



# **B**LANDFORD

community development plan

prepared by  
**The Pioneer Valley  
Planning Commission**



Funding for this plan was provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts via Executive Order 418 through the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Department of Economic Development and the Massachusetts Highway Department.

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**Prepared by the Blandford Community Development Committee in cooperation with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission**

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# **Executive Summary: Bringing It All Together**



Town of Blandford  
Community Development Plan

# **Executive Summary - Bringing It All Together**

## ***Background***

The Blandford Community Development Plan was developed by a diverse group of Blandford residents who participated in the Community Development Plan Committee (CDP) to develop a vision and plan for Blandford's future. At our community forums and public meetings, our process was open, inclusive and endeavored to ensure that a wide range of viewpoints was represented. Staff of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) provided data, planning assistance and maps that were instrumental in the development of this plan.

This plan was funded through a planning services agreement with the Massachusetts Interagency Work Group (IAWG) under the Executive Order 418 Community Development Planning Program. Funding for the program was provided by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Department of Economic Development, and the Executive Office of Transportation and Construction.

The following plan is intended to help guide future planning and policy initiatives in Williamsburg. Our vision and planning, however, is a process, not a one-time effort. We commit to continue to work with our residents to ensure a future that we can all embrace.

The Town of Blandford is a rural hilltown with a managed water supply, many forests and natural landscapes. The town faces development pressure given its proximity to the larger communities of Westfield, Springfield and communities in Connecticut. Residents take pride in their community and want to retain its small-town character and high-quality community amenities. Balancing the need for affordable housing, a manageable tax rate, high quality town services and protected open spaces will require careful planning and management in Blandford. This Community Development Plan is an effort to plan for future change and development such that Blandford is able to retain the characteristics that residents value most.

This plan has been developed by Blandford's Community Development Planning Committee and Open Space Committee with extensive support from staff at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. Work began in Spring 2002 and continued through May 2004. Funding for this plan was made available through Executive Order 418, which provided funding to each town in Massachusetts to plan for housing development while balancing the need for economic development, open space and resource protection and transportation planning. The four elements addressed by this Plan are open space and resource protection, housing, economic development, and transportation. Additional funding from the Highlands Community Initiative, a program of the Trustees of the Reservations, also allowed the Open Space Committee to update the town's Open Space and Recreation Plan. This plan includes the Blandford Open Space and Recreation Plan, which contains information about the town's soils, rivers, wildlife, conservation lands and other natural resources.

This Executive Summary presents the goals, and some key findings of each section of the Community Development Plan. Each of the core elements is discussed in more detail in the four sections of the Plan. These plan elements provide data, maps, goals, objectives and implementation strategies related to open space and resource protection, housing, economic development and transportation.

## ***Planning Process***

In developing this plan, the Community Development Planning Committee (CDPC) analyzed data related to housing, economic development, and transportation trends in Blandford and developed goals, objectives, and strategies to meet Blandford's most pressing needs in these areas. The Open Space Committee worked with Pioneer Valley Planning Commission staff to develop accurate maps of open space areas in town, and develop goals, objectives, strategies and an action plan to meet Blandford's open space, recreation and resource protection needs into the future. A survey of town residents conducted by PVPC in February 2002, data from the 2000 census, as well as general knowledge of the town informed this process.

Throughout this planning process, both committees actively sought public input on the town's most pressing needs as well as special places in Blandford in need of protection. In March 2003, October 2003, and May 2004, the CDPC held public forums to share information on trends and issues in town and seek public input on the most important issues to address in the Community Development Plan. Open Space Committee members attended the workshops and reported their findings to CDPC members at regular public CDPC meetings.

## ***Summary of Open Space Element***

### **Key Findings**

- A large portion – 44% - of Blandford's land is permanently protected from development
- The City of Springfield, the Town of Russell, and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management are the largest landowners in Blandford
- Survey respondents listed Blandford's "small town atmosphere" as their primary reason for living in the community
- Although Blandford residents place a high value on the Town's rural character, there are few regulatory controls on the kinds of development activities that could alter this character
- A majority of residents feel that environmental issues are the most important issues facing the Town
- According to the Dept. of Environmental Protection, Blandford has 23,503 acres of land area classified as "Outstanding Resource Water"
- Nearly all of the Town's riparian lands remain in their natural state
- Very few areas in Blandford possess soils that have the drainage characteristics required for effective on-site sewage disposal
- The Town has no public municipal wastewater treatment system
- The 81-acre Long Pond, with a capacity of 65 million gallons, is the source for Blandford's public water system which serves just under 900 residents
- Nearly one-fifth of Blandford's land is classified as "core habitat" under the NHESP BioMap project
- Blandford's forest resources - which cover 86% of the Town - serve as significant natural filters for several municipal water supplies, an economic resource for lumber production, and as critical wildlife habitat

### **Open Space Goals**

Three primary open space goals emerged as a result of this planning effort:

- Preserve the watersheds and purity of drinking water supplies

- Maintain and improve outdoor recreational access, scenic views, and community character
- Protect critical land parcels in order to maintain the health of sensitive natural areas

### **High Priority Open Space Strategies**

<b>LANDS</b>
Acquire or protect land to protect natural sensitive areas
Establish a Blandford Community Preservation Fund
Seek out equitable fiscal and functional resolution of the outside municipality land control issue; Continue communication with Springfield DPW on watershed lands goals (Article 97)
<b>LAND USE AND ZONING</b>
Implement the following zoning bylaw amendments to further the goals of protecting the natural environment and maintaining the community character of Blandford:
- Create Site Plan Review to address state zoning exemptions (e.g., churches, schools)
- Create a Watershed Overlay District to protect water resources
- Investigate zoning amendments to help protect forestlands and farmlands
- Adopt an Environmental Impact Analysis requirement in the zoning bylaws
- Implement a performance-based stormwater management by-law
- Create overlay zoning districts for agriculture and forestry
- Prepare a Conservation Subdivision Zoning Bylaw to promote retention of natural areas
- Developing zoning regulations to protect ridgelines
<b>WATER</b>
Preserve the watersheds and purity of drinking water supplies
Create a Watershed Overlay District to protect water resources
Monitor progress of filtration plant and water lines
Increase public recognition of the water supply protection areas
Protect water supplies from road salt contamination
<b>SCENIC COMMUNITY CHARACTER</b>
Establish roads as “scenic roads” under MGL 40 Ch. 15
Maintain and improve scenic views
Review roadside cutting program with the Highway Department and Tree Warden
<b>WETLANDS</b>
Strictly enforce the Wetlands Protection Act (including provisions of the Rivers Protection Act)
Actively engage in certifying vernal pools with the State Natural Heritage Program
Maintain adequate vegetated buffer strips between developed areas and wetland areas

<b>CONSERVATION</b>
Define and map priority habitat areas
Establish center, possibly Dover Trust Nature Center, for appreciation of nature, wildlife and historical interests
Maintain an active conservation program for all citizens
Consider effects of off-road vehicles, hunters, permits and trash
Use Long Pond as an educational tool to further community knowledge of flora and fauna
Consider collecting stumpage and water fees to use for conservation
<b>TRAILS AND GREENWAYS</b>
Develop a town-wide greenways network focusing on corridors along streams
Map and maintain existing trails for recreation, and develop multi-user trail systems that tie into the existing trail network
<b>FORESTS AND FARMS</b>
Consider town participation in the Community Forestry Program
Map existing cultivated fields to monitor net loss of farmland
Encourage and Publicize the Agricultural Preservation Act
Create a farmer's market in Blandford Center
<b>RECREATION</b>
Support development of community arts festivals & events
Reestablish a Parks and Recreation Committee
Open discussion with the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen regarding the needs of the elderly in town

## Summary of Housing Element

### Key Findings

- 23 percent of home owners and of 19 percent renters in town pay **more than 30 %** of their income for housing
- 7.6 percent of home owners and renters pay more **than 50 %** of their household income for housing
- Blandford currently has 3 subsidized (chapter 40B) housing units
- The average sale price of a single family home in Goshen in 2003 was \$140,000
- Over half the homes in Blandford were built before 1960
- From 1990 to 2000, Goshen experienced a significant decrease in the number of homes used for seasonal and recreational purposes
- Only 3.8% of the current ownership housing stock is affordable\* for low income residents over age 65
- None of the current rental units or ownership units in town are considered affordable<sup>1</sup> for low income households under age 25

### Priority Housing Goals

<b>LAND USE AND ZONING</b>
Consider adopting a Phased Growth Bylaw
Consider comprehensive Site Plan Review and Site Plan Approval Bylaw
Prepare a Conservation Subdivision Zoning Bylaw with incentives to promote retention of natural areas
<b>FUNDING</b>
Seek funding for Housing Rehabilitation Programs that target low and moderate income households in town
Consider seeking low interest loans (through Board of Health) to provide funding for septic system repairs
<b>AFFORDABILITY</b>
Prepare an Affordable Housing Zoning Bylaw (Inclusionary Bylaw)
Consider adoption of Comprehensive Permit Process Bylaw
Study Existing Zoning Bylaws and consider adoption of an Accessory Apartment Bylaw
Prepare amendments to the zoning bylaws that allow Congregate Care and Assisted Living facilities by special permit

### ***Summary of Economic Development Element***

#### **Key Findings**

- A consistent number of town employers but a decreased number of employees
- A significant increase in the number of commercial and industrial zoned parcels
- A decrease in the number of multi-family residential parcels
- 6,697 acres of land potentially unconstrained to development and maximum population of 20,632 people.
- Average weekly wages significantly lower than that of the Pioneer Valley region
- A 19% increase in town expenditures and a 53% increase in total revenue since 1990 (calculated into 2000\$)
- Average educational levels higher than that of the region

#### **Priority Economic Development Goals**

<b>Strategy</b>
<b>LAND USE AND ZONING</b>
Undertake comprehensive review of zoning bylaws and zoning map including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Considering a mixed-use Village Center bylaw</li> <li>- Encouraging Cottage Industry in the Town while providing adequate protection of neighborhood character and property value</li> <li>--Upgrading the accessory use section for home-based businesses</li> </ul>

<b><i>ECONOMIC CHARACTER</i></b>
Support and encourage appropriate local business activity that contributes to the rural character of Blandford
Encourage and promote specialized agricultural activities which create 'value-added' products for the wholesale and retail markets
Promote Blandford as a location for vacation and retirement homes
Promote Blandford as a destination for tourist and recreational activities
<b><i>FISCAL HEALTH</i></b>
Study ways to compensate the Town for providing and protecting natural resources that are vital to the health and prosperity of the region

### ***Summary of Transportation Element***

#### Priority Transportation Goals

<b>Strategy</b>
Seek adequate paratransit service in Blandford (PVRTA/ FRTA)
Study development of 'Park and Ride' facility for commuters
Collect information regarding any plans, procedures and timetables for the development of a new interchange on the Mass Turnpike in Blandford
Consider the implementation of traffic calming strategies in the town center area

# Community Input



Town of Blandford  
Community Development Plan

# The Town of Blandford Community Input

## *Purpose*

The survey helped the CDP Committee to develop a Community Vision Statement that reflected input from the community planning process. The survey was conducted in order to promote maximum public involvement in the creation of the Community Development Plan for Blandford. Finally, the results of the survey in conjunction with socio-economic statistics helped the CDP Committee identify key areas for discussion and develop focused and productive community planning workshops.

## **Methodology**

The survey was designed by PVPC in cooperation with the CDP Committee. The survey questionnaire was mailed to each of Blandford's 500 households of which 139 or 27.8% responded to the multiple-choice questions. The survey asked residents to give their opinions and attitudes on the Town's growth and development issues. This section provides a summary of the survey results and statistical data for the Town of Blandford.

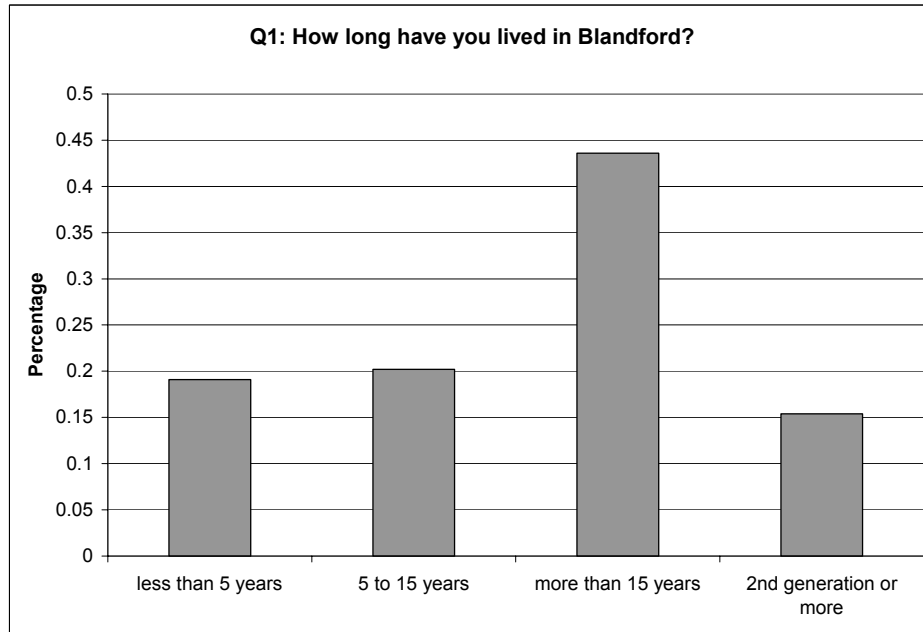
## **Summary**

- Most residents have lived in Blandford for 15 years or more (43.6%) and 15% of residents are second generation or more.
- Most people responded that they live in a location that was not listed on the survey. 26% indicated that they live in the center of town.
- Blandford's small town atmosphere was listed as the primary reason for living in town (41.5%). Open space was listed second with 28%.
- 81% indicated that they would regret Blandford losing its rural small town atmosphere.
- When asked would you like to see new business development in town in order to create local jobs, roughly 55% indicated no, they would not.
- 37.2% stated that they have not seen a change in the character of Blandford during their residence in town. 28.7% stated that it has changed for the worst and 10% stated it has changed for the better.
- The majority of residents rated Blandford as a good place to live (54.8%), 26% responded excellent, 12% fair, and 2% not very good.
- Most residents get their information from either talking to other people or from the Country Journal.
- Snow removal and the transfer station received the highest rating in the good category for adequacy of community services and facilities in Blandford. Public water service (57%) and youth services (36%) were listed as needing the most improvement.
- An overwhelming majority (71.8%) of residents would support new zoning regulations to protect Blandford's ridgelines, forests, waters, and hillsides from adverse environmental and aesthetic impacts of development.
- The economic opportunities that residents would favor the town to seek out are:

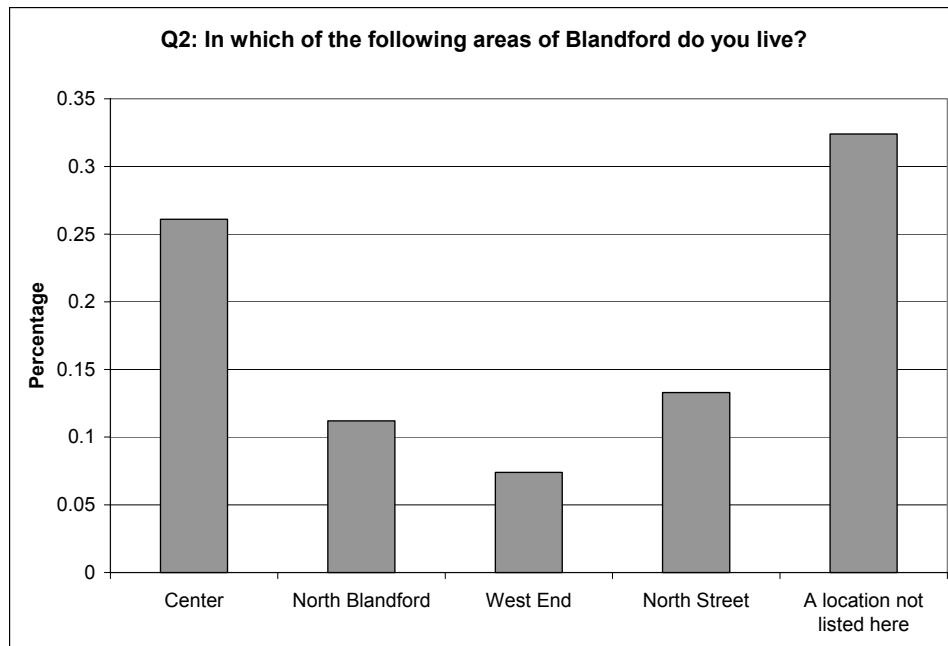
- Artisan/craftsman business (59.4%)
  - Home-based businesses (58.0%)
  - Agriculture or farm-support business (55.6%)
  - Gardening/landscaping supplies (50.7%)
- The economic opportunities that would be opposed to are:
  - Clothing store (65.5%)
  - Dry cleaning/laundry (64.9%)
  - Light industry (59.5%)
  - Warehousing/distribution (59.0%)
- 48.9% of residents responded that they believe the town should not pursue the construction of a Massachusetts Turnpike exit in Blandford. 43.6% are in support of constructing an exit. 7.5% had no opinion.
- The vast majority of residents in Blandford work out of town (66%). 21% listed that they are retired and 12.8% stated that they work from home.
- Small town, rural atmosphere, open spaces, and forest were listed as being very important features in Blandford.
- Most people indicated that they participate in such recreational activities as: walking (63.8%), hiking (48.9%), and bird watching (40.4%).
- 45% of residents responded that the amount of open space currently protected in Blandford is just right. 36.2% stated that there is not enough protected open space in Blandford.
- Most people believe the town should set aside local funds to purchase or protect open space (28%) and another 32% support this only if funds are matched by state or private funds.
- The three most important town issues are:
  1. Environment (67.6%)
  2. Roads (55.9%)
  3. Public Facilities (43.6%)
- Seasonal housing received the most support at 41.2% as a housing opportunity that residents would like to see in Blandford. Residents strongly oppose multi-family (62.8%) and rental apartments (58.5%) housing developments in Blandford.

## **Survey Results**

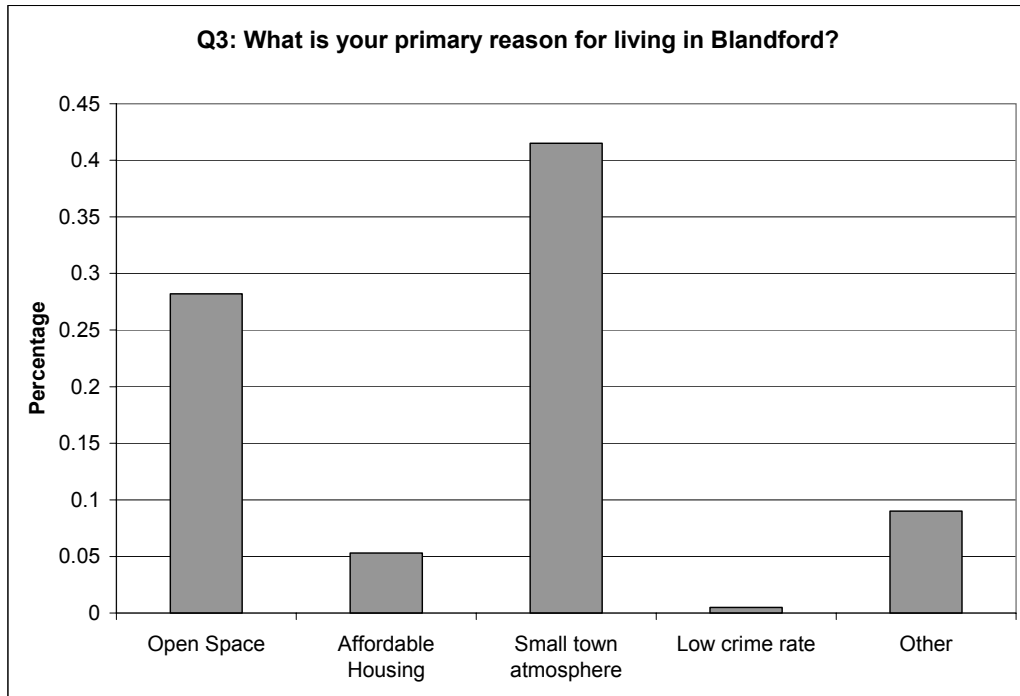
**Question 1: How long have you lived in Blandford?**



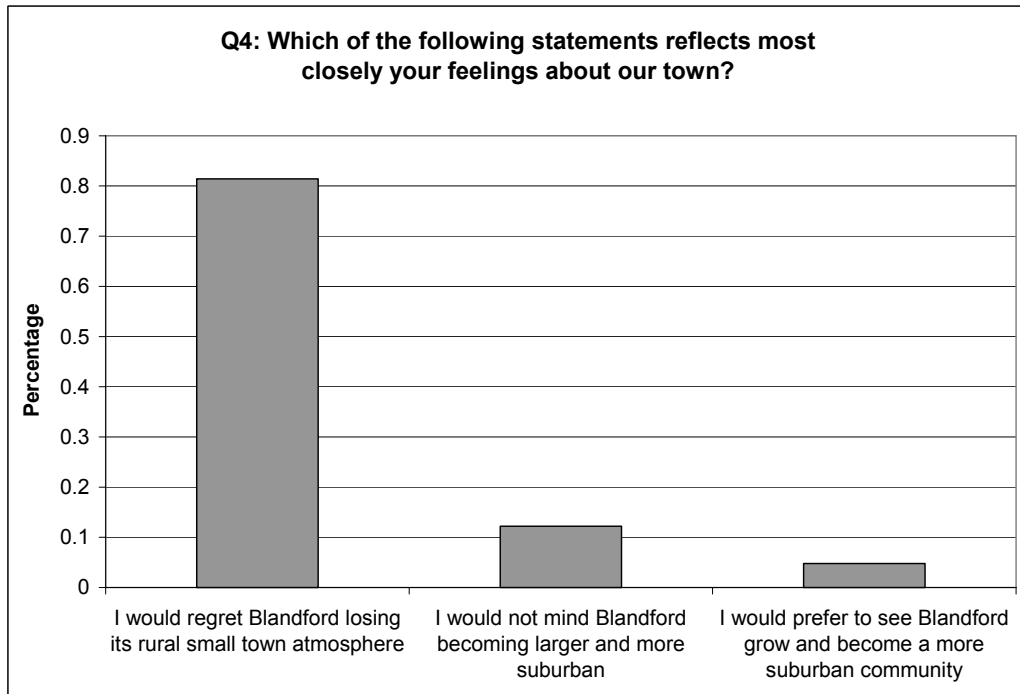
**Question 2: In which of the following areas of Blandford do you live?**



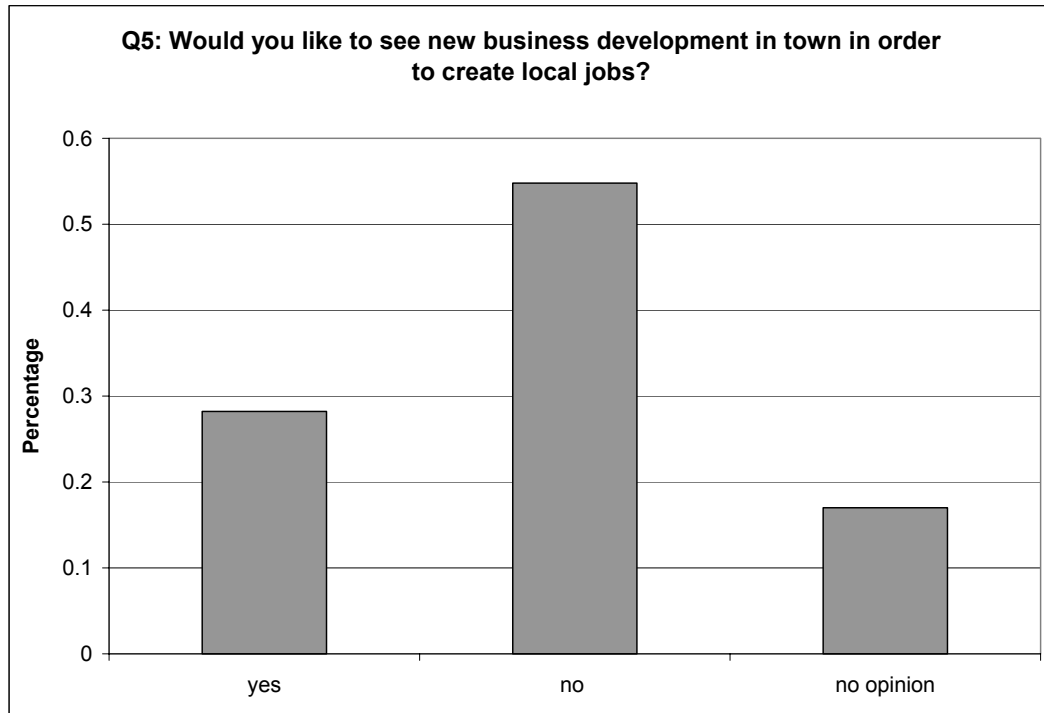
**Question 3: What is your primary reason for living in Blandford?**



**Question 4: Which of the following statements reflects most closely your feelings about our town?**

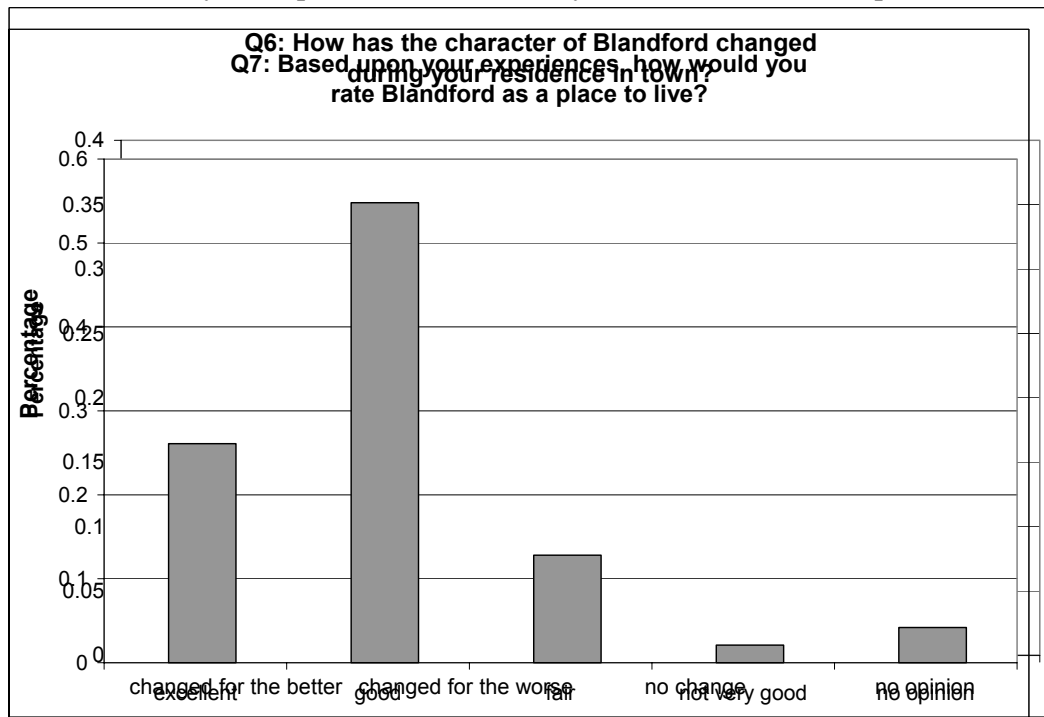


**Question 5: Would you like to see new business development in town in order to create local jobs?**

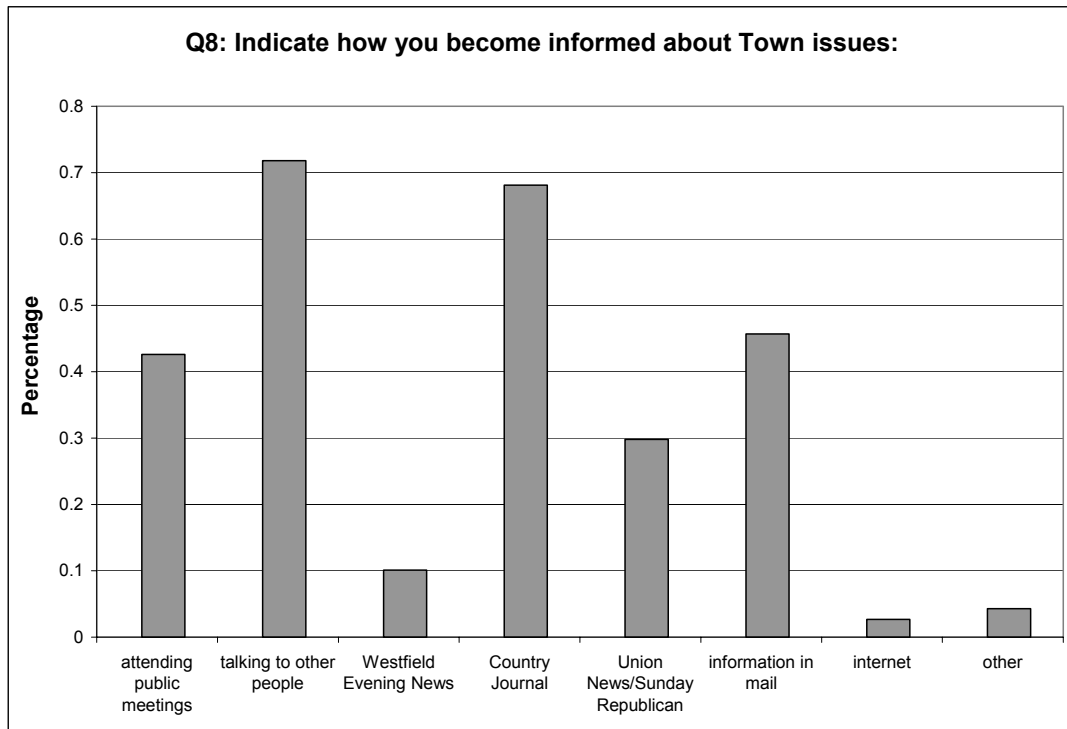


**Question 6: How has the character of Blandford changed during your residence in town?**

**Question 7: Based on your experiences, how would you rate Blandford as a place to live?**



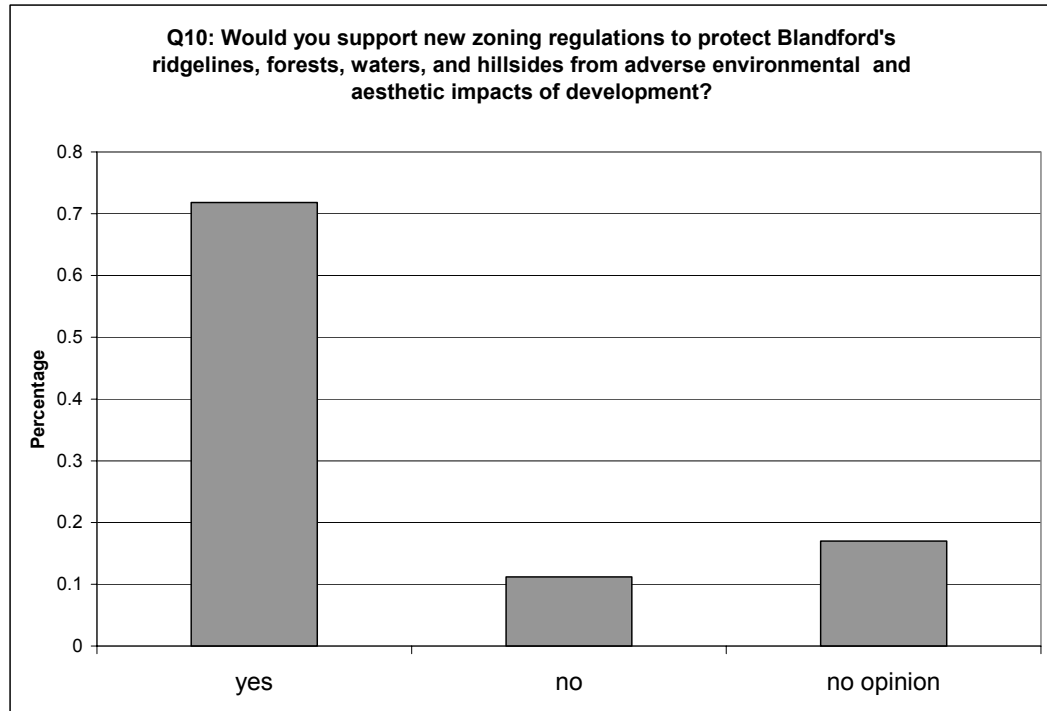
**Question 8: Indicate how you become informed about Town issues:**



**Question 9: Rate the adequacy of each of the following community services and facilities in Blandford:**

Community Services/Facilities	Good	Adequate	Needs Improvement	No Opinion
road maintenance	35.4%	32.6%	31.4%	0.6%
sidewalks	9.0%	37.7%	19.8%	33.5%
street lights	18.2%	42.4%	13.9%	25.5%
police services	24.3%	34.7%	30.1%	11.0%
vehicular speed control	18.1%	34.0%	29.8%	18.1%
snow removal	44.1%	28.7%	12.8%	14.3%
senior services	4.8%	20.5%	15.7%	59.0%
youth services	1.2%	11.9%	36.3%	50.6%
recreational facilities & services	3.2%	22.9%	33.5%	40.4%
community meeting space	10.5%	40.9%	29.8%	18.7%
town government	9.0%	33.0%	35.6%	22.3%
handicap access	8.1%	31.1%	9.9%	50.9%
transfer station (dump)	35.8%	40.0%	18.2%	6.1%
library	34.6%	27.1%	6.4%	31.9%
cemetery maintenance	29.8%	25.0%	2.7%	42.6%
public water service	2.1%	5.3%	56.9%	35.6%
regional school system	18.0%	25.1%	29.9%	26.9%
ambulance service	19.7%	31.9%	10.1%	38.3%
Watson Park	28.7%	33.3%	20.1%	17.8%

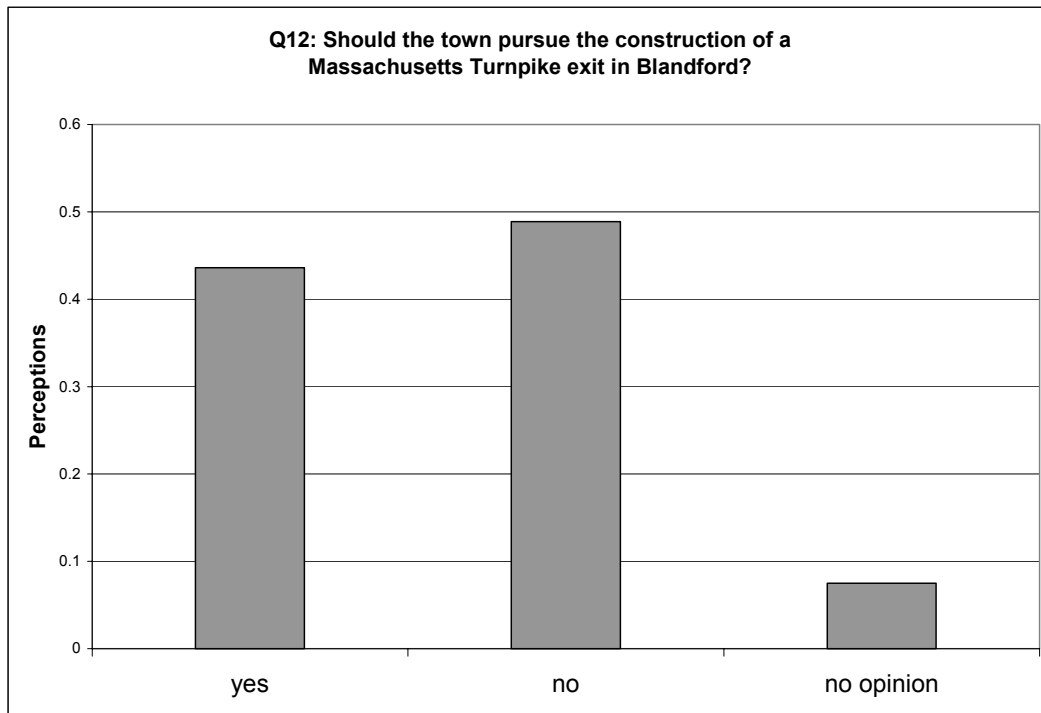
**Question 10: Would you support new zoning regulations to protect Blandford's ridgelines, forests, waters, and hillsides from adverse environmental and aesthetic impacts of development?**



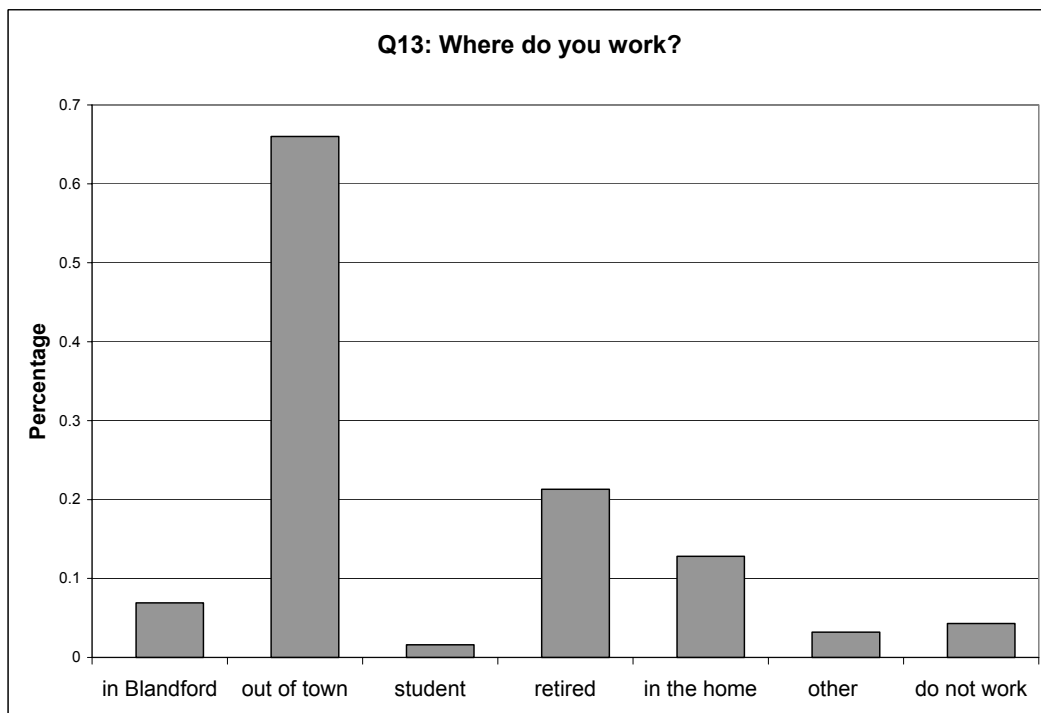
**Question 11: What economic opportunities do you feel Blandford should seek out or support in the future?**

<b>Economic Opportunity</b>	<b>Favor</b>	<b>Oppose</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>
groceries	37.8%	30.3%	31.3%
restaurant	41.0%	23.4%	35.6%
medical/dental office	31.4%	24.5%	44.2%
auto repair	20.2%	30.3%	49.5%
gas station	28.2%	30.3%	41.4%
videotape/DVD rental	23.7%	42.0%	34.4%
legal/accounting services	18.6%	24.5%	56.9%
equipment repair	20.1%	42.4%	37.4%
clothing store	8.6%	65.5%	25.9%
sale of alcoholic beverages (package store, not a bar)	22.9%	35.6%	41.5%
drug store/pharmacy	26.6%	33.5%	39.9%
dry cleaning/laundry	11.5%	64.9%	23.7%
hardware store	46.3%	37.5%	16.2%
construction services/builder	21.6%	44.1%	34.2%
gifts	33.3%	36.4%	30.3%
agriculture or farm-support business	55.6%	18.1%	26.4%
artisan/craftsman business	59.4%	19.6%	21.0%
warehousing/distribution	4.8%	59.0%	36.1%
light industry	23.7%	59.5%	16.8%
tax exempt (institutional)	24.8%	44.7%	30.5%
gardening/landscaping supplies	50.7%	26.4%	22.9%
ATM machine	44.7%	29.8%	25.5%
home-based businesses	58.0%	10.1%	31.9%
small, centrally-located shops	38.7%	45.3%	16.1%
local tourism	31.4%	28.2%	40.4%
outdoor activities	39.4%	24.5%	36.1%
other	33.3%	26.7%	40.0%

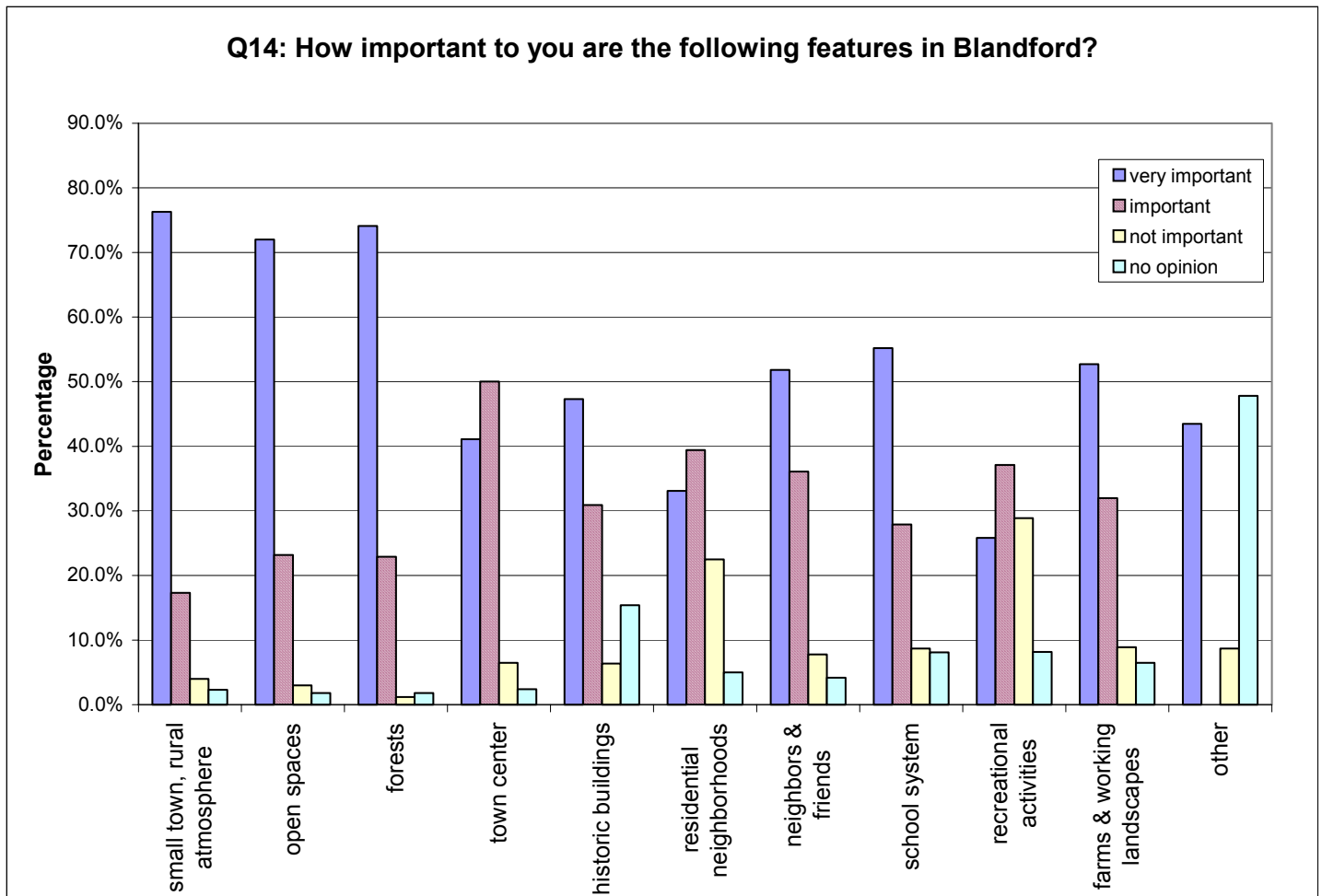
**Question 12: Should the town pursue the construction of a Massachusetts Turnpike exit in Blandford?**



**Question 13: Where do you work?**



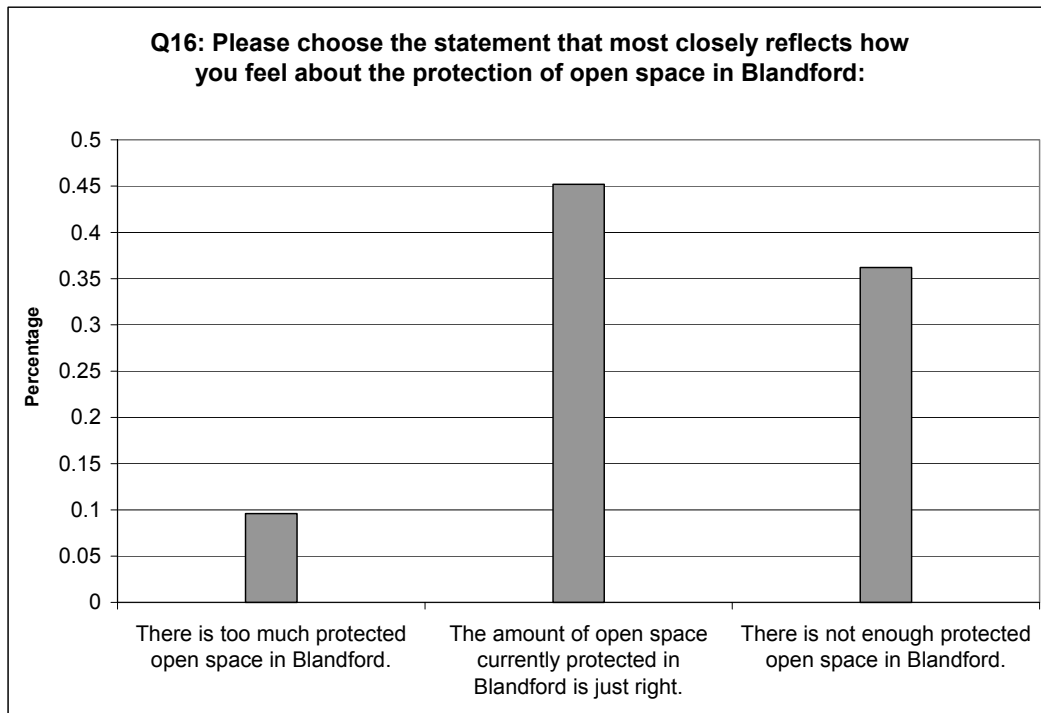
**Question 14: How important to you are the following features in Blandford?**



