

Clarksburg Comprehensive Plan

July, 2026



BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission



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Introduction

Massachusetts General Law Ch. 41, § 81D defines a comprehensive plan as “a statement, through text, maps, illustrations or other forms of communication, that is designed to provide a basis for decision making regarding the long-term physical development of the municipality.”

The law empowers and encourages Planning Boards in communities throughout the Commonwealth to think holistically about the aspects that make its town unique, special, and to make decisions based on the community’s values. Rather than acting on siloed issues as they arise, municipalities should recognize and evaluate proposals in the context of a larger framework of the community’s vision for where it would like to be in the future.



Clarksburg Elementary School pupils drew what they wanted for their future in the town of Clarksburg.

A hallmark of comprehensive plans is that they are written by community members who understand their unique challenges and opportunities and reflects input from all everyone with a stake in the town’s future. It recognizes where the town has been, what it is now, forecasts the future, and establishes concrete steps the community can take to amplify the aspects of the community that make the community a wonderful place to live, work, and play.

Nestled in the northwest corner of the Commonwealth, Clarksburg is a small, rural community more than 1,600 people call home. When asked what makes Clarksburg special, the community responded:

- The town’s rural nature, scenic landscapes, farmlands, and natural resources.
- A strong sense of community.
- An amazing school.
- Historic charm.

The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee used those values as its guide in evaluating the town’s land use policies, transportation options, employment and economic development, housing, education, services, and open space and recreational opportunities and established a vision for the town’s future.

The plan focuses on preserving the town’s natural beauty while supporting growth in the historically developed villages, gently increasing density, and stabilizing the services and municipal finance to preserve the most important aspects of living in Clarksburg. The plan recognizes that the corridor featuring Town Field, the Community Center, and the school serve as the town’s heartbeat and ideal location for placemaking to foster greater community unity.

Plan Development and Public Engagement

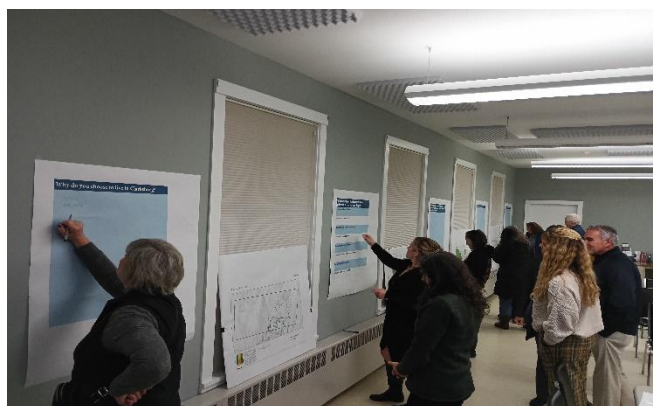
The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs awarded the town of Clarksburg a grant to fund the development of a new comprehensive plan. In August 2025, the Steering Committee met for its first time and met monthly until June 2026 to discuss the various topics addressed in the plan.

The volunteers serving on the committee represented diverse interests and included:

- Mary Giron
- Kelly Haskin
- Susan Brandon
- Colton Andrews
- Ronald Boucher

The plan's development revolved around three processes – data analysis, community engagement, and goal setting.

The Steering Committee utilized several sources to understand the existing conditions in town and how the town has been evolving over the last decade. Some important data sources include: Berkshire Benchmarks, U.S. Census Bureau, the Massachusetts Department of Revenue Division of Local Services, Massachusetts Office of Economic Research, Clarksburg Assessor's Office, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and several resources available from the Massachusetts Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs. The data establishes a baseline understanding of how the town has changed and the current direction the community is trending.



The community participated in workshops throughout the process to establish the town's values and goals.



The committee hosted its first public meeting on November 13.

The committee sought input from the public through a survey, multiple public listening sessions, conducted stakeholder interviews, outreach to students, and held monthly public committee meetings.

Articulating Community Values

The committee engaged with residents at eight stations. Each station posed a question or statement for the attendees to discuss. After the exercise, the Committee held a group conversation about the responses to gather additional feedback.

The workshop stations posed the following statements or questions to facilitate conversation:

- Write down three words to describe Clarksburg to someone who has never been here before.
- What are you most concerned about?
- Clarksburg has everything except for...
- Why do you choose to live in Clarksburg?
- What would you like to see the town prioritize during the next 20 years?



**Share your vision
for the future of
Clarksburg**

**Take the
Comprehensive
Planning Survey**

The Comprehensive Planning Committee invites you to share your opinions and concerns about the town and its future.

The online survey was live from the end of August until the end of December. In total 113 people took the survey.

Additionally, attendees had the opportunity to place stickers on a town map to demonstrate what types of land uses they would like to see in various locations including homes, commercial growth, parks and outdoor spaces, and preserved forest land.

Listening to the Community

The Steering Committee launched a survey on August 28, 2025, and closed it on December 31, 2025. The Committee promoted the survey at the first annual holiday tree lighting, sent students from Clarksburg School home with it, advertised it in the media and on social media, and committee members shared it with their networks.



The younger students drew the kind of things they wanted to see in Clarksburg when they grow up.

A total of 124 people did the survey. The total amount is reflective of approximately 7.5% of the total population. Provided that there Census population includes young children and assuming some households took the survey as one household representing multiple people, the responses reflect a greater proportion of the population.

The survey asked 40 questions including general feedback on the community and its future, education, open space and recreation, economics, housing, historic resources, land use, transportation, agriculture, town services, and demographic information. **The full survey and its results are available in the appendix.**

Empowering the Youth

On December 10, 2025 members of the Master Plan Steering Committee held workshops with every class at Clarksburg Elementary School. The committee asked the students to answer questions about their opinions on matters in the town

such as “do you feel safe riding your bike in town?” The questions provides valuable responses from an age group that is unlikely to take the survey. The questions varied for each age group. **The full list of questions is available in the appendix.**

The younger grades used crayons and paper to draw what they wanted to see in the community when they grow up and shared their responses with the class.

The older grades separated into small breakout groups with each group assigned a question about various topics for the town’s future. An example of the questions is “write down one thing you think would be fund to have in town.” The groups also had stickers they could put on peer’s responses to indicate their support.



Participants in the second community outreach provided their opinions and ideas about a series of goal statements.

Establishing a Shared Vision

The Steering Committee held a second public outreach meeting on February 5, 2026. After reviewing the survey results and the community visioning session, the Committee drafted vision statements that aligned with major themes emerging form the conversations and results.

Attendees at the Feb. 5 meeting provided their input as to the importance of the statements and proposed action items to support the vision. After browsing each station, each participant took 10 stickers and placed them on the action items they felt were the top priorities.

The statements presented are:

- In 2040, Clarksburg’s scenic landscapes, farmlands, and natural resources will remain a defining characteristic of the town.
- In 2040, Clarksburg will have new commercial and residential developments that support the community’s needs while making low impacts on the environment and residents’ quality of life.
- In 2040, Clarksburg utilizes its natural resources as an attraction to drive economic development and support the regional economy.
- In 2040, Clarksburg’s housing stock will have multiple housing options for residents at different stages of life.
- In 2040, Clarksburg has a robust offering of community services and residents feel included in decision making and proud of community successes.
- In 2040, Clarksburg honors its history and the people who built the town.

- Open Forum! All ideas, thoughts, opinions are welcome here.

The exercises and public input guided the committee's analysis and determination of the Comprehensive Plan goals.

Creating A Roadmap to Success

Following the public brainstorming public meeting, the Steering Committee developed a long list of objectives and action items to support the goals previously established through community engagement efforts.

On May 6, 2026, the Committee held its third public meeting to share those objectives and action items.

Participants browsed fourteen objectives with a varying number of action items and provided opportunities to add their own action items and have discussion with committee members. Each objective and action item included a priority box for the public to rate from 1-5 and an area for residents to add additional thoughts.



Envisioning Clarksburg 2040 Final Community Meeting

Wednesday, May 6, 2026

6 p.m.

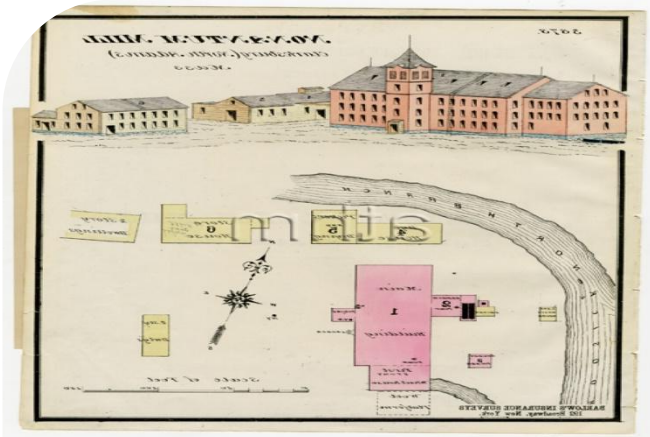
Community Center

Join us on May 6 for your last opportunity to provide feedback on the town's Master Plan.



Town of
Clarksburg
Massachusetts

BRPC
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission



Clarksburg's Past



The First Settlements and Incorporation

The first settlement in the territory that became Clarksburg was established in 1769 by purchasers of land that was granted to Colonel William Bullock, a surveyor from Rehoboth, Massachusetts. Captain Matthew Ketchum, Matthew Jr, cousins Epenetus, Daniel, and Samuel Ketchum arrived from Long Island, N. Y. and brothers Nicholas, Aaron, Stephen, and Silas Clark came from Cumberland, R.I.

The territory being mostly wilderness, the first dwellings were located along an established pathway connecting Fort Massachusetts to other forts north and east. When Berkshire County was established in 1771 it became a county road coming up from the south and following Middle Road continuing north into Vermont. The inhabitants farmed the land between the mountains on each side of the valley, rugged Bald Mountain on the west and the Hoosac Range to the East.

Several sawmills and a grist mill were established along Hudson Brook that flows from Bald Mountain, through the center of Clarksburg, and then empties into the North Branch of the Hoosic River through the marble chasm at Natural Bridge.

November 1797, the inhabitants of the area petitioned the Massachusetts General Court requesting to incorporate to raise funds for schools and to call the district "Hudson", but on March 2, 1798, the town was incorporated as "Clarksburg". The change was unreported.

Hudson Brook bears a famous name. Several legends of the man named Hudson have been told. The two most heard are that he was the first European to fell a tree in the Indian territory and the other said to be in honor of Dr. Seth Hudson who treated soldiers at nearby Fort Massachusetts circa 1749 during the French & Indian War. These stories could very well relate to the same person. The Fort was built south of Clarksburg's mountainous west side where towering spruce and hemlock grew. Sherman Brook flows down slope from the mountain directly into the Hoosic River near the site of the fort.

Clarksburg was named in honor of the family of Nicholas Clark. He with his wife, Esther, raised a family of seven sons, Silas, Samuel, Joseph, Eli, John, Asa, Salah and possibly a daughter, Sarah; all were born between 1772 and 1787 before incorporation. They are buried in the family cemetery situated on the knoll at the south end of Horrigan Road.

The Ketchums were another prominent family; the 1790 census records the heads of family and numbered the members. The Ketchums totaled twelve and the Clarks fifteen.

Most of the Ketchums moved from the area and Nicholas Clark's three brothers also eventually settled elsewhere. Before Stephen moved to NY, he built the "Musterfield House" possibly as early as 1785. His beautiful hand-hewn beam construction dwelling still proudly stands along Middle Road. It was here at the dwelling of Stephen Clark that the town inhabitants were called for their first town meeting on April 4, 1798.

Primarily an agrarian community it had numerous farms between the mountains raising sheep and producing some butter, cheese and wool to market. The rocky soil favored grazing instead of large crops, but supported the growing of Indian corn, potatoes, rye, oats, flax and some wheat, mostly only supplying the inhabitants.

Early Industry, Manufacturing, and Schoolhouses

The mountains being covered with valuable timber, oak and chestnut on the east mountains and spruce and hemlock on the west mountains, led to the production and marketing of fine lumber supplying the neighboring communities of Adams and Williamstown. It was initially Clarksburg's principal commodity. Some farmers established a glasswork operation naming it the Farmer's Glass Factory in 1814. It was located near the intersection of Middle and River Roads. It produced windows, vases, and other glass products, but closed by 1819.

