passenger rail.	Short-term	\$	High	Support.	Town Hall staff, Select Board, Chamber of Commerce, Cultural District