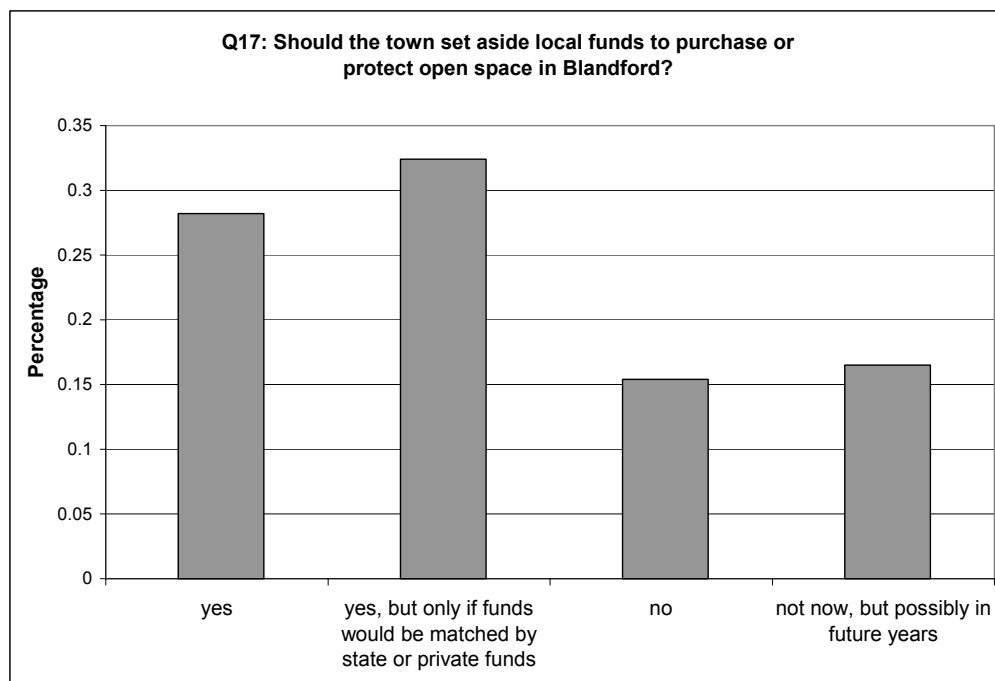
**Question 15: What types of recreation do you participate in?**

bicycling	28.2%
mountain biking	19.7%
bird watching	40.4%
canoeing, kayaking, or rowing	25.5%
fishing	35.6%
hiking	48.9%
horseback riding	14.9%
hunting	23.9%
motorboating or water skiing	18.1%
sailing	5.9%
snowmobiling	13.8%
swimming	37.2%
walking	63.8%
cross country skiing	22.9%
rollerblading or skateboarding	7.4%
all-terrain vehicles	10.1%
dancing	13.3%
organized sports	11.7%
ice skating	16.5%
golf	19.1%
other	14.9%

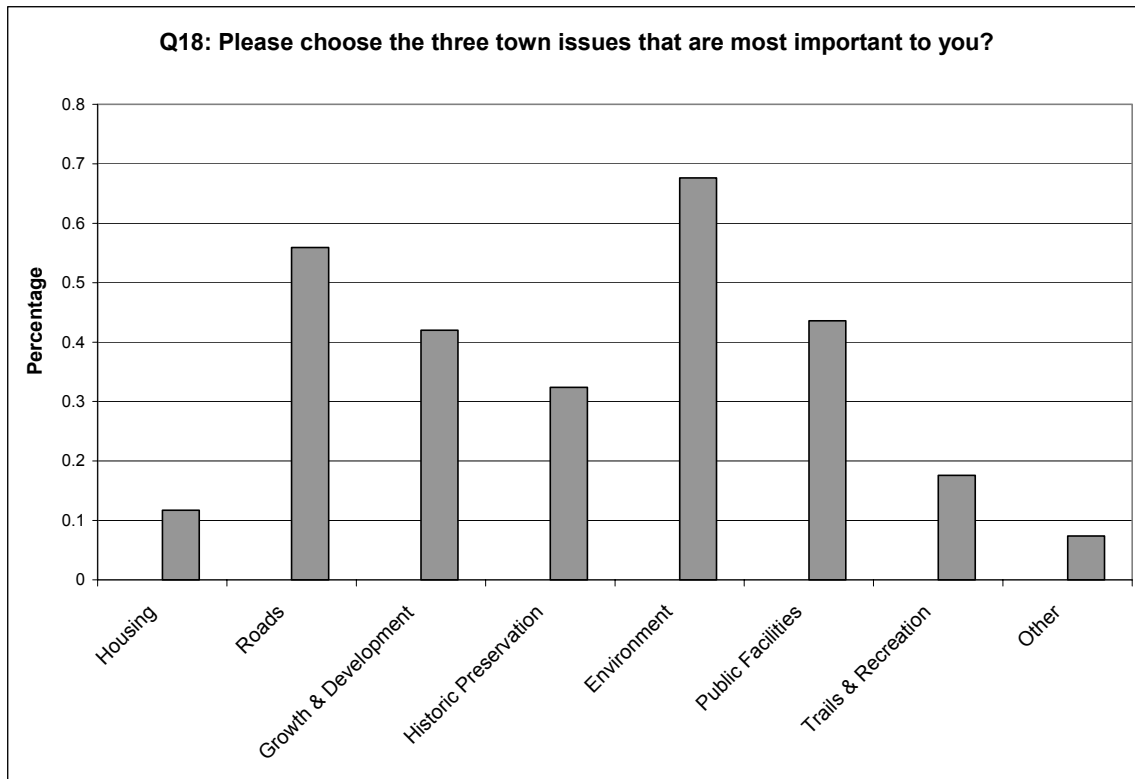
**Question 16: Please choose the statement that most closely reflects how you feel about the protection of open space in Blandford.**



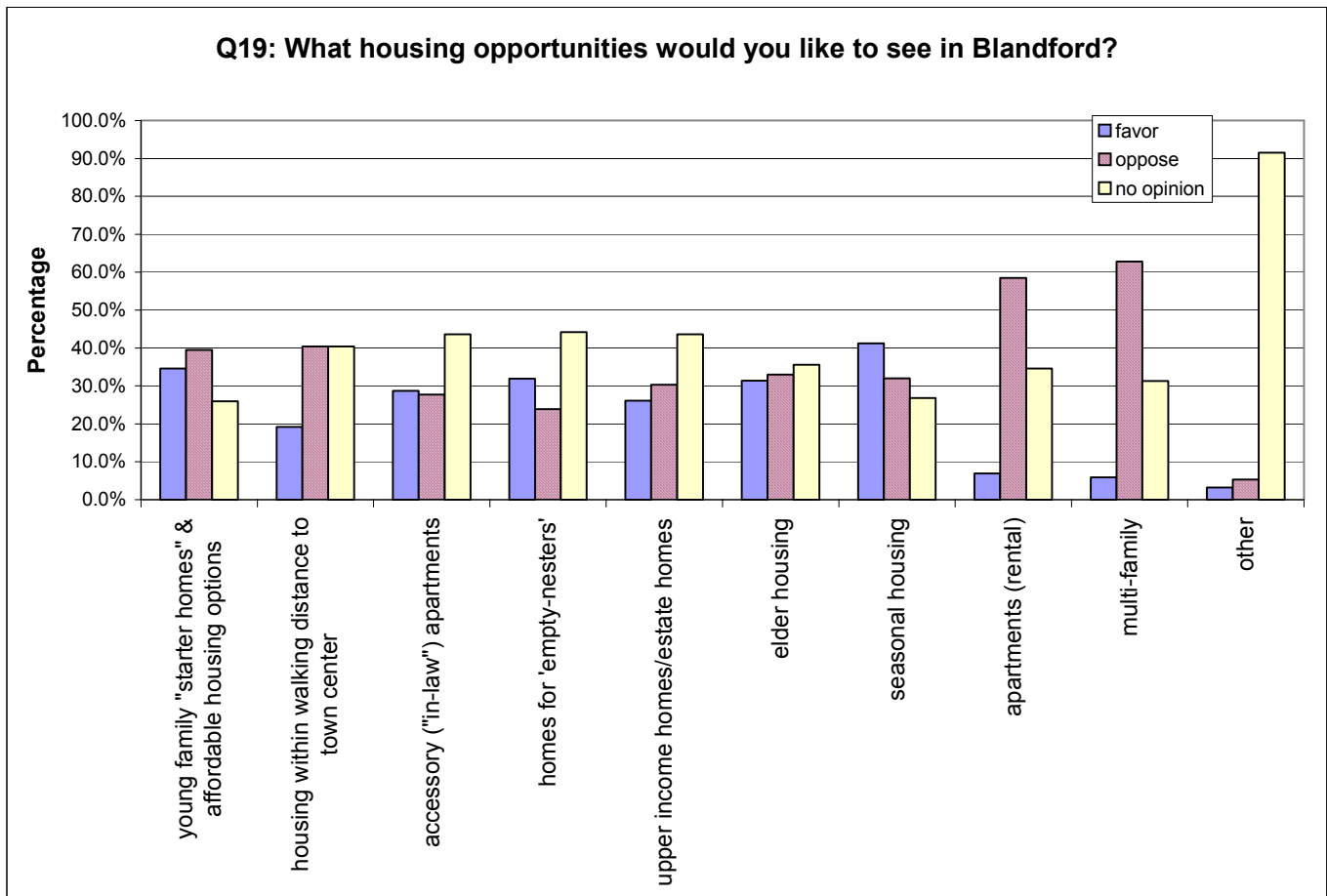
**Question 17: Should the town set aside local funds to purchase or protect open space in Blandford?**



**Question 18: Please choose the three town issues that are most important to you.**



**Question 19: What housing opportunities would you like to see in Blandford?**



## **Summary of Responses to the Open-Ended Survey Questions**

In all, a total of 213 comments were written in regards to planning for Blandford's future and these comments were cataloged and sorted into six distinct classifications. All the comments that were given are listed in the appendix of this report.

Roughly 35% of the comments that were given focused on protecting Blandford's open space and rural quality of life. About 25% of the comments were in regards to water and sewer systems and other town services. Most comments stressed the need to repair or improve the town's water system at a cost that is affordable to its residents. Another 23% support the growth of Blandford, particularly economic development that will decrease residential property tax. One economic development measure that was cited by residents was opening an exit ramp onto the Massachusetts Turnpike and allowing commercial and industrial development near the ramp. About 3% of the comments focused on the need to reopen Blandford's elementary school and another 3% on the need for more recreational opportunities. Lastly, issues related the government, either state or local, received about 10% of the comments. Some of these comments centered on the need for local government to listen to its citizens and make sure they are educated on the issues so that they can make informed decisions. It was also clear from the comments that there is much tension related to the balance of power between the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Springfield Water and Sewer Commission, and the Town of Blandford.

## **Listing of Blandford's Responses to the Open-Ended Survey Questions**

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### **Q20. The most important thing the Town can do in the next 10 years is:**

- Protect open space from being bought. Water Dept.- purchase open lands for preservation
- Put in place by-laws to protect & control growth. Subdivision by-laws, size of building by-laws, etc. in case there is a turnpike exit we have to take control of our Town. Stop letting other municipalities buy our land. We need to re-invest in ourselves
- Update to clean, safe, & reliable water system with adequate pressure to fulfill modern needs & expectations. Expanding the postal delivery system to all residents would be an asset. Opening a turnpike exit in Blandford would help to expose us to other larger communities thus making Blandford more appealing a place to live for maybe future limited expansions. Blandford should make public land more accessible to the public for recreational non-destructive uses such as picnic areas, camping, fishing, hunting, hiking, etc.
- Keep the small town atmosphere as it is.
- Tighten and improve zoning regulations to anticipate future development pressures. Create a panel to oversee and have involvement in SWSCs lands so the Blandford has an integral involvement in planning for any changes of use on these lands. Establish by laws to help preserve the town's relatively pristine condition and character.
- Fix the water system & high speed internet access
- Fix water lines & town roads
- Keep sense of community- do not get too big that we lose the history
- Nothing, leave this town alone. It hasn't needed help in the past 200 years in development. This is not the city so leave it be. We need a non-development committee. No improvements to me would be an improvement

- Protect open space from land development. We would hate to see this beautiful small town with lots of county charm turn into Westfield or Southwick. Nature here in Blandford is abundant and comforting; new home developments and factories are not.
- Keep the small Hilltown way of life as best we can, while providing the necessary services needed, with limited growth and urban sprawl. Provide a town swimming pool Olympic size in Watson Park and /or a town beach on a river or pond/lake
- Turnpike exit and entrance
- Fix the public water system at an affordable dollar amount for all users. The entire town, not just the water users should be included in dividing the expenses
- Preserve our quality of life
- Keep growth to a slow and steady pace and avoid all rapid housing developments where developers put up lots of houses in a short span of time.
- Improve water system
- Listen to the citizens of Blandford and make sure we are in on all of the decisions made and are well informed prior to having to make such decisions
- Bring down the property tax rate. Charge a fair rate for water. Those who use one gallon pay as much as those who use 1000 gallons & they spent money years ago for water meters but now they don't use them and unfairly charge everyone the same.
- Put a halt to rising water charges
- The town needs to find other ways to generate revenue besides residential development. The town needs to develop a building maintenance and replacement or expansion program. Some of the buildings look like department heads are not including maintenance in their budgets. Property owners in the center of town should be made to maintain their property. Vacant buildings should be torn down. The center of town should be connected to the Russell sewer treatment plant. Aggressively seek low interest loans or grants for this project
- Fix water system, repair roads, install sewer system
- Have more recreational opportunities and activities for our children. They need to feel part of their community. Right now there is very little for the youth. We need more programs not just athletic programs but fun and interesting activities for example movie night or get together with theme-based activities. This will bring the children together as well as the adults.
- Insist that the state and Springfield center and sewer commission open cobble Mt. Road. This scenic drive was a major asset to the region. It was closed illegally by the state.
- Keep Blandford a rural environment and protect itself from other municipalities and corporations which seek to take advantage of it. The residents and town officials need to stay on top of important issues and fight for the right of the town. We don't want to turn Blandford into another Agawam. We want to keep it a beautiful country town.
- Protect our beautiful, peaceful town from over development
- Increase the tax base while preserving the feel and atmosphere of the town. Small businesses, single family homes (not developments) would help this town. We need to get in better financial shape first and then concentrate on preserving the history and environment of this town
- Preserve and protect the rural character of the town and protect its open spaces and environment
- Bring back the small town attitude
- Prepare a plan for coming changes
- Preserve the small town atmosphere

- Any land we wish to protect, the town should buy it with local funds. Lets not rely on someone else to protect our water supplies and sewer system
- Bring in new business, hobs. Keep property tax in check
- Reject the Cobble Mt. Biosphere management plan and send the state EDEA packing. Too much of Blandford's business is controlled by EDEA and the Springfield water and sewer commission.
- Stop new building while there are plenty of older homes for sale
- Get the different depts. in town to communicate and work together in the 2 years I have lived in town I have seen a lack of co-operation and communication
- Have more notice given to town topics (additional, deletions in services). Don't increase taxes anymore
- Complete the water project. Continue to keep Blandford small and historical. Purchase land to prevent fast growth and keep the town's rural appeal.
- Make a place for kids in the community to hangout and play sports
- Lower taxes so people that live here can stay here
- Preserve the peaceful, quiet, open spaces and woodlands of our small town. Look to Westfield to develop housing, small businesses and remember that bigger is not better. Hunters, snowmobiles, and ATV's are noisy intrusions and should not be encouraged.
- Keep the land requirements are is with frontage and acreage requirements in building so Blandford will not become over crowed- then put in the turnpike exit. This will also lighten the traffic congestion on Elm St. in Westfield.
- Keep small town just the way it is
- Maintain and repair the water system. Strive to retain the small town atmosphere
- Improve the water system
- Upgrading the present water system.
- Limit progressive development and open an access route to the turn pike
- Maintain its rural environment
- Bring taxes (home and land) down again.
- Slow growth, control growth, fair tax rate, superior school system, fix the water system
- Maintain currently rural atmosphere
- Install a water filtration system
- Stay as homely and small as possible.
- Fix the water problem
- Town selectman and administrators should take citizen complaints seriously and follow up on them
- Fix water system. Build a new fire department post haste
- Improve town services
- Improve the water delivery system
- Fix the roads and line them. Our street is very foggy and without lines it's almost impossible to drive
- More family recreation like movie theater, restaurant, craft fair. Balance growth with preserving the town character
- Keep development within reason.
- Fix water system and maintain the small town atmosphere
- Lower the tax rate, lower water rate, clean up the drinking water problem
- Plan to follow up with zoning regulations with other bylaws to protect open space, historic properties, rural roads, and to control location of new building
- Become more progressive by having a turnpike exit and encourage growth of small businesses in the center of town.

- Establish town sewer system for the center of town and open a exit/entrance ramp at the turnpike
- Keep out hunters and trappers and anything harmful to the flora and fauna in town. We would like to see the town become a farming community where applicable.
- Get our school re-opened for our town's children. A school is what brings young families into a town.
- Acquire preservation land. Maintain minimum no commercial development. Restrict apartment/multi-family housing. Must develop a five/ten year future Blandford plan. Solicit and share information with residents through main/ town meetings. Be proactive rather than reactive. Our town representatives must lean forward now to direct our community's future, before other people decide hat for us.
- Develop a plan to preserve the unique ecosystems existing in town. Develop programs to draw the community together
- Be sure zoning bylaws are followed. Try to correct our water system in town. Be sure only Blandford residents use our dump. Traffic through town can be patrolled more.
- Keep Blandford a small town community
- Keep Blandford's small town atmosphere but be open to new ideas
- Make town center more attractive so that people will want to come and spend money and time here. Quaint shops like Stockbridge with recreational connections- e.g. bike trails, horseback trails, overnight accommodations along with the existing ski areas (cross-county & downhill), with the campgrounds in the areas, the town can become a vacation destination (look at the rail trail on the cape).
- Work together as a small community to bring projects together
- Repair water system
- Protect open spaces, forests, natural environment
- Have an exit on mass turnpike
- Get the school budget under control
- Fix water system
- Grow! The town needs to become an actual community
- Improve the school district. Bring in light industry to help with the tax base
- Allow development
- Reduce town government
- Re-open Blandford school. Have daytime hours for Town Clerk for questions, permits, info. Work on ways to stop closings of roads like Cobble Mt. Educate townspeople on important town issues by holding informational meeting beforehand
- Modernize and grow. Improve water lines and install a sewer system
- Pave roads. Good cable company. Turnpike entrance
- Concentrate on infrastructure needs, road upkeep, paving, drainage needs, etc. Even small towns experience growth to one degree or another, and having good roads is a priority. Also, more police patrols of existing roadways to keep speeding in check. An exit off the turnpike is and has been needed for a long time. If for no other reason than safety for emergency vehicles.
- To hold on to self-governing system through town meeting type government. Stop private land and homes from being taken over by public entities and reducing tax base. Maintain the clean, small town character. Hold onto the town as an incorporated body rather than letting it go totally to other public entities.
- Manage fiscal responsibilities effectively for both schools and town projects

- Install sewer system. Open school for K through 4. Improve or get out of gateway regional school system. Utilize Cobble Mt. As a water supply for the town. Utilize fairgrounds for more events to generate revenue. Improve roads.
- Repair and restore its basic infrastructure. This would include replacement of all old water pipes, paving roads, maintaining and repairing dirt roads
- Exit from turnpike
- Put an exit off turnpike
- Fix water problem, control tax expenses, get public sewer
- Prevent Springfield from annexing Blandford
- Carefully re-zone protected land. There is plenty of protected areas, so home-owners should be able to have their say in what they do to make their own property function for them, i.e. cut trees as wanted, bring in fill, etc. and take care of low-lying water-filled areas close to their primary residence. This should be of special concern with the town because of the diseases that spread because of mosquito-infested stagnant water. The town should determine on a case-by-case account on these issues so a reasonable compromise can be reached.
- Moderate growth. It would be advantageous to have conveniences in town, groceries, gas, and pharmacy. We need to have an exit/entrance to Mass Pike. This would decrease commute times
- Take better care of the elderly. Transportation to Westfield so they can make doctor appointments, hair, banking, etc. The town should also make the Pike accessible.
- The town should stay the way it has for the last 50 years
- Continue improvements and up-grading of the town water system. Continue negotiations with the MTA to see that the entity pays if fair share of the improvements
- Keep taxes to a minimum and spend money smartly. Improve sewer/water. Give the youth something to do. Build a skate park, community building. Make kids want to stay in Blandford. Hold community events to spark neighbor relations.
- Water system update
- Keep our school for town residents for the very young to ride the bus to regional school is hard on the youngsters.
- Provide proper water/sewer systems. Provide a public meeting place
- Bring water system up to a reliable and safe source of drinking water
- Blandford could use more stores, besides the general store. The town could use some light industry for a tax base. I would like to see some development but at a moderate rate, not all at once. Fix the water supply.
- Solve water problems by either rebuilding/expanding the existing system or by helping water customers dig wells.
- Provide its citizens with the information about changes in open space, building changes and other issues.
- Let those of us on the "high road" live in peace
- Construct the turnpike exit
- Improve town water quality
- Fix water system.
- Support opportunities to help tax base.
- Construct wall to decrease turnpike noise. Springfield water shed should pay property tax (current tax rate). Utilize Blandford school to full capacity
- Fix water supply system with new distribution lines and filtration so that the town is provided with safe drinking water

- Plan ahead to keep town's rural character. Accept the state's offer to purchase & protect the 5000 acres plus to prevent massive growth.
- Improve water supply and sewers. Plan for elderly housing
- Construct turnpike exit
- Fix water system. Repair paved roads
- Maintain small town character and country. Purchase available open space by the town without the use of federal and/or state funding
- Make turnpike exit
- Keep it the same
- Repair and improve our water system to the homes
- Turnpike exit in Blandford. See a bigger school built in town due to the fact that Blandford is growing and gateway is quite a ways to travel for children. Need a high school and activity center where children can participate in different activities instead of seeing them hangout at the school. A daycare is also needed as both parents have to work. Signs needed for deer crossing
- Remain the way it is and has been for years
- Fix town's water and sewer problems
- Protect open spaces, especially scenic roadside drives, avoid building house with little setback from roads, preserve rural character
- Make water system reliable
- Get water lines fixed and repair roads
- Protect environment
- Maintain the peaceful, low crime atmosphere that most of the residents thrive on. Keep our children in good local schools, with good local sports and other outlets to keep them out of trouble
- Stay the way it is
- Fix roads and water supply. Shut the town down and give it to the towns around it.
- Open small stores, open turnpike
- Allow certain areas zoned to allow mobile homes for a retirement community
- Maintain small, rural town character
- Maintain quiet country charm by preventing state from buying up land
- Retain small ruralness of the town- control development; pass a noise ordinance; find money to better support local town government; find government support (Congressman and Reps) to make changes in Boston in support of small towns; hire part-time administrative worker in the town to help coordinate efforts;; hire a part-time grants writer to investigate and write grants to help the town take advantage of what's out there for help.
- Plan for growth and manage growth. Develop and maintain a capital plan
- Encourage the commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission to create a large bioreserve for passive recreation and preservation through the purchase of development rights.
- Get a handle on taxes. They are rising too fast for people on fixed incomes. Open up pike and allow small businesses would help alleviate the tax burden
- Stop the sale of Springfield watershed lands to the State of MA. Protect the environment by closing watershed areas to everything except hiking.
- Make Springfield water shed pay taxes or at least pay us a percentage of the millions of dollars they have made in cutting high grade timber in town.
- Repair the water system
- Events to promote town spirit

- Please, hire a Town Manager immediately. The town is presently being run by the treasurer, who is constantly giving out misinformation. The taxpayer in recent years has paid for an assistant to help out the treasurer. For over seven years the treasurer has refused to go forward with the taking of land in tax title, which adds up to around \$150,000. This money could be used to hire a town manager and perhaps lower the tax rate. Also you write checks to the town that don't get cashed for over 3 months!!! This has been going on for years and it's starting to catch up to the town, POOR MANAGEMENT. We need someone who totally understands town government to help the town go forward. Under the present circumstances the town has nothing to look forward to but higher, and higher taxes.
- Fix the water system
- Create a reliable public water system. I write this as I am without water for the third time in two weeks. Bring back all grades to the elementary school
- Avoid major growth and development
- Regulate new housing and building to keep Blandford a small town
- Reduce our taxes and remain rural
- Better water system. Make library larger. Cable TV. Reduce water bill. Senior citizens should get a break on dump, water, tax rebates
- Prevent Blandford from becoming like Westfield or any other well-populated town.
- Hire a non-political town manager and eliminate the offices of selectmen
- If Springfield water is liable for back taxes, Blandford should focus on collecting such funds and improving; (1) Blandford's water system, (2) supporting improvements in school system (Gateway) and (3) improving roads.
- Leave Blandford with the beauty and ridgelines the way they are. Not to promote growth in population or development of any type
- Preserve as much land as possible
- Maintain its small town atmosphere with an emphasis on historical preservation and controlled growth
- Make state realize Blandford is another small rural town in Western Massachusetts that needs financial assistance.
- Save its natural resources (land, water, natural habitat, wildlife) from being extinguished by development. Also preserve its historic buildings and heritage. Control development. Protect the citizens and our environment.
- Fix the water system
- Thoughtfully consider the long term residents and community members, to maintain the small town feel and beauty of Blandford and to support an infrastructure that works to support activities, events, and decision-making that bring the community together.
- Eliminate or drastically reduce the impact of the turnpike service station

**Additional thoughts or comments regarding planning for Blandford's future:**

- Eliminate the turnpike service station signs and excessive nighttime optical pollution. Force the turnpike to remove trash created along North Street and the service road.
- Springfield watershed property not become state land but remain protected
- Blandford has to find a way to secure funds so that our open spaces are not continually bought out from underneath us. We are tired of Springfield Water and Springfield Ski Club.

- Folks come to Blandford for the open space, small population, peace and looks. It is not fair if by any reason the town is working around the people. The people of Blandford are the town.
- Need more services for the elderly- transportation, meals on wheels. More fun things for children- better more modern playground, bike trails, sports for elementary and middle school
- Provide community services &/or help to clean up and clear out those home owner's properties that have become junk yards.
- Keep small town atmosphere and size.
- Regional fire and EMS services
- Maintain the rural nature of the town
- Develop a small business center at or near the intersection of North Street and Gore Rd., which will need expanding, the supermarket, and drug store on the south side of Gore Rd. and the other businesses aside one another on the North side of Gore Rd. Town needs the expand the scope of the transfer station operations to include the acceptance of leaves, brush and grass clippings and a once a year collection of hazardous materials. Accessibility to town hall staff and services- 4 hrs a day Mon-Fri 24 hour local police coverage-1 manager 8 hr. shifts, entry but no exit from turnpike 9if possible). Install a cable TV system, install sound barriers on the pike through appropriate town agency. Conduct periodic workshops on anger management and controlling domestic violence
- Improve/repair the water system
- More culture and exhibits on the town green (or Rt 23). Promote small businesses in downtown
- Do not let the Springfield Water Commission govern our town. If they receive money for letting people hunt and fish our protected lands we should have them pay for a sewer treatment facility and pipe our center into it. That way we don't completely loose out to them (once again)
- People move here for the quality of life it offers. People do not live here in search of jobs. I feel that we do not need to add industry to make our town grow. Try to keep it small and quiet. Try to make it stronger.
- Allow residents only to use the turnpike maintenance gates. Create a system (a swipe card or sticker pass) and a fee on a yearly basis.
- Our bylaws need to prevent growth without citizen approval. We need to stand ready to fight those who come in and say "you will accept growth".
- Since about 1/3 of Blandford is tied up by SWSC Watershed, the town needs assistance (maybe someone like the nature conservancy?) to keep the state and Springfield from running roughshod over us.
- Mass Pike
- We should pay for the technical skills we need to help use make the right decision
- We need to plan for growth through zoning/open space plans, etc by utilizing the conservation and historical commissions and by studies such as these
- Stop trying to have city services- get back to the basics
- Control new development for privacy and small town environment
- Playground for the kids
- No cell towers or new housing developments. Education is exceptionally important; increase school funding
- Blandford needs to change with the times. We are moving since the town has nothing to offer. The taxes are much too high for a town with part time police and volunteer fire.

The school has been renovated or being renovated and there are not enough kids to fill it- what a waste!

- Lower taxes so that people can stay and retire here
- Do not let Blandford become a seasonal resort
- A small garage/gas station would be a welcomed addition, as it is a considerable distance to travel now, to get fuel. A town meeting or notice board in front of the town hall/post office that would be visible while driving by, would allow more people to know what is going on and when.
- Control growth and control recreation
- Please continue to vote down an exit ramp from the turnpike
- Don't want town to become like a suburb
- We do not support opening of SWSC lands for public use
- A turnpike exit would be the beginning of the end of this beautiful little town
- More activities for teenagers are needed
- As a new resident I find it difficult to reach town hall employees. They often are not present when posted hours state they are.
- Keep Cobble closed
- Settle water problem
- Don't raise taxes so we can not afford to live here
- Turnpike exit would be helpful in getting more job options outside of Blandford
- Town should acquire more open space land and manage timber resources as a source of perpetual income
- The Springfield Ski Club facility should have full town support. It is one of the major employers of young people in this town. Keep Blandford small and simple and natural. No hunters, trappers, no outsiders polluting the forests.
- Expand a little but not too much
- Allow some businesses in town for the tax revenue
- Do something with Woronco Buildings
- More local police presence- control speeding.
- Encourage businesses so that they can help bring down taxes
- Growth is good, we need to increase our tax base but we need to grow in the spirit of our town
- Need better schools
- Listen to residents!
- Tourism is most likely vehicle with which the town can improve.

# **Element One: Open Space & Resource Protection**



Town of Blandford  
Community Development Plan

## **Element One: Open Space and Resource Protection**

The Town of Blandford covers approximately 54 square miles and has a population of 1,214 (Census 2000). The Town is located at the eastern foothills of the Green Mountains, which originate in Vermont. The Town is located in Hampden County, in Southwestern Massachusetts and is bordered by Chester, to the north; Huntington, to the northeast; Russell, to the east; Granville and Tolland to the south; and Otis and Becket, to the west.

Blandford is a rural, community in the Berkshire hills with breathtaking views, a wide variety of hiking trails and natural recreational opportunities supported by an enormous range of flora and fauna. The Town of Blandford is considered a “hilltown” and also one of the Highland Communities identified by the Trustees of Reservations. Blandford shares resources such as watersheds, public forestlands, and a regional middle and high school. Approximately 59% of the town is open space with some sort of protection and 44% is considered permanently protected. The City of Springfield, the Town of Russell, and the Commonwealth’s Department of Environmental Management are the largest landowners in the town. The City of Springfield and the Town of Russell own approximately 37% of the town’s total area.

Because of its fairly remote location, it has been able to maintain a quiet, country character. . Blandford is experiencing minimal population growth with residential development on the increase. People moving into town value the quiet country setting where they can raise their children and yet be within an easy commute to the surrounding cities and towns. Aside from single family homes, the remainder of land in Blandford is hilly and forested (86 percent), with some scattered open fields in agricultural use.

### **Key Open Space and Resource Protection Themes**

Themes Identified in the 2002 Blandford Community Development Plan Visioning Process:

The PVPC, in cooperation with the Blandford Community Development Committee, designed a survey in an attempt to develop a Community Vision Statement that reflected input from the community. The survey was conducted in order to promote maximum public involvement in the creation of the Community Development Plan for Blandford.

The survey questionnaire was mailed to each of Blandford’s 456 households; of which, 139 or 30% responded to the multiple-choice questions. The survey asked residents to give their opinions and attitudes on the Town’s growth and development issues. The following report provides a summary of the survey results and statistical data for the Town of Blandford. The attached appendix provides the comprehensive survey results.

- Most survey respondents have lived in Blandford for 15 years or more (43.6%) and 15% of these citizens are second generation residents of the Town.
- Blandford’s small town atmosphere was listed as the primary reason for living in town (41.5%). Open space was listed second with 28%.
- 81% indicated that they would regret Blandford losing its rural small town atmosphere.

- 37.2% stated that they have not seen a change in the character of Blandford during their residence in town. 28.7% stated that it has changed for the worst and 10% stated it has changed for the better.
- The majority of residents rated Blandford as a good place to live (54.8%), 26% responded excellent, 12% fair, and 2% not very good.
- Snow removal and the transfer station received the highest rating in the good category for adequacy of community services and facilities in Blandford. Public water service (57%) and youth services (36%) were listed as needing the most improvement.
- An overwhelming majority (71.8%) of respondents would support new zoning regulations to protect Blandford's ridgelines, forests, waters, and hillsides from adverse environmental and aesthetic impacts of development.
- Small town, rural atmosphere, open spaces, and forest were listed as being very important features in Blandford.
- Most respondents indicated that they participate in such recreational activities as: walking (63.8%), hiking (48.9%), and bird watching (40.4%).
- 45% of respondents indicated that the amount of open space currently protected in Blandford is just right. 36.2% stated that there is not enough protected open space in Blandford.
- Most respondents believe the town should set aside local funds to purchase or protect open space (28%) and another 32% support this only if funds are matched by state or private funds.
- The three most important town issues are:
  1. Environment (67.6%)
  2. Roads (55.9%)
  3. Public Facilities (43.6%)

### ***Open Space and Resource Assessment***

#### **Water Resources**

Approximately 40% of Blandford is in some sort of watershed protection. The City of Springfield owns 28% of the town to protect Cobble Mountain Reservoir. This reservoir supplies water to Springfield, Agawam, and East Longmeadow. The towns of Russell, Chester and Huntington also have watershed properties in Blandford.

The watershed for the town's water supply (Long Pond) lies within the town of Blandford (308 acres) and Otis (88 acres). The entire Watershed Protection Area (WPA) Zone A falls within the Town of Blandford. A majority of the land within the WPA Zone A is owned by the City of Springfield (Watershed Land) or by the Town of Blandford (conservation land – open space funded).

Blandford is in the Westfield (96%) and Farmington (4%) River basins, with 32,692 acres draining to the Westfield and 1,535 acres draining to the Farmington. According to Mass. DEP, Blandford has 23,503 acres of Outstanding Resource Water.

#### **Lakes and Ponds**

There are approximately 1,100 acres of open water located in Blandford. The largest surface water body in town is the Cobble Mountain Reservoir (867 acres) which is the major source of water for the cities of Springfield, Agawam, East Longmeadow, Longmeadow and Ludlow.

Other major lakes and ponds in town include Long Pond, Blair Pond, Cochran Pond, Huntington Reservoir, Bordon Brook Reservoir, and Dunlap Pond. These water bodies offer valuable wildlife habitat, unique natural environments, and provide benefits to Blandford's human inhabitants in the form of pristine drinking water supply.

## **Rivers and Streams**

The majority of major brooks in Blandford drain into the Cobble Mountain Reservoir. The surface water quality in this and all other water bodies in Blandford have been classified as "A" by the Massachusetts DEP. Major streams in town include: Watson Brook, Pixley Brook, Pebbles Brook, Wheeler Brook, Tiffany Brook, Sanderson Brook, Black Brook, Wigwam Brook, Freeland brook, Henry Brook, Case Brook, Lloyd Brook, Falls Brook, and Cold Brook

## **Riparian Corridors**

There are 6,097 acres of "Riparian Lands" with 5,900 acres (97%) of this riparian land thought to be in a natural state "Natural Land – Riparian". The value in maintaining vegetative cover and uninterrupted riparian corridors goes beyond wildlife preservation. These corridors and wetlands provide many other significant public health benefits for the entire community. These benefits include:

- Flood mitigation for agricultural crops and structures by storing and slowing runoff;
- Water supply protection, through filtration of pollutants. (Studies by the Environmental Protection Agency show that over 75% of phosphorus and nitrogen can be filtered in riparian areas adjacent to farmland)
- Erosion control by absorbing and slowing down storm runoff, these storage areas reduce erosion that results from fast flowing water;
- Groundwater replenishment;
- Stormwater management and regulation of water levels in watersheds;
- Open space corridors and recreational opportunities, such as fishing, boating, hunting.

A great diversity of species is dependent upon the wetlands and riparian areas in Blandford. Maintaining the integrity of wetlands and riparian corridors with vegetated cover is also important to:

- Provide shelter for various species;
- Provide protected corridors for movement between and among adjacent habitats;
- Provide food source;
- Provide permanently flowing water sources;
- Provide nesting and breeding places.

If these corridors are disturbed or interrupted, damage to habitat and species population will result. This holds true for common species as well as rare and endangered species. Man-made disruptions that have impacts on the habitat include:

- Roads;
- Parking lots;
- Residential lots, where domestic animals can threaten wildlife;
- Large commercial developments;
- Manicured lawns, which minimize protected cover and generation of food resources.

There are 6,307 acres of land in riparian corridors. Development activity in the first 100 feet of river buffer area is severely limited by the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (Rivers Protection Act). The Wetlands Act offers additional protection of lands in the area between 100 feet and 200 feet of the mean high water mark of a qualifying stream or river. However, this outer riparian zone is susceptible to limited development in certain instances. Blandford currently has no local rivers protection bylaw.

## **Wetlands**

Wetlands include rivers, ponds, swamps, wet meadows, beaver ponds, and land within the FEMA-defined 100-year flood area. Wetland areas are home to frogs, fish, freshwater clams and mussels, beaver, muskrats, great blue herons, waterfowl, bitterns and numerous other species.

Wetlands are specialized habitat areas that are always wet or are wet for extended periods of time during the year. There are many types of wetlands including:

- Marshes – These are predominantly open, water logged areas
- Swamps – These are predominantly wooded waterlogged areas
- Vernal Pools – These are confined depressions that fill seasonally (at least 2 continuous months)
- Ponds – These are naturally water-filled areas or those areas created by dams
- Riparian Areas – The area where the water and the land meet
- Streams and Rivers – These wetland areas include bordering vegetated wetlands identified and protected under the state law

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts regulates activities in and around wetlands in Blandford through the Wetlands Protection Act (WPA) – a state law enforced by the local Conservation Commission. Wetlands protected by the act are primarily those that border the streams, rivers and ponds in the town. These ‘bordering vegetated wetlands’ provide critical wildlife habitat and play a critical role in maintain water quality by serving as natural filters for nutrients, toxins, and sediment that would otherwise move directly into surface and ground waters. Isolated wetlands – at least 1000 square feet in size – are also protected by the state regulations.

Wetlands also serve as temporary storage areas for flood waters allowing the water to percolate slowly into the ground rather than run off into streams and rivers quickly and violently.

There are approximately 748 acres of wetlands in Blandford. Wetland habitats in town occur along the streams and rivers as well as in lands adjacent to the major ponds in Blandford. These wetlands and flood areas are shown on Blandford’s Water Resources Map.

Currently, development of some wetland areas in Blandford is limited by the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act. However, Blandford currently has no local wetlands bylaw and as a result, protection of these critical natural areas is not guaranteed.

## **Groundwater Recharge**

Blandford does not have any major aquifer recharge areas within its town boundaries, according to the “USGS Hydrologic Atlas Series on Groundwater Favorability in Massachusetts”. However, Blandford does have several areas of surficial geology described as “moderate to high

potential” and “moderate potential” s” for groundwater availability. These locations (17 acres) are illustrated on the map “Blandford Topology, Floodplain and Water Supplies” (PVPC, 2003).

### **Sources of Water Supply**

Long Pond is the source of the Blandford Water System. It has a surface area of 81 acres and a storage capacity of 65 million gallons. The area immediately surrounding the pond is owned for the most part by the Town of Blandford. The reservoir is fed by two continuous flowing brooks and numerous intermittent streams and sheet run off from the surrounding drainage area. A masonry and earthen embankment dam on the northern shore discharges to Wheeler Brook. Wheeler Brook is part of the Cobble Mt Reservoir tributary watershed.

The Water Department has recently replaced 1,000 feet of pipe on North Blandford Road. A holding tank and a portion of the distribution pipes are located on 69 acres recently purchased by the Town of Blandford. The Town has been ordered to put in a new filtration system or a deep well system by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The town is also conducting feasibility studies to determine what water source would be best for the town.

The Blandford Water Dept., overseen by a three member Board of Water Commissioners, is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the water supply and distribution system

### **Non-community Water Systems**

Blandford has two water systems served by groundwater wells which serve public populations. These non-community systems are categorized as “Transient non-community” water systems or “TNC” including one restaurant and a camp. TNC means a public water system this is not a community water system or a non-transient non-community water system, but is a public water system which serves water to 25 different persons at least 60 days of the year. These locations are illustrated on the map “Blandford Topology, Floodplain and Water Supplies” (PVPC, 2003) and include Laurel Ridge Camping area and Snow’s Steak House.

### **Wastewater Discharge**

Blandford does not have a public sewer system or any publicly-owned wastewater treatment plants in the town. All residences and businesses are served by on-site septic systems with the exception of the McDonalds restaurants on the Massachusetts Turnpike. Their wastewater is distributed to the Russell wastewater treatment plant for treatment.

### **Potential Pollution Sources**

Very few areas in Blandford possess soils that have good drainage characteristics required for proper on-site sewage disposal. Based on historical Blandford Board of Health records, failing septic systems have occurred in the past.

Former solid waste facilities are located on both Huntington and Beech Hill Roads. The Huntington Road site is the former location of the Blandford landfill, now the municipal transfer station. The former landfill was capped in 2000, but is not lined. The Beech Road site is the former location of the Blandford demolition landfill and is owned by the Springfield Water department.

As noted previously, road salt contamination problems have occurred along Route 90, because of heavily salted roads contaminating groundwater and wells.

### **Sanitary Sewer, Storm Water, and Water Supply Infrastructure**

Sanitary sewer infrastructure in Blandford is limited to on-site systems serving individual residences, a handful of business uses, and several institutional and recreational sites.

Stormwater management is also handled on-site although in most cases stormwater management and erosion control has not been addressed formally or adequately.

Water supply infrastructure is limited to small community distribution systems located at Long Pond.

### **100-Year Floodplain**

The 100-year floodplain is defined as an area with a 1% chance of flooding in a given year. The floodplain serves as a critical habitat for many plant and animal species and provides some of the most fertile soils in the region. Areas in the 100-year flood zone in Blandford are primarily those lands adjacent to and including the open water areas at Lilly Pond, Hammond Pond and Sears Meadow. Because of Blandford's steep terrain and largely uninterrupted drainage system of brooks, ponds and streams, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)/Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) Flood Hazard Maps show relatively few areas of concern. Most areas prone to flooding are existing wetlands, and even in extreme circumstances provide little threat other than some light flooding of low-lying secondary roads. Cobble Mountain Reservoir has a virtually fail-safe spillway that limits the water level within the reservoir, so infrastructure and residential development closest to the reservoir are beyond the designated Zone A flood hazard zone.

Additional controls in the floodplain:

- Lending institutions may require flood insurance for those structures built in the 100-year flood zone. Although the consumer cost of this federally-supported insurance program is relatively inexpensive, some prospective homeowners simply do not want to take on this added burden. The town should, however, consider the role of the lender in guiding development in these areas and be proactive in its approach to educating the loan officers and boards of the effect of floodplain development.
- The Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act limits the impacts of construction and alteration activities in the floodplain through its local enforcement by the Conservation Commission.
- Local zoning bylaws are an additional regulatory layer that can control development in these critical areas. Blandford's lack of a Floodplain Overlay District is a critical weakness in that it does not prevent residential development in these areas. A new regulatory strategy is needed to protect the floodplain in Blandford.
- The State Building Code requires the elevation of structures in the floodway—the floor of the lowest habitable area in the structure must be above the base elevation for

floodwaters during a 100-year storm event. The code also reinforces the overlay district regulations by prohibiting any change in the flood storage capacity of the area.

## Habitat

### Rare Natural Communities

### Threatened or Endangered Species Habitat

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) has mapped areas of critical concern for threatened and endangered species within the Town of Blandford. These areas are generally shown on the Blandford Natural Habitats Map. Approximately 174 acres have been identified by NHESP as priority habitats for these species. The plants and animals that fall within this classification are identified in the following Table.

***Table 1-1: Threatened and Endangered Species of Blandford***

<b>Taxonomic Group</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Status</b>
Reptile	Clemmys insculpta	Wood Turtle	Special Concern
Bird	Bartramia longicauda	Upland Sandpiper	Endangered
Bird	Circus cyaneus	Northern Harrier	Threatened
Bird	Cistothorus platensis	Sedge Wren	Endangered
Vascular Plant	Gentiana andrewsii	Andrews' Bottle Gentian	Endangered
Vascular Plant	Rhododendron maximum	Great Laurel	Threatened
Vascular Plant	Sisyrinchium mucronatum	Slender Blue-Eyed Grass	Threatened

Source: Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, 2003

These species are dependent upon habitat provided by riparian and wetland resources as well as forest resources. Preventing the extinction of these species is critical to maintaining bio-diversity in the Pioneer Valley. A biologically diverse native ecosystem is important to ensure stability of all plant and animal species. On a global scale, it is essential for human health as well. As the number of species within an ecosystem decline the remaining species become more dependent upon fewer resources for survival. In many cases, the elimination of one species leads to the demise of another or many others when such species cannot adapt to the reduction and change in their environment.

## **Biodiversity - Areas of Significance**

### **BioMap**

The Commonwealth's NHESP developed the BioMap to identify the areas most in need of protection in order to protect the native biodiversity of the Commonwealth. BioMap focuses primarily on state-listed rare species and exemplary natural communities but also includes the full breadth of the State's biological diversity (NHESP).

BioMap Core Habitats are areas with the highest priority for conservation and biodiversity conservation. They represent the sum total of viable rare plant habitat, viable rare animal habitat, and viable exemplary natural communities (NHESP). BioMap Supporting Natural Landscapes are the most intact lands adjacent to and near Core Habitat areas. These lands provide linkages between habitats, buffer Core Habitat, and are thought to contain rare species not yet discovered.