As early as 1829, there were four sawmills running all year round. Waterpower was being generated from the Hoosic River providing the energy to support more sawmills and grist mills. The mill industry expanded along the river at Red Mills. The mills of Eleazer Ketchum were in this section, later owned by W. W. Gallup and eventually becoming Ray Gleason's Four Pines Dairy and Poultry Farm. Today it is a private home.

By 1837 a cotton mill was established along the North Branch of the Hoosic River bordering with North Adams (Adams pre-1878). The town had a population of 386 people, five sawmills, 255 sheep and by 1858 several gunpowder mills on Powder Mill Flats near the Sunnyside and Baker section of town along River Road approaching the Four Corners at Mauserts Pond.

1848 Jonathan Hall, a farmer from Connecticut, built a dwelling near the cotton mill. This is one of the earliest dwellings still standing in Briggsville next to another building that was a cooper shop. Jonathan owned all the land from the river up to Gleason's Four Corners including the Tamarack Swamp. His son, R. G. Hall, built a wooden bridge across the river (now called Mary Baker Bridge) and established sawmills along the river at Hall's hill.

1848 Clarksburg annexed its mountainous eastern end to the Town of Florida. The residents on the mountain found it difficult to travel down to the town polling places during the month of March to vote and back home again by horseback or horse drawn sleigh.

The 1858 map shows four schoolhouses, on West Road, Middle Road, East Road and Red Mills. Briggsville added a school once the woolen mill was in operation, Houghtonville School replaced West Road, Center School replaced the older one on Middle Road, and Bishop School was built along River Road near Tanner Farm. Some private homes were rented by the town to serve as schoolhouses, like the Dooley School on Hayden Hill.

By the 1870's the people are still primarily engaged in lumbering, farming, and the manufacturing of powder, bricks and by now woolen cloth – with one woolen mill and one wool-carding mill as well as three powder, two grist and five sawmills. R. G. Hall built a fine residence that still stands at the beginning of what would become Carson Avenue.

R.G. Hall's Turning Works at Halls' Ground produced axe handles and wagon spokes, Joel C. Haskin's sawmill on Hudson Brook produced lumber, shingles, railroad ties and telegraph poles. At Red Mills the industries included C. W. Gallup's Saw and Grist Mill producing grain and lumber formerly owned by Eleazer Ketchum, Chilson's Planing Saw and Box Mill, and Thayer's Grist Mill and Store.

Villages of Briggsville and Houghtonville

The early industrial mill operations in Clarksburg and neighboring North Adams led to the development of the villages of "Briggsville" and then "Houghtonville". These two villages flourished with the new economic development. Between 1830 and 1890 the population of Clarksburg increased from 315 to 1,009 souls, an increase of 694 (over 300%).

Briggsville is named after brothers George C. and Henry P. Briggs who operated mills in North Adams but moved to Clarksburg for the light taxes and being only a mile and a half from the railroad station. The North Branch of the Hoosic River provided hydropower to operate the mill, which was first constructed of wood in 1862 and then was replaced with brick in 1865. A dam was constructed on the river about the same time.

The business became known as the Linwood Woolen Company focusing on manufacturing union cassimeres and meltons, employing 135 hands in 1883. Owning forty acres of land the company built a school and hosted community and church events in Linwood Hall. They constructed a dozen dwellings for their workers and established a general store with the town's first post office and also built a saltbox structure for a chapel. It was replaced by the Union Chapel aka Tri-Pillar Club. By 1885 a new school was needed, and one was built on the hill behind the general store. A year later the school was enlarged to hold the town offices that had been located at Center School on Middle Road.

Houghtonville is a residential [village on the west side of town. The easy connection into North Adams and the textile mills of Arnold Print Works along the Hoosic River](#) at the foot of the hill made Houghtonville a convenient place to construct housing. With the growth of housing opportunities several small businesses opened in the neighborhood. Once a sparsely populated area it began to see more growth and by 1888 the neighborhood had over 25 children and needed a schoolhouse.

Fall of 1908 membership of the town's schools were Briggsville Grammar, 36 and Primary, 41; Center School, 41; Houghtonville Grammar, 30 and Primary, 25; and Bishop School, 40. Total membership of the four districts was 213 with an average attendance of 92.3%.

Strong, Hewat, & Company Manufacturing High-Quality Wool

Briggsville 1898, the Linwood Mill was purchased by R. A. Hewat and R. A. Strong calling it Strong, Hewat & Co. It had shifted production away from low-value woolens to custom high-fashion suits and coats. The new owners secured steady employment for the district for seventy years and the Briggsville district flourished.

With the great success of Strong, Hewat & Co. being one of the leading high-quality custom woolen manufacturers in the United States the company made improvements and enlargements to the original mill. In the 1920's the company constructed eighteen new worker housing units across the river on Hall's Ground, along with six identical cottages and a tenement block on the newly laid out Carson Avenue.

The population of the town in 1920 was placed at 1,136; an increase of another 127 residents since 1890. An account written by George B. Griffith says, "Between the soils and the milling interests the people have been able to become quite independent financially, with the passing decades."

Development of Clarksburg Reservoir and Country Club

1875 a plan was put into place to turn Roaring Brook in Stamford, VT into the Clarksburg reservoir to increase the availability of water for North Adams. William Mausert leased property and developed a recreation area at the east end of the new reservoir and established a jitney service to transport summer bathers from North Adams.

1897 Conrad Mausert, brother of William, organized and headed the Clarksburg Ice Company and the Mausert Ice Cream company. Ice harvesting continued until 1952 when the cost of harvesting natural ice was more than making it by machine.

E. W. Gleason and Dr. H. J. Millard also set up ice businesses on the Hudson Brook. A soap making factory was also established on the Hudson Brook.

1889 The electric street railway made its debut replacing the horse drawn passenger cars. Teamsters continued to carry their loads to market by horse drawn wagons.

1901 talk of the street railway coming to Briggsville and possibly extending to Stamford to provide North Adams with parks and outing places led to land being bought up around the reservoir. Arnold Print Works, under the direction of treasurer W.A. Gallup, purchased water rights, increased the size of the reservoir, and developed a private beach club. By summer 1919, A.P.W. had their first annual outing and picnic for their 1300+ employees.

By 1903 the street railway was extended from Briggsville to Red Mills about the same time as the prominent men of North Adams developed the North Adams Country Club on 40 acres of land near the mill property of W.W. Gallup, called the Clarksburg Grain Company.

1903 the Ladies Aid Society was organized in Briggsville at the same time the Union Chapel opened and was dedicated "To promote the spiritual, intellectual and social welfare of the community and shall be maintained as a union non-sectarian place of religious worship." Special activities were arranged for the children, plus box specials, concerts and plays by local talent and dancing.

Sometime after 1905, Houghtonville, Clarksburg center and Briggsville were finally connected by the construction of a crossroad from Hall's Ground bridge to Middle Road at Gleason Four Corners, replacing the two ruts that had formed. West Road, Middle Road, River Road, and East Road provide north-south means of transportation through the more rural areas of Clarksburg.

There was an earlier E-W stagecoach pathway created to avoid crossing the river near Red Mills before the bridge was built. Starting at Middle Road near Daub's Pond it extended east staying on the NW side of the river passing behind Steven's Tavern on River Road. This historic tavern on the south side of the old Country Club property is now condemned. The early pathway was probably abandoned after the construction of the Red Mills bridge.

The Mohawk Trail, Tourism, and Transportation Revolution

September 1914, the Mohawk Trail state highway, originally a walking route used by indigenous people, formally opened. It was labeled "the most beautiful road in New England". By October 1, 200 automobiles passed over the mountain during the official dedication and area hotels were filled to the limit having to turn tourists away.

The Trail is steeped in local history and provides the primary east-west travel route in northwestern Massachusetts. It passes through Clarksburg's Hairpin Turn. The road became the most utilized route from Boston to Albany and a significant draw for people seeking scenic beauty. Businesses began opening all along the Trail.

Unfortunately, the Mohawk Trail (except for the Hairpin Turn) does not go directly through Clarksburg proper. So the town did not benefit as much as other neighboring towns.

1918 Charles R. Canedy of North Adams, a photographer at the North Adams Transcript and locally considered the father of tourism on the Trail, had driven the first car across in June 1914. He became keenly aware of the potential for tourism and built a gift shop on Whitcomb Summit and then the Golden Eagle at the Hairpin Turn for the vista across the valley to the Taconic Range.

The original building with observations towers and location has changed at the precarious site, but it is still a perfect natural tourist stop. Now, who hasn't pulled over along the road for a quick peek or to tarry and soak in the stunning vista or sunset? It was a great location to park and watch Clarksburg's 4th of July fireworks display back in the day.

The introduction of motor vehicles at affordable costs for most people led to a significant auto tourism industry, which made it possible for more residents to live in Clarksburg and commute to work. New businesses opened in town as well.

By 1920 R.G. Hall's son, George W. Hall, moved the sawmill operation across the road and built an auto repair garage in its place. He became an agent for Studebaker and Stanley Steam automobiles.

Further north on River Road was Bakers Garage, owned and operated by Ralph L. Baker. Ralph's wife, Mary Ford Baker served as town clerk for 43 years. Their son, Warren Baker, took over the family business in 1957 after the death of his father and then sold it to Thomas Cooper in 1968. A dairy bar was added serving Mauserts Ice Cream.

In 1920 George W. Hall became the town's first Chief of Police. Since incorporation, the town usually had six constables that were on call 24 hours per day. In September 2024, after 100 years, the department closed with the retirement of Chief Michael Williams.

1923 William Mausert, owner of a bus company leased the east shore of Clarksburg reservoir from APW and proposed to build more bathhouses plus a dancing pavilion with parking for 200 autos. The Clarksburg reservoir, aka Mauserts Pond, became a popular bathing spot on hot summer days for people from North Adams, traveling via trolley to the end of the line at Red Mills or hiring a jitney or hackney directly to the reservoir.

By 1927 with the arrival of the trolley providing a means for people to attend church in North Adams the Union Chapel had its final meeting. Without a chapel the Ladies Aid Society reorganized into the "Women's Club".

1930 the Berkshire Street Railway proposed to discontinue all trolley service in the Northern Berkshires and substitute buses affecting seven communities. The debate between trolley or bus was a big issue in

Clarksburg. Those who lived in Briggsville wanted to keep the trolley to save four cents from the proposed new flat rate of ten cents and believed the trolley would accommodate more passengers during rush hours. Others desired an extension of service beyond the terminal at Red Mills, and they would save two cents with a bus line.

1930 Sprague Specialty Company from Quincy, MA came to North Adams bringing production of electrical condensers to the now vacant Beaver Mill. Sprague Specialty soon decided to also relocate its engineering and research laboratories creating an additional need for housing of their executives, thus stimulating energy into expanding and for modernizing homes. Improvements to electric lines and a gas main constructed along Union and Beaver Streets that lead to Briggsville.

By 1931 the trolley to Briggsville was discontinued and was replaced by a bus line. The advent of new public transportation options beyond Briggsville and Red Mills led to more Clarksburg residents commuting to work in North Adams.

1935 George W. Hall and son Howard, start a pulverized peat moss market; selling to greenhouses and gardeners the peat moss that they extracted and dried from their 15-acre property at Tamarack Swamp on Cross Road. George's son, Edward, opened and operated the Rainbow Restaurant and dance hall on Hall's Ground for about ten years.

December 1936 the Briggsville School, which held the town offices and library, was destroyed by fire. A new building was constructed of brick and cement – opening in 1938 across the road and further south in a ball ground owned by Strong & Hewat. The Town Hall currently occupies this building.

Incorporation of the Clarksburg Volunteer Fire Company

December 1936 the newly incorporated Clarksburg Volunteer Fire Company was functioning as a bucket brigade with 25 fire buckets and 100 feet of garden hose. The burning of the Briggsville School spurred the town to purchase a new truck with a tank. In 1949 Strong & Hewat deeded land to build a firehouse on Hall's Ground. The CVFC celebrates its 90th Anniversary in December of 2026.

1939 a fraternity of thirty Freemasons living in Clarksburg and Stamford organized a club known as the Tri-Pillar Club at the former Union Chapel. They made improvements to the building to establish a recreation and social center and planned weekly whist parties.

By the 1940's the sole commercial sawmill in town was William Carson's on Hall's Ground, formerly owned by George W. Hall. Hall's auto repair business was bought by Albert Bona of Bona's Garage and replaced it with a new Richfield Service Station. Today the auto repair shop is named Gordons.

Ethel Mae Marsden, a lifelong resident of Hall's Ground, and author of Clarksburg, Mass, Then and Now, 1749-1962, opened a package store at the bottom of the hill. It changed hands many times since and is now the office of A-1 Septic, who also purchased the old sawmill property that it sits on. The store sat next to Carson's sawmill and the auto repair garage across the way; it was a busy little neighborhood. Men gathered to chat in the Bona's Garage waiting room area whether they were getting their car repaired or not. Even the mail carrier would tarry during the lunch break.

1942 Arnold Print Works was financial straits caused by falling cloth prices and cheaper competition in the South. The business closed its sprawling Marshall Steet Manufacturing operations. The complex was

purchased by Sprague Electric Company (now Mass MoCA). All the property that APW owned along the river in Clarksburg was transferred to Sprague Electric Company.

Post World War II Construction and Growth

May 1945 Bishop School on River Road closed and its two remaining students were transferred to Briggsville. Spring 1952 both the Center School, the oldest school serving the town for 100 years, and Houghtonville School were closed for safety reasons. The schools were merged and relocated to a new school built in a centralized location on West Cross Road. September 1952 the new Clarksburg Elementary School opened.

1954 the Clarksburg Volunteer Fire Company built a new recreation field for the town; they filled in and graded the town acquired land adjacent to the Clarksburg Elementary school. The CVFC planned fund-raising events, the annual 4th of July celebration jamboree and brought the Mills Brothers 3-Ring Circus to town for the first time at the end of July. They raised \$500 to drill a water well at the Fire House on Hall's Ground.

The Firemen's annual 4th of July Jamboree was originally held in Briggsville since the 1920's or earlier. In 1927 it was estimated that 3,500 people attended. The Jamboree was their main fundraiser; it continued annually at the new town field until the final one in 1981.

1954 Mauserts Pond, now privately owned and a target of vandalism, was banned from public use. Subsequently the 346-acre property was sold to the state for a recreational area. Clarksburg State Park, for a fee, provides residents and visitors with an array of recreational activities including camping, boating, fishing, and hiking.

By 1954 even though numerous family-owned dairy and poultry farms thrived in Clarksburg long after the lumber business dried up, two large farms along Middle Road were sold for the development of housing lots. The Shultis Farm near the North Adams line and the Musterfield Farm were some of the original farmlands since settlement began in 1769.

Local Farming Thrives and Businesses Added

In the 1960's, according to Ethel Mae Marsden, Tanner's 150-acre dairy farm on River Road pasteurized its own milk and delivered it, too. It raised most of the hay to feed their 80 head of cattle. Demers Dairy Farm on Middle Road also grew their own hay and cut and baled for other farms. The Four Pines Dairy and Poultry Farm on River Road also had a guest home. Frank Booth poultry farm on East Road delivered eggs to Clarksburg and North Adams. Gordon Oakes 3,000 chicken poultry farm on Middle Road sold most of his eggs wholesale to shops in North Adams.

Small grocery and package stores and a couple of restaurants dotted the more populated areas of town. Brothers Package Store and Mountainview Restaurant in Houghtonville, Phil Fosser's Briggsville Store, Sunnyside Café and Baker's Dairy Bar on River Road, Pedercini's Dairy Bar on Middle Road, Golden Eagle Restaurant and Gift Shop at the Hairpin Turn, Bishop's Liquor Store and Taylor's Store in Red Mills.

Taylor's store was owned by Earl Taylor and his wife, Louise. It closed in 1969 when they retired after 35 years of business. The new store was then filled with fabrics and sewing notions.

Red Mills Store, an historic landmark, operated as a general store for more than 100 years. Previously owned by the Ross Brothers (they also owned the store in Briggsville), Charles D. Kemp, Chauncy Jepson, Frank D. Hayden, and Thayer. Thayer also operated a gristmill.

Earl Taylor served in the town's government in many capacities for 53 consecutive years. Governor Edward J. King gave an official citation declaring "In recognition of his loyalty and dedication to his fellow citizens, let it be known that Saturday, May 19, 1979, is to be observed in a special way as: Earl Taylor Day for the Town of Clarksburg."

Home cottage businesses were also common: dairy bars, bakeries, hair salons, barbers, watch repair, greenhouses, knife and saw sharpening, weaving, electricians, plumbing & heating, surveyors, yardwork, trucking and bus line, to name a few.

April 1963 the Clarksburg Cooperative Kindergarten opened in Briggsville in the Tri-Pillar Club formerly known as Union Chapel with 18 pupils; the following September 38 were enrolled. 1981 the Briggsville School housing two kindergarten sessions and two first grade classes closed at the end of the school year to save on heating and transportation costs. All the town's school children were gathered into one building at Clarksburg Elementary.

Closing of Strong, Hewat and Company After Three Generations

Dec 1965 Strong, Hewat & Company announces it is expanding production and entering the sportswear market promising to hire 90 new workers, But by March 1966, after a management reorganization, it instead announces temporary layoffs reducing employment from 220 to about 75. To survive and keep the company afloat they bid on a government army and navy blanket contracts. Many workers couldn't afford any unemployed down time so left to work in North Adams at Sprague Electric.

1966 was a difficult roller coaster of a year. Local news reported weekly updates questioning whether the industry could survive to live for another generation or would it go the way of so many of the other mills forced to close due to changing economic conditions.

Transcript's editorial described the close-knit community, "This company has long operated in the Old New England tradition of small industry, locally owned and managed, and indeed one of the last of its kind. Its owner has been closely identified with community life for three generations and have contributed to it in many ways".

October 1966 it was announced that Strong & Hewat was up for sale; they lost the bids for the government contracts. It was a hard blow for both the workers and the town.

June 1966 Clarksburg Elementary School breaks ground for a four-room addition including a multi-purpose room that serves as a cafeteria and auditorium. School enrollment in 1965 was 277. The addition was ready to occupy by the beginning of the 1968 school year.

June 1971 the Clarksburg Town Library moved from the Briggsville School where it had been since its construction in 1938 to the new wing at Clarksburg Elementary.

1970's, the last remaining functioning dairy farm was located on Middle Road next door to the Musterfield Farm, owned by C. Kenneth Demers. Mr. Demers reported in the Transcript that he had 72 head of cattle, 26 acres of corn, many more acres of hay and nine horses.

As Clarksburg continued to develop with a mix of agriculture and residential living, the business sector grew significantly in the urban center of nearby North Adams until 1985 when the Sprague Electric Company business closed; this was devastating for North Adams and the surrounding communities including Clarksburg.

At its peak, Clarksburg had as many as 1,987 residents, which has remained relatively stable since. There are still thriving businesses and small farms remaining in Clarksburg, but the town is primarily a residential community with workers mostly employed in the neighboring larger communities of North Adams, Williamstown and Pittsfield.

Much of the social life and community clubs have disappeared and opportunities and places to gather are few and far between. There has always been a desire expressed for a coffee or snack shop in town, a place of casual gathering to connect with our neighbors and create greater sense community.

The Commonwealth continued to purchase property in Clarksburg to preserve it for its natural resources. More than half of the land within the town's borders is owned by the Commonwealth. The town has limited commercial development and over the years residential development expanded outward, away from the town's centers. Large-lot single-family homes being constructed throughout the previously undeveloped land.



Clarksburg Today



Natural Environment

The natural landscape of Clarksburg is sculpted by glacial movement from the Ice Age. The developed area of Clarksburg is in a valley, with steep elevations to the east and the west. The Hoosic River twists and turns through the valley, with historic development utilizing the river as a source of sustenance and commercial activity.

The majority of the town's land is forest. A total of 6,894.86 acres of land is forest. Another 334.17 is open land. Much of the forest land is protected from development, preserving natural resources. There are 318.62 acres of wetland and 257.77 acres of agricultural land.

Water Resources

Clarksburg is in the Hoosic Watershed. The water runoff from higher elevations flows into the center of the Valley where it connects with the North Branch of the Hoosic River, which flows south into North Adams. The Hoosic River then flows into Pownal, Vt. and into New York State. The river flows southward through New York and empties into the Atlantic Ocean at the Long Island Sound. The Hoosic River enters Clarksburg from Stamford, Vt. and flows southward into North Adams. The main thoroughfare through town – Route 8 – runs alongside the river. There are several brooks following down from the highlands and draining into the Hoosic River.

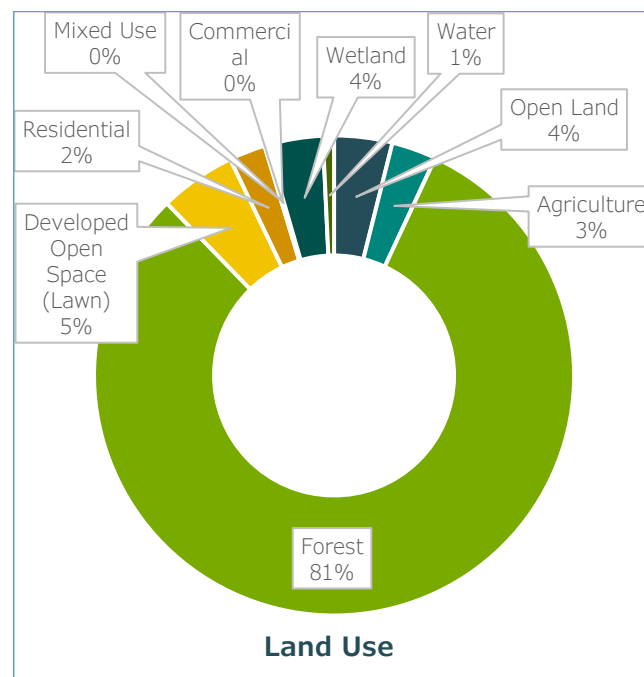
Mauserts Pond, located in the State Forest, is a man-made water body providing residents and visitors access to swimming, kayaking, fishing, and other recreational outdoor activities.

Wetlands

There are several large swaths of wetlands located throughout the town of Clarksburg. The largest concentration of wetlands are located around Mauserts Pond, Beaver Creek, and the west side of Horrigan Road. The wetlands are located within the boundaries of Clarksburg State Forest. Another large swath of wetlands is located near the intersection of Cross Road and Middle Road. An approximate 50-acre wetland spans the abutting land on the western side of the former North Adams Country Club to Cross Road. The wetlands are located on private land. Approximately 20 acres of wetlands are located further west on West Cross Road, and border PFC Peter A. Cook Veterans Memorial Field and the Elementary School. The wetlands, regulated by the Wetlands Protection Act, provides limited opportunities for development.

Forest Land

Forest encompasses 81% of the town. More than half (51.99%) of the 6,894.86 acres of forest is owned by the Commonwealth. The state-owned land, encompassing East Mountain, in the western portion of the



The majority of the town is forestland.

town is a large core wildlife and plant habitat. The Commonwealth identifies core habitats as priority areas to preserve biodiversity. Within the core habitats are two natural communities – a section of Ridgetop Pitch Pine – Scrub Oak Community and a section of Acidic Rocky/Rock Outcrop. MassWildlife’s Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program identifies natural communities as those with distinct characteristics because of the type of vegetation surviving in those locations have unique characteristics and the interplay between them.