Blandford contains 7,000 acres of NHESP BioMap Core Habitat and 16,968 acres of Supporting Natural Landscape. Core Habitat stretches from the south-central portion of the town in a northwesterly direction. The locations of Core Habitat and Supporting Natural landscape are illustrated on the map "Blandford, Massachusetts Natural Environment" (PVPC, 2003).

### **Vernal Pools**

Vernal pools are unique wildlife habitats best known for the amphibians and invertebrate animals that use them to breed. Vernal pools, also known as ephemeral pools, autumnal pools, and temporary woodland ponds, typically fill with water in the autumn or winter due to rising ground water and rainfall and remain ponded through the spring and into summer. Some vernal pools are protected in Massachusetts under the Wetlands Protection Act regulations, as well as several other federal and state regulations, and local bylaws (NHESP).

The NHESP serves the important role of officially "certifying" vernal pools that are documented by citizens. Finding vernal pools is the first step for protection. According to NHESP, there are no certified vernal pools in Blandford. The Massachusetts Aerial Photo Survey of Potential Vernal Pools has been produced by the NHESP to help locate likely vernal pools; 44 potential vernal pools have been identified throughout Blandford using this survey.

### **Wooded Areas (Forestlands)**

These areas are habitat for bears, coyotes, deer, grouse, woodpeckers, squirrels, porcupines, and deep wood songbirds such as Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanager, and Veery. The forest resources and woodlands in Blandford are abundant throughout the town. Blandford's Existing Land Use Map shows the extensive range of these forestlands encompassing approximately 29,400 acres; 86% of the total land area of the Town.

Blandford is in the enviable position of having significant forest resources that can provide a benefit to wildlife and residents of the community. Protecting and enhancing these resources can provide long term economic benefits as well as providing protection for the diversity of wildlife species that are fully dependent on the forestlands

The economic value and greater value of the forest resources to the community as a whole extends beyond lumbering and sale of Class I Prime forest species. Trees that are not harvested for their commercial application provide flood mitigation and water supply filtration, which

benefits residents and businesses alike in Blandford. Specifically, these important benefits include:

- Flood control in upland forested areas, where treed slopes can slow storm water runoff and minimize down-stream flood impacts on farms, residences, and businesses;
- Flood control in lowlands, where trees can absorb run-off before it reaches surface water sources;
- Water supply protection for public and private sources. Trees and shrubs can absorb and filter pollutants prior to absorption into aquifers, and surface water supplies;
- Air quality improvements;
- Erosion control, which benefits downhill farming, and water supply and surface water quality;
- Recreational opportunities for hiking, biking, skiing, hunting;
- Visual buffers between uses.

Though the public health benefits of maintaining forest resources identified above are extensive, these resources also provide habitat for wildlife in Blandford. The extensive forestland in the hills and along riparian corridors provides vital resources for wildlife. These include:

- Protection and shelter for inland and water-based species such as bear, moose, duck;
- Nutrient and food source for land and water species;
- Nesting areas for indigenous birds such as osprey, duck, and heron;
- Seasonal shelter and food source for migratory birds;
- Protected breeding areas.

Without forested areas, floodwaters from heavy storms would runoff more rapidly, raising flood waters and assuring more property and crop damage. Other environmental impacts such as air quality degradation, reduction of visual buffers from adjacent uses and elimination of habitat could ensue as well. Deforested areas in the hills also could cause impacts on down-gradient properties as the rapid runoff causes erosion of stream banks and hillsides, sending sediment onto farmland and other properties and potentially causing greater damage to homes and businesses during major storm events. Erosion causes streams and rivers to fill with silt resulting in oxygen deprivation to water plants and animal species killing them and causing down-slope wetlands to deteriorate. This in turn would eliminate food sources for migratory birds and land animals.

Finally, the loss of significant forested areas would visually alter the character of the community. According to pre-planning survey results, an overwhelming majority of residents would support new zoning regulations to protect Blandford's ridgelines, forests, waters, and hillsides from adverse environmental and aesthetic impacts of development.

### **Regional Links**

Many of the benefits offered by the rich natural resources of Blandford are shared with adjacent communities surrounding the town. The town also benefits from the careful protection and stewardship of natural lands in these same communities.

Blandford residents share Russell Pond for recreational opportunities and the Gateway Regional School System for education. Blandford is part of an extensive network of "hilltown" communities connected by roads and rivers. It shares its abundant clean water supply with both adjacent communities and those in the Pioneer Valley.

Open spaces and natural resources are regional assets whose boundaries do not necessarily respect those municipal or state political boundaries established by people. When considering future land use strategies for Blandford, the community has chosen to consider the impacts of its decisions – both positive and negative – on sensitive natural environments throughout the town and throughout the region.

Specific regional linkages will be considered in studying the following issues:

- Greenways planning;
- Watershed planning (including the Westfield River basin);
- Riparian corridors;
- Forestland protection and stewardship.

### **Recreational Resources**

Blandford is perceived as a recreational destination within the Pioneer Valley by virtue of the location of the Blandford Ski Area, the Chester-Blandford State Forest, Blandford State Forest, and Tolland State Forest. These areas offer opportunities for hiking, swimming, skiing, bicycling, and picnicking.

### **Private Parcels**

The Town of Blandford is comprised of 34,228 acres of land, of which 4,249 acres, or 12.4%, are protected under Chapters 61, 61A, and 61B. These programs provide property tax relief to landowners who retain their land for farming, forestry, or recreation. The program taxes the properties for their use rather than their market value.

Cockran Pond Swamp has dry trees and open water and is suitable for wildlife habitat management and preservation. The former trolley line right-of-way is west of the swamp and is accessible from Huntington Road for hiking and horsebackriding. Cockran Pond is at the junction of Huntington and Haight Roads, contains seven acres, and has cattails along one edge. The Town is considering acquiring this parcel for water supply protection and as an ice skating pond in the winter.

Bedlam Brook, which drains into Cobble Mountain Reservoir, is a beautiful waterway with wetlands for wildlife habitat, alders, swale grass and some open water.

Blandford Ski Area, in operation since 1936, has a 465 foot elevation gain and contains 22 trails, three chairlifts, one surface lift, two lodges, a terrain park, and a half pipe. There is a nine-hole golf course and tennis courts that are accessible in the summer. Members are offered discounts, as well as access to a boathouse on Russell Pond. The ski area is open to nonmembers.

### **Public and Nonprofit Parcels**

Dover Trust Land, just acquired from the City of Springfield by the Town of Blandford, which plans to use the parcel and its accompanying building for appreciation of nature and wildlife.

The Chester/Blandford State Forest, located north of Chester Road, contains 2,297 acres of which 1,199 acres are located in Blandford. This forest is a very scenic, wooded area with moderate to steep sloping, rough, stony land. The forest offers stream fishing, hiking, horsebackriding, hunting, and woodland management. There are also very scenic streams and falls, a mica mine and a gold mine. One of the falls, called Sanderson Falls, has breathtaking views of whitewater dropping over precipitous ledges in view of Sanderson Brook Road. This state forest has a few wheelchair-accessible roads, but no accessible trails.

An abandoned goldmine located on Goldmine Brook, one mile south of the Chester-Blandford State Forest access road, is suitable for geologic study. A 20-minute hike along Goldmine Brook is rather scenic, with frequent views of white water in the rocky streambed. The mine consists of a vent shaft with wood retaining wall, drill holes in the ledge, tailings, etc. A short distance downstream lie the remains of a foundation and a canal that were apparently connected with the mine. Also associated with the mine is an impoundment site on Goldmine Brook about 1 ½ miles upstream from the Chester Town line. This has the potential to become a 53-acre lake with a maximum depth of 18 feet at the dam. The Springfield Hiking Club has initiated many trips to this area in the past. This area is not accessible.

There are three Town owned parcels near Freeland Brook. The three parcels total 145 acres: parcel 28-68 acres, parcel 26- 57 acres, and parcel 25- 20 acres. Parcel 25 is privately owned and is landlocked because of the Massachusetts Turnpike. This 26 acre tract would be a nice addition to the land already owned by the Town.

This area is suited for passive recreation. There are forests of oak and hemlock, which surround the remains of an old dam once used for municipal water. One of the branches of Freeland Brook is rock lined with ledge outcropping and rock waterfalls, which makes a good setting for hiking, fishing and geology. Currently there are no accessible benches or trails.

Long Pond Conservation Area - In 1985, the Town of Blandford purchased 234 acres surrounding Long Pond Reservoir to protect drinking water. A beaver pond along the edge of North Blandford Road attracts an abundance of wildlife. In the past, the Boy Scouts have worked on trails around the beaver pond and have added wood duck boxes to this area. This parcel was purchased with assistance from a Self-Help Grant; therefore the public is encouraged to use the area for passive recreation such as hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country, birdwatching, photography, etc. In 1999, an additional 69 acres was purchased by the Town to continue efforts to protect the watershed and filtration plant. Currently there are no accessible trails.

The Town Common, located by the town garage and south of the cemetery, contains approximately nine acres of town-owned land. It is partially wooded with large, well-pruned white pines and oaks. This area is suitable for limited picnicking and hiking, and contains a Bicentennial Oak planted in 1935, along with a plaque marking the site of the first church in Town. It is a nicely landscaped public space with a circular rock planter in the center and a large shade tree; several raised perennial and shrub beds; paving stones; and a bench. Access is very easy for those with disabilities.

Watson Town Park, located north of Blandford Road in Blandford Village, is an excellently maintained, 11-acre park with an extensive network of roads and paths, a tennis court, a horseshoe pit and a ball diamond. The park is well landscaped with many interesting flowers and shrubs, and has several picnic facilities, great views of the Connecticut and Westfield valleys, and roads suitable for jogging and hiking. It has an old-style metal playground w/ several swings, two slides, jungle gyms; little league ball field; several picnic tables w/ BBQ facilities; tennis court;

extensive well-maintained, rolling open lawn area; single lane loop road (5mph) w/ some mature large Rhododendrons and miscellaneous other plantings and large shade trees; and a small gazebo in need of some repair; there is an historic barn on property. Ice skating has been done in the past on a flooded winter rink. There are no curb issues and good access to all areas exists. The Blandford Historical Commission (BHC) is in the process of working with a horticultural group to identify, prune, and upgrade the trees, shrubs, and perennial flowerbeds. The BHC has applied for grant money from the Highlands Communities Initiative to begin this project.

Veteran's Memorial Park - (corner of Rt. 23 and N. Blandford Road - next to Highway Dept. Headquarters) contains five commemorative stones honoring veterans of the Civil, Spanish, WW1, WWII, Vietnam and Korean Wars; and seven flag poles. It is a memorial erected by the Commonwealth in 1927 to commemorate General Knox's march from Ft. Ticonderoga to Boston to fight the British. General Knox came through Blandford during the winter of 1775-76 carrying canons and arms that were used to liberate Boston. The park is very accessible.

Millers Swamp, located partly on State Forest land and partly on private land, contains approximately 50 acres of hardwood swamp. The area has small patches of open water, ferns, blueberries and other natural shrubs. There has been limited development in the area, with five new residences along the road. The rest would be suitable for a conservation restriction.

Tolland State Forest, located in Otis on the border of Blandford, consists of approximately 870 acres of woodland and hardwood swamp land. South Otis Road and Otis Tolland Road provide access to the forest, which offers hiking, horsebackriding and hunting opportunities. The State Forest has accessible restrooms, but no accessible trails.

The Wigwam Brook Conservation Area – In May, 2003 the Valley Land Fund (VLF) assisted the Town of Blandford in purchasing 150 acres, located on the corner of Russell Road and Nye Brook Road, from the Letourneau family. This property has a conservation restriction on it. Wigwam Brook is a tributary of the Westfield River. This property has access through a deeded right of way which can be accessed by the driveway leading to the Letourneau farmhouse. The Blandford Conservation Commission is in the process of securing another entry to the parcel by way of Nye Brook Road. The area is open to the public for passive recreation. The VLF requests that this land not be logged, encouraging old growth. An old logging road helps to distribute hikers throughout the diverse property. This property is not accessible.

## Open Space and Greenways

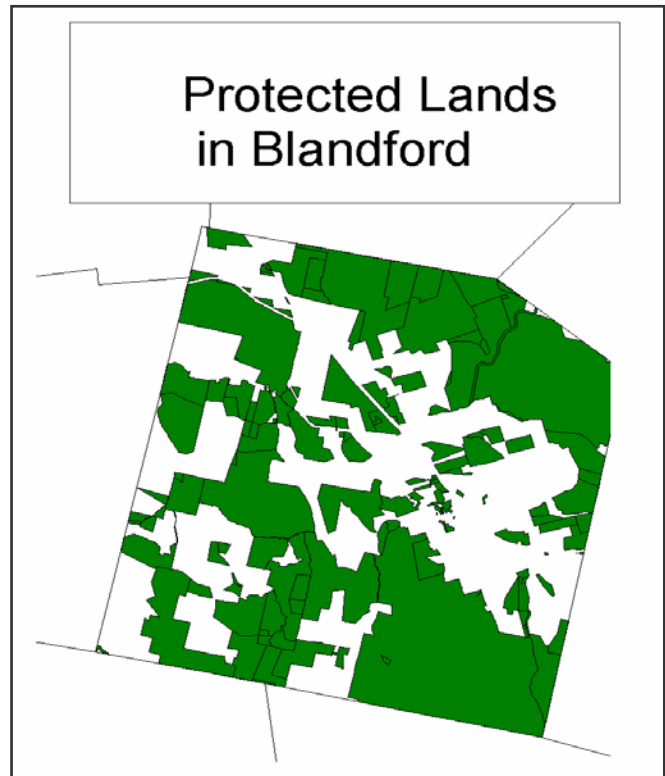
### Existing Protected Open Space

#### Permanently Protected

Approximately 15,100 acres (44 percent of the town) in Blandford are permanently protected from development through the use of conservation restrictions or agricultural protection restrictions. Two major corridors of protected lands exist south and north of Interstate 90. The majority of this protected open space in Blandford is in forest cover.

#### Temporary Protection (Local, State, Private)

Approximately 4,249 acres of land in Blandford are considered to have temporary protection from development. These lands are generally protected due to enrolment in the Commonwealth's c 61 tax deferment program. These lands can be legally developed usually after their transfer to different owners. Once the property is removed from the tax deferment program, the town has right of first refusal....



<i>Table 1-2 :Open Space Ownership</i>			
Type	Acres	Percent of Open Space	Percent of Town Area
Inholdings	223	1%	1%
Municipal	12,705	63%	37%
Non-Profit	579	3%	2%
Private	4,384	22%	13%
State	2,274	11%	7%
<i>Total</i>	<i>20,165</i>		<i>59%</i>

Source PVPC, 2003

Over 300 acres of land in Blandford are owned and controlled by the town. Some of the more prominent parcels owned by the municipality are:

- Watershed land surrounding Long Pond;
- Town Common;
- Blandford Elementary School (including playing fields);
- Watson Park;

- Blandford Historical Society.

### **Existing and Potential Greenways (Local, Regional)**

There are currently no identified local greenways in the Town of Blandford. However, a few potential trail corridors were identified and made part of the 2004 Blandford Open Space and Recreation Plan. Given the high percentage of protected land already established in the town, Blandford's future greenway efforts may be best spent working with institutional and private land owners to agree to a set of 'greenway stewardship practices' that would allow natural lands and wildlife corridors to remain healthy and vital. Of particular importance would be those lands identified as core areas in Massachusetts's BioMap project, corridors of land connecting large tracts of permanently protected acreage, and lands hosting and buffering surface waters.

The Pioneer Valley Regional Greenways Plan (PVPC 2003) identifies portions of northeastern Blandford as falling within the 'Upper Westfield River' Focus Area. Regional greenway focus areas delineate priority areas for protection of regionally significant greenway corridors. Much of the Upper Westfield River Focus Area in Blandford is already permanently protected from land development. The remaining lands most likely to have a major impact on the focus area are those forested parcels which sit at the headwaters of streams feeding the West Branch of the Westfield River below the Route 20 (Jacob's Ladder Trail) corridor.

Regional links to the recently completed Westfield River Watershed Open Space and Recreation Plan will be planned and prioritized to take advantage of natural corridors protected through the efforts of federal, state, and municipal organizations in the Westfield River basin. Some of these lands certainly fall within the boundaries of the town.

<b><i>Table 1-3 :Chapter Lands (Ch. 61, 61A, and 61B)</i></b>			
<b>Type</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent of Open Space</b>	<b>Percent of Town Area</b>
c 61 Forest	3,535	18%	10%
c 61A Farm	559	3%	2%
c 61B Recreation	154	1%	0.5%
<i>Total</i>	<i>4,248</i>	<i>21%</i>	<i>12%</i>

### **Working Landscapes**

Historically, the working landscapes of Blandford have shaped the physical, economic, and cultural character of the community. The quarries, forest lands, and remaining farms continue to contribute to the economic and environmental well-being of the town.

#### **Forest Lands**

Forest cover is by far the most prominent land use in Blandford. Over 29,000 acres of forest exist in the community with a vast majority of the town's 3,535 acres that are currently under limited protection from development through participation in the Chapter 61 program falling into this land use category.

#### **Farms**

Approximately 559 acres of agricultural land are protected from development for a limited period of time through the Chapter 61A program.

## Quarries

There are 3 operating commercial stone quarries in the Blandford. The total amount of land dedicated to open quarry (mining) use in the Town is less than half of what it was in 1971, dropping from 13 acres to 5 acres over three decades.

## Land Use

### Existing and Historic Land Use

Most land in Blandford remains in woodland and farming uses. Nearly 96% of the total acreage in the community consists of forest cover, agricultural lands, wetlands, and water resources. Less than 2.5 % of the land in town is used for residential purposes with less than 1% for transportation.

In the period 1971 to 1999, there were few significant changes other than the marked increase in large lot residential uses. Much of this newly developed land occurs in areas that were previously forested or utilized as pasture land. It is also likely that some pasture areas reverted to woody perennial cover or forest during this 28-year period.

Overall, this land use information is consistent with comments made during the public input process that Blandford's recent growth has been largely limited to large lot residential homes.

**TABLE 1-4: Land Uses in Blandford 1971 - 1999**

<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Acreage 1971</b>	<b>Percent of Town Land 1971</b>	<b>Acreage 1999</b>	<b>Percent of Town Land 1999</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
Cropland	728	2.13%	707	2.1%	-2.9%
Pasture	368	1.08%	324	0.9%	-12.0%
Forest	29,578	86.46%	29,416	86.0%	-0.5%
Wetland	757	2.21%	747	2.2%	-1.3%
Mining	13	0.04%	5	0.0%	-61.5%
Open Land	482	1.41%	473	1.4%	-1.9%
Participation Recreation	191	0.56%	191	0.6%	0.0%
Spectator Recreation	24	0.07%	23	0.1%	-4.2%
Residential (1/4 to 1/2 acre lots)	82	0.24%	82	0.2%	0.0%
Residential (> 1/2 acre lots)	468	1.37%	673	2.0%	43.8%
Commercial	9	0.03%	9	0.0%	0.0%
Urban Open Land	57	0.17%	60	0.2%	5.3%
Transportation	330	0.96%	330	1.0%	0.0%
Water	1,140	3.33%	1,139	3.3%	-0.1%
Woody Perennial	7	0.02%	30	0.1%	328.6%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>34,209</b>		<b>34,209</b>		

Source: PVPC 2003, MassGIS data

## **Significant Landscapes (Historic, Scenic, Cultural Value)**

Blandford has developed an Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Map of Unique Features that is part of this plan includes a variety of landscapes considered important by residents. They include: historic features such as the trolley line and old school house; facilities that contribute to the traditional rural town center such as the library, Watson Park, and the Congregational Church; scenic viewsheds such as several towards Mount Monadnock in New Hampshire; recreational resources such as Sanderson Brook Falls, Dover Trust Nature Center, Blandford Fairgrounds, the golf club, and Blandford Ski Area; and scenic roads such as the one to Cobble Mountain Reservoir.

## **Geology, Soils, and Topography**

Blandford is situated in the eastern foothills of the Green Mountains with an elevation of approximately 650 to 1500 feet above sea level. The hills present in Blandford were created by, the Taconic and Acadian mountain-building events, from 350 to 500 million years ago. These events caused folding, faulting, and uplifting of mostly schist, gneiss, and quartzite. The mountains produced by these events weathered and eroded over the next few million years into the present undulating hills.

Five generalized bedrock classifications exist in Blandford, including: Proterozoic Rocks, schist and gneiss; the Hoosac Formation, quartz and mica-rich schist and gneiss; the Rowe-Hawley zone, carbonaceous quartz-rich schists, amphibolites, and gneisses; the Cobble Mountain Formation, interbedded schists and gneisses; and the Goshen Formation, carbonaceous schist and micaceous quartzite.

Like almost all of New England, Blandford was covered by great ice sheets thousands of feet thick in the recent geologic past. The ice sheets melted about 12,000 years ago and left extensive surficial deposits that cover most of the land and dominate the New England landscape. The two basic types of deposit in Blandford are lodgement till and stratified drift. Lodgement till formed when glaciers overrode and compressed the earth. It is an unsorted mixture of sand, clay, pebbles and boulders, no more than three feet thick. Stratified drift refers to deposits of sand and gravel that formed during the final days of the Ice Age. The melting ice sheets gave rise to torrential streams that had the power to carry a large load of sand and gravel formerly trapped in ice. When the velocity of the stream diminished, as when entering a lake or flat area, its load would settle and form deposits of sand and gravel.

According to the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Blandford is made up of three major soil associations: the Ashfield-Shelburne, Lyman-Tunbridge-Peru, and Montauk-Paxton-Scituate. All of the soil types existing in Blandford present limitations (many severe) to septic absorption fields and building construction. As there is no public sewer system in Blandford and a limited water system, this presents natural constraints to development. However, more flexible septic site requirements combined with land modification practices, development is possible, although expensive.

## **Patterns of Development**

Because of its fairly remote location, the Town of Blandford has been able to maintain a quiet, rural character. Blandford was purchased in 1735 by Scotch-Irish settlers from Hopkinton and divided into lots known as the New Glasgow plantation. Uniform, rectangular houses were

constructed along both sides of North Street and Haight/Sperry Road. The community began as an agricultural and grazing-based economy. In 1741, the name was changed from New Glasgow to Blandford and incorporated as a Town.

Blandford was located on a major east-west traveling route known as the General Otis Knox Stage Road (Route 23). This route provided direct access to larger nearby communities such as Westfield, West Springfield and Springfield in Massachusetts and Albany in New York. Due to its location along this route, it was reported that there were an unusually high number of taverns for a town of this size. Russell Stage Road served as the primary route to the Westfield River in Russell from Blandford Center. Because of its location along these routes, the population grew dramatically in the late 18th century. From 1776 to 1790, the population nearly doubled from 772 to 1,416 and reached a peak in 1800 of 1,778.

The economy focused on agriculture, specifically livestock and dairy products. The production of crops was limited due to the lack of fertile lowlands. Blandford's woodlands also supported lumber operations. In 1807, a Connecticut merchant by the name of Amos Collins convinced the Blandford farmers to switch from the cultivation of wool to the manufacturing of butter and cheese. The Town's primary market was in Hartford, Connecticut and much of their business was with Connecticut communities. The first tannery was constructed in 1760 near Blandford Center. By 1837, there were a total of three tanneries whose production represented one quarter of all of the leather tanned in the county. A small paper mill that manufactured coarse wrapping paper was established in 1832. There was regular traffic between North Blandford and Chester to haul these products to the rail line.

In 1842, with the development of the Western Railroad (later to be known as the Boston & Albany railroad), travel primarily followed the Westfield River south of town. Blandford's population began to decline and, in 1870, it was reduced to 1026. During this period, however, the Town continued to excel in the tanning industry. By the 1870's the majority of the manufacturing industries had left Town and Blandford was becoming known as a summer resort for people who lived in Springfield and Westfield.

In 1880, a layer of kaolin was discovered near the center of Town. This discovery led to the formation of the Blandford Brick and Tile Company. The clay was transported to the company's yard in Russell for processing. The amount of available kaolin appears to have been insufficient as the pit was closed by 1900.

Over the course of the two years from 1909 to 1910, the City of Springfield constructed a water supply source along the Blandford/Granville Town line. The reservoir was created on Borden Brook and subsequently named the "Borden Brook Reservoir". The City claimed large portions of the watershed by buying many structures along the brook's tributaries.

Meanwhile, the population continued to decline, down to 623 in 1915. That year the Berkshire Street Railway constructed an interurban trolley line between Lee and Huntington, which passed through North Blandford. The trolley line had little impact on settlement and, consequently, was abandoned in 1918. Local roads were improved as auto routes, with the primary east-west route remaining Route 23, as it is currently known.

The City of Springfield constructed the Cobble Mountain Reservoir from 1928 to 1930 by damming the Little River. The reservoir flooded several farmsteads along the Little River valley and had a total capacity of 22.5 billion gallons. As with the construction of the Borden Brook Reservoir, the City again claimed large portions of the watershed.

Since the late 1970's the population in Blandford has seen only slight increase, from 1,038 persons in 1980 to 1,214 persons in 2000.

### **Land Use Suitability Analysis**

The Land Use Suitability Analysis is a process by which PVPC planners and the Blandford Community Development Planning Committee can identify those lands that are most appropriate for development and those areas that need some form of protection from development in future years.

Development of the Blandford Land Suitability Map and the subsequent discussions with the Community Development Planning Committee helped to establish a clear set of geographic priorities that can be used as a guide for future land use decisions in Blandford.

For a more detailed discussion of the suitability analysis and the development of the land use strategies maps, please see "Bringing It All Together" at the end of this report.

### **Blandford's Water Resources**

Protecting water resources is a key part of any long-range municipal planning effort that ensures the long-term environmental and economic health of a community or group of communities. The following six planning concepts outline a responsible approach to community water resources:

- Use water efficiently.
- Keep water near its point of withdrawal.
- Protect current and future water supplies.
- Protect natural water resource areas.
- Develop a single plan for meeting water, wastewater and stormwater needs.
- Use appropriate treatment for water, wastewater, and non-point source pollution, emphasizing pollution prevention as the best alternative.

This Community Development Plan addresses water resource issues in three areas: Water Quality Assessment, Water Supply Protection, and Water Budgeting.

In order to complete these following analyses, PVPC has gathered existing wastewater plans, water supply plans, and stormwater plans to assess the overall picture of how current and planned infrastructure will affect Blandford's water resources and meet future needs.

### ***Water Quality Assessment***

#### **Existing Protection Strategies**

Long Pond supplies water to Blandford's Water System. The Blandford Water Dept., overseen by a three member Board of Water Commissioners, is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the water supply and distribution system including providing adequate volume, pressure, high quality water and overall compliance with the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act.

In addition to the town's public water supply system, Blandford has two transient non-community (TNC) wells which are considered for interim wellhead protection. A TNC public water system (PWS) is any publicly or privately owned system that provides piped water for human consumption, if such system has at least 15 service connections or regularly serves an average of at least 25 individuals daily for at least 60 days per year. This includes, but is not limited to, campgrounds, motels, gas stations, golf courses, restaurants, and roadside rest stops. In Blandford, this includes the Laurel Ridge Camping Area and Snow's steak House.

Interim Well Head Protection Areas are established around each of the non-community wells in Blandford. An Interim Wellhead Protection Area (IWPA) provides a basic protected recharge area for groundwater sources of public water supplies in Massachusetts. An IWPA is defined as a circular area whose radius is proportional to the pumping rate of the protected well. Blandford's IWPA's are illustrated on the map "Blandford Topology, Floodplain and Water Supplies" (PVPC, 2003).

Blandford residents rely on both surface water and groundwater wells for their water supply. Consequently, a water supply protection strategy must target all of these resources. A zoning overlay district for water supply protection is the most important initial step in this process. Communities with private wells have the following zoning options for water supply protection:

- Adopt a water supply protection zoning overlay district which covers the entire town;
- Adopt a water supply protection zoning overlay district which protects the Interim Wellhead Protection Area (IWPA) for all non-community wells. The minimum IWPA radius to be protected around wells is 400 feet;
- Protect potential future public water supplies by adopting a water supply protection zoning overlay district which protects major aquifers which have been identified and mapped in Blandford.

Other strategies to consider:

- Highly elevated levels of sodium chloride have been found in wells located along Main Street due to roadsalt application. Consider working with the Highway Department to establish zones for reduced road salt application.
- Adopt a bylaw requiring registration of underground storage tanks and hazardous materials storage. This bylaw requires that the Fire Department or Board of Health be notified of all underground fuel storage and of storage of hazardous materials in commercial quantities. The bylaw establishes performance standards for safe storage.
- Adopt Board of Health regulations for private well protection. Board of Health can adopt private well regulations to require proper well installation, well testing for water quality, and safe distances from septic systems.
- Adopt stormwater runoff and erosion control bylaws. These bylaws can prevent illicit connections to municipal stormwater systems, prevent construction site erosion and reduce stormwater runoff from new development after construction is completed.
- Adopt subdivision regulations to control stormwater runoff, maximize groundwater recharge, and limit paving over aquifer recharge areas.

## ***Water Budget***

Approximately 72 % of Blandford residents rely on the municipal water system. The additional residents of the town utilize private on-site groundwater wells. Water usage data is unavailable for private wells.

***Table 1-5. Water Supply Supply and Demand - History and Projections***

Year	Population	Population Served	Per Capita Consump. (gpcd)	Avg. Day Demand (mgd)	Max. Day Demand (mgd)	Safe Yield
1980	1,038	830	95	.08	.10	0.5
1990	1,187	968	159	0.15	0.29	0.5
2000	1,214	874	88	.077	n/a**	0.5
2005	1,410*	1,015	88	.089	n/a**	n/a**
2010	1,491*	1,074	88	.095	n/a**	n/a**

\*MISER predictions    \*\*Data Unavailable

Population growth in Blandford – even should it occur solely in areas served by the public water system – is not likely to approach a level at which the maximum safe yield of the system is broached any time in the near future. The projected water usage listed in the table above assumes that per capita consumption will remain steady. This level of consumption may be reduced over time as older water fixtures such as toilets and washing machines are replaced with water conservation models. A more troublesome issue could arise in the spiked usage (maximum daily demand) on any given day, presumably during the summer months. Although the 1990 maximum daily demand figure of 290,000 gallons appears to approach the safe yield ceiling, it is likely that the per capita average daily consumption for that year is an aberration. At a more reasonable level determined by the most reason average daily usage, it is not likely that peak usage is an issue for the system. However, as Blandford works with the Department of Environmental Protection to address water filtration and distribution concerns, more current usage data should be made available to ensure that future growth can occur safely and practically utilizing this important community infrastructure.

## **Summary and Analysis**

Blandford's rich natural environments define the quiet rural character of the community. During the pre-planning process, residents in Blandford identified the town's open spaces and natural environments as the most important features in the community.

Current growth pressure in Blandford is low, however many of the resources highlighted in this report remain threatened by the potential for inappropriate development.

## **Gaps in Wetlands Data**

It is likely that many isolated forested wetlands are simply identified on the land use maps as 'forestland' due to the limitations of the land use assessment. Also, many bordering vegetated wetlands along waterways are not specifically identified as such on the maps presented with this plan.

### **Data Regarding Individual Wells and On-site Septic Systems**

Were this data available, a more thorough discussion of water supply protection might be possible. In future years, planning efforts will be enhanced by the inclusion of this data in a digital format usable by GIS mapping professionals.

## **Open Space and Resource Protection Strategies**

Blandford has identified key strategies to achieve the goal of protecting and enhancing the open spaces, sensitive resources, and natural environments in the town:

### **Preserve the watersheds and purity of drinking water supplies**

1. Monitor progress of filtration plant and water lines
2. Protect water supplies from road salt contamination
3. Strictly enforce the Wetlands Protection Act (including provisions of the Rivers Protection Act)
4. Continue communication with Springfield DPW on watershed lands goals (Article 97)
5. Increase public recognition of the water supply protection areas

### **Maintain and improve outdoor recreational access, scenic views and community character**

1. Establish roads as “scenic roads” under MGL 40 Ch. 15
2. Map and maintain existing trails for recreation, and investigate new trail possibilities
3. Establish a center for nature and wildlife appreciation
4. Consider the Community Forestry Program

### **Protect critical land parcels in order to maintain the health of natural sensitive areas**

1. Define and map priority habitat areas
2. Establish a Blandford Community Preservation Fund
3. Increase use of the Chapter 61 program
4. Actively engage in certifying vernal pools with the State Natural Heritage Program

**Additional goals and strategies related to open space, natural resources, and recreational opportunities are identified and discussed in the recently completed Blandford Open Space and Recreation Plan (2004), following.**

# Town of Blandford



## Open Space and Recreation Plan

**May 2004**

Acknowledgements:

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS:

ROSEMARY ARNOLD

JOHN CASWELL

PETE SUTHERLAND

ROBIN STEVENS

CHUCK BENSON

## **Section 1: Plan Summary**

As we move into the 21st century and developmental pressures continue to increase across the region encompassing the hilltowns west of the Connecticut River valley, the protection of Blandford's open space is vitally important to the preservation of the Town's rural character, agriculture, forests, watersheds and wildlife habitat. All of these define the natural quality of life in Town.

This Open Space and Recreation Plan Update (OSRP) is an excellent tool for evaluating current resources, areas of concern and future objectives. Blandford is fortunate to have remained largely unscathed by the rapid development experienced by the overall region. We have a tremendous opportunity to preserve our large percentage of open space and become a model for environmental integrity. We are also fortunate to be able to take advantage of recent environmental research, which we hope will give us positive, well-informed direction in this endeavor. The OSRP condenses the available information into a reader-friendly, accessible format.

Blandford's original Open Space Plan was completed in 1983 and revised for the first time in 1988. Ideally the plan is to be reviewed and revised every five years. It is hoped that periodic review will keep the town aware of its natural and recreational resources and need to preserve them. This plan should also help the Town develop clear direction regarding recreational needs, areas where open space conservation is needed, and maintenance of these resources. Ultimately, the goal for the plan is to ensure that Blandford remains a clean and safe environment for its residents.

## **Section 2: Introduction**

### ***Statement of Purpose***

The OSRP attempts to provide those interested in Blandford's environmental future with the information necessary to adequately visualize the Town's current resource structure, to identify areas and issues of special concern, and produce a methodology for protection of those areas.

The Planning Committee has also sought to include current environmental research and theory into the Plan and develop a progressive conservation philosophy which seeks to balance human needs with those of natural resource and wildlife protection in a regional (or macro) context as well as a local (or micro) context.

It should be noted that the OSRP is being worked on concurrently with Blandford's Community Development Plan, and we have noticed a considerable overlapping of issues between the two. The Committee trusts that environmental issues will continue to be a primary factor in planning the Town's future, and that the OSRP will be an excellent resource for the Planning Board to rely on to inform future planning and zoning issues.

Finally, the OSRP is a requirement for acquisition of certain State grants, such as Self-Help Funding, which would be a useful and appreciated tool to further protect parcels of interest and develop recreational opportunities.

### ***Planning Process and Public Participation***

The development of the original OSRP was instituted by the Blandford Conservation Commission. The Recreation Committee and the Planning Board were consulted during development, particularly with regard to the listing of Town goals and objectives.

For this revision, the Open Space Committee worked with the EO418 Community Development Committee to develop a survey that included Blandford's natural resources and open spaces. The survey was sent to all households in town over the summer period of 2002. The returned surveys were evaluated and results can be found in the Appendices. The committee then reviewed and revised the previous OSRP, utilizing the data from the survey results to note and record the current priorities of the Town residents. In order to solicit as many comments about the plan as possible, the Open Space Committee took part in a public hearing for the EO418 Community Development Plan on March 27, 2003, which included the community's strengths and weaknesses and the features the community felt made Blandford unique. On June 5, 2003, community residents took part in a workshop where they articulated goals and objectives for Blandford's open space and recreation future. The list is included in Section 6B of this plan.

In order to ensure continued progress on agreed-upon goals and objectives, the plan will be reviewed every two years by a three person committee, composed of one member each of the Conservation Commission, Recreation Committee, and the Planning Board. This committee should review the plan and make recommendations of proposed changes to the residents at Town Meeting. The committee will also report on the progress of meeting the current goals and objectives.

## **Section 3: Community Setting**

### ***Regional Context***

***SUMMARY: Blandford is located in Western Mass, and is a beautiful rural, mountaintop community. The Town has breathtaking views, a wide variety of hiking trails and natural recreational opportunities supported by an enormous range of flora and fauna. The Town of Blandford is considered a “hilltown” and also a part of the Highland Communities defined by the Trustees of Reservations. Blandford shares resources such as watersheds, public forestlands, and a regional middle and high school. Many business and cultural meccas such as Lenox, Stockbridge, Pittsfield, Lee, Westfield, Northampton, and Springfield surround it. It is a short commute to Hartford and Albany, and NYC is only 2-½ hrs away.***

The Town of Blandford lies in the eastern foothills of the Berkshire Mountains, which originate in the Green Mountain Range in Vermont. The Town is a part of Hampden County in southwestern Massachusetts. Blandford is bordered by Chester on the north, Huntington on the northeast, Russell on the east, Granville and Tolland on the south and Otis and Becket on the west. The Town covers approximately 54 square miles and the 2000 Federal Census indicated a population of 1,214.

Blandford has its own elementary school, but as of 2001 houses only kindergarten and the Head Start Program. The Gateway Regional School System is building new facilities and updating its grammar schools. When renovations are complete, the Blandford Elementary School will service Kindergarten through fourth grade. However, Blandford students in fifth grade and above, along with children from Russell, Chester, Huntington, Montgomery, Worthington and Middlefield, will be bussed to Gateway Regional School District in Huntington, MA.

By far, the most noteworthy unique feature of Blandford is its abundant supply of clean water. Most major brooks in Blandford drain into the Cobble Mountain Reservoir, which is the major source of water for the city of Springfield as well as several other surrounding cities and towns. The surface water quality in this and all other water bodies in Blandford have been given an “A” classification by the Massachusetts Division of Water Pollution Control. In addition, the reservoir and its feeder streams are designated an anti-degradation segment, which constitutes an outstanding natural resource and requires that the water quality be maintained and protected. Also, the adjoining towns of Huntington and Russell own extensive watershed lands in Blandford.

Blandford’s public water supply is drawn from the Long Pond Reservoir that lies entirely within the town’s boundaries. The Town of Blandford purchased 229 acres of watershed land surrounding Long Pond in 1985 with the aid of Self Help Funding. This property provides protection of the Long Pond Reservoir and the land is ideal for passive recreation where hiking, cross-country skiing and bird watching are encouraged. Blandford plans to continue to protect our watershed and develop a corridor for wildlife by connecting the watersheds that exist within our town.

## ***History of the Community***

***SUMMARY: Blandford is situated in the eastern foothills of the Berkshire Mountains and is criss-crossed by streams. It is a rural hill town on the historic western corridor between Connecticut and the Housatonic Valley and is on an early route of travel from Springfield to Albany. This was an important military highway from New York during the revolution as is testified by the number of taverns that were recorded on the post road servicing travelers. The Town was originally cut up into lots and sold to Scotch-Irish Presbyterians who immigrated from Hopkinton and created an agricultural and grazing based economy. There were some early tanners, paper and cardboard mills, but the major emphasis in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was dairy farming. Blandford led the county in cheese production in 1845 and then again in 1870. Where the town once was a favored summer resort where people came to improve their health with the clean mountain air, now most of the summer homes have been converted into year round residences. The town continues to support a country club and a family oriented ski area.***

Blandford was purchased in 1735 by Scotch-Irish settlers from Hopkinton and divided into lots known as the New Glasgow plantation. Uniform, rectangular houses were constructed along both sides of North Street and Haight/Sperry Road. The community began as an agricultural and grazing-based economy. In 1741, the name was changed from New Glasgow to Blandford and incorporated as a Town.

Blandford was located on a major east-west traveling route known as the General Knox - Otis Stage Road (Route 23). This route provided direct access to larger nearby communities such as Westfield, West Springfield and Springfield in Massachusetts and Albany in New York. Due to its location along this route, it was reported that there were an unusually high number of taverns for a town of this size. Russell Stage Road served as the primary route to the Westfield River in Russell from Blandford Center. Because of its location along these routes, the population grew dramatically in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. From 1776 to 1790, the population nearly doubled from 772 to 1,416 and reached a peak in 1800 of 1,778.

The economy focused on agriculture, specifically livestock and dairy products. The production of crops was limited due to the lack of fertile lowlands. Blandford's woodlands also supported lumber operations. In 1807, a Connecticut merchant by the name of Amos Collins convinced the Blandford farmers to switch from the cultivation of wool to the manufacturing of butter and cheese. The Town's primary market was in Hartford, Connecticut and much of their business was with Connecticut communities. In 1845, Blandford reported the highest cheese production of any town in the county and, by 1865, was responsible for producing 30% of the county's cheese.

The first tannery was constructed in 1760 near Blandford Center. By 1837, there were a total of three tanneries whose production represented one quarter of all of the leather tanned in the county. A woolen factory that made satinets (a thin silk satin) was also constructed around this time. A small paper mill that manufactured coarse wrapping paper was established in 1832. A "card-board" (boards used for cleaning everything from cattle and horses to silk hats) factory was built in 1845, along with several turning mills and a bedstead factory. There was regular traffic between North Blandford and Chester to haul these products to the rail line.

In 1842, with the development of the Western Railroad (later to be known as the Boston & Albany railroad), travel primarily followed the Westfield River south of town. Blandford's population began to decline and, in 1870, it was reduced to 1026. During this period, however,

the Town continued to excel in the tanning industry. There were now four tanneries and, in 1855, the production of these tanneries represented 27% of the county value for leather. By the 1870's the majority of the manufacturing industries had left Town and Blandford was becoming known as a summer resort for people who lived in Springfield and Westfield.

In 1880, a layer of kaolin was discovered near the center of Town. This discovery led to the formation of the Blandford Brick and Tile Company. The clay was transported to the company's yard in Russell for processing. The amount of available kaolin appears to have been insufficient as the pit was closed by 1900.

Over the course of the two years from 1909 to 1910, the City of Springfield constructed a water supply source along the Blandford/Granville Town line. The reservoir was created on Borden Brook and subsequently named the "Borden Brook Reservoir". The City claimed large portions of the watershed by buying many structures along the brook's tributaries.

The population continued to decline, down to 623 in 1915. That year the Berkshire Street Railway constructed an interurban trolley line between Lee and Huntington, which passed through North Blandford. The trolley line had little impact on settlement and, consequently, was abandoned in 1918. Local roads were improved as auto routes, with the primary east-west route remaining Route 23, as it is currently known.

The City of Springfield constructed the Cobble Mountain Reservoir from 1928 to 1930 by damming the Little River. The reservoir flooded several farmsteads along the Little River valley and had a total capacity of 22.5 billion gallons. As with the construction of the Borden Brook Reservoir, the City again claimed large portions of the watershed.

#### *Population Characteristics*

***Summary: Since the late 1970's the population in Blandford has seen only slight increase, from 1038 persons in 1980 to 1214 in 2000. Because of Blandford's rural setting and slow growth rate in recent years, it would seem that protecting open space while it is available and affordable should be a main focus of the open space plan. Joining watershed properties to other protected lands in town to ensure a healthy balance between humans and wildlife will be an important goal for the town.***

Blandford's total area consists of 53.56 square miles with a land area of 51.75 square miles. The table below illustrates pertinent population data. For example, the population density is only 23.5 persons per square mile, compared with the much greater density statewide of 810 persons per square mile. Blandford remains a rural community with widely scattered population and large open spaces.

	<b>Blandford</b>	<b>Massachusetts</b>
2000 Population	1,214	6,349,097
Total households	456	2,443,000
Average Household Size	2.66	2.51
Population density	23.5 persons per sq. mile	810 persons per sq. mile

Blandford is a town with a strong environmental constituency. As a survey given to residents in 2002 reveals, many live here because of the high quality and significant quantity of natural environment. Although nearly half of Blandford is protected, the survey shows that approximately 90% of residents consider this "just right" or "not enough". Fewer than 10% feel

that Blandford has "too much" protected open space. The three most important features to residents surveyed are: small town rural atmosphere, open spaces and forests. The most important town issue is the environment (67.6%). Seventy-two percent would support new zoning to protect ridgelines, forests, waters and hillsides from adverse impacts of development.

Although Blandford is experiencing minimal population growth, residential development is on the increase. People moving into town are looking for a quiet country setting where they can raise their children and yet be within an easy commute to the surrounding cities and towns.

#### *Growth and Development Patterns*

***Summary: Residential development is on the increase in Blandford. This new development is occurring along existing road frontage, on both agricultural and woodland properties. This results in the loss of unobstructed views and lost woodland.***

Originally, Blandford developed along a trail from the New York border to Westfield and the towns of the Connecticut River valley. This was later known as the Albany Road and was traveled by General Knox and his troops on their journey from Fort Ticonderoga to Boston to deliver cannons to General Washington. Houses and taverns were built along this "highway". Today, this road again sees the greatest amount of new home building. This development is in the form of frontage lots, often subdivided from larger parcels with no neighborhood clustering.

Blandford seems destined to grow in population. With land in Westfield and other parts of the Valley becoming increasingly scarce and more costly, and with people increasingly becoming disenchanted with city life, growth is heading toward the hill towns.

During the 90's, Blandford experienced very slight growth. The first year of the new century saw a doubling of new home building permits and an even greater increase the next year. The implications of this are additional children in schools, increased need for water and new roads, and the impact such growth will have on the Town's way of life.

#### Transportation

Blandford is a hilltown community where most people commute to surrounding areas for work. The principal highway serving Blandford is Route 23. All major roads are paved and in good condition, with some dirt roads maintained and in passable condition. The Massachusetts Turnpike runs through the town, but there is no exit available to town residents. The construction of a turnpike entrance, which is discussed periodically, would undoubtedly increase residential development.

Route 23, bisecting the town from east to west, is a state highway that connects with both Route 20 and Route 8. This heavily traveled road is a winding, mountainous travel route for residential traffic and tourists. It is a main route to Otis Reservoir, which supports a large recreational community. There are many curves along this route, which can be dangerous to those not familiar with the roadway.

Russell Stage Road, a rural country road, which connects Route 20 to the Springfield Ski Club, has seen a major increase in traffic since the closing of Mt Tom Ski Area. The Blandford Highway Dept. has proposed construction on this road to handle this increased volume of traffic. The Town Highway Dept. has a full-time staff, employing town people. Its budgetary needs are generally well-supported by town meeting.