Prime Farmland

There is approximately 85 acres of prime farmland, primarily located on the eastern side of River Road and along Middle Road. The prime farmland consists of nine different soil classifications, including Hinckley loam sand (3-8% slopes), Merrimac find sandy loan (0-3% slopes), Merriman fine sandy loam (3 to 8% slopes), Hero loam (0-3 percent slopes), Hero loam (3-8% slopes), Hadley silt loan (0-3% slopes), Hinkley loam sand (3-8% slopes), Hinckley loam sand (8-15% slopes), and Winsooski silt loam (0 to 3% slopes).

Protected Lands

Beyond the state-owned lands, there are several properties that utilize regulatory tools to protect land from development. JAM Realty Tr APR protects 64.26 acres of land in Clarksburg, mostly located between Wood Road and Hudson Brook. There are seven properties currently enrolled in Chapter land – six under agricultural protections of 61A and one in forest protection of 61.

Address	Owner	Current Use	Type of Protection
161 Henderson Road	Mayunsook Management Trust	Residential, agriculture	61A
0 Henderson Road	Gallup Nominee Realty Trust	Open Space	61A
0 River Road	Debra Chesbro	Productive Woodland	61A
634 River Road	Williams, Jeffrey J. and Laura J.	Residential	61A
484 Middle Road	Perry IV, Fred C TE	Residential, agriculture	61A
0 West Road	Rensma Timberland, L.P.	Open Space	61
901 River Road	Tanner, Howard A and Marlene A	Agriculture	61A
Wood Road	JAM Realty Trust	Agriculture	APR

People

The current population is 1,657¹, representing an 11% decline in population in the last 50 years. The UMass Donohue Institute projects a further decline during the next 25 years². With current conditions, the population is anticipated to reach a low of 1,484 by 2050.

The trend aligns with national and state trends largely attributed to the increase in births between 1946 and 1964 generally referred to as the “baby boom.” Clarksburg had a total population of 1,871 in 1980 because of the large population growth nationally and locally.

Age

The median age of a Clarksburg resident is 48.8, which is older than the 41.3 median age at the turn of the century and up from 33.7 in 1980. The number of children under the age of 18 in the community continually declined since then while the number of people over the age of 65 generally increased.

Approximately 26% of the current population is over the age of 65, an increase from when approximately 11% of the population were of retirement age in 1980. The UMass Donohue Institute projects a slight increase in the percent of residents over the age of 65 in the coming years – reaching as much as 30.5% in 2035 – and leveling off after that. The Donohue institute projects little change in the percentage of children under the age of 18 and a small growth of the percentage of working-aged adults. The number of younger, working families moving into or out of the town of Clarksburg is the biggest factor in determining the town’s total population and age distribution.

Households and Families

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates a total of 726 households in Clarksburg.³ The average household size is 2.37 persons, and the average family is 2.93. The household and family sizes are smaller than they were in 2010 – 2.48 and 3.1 respectively.

Among the 1,657 people who live in Clarksburg...

- 96.1% are white
- 15.4% have a disability
- 4.1% are veterans
- 43.1% receive social security retirement benefits
- 2.5% live below the federal poverty level

¹ U.S. Census Bureau.

² <https://donahue.umass.edu/business-groups/economic-public-policy-research/massachusetts-population-estimates-program/population-projections>

³ U.S. Census Bureau ACS DP02

An estimated 53.4% of the households are married couples (388) – 14.5% of which have children under the age of 18 – and another 7.9% are cohabitating couples – 2.5% with children.

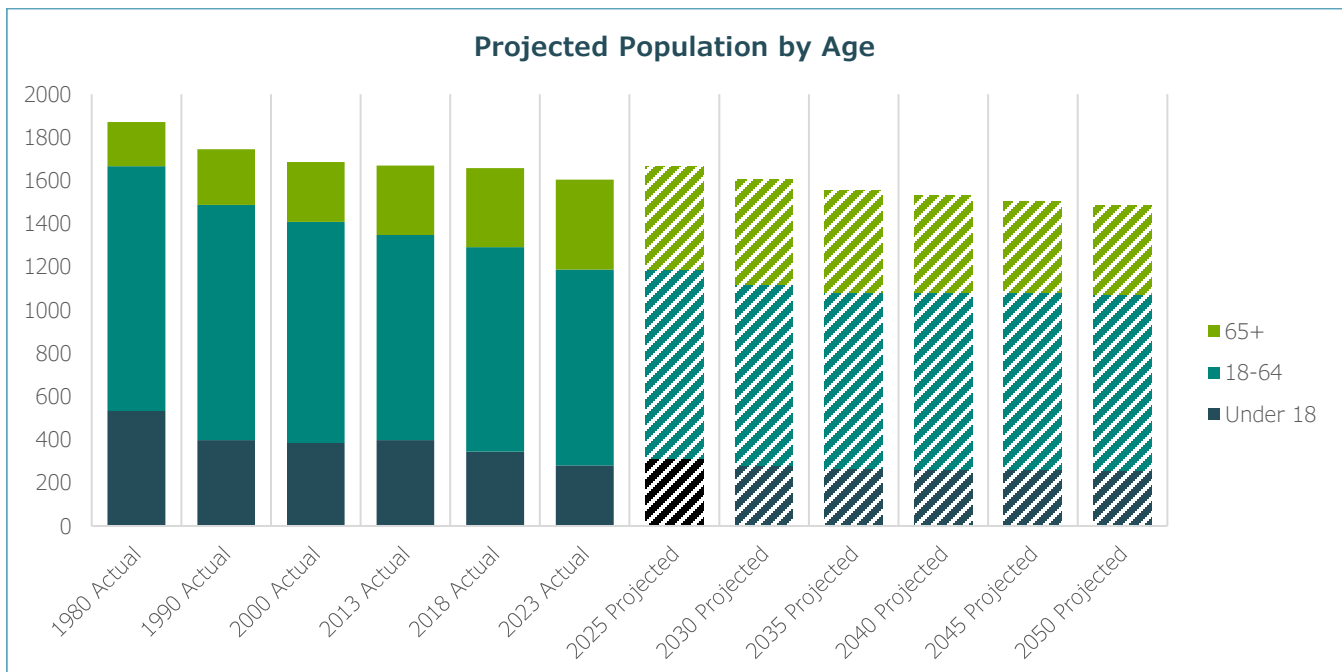
Approximately 38.7% of householders have no spouses present. Approximately 281 householders are not living with spouses (38.7% of all householders). Among those, 217 are living alone, 108 are over the age of 65, and 20 have children under the age of 18.

Employment and Income

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that are 960 Clarksburg residents of working age employed and approximately 39 people unemployed for an unemployment rate of 4.06%. The per capita income is \$44,200 and the median household income is \$78,421.

Despite little commercial businesses located in Clarksburg, the town has a low unemployment rate. For the last 15 years, the town's unemployment rate trended with the regional unemployment rate, according to the Office of Economic Research. From 2010 until 2020, Clarksburg's unemployment progressively declined from 8.1% to a low of 3% in 2019.

The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic shuttered industries nationally, statewide, and locally. Clarksburg's unemployment rate rose to 8.4%, which was just below the regional unemployment rate of 9.3%. Since then, the rate dropped significantly. In 2025, unemployment was 4%, representing one of the lowest rates in the last 15 years but slightly above the low in 2019.



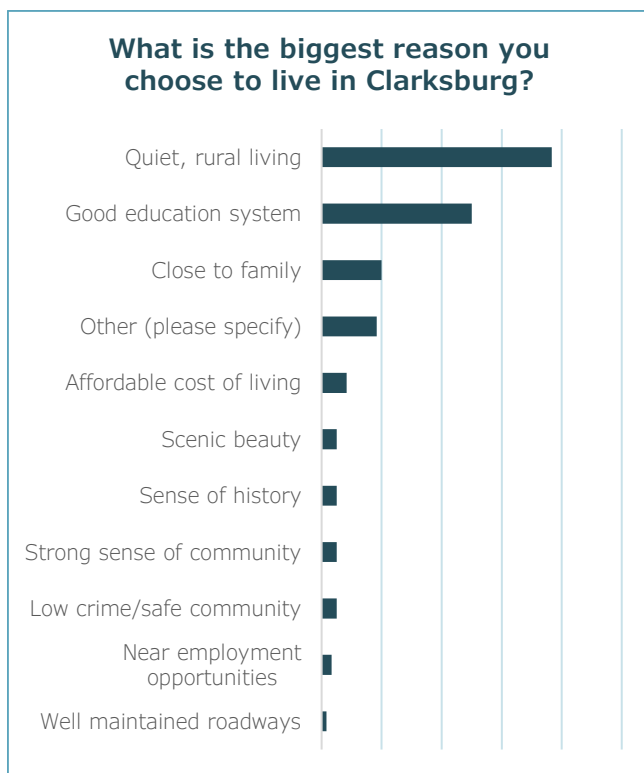
The UMass Donohue Institute projects that Clarksburg's decline in total population will continue for the next 25 years and that there will be an increase in the number of people over the age of 65 as a percentage of the population.

The mirroring of regional trends and lack of commercial properties in town, among other data, reflect the town's current status as a primarily residential community with residents working elsewhere.

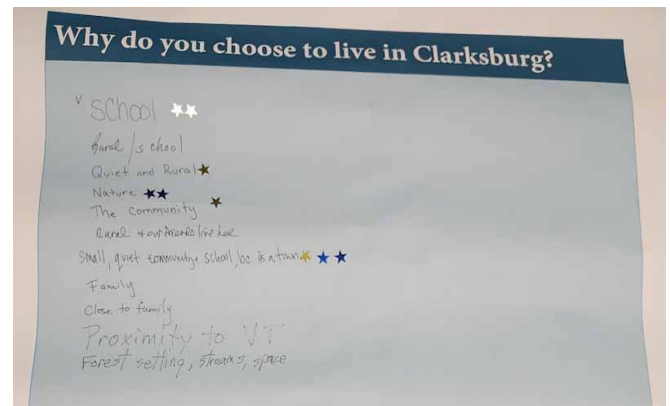
Local Sentiment

The biggest reason survey takers choose to live in Clarksburg is because it offers quiet, rural living and a good educational system. Thirty-eight percent of respondents cited quiet, rural living as their top reason and another 25% said it was the education system.

The remaining one-third of survey takers responded with being close to family (10%), affordable cost of living (4%), scenic beauty (3%), low crime rate (3%), strong sense of community (3%), sense of history (3%), near employment opportunities (2%), four season climate (1%), well maintained roadways (1%), and 9% provided a written response in the "other" answer in the survey.



The rural, quiet nature of Clarksburg is a significant reason why survey takers choose to live here.



At a public meeting residents had the opportunity to write down the reasons they choose to live in Clarksburg. The rural, quiet nature of Clarksburg is a consistent theme.

Among the other responses, people responding that they are in the town they grew up in was a prevalent theme.

The rural feeling and the quality of the education system also topped the survey's second question, which asked what the residents think are the most important things for Clarksburg in the next 20 years, with 18% and 20% respectively.

The survey also asked residents to share if they considered leaving Clarksburg and the reasons. A quarter of those who considered leaving did so to move to warmer climate and another 23% cited job opportunities elsewhere. Other top responses include it being too expensive (16%), public safety concerns (12%), being closer to family (11%) and no enough services nearby (11%).

At the first public meeting, residents wrote down on a sheet of paper why they chose to live in Clarksburg. The most popular response was "small, quiet, community, school, and because it is a town." Other top responses include "quiet and rural," "nature," and "the community."

Education

The school system is one of the town’s most valuable assets. Clarksburg School served 208 students between pre-K and eighth grade during the 2023-2024 school year.

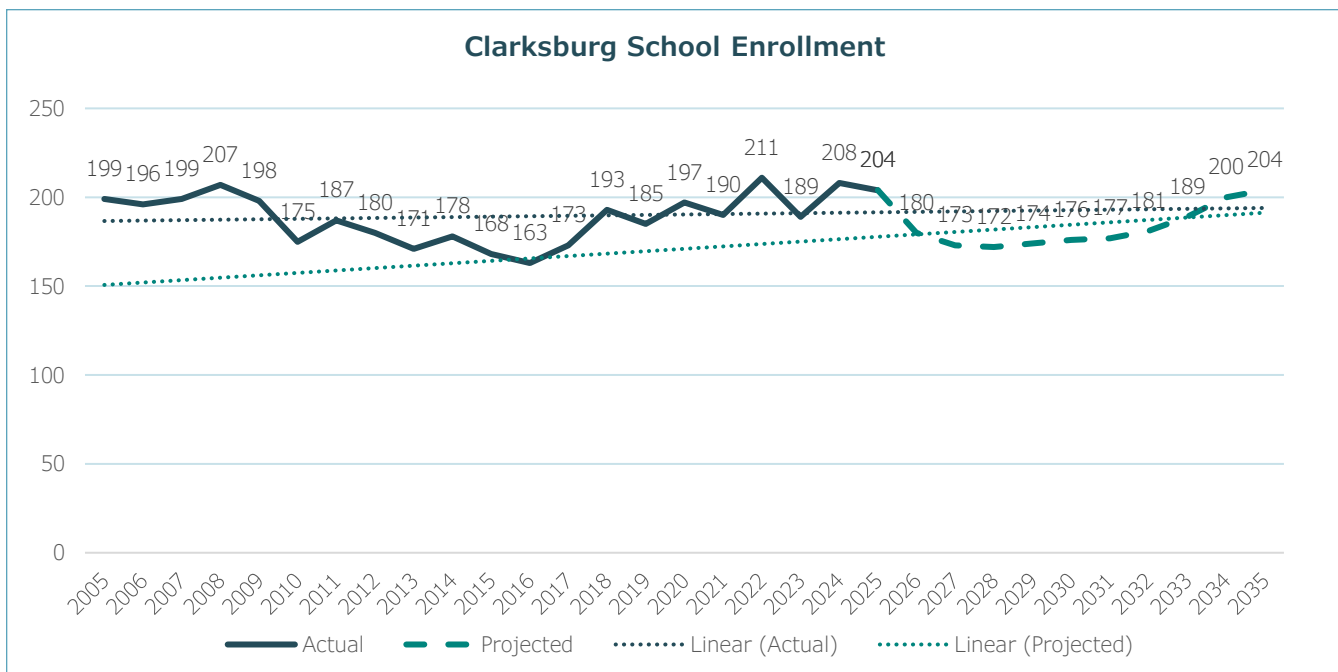
The school is overseen by a local School Committee the administration is conducted by the Northern Berkshire School Union. The union consists of five towns sharing administrative service. School Unions are increasingly rate in Berkshire County with former unions taking on regionalization efforts to increase state reimbursement for transportation and improve administrative efficiency.



Clarksburg School is one of the town’s most valuable assets.

Clarksburg School is an outlier in its enrollment trends. In 2024, the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission [conducted a countywide school enrollment projection](#) study which concluded that, if current population trends continue, Clarksburg Elementary will maintain or slightly increase its school enrollment into the next decade while most Berkshire schools are anticipated to lose population. The district launched a pre-K program, which quickly filled.

The projected demographic changes on the regional scale led education leaders to reimagine the school system in a collaborative way that sustain a wide variety of programming through regional agreements. Clarksburg is currently partnering with nine towns to analysis the potential benefits and challenges of merging middle and high school levels. For Clarksburg, the potential outcomes could assist in addressing



The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission projects Clarksburg School’s population to increase in the next decade.

space limitations the town has with its current school and allow for a larger variety of programmatic offerings. The study is currently in its infancy, and the town should continue to be part of those conversations and be cognizant of neighboring communities' needs that could alter Clarksburg's current agreement.

The school's two largest pressing challenges are finances and infrastructure. Approximately 68% of the town's budget is appropriate to support the school and the town has the lowest per pupil spending among Berkshire County districts.



The School is a leading reason why people move to Clarksburg.

The small nature of the school poses a financial and programmatic challenge for special education costs. The law requires schools to pay for appropriate special education if it is unable to provide it in the school. Clarksburg School often sends students out of district because it is unable to provide it in house. The district provides limited social emotional learning programs.

The school's building lacks space. Band and art teachers, for example, do not have classroom spaces. The gym, cafeteria, and auditorium is one space utilized by all programs. The town library is connected to the building.

In 2017, the town voted down a school building project to address deficiencies. The town addresses the building piecemeal. Town meeting approved fixing the school's roof in 2025 and the town recently received an ADA Municipal Improvement Program grant award from the Massachusetts Office on Disability to make accessibility improvements to the building. Other projects recently include new flooring in the kindergarten wing and new playgrounds.

The town does not have a long-term capital improvement plan for the school, nor does it have a facilities manager. The town would significantly benefit from undertaking a thorough review of the condition of the building and developing a long-term capital plan.



The town library is attached to the school.

The school received a Safe Routes to School grant to improve the sidewalks near the school, including connectivity with the park and the community center. During school outreach, students overwhelmingly responded that they did not feel safe walking or riding their bicycles in town. Implementing a Safe Routes to School project to add safe transportation options for all modes of travel will increase safety and support the town's vision of rebuilding a "town center" near the school.

The school is experiencing an influx of younger families moving into the district. The homes sold in Clarksburg recently are often purchased by people looking to move to Clarksburg for the school system.

In recent years, Clarksburg School began limiting school choice because the school's limited on space. Despite restricting choice in, the school still receives double the number of students choosing in than those choosing out.

The school is expecting to see an increase in interested families following the closure of Stamford Elementary School. The education system created a competitive market for housing and relocation. Clarksburg is a destination for younger families looking for a good school system and is one of the most important assets in Clarksburg. Balancing space limitations, class sizes, robust program offerings, and the financial benefits of filling classrooms with additional students remains a continuing discussion.

Additionally, the town's Parent Teacher Group is a significant asset to the community. The volunteer group organizes and supports events for the students and supports teachers, provides assistance for field trips, and contributed to the new playground.

Local Sentiment

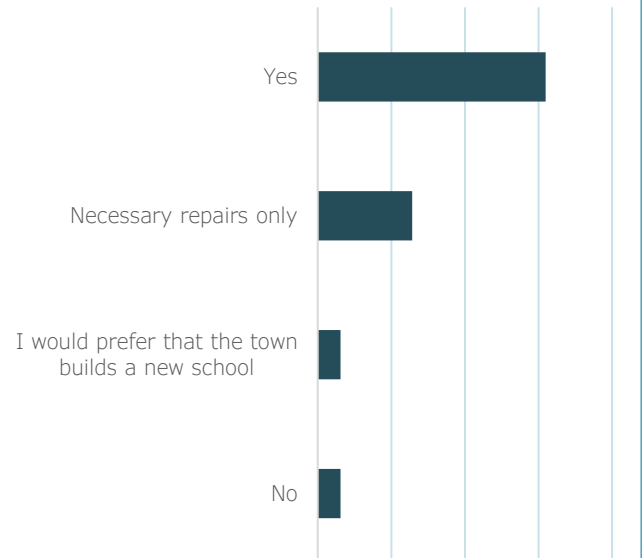
Survey respondents support improving the school building, showing both a recognition of the need for repairs but also a desire to invest in the building. The survey respondents, however, did not support constructing a new building.

A total of 62% of survey respondents support improvements to the school while another 26% support making necessary repairs only. Only 6% did not support investing in the school and 6% responded that they prefer the town to build a new school.

The survey asked respondents to indicate their support for leaving the union and becoming its own district, regionalizing with larger, regional school, and regionalizing with smaller, rural schools. Approximately half of all survey respondents to each question said they needed more information before making a decision. Among those with an opinion, the only regionalization with more yeses than no's is to regionalize with smaller, rural schools.

At the first community meeting, attendees ranked maintaining a great school as a top priority for the next 20 years. On a separate question, the school building ranked third in the attendees' biggest concerns, below municipal financial stability and the ability to preserve Clarksburg's independence.

Town meeting recently approved improvements to Clarksburg School. Do you support further improvements to the facility?



Survey takers overwhelmingly support improving the school but building a new school received support from only 6%.

Economy

There is very limited commercial activity in town. The largest employer is the town, consisting mostly in the School District⁴.

RI Baker, which occupies the historic Strong-Hewitt Mill on River Road, and A1 Incorporated Septic, located on Cross Road, located next to Gordon's garage and the former New England Dispensary, represent the larger private employers.

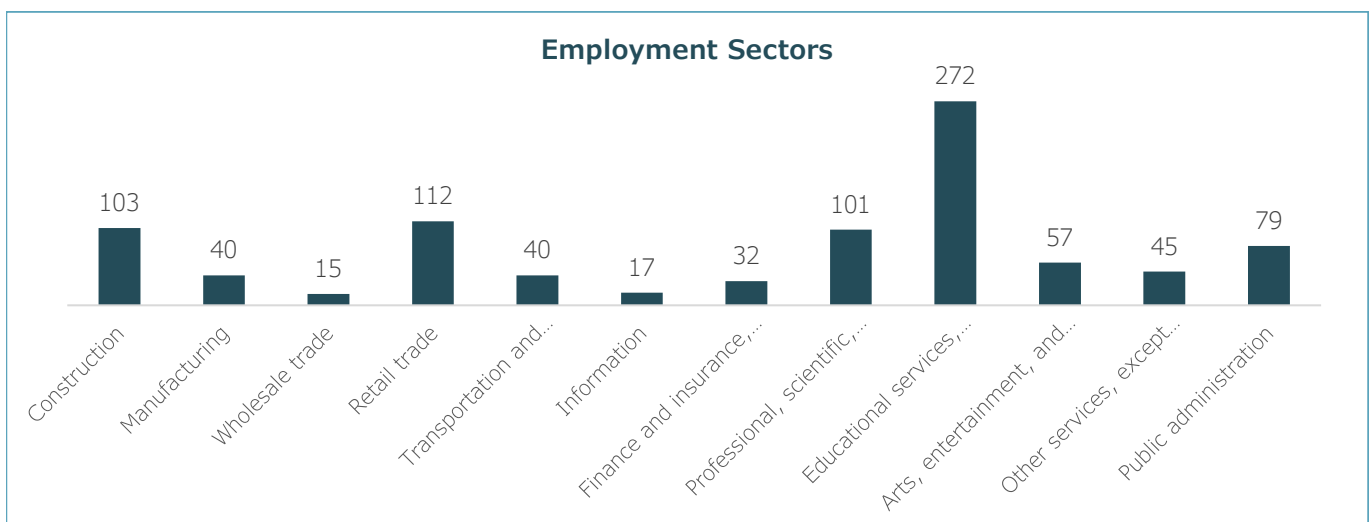
The town values its farming and agricultural commercial operations and there are several other small home-based businesses with Clarksburg addresses employing one to four people. Many Forks Farm, Sunnybrook, and Tanner's Farm are actively operating farms.



A couple clustered businesses on Cross Road represents the extent of the traditional commercial activity in town.

According to Census data, those who live in Clarksburg are mostly employed in educational and health services, which aligns with Berkshire County trends. Other larger employment sectors include retail, construction, and professional services. Those jobs, however, are not provided in Clarksburg and residents must commute. More than half of Clarksburg's workers travel between 10 and 20 minutes to work, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

The lack of public transportation and commercial activity makes it a necessity for residents own a motor vehicle for work, shopping, and entertainment.



The economic sectors of Clarksburg works aligns with countywide trends.

⁴ <https://lmi.dua.eol.mass.gov/LMI/LargestEmployersArea/LEAResult?A=05&GA=000333>

Local Sentiment

Community members of all ages support additional commercial activity.

At the first community meeting, members voiced significant desire for the town to attract a restaurant, coffee shop, or general store to serve as a community hub as well as supporting farming and farmstands. Pupils at the elementary school level voiced support for more commercial activity, particularly restaurants.