There are many unpaved roads in town that are cherished by the townspeople. Most of these country roads are well-maintained by the highway department.

## Water Supply

The Blandford Water Dept., overseen by a three member Board of Water Commissioners, is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the water supply and distribution system including providing adequate volume, pressure, high quality water and overall compliance with the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act.

Long Pond, a surface water source, supplies the Blandford Water System. The source is located in the western part of Town. The capacity of the pond is 65 million gallons. The reservoir is approximately 1-mile long by 0.25 miles wide at its widest point with a surface area of 81 acres. Long Pond and its surrounding area are owned by the Town of Blandford. The reservoir is fed by two continuous flowing brooks and numerous intermittent streams and sheet run off from the surrounding drainage area. A masonry and earthen embankment dam on the northern shore discharges to Wheeler Brook. Wheeler Brook is part of the Cobble Mt Reservoir tributary watershed.

The Blandford Water Department has jurisdiction over the Long Pond Reservoir and the Blandford Conservation Commission has helped to protect the watershed by assisting the town in purchasing land surrounding the reservoir using self-help funding. The Water Department has recently replaced 1000 feet of pipes on North Blandford Road. The old pipes consisted of concrete asbestos and were degrading at a rapid rate, causing many breaks & water failures in town. They are now being replaced with plastic pipe. A holding tank and a portion of the distribution pipes are located on 69 acres recently purchased by the Town of Blandford. This property abuts Long Pond Conservation Land. The Town of Blandford purchased this property in 2001.

After failing a coliform test a couple of years ago, the Town was mandated by Department of Environmental Protection to put in a new filtration system. Blandford has had to upgrade a major portion of the water distribution system. At this time Blandford is installing water and sewer extensions.

Tighe & Bond did a feasibility study of projected water use for the Town of Blandford a few years ago. The following information reflects their findings:

Current day population statistics along with future projections were obtained from the Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research (MISER). The planning period for this study is through the year 2020, but the population projections obtained from MISER only extend to the year 2010. MISER has projected a 6.4% increase in population from the year 2000 to the year 2010. A linear extrapolation of this growth trend (+6.4%) has been used to develop a population projection to the year 2020. (Actual numbers from the 2000 census show a lesser growth rate over the past 10 years than MISER predicted; however, the information on water use is still pertinent.)

These population projections indicate that moderate growth is expected in the community over the next 20 years. The 1990 Census established a total population for the Town of Blandford of 1,187 people. The MISER year 2010 projection of 1,410 people represents an increase of 18.8% from the 1990 figure. The population projection developed in this study for the year 2020 of 1,500 people represents a 26.4% increase from the 1990 figure. The projections which were developed along with the 1990 census data are summarized below.

## Town of Blandford Population and Population Projections

Year	Town Population	Estimated Population Served by Water System
1990	1187(1)	633
2000	1214(1)	633
2010	1410(2)	705
2020	1500(3)	750

(1) Actual census data

(2) MISER projections

(3) Assumed population based on MISER growth rates

### *Sewer Service*

The entire Town of Blandford, excluding East and Westbound McDonald's franchises on the Mass Turnpike, is on privately owned septic systems. The McDonald's facilities wastewater is pumped to the Russell Sewage Treatment Plant.

### *Long-Term Development Patterns*

**Summary:** *Because of Blandford's steep landforms, protected watershed land, wetlands and somewhat remote location, the town's zoning has thus far been adequate. However, increasing population and growth trends indicate that new development is occurring on land previously thought to be "self protecting" and may pose a threat to the rural character of the town.*

Over 97% of Blandford is zoned agricultural, with a small area defined residential and a very small strip along Main Street zoned for business. The bylaws require a minimum of 2 acre lots with 300 feet of frontage along an accepted road for parcels in the agricultural zone. Lots in the residential district require a minimum of 30,000 square feet with 150 feet of road frontage. Subdivision regulations permit the creation of new frontage by road building, but the subdivision driveways may not be shared between units. Mobile homes are allowed by special permit on a temporary basis for 60 days while a home is under construction. Two family homes are allowed in both districts, but open space residential development is not permitted under current zoning.

Blandford also has 402 acres in the Long Pond Watershed Protection District.

The uses permitted in the residential/agricultural zones are extensive, though some require a special permit. No use, however, may create offensive odors, noise or unsightly appearance noticeable off the premises. Size and placement of signs are regulated.

The most recent amendment to the zoning by-law regulates the placement of telecommunication cell towers. While these structures cannot be banned in a town, control of their placement allows the town to preserve historic and scenic sites.

Blandford is not perceived as a prime location for industry or commerce on a scale that would be useful to the tax base. It is, however, suitable for residential development, and this is becoming increasingly evident by the growing number of building permits. During the 1990's, there was an average of two new home building permits issued per year. Already, this has doubled in the first year of the new century and tripled the following year. Were Blandford to grow from fewer than

600 homes in the year 2000 to the maximum build-out of over 6000 homes, much of the town's open space, fields, forests and scenic views would be destroyed. The impact on town services and resources is hard to imagine, and the lifestyle of current residents would certainly be altered. Conservation of landscapes that are elements of our community's character is essential.

## **Section 4: Environmental Inventory and Analysis**

### ***Geology, Soils and Topography***

Blandford is in the Berkshire Transition Zone, which ranges in elevation from 400 to 1400 feet. The majority of its slopes range from 8% to 15%, at 10,109 acres, although there 9,573 acres that are 15% or greater. A greater than 15% slope is a natural constraint to development.

Blandford is made up of four major soil associations:

Ridgebury-Muck-Whitman	5,069 acres	15%
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This general soil type is extremely stony, poorly drained, mineral soil with hardpans, and very poorly drained organic soil. This type is found in nearly level to gently sloping depressions and drainage channels. It consists of about 65% Ridgebury soils, 10% Muck, and 5% Whitman soils. The remaining 20% consists mainly of similar mineral soils without hardpans. The Ridgebury soils are poorly drained mineral soils that formed in extremely stony, compact glacial till. They have a hardpan within two feet of the surface. Muck consists of thoroughly decomposed organic deposits over mineral soil material. The depth of these deposits varies from 16 inches to more than three feet. Whitman soils are very poorly drained mineral soils that formed in materials similar to those at the Ridgebury soils.

This general soil type has severe limitations for commercial, industrial and residential development due to extreme wetness. Large areas have moderate to severe limitations for wetland wildlife habitat development, especially shallow water impoundments.

Lyman-Berkshire Association	6,690 acres	20%
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This soil type contains extremely rocky, shallow soils and extremely stony, deep soils without hardpan. It occurs on steep hills and ridges. It consists of about 76% Lyman soils and 20% Berkshire soils. The remaining 5% consists of small areas of other similar soils. Lyman soils are somewhat excessively drained loams. These soils developed in thin deposits of soil material over bedrock. Lyman is underlain by bedrock at a depth of about 20 inches. Bedrock outcrops range from less than 30 feet to 100 feet apart. Berkshire soils are well drained loams that developed in deep deposits of glacial till.

This soil type has severe limitations for most uses due to the steep slopes and shallow depth to bedrock.

Merrimac-Sudbury Association	290 acres	1%
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This soil type contains well drained and moderately well-drained, sand and gravelly soils. Most of this type occurs on gentle to moderate slopes on old gravelly terraces. It consists of about 40% Merrimac soils and 40% Sudbury soils. The remaining 20% consists of similar sandy and gravelly soils that are excessively drained to well-drained. Merrimac soils are well-drained, fine sandy loams and sandy loams. They are underlain by stratified sand and gravel deposits at depth of 24 to 30 inches. Sudbury soils are moderately well-drained and similar to Merrimac soils.

This soil area has moderate to severe limitations for commercial and industrial uses, and slight to moderate limitations for residential and farming uses. This area has severe

limitations for wetland wildlife habitat development. Contamination of groundwater may be a problem in areas used for sewage disposal fields and sanitary landfills.

Peru-Marlow Association	12,496	27%
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This soil type is extremely stony, moderately well-drained and well-drained glacial till with hardpans. This general soil type occurs on gently to moderately steep upland areas. It consists of about 55% Peru soils and 40% Marlow soils. The remaining 5% consists mostly of similar well-drained soils without hardpans. Peru soils are deep, moderately well-drained loams developed in compact, stony glacial till. They are underlain at a depth of about 18 to 30 inches by hardpan. Marlow soils are well-drained and are similar to Peru soils with hardpan at 24 to 36 inches.

This general soil area has moderate to severe limitations for most uses due to stones and slope.

The soils in Blandford occupy level to very steep slopes, ranging in gradient from 0% to more than 35%. Slope gradient can be a limiting factor for many uses. There is a relationship between slope and development costs of roads, homes or industrial parks. As the slope of the land increases, the development of necessary infrastructure also increases. Initial costs for grading and landscaping on steeper slopes are higher and establishment and maintenance of lawns is more difficult. This, as well as the presence of hardpan and bedrock so close to the land surface, constrain development in many areas of Blandford.

### ***B. Landscape Character***

Blandford has an elevation from 650 to over 1700 feet above sea level. It is in the Berkshire Transition Zone, which is characterized by forest types of transition (maple-beech-birch, oak-hickory) and northern (Hemlock-White Pine) hardwoods. Surface waters drain to the Westfield and Connecticut River basins.

Blandford has a rich agricultural history. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century its dairy herds supported an important cheese making industry. The miles of old stone walls in today's forests testify to the vast areas of cultivated land that once supported families in Blandford. In comparison, in 1990, less than 4% of Blandford land was in agricultural use.

Today, the hillsides of Blandford support several blueberry farms. Blandford's acidic soils are ideally suited to this activity. Next in agricultural importance is the haying industry, which provides fodder to farm animals in Town and surrounding communities. Sheep farming is also visible in town. A sheep farm and woolen handcraft store are doing quite well at their Route 23 location.

Though Blandford is modest in terms of large-scale agricultural activity, there is still a great deal of farming on a small scale. Most households in town boast a small vegetable garden and some fruit trees. The numerous local exhibitors in the traditional Blandford Fair attest to the interest of residents in growing fruit produce, and flowers.

Since large parcels of Blandford are forested, there is a considerable amount of logging. Christmas tree farms are also visible throughout the town and maple sugaring continues to be practiced within the community.

Recently the Commonwealth of Massachusetts undertook a project to identify and map the areas of the Commonwealth most in need of protection to conserve biodiversity for future generations.

The project, called BioMap, identifies 7,000 acres of core habitat in Blandford, as well as 16,968 acres of supporting landscape, 6,097 acres of riparian corridor land and 5,900 acres of natural lands within the riparian corridor.

Following is a table illustrating the distribution of land uses today. The table demonstrates the character of Blandford as a rural, forested community with rich water resources.

<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Forest	29,428
Intensive Agriculture	708
Open Water	1,139
Residential over ½ acre	674
Wetlands	748
Riparian Corridors	6,307
Flood Plain	2,434
Biomap Core Habitat	6,997
Potential Vernal Pools	44 locations
Outstanding resource water way	23,503
Chapter 61 Forestry	3,535
Chapter 61 Agriculture	559

### ***C. Water Resources***

Watersheds – Blandford’s position in the Westfield River watershed provides a reliable water supply for several communities besides its own. Approximately 40% of the town is in watershed properties. The city of Springfield owns in excess of 30% of the town in order to protect Cobble Mountain Reservoir. This reservoir supplies water to Springfield, Agawam, and East Longmeadow. The towns of Russell, Chester and Huntington also have watershed properties in Blandford.

The total Long Pond watershed area, which provides the water supply for the Town, consists of over 400 acres, of which more than 300 acres lie within the Town of Blandford and 88 acres lie within the Town of Otis. The entire Watershed Protection Area (WPA) Zone A falls within the Town of Blandford. A majority of the land within the WPA Zone A is owned by the City of Springfield (watershed land) or by the Town of Blandford (conservation land – open space funded).

Watershed Recharge Areas – Blandford is in the Westfield and Farmington river basins, with 32,692 acres draining to the Westfield and 1,535 acres draining to the Farmington. According to Mass. DEP, Blandford has 23,503 acres of Outstanding Resource Water.

Flood hazard areas – Because of Blandford’s steep terrain and largely uninterrupted drainage system of brooks, ponds and streams, the Department of Housing and Urban Development

(HUD)/Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) Flood Hazard Maps show relatively few areas of concern. Most areas prone to flooding are existing wetlands, and even in extreme circumstances provide little threat other than some light flooding of low-lying secondary roads. Cobble Mountain Reservoir has a virtually fail-safe spillway that limits the water level within the reservoir, so infrastructure and residential development closest to the reservoir are beyond the designated Zone A flood hazard zone.

#### ***D. Vegetation***

As with most hilltowns, Blandford is primarily comprised of second-growth forest. The forest consists mostly of maple/beech/birch and oak/hickory hardwoods and northern evergreens like Hemlock and White Pine. With over 29,000 acres of forest, Blandford has the highest forest acreage in the entire Westfield River Watershed. Woodlands are economically important, providing resources for lumber operations, firewood, and maple sugaring. The woodlands are also vital scenic resources, providing recreation along official and private trails, including walking and hiking, cross-country skiing, bicycling and running.

Along with the woodlands are associated plants found on the forest floor, such as fringed gentian, ladyslipper, trillium, wild begonia, skunk cabbage, false Solomon's seal, goat's beard, goldenrod, mountain laurel, nightshade, and wood anemone. The Conservation Commission has a record of hundreds of occurrences of wildflowers that Harold Vermes published in March of 1978, for further reference.

As in most other towns, there have been occurrences of invasive species such as purple loosestrife, barberry, Asiatic bittersweet, and buckthorn. This issue is in both the forested areas and in the wetlands.

#### ***E. Fisheries and Wildlife***

Blandford has a considerable amount of forest land, open fields and unpolluted ponds and streams, which support a diversity of fisheries and wildlife. Among animals increasing in numbers in recent years are the wild turkey (now common), black bear, beaver and coyote. Moose, Fishers, Mountain Lions, birds of prey, and Bobcats have also been spotted.

Massachusetts has a rich biological legacy and is home to a wide array of plants and animals, some of which are unique to our state, others that have their largest, most stable populations here, and yet others that are still relatively common. There are 190 species of vertebrate and invertebrate animals and 258 species of native plants that are officially listed as endangered, threatened or of special concern in Massachusetts and tracked by the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program According to the National Heritage and Endangered Species data, Blandford has seven species that are either endangered, threatened or of special concern. They are listed below.

	<b>Scientific name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Federal Rank</b>	<b>Most Recent Observations</b>
Reptile	Clemmys insculpta	Wood Turtle	SC	1995
Bird	Bartramia longicauda	Upland Sandpiper	E	1901

Bird	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	Northern Harrier	T	1923
Bird	<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>	Sedge Wren	E	1982
Vascular Plant	<i>Gentiana andrewsii</i>	Andrews' Bottle Gentian	E	1997
Vascular Plant	<i>Rhododendron maximum</i>	Great Laurel	T	1946
Vascular Plant	<i>Sisyrinchium mucronatum</i>	Slender Blue-Eyed Grass	T	1919

Much of the Blandford wildlife needs either tree canopy or low, dense leafy growth for hiding from predators, for roosting, and for food. Some require clearings for their shrubs with berries, or farmland with succulent grasses and grains. Many mammals common to inland New England, as well as native trout and salmon, inhabit Blandford. Wildlife that can be found in Blandford are listed below.

#### **Common Name**

#### **Scientific Name**

Virginia Opossum

*Didelphis virginiana*

Masked Shrew

*Sorex cinereus*

Hairy-tailed Mole

*Parascalops breweri*

Star-nosed Mole

*Condylura cristata*

Little Brown Bat

*Myotis lucifugus*

Northern Long-eared bat

*Myotis septentrionalis*

Eastern Pipistrelle

*Pipistrellus subflavus*

Big Brown Bat

*Eptesicus fuscus*

Eastern Cottontail

*Sylvilagus floridanus*

Snowshoe Hare

*Lepus americanus*

Eastern Chipmunk

*Tamias striatus*

Woodchuck

*Marmota monax*

Eastern Gray Squirrel

*Sciurus carolinensis*

Red Squirrel

*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*

Northern Flying Squirrel

*Glaucomys sabrinus*

Southern Flying Squirrel	<i>Glaucomys volans</i>
American Beaver	<i>Castor Canadensis</i>
White-Footed Mouse	<i>Peromyscus leucopus</i>
Deer Mouse	<i>Peromyscus maniculatus</i>
Southern Black-footed Vole	<i>Clethrionomys gapperi</i>
Meadow Vole	<i>Microtus pennsylvanicus</i>
Woodland Vole	<i>Microtus pinetorum</i>
Woodland Jumping Mouse	<i>Napaeozapus insignis</i>
Common Porcupine	<i>Erethizon dorsatum</i>
Coyote	<i>Canis latrans</i>
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>
Common Gray Fox	<i>Urocyon cinereoargenteus</i>
Black Bear	<i>Ursus americanus</i>
Common Raccoon	<i>Procyon lotor</i>
Fisher	<i>Martes pennanti</i>
Ermine	<i>Mustela erminea</i>
Long-tailed Weasel	<i>Mustela frenata</i>
American Mink	<i>Mustela vison</i>
Northern River Otter	<i>Lutra canadensis</i>
Striped Skunk	<i>Mephitis mephitis</i>
Bobcat	<i>Lynx rufus</i>
White-tailed Deer	<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>
Moose	<i>Alces alces</i>
Evening Grosbeak	<i>Hesperiphona vespertina</i>
Tree Sparrow	<i>Spizella arborea arborea</i>
Ruffed Grouse	<i>Bonasa umbellus</i>
Wild Turkey	<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>
Great Horned owl	<i>Bubo virginianus</i>
Pileated Woodpecker	<i>Hylatomus pileatus</i>
Hairy Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopus villosus</i>
Downy Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopus pubescens</i>

Blue Jay	<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>
Common Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>
Black-capped Chickadee	<i>Parus atricapillus</i>
Tufted Titmouse	<i>Parus bicolor</i>
White-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>
Red-Breasted Nuthatch	<i>Hylocichia mustelina</i>
Eastern Bluebird	<i>Sialia sialis</i>
Brown Creeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>
Purple Finch	<i>Carpodacus purpureus</i>
American Goldfinch	<i>Spinus tristis</i>
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>
American Woodcock	<i>Philohela minor</i>
Redwinged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>
Pine Grosbeak	<i>Pinicola enucleator leucura</i>
Cooper's Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>
Wood Thrush	<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>
Wood Duck	<i>Aix sponsa</i>
Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megasceryle alcyon</i>
Black Rat Snake	<i>Elaphe obsoleta obsoleta</i>
Wood Turtle	<i>Clemmys insculpta</i>
Snapping Turtle	<i>Chelydra serpentina</i>
Eastern Painted Turtle	<i>Chrysemys picta picta</i>
Spotted Salamander	<i>Ambystoma maculatum</i>
Northern Two-lined Salamander	<i>Eurycea bislineata</i>
Spring Peeper	<i>Pseudacris crucifer</i>
American Bullfrog	<i>Rana catesbeiana</i>
Bluegill	<i>Lepomis macrochirus</i>
Brook Trout	<i>Salvelinus fontinalis</i>

#### ***F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments***

The Map of Unique Features that is part of this plan includes a variety of landscapes considered important by residents. They include: historic features such as the trolley line and old school

house; facilities that contribute to the traditional rural town center such as the library, Watson Park, and the Congregational Church; scenic viewsheds such as several towards Mount Monadnock in New Hampshire; recreational resources such as Sanderson Brook Falls, Blandford Fairgrounds, the Blandford Club and the Springfield Ski Club; and scenic roads such as the one to Cobble Mountain Reservoir. These features are described further in this section and in Section 5, Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest.

The Lee to Huntington trolley line, which became known as the Huckleberry line during its first season of operation, was constructed by the Western Massachusetts Contracting Company for the Berkshire Street Railway in response to that demand from hilltowns, where farming operations were declining due to the inability to get goods efficiently to market. The hilltowns also hoped to increase tourism to their region. The line was constructed and ran for only two seasons, from 1917 to 1918. Tracks were torn up between 1921 and 1928. There are still remains of the line, including culverts, that can be located on the accompanying map of scenic resources.

The following roads were noted as particularly scenic by the Hampden County Natural Resources Technical Team. These indicate areas that could use current and future maintenance, such as brush cutting and zoning protection.

Chester and George Millard Roads and South Street offer excellent views of the valley and mountains. Nye Brook Road provides a cool, steep ride with numerous vistas of whitewater in the rocky bed of Gibbs Brook. Along Gibbs Road, motorists can see the valley and mountains with a foreground of farmland. Motorists riding along North Street by the Blandford Club are offered excellent views of the mountains to the east and the northeast. On a clear day, one see as far as Springfield. Blair Road provides vistas of the Blandford church steeple and Cobble Mountain Road offers many excellent views of the Cobble Mountain Reservoir.

The Hampden County Natural Resource Technical Team (NRTT) assessed several roadsides for their potential as rest areas. They identified eight sites as having potential: on Chester road near open farmland; the triangle at the junction of North Street and the Massachusetts Turnpike; the north side of Route 23 west of Pond Brook; General Knox Road near the junction of Birch Hill Road; a hilltop near Jackson Hill; Route 23 at the junction of Shephard Road; a large site off Route 23 between Pond Brook and Lloyd's Road; and a site off Cobble Mountain Road, with adequate park policing.

The NRTT also identified several sites that have access to recreational activities. These include: Sanderson and Beulah Land Roads, which provide access to the Chester/Blandford State Forest for hiking and hunting (with restrictions); John Knox Road, which also provides access to the Chester/Blandford State Forest for passive recreation; North Blandford Road, which provides access to the old trolley line right-of-way for hiking and horsebackriding; Jethro Jones Road , which is suitable for horsebackriding and hiking along Walnut Hill Ridge; Blair, Birch Hill, Hiram Blair and Hall Roads, which are suitable for hiking and horsebackriding; and Beech Hill Road, which provides access to trails leading to Pudding Hill; and Warfield Cemetery and edges of Cobble Mountain Reservoir, which are suitable for hiking and hunting with written permission. Some of these roads travel through private property, which should be respected.

### ***G. Environmental Challenges***

Blandford's current zoning by-laws favor residential development along existing roadways, making open land and lightly wooded areas along roads prime sites for development. In order to preserve a rural character, our priority would be to identify and attempt to preserve vistas and

special properties along these roadways. A re-examination of current zoning bylaws might be helpful in preserving roadside vistas.

Increased homebuilding and commercial logging has the potential of changing the balance of land habitat types. An area in which the Great Blue Heron once nested has disappeared. Logging and building will also increase siltation of ponds and streams with the consequent loss of fish populations and loss of potential drinking supplies such as Gibbs Pond and Dunlap Pond. Siltation of Long Pond, Blandford's present source of drinking water, would present an almost insurmountable problem to town residents.

Blandford has installed a new water main and has had to replace water and sewer lines at a cost of \$6,000,000 because of asbestos issues. Currently, there are also road problems such as siltation and road salt, lack of adequate catch basins, and inadequate culverts. As Mass Highway has jurisdiction over Route 23, it is an area of future discussion to limit the use of road salt in order to protect the outstanding water supply.

## **Section 5: Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest**

This inventory describes ownership, management agency, current use, condition, recreation potential, public access, type of public grant accepted, zoning and degree of protection, for each parcel. This information is also included in map and matrix form with an accompanying narrative. All municipally owned conservation and recreation facilities and programs have been evaluated for accessibility to people with disabilities.

### ***A. Private Parcels***

The Town of Blandford is comprised of 34,228 acres of land, of which 4,249 acres, or 12.4%, are protected under Chapters 61, 61A, and 61B. These programs provide property tax relief to landowners who retain their land for farming, forestry, or recreation. The program taxes the properties for their use rather than their market value.

The Blandford Conservation Commission works with private landowners to place conservation restrictions on private parcels where possible, and will continue to do this as noted in the new action plan. The Conservation Commission also currently does and plans to continue to encourage land protection under the Commonwealth's APR and Chapter 61 programs. Of the privately owned lands, there are 3,535 acres protected under Chapter 61 for forestry, 559 acres protected under Chapter 61A for agriculture, and 155 acres protected under Chapter 61B for recreation. Additionally, there is a significant portion of protected lands that are privately owned. The City of Springfield owns in excess of 10,000 acres, the Town of Russell owns 2,755 acres, DEM owns 2,276 acres, Hull Forest Products owns 1,088 acres, and the Town of Blandford owns more than 300 acres. Following are descriptions of private and public parcels of particular value to the Town.

Bedlam Brook, which drains into Cobble Mountain Reservoir, is a beautiful waterway with wetlands for wildlife habitat, alders, swale grass and some open water.

Blandford Ski Area, in operation since 1936, has a 465 foot elevation gain and contains 22 trails, three chairlifts, one surface lift, two lodges, a terrain park, and a half pipe. The Blandford Club offers a nine-hole golf course and tennis courts that are accessible in the summer. Members are offered discounts, as well as access to a boathouse on Russell Pond. The ski area is open to nonmembers.

### ***B. Public and Nonprofit Parcels***

Dover Trust Land – the Town of Blandford is acquiring this parcel from the City of Springfield and plans to use it and its accompanying building for appreciation of nature and wildlife. More details on this parcel will be forthcoming.

The Chester/Blandford State Forest, located north of Chester Road, contains 2,297 acres of which 1,119 acres are located in Blandford. This forest is a very scenic, wooded area with moderate to steep sloping, rough, stony land. The forest offers stream fishing, hiking, horsebackriding, hunting, and woodland management. There are also very scenic streams and falls, a mica mine and a gold mine. One of the falls, called Sanderson Brook Falls, has breathtaking views of whitewater dropping over precipitous ledges in view of Sanderson Brook Road. This state forest has a few wheelchair-accessible roads, but no accessible trails.

An abandoned goldmine located on Goldmine Brook, one mile south of the Chester-Blandford State Forest access road, is suitable for geologic study. A 20-minute hike along Goldmine Brook is rather scenic, with frequent views of white water in the rocky streambed. The mine consists of a vent shaft with wood retaining wall, drill holes in the ledge, tailings, etc. A short distance downstream lie the remains of a foundation and a canal that were apparently connected with the mine. Also associated with the mine is an impoundment site on Goldmine Brook about 1 ½ miles upstream from the Chester Town line. This has the potential to become a 53-acre lake with a maximum depth of 18 feet at the dam. The Springfield Hiking Club has initiated many trips to this area in the past. This area is not accessible.

There are three Town owned parcels near Freeland Brook. The three parcels total 145 acres: parcel 28-68 acres, parcel 26- 57 acres, and parcel 25- 20 acres. Parcel 25 is privately owned and is landlocked because of the Massachusetts Turnpike. This 26 acre tract would be a nice addition to the land already owned by the Town.

This area is suited for passive recreation. There are forests of oak and hemlock, which surround the remains of an old dam once used for municipal water. One of the branches of Freeland Brook is rock lined with ledge outcropping and rock waterfalls, which makes a good setting for hiking, fishing and geology. Currently there are no accessible benches or trails.

Long Pond Conservation Area - In 1985, the Town of Blandford purchased 234 acres surrounding Long Pond Reservoir to protect drinking water. A beaver pond along the edge of North Blandford Road attracts an abundance of wildlife. In the past, the Boy Scouts have worked on trails around the beaver pond and have added wood duck boxes to this area. This parcel was purchased with assistance from a Self-Help Grant; therefore the public is encouraged to use the area for passive recreation such as hiking, ice skating, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, birdwatching, photography, etc. In 1999, an additional 69 acres was purchased by the Town to continue efforts to protect the watershed and filtration plant. Currently there are no accessible trails.

The Town Common, located by the town garage and between two cemeteries, contains approximately nine acres of town-owned land. It is partially wooded with large, well-pruned white pines and oaks. This area is suitable for limited picnicking and hiking, and contains a Bicentennial Oak planted in 1935, along with a plaque marking the site of the first church in Town. It is a nicely landscaped public space with a circular rock planter in the center and a large shade tree; several raised perennial and shrub beds; paving stones; and a bench. Access is very easy for those with disabilities.

Watson Memorial Park, located north of Blandford Center on Blandford Road, is an excellently maintained 11-acre park with an extensive network of roads and paths, a tennis court, a horseshoe pit and a ball diamond. The park is well landscaped with many interesting flowers and shrubs, and has several picnic facilities, great views of the Connecticut and Westfield valleys, and roads suitable for jogging and hiking. It has an old-style metal playground w/ several swings, two slides, jungle gyms; little league ball field; several picnic tables w/ BBQ facilities; tennis court; extensive well-maintained, rolling open lawn area; single lane loop road (5mph) w/ some mature large Rhododendrons and miscellaneous other plantings and large shade trees; and a small gazebo in need of some repair; there are two historic barns on the property. Ice skating has been done in the past on a flooded winter rink. There are no curb issues and good access to all areas. The Blandford Historical Commission (BHC) is in the process of working with a professional arborists to identify, prune, and upgrade the trees, shrubs, and perennial flowerbeds. The BHC has been awarded grant money from the Highlands Communities Initiative to continue this project.

Veteran's Park at Town Common: (corner of Rt. 23 and N. Blandford Road - next to Highway Dept. Garage) contains five commemorative stones honoring veterans of the Civil, Spanish, WW1, WWII, Vietnam and Korean Wars; and seven flag poles. It is a memorial erected by the Commonwealth in 1927 to commemorate General Knox's march from Ft. Ticonderoga to Boston to fight the British. General Knox came through Blandford during the winter of 1775-76 carrying canons and arms that were used to liberate Boston. The park is very accessible.

Miller's Swamp, located partly on State Forest land and partly on private land, contains approximately 50 acres of hardwood swamp. The area has small patches of open water, ferns, blueberries and other natural shrubs. There has been limited development in the area, with five new residences along the road. The rest would be suitable for a conservation restriction.

Tolland State Forest, located in Otis on the border of Blandford, consists of approximately 870 acres of woodland and hardwood swamp land. South Otis Road and Otis Tolland Road provide access to the forest, which offers hiking, horsebackriding and hunting opportunities. The State Forest has accessible restrooms, but no accessible trails.

The Wigwam Brook Conservation Area – In May, 2003 the Valley Land Fund (VLF) assisted the Town of Blandford in purchasing 150 acres, located on the corner of Russell Road and Nye Brook Road, from the Letourneau family. This property has a conservation restriction on it. Wigwam Brook is a tributary of the Westfield River. This property has access through a deeded right of way which can be accessed by the driveway leading to the Letourneau farmhouse. The Blandford Conservation Commission is in the process of securing another entry to the parcel by way of Nye Brook Road. The area is open to the public for passive recreation. The VLF requests that this land not be logged, encouraging old growth. An old logging road helps to distribute hikers throughout the diverse property. This property is not accessible.

## **Section 6: Community Vision**



### ***A. Description of Process***

In 2002, Blandford began taking advantage of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Order 418, which provides \$30,000 of planning services to participating communities. With the assistance of PVPC, the Town looked at the four core elements of open space, housing, economic development, and transportation in order to [improve quality of life and preserve community character](#). Representatives from PVPC presented the components and process of open space and recreation planning to prepare for the updating of Blandford's Open Space and Recreation Plan, which had not been done since 1988. The Trustees of Reservations also supported the OSRP update by funding a portion of it with their Highlands Community Initiative grant program.

As part of the development of the Community Development Plan, the Community Development Committee initiated a local survey in September 2002. The survey is included in the appendix. Many of the responses were related to open space and recreation. Almost 30% of respondents identified the Town's open space as a primary reason for living there. The same percentage felt that the town should set aside funds for the purchase or protection of open space in town, although a greater percentage (32.4%) thought collaborative funding between the Town and the state should be initiated to protect open space. Respondents overwhelmingly ranked the Town's forests (74.1%) and open spaces (76.3%) as key Town features. The most popular recreational

activities in which respondents participated included walking (64%), hiking (49%), bicycling (48%), bird watching (40%), swimming (37%), and fishing (36%). Other popular activities respondents mentioned included canoeing, kayaking, hunting, and cross-country skiing.

In early 2003, the Town began participation in a series of workshops related to each of the core elements of the Community Development Plan. On March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2003, residents identified strengths and weaknesses of the Town on flip charts and identified them spatially on maps provided by PVPC. Additionally, residents identified features unique to the Town. In June, residents prepared a wish list of future open space and recreation goals and activities, which is detailed further below. Concurrently with the Community Development Plan meetings, a committee devoted to open space and recreation planning met regularly with representatives from PVPC to review and discuss the OSRP update.

### ***B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals***

On June 5, 2003, residents met at a workshop where they developed a “wishlist” of future open space and recreation goals. These issues stood out as the most vital for the future of open space and recreation for the Town. The OSRP committee will continue to work to develop these objectives.

- Farm preservation
- Scenic ridge protection
- Meeting or gathering place
- Re-establishing views and vistas
- Upgrade Watson Park, with bathrooms and soccer fields
- Maintain viability of fairgrounds (private owner now, Town wants first right of refusal)
- Comment on Environmental Impact Statement for Land Use Study of Bioreserve lands
- Noise abatement of I-90
- Action to reduce number of cell towers
- Re-establish activities within Town boundaries (as they were 12 years ago)
- Soccer
- T-Ball
- Ice skating
- Get parents back into participatory role
- Provide usable recreational fields, for intramural leagues and practice
- Investigate liability and feasibility issues for skate park
- Provide a Nature/Interpretive Center & Environmental Library
- Hiking trails-maintain existing trails, map trails, provide new trails
- Provide shared transport for cultural activities and field trips

- Promote a hunter safety & instructional course, especially for fishing and boating
- Provide activities for children, especially if the school week goes to 4 days
- Reinvigorate the 4-H program
- Preserve the historic town center
- Collaborate with The Nature Conservancy to identify and map target areas for prime habitat

Additionally, in 2005, the University of Massachusetts will complete the Biomap habitat project for Blandford. It will be a tool Blandford will use to focus protection efforts where they are most needed. Concurrently, the Blandford Historical Commission will be doing a vegetation inventory of Watson Park.

## **Section 7: Analysis of Needs**

### ***A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs***

According to many studies of wildlife science and ecology, including those done by Harvard University, the variety of existing species of wildlife and vegetation require different landscape patterns. These patterns include small and large patches of land that are ideally connected by corridors that wildlife can use to travel. Blandford does not currently have an environmental inventory for habitat and wildlife corridors. The Conservation Commission would like to collaborate with The Nature Conservancy to begin identifying and inventorying likely areas, as well as gathering data from the Biomap and State Greenway Plan for core habitat areas.

The recently tabulated survey results indicate that residents are very supportive of protecting the town's resources. Almost 30% of residents felt that the town should set aside funds for the purchase or protection of open space in town, although a greater percentage (32.4%) thought collaborative funding between the Town and the state should be initiated to protect open space. Respondents overwhelmingly ranked the Town's forests (74.1%) and open spaces (76.3%) as key town features.

### ***B. Summary of Community's Needs***

According to the *Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)*, participation rates for communities in the region are highest for golfing (26.6%); playground activity (25.8%); picnicking (26.5%); sightseeing, tours, and events (54.9%); watching wildlife and nature study (29%); walking (44.5%); fishing (39.7%); swimming (52.7%); and hiking (41.9%). These responses suggest a market for trails, water-based recreation, playgrounds, and activities for the growing senior population.

Residents of the community feel that there is an issue with noise and light pollution; they wish to retain the rural character of Blandford. Currently there are conflicts with ATVs, dirt bikes, and snowmobiles. There is not enough policing and a lack of adequate response from the environmental police. There is also no recreation available for seniors and no transportation for them. There is a perceived need from the community for these types of programs and facilities.

### ***C. Management Needs, Potential Change of Use***

One of the present challenges to overcome is the lack of meeting space. Town hall and the post office are combined in one small building, which has only one meeting room. It is therefore impossible for more than one board or committee to meet on the same night. The old school building, which is currently used only for preschool, is an untapped resource for space.

Another issue is staffing of committees and communication between them. Staffing of the town offices has been sporadic. There has recently been more positive communication than in the past, but there is still a high turnover rate, so ongoing communication is difficult.

The Recreation Committee in particular is struggling, as there is no longer an elementary school to draw parents and children together for activities. This points to a need for a gathering place that draws adults and youth, as well as a potential resource in the form of the building that once housed the elementary school and is now underused.

Town finances are limited, and committees also struggle to find time to apply for grants. The regional school is taking up the majority of town funds.

A continuing issue is the great amount of land owned by the City of Springfield for their water supply. The land is a potential resource, but access is limited at present. Residents feel that there is a loss of control over resources that exist in the town. Residents are also concerned about the continuing viability of the fairgrounds, which are privately owned.

In 2002, many residents became concerned when the State's Executive Office of Environmental Affairs proposed opening several thousand acres of watershed protection lands for "passive" recreation, including hunting. An outside consultant (Epsilon Associates) was hired from the eastern part of the State and plans for the "Cobble Mountain Bioreserve" were drafted with minimal input or approval from Blandford residents. The plan lacked clarity in many respects, such as permitting hunting in core and supporting habitat areas without first requiring an environmental impact study or species inventories and providing no commitment for compensation to the Town for the increased costs of monitoring, policing or maintenance. The plan ultimately failed to pass the Legislature, but made many aware of the perceived value of Blandford's conservation lands to those involved in environmental politics. A strong sense of autonomy ensued with the emergent need for the Town to maintain control of its environmental destiny and see that any major change of use be allowed only after proper protocol is followed. [see Appendix for a detailed description of the Bioreserve issue].

## **Section 8: Goals and Objectives**

*Summary: the Open Space and Recreation Committee and town residents, in workshops and in survey results, have identified rural character, forestland, watersheds, scenic roads, wildlife habitat, recreation trail and activities, farmland, viewsheds, and wetlands as important aspects of their community. The community and its representatives will work towards these goals through a series of actions over the next five-year period.*

The following goals elaborate on the summary, detailing the most important objectives identified by the Open Space and Recreation Committee in its meetings and workshops.

1. Protect public drinking water resources
2. Preserve the watersheds and purity of the drinking water supplies of the City of Springfield and the Towns of West Springfield, Agawam, Longmeadow, East Longmeadow, Russell, and Huntington, as well as that of the Town of Blandford (including the Mass Turnpike facility restaurant, service station, maintenance area, etc.)
3. Monitor progress of filtration plant made necessary by the findings of high fecal coliform a few years ago. The plant and concomitant water and sewer lines will service only about 200 homes, but raise taxes for the entire town.
4. Protect water supplies from road salt; all of Route 23 should be a reduced salt area.
5. Preserve the natural environment of the Town in order to assure a rural atmosphere for future generations.
6. Encourage conservation easements, restrictions, or gifts of lands.
7. Establish roads in Blandford as “scenic roads” under MGL 40 ch. 15.
8. Maintain or improve certain scenic views in the Town.
9. Define and map priority habitat areas.
10. Provide a balanced recreation program with emphasis on integration of certain conservation and recreation activities.
11. Map and maintain existing trails for horsebackriding, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, and hiking.
12. Continue to collaborate with Russell on using and developing Russell Pond as an accessible swimming area.
13. Investigate trails of out-of-the-way sites in town of special interest.
14. Provide assistance in the area of conservation for various youth groups such as the scouts and 4-H Club.
15. Consider applying for the Community Forestry Program.
16. Maintain an active conservation education program for all citizens.

17. Establish center, possibly Dover Trust Nature Center, for appreciation of nature, wildlife, and historical matters.
18. Provide periodic talks, nature walks, slideshows, or the like by knowledgeable individuals on special topics in the area of natural history.
19. Integrate conservation projects with existing summertime recreational activities for children.
20. Maintain and expand the wildflower inventory.
21. Continue to exercise control over practices which alter Blandford's natural environment.
22. Vigorously enforce the Wetlands Protection Act and Regulations.
23. Collaborate with The Nature Conservancy to include more of Blandford in the Forest Legacy Program.
24. Review roadside cutting program through the Board of Selectmen with the Highway Department and the Tree Warden.
25. Encourage development of Blandford's limited good farmland for farming. (including blueberry, tree and horse farms)
26. Encourage and publicize the Agricultural Preservation Act.
27. Encourage good woodland management, and forestry practices that minimize erosion of soils into streams.
28. Map existing cultivated fields to monitor net loss of farmland.
29. Create a farmer's market in the center of town and encourage farmers to participate.
30. Protect farmland with proper zoning bylaws
31. Establish dialogue with State Fish and Game Department, PVPC, and UMass Extension to see what might be done to improve conditions for wildlife in town, to increase total numbers, and to encourage diverse species.
32. Work to overcome conflicts of use and ownership.
33. Consider effects of off-road vehicles, hunters, permits and trash.
34. Develop a conservation protocol which defines steps which must be taken before changes of use may occur.
35. Consider collecting stumpage and water fees to use for conservation

## **Section 9: Five-Year Action Plan**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Responsible Committee</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Preserve the watersheds and purity of the drinking water supplies of the City of Springfield and the Towns of West Springfield, Agawam, Longmeadow, East Longmeadow, Russell, and Huntington, as well as that of our own Town of Blandford	Conservation Commission	ongoing
Monitor progress of filtration plant and water lines	Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission	Ongoing
Protect water supplies from road salt; all of Route 23 should be a reduced salt area.	Conservation Commission	2004-ongoing
Consider Beaver Pond on North Blandford Road for winter ice skating resource	Planning Board, Conservation Commission	2004-2005
Encourage conservation easements, restrictions, or gifts of lands	Conservation Commission	ongoing
Establish roads in Blandford as “scenic roads” under MGL 40 Ch. 15	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen	2003
Maintain or improve certain scenic views	Planning Board, Conservation Commission	ongoing
Define and map priority habitat areas, using the Biomap tool being developed by UMass	Planning Board, Conservation Commission	2004-2005
Map and maintain existing trails for horsebackriding, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, and hiking	Planning Board	Ongoing
Continue to collaborate with Russell on using Russell Pond as an accessible swimming area	Board of Selectmen	2004-2006
Investigate trails of out-of-the-way sites in town of special interest.	Planning Board, Conservation Commission	Ongoing
Provide assistance in the area of conservation for various youth groups such as the scouts and 4-H Club	Conservation Commission	Ongoing
Consider the Community Forestry Program	Conservation Commission	2004
Establish center, possibly Dover Trust Nature Center, for appreciation of nature, wildlife, and historical matters	Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Historical Commission	2004-2005

Provide periodic talks, nature walks, slideshows, or the like by knowledgeable individuals on special topics in the area of natural history	Conservation Commission, Recreation Committee	Ongoing
Integrate conservation projects with existing summertime recreational activities for children	Recreation Committee	2004-2008
Maintain and expand the wildflower inventory	Conservation Commission	Ongoing
Vigorously enforce the Wetlands Protection Act and Regulations	Conservation Commission	Ongoing
Collaborate with The Nature Conservancy to include more of Blandford in the Forest Legacy Program	Planning Board, Conservation Commission	2004-2005
Review roadside cutting program through the Board of Selectmen with the Highway Department and the Tree Warden.	Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Board of Selectmen	2004
Encourage and publicize the Agricultural Preservation Act	Planning Board, Conservation Commission	Ongoing
Encourage good woodland management, and forestry practices that minimize erosion of soils into streams	Conservation Commission	Ongoing
Map existing cultivated fields to monitor net loss of farmland	Planning Board	2004-2005
Create a farmer's market in the center of town and encourage farmers to participate	Planning Board, Conservation Commission	2005-2007
Protect farmland with proper zoning bylaws	Planning Board	2004-2006
Establish dialogue with State Fish and Game Department, PVPC, and UMass Extension to see what might be done to improve conditions for wildlife in town, to increase total numbers, and to encourage diverse species	Conservation Commission	Ongoing
Consider effects of off-road vehicles, hunters, permits and trash	Board of Selectmen	2004-2009
Continue communication with Springfield Water and Sewer on access and enforcement for watershed lands (Article 97)	Planning Board, Conservation Commission	2004-2007
Consider collecting stumpage and water fees to use for conservation	Board of Selectmen	2004-2007
Educate residents to consider adoption of the Community Preservation Act	Board of Selectmen	2004-2005
Use Long Pond as an educational tool in order to further community knowledge of flora and	Conservation Commission	ongoing

fauna

Regarding the needs of the elderly in Town, open discussion with the Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen	Conservation Commission, 2004-2008 Planning Board, Board of Selectmen
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Reestablish a Recreation Committee	Conservation Commission, 2004-2006 Recreation Committee
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# Element Two: Housing



Town of Blandford  
Community Development Plan

## **Element Two: Housing**

On January 20, 2000, Governor Paul Cellucci and Lieutenant Governor Jane Swift issued Executive Order 418. This Order was designed to help communities plan for new housing opportunities while balancing economic development, transportation infrastructure improvements and open space preservation. The impetus of this Order was a commitment to creating housing opportunities for families and individuals across a broad range of incomes.

The first step of EO418, a buildout analysis of the Town of Blandford, has already been completed. PVPC analyzed the developable land in Blandford and calculated what full buildout would look like under current zoning restrictions and natural constraints such as steep slopes, wetlands, rivers and floodplains. According to this analysis, there is approximately 11,500 acres of unconstrained land in town for potential development. While this new development would certainly put undue stress on the infrastructure and outstanding natural resources of the town, it presents an opportunity for further analysis of future housing types and locations. This plan considers the current housing supply in Blandford, assesses areas where housing types do not meet current and future demand, analyzes the gap between the housing supply and demand for low and moderate income households, and suggests housing goals, objectives, and strategies for their implementation.

Today, a major challenge Blandford faces is meeting the housing needs of the community as its young adults enter the market and a growing proportion of the Town's population ages. As can be seen in the housing supply and demand section, actual housing costs remain prohibitive for people with low and moderate incomes.

Blandford has started to feel the growth pressure from neighboring communities due to its proximity to highway transportation routes. As real estate values in the Pioneer Valley continue to escalate, land that was once considered relatively inexpensive will continue to increase in value.

### **Housing Trends**

- 23 percent of home owners and of 19 percent renters in town pay **more than 30 %** of their income for housing
- 7.6 percent of home owners and renters pay **more than 50 %** of their household income for housing
- Blandford currently has 3 subsidized (chapter 40B) housing units
- The average sale price of a single family home in Goshen in 2003 was \$140,000
- Over half the homes in Blandford were built before 1960
- From 1990 to 2000, Goshen experienced a significant decrease in the number of homes used for seasonal and recreational purposes
- Only 3.8% of the current ownership housing stock is affordable\* for low income residents over age 65
- None of the current rental units or ownership units in town are considered affordable<sup>1</sup> for low income households under age 25

\* The generally accepted HUD definition of affordability is for a household to pay no more than 30 percent of its annual income on housing.