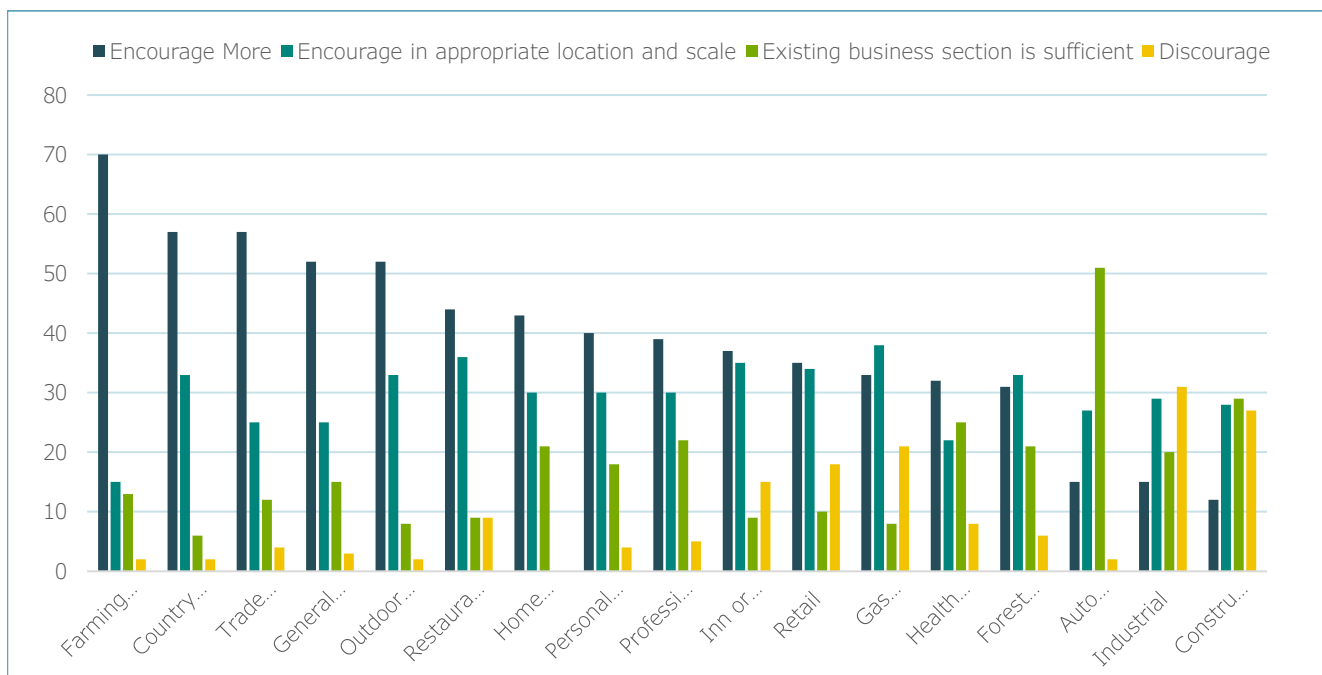
Farms and country stores are the most supported types of businesses among survey takers followed by trades (plumbers and electricians) and general services (handymen) and outdoor recreation businesses round out the top five most supported businesses. Restaurant ranked sixth.

Survey respondents encourage businesses in appropriate location and scale consistently ranked among the top, representing not only a desire among community members to expand the business sector but also demonstrating care that the type of businesses fit in with the character of the small town. Industrial and construction (including trucking and hauling) were the two types of businesses that the survey takers discouraged the most.

in Clarksburg Somewhere!



The desire for additional commercial activity is shared among all age demographics in Clarksburg.



The survey requested respondents to rank their support for the types of businesses they wanted to see in Clarksburg.

The survey also asked residents if they supported expanding the areas of town in which new businesses can build or expand. More than half of the survey respondents supported expanding the commercially zoned areas.

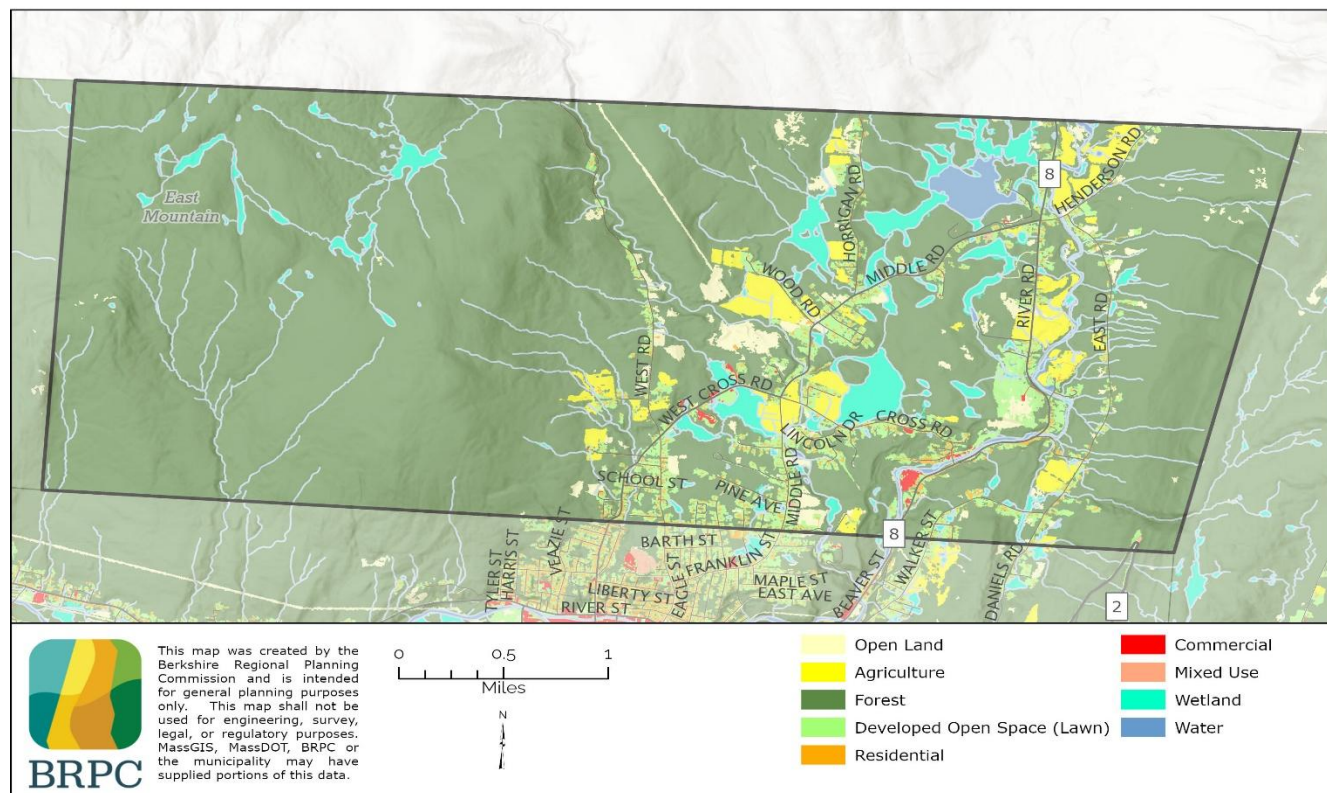
A total of 38% of survey respondents support expanding the commercially zoned areas but only if the uses are low impact to its surrounding while 28% support expanding business opportunity throughout all areas of town. Approximately 20% supported only expanding into areas currently very near to existing commercial activities and 14% responded that they do not want to expand the business corridor. The survey results demonstrate a desire among the community to look at its zoning bylaws and seek ways to encourage the appropriate development.

At the final community meeting, residents expressed support in maintaining the Strong-Hewit Mill as a commercial centerpiece. The mill is currently active and occupied and a former Selectmen reported that he has previously presented state programs to support the property to the land owner. There is a potential partnership with the land owner, town, and the state to preserve the historic property as well as contributing to the town's long-term economic development strategies.

The map below demonstrates the vast amount of forest land, the majority of which is protected, and natural resources while the town's commercial and residential development remains predominately in the southern portion of the town, near the North Adams border.

Town of Clarksburg

Land Use



Land Use Policies

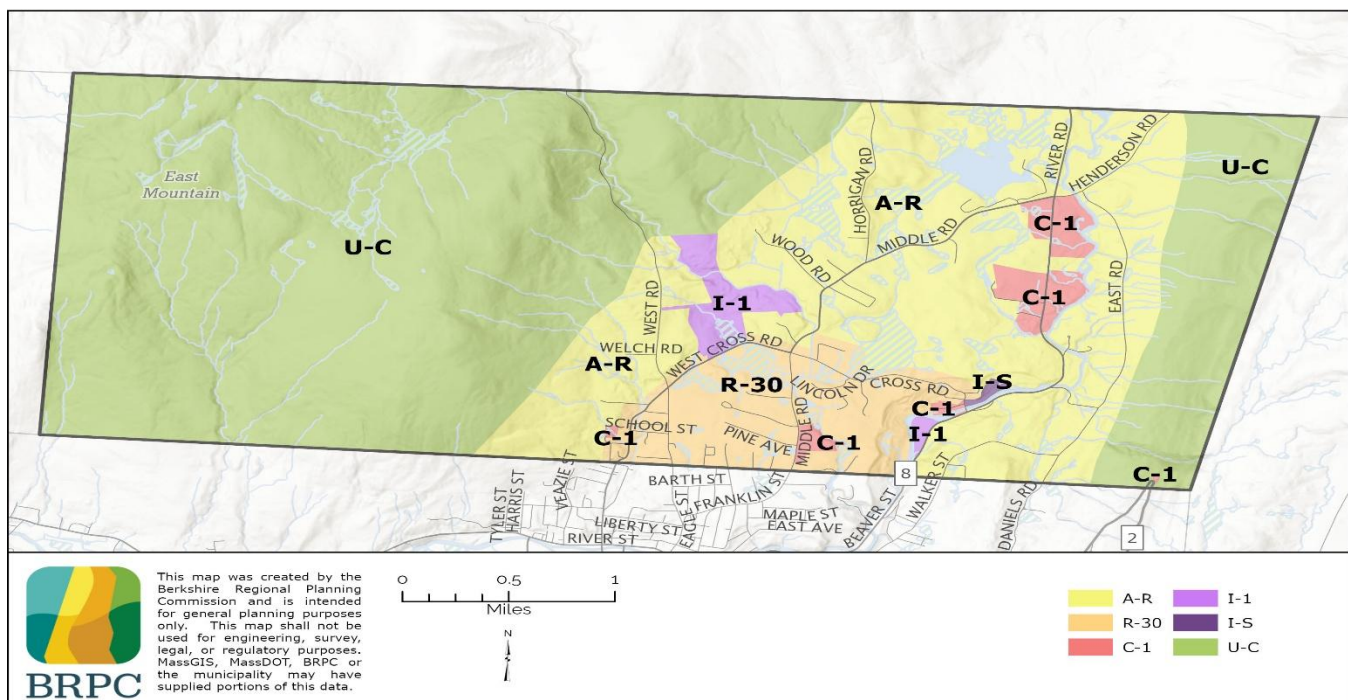
The town's zoning is divided into six districts – Upland Conservation District; Agricultural-Residential District; Residential District; Commercial District; Industrial District; and Industrial Service District.

The Upland Conservation District encompassed the largest land mass and including the protected state-owned land in the Clarksburg State Forest/East Mountain. It is the largest zone and consists of mountainous areas. The district has steep slopes and there is little development in those areas. West Road is the only main thoroughfare that spans into the district and there are only a couple single-family homes. The zoning allows for very few commercial operations and only single-family homes for residential uses. The land is not connected to sewer and water systems, requiring homes to provide septic systems and wells. A build out analysis map (shown in Appendix) demonstrates the limited capacity for development.

The Upland Conservation District has a minimum lot size for construction of five acres and a minimum of 250 feet of frontage along the roadway. The bylaw does not allow commercial development in the area. However, there are several developments that could potentially have a negative impact on the ecology and conserved areas in the town's west. The bylaw allows for nursing homes, senior care centers, and construction of private streets with subdivision approval. It provides a special permit process for private non-profits and resorts.