## *Housing Supply and Condition Inventory*

### **Description of housing stock and densities**

According to U.S. Census data, Blandford had 526 housing units in 2000, a decrease of 3% over the 544 housing units in 1990 (Source: 2000 U.S. Census). This reflects a reduction in housing production as compared to the Commonwealth as a whole (6.0% increase) and the Pioneer Valley region (4.9% increase) over the same time period. Fortunately, occupied housing increased from 424 units in 1990 to 456 in 2000.

Despite this recent increase in occupied housing development, the average age of Blandford's housing stock remains slightly older than that of the Pioneer Valley's. Nearly seven percent of all housing stock was built since 1990; however, over 36% of housing is over sixty years old (Source: 2000 U.S. Census). This is slightly older than that of the Greater Pioneer Valley region in which 30% of housing units are more than 60 years old.

In 2000, Blandford had a relatively low occupancy rate, with only 87% of all housing units occupied year-round. However, the majority of the unoccupied units were either on the market or were seasonal housing. The number of vacant units in town has decreased significantly since 1990 (a 42% decrease). This decline has made finding vacant housing in town easier.

***Table 2-1: Housing Stock***

	<b>Housing Stock</b>				
	<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>		<b>% Change</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	544		526		(3.3%)
<b>Occupied Housing Units</b>	424	77.9%	456	86.7%	7.5%
<b>Vacant Housing Units</b>	120	22.1%	70	13.3%	(41.7%)
<b>Vacant Units</b>					
<b>For rent</b>	0	0.0%	1	1.4%	100.0%
<b>For sale</b>	5	4.2%	4	5.7%	(20.0%)
<b>Rented or sold, but not occupied</b>	6	5.0%	2	2.9%	(66.7%)
<b>For seasonal or recreational use</b>	93	77.5%	54	77.1%	(41.9%)
<b>For migrant workers</b>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Other vacant</b>	16	13.3%	9	12.9%	(43.8%)

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Nearly 96% of the town is currently undeveloped with 60% (20,200 acres) of the land protected in some manner. Considered by developed land parcels, 96% of Blandford is developed for single family residential uses, while only 1.4% is used for multi-family residential, condominiums or apartments (Source: Mass. Department of Revenue). Most of Blandford's housing units (94%) are single family detached houses, followed by duplex units (3%). Sixty-four percent of homes in Blandford have six or more rooms. Blandford's housing is predominantly owner occupied (89%), with 50 renter-occupied units.

**Table 2-2: Occupancy**

	Owner versus Renter Occupancy				
	1990	Percent	2000	Percent	Percent Change (1990 to 2000)
<b>Occupied Housing Units</b>	424		456		
<b>Owner Occupied</b>	378	89.2%	406	89.0%	7.4%
<b>Renter Occupied</b>	46	10.8%	50	11.0%	8.7%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

### **First-time homebuyer programs**

Blandford participates in the Soft Second loan program. The Soft Second program is sponsored by the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) and the Massachusetts Housing Partnership Fund (MHP) and administered by HAP, Inc. The program subsidizes a second mortgage on a home to help cover interest on the first mortgage for lower income families. (Source: MHFA and HAP, Inc.)

The income limits for the Soft Second loan program represent 80% of the median community income in Blandford and are as follows:

<b>Household Size</b>	<b>Maximum Income</b>
1	\$41,120
2	\$43,450
3	\$48,900
4	\$54,300
5	\$58,650
6	\$63,000
7	\$67,350
8	\$71,700

Other first-time homebuyer programs include Mass. Advantage and Mass. Advantage 100, which are administered by the Mass. Housing Finance Agency.

### **Homelessness Problems**

Blandford does not have a homeless shelter and because it is a rural community without a staffed housing authority, there is little data available on homelessness in Town.

### **Chapter 40B goal, number, type and percent of subsidized housing**

Chapter 40B is the Comprehensive Permit law, which authorizes a housing agency or developer which provides affordable units in at least 25% of a new development to obtain a single comprehensive permit if less than 10% of total year-round housing in the community is subsidized low or moderate-income. "Low or moderate income housing" is defined as any housing subsidized by the federal or state government under any program to assist the construction of low or moderate income housing as defined in the applicable federal or state

statute, whether built or operated by any public agency or any nonprofit or limited dividend organization. This housing must have provisions guaranteeing long-term affordability.

In 2002, Blandford had 3 units (.6%) of subsidized housing meeting the criteria for M.G.L. Chapter 40B (Source: DHCD). If less than ten percent of municipality's total housing units are subsidized low and moderate income units, there is a presumption that there is a substantial housing need which outweighs local concerns (DHCD).

State programs that are included under Chapter 40B include:

- DHCD Chapter 689 Special Needs Housing
- DHCD Chapter 167 Special Needs Housing
- DHCD Chapter 705 Family Low Income Housing
- DHCD 667 Elderly/Handicapped Low Income Housing
- DHCD Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program
- DHCD Affordable Housing Trust
- DHCD Housing Innovations Fund
- DHCD Housing Stabilization Fund
- DHCD Local Initiative Program
- DHCD Individual Self Sufficiency Program
- DMR Group Homes
- DMH Group Homes
- EOHHS Facilities Consolidation Fund
- DMR/DMH community based housing
- Massachusetts Housing Partnership Fund
- MassHousing 80/20 Rental Housing
- MassHousing Elder 80/20
- MassHousing Elder Choice
- MassHousing Expanding Rental Opportunities
- MassHousing Housing Starts

Federal programs that are included under Chapter 40B include:

- FHLB Affordable Housing Program
- FHLB New England Fund
- HUD HOME Program
- HUD Section 811
- HUD Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program
- HUD Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly
- HUD Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Single Room Occupancy Program
- HUD Section 8 Project-based Rental Certificate Program
- HUD Shelter Plus Care
- HUD CDBG Housing Development Support Program
- HUD CDBG Community Development Fund
- HUD Enhanced Voucher
- USDA Rural Development Section 515 program

Blandford is well below the state's 10% Chapter 40B goal for subsidized housing, which makes the town vulnerable to a Comprehensive Permit application.

### **EO 418 Housing Certification**

In 2000, Gov. Cellucci issued Executive Order 418, which declares that a Town must have 10% subsidized housing to be compliant with housing certification requirements. For the first two years of EO418, communities could achieve certification by demonstrating that they have taken steps with respect to planning, removing barriers, and creating a positive atmosphere for housing development. Now, in order to comply, communities must:

- Complete a housing strategy and take step to implement the strategy by creating housing units
- Determine quantifiable objectives for producing affordable housing

Blandford is not currently housing certified under Executive Order 418 (Source: DHCD).

### **2002 Subregional Housing Plan**

Blandford did participate in the 2002 Subregional Housing Plan coordinated by the PVPC. This plan was developed in order to establish a subregional approach to providing a broad framework for developing local affordable housing strategies. As outlined in the Pioneer Valley Subregional Housing Plan of 2002, the communities of Agawam, Blandford, Chester, Granville, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Russell, Southampton, Southwick, Tolland and West Springfield identified the following housing needs:

1. Upgrading substandard housing
2. First-time home buyer education and purchase assistance programs
3. Affordable housing unit production given environmental constraints
4. Technical assistance in areas such as zoning bylaws revision, homebuyer assistance, state and federal housing programs, donation of public land, regional cooperation, land trusts, limited equity homeownership, regional cooperation and municipal land acquisition.

The town of Blandford set the following community goals in this plan:

1. Develop new affordable housing within identified building constraints.
2. Technical assistance on zoning revisions, homebuyer purchase assistance, housing rehabilitation grants, and other means to encourage affordable housing and development.

Housing certification is very important for communities not only because of the threat of a Comprehensive Permit, but also because uncertified communities are not eligible to apply for certain key state grants, including:

- Massachusetts CDBG Ready Resource Fund (RRF)
- Massachusetts CDBG Community Capital Fund (MCCF)
- Community Development Action Grants (CDAG)
- Public Works Economic Development Grants (PWED)
- Affordable Housing Trust
- Capital Improvements Preservation Fund.

In addition, housing certification can also provide communities with bonus points for the following competitive grant programs:

- Massachusetts CDBG Community Development Fund
  - Self-help Program
  - Massachusetts Clean Water State Revolving Fund Program
  - Massachusetts Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Program
  - Housing Stabilization Fund
  - Soft Second Loan Program
- and other programs.

## Current Housing Costs

In year 2000, the median monthly housing cost for homeowners to own a home in Blandford was \$1,120 and the median rental cost was \$650 (Source: 2000 U.S. Census). Included in the above housing costs numbers for rental housing are any utilities paid by the renter. The median monthly homeowner's cost includes the cost of mortgage, utilities, taxes, and insurance. In 2000, only 69% of Blandford homeowners reported having a mortgage.

In year 2000, 23% of homeowners in Blandford were paying more than 30% of their total household income for housing costs. In general, 30% of income is used as a reasonable upper limit for housing costs, without a significant hardship. In addition, 19% of renters in Blandford were paying more than 30% of their total household income for housing costs (Source: 2000 U.S. Census). This may indicate a need for low and moderate income housing in Blandford to meet the needs of current residents. It is important to note that some residents choose to spend more than 30% of their income on housing.

When considering households where the head of household is less than 25 years of age, homeowners are paying an alarming 69% of their household income and renters are paying 34%. For households where the head of household is over 65 years of age, housing costs decrease to 36% of household income for owners and 21% for renters.

**Table 2-3: Monthly Housing Costs**

<b>Housing Stock Affordability Overview</b>				
	<b>Rental Housing Market</b>		<b>Owned Housing Market</b>	
<b>All households</b>	Median monthly cost (gross rent)	\$650	Median monthly cost (with mortgage)	\$1,120
	Median monthly income	\$4,411	Median monthly income	\$4,411
	Ratio	0.147	Ratio	0.254
<b>Under 25</b>	Median monthly cost (gross rent)	\$650	Median monthly cost (with mortgage)	\$1,120
	Median monthly income	\$1,875	Median monthly income	\$1,875
	Ratio	0.347	Ratio	0.597
<b>65 and over</b>	Median monthly cost (gross rent)	\$650	Median monthly cost (with mortgage)	\$1,120
	Median monthly income	\$3,080	Median monthly income	\$3,080

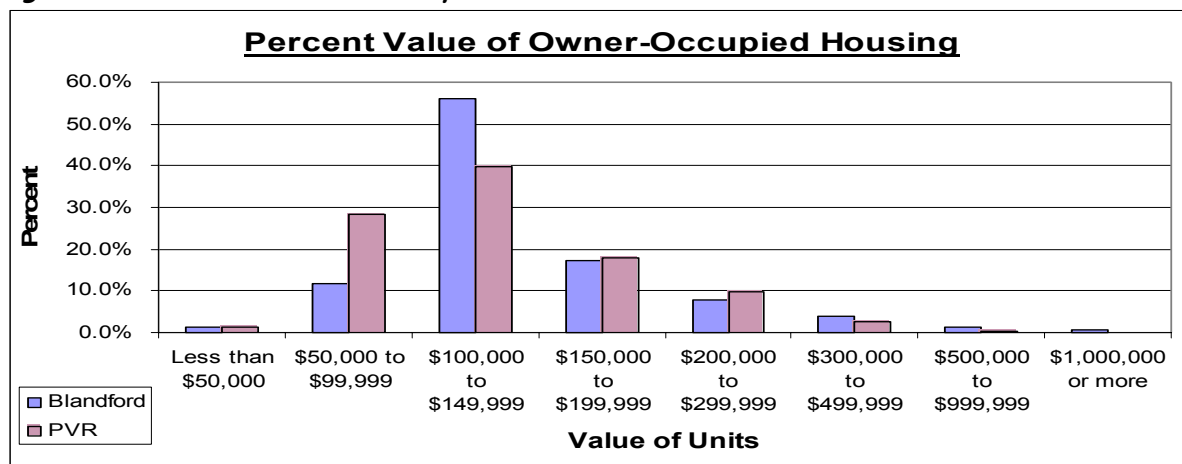
	Ratio	0.211	Ratio	0.364
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Source: U.S. Census

In Fiscal Year 2000, the average assessed value of single-family homes in Blandford was \$121,288. In 2003, this rose to \$133,131, an increase of 9.7% (source: MA DOR). In that same time period, the average single family tax bill increased 43%, from \$1,635 in 2000 to \$2,334 in 2003.

Over 30% of all homes in Blandford were assessed higher than \$150,000. This is just slightly higher than the regional median value of \$135,928. The assessed values shown in the chart below do not indicate that houses currently for sale will continue at this value; in fact, it is highly unlikely based on current trends in the Pioneer Valley.

**Figure 2-1: Value of Owner-Occupied Units**



Source: U.S. Census

### **Health or Sanitary Standards**

The majority of Blandford's housing stock meets health and sanitary standards. Only two units had inadequate facilities for plumbing. No units lack adequate kitchens or telephone service. Homes in town exceed standards of the Pioneer Valley as a whole.

**Table 2-4: Housing Characteristics**

	Town Housing Characteristics		PVR Housing Characteristics	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Lacking complete plumbing	2	0.4%	1,692	0.7%
Lacking complete kitchen	0	0.0%	1,678	0.7%
No telephone service	0	0.0%	3,017	1.3%

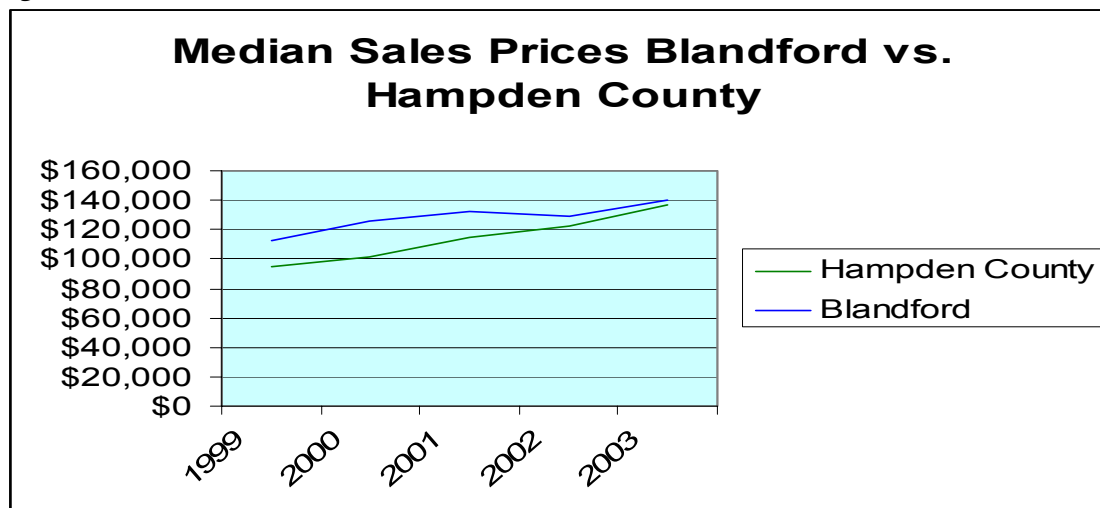
Source: U.S. Census

### **Units on the market**

For 2003, there were 13 single-family homes sold in Blandford (2.5% of housing stock). This represents a decrease from the 26 homes sold in town in 2002, but near the five-year average of 14. This is a general indicator of the percent of units on the market.

The median sales price for single-family homes continues to increase slightly. From 1999 to 2003, the median sales price has increased from \$113,000 to \$140,000. Median sale prices in Hampden County have been slightly less than those in Blandford, ranging from \$95,000 in 1999 to \$137,000 in 2003.

**Figure 2-2: Median Sales Prices**



Source: The Warren Group

## **Assessment of Housing Demand**

### **Household Size**

Two-person households are the predominant household size for owners in Blandford at 36% of all owner-occupied households. One-person households predominate in renter-occupied households, with 28%. Fifty-four percent of all owner-occupied households and 52% of all renter-occupied households in Blandford are one or two-person households. Eight percent of all households in Blandford have five or more occupants.

### **Number and type of households**

From 1990 to 2000, Blandford's population increased slightly from 1,187 to 1,214 (Source: 2000 U.S. Census). Blandford's concurrent increase in occupied housing units indicates a stable household size.

As seen in the table below, 12% of the population in Blandford is over 65 and the head of household. There is only a small percentage of heads of household under age 25. These populations statistically have more difficulty finding and keeping affordable homes.

**Table 2-5: Age of the Head of Household**

Age of the Head of Household				
	Family Households		Nonfamily Households	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Total households</b>	350		106	
<b>15 to 24</b>	2	0.6%	3	2.8%
<b>25 to 34</b>	43	12.3%	3	2.8%
<b>35 to 44</b>	91	26.0%	14	13.2%
<b>45 to 54</b>	115	32.9%	23	21.7%
<b>55 to 64</b>	55	15.7%	31	29.2%
<b>65 to 74</b>	27	7.7%	14	13.2%
<b>75 to 84</b>	16	4.6%	14	13.2%
<b>85 and over</b>	1	0.3%	4	3.8%

Source: U.S Census

### **Age composition and distribution**

Like most towns in the region, the largest age group in Blandford's population is the group aged 35 to 55. Based on this data, nearly 1/3 of the town population will be retirement age within the next ten years. Looking forward, the town will need to provide housing opportunities for this group. Also, Blandford's children are growing up, and are future first-time homebuyers whose needs must be addressed.

### **Income data**

From 1989 to 1999, median household income increased slightly, from \$52,641 (adjusted to 1999 dollars) to \$52,935. Blandford is estimated to have 79 low-income households (incomes below \$26,468), or 17% of all households. An additional 71 households are considered moderate income, below a threshold of \$42,348. Blandford has had an increase in the number of people living below the poverty line, up from 18 people in 1990 to 41 in 2000.

### **Affordability Gap**

Generally, household income groups are in three categories; low, moderate, and middle income groups. As the table below illustrates, low income is considered income up to 50% of the median household income, moderate income is up to 80% of the median household income, and middle income is 150% of median household income from census data. PVPC did a comparative analysis based on census data, which yielded the following results. The table below illustrates what the affordable purchase price for a median priced housing unit in Blandford would be for households in three income categories.

**Table 2-6: Housing Affordability**

Housing Affordability						
	Upper Limit of Income Category <sup>1</sup>	Income as % of Median Single Family Home	Percent of Income Necessary to Purchase the Median Single Family	Most Expensive House Price Affordable <sup>4</sup>	Maximum Number of Owner-Occupied Housing Units	Percent of Owner-Occupied Housing Units Affordable

		Price <sup>2</sup>	Home <sup>3</sup>		Affordable <sup>5</sup>	
<b>All Households</b>	\$52,935	42.0%	20.7%	<b>\$158,805</b>	272	86.3%
<b>Low income households</b>	\$26,468	21.0%	41.3%	<b>\$79,403</b>	41	13.0%
<b>Moderate income households</b>	\$42,348	33.6%	25.8%	<b>\$127,044</b>	218	69.2%
<b>Middle income household</b>	\$79,403	63.1%	13.8%	<b>\$238,208</b>	297	94.3%
<b>Median sale price, single-family home (2000)</b>	\$125,900					

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; The Warren Group; PVPC

1 - Based on thresholds established by the MA Department of Housing and Community Development. Upper limits of each category are determined as follows: low income=50% of median household income; moderate income=80% of median household income; and, middle income=150% of median household income.

2 - Median income, or upper limit for each income category, divided by the median single-family home price in 2000.

3 - Percent of income necessary to make monthly mortgage and property tax payments on the median single-family home with the following assumptions: a) 10% down payment; b) 7.0% annual percentage rate; c) 30 year fixed rate mortgage; d) no points; and, e) \$15 per thousand property tax assessment. No homeowners insurance is included in this calculation.

4 - Median income, or upper limit for each income category, multiplied by three.

5 - The total number of owner-occupied housing units valued within the range of the maximum affordable house.

The table above illustrates that:

- Blandford has a total of approximately 41 housing units assessed at under \$74,403 that are affordable to low-income households with incomes under \$26,468;
- Blandford has a total of approximately 218 housing units assessed at under \$127,044 that are affordable to moderate-income households with incomes under \$42,348; and
- Blandford has approximately 297 housing units assessed at under \$238,208 that are affordable to middle-income households with incomes under \$79,403.

It is important to note that the number of owner occupied units in the table above is based on the value of owner occupied units in Goshen as reported in the 2000 Census; only 315 of the 456 occupied housing units in town.

### **EO 418 Affordable Criteria**

The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) uses more liberal criteria for homeownership for EO 418 certification purposes. The goal is the creation of housing affordable to households across a range of income levels. For Fiscal Year 2004, (DHCD) determined that:

- the affordable home purchase price for a median income household in Blandford is 269,726; and

- the affordable rent for a median income household was \$1,390.

These figures are based on the median income of the Non-Metro Hampden County Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). For Blandford, this means a median income of \$55,600 and assume 5% down payment, 7.5% APR mortgage for 30 years, 30% of income for housing costs and \$300/month for taxes and insurance. Using these criteria for what's affordable, nearly all homes in Blandford would be considered affordable.

### **HUD Affordability Criteria**

The generally accepted definition of affordability is for a household to pay no more than 30 percent of its annual income on housing. Families who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care (U.S. DHUD).

Considering these guidelines, Blandford has approximately 48 occupied ownership and rental units affordable to low-income households, 194 units affordable to moderate-income households, and 270 units affordable to middle-income households. The need for affordable housing is further suggested by the fact that 23 percent of owners and of 19 percent renters in town are paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing with nearly 8% of all renters and owners paying over fifty percent of their household income for housing. According to HUD, these figures are lower than the national trends.

When looking at households where the head of household is under the age of 25 or over the age of 65, Blandford has a significantly lower number of ownership or rental units affordable to low and moderate income households. Using these criteria, there are no units affordable to low income renters or homeowners where the head of household is under the age of 25 and only 16 units affordable to households where the head is over the age of 65. It is evident from this information that ownership housing is beyond affordability for these special populations.

## **Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for Implementation:**

Objective: Blandford seeks to provide a diverse mix of housing types to serve the needs of the Town's changing and aging population in ways that maintain the town's rural quality and historical characteristics. In response to an escalating housing market, Blandford seeks to include affordable housing in its stock to meet the needs of lower and moderate-income households in all age categories.

Below are the strategies developed by the Community Development Planning committee, organized by category.

### **LAND USE AND ZONING**

- Consider adopting a Phased Growth Bylaw
- Consider comprehensive Site Plan Review and Site Plan Approval Bylaw
- Prepare a Conservation Subdivision Zoning Bylaw with incentives to promote retention of natural areas

### **FUNDING**

- Seek funding for Housing Rehabilitation Programs that target low and moderate income households in town
- Consider seeking low interest loans (through Board of Health) to provide funding for septic system repairs

### **AFFORDABILITY**

- Prepare an Affordable Housing Zoning Bylaw (Inclusionary Bylaw)
- Consider adoption of Comprehensive Permit Process Bylaw
- Study Existing Zoning Bylaws and consider adoption of an Accessory Apartment Bylaw
- Prepare amendments to the zoning bylaws that allow Congregate Care and Assisted Living facilities by special permit

These strategies are further explained below. Their intent is to promote a range of housing opportunities while retaining the rural character of Blandford. The Blandford Community Development Plan committee, in concert with Town officials, volunteer Boards and the people of Blandford, has prioritized these strategies as useful and relevant to the town.

### **Study Blandford's current zoning bylaws and explore changing them to allow Accessory Apartments**

Accessory apartments can provide improved rental housing opportunities by allowing "in-law" or accessory apartments in single family homes, without altering the character of neighborhoods. These secondary units can be allowed 'by-right', by site plan administrative review, or by special permit.

### **Affordable Housing Zoning Bylaw**

The adoption of an Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw for Affordable Housing would promote the construction of affordable housing for low and moderate income residents. Inclusionary housing bylaws promote the private market development of affordable housing by offering developers residential density bonuses. In return, the developer must set aside a percentage of housing units in the development for low and moderate income residents. In existing inclusionary bylaws, the

percentage of affordable units generally ranges from 10 to 25% of the total units being developed. As alternatives, communities may allow developers to construct some of the required affordable units off-site, or allow the developer to make a cash payment to the community equal to the value of the affordable units to be used by the community to develop affordable units. Inclusionary zoning allows the integration of all levels of income and allows for a balance between housing and employment. This is done by allowing equal opportunities to all types of developments.

#### **Consider Adoption of Comprehensive Permit Process Bylaw**

The adoption of an Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw for Affordable Housing would promote the construction of affordable housing for low and moderate income residents. Inclusionary housing bylaws promote the private market development of affordable housing by offering developers residential density bonuses. In return, the developer must set aside a percentage of housing units in the development for low and moderate income residents. In existing inclusionary bylaws, the percentage of affordable units generally ranges from 10 to 25% of the total units being developed. As alternatives, communities may allow developers to construct some of the required affordable units off-site, or allow the developer to make a cash payment to the community equal to the value of the affordable units to be used by the community to develop affordable units. Inclusionary zoning allows the integration of all levels of income and allows for a balance between housing and employment. This is done by allowing equal opportunities to all types of developments.

#### **Develop a Conservation Subdivision (Cluster) Zoning Bylaw**

Blandford has not yet adopted Conservation Subdivision Zoning regulations, and since Massachusetts has now amended the State Zoning Act, Chapter 40a, to allow by-right “cluster” development, Blandford could update its Zoning Regulations to allow this use by right, rather than by Special Permit. The town could give a density bonus to a developer for preserving additional open space, utilizing smaller lots, minimizing impervious surface area, and encouraging affordable housing, among others. The Planning Board is currently working to prepare this bylaw for consideration by Town Meeting, possibly in 2004.

#### **Congregate Care and Assisted Living Facilities**

There are several forms of elderly housing, such as ‘life care’ facilities, senior apartments and congregate elderly housing, which are not addressed in many community bylaws. These are vital housing opportunities for elders and should be allowed by Special Permit in most residential areas. In addition to creating potential living units for local elders, these facilities can also provide some local employment opportunities.

#### **Consider Adopting a Phased Growth Bylaw**

The purpose of this bylaw is to promote a manageable rate of residential growth that is consistent with historical development patterns, to limit strain on the community’s ability to provide services to such development, and to protect and enhance the character of the town and its natural resources utilizing a planned growth rate and development schedule.

#### **Consider Comprehensive Site Plan Review and Site Plan Approval Bylaw**

Site plan approval can promote attractive, well-designed business development, by setting standards to reduce impacts on traffic, neighboring properties and community character. Plans are carefully reviewed by a town board and must meet standards for landscaping, architectural design, layout, parking, traffic and access, screening, environmental quality and other related issues. The Administrative Review Process can be used to reduce the procedural burden on applicants wishing to pursue low impact business uses in the Town by eliminating the need for the Special Permitting process.

**Seek Funding for Housing Rehabilitation Programs that Target Low and Moderate Income Households in Blandford**

The Town should continue to support residents wishing to participate in regional and state funding programs established to restore and improve existing housing units that have fallen into disrepair.

**Consider Seeking Low Interest Loans (through the Board of Health) to Provide Funding for Septic System Repairs**

The Blandford Board of Health should remain alert to funding programs loans under the State Revolving Fund Pollution Abatement Trust Program established to help low and moderate income households absorb the often high costs associated with repairing or replacing a failing or failed on-site septic system.

**Rural Village Center Bylaw**

The intent of such a bylaw is to provide a community or neighborhood with a focus area for activity that would include a higher intensity of land use than is typically allowed in outlying areas. Rural Village Centers often have a unique identity, developed over many years, and provide commercial, residential and civic uses within easy and safe walking distance of each other. Vehicular circulation should be well organized yet accessory to the demands of pedestrians and slow moving automobiles. Parks, recreational areas, and cultural sites can serve as important destinations in a rural village center and can also be used as features around which other uses are developed. Site design and dimensional regulations in a rural village district must be thoughtfully created to build upon the existing pattern of buildings and open areas that define the settlement.

# Element Three: Economic Development



Town of Blandford  
Community Development Plan

## **Element Three-Economic Development**

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In general, Blandford's economic character reflects that of many hilltowns in the Western Pioneer Valley. Over the past ten years the Town has seen little in terms of economic development, as job growth and business development has remained stagnant and the average wage in Blandford has remained at about half that of the Pioneer Valley region.

Simultaneously, the number of residents has significantly increased and, currently, over 95% of Blandford's developed land is categorized as residential property. The Town is heavily dependent on residential property taxes as its main source of revenue. Unfortunately, residential properties are more likely to emerge as a tax liability rather than as an asset. This means residential properties cost the town more in services than commercial and industrial properties which use fewer services and do not generally increase high ticket budget items such as educational expenses. Taxes from businesses have increased by over 300% since 1990 but only accounted for 2.4% of the total municipal revenues in FY 2000. Even though the majority of residents who responded to recent planning surveys stated that they do not want to see new small business development in town in order to create local jobs, Blandford could benefit from additional business development.

Blandford's population was 1,214 people in 2000 and is projected to increase by 22.8% by the year 2010. According to the state's 2001 buildout analysis, the Town has the potential to reach a maximum population of 20,632. If this occurred, Blandford would, without a doubt, lose much of its rural character and natural beauty that is so prized by its residents. Furthermore, the current proportion of residential to commercial and industrial properties would not be sustainable and Blandford would have no choice but to seek additional revenue sources. It is also clear that the current infrastructure could not support such a population increase and local zoning revisions should be considered in order to prevent this from occurring and ensure a healthy balance between residential growth and economic development.

### **Statement of Goals**

- Maintain Blandford's rural, small-town atmosphere
- Consider new zoning regulations to protect Blandford's ridgelines, forests, waters, and hillsides from the adverse environmental, functional, and aesthetic impacts of development
- Promote economic opportunities for businesses such as artisan/craftsman, home-based occupations, agriculture or farm-support operations, or gardening/landscaping business
- Support seasonal housing and deter additional multi-family and rental apartment developments

### **Summary of Key Trends**

Key economic trends, which are described in greater detail throughout this plan, include:

- A consistent number of town employers but a decreased number of employees
- A significant increase in the number of commercial and industrial zoned parcels
- A decrease in the number of multi-family residential parcels

- 6,697 acres of land potentially unconstrained to development and maximum population of 20,632 people.
- Average weekly wages significantly lower than that of the Pioneer Valley region
- A 19% increase in town expenditures and a 53% increase in total revenue since 1990 (calculated into 2000\$)
- Average educational levels higher than that of the region

## **Purpose**

Economic development helps sustain the quality of life in our communities by ensuring prosperity and jobs for residents. As cities and towns become even more integrated into the national and international economies, a planned approach for future economic development helps ensure the long-term viability of our local economies. Moreover, economic growth is increasingly interrelated with housing, transportation, and open space and resource protection.

Creating an economic development plan is the process of analyzing the unique characteristics of the municipality in light of community business development and retention goals, and then defining appropriate strategies to meet these goals. Facilitating economic development is an important function of local government regardless of whether the economic priority is the revitalization of a commercial center or retaining existing economic activity.

Strategies contained in the plans are meant to prepare the Town of Blandford to quickly respond to both problems and opportunities that come about due to changes in the economy. A plan provides the foundation for this type of decision-making as it clearly delineates the community's goals and strategies. Lastly, it gives local officials the direction needed to take a leadership position in addressing economic growth and prosperity issues.

### *The Product: Economic Development Element of a CD Plan*

- ◆ Current and future economic profile
- ◆ Economic development goals statement
- ◆ Implementation strategy and accompanying map

This element of the Blandford Community Development plan was developed by:

- researching, collecting, summarizing and analyzing economic development data from local, state, and regional sources;
- surveying a small sample of community leaders and business owners to get a sense of the community's economic development concerns and issues;
- articulating possible economic development goals;
- presenting proposed goals and data to the community;
- modifying proposals based on community input; and
- summarizing information gathered and preparing a list of recommendations on how the community can achieve its goals.

The economic development section of Blandford's Community Development Plan identifies the location, quantity, and type of future commercial and economic development. By creating a profile of Blandford's current and potential economic status, using buildout and growth suitability maps, the community has determined needs and resources, established economic goals, and developed strategies for implementation. This section also discusses the Commonwealth's

Framework for Economic Development and the Pioneer Valley's Plan for Progress. These goals are the basis for Blandford's future community economic development strategy.

## **A Strategic Framework for Economic Development**

The State of Massachusetts' report *Toward a New Prosperity: Building Regional Competitiveness Across the Commonwealth* outlines policy options that are designed to promote a healthy debate around the economic future of the Commonwealth and its regions. Knowledge-intensive production, high-tech innovation, and global trading characterize the "New Economy" of Massachusetts. New economic conditions present Massachusetts with a new set of challenges. Continued progress will require well-targeted educational and infrastructure investments. The report proposes a strategic framework composed of six competitive imperatives for the economic development of the Commonwealth designed to meet the challenges of the "New Economy". In addressing these imperatives, the Commonwealth can achieve its proposed vision for economic development.

### **Six Imperatives**

#### **1. Improve the business climate to support all industry clusters.**

Vibrant and innovative export industry clusters are the primary engines of economic growth today. In traditional, as well as knowledge-based sectors of the economy, such clusters support and motivate innovation, which enhances the Commonwealth's competitive position. We need to support the development of strong export clusters in all regions of the Commonwealth.

#### **2. Support entrepreneurship and innovation.**

Strengthening the Commonwealth's innovation infrastructure will give entrepreneurs better access to the resources they need by improving channels of communication and coordination. We must take aggressive action to reduce disparities in business resources that support innovation and improve access to capital in all regions of the Commonwealth.

#### **3. Prepare the workforce of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

A well-educated and highly skilled workforce is essential to competitiveness in today's economy. Our firms must have access to talent they need to succeed and our workers must have skills that match the opportunities emerging in this constantly evolving competitive marketplace.

#### **4. Build the information infrastructure of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

The Commonwealth has made enormous transportation investments, most visibly in roads, bridges, and air transportation. The rise of the information economy requires a renewed focus on our information infrastructure. The Commonwealth must facilitate improved access to affordable broadband options throughout the Commonwealth.

#### **5. Ensure that economic growth is compatible with community and environment.**

Housing affordability is fundamental to accommodating a growing economy. At the same time, we must be a leader in implementing sustainable growth strategies that ensure a high quality of life in our cities and towns.

#### **6. Improve the outcomes of government action.**

Massachusetts is widely perceived as having significantly improved its business climate over the past decade. We must continue to reduce regulatory burdens and provide more coordinated services and resources to businesses- particularly small business. State government must also help collaborate with the private sector and the federal government to effectively respond to the emerging terrorism threats. State government must also maintain confidence in basic infrastructure linking global production, communication, and transportation networks.

## **The Plan for Progress**

### ***Vision:***

*To bring together the vital economic interests of the Pioneer Valley to build a competitive regional community with a world class environment that stimulates development and growth.*

## **Economic Statistical Profile**

### **Community Development Pre-Planning Survey**

The purpose of the survey was to help the CDP Committee to develop a Community Vision Statement that reflects input from the community planning process. The survey was conducted in order to promote public involvement in the creation of the Community Development Plan for Blandford.

The survey was designed by PVPC in cooperation with the CDP Committee and administered in September of 2002. The survey questionnaire was mailed to each of Blandford's 500 households of which 139 or 27.8% responded to the multiple-choice questions. The survey asked residents to give their opinions and attitudes on the Town's growth and development issues. The following provides a summary of the survey results related to economic development issues in Blandford.

According to results of the Blandford Community Development Pre-Planning Survey, the economic opportunities that residents favor are:

- Artisan/craftsman business (59.4%)
- Home-based businesses (58.0%)
- Agriculture or farm-support business (55.6%)
- Gardening/landscaping supplies (50.7%)

The economic opportunities that residents would be opposed to are:

- Clothing store (65.5%)
- Dry cleaning/laundry (64.9%)
- Light industry (59.5%)
- Warehousing/distribution (59.0%)

In addition, over half of the survey respondents (55%) did not want to see new small business development in town in order to create local jobs.

One economic development issue that was revealed by residents was opening an exit ramp onto the Massachusetts Turnpike in Blandford and allowing commercial and industrial development near the ramp. Forty-nine percent of survey respondents did not support a Turnpike exit while 44% did. The support for an exit is typical of the town's newcomers and current business owners.

#### **Location and number of businesses, employers, employees**



The business district in Blandford is located on “the south side of Main Street between Glasgow Road and the intersection of North Street, for a depth of 150 feet. The north side of Main Street between the easterly line of property now or formerly owned by John Peebles and the intersection of North Street, for a depth of 150 feet.” A number of small businesses are located within this district; however, home –based businesses seem to be the trend. Home occupations are permitted in the residential district with a special permit.

According the Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training (DET), the number of employers in Blandford remained unchanged from 1996 to 2000 with 18. The Pioneer Valley region experienced an 8% increase for this same time period. The number of employees decreased from 148 to 144 during the same time period, a 3% decrease compared to an 8% increase for the region.

The results of the telephone business survey, which surveyed nearly half the town businesses, indicated less than thirty full-time employees in town –much less than numbers reported by MA DET. The state may be including the many part-time employees in Blandford including town government employees in their data.

The business in town is typical of the hilltowns and includes mostly home-based or sole proprietor type business such as artisans, farms, construction services, as well as a bed and breakfast. Businesses in Blandford are generally small and provide the necessary services for the local area. The majority of surveyed businesses in town are locally owned and only one or two actually maintain more than one or two full-time employees.

The McDonalds restaurant located on interstate 90 is the only nationally owned business in the town. The Blandford Ski Area has operated in town since 1936 and is regionally owned by the owned and operated by the Springfield Ski club. The Ski Area is the oldest, continuously operating, club-owned ski area in North America.

## Results of Business Survey

A survey of several local businesses was conducted to get their insight and opinion on the economic climate of the Town of Blandford. The survey was administered to 10 local businesses selected from a list provided by the Town and the Jacobs Ladder Businesses Association.

The businesses that responded have been located in Blandford for varying lengths of time ranging from two years to over 60 years. Many business owners located in Blandford because they live in town and wanted to work out-of, or close to home. Others saw the town's rural characteristics as a necessity for their type of business. Two of the surveyed business owners had plans to expand their businesses, but only by offering additional services. One owner had plans to reduce the size of his business due to his age. No other businesses planned to expand, hire additional employees, or reduce operations.

Half of the surveyed businesses employed only themselves. Of the businesses that employed more than just themselves, two had trouble hiring competent employees. One has trouble hiring employees with up-to-date computer related skills and another has difficulty based on the seasonal conditions of employment. All surveyed businesses either train their employees, or are willing to.

In general, businesses described the economic character of Blandford as slow, but a good place to locate. Owners did not want to see growth ruin the small-town, rural character. Business owners identified friendly customers, small town appeal, quiet environment, and the beautiful landscape as assets.

The participating businesses also identified some weaknesses of Blandford that affect its economic character. A few owners felt that the town government does not support them and makes it difficult for new business to locate in town. In addition, the remote location of the town makes general transportation and deliveries difficult and relatively expensive.

Surveyed businesses were not aware of any local area workforce development programs but agreed that these programs could benefit them. Most businesses felt that there are opportunities to build good relations or partnerships with other businesses in Blandford and in nearby towns. Most respondents were familiar with or members of either the Jacob's Ladder Business Association (JLBA), or the Hilltown Community Development Center (Hilltown CDC). In contrast to the regional partnerships, most businesses did not feel that there are opportunities to build good relations or partnerships with the local government.

Half of the respondents felt that Blandford is a 'business-friendly' place that does not discourage business. Three respondents were divided and suggested that the town neither encourages nor supports business. One respondent felt that the town does not support business at all and has even refused to join the Hilltown CDC. One owner suggested that the town does not see the benefits of new business.



Of the businesses in town with employees, one owner believed that the new housing in town is out of the price range of most town residents but does not have employees with unmet needs. Most surveyed owners only employ part time workers who had housing prior to working for them. Surveyed owners also felt that if they were to hire new employees, they would not be able to find affordable housing without supplementary income. Many of the employees of the surveyed businesses were part time students or family members.

Lastly, respondents felt that Blandford is a typical bedroom community that is experiencing the financial burdens that come with a small tax base and a growing residential population. Financing the improvements to the Gateway Regional School, as well as a municipal water supply infrastructure that is in disrepair, is burdening the town and residents. In addition to these concerns, surveyed owners also felt that the town administration should support local businesses and make their services more readily available.

### **Recent business growth trends**

According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, the number of businesses in town has not changed within the last four years. The majority the town's pre-planning survey respondents did not support new business development; however, telephone survey respondents generally supported growth that would maintain the rural character of the town.

From 1990 to 2000 the actual tax rate in Blandford increased from 10.70% to 13.46%. The Town maintains a uniform tax rate of 13.46 % on all types of land (Source: MA Department of Revenue). The tax rate is a significant factor in determine the town's economic well-being as it provides 60% percent of municipal revenue.

The City of Springfield owns approximately 12,100 acres of open space in the Cobble Mountain Reservoir watershed. While this land requires no community-supplied services, it may never be developed, and may limit economic development opportunities in the community.

From 1991 to 2001 the total number of parcels of land increased 5%, from 483 to 506. The number of commercial parcels increased 250% and the number industrial parcels increased 150%. These numbers indicate zoning changes in town to accommodate new businesses, mostly home - based.

The vast majority of parcels are rural-residential (96% of total). The number of single-family residential parcels increased 5.6% and multi-family residential parcels decreased 61% since 1990 (Source: MA Department of Revenue). An increased number of new construction permits have been issued by the town in recent years. These permits have led to the increased construction of higher-priced homes.

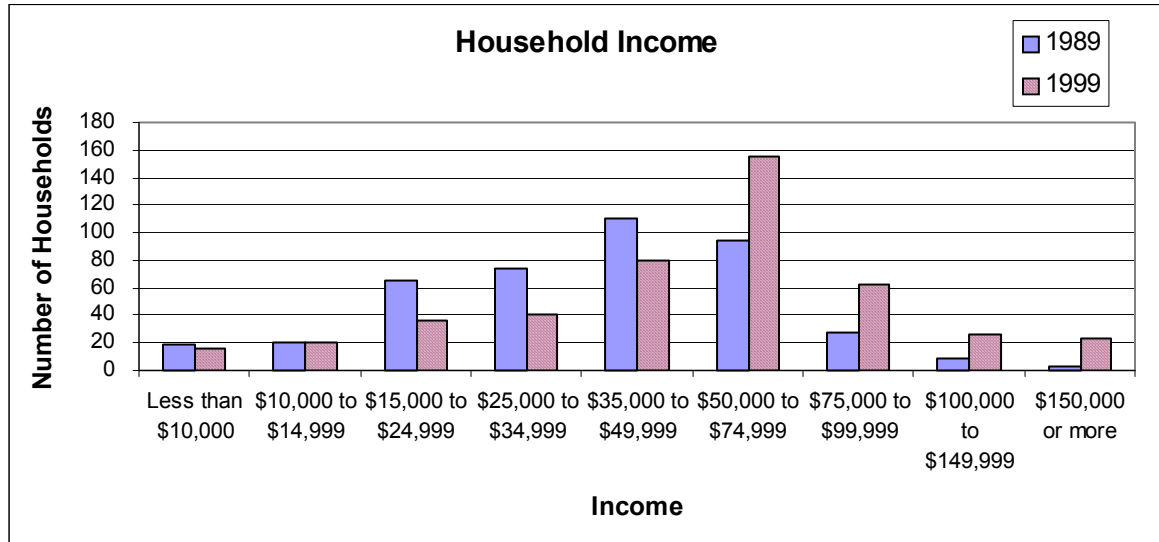
### **Workforce Characteristics**

The total population of Blandford increased 2.3% from 1990 to 2000. The population is projected to increase by 22.8% by 2010, up from 1,214 in 2000 to 1,491 in 2010. However, the population aged 20 to 29 decreased 4.2%, from 119 to 114. Those aged 44 to 64 showed the highest increase in population since 1990 (Source: U.S. Census Bureau).

### Household Income

From 1989 to 1999 median household income increased by 0.6%, from \$52,641 (converted to 1999\$) to \$52,935. The number of households making over \$50,000 annually increased dramatically. There are 6 families (1.7%) in Blandford living below the poverty line. This is well below the regional average of 8.3% (Source: U.S. Census Bureau).

Figure 3-1: Household Income



1989 income data converted to 1999\$

### Wage

The average weekly wage increased .4% from \$315.45 (converted to 2000\$) in 1996, to \$316.62 in 2000, compared to only a 5% increase in the rest of the region. The average weekly wage for residents in Blandford is 48% lower than that of the Pioneer Valley region (Source: MA Department of Employment and Training)

### Access to a vehicle

Of the 457 occupied housing units reported in the 2000 census, 3.1% have no vehicle, compared to 13% of vehicle-less households in the region. 23% have one vehicle, compared to 38% across the region. 49% have two vehicles, compared to 37% for the rest of the region and 25% have 3 or more, compared to 12% for the region (Source: U.S. Census Bureau). The lack of public transportation coupled with longer commute times are reflected in the higher levels of vehicle ownership.