Town of Clarksburg

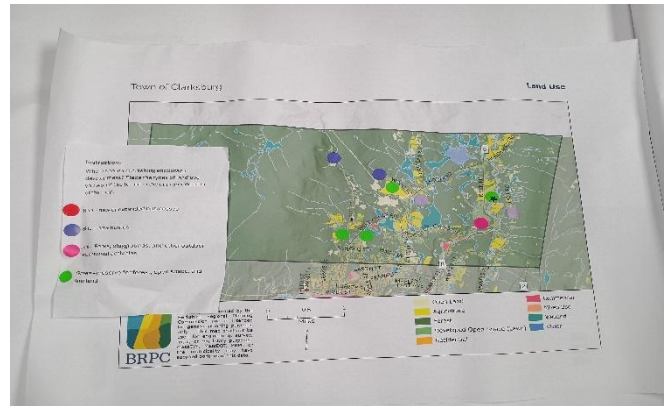
Zoning



Clarksburg's zoning limits commercial activity to along River Road and in small portions off Middle, and West Cross Roads.

Conversely, the historic villages of Houghtonville and Briggsville, located in the Residential District, have greater buildout capacity, more permissive zoning bylaws, and are served by utilities.

The Briggsville Water District serves homes along Route 8 with potable water and the North Adams system has public water available along North Houghton Street, North Eagle Street, and a small portion of Middle Road. The town is part of a regional Northern Berkshire Solid Waste Management District for its sewer treatment. The sewer lines expand from North Adams into Clarksburg at River Road, Middle Road, North Houghton, North Eagle, Belmar Avenue, and Well Avenue. The sewer also serves Carson Avenue and the commercial operations next to it on Cross Road. A full utilities map is available in the appendix.



Attendees at the first public meeting mapped where they would like to see new development.

Within the Residential District are two commercial pockets, one on Middle Road and one on Route 8, south of Cross Road. Two additional commercial areas are located on either side of River Road to the north, south of Henderson Road. One of which spans the former North Adams Country Club property, which is now a solar array. Neither commercial districts to the north are supported with water and sewer.

Local Sentiment

Survey takers are supportive of expanding commercially zoned areas in order to encourage appropriately scaled development. When asked if they felt the town's management controls over various development types, survey takers mostly felt the controls are at the appropriate level. Residential development, environmental protection, and agricultural land use ranked as the top three in both categories of having too much control and too little control. Less than 10% of survey takers felt controls were either too tight or too loose for economic development, open space, and recreational facilities.

During a mapping exercise at the first public meeting, residents placed stickers on areas they want to see preserved as farmlands, forests, and open spaces; outdoor recreational activities; new homes; and expanded businesses. Farmland on River Road, the area of town field, and agricultural land west of West Road were marked for preservation; the town hall area was marked for parks and playgrounds, and new homes were marked on Wood Road, Middle Road, East Road, and on West Road.

At the second community meeting, residents supported adopting a Dark Skies bylaw and noise ordinances to protect the rural and quiet nature from nuisance development, increasing water supply reserves to protect people's wells, and conducting a feasibility study to expand the Briggsville Water District and the North Adams sewer system further into Clarksburg to make development easier.

Community members also expressed interest in re-examining its zoning policies to encourage more development in the historically developed areas currently served by utilities as well as adopting protections that will preserve farmland and natural resources that contribute to the character of the community.

Natural, Cultural, and Historic Resources

Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway

The Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway follows the east-west route used for approximately 10,000 to 12,000 years by the Native people to hunt, trade, and conduct war campaigns between the Hudson River and Connecticut River Valleys. In subsequent years, the European settlers used the trail for the same purposes and eventually upgraded it to support the use of horse and cart.



Clarksburg is characterized by a vast amount of natural resources.

As the automobile increased in popularity the road was improved to better serve its use. The trail is nationally recognized as a Scenic Byway and several sites along the route are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Historic Places

Briggsville is potentially eligible for the National Registry of Historic Places because of its architecture, role in the local textile industry, and early settlement history. The district, including several buildings, are part of the Massachusetts Historical Commission's cultural resources inventory. The full historic inventory is in the appendix.

The village of Briggsville, located in the southeastern corner of Clarksburg, is representative of historic development patterns of the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth century. Briggsville is an integral part of Clarksburg's land use history and town history.

Briggsville developed along the Hoosic River around the Briggs Brothers/Strong, Hewat & Co. mill complex, which was the town's largest employer. The woolen mills complex and dam stood at the center of what became a village of housing units, a school, chapel, and a bridge featuring the late Victorian architecture. In 1866, the Briggs Brothers company formed the textile-producing business. The state worked with the town to remove the Briggsville Dam and restore the North Branch of the Hoosic River.

The area features numerous historic buildings including the 1848 J. Hall Residence, the 1860 R.G. Hall House, the 1876 Briggsville Union Chapel, and the 1939 Briggsville School, which is now the town hall.

Located on the iconic hairpin turn on the Mohawk Trail, the Golden Eagle, built in 1959, sits facing west overlooking the Taconic Mountain Range. Following the completion of the Mohawk Trail in 1914, Charles Canedy of North Adams built a one-and-a-half story gift shop on the location. The Mohawk Trail became a popular route of travel for automobile tourism as travelers sought to experience the length of the trail and the gift shop and hairpin turn became an iconic scenic location that still attracts visitors. The original building was struck multiple times and in 1959 the owners torn the building down and constructed the current restaurant. The Golden Eagle got its name in 1963 and sold to its current owners in 1980.

Appalachian Trail

The Appalachian Trail's 2,200 miles spanning from Georgia to Main travels through the study area, including on portions of Mount Greylock State Reservation. The National Park Service recognizes it as a national scenic trail.

The trail enters Clarksburg from North Adams in the middle of East Mountain and continues into the Green Mountain National Forest in Vermont. There is no connection between the developed portions of Clarksburg with the trail. A large amount of forest separates access for Clarksburg residents to the trail.

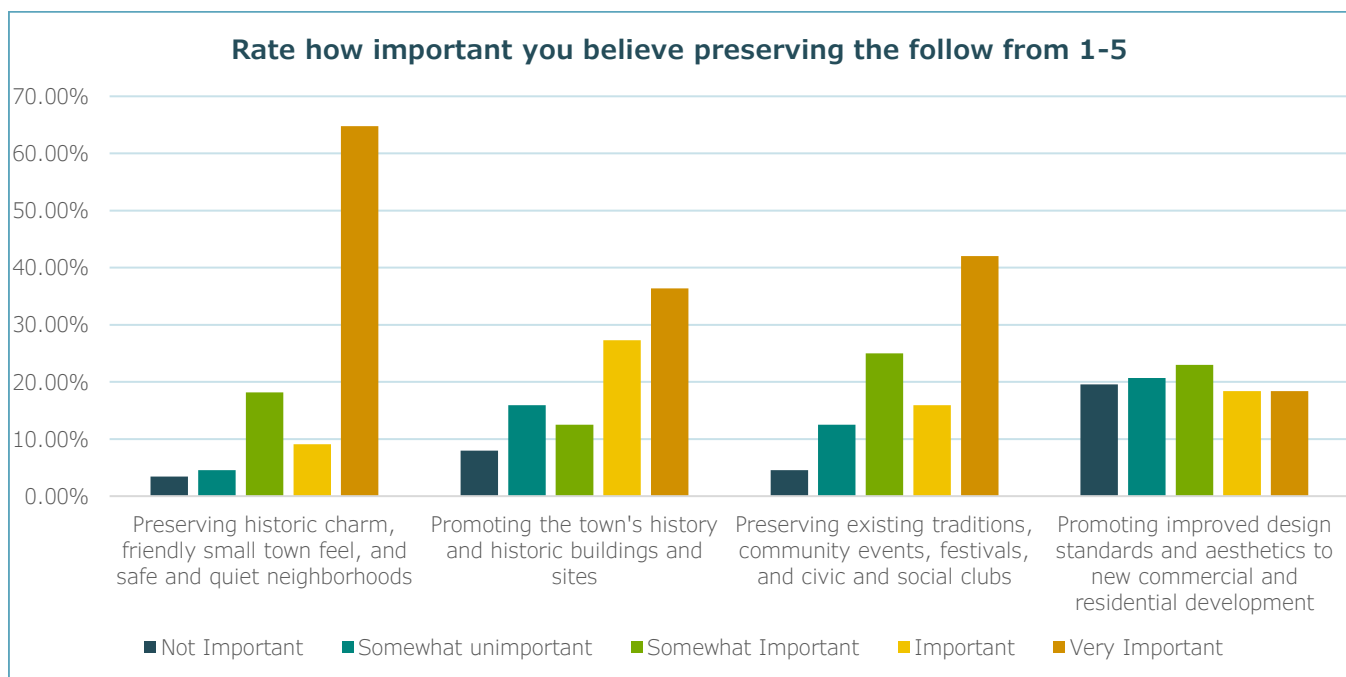
Local Sentiment

The historic and cultural assets are important to Clarksburg residents responding to the survey. In a question asking residents to place a level of importance – from 1 to 5 – preserving historic charm and promoting the town's history are ranked as high priorities.

Separately, 94% of survey respondents believe it is important to educate children about local history and 90% believe it is important to educate children about town meeting form of government.

The New England Town Meeting government was a discussion point during the first community outreach meeting in which attendees cited the ability to have a meaningful voice in local operations as a reason to live in the town of Clarksburg.

Supported actions to honor the town's history include launching local history programming, adopting the Community Preservation Act to preserve historic buildings, creating a Clarksburg Historic Week, and celebrating Earl Taylor Day on May 19th.



Residents feel that preserving historic charm of Clarksburg is very important for the town in the next two decades.

Housing

More than three-quarters of the town's housing stock (77.5%) dates to pre-1975. Accessor's data shows that between 2001 and 2021, developers created 81 new housing units, which represents just 7% of the housing units in town.

Approximately 921 of the 1,189 housing units (77.5%) in Clarksburg are more than 50 years old.

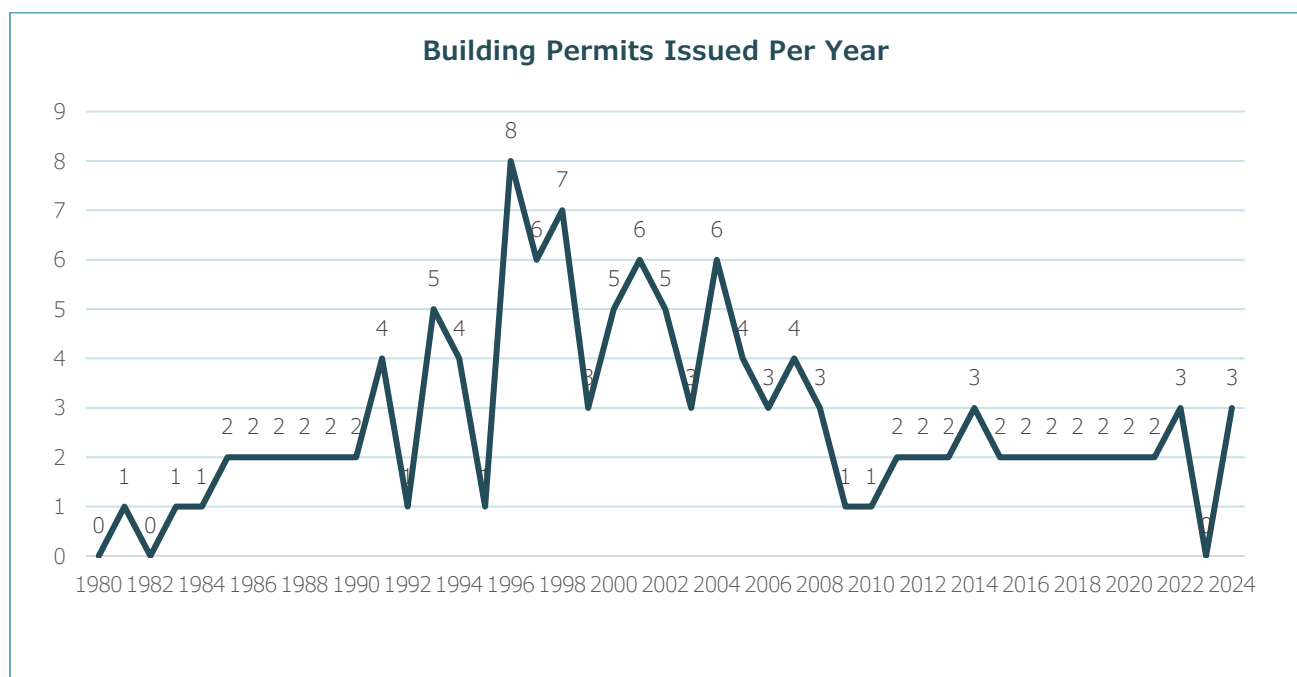
Approximately a quarter of the buildings in Clarksburg date back to the 1800s; another quarter were built between 1901 and 1950; and another quarter constructed between 1951 and 1975.