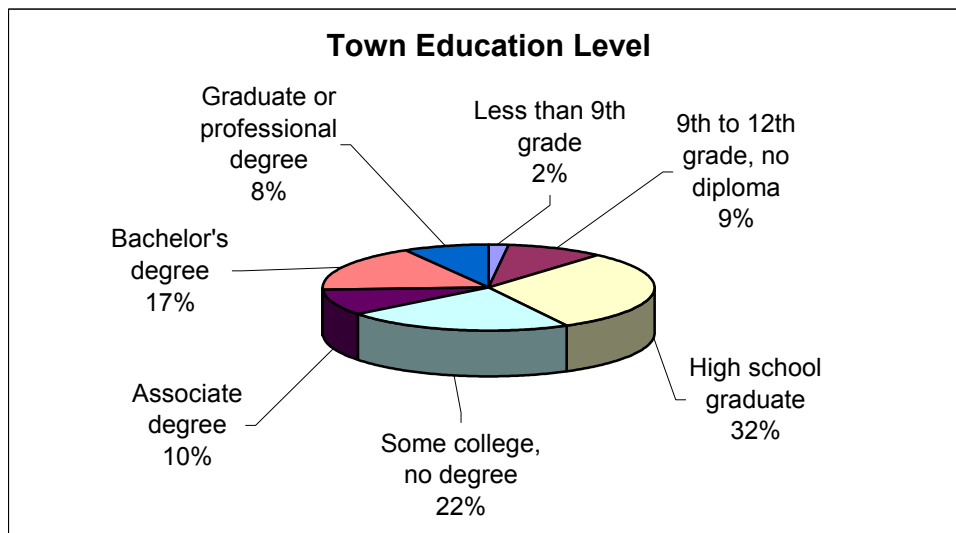
**Table 3-1: Available Vehicles**

<b>Vehicles Available per Occupied Housing Unit</b>				
	<b>Town</b>		<b>PVR</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Occupied Housing Units	456		231,279	
None	14	3.1	29,755	12.9%
1	105	23.0%	87,552	37.9%
2	225	49.3	85,586	37.0%
3 or more	112	24.6%	28,386	12.3%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau				

#### *Educational level of workforce*

The educational level of Blandford's residents aged 25 and over is slightly higher on average than the rest of the Valley. Only 11.4% the population aged 25 and over did not complete high school compared to 18% of the rest of the region. 26% are college graduates, compared with 25% for the region (Source: U.S. Census Bureau).

**Figure 3-2: Town Education Level**



People with a bachelor's degree increased 21%, compared to a regional increase of only 18%. People with an associate's degree decreased 9% compared to a regional increase of 8% (Source: U.S. Census Bureau). The recent influx of educated people correlates with the recent increase in higher-earning people.

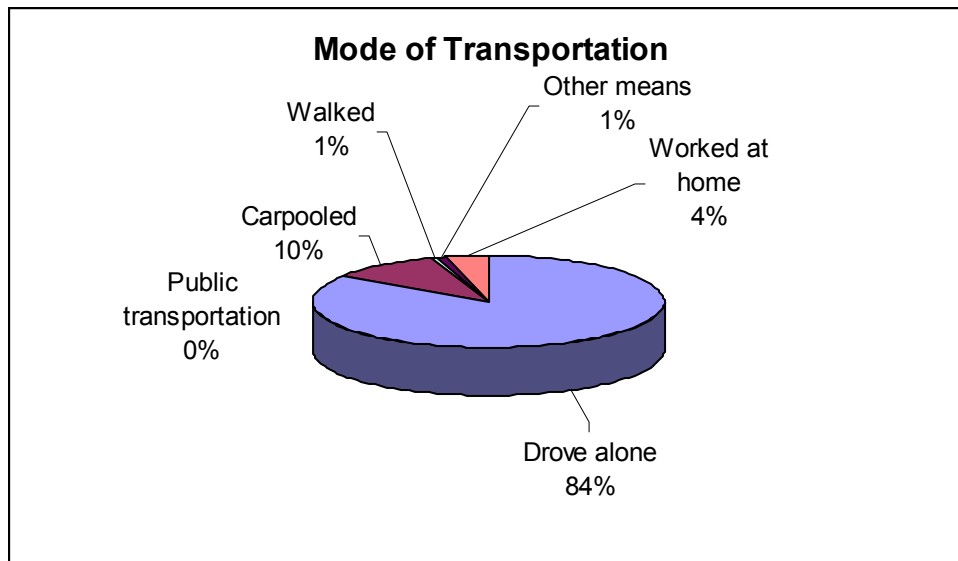
#### *Travel time to work*

The mean travel time to work for Blandford residents increased 21.8% from 1990 to 2000, from 31 minutes to 38 minutes. Clearly the majority of residents work outside of Town. 564 (85%) residents drive alone to work while 68 people (10%) carpool. No residents reported using public

transportation to get to work (public transportation is not available to town residents) while four people walk to work. Twenty-six people (4%) report working at home compared to the regional average of 3% (Source: U.S. Census Bureau).

The construction of a Massachusetts Turnpike exit in Blandford would significantly decrease the travel time of Blandford residents; however, 48.9% of residents who responded to the pre-planning survey opposed the construction of a Turnpike exit. Respondents to the telephone business survey strongly supported the addition of a turnpike exit in town.

**Figure 3-3: Mode of Commute**



## Future Economic Profile

### Availability of land and buildings for economic development

According to the PVPC Subregional Housing plan, a total of 16,198 acres of developable land remains in Blandford. Of this amount, 11,521 acres (71%) remain potentially unconstrained to development. A complete Buildout of all developable land in Blandford could potentially increase the town's population to 20,632 people.



**Table 3-3: Developable Lands and Constraints**

	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Percent Developable Land of</i>
Total Land Area	32,228	NA

Remaining Developable Land	16,198	NA
Developable Land with Constraints	4,677	28.9%
Developable Land without Constraints	11,521	71.1%
Constraint-slope	3,492	8.0%
Constraint-river	602	3.7%
Constraint-wetlands	507	3.1%
Constraint-floodplain	76	0.5%
Constraint-multiple	N/A	N/A

Source: PVPC, Subregional Housing Plans 2002

### Predicted workforce and job availability

The MA Division of Employment and Training projects a statewide increase of 47.6% in trade employees by 2008, a 40% increase in service employees and a 12% increase in public administration employees. A 2.8 % increase is expected in Construction and Mining employees.

**Table 3-4: Statewide Employment Projections**

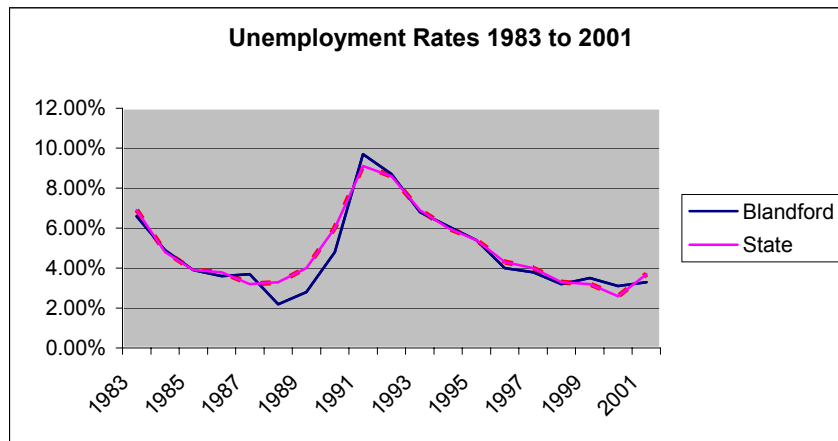
	<b>2008 Statewide Employment Projections</b>			
	<b>2000 Employment</b>	<b>2008 Projected Employment</b>	<b>2000-2008 Projected Percent Change</b>	<b>2008 Percent of Total Employment</b>
Construction and mining	2	2.01	2.8%	1.2%
Manufacturing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Transportation, communications, and utilities	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Trade	74	79	6.7%	47.6%
Finance, insurance, and real estate	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Services	53	66	23.9%	39.6%
Public administration	18	19	6.8%	11.6%
Total (does not include agriculture)	147	166		

Source: MA Division of Employment and Training, Massachusetts Employment Projections through 2008; PVPC

Note: Projections are derived by using 1998-2008 industry projections developed by the Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training for the state as a whole.

Since 1983, the unemployment rates in Blandford have generally mirrored those of the entire state.

**Figure 3-5: Unemployment Rates**



### Availability of needed services

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) sponsored the creation of a set of Buildout maps and analyses for all 351 cities and towns within the Commonwealth. The maps and analyses depict currently protected and developed land within each community and what it would look like if remaining undeveloped land was completely developed in accordance with current local zoning.

The EOEA Buildout Analyses project the following for the Town of Blandford:

**Table 3-5: Buildout Analysis**

	<b>2001</b>	<b>Buildout</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<i>Population</i>	1,214	20,632	19,418
<i>Students</i>	205	3,534	3,329
<i>Households</i>	526	6,921	6,395
<i>Total Water Use (gallons/day)</i>	106,909.59	1,563,287.59	1,456,378
<b>Additional Resources</b>		<b>Buildout</b>	
<i>Residential Water (gallons/day)</i>		1,456,374	
<i>Commercial &amp; Industrial Water (gallons/day)</i>		0	
<i>Total Solid Waste (tons/year)</i>		9,962	
<i>Non-Recyclable Waste (tons/year)</i>		7,088	
<i>Recyclable Waste (tons/year)</i>		2,874	
<i>Roadway (miles)</i>		207	

Source: MA Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

Clearly, the current town infrastructure could not support a dramatic increase in population if complete Buildout were to occur. Local zoning should be revised to prevent such an event.

### Availability of housing

Nearly 90% of the housing is owner-occupied leaving few rental opportunities. The majority of vacant housing in Blandford is reserved for seasonal or recreational use. In 2000, only 5 vacant units in town were for sale or rent. The majority of housing (56%) is valued at \$100,000 to \$149,000.

Respondents of the pre-planning survey supported seasonal housing as an opportunity that they'd like to see. Residents strongly oppose multi-family (63%) and rental apartments (59%) housing developments in Blandford. Respondents of telephone business survey believed that housing is not a problem for employees because most are part time and have lived in town for years. Element Two of the CD Plan: Housing, contains a more detailed analysis of housing availability.

### Revenue generation and service demands

From 1990 to 2000 total expenditures in Blandford increased by 19%, from \$1,117,820 (in 2000\$) to \$1,329,047. Not surprisingly, 62% of Blandford's municipal expenditures are on education with public works and highway second (12%). Both education and public works expenditures are expected to increase over the next few years.

**Table 3-6: Municipal Expenditures**

	FY 1990			FY 2000		Percent
	Amount	Amount (in 2000 \$)	Percent of Total	Amount	Percent of Total	Change in Amount
General government	\$61,660	\$67,615	6.0%	\$90,137	6.8%	46.2%
Police	\$6,131	\$6,723	0.6%	\$10,797	0.8%	76.1%
Fire	\$5,869	\$6,436	0.6%	\$26,070	2.0%	344.2%
Other public safety	\$12,778	\$14,012	1.3%	\$14,380	1.1%	12.5%
Education	\$531,754	\$583,109	52.2%	\$833,767	62.7%	56.8%
Public works/highway	\$166,170	\$182,218	16.3%	\$155,801	11.7%	(6.2%)
Other public works	\$84,888	\$93,086	8.3%	\$71,405	5.4%	(15.9%)
Health and welfare	\$7,141	\$7,831	0.7%	\$14,739	1.1%	106.4%
Culture and recreation	\$24,090	\$26,417	2.4%	\$29,262	2.2%	21.5%
Debt service	\$45,982	\$50,423	4.5%	\$17,457	1.3%	(62.0%)
Fixed costs	\$68,285	\$74,880	6.7%	\$59,754	4.5%	(12.5%)
Intergovernmental	\$4,624	\$5,071	0.5%	\$5,478	0.4%	18.5%
Other expenditures	\$0	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
Total expenditures	\$1,019,372	\$1,117,820		1,329,047		30.4%
Source: MA Department of Revenue, Municipal Data Bank						

From 1990 to 2000, total revenue in Blandford increased by 53%, from \$1,180,984 (in 2000\$) to \$1,801,289. Nearly 60% of the total revenue in 2000 came from taxes. Taxes from businesses increased nearly 300% from 1900 to 2000, but only accounted for 2.4% of municipal revenue in 2000. Clearly, the town could benefit from additional businesses.

**Table 3-7: Municipal Revenue**

	FY 1990			FY 2000		Percent
	Amount	Amount (in 2000 \$)	Percent of Total	Amount	Percent of Total	Change in Amount
Total tax levy	\$697,945	\$765,350	64.8%	\$1,065,695	59.2%	52.7%
Residential	\$647,437	\$709,965	60.1%	\$961,263	53.4%	48.5%
Open space	\$0	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	0.0%

Commercial	\$13,934	\$15,280	1.3%	\$41,291	2.3%	196.3%
Industrial	\$722	\$792	0.1%	\$2,567	0.1%	255.5%
Personal Property	\$35,852	\$39,314	3.3%	\$60,574	3.4%	69.0%
State Aid	\$141,482	\$155,146	13.1%	\$170,717	9.5%	20.7%
Local Receipts	\$207,546	\$227,590	19.3%	\$382,508	21.2%	84.3%
All Other	\$30,000	\$32,897	2.8%	\$182,369	10.1%	507.9%
Total Revenue	\$1,076,973	\$1,180,984		\$1,801,289		67.3%
Source: MA Department of Revenue, Municipal Data Bank						

## Economic Development Goals and Strategies

### Statement of goals

- Maintain a rural, small-town atmosphere
- New zoning regulations to protect Blandford's ridgelines, forests, waters, and hillsides from adverse environmental and aesthetic impacts of development
- Promote economic opportunities for businesses such as artisan/craftsman, home-based, agriculture or farm-support, or gardening/landscaping business
- Support seasonal housing and deter additional multi-family and rental apartment developments

### Economic Development Strategies

#### **Support and Encourage Appropriate Local Business Activity that Contributes to the Rural Character of Blandford**

The Town should move forward with all reasonable strategies that encourage, promote, and retain appropriate business activities that build on the community's strong hilltown character:

- Create a forum to identify common problems and provide group solutions in cooperation with town officials
- Seek to enact amendments to the zoning bylaws that allow for appropriate businesses to locate or expand in Blandford
- Create a 'business-friendly' environment in the Town that strives to provide clarity in local regulations, a town government 'business liaison' (a point person for responding to business inquiries), and a fair and honest effort to help local businesses flourish

#### **Study Ways to Compensate the Town for Providing and Protecting Natural Resources that are Vital to the Health and Prosperity of the Region**

Elected officials and citizens should continue to work toward an equitable way of compensating the community for its efforts in helping to maintain healthy forests, fields, and waterways which provide:

- Vital habitat area for local and migratory wildlife

- Clean watershed lands that serve as natural filters for drinking waters
- Beautiful open and forested landscapes for all to enjoy

### **Promote Blandford as a destination for tourist and recreational activities**

Tourism is one type of economic development that does not rely on the local market or the town's infrastructure. Blandford is conveniently located west of Springfield and northwest of Hartford offering a close-to-home escape. The scenic drives and country walks grouped with existing businesses (including a bed and breakfast, the ski area, and many small farms) are a solid foundation from which to build a small and sustainable micro-economy in Blandford.

### **Mixed Use Village Center Development Bylaw**

The purpose of a mixed use bylaw is to foster a greater opportunity for creative development by providing guidelines that encourage a mix of uses compatible with existing and neighborhood properties; to provide housing and business uses in locations where a variety of town services are available; to promote utilization of existing buildings and property, and to encourage the provision of open areas. The intent is to enhance business vitality, reduce vehicular traffic, provide employment opportunities for residents close to home, ensure the compatibility with each other of the commercial, industrial, and residential uses, and ensure that the appearance and effects of the buildings and uses are harmonious with the character of the area in which they are located. See the attached Proposed Zoning Bylaws for Hatfield.



### **Promote Blandford as a location for retirement and vacation homes**

Blandford's unique rural character and convenient location appeal to retirees and second home owners. These types of home owners do not require the same level of municipal services as younger families, but their taxes still benefit the town. By developing such communities as clustered developments, away from the major roads, potential visual impacts are lessened and the town's rural character is not threatened.

### **Encourage and Promote Specialized Agricultural Activities that Create 'Value-Added' Products for the Wholesale and Retail Markets**

The remaining small farms and forest areas in the Town provide a small economic base upon which to build agricultural operations that use locally-grown food and fiber to create finished products or refined items for wholesale distribution. This low impact sector of the local economy could provide many part-time and seasonal jobs within Blandford's borders as well as increase the likelihood that local agricultural businesses could remain viable in coming years.

**Encourage Cottage Industries and Expanded Home Occupations in Blandford while Providing Adequate Protection of Neighborhood Character and Property Values**

Blandford has small home occupations at this time, and would like to encourage their growth while not detracting from the character of the community. Techniques to encourage this include parking regulations, control of hours of operation, and criteria for signage and other architectural aspects of homes that harbor businesses and cottage industry.

# Element Four: Transportation



Town of Blandford  
Community Development Plan

## **Element Four: Transportation**

### **Introduction**

This study was conducted according to guidelines established as part of Executive Order 418 and is intended to serve as the transportation element of the Blandford Community Development Plan. The goal of this project is to provide a detailed analysis of the existing and anticipated traffic demands and assess the impacts of current and planned land uses along the Route 23 corridor in the Town of Blandford. This study will identify opportunities to improve the safety of the roadway which serves both Blandford and the surrounding region. The study is designed to identify current and future transportation deficiencies to assist the Town of Blandford in the development of projects and strategies to improve safety and improve travel conditions for both vehicles and pedestrians throughout the study area.

### **Study Area**

The study area consists of the Route 23 corridor from the Russell Town Line to the Otis Town Line.

### **Existing Transportation Conditions**

This section provides a technical evaluation of the transportation components throughout the study area. It includes a presentation of the data collected, analysis of traffic operations, and a series of short term recommendations to improve overall performance and safety.

### **Data Collection**

Comprehensive data collection activity was conducted for this study to identify existing deficiencies. This activity consisted of obtaining traffic volumes, crash data, and summaries of previous transportation studies conducted for the Town. PVPC staff collected a large portion of the data used in this report. Additional data was obtained from the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway).

### **Daily Vehicle Volume**

Vehicle volume data was collected for use in the transportation analysis in order to measure the travel demands on an average weekday. Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes were compiled for a total of 48 hours at various mid-block locations within the study area using Automatic Traffic Recorders (ATRs). All ADT weekday volumes were factored to represent Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) levels. The 2003 average weekday traffic counts conducted by the PVPC are shown in Table 4-1 and Figure 4-1.

**Table 4-1 - Average Annual Daily Traffic**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Eastbound</b>	<b>Westbound</b>	<b>Total</b>
Route 23 at the Russell Town Line	1,198	1,184	2,382
Route 23 west of South Street	1,088	1,066	2,154
Route 23 west of North Blandford Road	708	682	1,390
Route 23 at the Otis Town Line	571	556	1,127

## Vehicle Classification

Vehicle classification data is used to identify the percentage of heavy vehicles and passenger cars on the roadway. Heavy vehicles include trucks, recreational vehicles and buses. The percent of heavy vehicles in the traffic flow is an important component in calculating the serviceability of a corridor or intersection. Trucks impact traffic flow because they occupy more roadway space than passenger cars and have poorer operating capabilities with respect to acceleration, deceleration and maneuverability.

Classification counts were conducted at all of the daily traffic count locations. Vehicles are classified based on the number of axles and the distance between each axle. Two axle, six tire vehicles and vehicles with three or more axles are classified as a “truck” or heavy vehicle. The percentage of heavy vehicle traffic on a roadway is important as large vehicles have different operating characteristics than normal passenger vehicles. Heavy vehicles have a larger turning radius than a typical passenger vehicle, require more time to accelerate to operating speeds, and require a greater braking distance to come to a complete stop. This information is also an important factor in the pavement design of a roadway. This information is shown in Table 4-2.

**Table 4-2 – Vehicle Classification Data**

		<b>Bikes</b>	<b>Cars &amp; Trailers</b>	<b>2 Axle Long</b>	<b>Buses</b>	<b>2 Axle 6 Tire</b>	<b>3 Axle Single</b>	<b>&gt;3 Axles</b>	<b>% Heavy Vehicles</b>
Route 23 at the Russell Town Line	Eastbound	1.6%	75.3%	18.2%	0.4%	2.4%	0.8%	1.4%	4.9%
	Westbound	1.6%	74.1%	18.4%	0.5%	2.3%	0.7%	2.4%	5.9%
Route 23 west of South Street	Eastbound	1.9%	80.7%	13.8%	0.4%	1.1%	0.9%	1.1%	3.6%
	Westbound	1.8%	85.7%	8.8%	0.3%	0.7%	0.5%	2.1%	3.6%
Route 23 west of North Blandford Road	Eastbound	3.1%	83.5%	10.3%	0.1%	0.4%	1.1%	1.6%	3.1%
	Westbound	3.0%	87.4%	5.5%	0.2%	0.5%	0.9%	2.5%	4.1%
Route 23 at the Otis Town Line	Eastbound	2.9%	76.9%	17.6%	0.1%	0.9%	0.3%	1.3%	2.5%
	Westbound	3.3%	82.3%	10.6%	0.2%	0.6%	0.4%	2.6%	3.8%

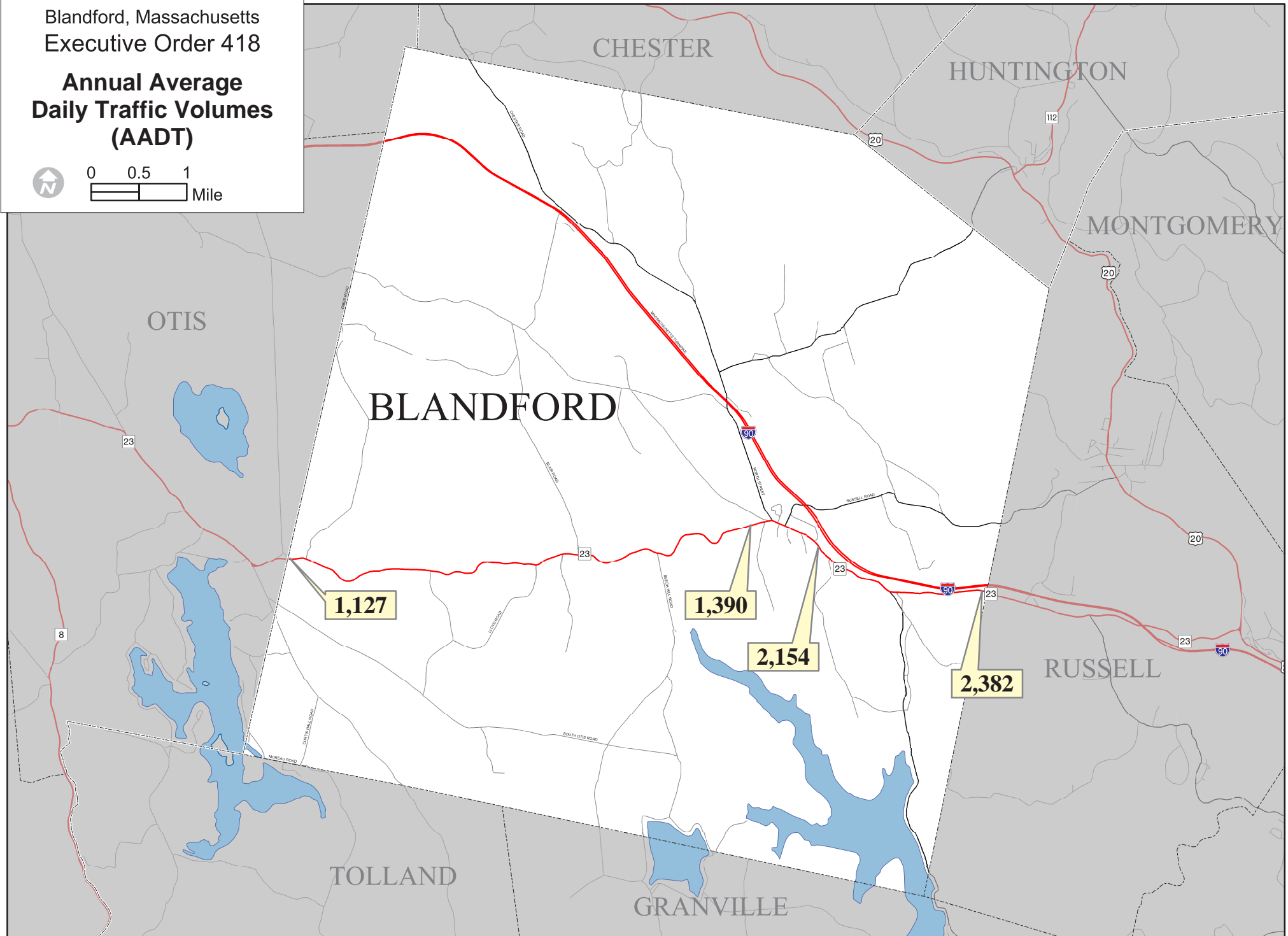
Figure II - 1

Blandford, Massachusetts  
Executive Order 418

**Annual Average  
Daily Traffic Volumes  
(AADT)**



0 0.5 1  
Mile



## Vehicle Travel Speeds

Travel Speed data was collected to establish the ranges or “bins” in which vehicles were measured to be traveling. The “Pace Speed” consists of the range in which most vehicles were recorded to travel. Speed data was also used to calculate the “85<sup>th</sup> Percentile” Speed for each direction on the roadway. The 85<sup>th</sup> Percentile Speed is defined as the speed that 85 percent of all traffic is traveling at or below. This method is typically used to establish the posted speed limit on a roadway. By comparing the 85<sup>th</sup> Percentile Speed to the posted speed limit a community can determine how well traffic is complying with the current posted speed limits and if increased enforcement is necessary. Speed data is summarized in Tables 4-3 and 4-4.

**Table 4-3 - Travel Speed Breakdown**

		0-15 mph	16- 20 mph	21-25 mph	26- 30 mph	31-35 mph	36-40 mph	41- 45 mph	46- 50 mph	51- 55 mph	56-60 mph	61-65 mph	> 65 mph
Route 23 at the Russell Town Line	EB	0.2%	0.0 %	0.0%	0.1 %	1.1%	16.0%	45.4 %	29.4 %	6.1 %	1.0%	0.2%	0.4%
	WB	0.3%	0.0 %	0.0%	0.4 %	1.8%	14.5%	50.7 %	27.5 %	3.5 %	0.6%	0.1%	0.7%
Route 23 west of South Street	EB	0.8%	0.9 %	1.1%	1.8 %	12.6%	40.9%	34.3 %	6.7 %	0.4 %	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%
	WB	1.5%	2.9 %	1.8%	4.0 %	30.8%	43.9%	12.8 %	1.4 %	0.3 %	0.1%	0.1%	0.5%
Route 23 west of North Blandford Road	EB	7.4%	13.1 %	14.0%	28.7 %	30.0%	5.4%	0.6 %	0.3 %	0.0 %	0.0%	0.1%	0.3%
	WB	4.1%	12.0 %	14.7%	33.2 %	31.4%	3.7%	0.4 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
Route 23 at the Otis Town Line	EB	0.2%	0.1 %	0.4%	1.4 %	9.9%	34.0%	38.1 %	13.4 %	1.1 %	0.6%	0.3%	0.3%
	WB	0.4%	0.2 %	0.2%	1.8 %	16.3%	47.6%	28.1 %	4.4 %	0.6 %	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%

**Table 4-4 - 85<sup>th</sup> Percentile Speeds (in mph)**

Location	Eastbound	Westbound	Posted Speed
Route 23 at the Russell Town Line	46	46	40
Route 23 west of South Street	41	39	35
Route 23 west of North Blandford Road	31	31	25
Route 23 at the Otis Town Line	43	41	35

Based on the speed data, most vehicles appear to be driving slightly faster than the posted speed limits. Along Route 23 this could be a function of the width of the roadway and also as a result of the many changes in the posted speed limit along the roadway. In the Town Center higher speeds could also be a result of the higher posted travel speeds along the approaching segments of the Route 23 corridor.

## Existing Pavement Condition

### Introduction

A Pavement Management System (PMS) is a systematic process that collects and analyzes roadway pavement information for use in selecting cost-effective strategies for providing and maintaining pavements in a serviceable condition. To conduct pavement data collection, the PVPC uses the “Road Manager” software developed by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc., (VHB). The Road Manager has been customized to apply pavement management techniques to each municipality’s specific roadway needs and priorities in the region as part of the PVPC’s local PMS. The Road Manager assesses the present pavement conditions and forecasts them annually based on historically derived roadway deterioration curves. Through the application of improvement funds, various budget scenarios can be compared to identify the condition levels associated with an improving, stabilizing or deteriorating roadway condition performance.

The study area for the pavement condition analysis consisted of all federal-aid eligible roadways in the Town of Blandford. The federal-aid highway system consists of any roadway that is not functionally classified as a rural minor collector or local roadway. These roadways belong to a block grant type program called the Surface Transportation Program (STP). The STP includes National Highway System (NHS) roadways which primarily consist of Interstate routes, and a large percentage of urban and rural principal arterials. There are currently 19.91 miles of federal-aid eligible roadways in the Town of Blandford. Arterial roadways comprise 8.57 miles of the federal aid eligible system, while collector roadways comprise 11.34 miles of the system.

## **Methodology**

The first step in the pavement condition analysis is an inventory of the existing federal-aid roadway network and development of manageable roadway segments based upon existing topography and roadway geometry. Historical information on roadway improvement projects in the community is also collected to assist in the development future maintenance recommendations. The pavement distress data is then collected and entered into the Road Manager Software. Lastly, the data is analyzed and a proposed maintenance plan is developed.

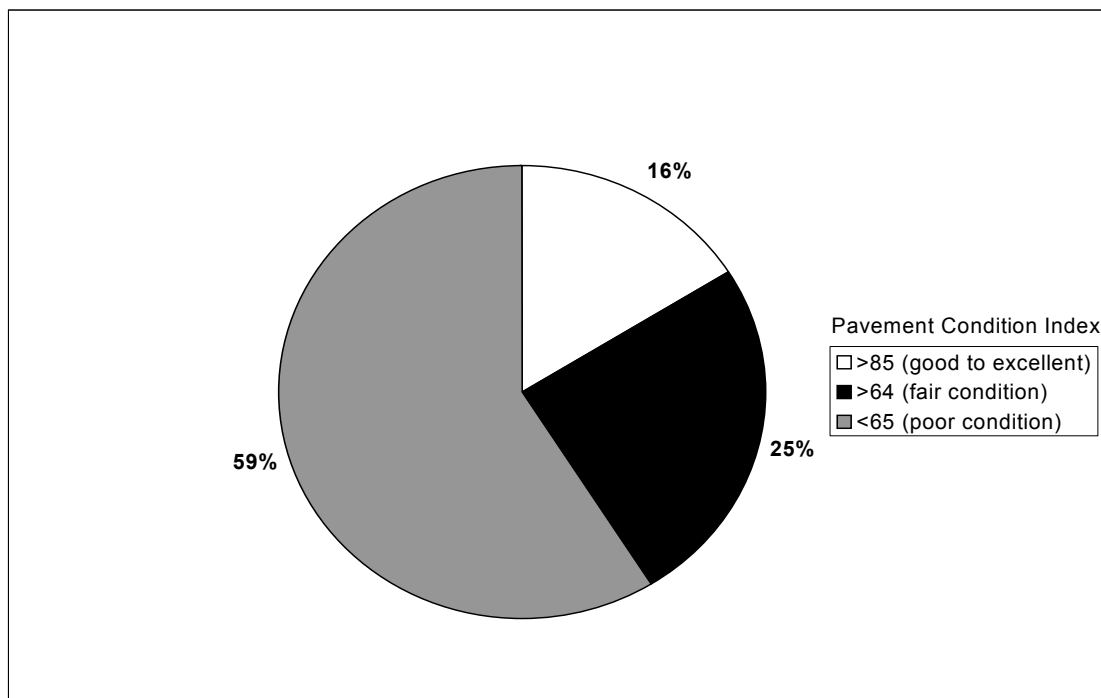
The Road Manager uses a Road Condition Index (RCI) as a measurement of roadway serviceability and as a method to establish performance criteria. RCI is derived from controlled measurements of conditions, including: pavement surface, rideability, drainage, safety, utilities, traffic controls, sidewalks, and roadside maintenance. These eight individual condition indices are based on inputs supplied to the Road Manager from the roadway survey. In analyzing Blandford’s federal-aid roadway system, pavement surface condition was considered to be the most important; therefore, the greatest significance was assigned to the Pavement Condition Index (PCI) when recommending future roadway improvement projects.

A Pavement Condition Index was generated for each inventoried roadway segment in the town using the distress data collected by the PVPC staff. Deduct values assigned to each type of distress based on severity and extent were applied to generate a PCI for each roadway segment. The PCI values generated are grouped into PCI category ranges which are defined by the user depending on the type and functional class of each segment. The PVPC incorporated 5 default repair categories with appropriate unit costs: (1) reconstruction, (2) rehabilitation, (3) preventive maintenance, (4) routine maintenance, (5) no action. Reconstruction involves the complete removal and replacement of a failed pavement section and base. The rehabilitation of pavements includes the work necessary to restore the pavement to a condition that will allow it to support traffic on its existing base. Preventive maintenance activities are those which are performed at planned intervals to protect and seal the pavement. Routine maintenance activities are those which are taken to correct a specific pavement failure or area distress.

A list of repair strategies was developed based on the PCI ranges and road characteristics such as the base, functional class, pavement type, curb reveal, drain index, and utility index. The Road Manager uses the repair strategies to assign a repair type and its associated cost to each roadway segment.

The average PCI for the surveyed roadways in Blandford is rated at 58, which indicates that majority of the roadways are in a fair to poor condition. The PCI generated by the Road Manager was used to establish pavement condition categories of “Good”, “Fair”, and “Poor” with PCI ranges of greater than 85, between 65 and 85, and less than 65 respectively. The results indicate that Blandford’s surveyed federal-aid eligible roadways are broken down as follows: 16% of the roadways are in good to excellent condition, 25% are in fair condition, and 59% are in poor condition. This information is depicted graphically in Figure II-2.

**Figure 4-2- Average Pavement Condition Index**



The budgeting process of the Road Manager can be used to calculate the backlog of repair work by assigning 100% of the towns surveyed roadway segments within the best PCI range (greater than 93). The backlog is defined as the cost of bringing all roads up to a near perfect condition within one year. The backlog represents how far behind the roadway network is in terms of its present physical condition and measures the cost of performing all desirable repairs to achieve the best PCI range. In the middle of year 2002 the backlog repair work for Blandford was \$5,125,216. This shows an increase of \$890,216 from the 1995 backlog of \$4,235,000. This cost estimate is useful in identifying the pavement condition of the system in the middle of year 2002 and in comparing to future and/or past years’ backlogs. After the backlog of improvement needs have been determined, the recommended maintenance actions for roadway segments are ranked by priority. The priority of segment improvement is determined based on its calculated Benefit Value (BV). BV is a function of vehicle volume, roadway length, estimated life of repair, improvement cost, and PCI, and it is a measurement of the benefit/cost ratio for each segment

improvement recommendation. Tables 4-5 and 4-6 summarize the town's top two arterial and collector roadway segments in terms of BV.

**Table 4-5 - BV Listing of the Top Two Arterial Roadway Segments**

Street Name	Sec. ID	From	To	Cost	Length (ft)	PCI	Repair Code	BV
Blandford Turnpike	100	North Street	By Sunset Road	\$33,880	1848	77	3	139
North Street	200	Mass Turnpike	House #35	\$36,777	2006	78	3	137

**Table 4-6 - BV Listing of the Top Two Collector Roadway Segments**

Street Name	Sec. ID	From	To	Cost	Length (ft)	PCI	Repair Code	BV
Russell Road	200	House #17	Russell T.L.	\$216,828	11827	76	3	70
Otis Stage Road	200	Gibbs Road	Otis T.L.	\$16,717	1003	81	3	66

As can be seen from the table, preventative maintenance is recommended for all four roadway segments. The general principle of pavement management is to keep the roadway segments that are in good condition from deteriorating to the point where they will require costly reconstruction projects.

## Crash Experience

Crash history was used to estimate the safety conditions throughout the study area. Crash information was gathered for the entire community based on information provided by the Massachusetts Highway Department. Table II-7 summarizes the number of crashes by location and type for a period of three years (1999- 2001) to identify any common conditions and possible causes.

**Table 4-7 - Route 23 Crash History Summary**

Year	# of Crashes	Severity		Type	
1999	16	Property Damage	19	Angle	2
2000	6	Personal Injury	11	Rear End	3
2001	9	Fatality	1	Head On	1
				Pedestrian	1
				Fixed Object	24

A total of 229 crashes were reported over the 3 year period in the Town of Blandford. Almost 80 % of these crashes occurred along the Massachusetts Turnpike. Nearly 39% of all crashes resulted in a personal injury and almost 78% involved a vehicle striking a fixed object such as a pole or tree. One fatal crash occurred along the Route 23 corridor over the three year period and involved a vehicle striking a utility pole during rainy conditions.

Five of the thirty one crashes reported for the Route 23 corridor occurred at an intersection with another roadway. Crash data from the Massachusetts Highway Department could be lower than actual conditions as many minor crashes are often not reported and as a result are not logged into the MassHighway crash database.

## Transit

Door-to-door accessible van service (paratransit) for elderly and disabled residents is provided in the Town of Blandford by the Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA). There is not currently any fixed route transit service provided in the Town of Blandford. The closest fixed route transit service is provided by the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVRTA) to the City of Westfield via two bus routes. The Red 10 runs from the Springfield Bus Terminal to Westfield State College at 30 minute intervals. Limited Sunday service is also currently provided. The Blue 23 runs from Holyoke center to Westfield center at 1 hour intervals. Transfers from the Red 10 to the Blue 23 are possible in the center of Westfield.

### **Short Term Recommendations**

Based on the results of the existing transportation conditions analysis, a series of short term recommendations were developed to address existing deficiencies. Short term recommendations are meant to be low-cost, "quick-fix" solutions that can be implemented over a 2-3 year timeframe.

Route 23 falls under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Highway Department District 1 Office. The Town of Blandford should consult with MassHighway District 1 prior to the implementation of any improvements along the Route 23 corridor.

- 1) Pavement markings were noted to be faded in several areas. Pavement markings serve as a way to provide regulatory and warning information to the driver without diverting his/her attention from the roadway. It is important to maintain pavement markings on a regular basis to ensure that maximum visibility is maintained.
- 2) Traffic volumes along key town roadways should be monitored periodically to determine changes in travel patterns as a result of growth along the corridor. PVPC has an annual traffic counting program and performs traffic counts at the request of member communities. Each community is allowed up to 2 free traffic counts per calendar year upon receipt of a written request by the chief locally elected official. Additional traffic counts are billed for at PVPC's actual cost. The PVPC has committed to performing additional weekend counts along the Route 23 corridor during the summer months to establish the peak weekend traffic volumes.
- 3) The Town of Blandford should consider the development of a pavement management program to incorporate all of the town-accepted roadways. Currently the PVPC conducts pavement management along all federal-aid eligible roadways. A local pavement management program covering all roadways and sidewalks in the community would allow for the prioritization of new roadway improvement projects and more efficiently utilize the town's transportation improvement funds.
- 4) Huntington Road is currently classified as a Rural Major Collector from its intersection with Chester Road to the Huntington Town Line. This roadway does not currently connect with Blandford Hill Road in Huntington and should be reclassified as a local roadway. It is recommended that the Blandford Board of Selectman initiate this process by requesting the change in writing from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.
- 5) Many of the existing traffic signs along the Route 23 corridor were observed to be obscured by vegetation at the time of the field inventory. Vegetation along the entire Route 23 corridor should be maintained on a periodic basis to ensure that good visibility is maintained for all traffic signs.

- 6) Maintenance of existing vegetation at local intersections and access driveways is critical to ensure that adequate sight distance is maintained from the minor street approaches. In some instances it may be necessary to approach property owners to request that existing vegetation be trimmed or removed to provide adequate sight distance.
- 7) Stopping sight distance was observed to be somewhat limited at the intersection of Route 23 at North Street. This intersection is controlled by a flashing warning beacon with North Street operating under “STOP” sign control. The existing “STOP” sign was observed to be rather low to the ground at the time of the field inventory. This sign should be replaced and raised to provide a minimum of 6 feet of clearance. Pavement markings on North Street were also observed to be very faded. The Town of Blandford should request that MassHighway District 1 consider this intersection for sight distance and geometric improvements as part of future roadway maintenance activities along the Route 23 corridor.
- 8) A “Reduced Speed Ahead” sign (R2-5a) should be considered for the eastbound and westbound approaches of Route 23 prior to the reduction in speed to 25 mph in the vicinity of North Street. The addition of “Reduced Speed Ahead” sign may assist in alerting motorists of the impending change in speed and help increase compliance with the posted speed limit.
- 9) Both North Blandford Road and Cobble Mountain Road intersect with Route 23 in a non-standard. It is the opinion of the PVPC that non-standard intersection alignments could contribute to future safety problems as traffic continues to grow along the Route 23 corridor. The Town of Blandford should consider requesting the conversion of both intersections to a standard “T” alignment by MassHighway District 1 as part of future roadway improvements to the Route 23 corridor.
- 10) It is recommended that the Town of Blandford meet with the MassHighway District 1 office to discuss their concerns regarding the safety of pedestrians crossing Route 23 in the vicinity of the library. The Town should also address their concept of identifying the Town Center with “Gateway” signs which will require approval from MassHighway if they are to be located within the state right of way along Route 23.
- 11) The concept of constructing a new interchange with the Massachusetts Turnpike in the Town of Blandford was identified as part of the public participation process. This long term improvement would require a feasibility study and approval by the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority. Prior to the investment of any transportation dollars into a feasibility study, it is recommended that the Town of Blandford hold a public meeting to determine if a new turnpike exit in town would be supported by the general public.
- 12) If the town supports the construction of a new exit, the Board of Selectmen should draft a letter to the PVPC requesting the project be included as part of the Regional Transportation Plan. The PVPC will analyze the impacts of a new interchange using the regional transportation model and make a recommendation on the need for the improvement.

## **FUTURE BUILD-OUT**

It is important to consider the impact of zoning regulations and future growth in employment, population and residential development on the existing transportation system. Zoning regulations may permit large developments with high trip generation rates in primarily residential areas. Site specific developments can be expected to impact the existing flow of traffic and add to delay throughout the study area. Growth in surrounding communities can also result in an increase in commuter traffic through the Town of Blandford. Many potential future deficiencies and problem areas can be eliminated by identifying the problem before it happens.

## Future Forecasts

The Bureau of Transportation Planning and Development (MassHighway Planning) developed the future forecasts of population, households and employment for the state of Massachusetts and each regional planning agency. Their procedures and preliminary estimates were reviewed by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and modifications were made based on our comments. A complete summary of the forecasts for population, households, and employment data for the Town of Blandford is shown in Table 4-8.

**Table 4-8 - Population, Household and Employment Forecast Data**

	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Population	1,187	1,214	1,240	1,253	1,267	1,280	1,294
Households	424	456	462	460	458	456	453
Employment	86	129	147	157	163	168	173

MassHighway Planning utilized several sources, such as the Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research (MISER), Woods & Poole Economics (WPE), and the U.S. Census to forecast population for the state. To determine the number of households at the state and regional level, population in households is based on past trends.

Population in the Town of Blandford is projected to steadily increase by 6.5% from 2000 to 2025. Over the same time period the same period the total number of households is projected to decline slightly. As a result, the average occupancy per household is expected to increase slightly from 2.66 residents in 2000 to 2.86 residents in 2025.

Total employment is defined as the number of employed residents plus non-residents who commute into the community to work minus residents who commute out of the community to work. Employed residents are forecast by multiplying persons 16 years and over by the labor force participation rate. Employment was allocated at the community level by regressing past decades with a non-linear growth function, then the proportion of jobs to population is examined as a check for reasonableness. Employment has been forecast to increase in the Town of Blandford from 2000 to 2025 and then begin to decline slightly from 2010 to 2025. The projected increase is due in part to past trends reflected in the 1990 and 2000 Census data.

## Maximum Build-out

In 1999, The Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) commissioned a build-out analysis for every community in Massachusetts. The build-out analysis provided a preview of the type and location of the maximum future development that could be expected under current zoning. While it is unlikely that maximum build-out will ever be attained, this information is

useful to analyze the impact of developing every piece of available land under current regulations on population, demands on public services, and consumption of resources. The estimated impact of a complete build-out of the Town of Blandford on population and households is shown in Table 4-9

**Table 4-9- Projected Maximum Build-out Levels**

	2025	Maximum Build-out	Net Increase
Population	1,294	19,584	18,290
Households	453	6,848	6,395
Employment	173	**	**

\*\* No Employment build out was conducted as projections are based on current zoning.

No projections were made for employment in the Town of Blandford as the projections are based on the current zoning information. Blandford does not have any areas zoned for business or industrial uses, so only new residential areas were assumed for the future build out.

As can be seen from Table 4-9, the complete build-out of every piece of currently undeveloped or underutilized land has a huge impact on population and household data. It should be noted that this Maximum Build-Out scenario assumes complete development of all available land regardless of existing constraints. This exercise is important to show the need for controls on development and to protect open space and conservation land. The effect of this increase on traffic will be documented in a later section of this report.

## Travel Demand Model

Travel demand models are developed to simulate actual travel patterns and existing transportation conditions. Traffic is generated using socioeconomic data such as household size, automobile availability and employment data. Once the existing conditions are evaluated and adjusted to satisfactorily replicate actual travel patterns and vehicle roadway volumes, the model is then altered to project future year conditions. The preparation of a future year socioeconomic database is the last step in the travel demand forecast process. Forecasts of population and socioeconomic data are used to determine the number of trips that will be made in the future.

Travel demand forecasting is a major step in the transportation planning process. By simulating the current roadway conditions and the travel demand on those roadways, deficiencies in the system are identified. This is an important tool in planning future network enhancements and analyzing currently proposed projects. The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) uses the TransCAD software to perform transportation forecasts for its base year of 2000 and analysis years of 2010, 2020, and 2025. All 43 communities within the boundaries of Hampden and Hampshire Counties are included in the PVPC regional transportation model. Roadway networks are constructed using current information for the higher classified roads. Most local streets are not included in the travel demand model and are represented by centroid connectors that link the major routes to areas of traffic activity.

## Future Volumes

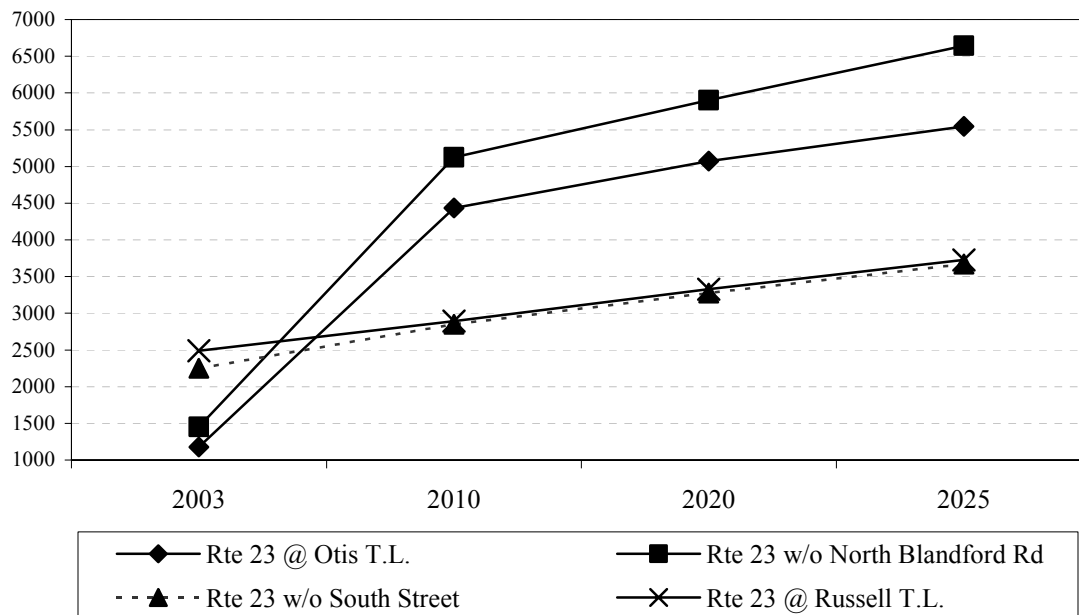
Estimates of average weekday traffic volumes were obtained from the PVPC regional transportation model for each of the analysis years and are presented in Table 4-10.

**Table 4-10- Future Traffic Volume Forecast**

Location	2003	2010	2020	2025
Route 23 at the Russell Town Line	2,382	2,892	3,326	3,725
Route 23 west of South Street	2,154	2,849	3,276	3,669
Route 23 west of North Blandford Road	1,390	5,124	5,901	6,645
Route 23 at the Otis Town Line	1,127	4,433	5,074	5,545

As can be seen from the Table, traffic volumes are expected to continue to steadily increase as based upon the forecasted increases in population and employment for the Town of Blandford.

**Figure 4-3 - Future Traffic Volumes Increases**



Traffic volumes along Route 23 west of North Blandford Road are projected to approach 7,000 vehicles per day in the 2025 analysis year. This is an increase of 378% over current levels. As traffic volumes and congestion continue to increase, vehicles will seek alternate routes in order to try and reduce travel times. As the hilltowns continue to grow in the future the Route 23 corridor can be expected to begin to bear the brunt of future traffic increases and begin to operate as more of a principal arterial roadway connecting the rural communities to the more urbanized areas.

## Regionally Significant Projects

Major roadway improvement projects such as the widening of an arterial roadway from two lanes to four lanes of travel can have a significant impact on future traffic volumes in the region. Improvements identified in the Short and Long Range Elements of the current Regional Transportation Plan for the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RTP) were

incorporated into PVPC's regional transportation model. The roadway projects for each analysis year are listed in Table III-4.

No site specific major transportation improvement projects in the Town of Blandford are currently identified in the RTP. However, major roadway improvement projects in surrounding communities such as the rehabilitation and widening of the Great River Bridge in Westfield will have regional impacts that will influence current travel patterns for commuter traffic in the Town of Blandford.

**Table 4-11 - Projects Included in the Regional Transportation Model**

Analysis Year	Community	Project Description
2003	Hadley, Northampton	Calvin Coolidge Bridge widening from 3 lanes to 4 lanes
2003	Hadley	Route 9 widening to four lanes - from Calvin Coolidge Bridge to West Street
2003	Springfield	Reversal of 4 existing I-91 ramps
2003	Chicopee	Memorial Drive signal coordination
2003	Hadley	Route 9 signal coordination
2003	Westfield	Route 20 signal coordination
2003	Springfield	Reconstruction, widening, and signal coordination on Parker Street
2003	Holyoke, W.Springfield	Route 5 signal coordination. Construct a new collector road to showcase cinema.
2010	Chicopee	Deady Memorial Bridge - widen to 5 lanes.
2010	Chicopee	Traffic coordination and improvements along Broadway
2010	Holyoke	Improvements to Commercial Street corridor
2010	Westfield	Route 10/202 Great River Bridge - two bridges acting as one-way pairs.
2010	Springfield	New slip ramp from I-291 to East Columbus Avenue
2010	Northampton	Road widening on Damon Road from Rte 9 to King St.
2010	Chester	Maple Street bridge restoration as a one-way bridge.
2010	E. Longmeadow	Improvements to the East Longmeadow Rotary.
2020	Agawam	Route 57 Phase II new limited access highway from Route 187 to Southwick Line.
2020	Holyoke	Elmwood Bypass - new roadway from I-391 to Lower Westfield Road. Holyoke
2020	Agawam, Longmeadow, Springfield	Improve the South End Bridge, construct a direct ramp from the South End Bridge to Route 57, fix existing lane reduction problem on I-91 between Exits 1-3.
2025	Northampton	Connector roadway between Route 10 and Route 66 from Old South Street.
2025	Ludlow, Springfield	Route 21 bridge reconstruction (possible to be widened as well)

### Maximum Build-out

The results of the maximum build out scenario were input into the regional transportation model to determine the effect on future traffic. This information is summarized in Table 4-12.

**Table 4-12 - Transportation Impacts of Maximum Build-Out**

Location	2025	Max
Route 23 at the Russell Town Line	3,725	15,185
Route 23 west of South Street	3,669	16,365
Route 23 west of North Blandford Road	6,645	24,184
Route 23 at the Otis Town Line	5,545	21,739

As expected, traffic volumes increased significantly on all roadways under the maximum build-out scenario. Again it is extremely unlikely that the maximum build-out scenario could ever be realized or that these traffic volumes could be supported by the existing roadway infrastructure.

However, it is important to see where the largest increases in traffic occur in the town. Some of the largest increases occurred along the Route 23 in the western section of town. This is largely a function of where the undeveloped land exists in the Town of Blandford.

The maximum build-out scenario demonstrates the importance of community planning and other controls on how a community develops in the future. The volume of traffic generated by a land use is directly related to the type and size of the development. The maximum build out scenario presents the worst-case scenario of how uncontrolled future development can dramatically increase existing traffic volumes and why it is important to plan for future growth to balance its anticipated impact on the local economy, community resources, and the existing transportation system.

## **Appendices**

### ***The Plan Maps***

#### **Land Use Suitability Mapping**

The Land Use Suitability Map is created by combining and comparing various digital layers of information developed from federal, state, and local sources. Overlays of the GIS mapping data identify those lands that are the most environmentally fragile and thus most desirable to protect, and those areas that are well suited for new residential and commercial development. Table 1-7 summarizes the findings of the Land Use Suitability map.

To aid in the visualization of these future land use priorities, PVPC has developed a range of categories for all lands in the town. Every acre of land in Blandford will fall into one of these categories. A brief description of each land use category follows, including the list of mapping data or characteristics used to create the category:

##### **Category 1a: Protected from Future Development**

This category includes lands that are most likely to remain undeveloped in the future. In some cases this is because the identified lands are protected from development or are in government or institutional ownership and are unlikely to be developed in the near future. Also included in this category are lands that are already developed. In articulating future land use strategies in Blandford, the community may wish to identify some previously developed lands as being appropriate for future redevelopment. However, for the purposes of this analysis the developed lands may remain in this first category.

##### **Data Layers**

- Open Water
- Existing Open Spaces
- Protected Lands
- Government-owned Lands
- Institutional Lands
- Private Lands

##### **Category 1b: Existing Developed Lands**

This category includes lands that are currently shown as developed on the most recent McConnell Land Use Maps from UMASS.

##### **Data Layers**

- Existing Developed Lands

##### **Category 2: Land Suitable for Compact Development (Mixed Use, Affordable Housing, Commercial Development)**

This category includes lands that are currently served – or could be potentially served – by the infrastructure that supports the most intensive development. Many times, these lands will occur around village centers, along developed commercial corridors, or in more intensively developed residential and mixed use neighborhoods.

##### **Data Layers**

- Unprotected, unconstrained lands within any of the following simple buffers to be established showing lands within:

#### Services

1. ¼ mile of water line
2. ¼ mile of sewer line
3. ¼ mile of public transit line
4. ½ mile of an interstate (or turnpike) exchange

#### Places

1. ¼ mile of major employer/employment center
2. ½ mile buffer of town center/s
3. ¼ mile buffer of village centers
4. ¼ mile buffer of other community-designated growth node

- Does not include active farmlands
- Commercial/Industrial zoned land not included (these lands appear in Category 6)

### **Category 3: Land Suitable for Protected Open Space**

This category includes lands that provide some valuable benefit to the natural or human environment in Blandford and that should be protected from future development.

#### Data Layers

- All lands not in Category 1 or 2 but including:

#### Resource Areas

1. 100-year Flood Plain
2. DEP Zone 1
3. Outstanding Water Resource Watershed
4. Wetlands (plus 100-foot buffer)
5. Rivers Protection Act (100-foot buffer, inner riparian zone)
6. BioMap Core Areas
7. Certified and Potential Vernal Pools (point designations only)
8. Steep Slopes (over 25%)
9. NHESP Rare & Endangered Species Habitat

#### Existing Open Space with Limited Protection from Development

1. Government-owned Lands
2. Institutional Lands
3. Private Lands

- Can include active farmland
- Does not consider existing zoning designations

### **Category 4: Farmland Suitable for Protection or Low Intensity Use**

This category includes all undeveloped and unrestricted farmland not in Categories 1, 2, or 3.

#### Data Layers

- Active Farmland

### **Category 5: Sensitive Lands Suitable for Low Intensity Use**

This category includes environmentally-sensitive lands that are most appropriate for low intensity uses such as low density residential housing, active recreational uses, or scattered, low-impact commercial activity. When appropriate, some of these areas may also be appropriate for long-term protection from development such as in the case of active agricultural lands.

#### Data Layers

All undeveloped and unrestricted lands not within Categories 1, 2, 3, and 4, but within:

- Active Farmland
- DEP approved Zone 2
- Aquifer Protection Overlay Zones
- Interim Wellhead Protection Areas
- NonTransient/NonCommunity Water Supply Buffers
- Steep Slopes (15% - 25%)
- Pioneer Valley Regional Greenways Priority Areas
- Planned Municipal trails or greenway corridors

### **Category 6: Land Suitable for Potential Economic Development (High Intensity)**

This category includes lands that may be suitable for high intensity commercial or economic development in Blandford. Not all communities have areas in all of these categories, but it is likely that at least some areas in town will fall into this category.

#### Data Layers

Undeveloped, unprotected, unconstrained lands within:

- Existing Industrial Park
- Designated Economic Opportunity Area
- Brownfield Sites
- Existing Vacant/Underdeveloped Industrial/Commercial Sites
- Lands Currently Zoned for Commercial or Industrial Use

### **Category 7: Remaining Lands – Suitable for Local Designation**

These lands are those that offer neither prime development opportunities nor particularly valuable environmental assets. The Community Development Planning Committee may choose whether or not to include specific strategies regarding future uses of these lands.

#### Data Layers

All remaining lands not included in Categories 1 through 6

### **Future Land Use Map**

The goal of the Future Land Use Mapping exercise (see “Putting It All Together”) is to identify the best places in Blandford to site future development. As the Committee and PVPC develop the Housing, Economic Development, and Transportation elements of this Blandford Community Development Plan, decisions will be made in each of these policy areas regarding the best use of land resources in the town. Town regulations, policies, and other community efforts should be implemented in a way that reinforces the preferred land use pattern developed in the Future Land

Use Map for Blandford.

# Town of Blandford Community Planning Workshop

Thursday, March 27, 2003

7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

at Blandford Elementary School

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**6:45 -7:05**      **Register, make a Name Tag, review handouts, poster boards etc.**

**7:00-7:10**      Welcome/Overview of Workshop & Community Development Planning

**7:10-7:20**      **Community Survey Results**

Think about the following questions:

- Was there any information that surprised you, if so, what was it & why?
- Do you feel this information accurately describes the Town of Blandford, why or why not?
- Is there any information that you found interesting or that you did not know about the Town of Blandford?

**7:20-7:55**      **Cognitive Mapping Exercise**

**Step 1:** Each table has a copy of an enlarged map of Blandford & markers. Identify by drawing on the map your answers to the following questions:

- What are the important resources and landmarks in the community (examples: natural features or historic landmarks, important businesses...etc.)?
- What and where do you see current & potential problems in the community?

**Step 2:** Each group has 2-3 minutes to present and explain their maps to everyone.

**7:55-8:20**      **Identifying Blandford's strengths and weaknesses**

**Step 1:** Using the markers each group should create a list of Blandford's *assets or strengths* in blue marker and *liabilities or weaknesses* in red marker.

**Step 2:** Each group has 2-3 minutes to present their results to the full group.

**Step 3:** The entire group will discuss the results of the Strengths/Weaknesses Inventory and prioritize the issues raised.

**8:20-8:55**      **Clarify Blandford's Vision**

**Step 1:** Each member of the group should finish the following statement on how they would improve the community: "*If I were king/queen for a day I would...*"

**Step 2:** From this statement and based on the priorities identified above each small group should create a vision statement (while keeping in mind the 4 areas of focus of the CDP: housing, economic development, open space and recreation and transportation).

**Step 3:** Each group has 2-3 minutes to present their vision to the whole group.

**8:55-9:00**      **Wrap Up**

If you would like to stay involved in Blandford's community development planning process, sign up at the registration table. You can volunteer for a sub-committee or just express your willingness to help out on an "as-needed" basis. There will be more opportunities to get involved as the community development planning process progresses.

**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!**

## **Community Planning Workshop, 3/03**

A planning workshop was held at the Blandford Elementary School on March 27, 2003 during which Blandford residents in attendance identified additional issues and opportunities regarding the future of the Town:

### **Community Assets**

- Rural character of Town – important to maintain
- Historic trolley line (“Huckleberry”), parts of which could be used for recreation
- No plans for significant economic development
- Golf Club; open viewsheds towards Springfield because of lack of trees
- No Massachusetts Turnpike interchange in Blandford
- “Community Assets” identified on the town map included: blueberry farms, scenic pathways, white church, old schoolhouse, mica mine, Blair Pond, Long Pond, Sanderson Brook Falls, Springfield Ski Club, Cobble Mountain Reservoir, Watson Park, Blandford Club, fairgrounds, Historical Society building, and the library building.

### **Issues of Concern**

- Springfield Water & Sewer owns 1/3 of the land in Blandford (but Town has right of first refusal in the event of Springfield selling the land)
- Continuing loss of control over Town resources
- Water supply land (Springfield) is not taxed at fair rate
- Property taxes are too high
- Noise, light, air pollution
- Threat of additional Telecommunications towers (4 existing, though not near center)
- Ski club – hard to maintain the roads
- Buildout of available lands is a big concern
- Eastern MA bias against small hilltowns; regulations are made for larger communities. “One size doesn’t fit all.”
- Outdated zoning bylaws, make room for too rapid development and sprawl
- Water line and water supply problem (e coli), raises taxes too much
- Missing necessary state funds because of state fiscal crisis

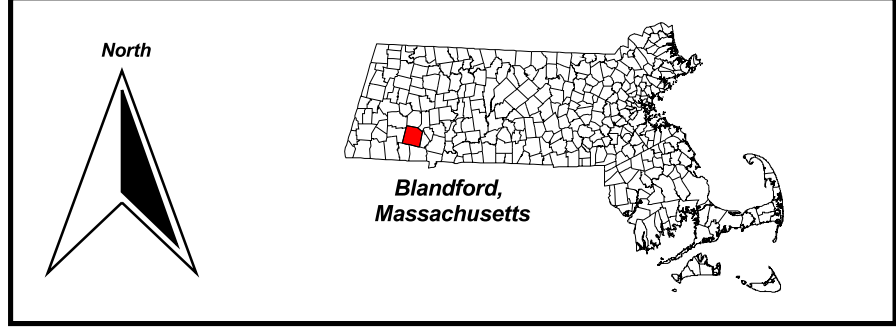
- No significant service for the elderly (tax formula to take into account percentages of school-age children, retirees, etc., in Towns?)
- Transportation – Blandford is isolated, with no bus or cab service
- No Massachusetts Turnpike interchange
- Concern about expansion of municipal water supply
- Concern about location of development – can there be projections based on where the most appropriate development should happen and how much growth is sustainable in Blandford?
- “Issues of Concern” identified on the town map included: gate at Cobble Mountain Reservoir, Massachusetts Turnpike, Springfield Ski Club

In general, many citizens indicated a loss of control over local land use issues tracing this loss of control to a few locally critical situations:

1. the ownership and control of large amounts of town land by the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission – this would include the actual and perceived loss of local tax revenue as a result of this ownership;
2. a significant increase in the municipal tax load borne primarily by residents of the town – this would include concern over the cost to residents of the newly-installed public water system in Blandford; and,
3. the application of inappropriate statewide solutions to localized problems in Western Massachusetts communities – this would include the perception that state leaders in Boston do not understand the issues faced by communities outside of the Greater Boston Metropolitan area.

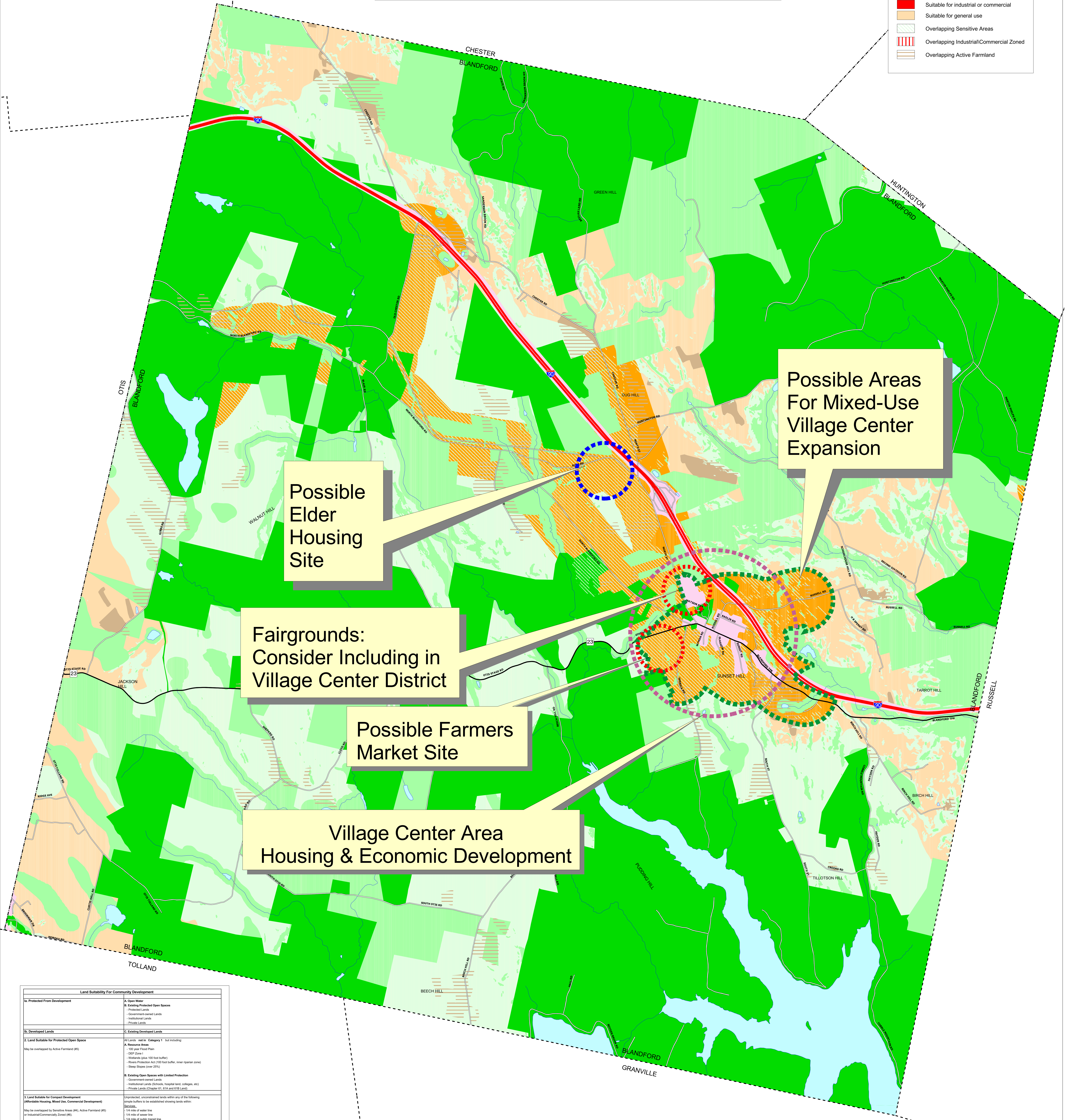
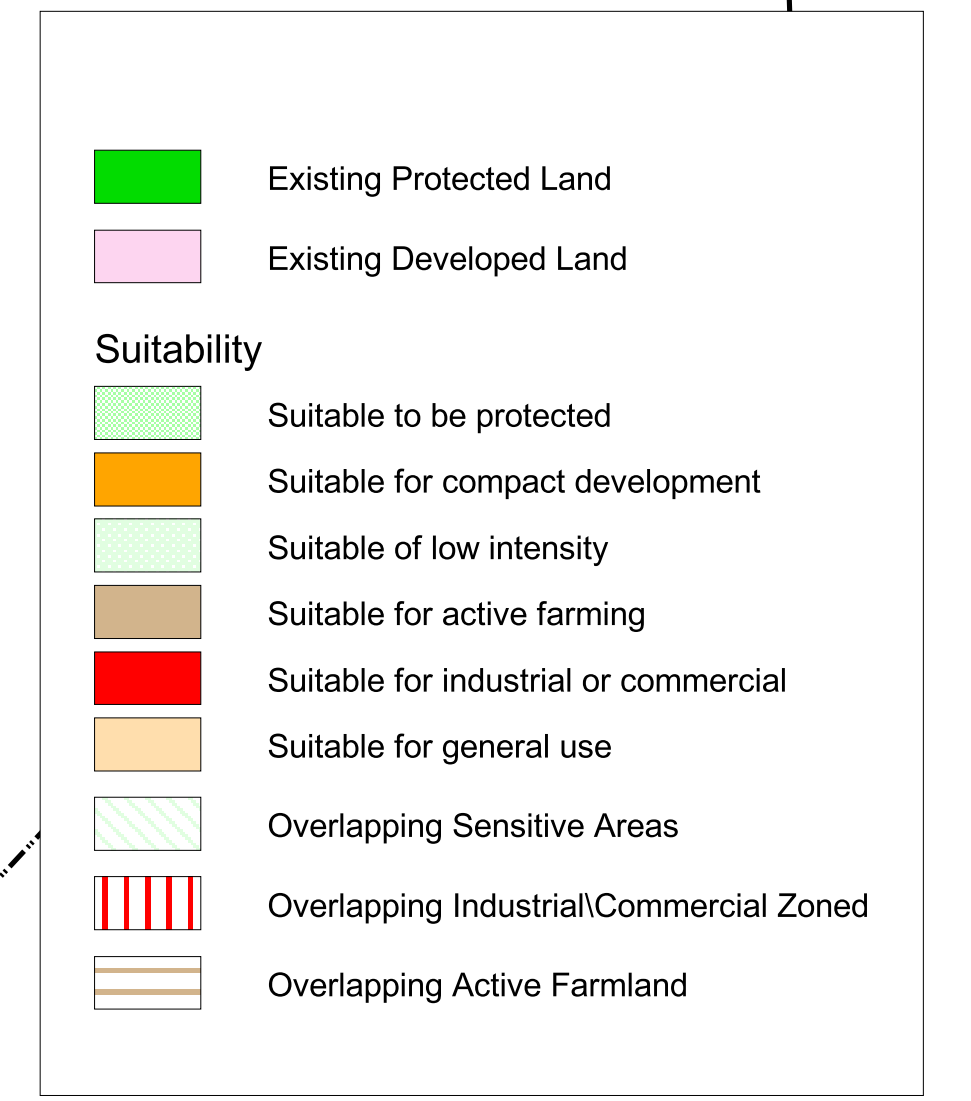
There was interest among several of those in attendance in making sure that the planning work to follow would completely, fairly, and proportionately address the issue of the Springfield water supply lands. However, most residents that spoke regarding this issue focused primarily on the fiscal impacts to Blandford residents and focused less attention on other possible impacts on the town.

A discussion regarding the impact of a Blandford Massachusetts Turnpike interchange prompted many to speak about the importance of maintaining the rural character of the town. Although a large number of Blandford residents who commute to jobs outside of the town recognized the benefit of increased and convenient access to the Turnpike, there seemed to be general agreement among those present that the construction of an interchange in Blandford would result in a significant change in community character.



Executive Order 418  
Community Development Project

# Blandford, Massachusetts Bring It All Together Housing & Economic Development



Possible Elder Housing Site

Possible Areas For Mixed-Use Village Center Expansion

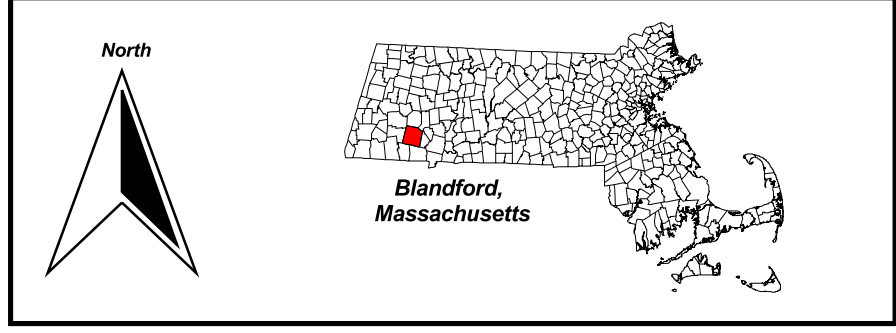
Fairgrounds: Consider Including in Village Center District

Possible Farmers Market Site

Village Center Area Housing & Economic Development

Land Suitability For Community Development	
<b>1. Protected From Development</b>	<b>A. Open Water</b> <b>B. Existing Protected Open Space</b> - Protected Lands - Government-owned Lands - Institutional Lands - Private Lands
<b>2. Developed Lands</b>	<b>C. Existing Developed Lands</b>
<b>3. Land Suitable for Protected Open Space</b> <small>May be overlapped by Active Farmland (AF)</small>	<b>A. Reserve Area</b> - 100 year Flood Plain - 100' Zone - Wetlands (plus 100 foot buffer) - 100' Buffer (plus 100 foot buffer, near riparian zone) - Steep Slopes (over 25%)  <b>B. Existing Open Spaces with Limited Protection</b> - Government-owned Lands - Institutional Lands (Schools, hospital land, colleges, etc.) - Private Lands (Chapter 61, 61A and 61B Land)
<b>4. Land Suitable for Compact Development</b> <small>(Affordable Housing, Mixed Use, Commercial Development) May be overlapped by Sensitive Areas (SA), Active Farmland (AF) or Industrial/Commercially Zoned (IC)</small>	Unrestricted, unconstrained lands within any of the following simple buffers to be established around lands within: - 1/4 mile of water line - 1/4 mile of sewer line - 1/4 mile of public transit line - 1/2 mile of an interstate (or turnpike) exchange (juncture) - 1/4 mile of a bridge or viaduct - 1/4 mile of major employment center - 1/2 mile buffer of open centers - 1/4 mile buffer of village centers - 1/4 mile buffer of other community designated areas
<b>5. Sensitive Lands Suitable for Low Intensity Use</b> <small>Cross-hatch where overlapping of other classifications occur</small>	<b>A. Undeveloped &amp; Unrestricted</b> Lands within: - Boring Core Habitat - OSP Agreement Zone 2 - Aquifer Protection Overlay Zones - Marine Wetland Protection Areas - Non-Township/Community Water Supply Buffers - Steep Slopes (15% - 25%) - PVI Regional Greenway Priority Areas - Planned municipal trails or greenway corridors - HalfSP Sites & Ecological Sensitive Habitat - Outstanding Water Resource Watershed
<b>6. Active Farmland</b> <small>Solid color denotes farmland not classified in 1 - 4. Hatching of the same color denotes overlap of other land uses or other classifications.</small>	Lands presently in active agriculture
<b>7. Land Suitable for Potential Economic Development</b> <small>Hatched color denotes overlap with other land classified in 1 - 5</small>	Undeveloped, unrestricted, unconstrained lands within: - Existing Industrial Park - Designated Economic Opportunity Area - Brownfield Sites - Existing Vacant/Underdeveloped Industrial/Commercial Sites
<b>8. Remaining Lands - Lands Suitable for General Development</b>	Undeveloped, unrestricted, unconstrained lands - not within Categories 1 - 8 - that is zoned for industrial or commercial use





Executive Order 418  
Community Development Project

# Blandford, Massachusetts

Existing Protected Land

Existing Developed Land

Suitability

Suitable to be protected

Suitable for compact development

Suitable for low intensity

Suitable for active farming

Suitable for industrial or commercial

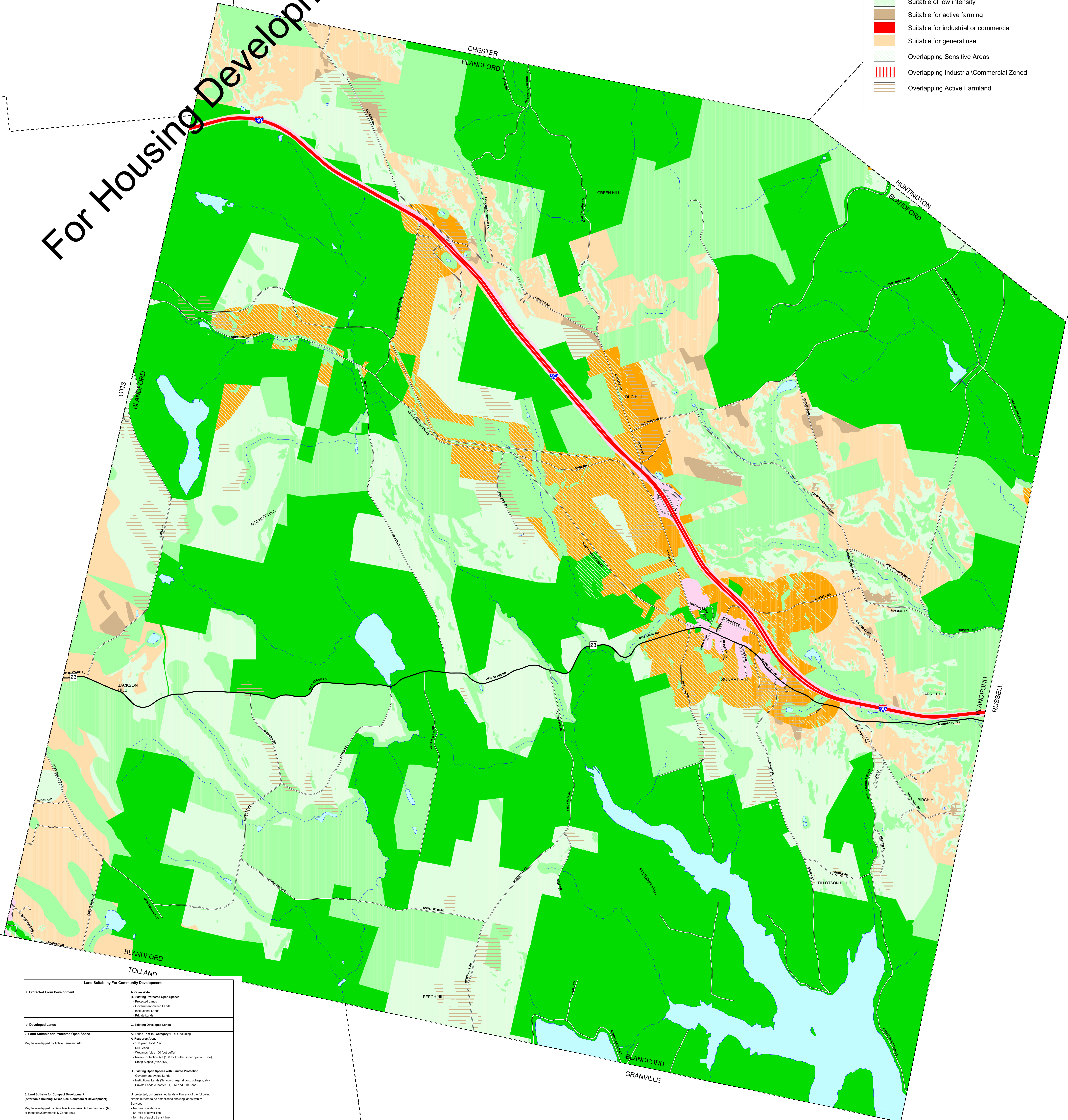
Suitable for general use

Overlapping Sensitive Areas

Overlapping Industrial/Commercial Zoned

Overlapping Active Farmland

For Housing Development Plan



Land Suitability for Community Development	
<b>1a. Protected From Development</b>	<b>A. Open Water</b>
	<b>B. Existing Protected Open Spaces</b>
	- Protected Lands
	- Government-owned Lands
	- Institutional Lands
	- Private Lands
<b>1b. Developed Lands</b>	<b>C. Existing Developed Lands</b>
	All Lands not in Category 1 but including:
<b>2. Land Suitable for Protected Open Space</b>	<b>A. Resource Areas</b>
May be overlapped by Active Farmland (45)	- 100-year Flood Plain
	- DEP Zone 1
	- Wetlands (plus 100-foot buffer)
	- Rivers Protection Act (100-foot buffer, inner riparian zone)
	- Steep Slopes (over 25%)
<b>3. Land Suitable for Compact Development</b>	<b>B. Existing Open Spaces with Limited Protection</b>
May be overlapped by Sensitive Areas (44), Active Farmland (45) or Industrial/Commercially Zoned (46)	- Government-owned Lands
	- Institutional Lands (Schools, hospital land, colleges, etc.)
	- Private Lands (Chapter 61, 61A and 61B Lands)
	Unprotected, unconstrained lands within any of the following
	unique buffers to be established (showing lands within:
	<b>Sensitive</b>
	- 1/4 mile of water line
	- 1/4 mile of sewer line
	- 1/4 mile of public water line
	- 1/2 mile of an interstate (or turnpike) exchange (juncture)
	<b>Dispersed</b> (single or polygon)
	- 1/4 mile of major employment/employment center
	- 1/2 mile buffer of town centers
	- 1/4 mile buffer of village centers
	- 1/4 mile buffer of other community-designated area
<b>4. Sensitive Lands Suitable for Low Intensity Use</b>	<b>All undeveloped &amp; unrestricted</b> lands within:
Cross-hatch where overlapping of other classifications occur	- Burroughs Cone Habitat
	- DEP Approved Zone 2
	- Aquatic Protection Overlay Zones
	- Interior Wetland Protection Areas
	- Shell/Terrace/Soil/Community Water Supply Buffers
	- Steep Slopes (15% - 25%)
	- PVI Regional Openways/ Priority Areas
	- Planned municipal trails or greenway corridors
	- MDEP Plans & Endangered Species Habitat
	- Outstanding Water Resource Watershed
<b>5. Active Farmland</b>	- Land presently in active agriculture
Solid color denotes farmland not classified in 1 - 4. Hatching of the same color denotes overlap of active farmland on other classifications	
<b>6. Land Suitable for Potential Economic Development</b>	Undeveloped, unprotected, unconstrained lands within:
Hatched color denotes overlap with other land classified in 1 - 5	- Existing Industrial Park
	- Designated Economic Opportunity Area
	- Brownfield Sites
	- Existing Vacant/Underdeveloped Industrial/Commercial Sites
	Undeveloped, unprotected, unconstrained lands not within Categories 1 - 5 that is zoned for Industrial or Commercial Use
<b>7. Remaining Lands - Lands Suitable for General Development</b>	All remaining lands not included in Categories 1 - 6

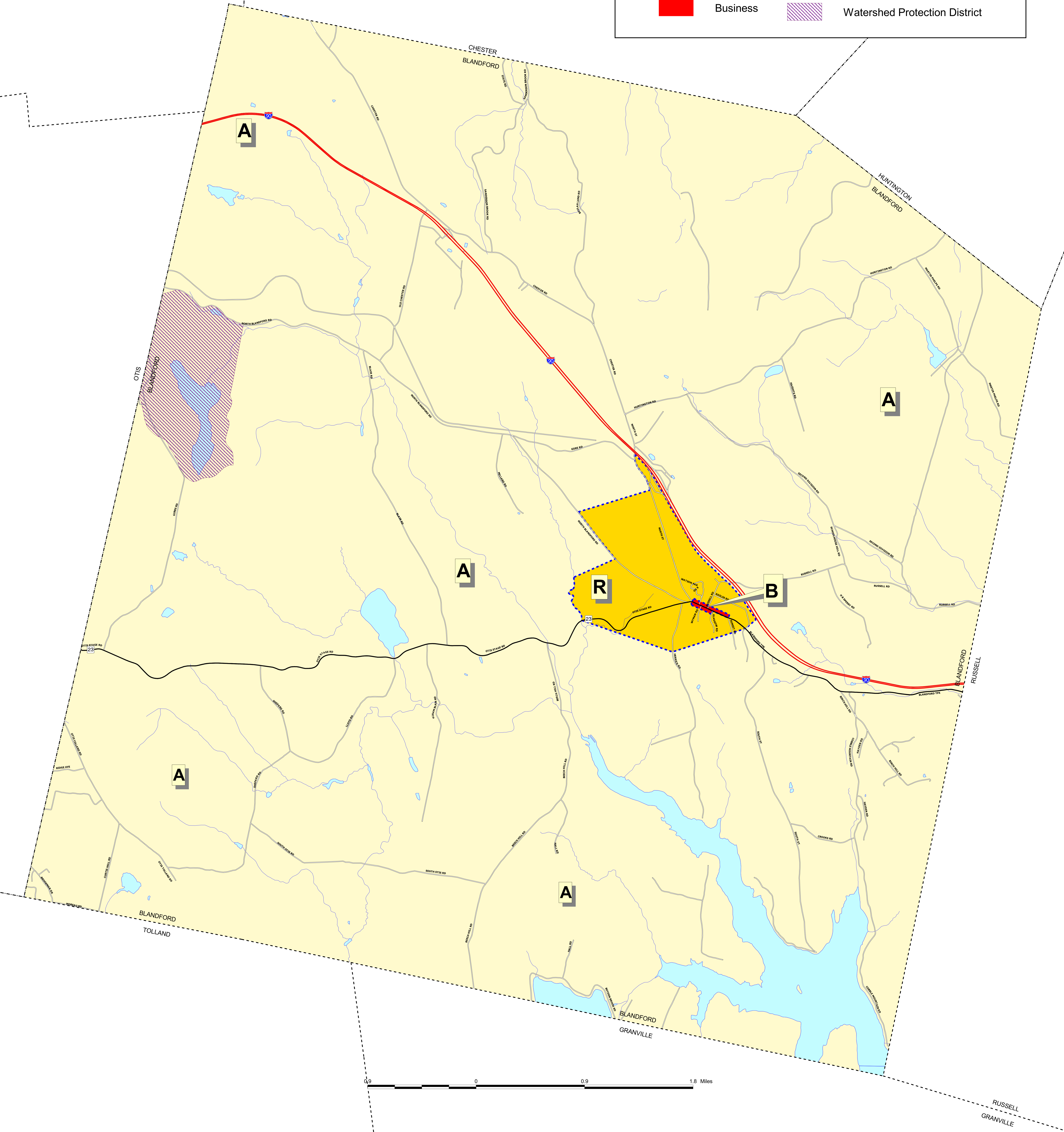


Blandford Municipal Zoning				
District	Code	Square Feet	Acres	Percent
Agricultural	A	1,456,544,458	33,437.7	97.69%
Business	B	408,112	9.4	0.03%
Residential	R	34,013,629	780.8	2.28%
Watershed Protection		17,506,764	401.9	-
	Totals:	1,490,966,199	34,227.9	100.00%

Executive Order 418  
Community Development Plan Project

Blandford, Massachusetts  
Municipal Zoning Districts

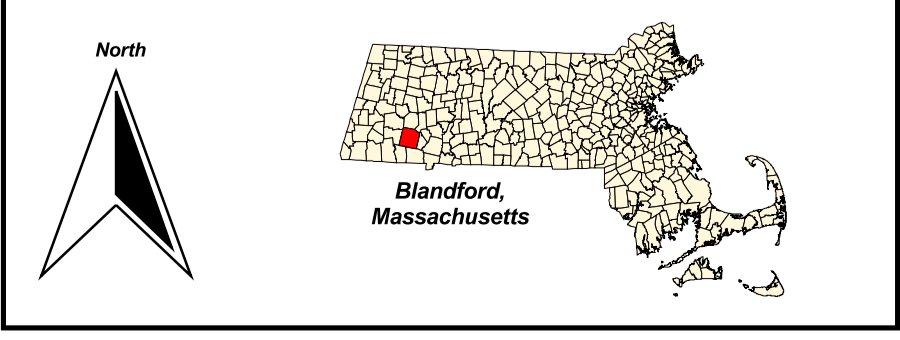
- Agriculture
- Business
- Residential
- Watershed Protection District

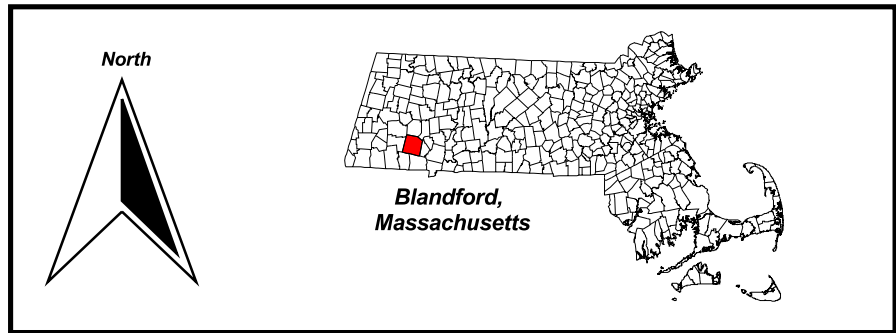


The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analysis.

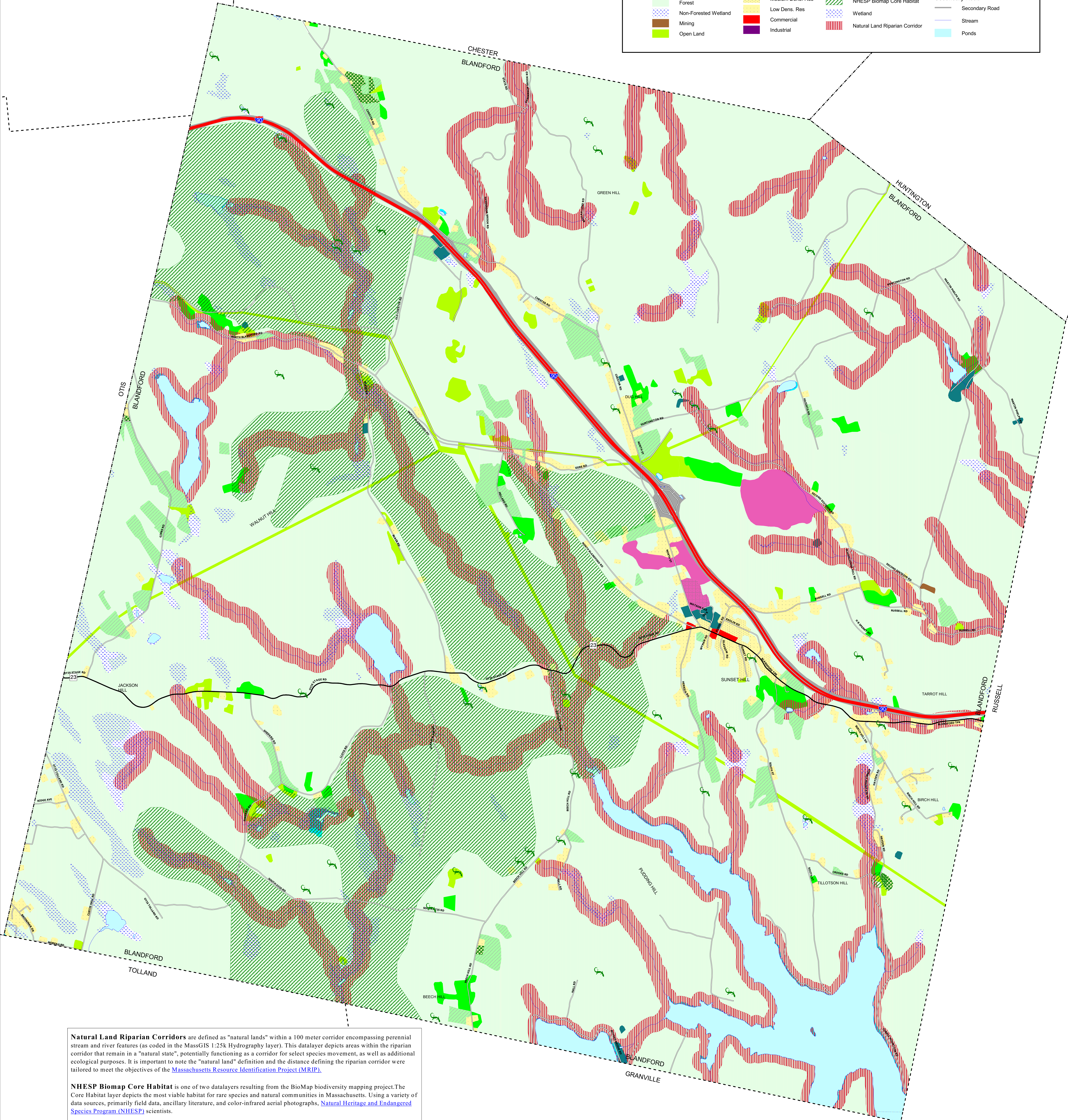
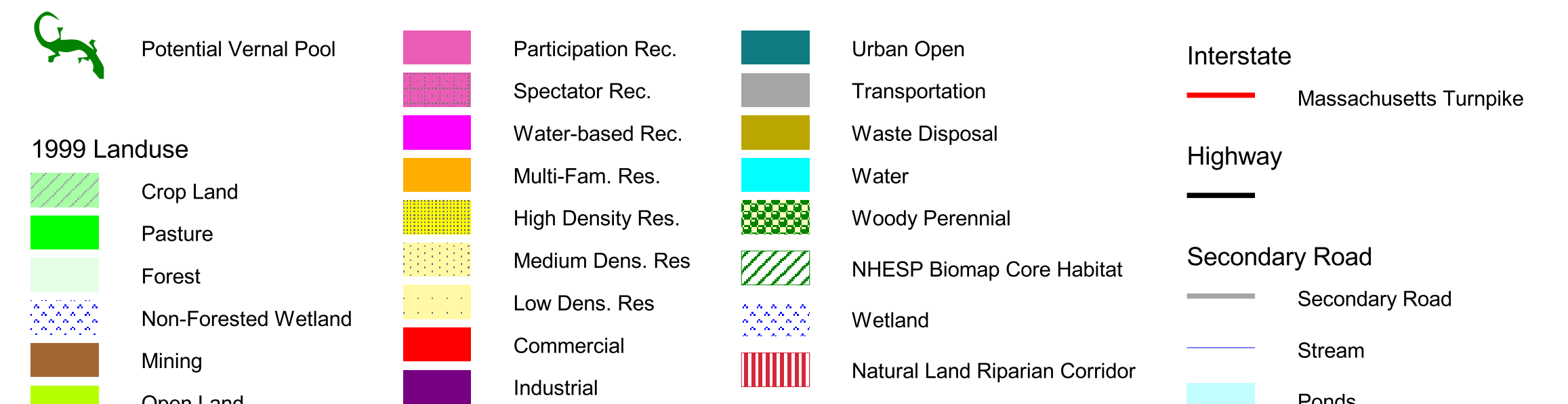
Produced by the PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION  
26 Central Street, West Springfield, MA 01089 • (413) 781-6045

MASS GIS  
Massachusetts Geographic Information System  
Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs - 2003





Executive Order 418  
Community Development Project  
and  
Open Space Plan  
**Blandford, Massachusetts**  
**Natural Environment**



**Natural Land Riparian Corridors** are defined as "natural lands" within a 100 meter corridor encompassing perennial stream and river features (as coded in the MassGIS 1:25k Hydrography layer). This datalayer depicts areas within the riparian corridor that remain in a "natural state", potentially functioning as a corridor for select species movement, as well as additional ecological purposes. It is important to note the "natural land" definition and the distance defining the riparian corridor were tailored to meet the objectives of the [Massachusetts Resource Identification Project \(MRIP\)](#).

**NHESP Biomap Core Habitat** is one of two datalayers resulting from the BioMap biodiversity mapping project. The Core Habitat layer depicts the most viable habitat for rare species and natural communities in Massachusetts. Using a variety of data sources, primarily field data, ancillary literature, and color-infrared aerial photographs, [Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program \(NHESP\)](#) scientists.

**Potential vernal pools** visible on aerial photographs were interpreted and included in this layer. However, this datalayer does not include every vernal pool in Massachusetts. Many vernal pools have not been identified due to unfavorable conditions in the landscape topography, pool physiography and/or photograph quality. Furthermore, vernal pool habitats occur in a wide variety of landscape settings, including forested swamps, bogs, and other wetlands. Vernal pools within these settings were not typically interpreted, but are nonetheless legitimate and valuable vernal pools. Also, field verification of all potential vernal pools in this study will identify errors such as the inclusion of features that are not actually vernal pools.

**Potential vernal pools identified in this survey are not to be confused with [Certified Vernal Pools](#).** Data pursuant to the official "Guidelines for the Certification of Vernal Pool Habitat" must be collected in the field and presented to the Massachusetts [Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program](#) to obtain official certification for a vernal pool. Potential vernal pools identified in this survey do not receive protection under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act Regulations (310 CMR 10.00), or under any other state or federal wetlands protection laws.

**1999 Land Use Data** was funded by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), the Executive Office of Transportation and Construction, Massachusetts Water Resources Authority and several regional planning agencies. Photointerpretation and digitizing were completed by the UMASS-Amherst Department of Forestry Resource Mapping Project (RMP).



## Blandford, Massachusetts Updated Chapter Lands & Protected & Recreational Open Space

**Ownership**

- Municipal
- Nonprofit
- Private
- State
- Federal

**Level of Protection**

- Limited
- None
- Permanent

**Water Bodies**

- Stream
- Highway
- Mass Pike
- Secondary Road
- Transmission Line

Chapters 61, 61A & 61B are all private and temporary level of protection.

**Agriculture 61A**  
**Recreation 61B**  
**Forestry 61**

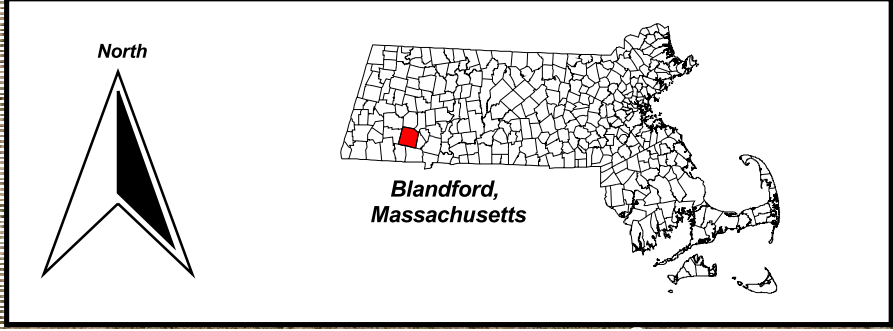
September 30, 2003

Chapter 61, 61A & 61B Lands							
Parcel Id	Owner	Owner Type	Site Name	Calculated Acres	Primary Purpose	Public Access	Level Of Protection
101-6	HULL FORESTLANDS, LP	P		47.3	F	X	T
102-11	HULL FORESTLANDS, LP	P		4.5	F	X	T
105-1	BLANDFORD CLUB, THE	P	BLANDFORD COUNTRY CLUB	9.2	R	4	T
105-14	BLANDFORD CLUB, THE	P	BLANDFORD COUNTRY CLUB	3.5	R	4	T
105-16	BLANDFORD CLUB, THE	P	BLANDFORD COUNTRY CLUB	1.9	R	4	T
105-17	BLANDFORD CLUB, THE	P	BLANDFORD COUNTRY CLUB	4.4	R	4	T
105-3	BLANDFORD CLUB, THE	P	BLANDFORD COUNTRY CLUB	16.3	R	4	T
105-12	BLANDFORD CLUB, THE	P	BLANDFORD COUNTRY CLUB	13.8	R	4	T
106-4	BLANDFORD CLUB, THE	P	BLANDFORD COUNTRY CLUB	1.8	R	4	T
110-6	LOOMIS, SCOTT	P		4.4	F	X	T
111-32	LOOMIS, SCOTT	P		8.5	F	X	T
114-21	BERNIE, DAVID M	P		3.1	A	X	T
402-24	MAIKA, ANTHONY J	P		17.5	C	1	T
402-31	TEMPLEMAN, RITA	P		26.8	A	X	T
402-33	ROBART, GARY	P		7.1	A	X	T
402-30	OTTEN, RUSSELL J	P		6.9	A	X	T
402-31	OTTEN, RUSSELL J	P		21.9	A	X	T
402-32	OTTEN, RUSSELL J	P		43.1	F	X	T
402-32	OTTEN, RUSSELL J	P		46.4	F	X	T
402-43	BRENT, PHILIP D	P		106.0	F	X	T
402-6	TEMPLEMAN, JAMES G	P		27.7	F	X	T
402-7	TEMPLEMAN, JAMES G	P		14.8	A	X	T
402-8	PECK REALTY TRUST	P		28.0	F	X	T
403-1	LITZINGER, HENRY A	P	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	10.8	A	X	T
403-3	HULL FORESTLANDS, LP	P		7.0	F	X	T
403-24	HULL FORESTLANDS, LP	P	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	145.5	F	X	T
404-24	HULL FORESTLANDS, LP	P	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	20.4	F	X	T
404-26	HULL FORESTLANDS, LP	P	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	43.4	F	X	T
404-27	HULL FORESTLANDS, LP	P	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	23.9	F	X	T
405-3	TERRY, HOWARD P & J	P		5.5	A	X	T
405-15.2	TERRY, HOWARD P & J	P		5.8	A	X	T
405-15.3	TERRY, HOWARD P & J	P		8.4	A	X	T
405-15.4	TERRY, HOWARD P & J	P		2.0	A	X	T
405-15.5	TERRY, HOWARD P & J	P		2.8	A	X	T
405-21.1	TERRY, HOWARD P & J	P		216.4	A	X	T
407-8	OLDGAK, ANDREW F JR	P		47.1	F	X	T
408-13	MATULEWICZ, CATHERIN	P		76.2	C	1	T
408-7	MARTIN, LLOYD JAMES	P		17.2	A	X	T
409-22	HULL FORESTLANDS, LP	P		64.8	F	X	T
409-23	HULL FORESTLANDS, LP	P		7.6	F	X	T
409-4	VAN WERKHOVEN, ANTH	P		10.3	A	X	T
409-41.2	VAN WERKHOVEN, ANTH	P		81.1	A	X	T
409-43.2	VAN WERKHOVEN, ANTH	P		4.2	A	X	T
409-47	HULL FORESTLANDS, LP	P		204.4	F	X	T
409-5	VAN WERKHOVEN, ANTH	P		22.0	A	X	T
409-6	VAN WERKHOVEN, ANTH	P		35.9	A	X	T
409-10	LLOYD, LESTER W JR	P		160.0	F	X	T
412-12	RIPLEY, LEON K	P		186.4	F	X	T
412-3	RUSZALA, PETER A	P		273.3	F	X	T
412-1	RUSZALA, PETER A	P		196.0	F	X	T
412-8	RUSZALA, PETER A	P		57.7	F	X	T
413-8	RIPLEY, LEON K	P		28.7	A	X	T
414-1.1	KISTELL, ETTA M	P		135.8	F	X	T
416-16	SPRINGFIELD SKI CLUB	P	BLANDFORD SKI AREA	11.4	X	4	T
416-4	HAIGHT, JOHN M	P		46.5	F	X	T
418-2	OLESIK, ANDREW III	P		666.0	F	X	T
418-3	B & N LANDS, LLC	P		268.8	F	X	T
418-4	HULL FORESTLANDS, LP	P		16.4	F	X	T
418-8	HULL FORESTLANDS, LP	P		45.8	F	X	T
421-14	HULL FORESTLANDS, LP	P		223.7	F	X	T
421-18	HULL FORESTLANDS, LP	P		51.3	F	X	T
421-11	HULL FORESTLANDS, LP	P		31.7	F	X	T
421-18	HULL FORESTLANDS, LP	P		35.0	F	X	T
421-11	HULL FORESTLANDS, LP	P		59.8	F	X	T
421-26	BOISSEAU ROBERT A &	P		59.8	F	X	T
421-39	HULL FORESTLANDS, LP	P		72.2	F	X	T
421-43	HULL FORESTLANDS, LP	P		1.2	F	X	T
421-53	PECK REALTY TRUST	P	BIRCH HILL ROAD	23.5	F	X	T
421-7	HULL FORESTLANDS, LP	P		43.2	F	X	T

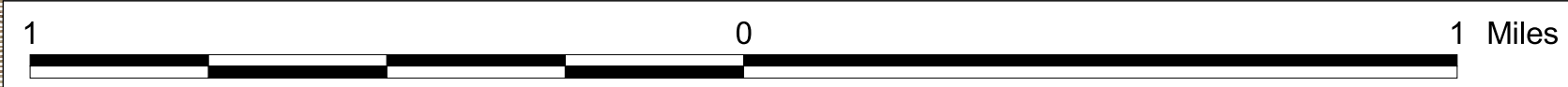
Protected and/or Recreational Openspace							
Parcel Id	Owner	Owner Type	Site Name	Calculated Acres	Primary Purpose	Public Access	Level Of Protection
107-3	NEFF	N	ARMS ACRES	60.3	B	1	P
107-5	NEFF	N	ARMS ACRES	13.2	B	1	P
108-5	UNION AGRICULTURAL S	N	BLANDFORD FAIR GROUNDS	17.0	R	1	N
109-11	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	TOWN COMMON	1.4	H	1	P
109-13	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	WATSON PARK	12.3	R	1	P
109-16	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	BLANDFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	2.9	R	1	L
109-17	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	TOWN COMMON	2.0	H	1	P
109-2	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	BLANDFORD HISTORICAL SOC. TOWN	4.0	H	1	P
109-8	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	HILL CEMETERY	3.1	H	1	P
110-21	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	OLD CEMETERY	0.4	H	1	P
110-22	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	TOWN COMMON	0.2	H	1	P
110-3	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	OLD CEMETERY	1.0	H	1	P
111-23	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	BLANDFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY	0.5	G	1	L
401-4	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	1.3	W	X	P
401-46	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	BLANDFORD WATER SUPPLY PROTECTION DISTRICT	215.5	W	X	P
401-5	DEM	S	TOLLAND STATE FOREST	75.1	B	Y	P
401-1453	DEM	S	TOLLAND STATE FOREST	5.1	B	Y	P
401-146	DEM	S	TOLLAND STATE FOREST	7.1	B	Y	P
402-22	TOWN OF BLANDFORD CC	M	DOVER TRUST ENVIRONMENTAL CENT	140.9	C	1	P
403-5	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	BLANDFORD WATER SUPPLY PROTECTION DISTRICT	333.4	W	X	P
403-7	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	158.7	W	X	P
404-1	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	271.1	W	X	P
404-25	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	20.5	W	X	P
404-26	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	NORTH BLANDFORD CEMETERY	2.6	H	X	P
404-30	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	98.3	W	X	P
404-30.1	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	0.6	X	X	P
404-38	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	106.5	W	X	P
404-40.1	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	72.1	C	1	P
404-41	TOWN OF BLANDFORD WFO	M	BLANDFORD WATER SUPPLY PROTECTION DISTRICT	12.9	W	X	P
405-1	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	1,187.0	W	X	P
405-9	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	30.9	W	X	P
406-18	STOWMATE FATHERS	N	HIGH FOLLY RETREAT	112.7	X	4	N
406-2	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	3.6	W	X	P
406-27	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	1.4	X	X	P
406-3	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	13.9	W	X	P
406-4	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	15.8	W	X	P
407-10	DEM	S	CHESTER-BLANDFORD STATE FOREST	870.3	B	Y	P
407-16.1	SPRINGFIELD BOYS CLUB	N	SPRINGFIELD BOYS CLUB	50.9	R	X	L
407-16	DEM	S	CHESTER-BLANDFORD STATE FOREST	207.4	B	Y	P
408-10	DEM	S	CHESTER-BLANDFORD STATE FOREST	85.3	X	X	N
408-40	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	92.0	W	X	P
408-40	DEM	S	CHESTER-BLANDFORD STATE FOREST	271.5	W	X	P
408-44	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	8.4	W	X	P
408-48	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	69.3	W	X	P
410-1	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	1,017.8	W	X	P
410-12	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	352.0	W	X	P
411-10	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	347.4	W	X	P
411-7	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	691.7	W	X	P
411-8	INHOLDING	I	INHOLDING	67.8	I	X	N
412-17	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	211.4	W	X	P
412-4	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	9.4	W	X	P
412-5	INHOLDING	I	INHOLDING	21.8	I	X	N
412-6	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	128.0	W	X	P
412-9	INHOLDING	I	INHOLDING	3.4	I	X	N
412-10	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	7.1	W	X	P
414-12	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	38.2	W	X	P
414-15	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	4,804.5	W	X	P
415-12	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	5.1	C	1	P
415-4	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	47.4	W	X	P
415-10	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	35.0	W	X	P
416-283	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	TOWN DUMP / TRANSFER STATION	20.5	O	1	L
416-29	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	FREE LAND	158.8	X	4	N
416-28	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	FREE LAND	19.8	X	X	X
416-26	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	FREE LAND	56.4	X	X	X
416-28	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	FREE LAND	67.5	X	X	X
417-2.01	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	FREE LAND	7.6	X	X	X
417-1	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	TOWN OF RUSSELL WATERSHED	561.7	W	X	P
417-4	TOWN OF RUSSELL	M	TOWN OF RUSSELL WATERSHED	57.3	W	X	P
417-5	TOWN OF RUSSELL	M	TOWN OF RUSSELL WATERSHED	2,137.4	W	X	P
417-6	INHOLDING	I	INHOLDING	15.2	I	X	N
418-1	DEM	S	CHESTER-BLANDFORD STATE FOREST	145.1	B	Y	P
418-2	TOWN OF HUNTINGTON	M	TOWN OF HUNTINGTON	4.0	W	X	P
420-183	TOWN OF RUSSELL	M	TOWN OF RUSSELL WATERSHED	8.2	W	X	P
420-11401	VALLEY LAND FUND	N	INCONTINENT	4.5	C	1	P
420-34173	TOWN OF RUSSELL	M	TOWN OF RUSSELL WATERSHED	2.2	W	X	P
421-40	TOWN OF BLANDFORD	M	FREE LAND	0.8	X	X	X
421-5	VALLEY LAND FUND	N	INCONTINENT	196.8	C	1	P
421-1	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	2.9	W	X	P
422-14	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	16.8	W	X	P
422-16	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	17.0	W	X	P
422-17	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	4.9	W	X	P
422-18	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	50.9	W	X	P
422-19	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	4.4	W	X	P
422-2	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	1.6	W	X	P
422-20	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	12.8	W	X	P
422-3	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	4.1	W	X	P
422-34	CITY OF SPRINGFIELD	M	SPRINGFIELD WATER SUPPLY LAND	253.1	W	X	P
422-35	PIONEER VALLEY COUNCIL	N	MOSES SCOUT RESERVATION	53.1	R	4	N

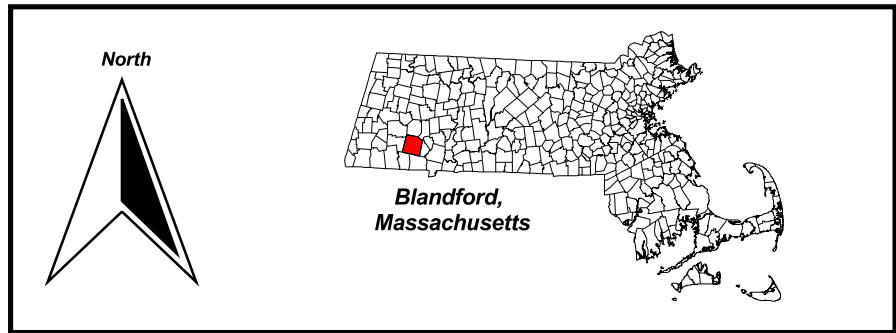
STATUS, FEE, OWNER (Owner Type)			CODE DESCRIPTIONS FOR OPEN SPACE		PUBLIC ACCESS TYPE	
F - Forest	N - Not open to public	P - Private	1 - ECEA or ECEA (private site access)	B - Recreation (activities are facility based)	1 - Yes (open to public)	2 - No (not open to public)
G - Golf	2 - ECEA or non-profit	R - Recreation and Conservation	2 - ECEA or non-profit	C - Conservation (activities are non-facility based)	3 - Limited (restricted access only)	4 - Unrestricted
H - Historic	3 - ECEA or non-profit	S - State	3 - ECEA or non-profit	D - Development and Conservation	5 - Unrestricted	
I - Industrial	4 - ECEA or non-profit	T - Town	4 - ECEA or non-profit	E - Agriculture	7 - Public (restricted)	8 - Public (unrestricted)
J - Judicial	5 - ECEA or non-profit	U - Unrestricted	5 - ECEA or non-profit	F - Public (restricted)	9 - Public (restricted)	10 - Public (unrestricted)
K - Other	6 - ECEA or non-profit	V - Other	6 - ECEA or non-profit	G - Other (unrestricted)	11 - Public (restricted)	12 - Public (unrestricted)
L - Other	7 - ECEA or non-profit	W - Other	7 - ECEA or non-profit	H - Other (unrestricted)	13 - Public (restricted)	14 - Public (unrestricted)
M - Other	8 - ECEA or non-profit	X - Other	8 - ECEA or non-profit	I - Other (unrestricted)	15 - Public (restricted)	16 - Public (unrestricted)
N - Other	9 - ECEA or non-profit	Y - Other	9 - ECEA or non-profit	J - Other (unrestricted)	17 - Public (restricted)	18 - Public (unrestricted)
O - Other	10 - ECEA or non-profit	Z - Other	10 - ECEA or non-profit	K - Other (unrestricted)	19 - Public (restricted)	20 - Public (unrestricted)
P - Other	11 - ECEA or non-profit	AA - Other	11 - ECEA or non-profit	L - Other (unrestricted)	21 - Public (restricted)	22 - Public (unrestricted)
Q - Other	12 - ECEA or non-profit	AB - Other	12 - ECEA or non-profit	M - Other (unrestricted)	23 - Public (restricted)	24 - Public (unrestricted)
R - Other	13 - ECEA or non-profit	AC - Other	13 - ECEA or non-profit	N - Other (unrestricted)	25 - Public (restricted)	26 - Public (unrestricted)
S - Other	14 - ECEA or non-profit	AD - Other	14 - ECEA or non-profit	O - Other (unrestricted)	27 - Public (restricted)	28 - Public (unrestricted)
T - Other	15 - ECEA or non-profit	AE - Other	15 - ECEA or non-profit	P - Other (unrestricted)	29 - Public (restricted)	30 - Public (unrestricted)
U - Other	16 - ECEA or non-profit	AF - Other	16 - ECEA or non-profit	Q - Other (unrestricted)	31 - Public (restricted)	32 - Public (unrestricted)
V - Other	17 - ECEA or non-profit	AG - Other	17 - ECEA or non-profit	R - Other (unrestricted)	33 - Public (restricted)	34 - Public (unrestricted)
W - Other	18 - ECEA or non-profit	AH - Other	18 - ECEA or non-profit	S - Other (unrestricted)	35 - Public (restricted)	36 - Public (unrestricted)
X - Other	19 - ECEA or non-profit	AI - Other	19 - ECEA or non-profit	T - Other (unrestricted)	37 - Public (restricted)	38 - Public (unrestricted)
Y - Other	20 - ECEA or non-profit	AJ - Other	20 - ECEA or non-profit	U - Other (unrestricted)	39 - Public (restricted)	40 - Public (unrestricted)
Z - Other	21 - ECEA or non-profit	AK - Other	21 - ECEA or non-profit	V - Other (unrestricted)	41 - Public (restricted)	42 - Public (unrestricted)
AA - Other	22 - ECEA or non-profit	AL - Other	22 - ECEA or non-profit	W - Other (unrestricted)	43 - Public (restricted)	44 - Public (unrestricted)
AB - Other	23 - ECEA or non-profit	AM - Other	23 - ECEA or non-profit	X - Other (unrestricted)	45 - Public (restricted)	46 - Public (unrestricted)
AC - Other	24 - ECEA or non-profit	AN - Other	24 - ECEA or non-profit	Y - Other (unrestricted)	47 - Public (restricted)	48 - Public (unrestricted)
AD - Other	25 - ECEA or non-profit	AO - Other	25 - ECEA or non-profit	Z - Other (unrestricted)	49 - Public (restricted)	50 - Public (unrestricted)
AE - Other	26 - ECEA or non-profit	AP - Other	26 - ECEA or non-profit			
AF - Other	27 - ECEA or non-profit	AQ - Other	27 - ECEA or non-profit			
AG - Other	28 - ECEA or non-profit	AR - Other	28 - ECEA or non-profit			
AH - Other	29 - ECEA or non-profit	AS - Other	29 - ECEA or non-profit			
AI - Other	30 - ECEA or non-profit	AT - Other	30 - ECEA or non-profit			
AJ - Other	31 - ECEA or non-profit	AU - Other	31 - ECEA or non-profit			
AK - Other	32 - ECEA or non-profit	AV - Other	32 - ECEA or non-profit			
AL - Other	33 - ECEA or non-profit	AW - Other	33 - ECEA or non-profit			
AM - Other	34 - ECEA or non-profit	AX - Other	34 - ECEA or non-profit			
AN - Other	35 - ECEA or non-profit	AY - Other	35 - ECEA or non-profit			
AO - Other	36 - ECEA or non-profit	AZ - Other	36 - ECEA or non-profit			
AP - Other	37 - ECEA or non-profit	BA - Other	37 - ECEA or non-profit			
AQ - Other	38 - ECEA or non-profit	BB - Other	38 - ECEA or non-profit			
AR - Other	39 - ECEA or non-profit	BC - Other	39 - ECEA or non-profit			
AS - Other	40 - ECEA or non-profit	BD - Other	40 - ECEA or non-profit			
AT - Other	41 - ECEA or non-profit	BE - Other	41 - ECEA or non-profit			
AU - Other	42 - ECEA or non-profit	BF - Other	42 - ECEA or non-profit			
AV - Other	43 - ECEA or non-profit	BG - Other	43 - ECEA or non-profit			
AW - Other	44 - ECEA or non-profit	BH - Other	44 - ECEA or non-profit			
AX - Other	45 - ECEA or non-profit	BI - Other	45 - ECEA or non-profit			
AY - Other	46 - ECEA or non-profit	BJ - Other	46 - ECEA or non-profit			
AZ - Other	47 - ECEA or non-profit	BK - Other	47 - ECEA or non-profit			
BA - Other	48 - ECEA or non-profit	BL - Other	48 - ECEA or non-profit			
BB - Other	49 - ECEA or non-profit	BM - Other	49 - ECEA or non-profit			
BC - Other	50 - ECEA or non-profit	BN - Other	50 - ECEA or non-profit			
BD - Other	51 - ECEA or non-profit	BO - Other	51 - ECEA or non-profit			
BE - Other	52 - ECEA or non-profit	BP - Other	52 - ECEA or non-profit			
BF - Other	53 - ECEA or non-profit	BQ - Other	53 - ECEA or non-profit			
BG - Other	54 - ECEA or non-profit	BR - Other	54 - ECEA or non-profit			
BH - Other	55 - ECEA or non-profit	BS - Other	55 - ECEA or non-profit			
BI - Other	56 - ECEA or non-profit	BT - Other	56 - ECEA or non-profit			
BJ - Other	57 - ECEA or non-profit	BU - Other	57 - ECEA or non-profit			
BK - Other	58 - ECEA or non-profit	BV - Other	58 - ECEA or non-profit			
BL - Other	59 - ECEA or non-profit	BW - Other	59 - ECEA or non-profit			
BM - Other	60 - ECEA or non-profit	BX - Other	60 - ECEA or non-profit			
BN - Other	61 - ECEA or non-profit	BY - Other	61 - ECEA or non-profit			
BO - Other	62 - ECEA or non-profit	BZ - Other	62 - ECEA or non-profit			
BP - Other	63 - ECEA or non-profit	CA - Other	63 - ECEA or non-profit			
BQ - Other	64 - ECEA or non-profit	CB - Other	64 - ECEA or non-profit			
BR - Other	65 - ECEA or non-profit	CC - Other	65 - ECEA or non-profit			
BS - Other	66 - ECEA or non-profit	CD - Other	66 - ECEA or non-profit			
BT - Other	67 - ECEA or non-profit	CE - Other	67 - ECEA or non-profit			
BU - Other	68 - ECEA or non-profit	CF - Other	68 - ECEA or non-profit			
BV - Other	69 - ECEA or non-profit	CG - Other	69 - ECEA or non-profit			
BW - Other	70 - ECEA or non-profit	CH - Other	70 - ECEA or non-profit			
BX - Other	71 - ECEA or non-profit	CI - Other	71 - ECEA or non-profit			
BY - Other	72 - ECEA or non-profit	CJ - Other	72 - ECEA or non-profit			
BZ - Other	73 - ECEA or non-profit	CK - Other	73 - ECEA or non-profit			
CA - Other	74 - ECEA or non-profit	CL - Other	74 - ECEA or non-profit			
CB - Other	75 - ECEA or non-profit	CM - Other	75 - ECEA or non-profit			
CC - Other	76 - ECEA or non-profit	CN - Other	76 - ECEA or non-profit			
CD - Other	77 - ECEA or non-profit	CO - Other	77 - ECEA or non-profit			
CE - Other	78 - ECEA or non-profit	CP - Other	78 - ECEA or non-profit			
CF - Other	79 - ECEA or non-profit	CQ - Other	79 - ECEA or non-profit			
CG - Other	80 - ECEA or non-profit	CR - Other	80 - ECEA or non-profit			
CH - Other	81 - ECEA or non-profit	CS - Other	81 - ECEA or non-profit			
CI - Other	82 - ECEA or non-profit	CT - Other	82 - ECEA or non-profit			
CJ - Other	83 - ECEA or non-profit	CU - Other	83 - ECEA or non-profit			
CK - Other	84 - ECEA or non-profit	CV - Other	84 - ECEA or non-profit			
CL - Other	85 - ECEA or non-profit	CW - Other	85 - ECEA or non-profit			
CM - Other	86 - ECEA or non-profit	CX - Other	86 - ECEA or non-profit			
CN - Other	87 - ECEA or non-profit	CY - Other	87 - ECEA or non-profit			
CO - Other	88 - ECEA or non-profit	CZ - Other	88 - ECEA or non-profit			
CP - Other	89 - ECEA or non-profit	DA - Other	89 - ECEA or non-profit			
CQ - Other	90 - ECEA or non-profit	DB - Other	90 - ECEA or non-profit			
CR - Other	91 - ECEA or non-profit	DC - Other	91 - ECEA or non-profit			
CS - Other	92 - ECEA or non-profit	DD - Other	92 - ECEA or non-profit			
CT - Other	93 - ECEA or non-profit	DE - Other	93 - ECEA or non-profit			
CU - Other	94 - ECEA or non-profit	DF - Other	94 - ECEA or non-profit			
CV - Other	95 - ECEA or non-profit	DG - Other	95 - ECEA or non-profit			
CW - Other	96 - ECEA or non-profit	DH - Other	96 - ECEA or non-profit			
CX - Other	97 - ECEA or non-profit	DI - Other	97 - ECEA or non-profit			
CY - Other	98 - ECEA or non-profit	DJ - Other	98 - ECEA or non-profit			
CZ - Other	99 - ECEA or non-profit	DK - Other	99 - ECEA or non-profit			
DA - Other	100 - ECEA or non-profit	DL - Other	100 - ECEA or non-profit			
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GR - Other		HC - Other				
GS - Other		HD - Other				
GT - Other		HE - Other				
GU - Other		HF - Other				
GV - Other		HG - Other				
GW - Other		HH - Other				
GX - Other		HI - Other				
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HG - Other		HR - Other				
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HI - Other		HT - Other				
HJ - Other		HU - Other				
HK - Other		HV - Other				
HL - Other		HW - Other				
HM - Other		HX - Other				
HN - Other		HY - Other				
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HP - Other		IA - Other				
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HR - Other		IC - Other				
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HV - Other		IG - Other				
HW - Other		IH - Other				
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HY - Other		IJ - Other				
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IL - Other		IW - Other				
IM - Other		IX - Other				
IN - Other		IY - Other				
IO - Other		IZ - Other				
IP - Other		JA - Other				
IQ - Other		JB - Other				
IR - Other						

# Blandford, Massachusetts Color Orthophotos April, 2001



These medium resolution true color images are considered the new "basemap" for the Commonwealth by MassGIS and the [Executive Office of Environmental Affairs](#) (EOEA). MassGIS/EOEA and the [Massachusetts Highway Department](#) jointly funded the project. The photography was captured in April 2001 when deciduous trees were mostly bare and the ground was generally free of snow. Imagery is available for all of the state except the Elizabeth Islands, Marthas Vineyard, and Nantucket. For these areas [black and white ortho imagery](#) is available.





Executive Order 418  
Community Development Project

**Blandford, Massachusetts**  
**Open Space Action Plan**

②

Action Plan Location

↑

Viewshed Directions

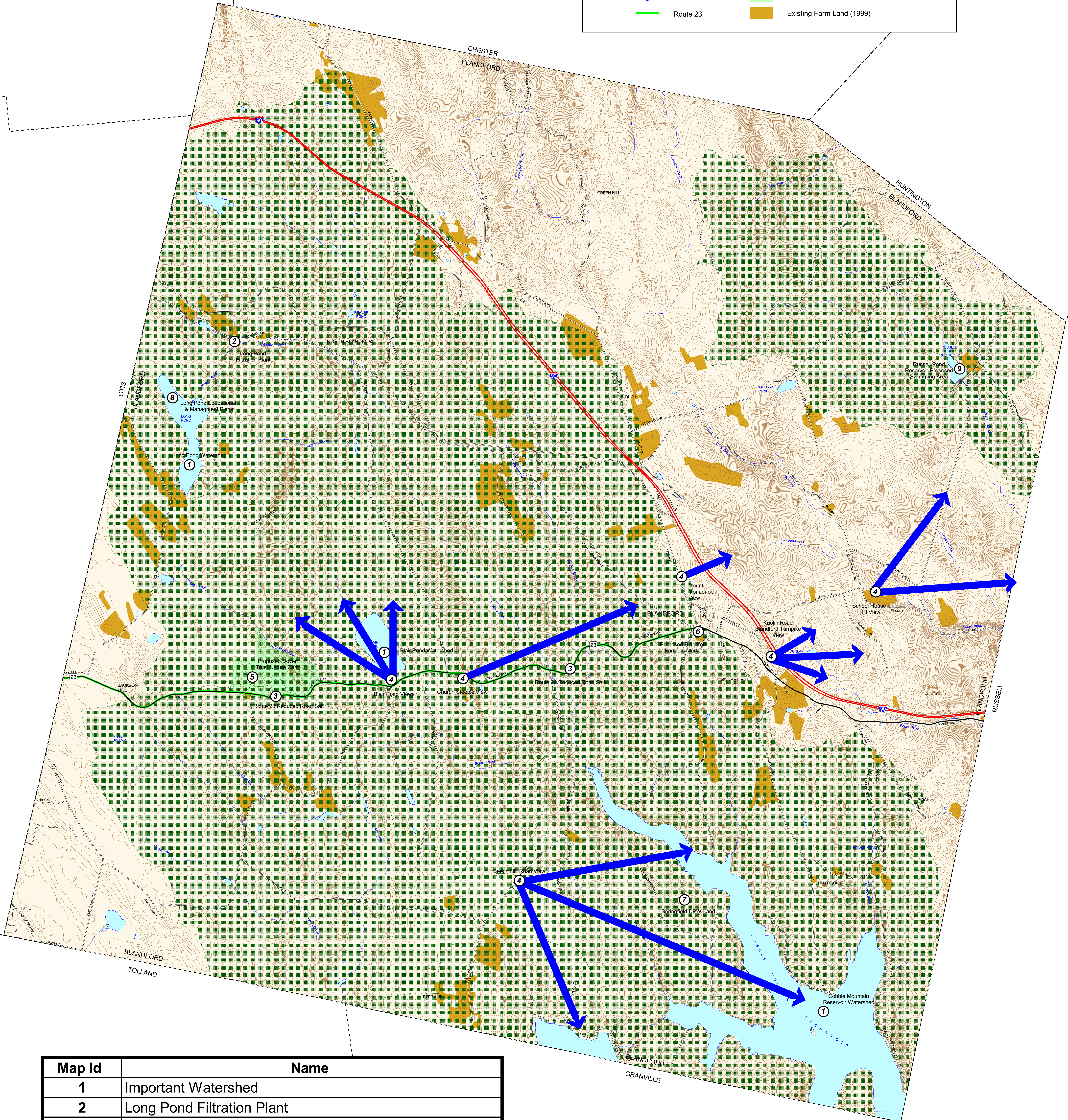
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Route 23

Outstanding Resource Watershed

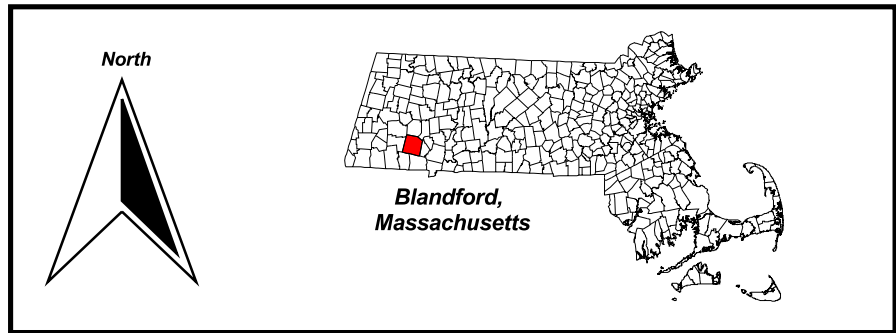
Proposed Dover Trust Nature Center

Existing Farm Land (1999)



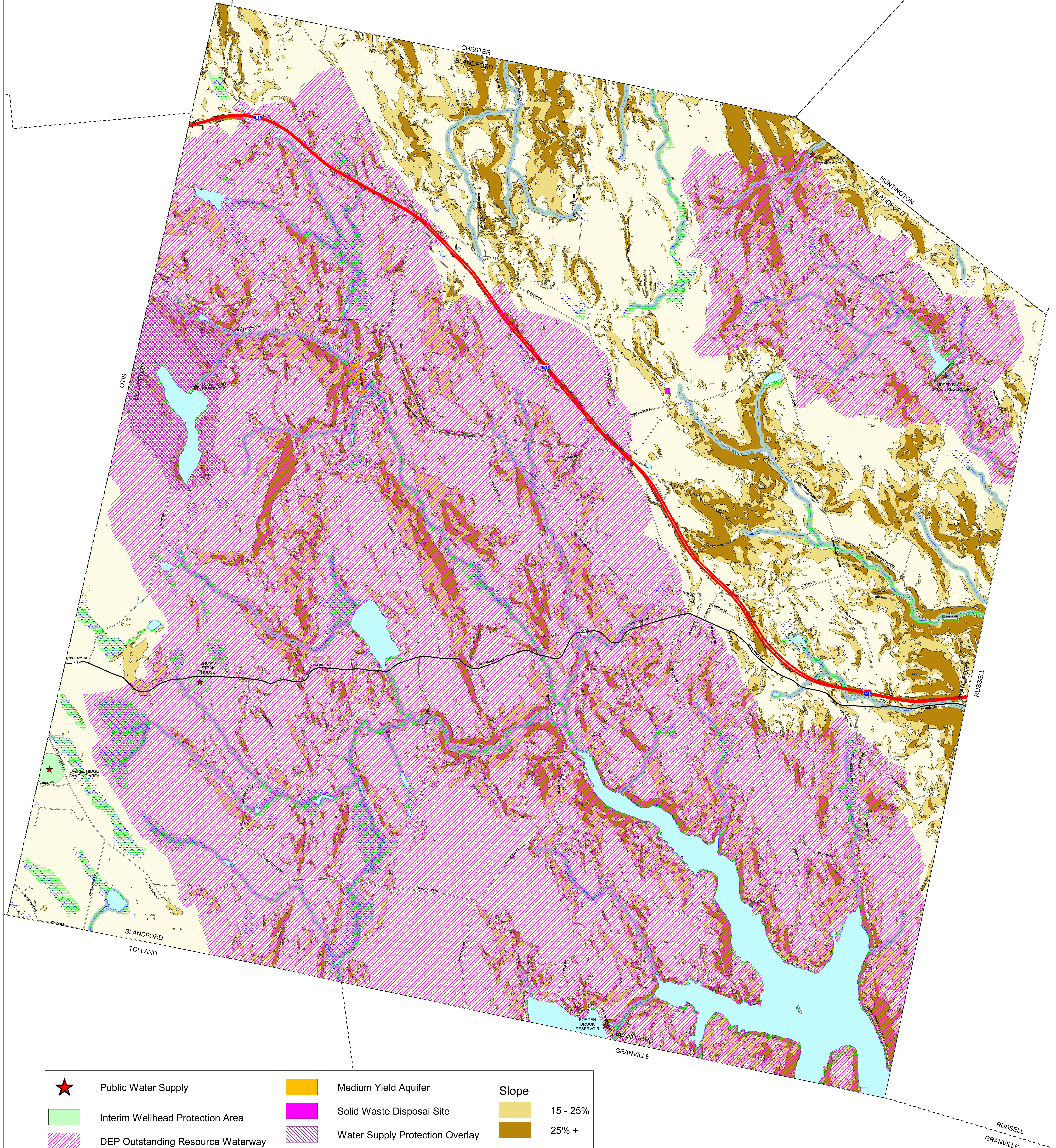
Map Id	Name
1	Important Watershed
2	Long Pond Filtration Plant
3	Route 23 Reduced Road Salt
4	Important View Shed
5	Proposed Dover Trust Nature Center
6	Proposed Blandford Farmers Market
7	Springfield DPW Land
8	Long Pond Educational & Management Plans
9	Russell Pond Reservoir Proposed Swimming Area





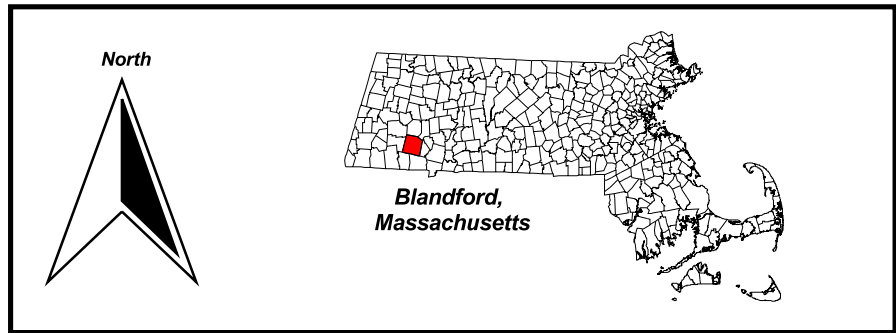
Executive Order 418  
Community Development Project

## Blandford, Massachusetts Topography & Water Resources



	Public Water Supply		Medium Yield Aquifer	<b>Slope</b>	
	Interim Wellhead Protection Area		Solid Waste Disposal Site		15 - 25%
	DEP Outstanding Resource Waterway		Water Supply Protection Overlay		25% +
	Flood Plain		Wetland		

1 0 1 Miles



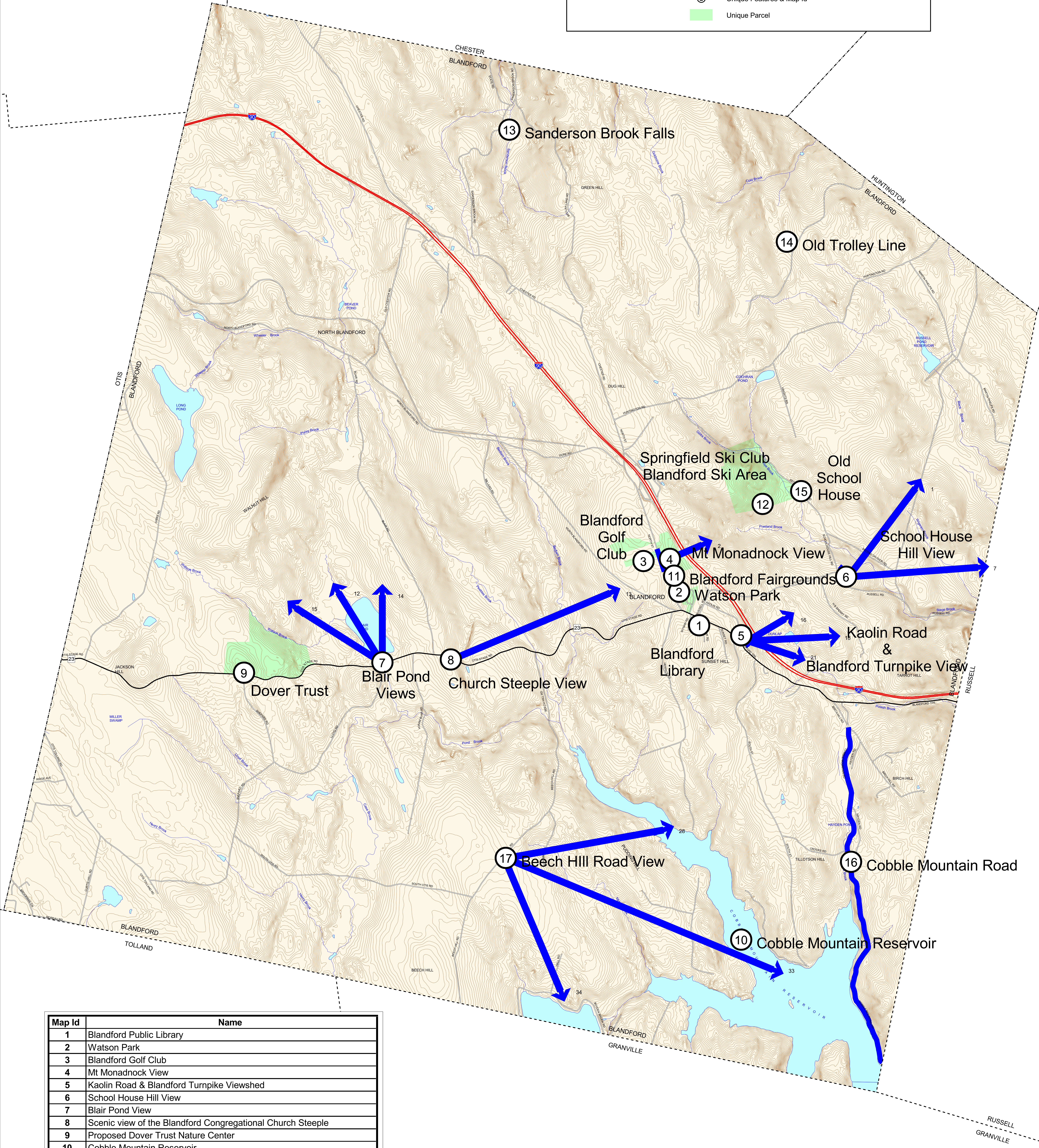
Executive Order 418  
Community Development Project

**Blandford, Massachusetts**  
**Open Space Plan Unique Features**

Viewshed Direction

Unique Features & Map Id

Unique Parcel



Map Id	Name
1	Blandford Public Library
2	Watson Park
3	Blandford Golf Club
4	Mt Monadnock View
5	Kaolin Road & Blandford Turnpike Viewshed
6	School House Hill View
7	Blair Pond View
8	Scenic view of the Blandford Congregational Church Steeple
9	Proposed Dover Trust Nature Center
10	Cobble Mountain Reservoir
11	Blandford Fairgrounds
12	Springfield Ski Club Blandford Ski Area
13	Sanderson Brook Falls
14	Old Trolley Line
15	Old School House
16	Cobble Mountain Road - Scenic Road
17	Beech Hill Road View