Carson Avenue is a small street with dense housing – originally developed to support mills – providing multi families housing options without impacting the natural resources and farmlands.

The aging housing stock is aligned with both local and national trends of a significant decrease in the number of new housing units constructed each year. In recent years, Clarksburg typically only issued two building permits for new homes per year. Older homes typically require increased levels of maintenance and/or renovations. Older homes often have poor ventilation, hazardous materials, and outdated plumbing systems. They are not energy efficient and are more costly to heat. The town recently applied for a Community Development Block Grant to implement a housing rehabilitation program to assist residents make home improvements.

The housing stock in Clarksburg is predominately single-family homes, with most having two to three bedrooms. Only 15% of Clarksburg households rent. There are limited housing options available in the town of Clarksburg.



The chart shows the number of building permits issued per year in Clarksburg. Source: <https://datacommon.mapc.org/browser/datasets/384>



The hilly terrain limits the viability of creating new homes in much of the town.

Housing values have increased significantly starting in 2020. The average house value, according to Zillow, in Clarksburg in 2020 was \$167,688. Today the average value of a home is \$269,602. The increased sales prices correlate to increases in property assessments. The town's overall residential tax class increased by \$25 million in value in the last three years, according to the division of local services, despite stagnant new housing development. The trends reflect a market in high demand with a limited inventory of homes.

The increased property values and lack of housing options pose challenges to young families entering the housing market and for older adults who are considering leaving the housing market and entering rental space or smaller homes.

The town is also constricted by the lack of developable land. Approximately half the land in Clarksburg is owned by the state for conservation purposes. Hilly terrain in both the west and eastern portions of the town are difficult to build on and there are several natural resources that need protection.

Local Sentiment

Most survey respondents are happy with their current living situation while another 10% are seeking new housing but are restricted because of the current housing market. Seventy-eight percent of survey respondents said their home or apartment is "perfect." Eleven percent said they would like to move but cannot "afford to in this housing market. Another 6% reported that they would like to move into a larger home but cannot find one that fits their needs and 5% said they would like to downsize but are unable to find smaller places in Clarksburg.

Among the 726 occupied housing units in Clarksburg...

- 1. 84.21% are single family*
- 2. 72.2% have a 2-3 bedrooms*
- 3. 33.5% date back to 1939 or older*
- 4. 85% are owner-occupied*
- 5. The median housing cost for a house is \$1,168 a month*

Another question asked respondents to rank the types of housing developments they feel are important. Beyond continuing the existing single-family housing, respondents felt there is a strong need for starter homes for young families and senior housing as most important.

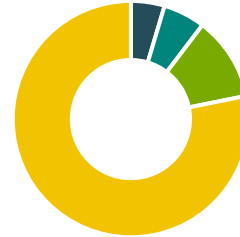
No respondents said they were unable to find homes in good condition, currently live in an apartment and seeking to purchase a home or had recently downsized.

The least supported housing options are apartment buildings, high-end homes, and mixed-use buildings featuring housing and businesses. The result reflect a community desire to ensure the rural nature of the community.

At the first public meeting, senior housing was a key topic. Senior housing had the third most responses to a prompt asking attendees to finish the statement "Clarksburg has everything except for..." Attendees voiced support for repurposing the current town hall into senior housing.

At the second community forum, identifying and pursuing opportunities for senior house ranked as a top priority. Attendees also expressed some support in expanding the water and sewer systems to support additional housing.

Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about your housing?



- I am looking to downsize but having difficulty finding smaller homes or apartments in Clarksburg
- I am looking to move into a larger home but I cannot find an one that fits my needs
- I would like to move into another home but I cannot afford to in this housing market
- My home/apartment is perfect

Residents are generally happy with their housing situation.

Transportation

Department of Public Works

The town is responsible for maintaining 15.85 miles of public road ways. The state's Chapter 90 formula provided the town with \$161,378.48 in aid in FY26.

Clarksburg is dependent on state funding for large reconstruction and maintenance projects. In recent years the Department of Public Works repaved Middle Road. In 2024, the town allocated \$283,918 for the Highway Department and another \$55,000 for snow and ice removal.

The department is also responsible for ensuring that town roads swept in the spring, lines are painted, hazard trees, mowing roadside brush and grass, cleaning and repairing drainage catch basins, sewer manholes, drainage ditching, flushing of culverts, street signs repaired and replaced and maintain all town property, buildings and equipment.

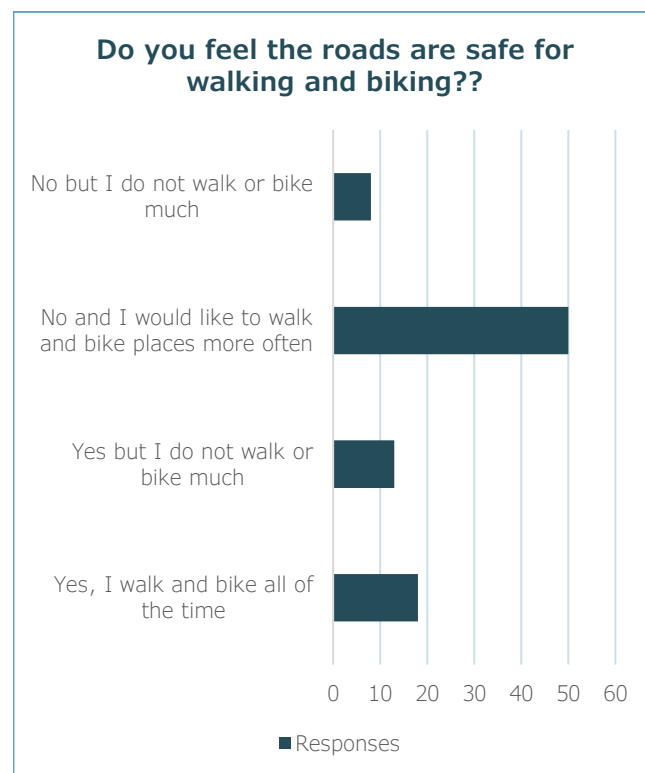
The Department of Public Works also addresses emergency repairs after large rainstorms. For example, in the fall of 2024 Horrigan Road washed out and the department restabilized approximately 100 yards. Increased flooding and high wind impacts because of climate change in the coming years will likely cause increased road and property damage. The Highway Department overall is the third highest budget line in the town's annual expenses.

Public Transportation

The Berkshire Regional Transportation Authority does not operate in Clarksburg and rideshare options are limited. The only transportation options for Clarksburg residents and visitors is by personal automobile.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates approximately 4% of the households do not have a vehicle⁵. Approximately 41% of households have one vehicle; 36% have two; 12% have three; and 7 percent have 4 or more. All of the households without a vehicle are one or two person households.

The lack of public transportation means vehicle ownership is the primary option for commuting to work. Among the estimated 799 workers over the age of 16 – as estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau – 96.6% drive to work and less than 10 percent carpool with colleagues.



Fifty-five percent of survey respondents do not feel the roads are safe for walking and biking.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. "Household Size by Vehicles Available." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B08201, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2023.B08201?g=060XX00US2500314010,2500324120,2500330315,2501121780,2501179110,5000369775>. Accessed on 7 Jul 2025.

Workers also tend to live close to where they work. Approximately 25% of workers commute less than 10 minutes to get to work. The mean travel time to work for Clarksburg residents is 21.5 minutes. The commute is the shortest compared the comparable towns of Florida, Erving, Whatley, Hinsdale, and Stamford – a difference attributed to Clarksburg's shared border with the city of North Adams whereas the comparable communities are further from urban centers.

Local Sentiment

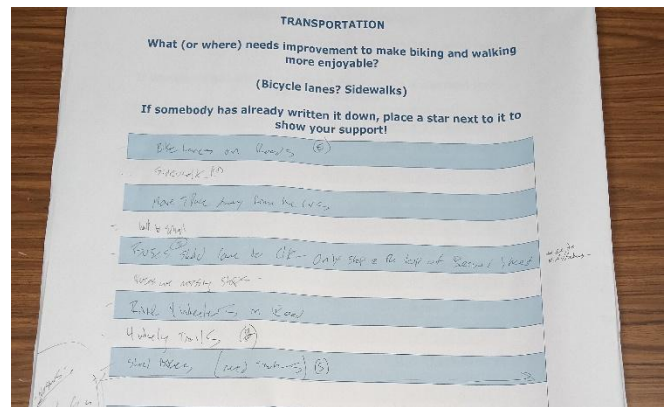
Residents responding to the survey feel the roads are in poor or okay condition compared to good or great. Thirty percent of respondents feel the roads are in poor condition, 36% feel the roads are okay. Only 6% feel the roads are in great condition and 28% feel the roads are in good condition.

A majority of survey respondents do not feel the current roads are safe for walking and biking. A total of 56% of survey respondents said the roads are not safe for walking and biking and they would like to walk and bike more often. Nine percent felt the roads are not safe but also do not walk or bike. A total of 20% of people who believe the roads are safe for walking and biking do and do so all the time and another 15% do not walk or bike much but do feel the roads are safe.

Survey respondents are not likely to utilize other modes of transportation if available. Sixty percent of survey respondents said they would not use another other type of transportation. However, 25% reported they would use a van service operated by the Council on Aging; 10% would utilize a bus service into North Adams; and 17% would use a rideshare program. Approximately 5% would use bike share programs and 4% would use a taxi service.

During outreach at the school, students raised thumbs up or down about whether they agreed with various statements about transportation. The students do not feel that it is easy to get around on a bicycle and do not feel safe crossing the street. The students were split about whether they felt the roads were safe for riding a bike.

During an exercise with a group of middle school aged students focused on transportation, the group mostly supported establishing bicycle lanes and sidewalks to allow safer transportation throughout town. Others supported expanding and connecting off-road trails to places in town and the third most supported transportation initiative the students supported is expanding bus connection with North Adams.



The middle school students are particularly supportive of adding bicycle lanes and sidewalks to the transportation system.

Recreation

The town has 3,880 acres of protected land people can utilize for recreation. The majority of the protected land is the Clarksburg State Forest, which encompasses 3,629 acres. Another 155 acres are in the Florida State Forest and 7 acres are located in the Natural Bridge State Park.

State-owned Recreational Parcels

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation operates Clarksburg State Park, which is home to Mauserts Pond and provides passive recreational opportunities. Mauserts Pond features grills, a pavilion, picnic tables, restrooms, showers, and a nature center. It has a paved parking lot and a boat ramp providing access to the water. The park provides fishing, cross-country skiing, swimming, camping, and boating opportunities. There is a network of hiking trails that spaces around Mauserts Pond and connected with the Clarksburg State Forest. Visitors can park at the facility and take either Shoreline or Pond Loop Trails to connect with Vermont Line Trail and the Horrigan Road Trails to access the large tracts of wooded land to the west and north.

The Appalachian Trail crosses through town and into the Green Mountains. However, there is not a direct connection with the town. The trail is oriented in a north-south direction entering Clarksburg from North Adams and into Vermont in the middle of East Mountain.

The Department of Conservation and Recreation also manages Natural Bridge State Park. The park is home to the only natural white marble arch in North America. It is a 60-foot gorge created by glacial melt. The entrance is located in North Adams, but much of the property is in Clarksburg. The park provides hiking and fishing opportunities and features a picnic area, restrooms, a visitor's center, and grills. The Florida State Forest provides hikers and nature viewing.



Mauserts Pond features kayaking, hiking, and picnicking opportunities.



The Vermont Line Trail connects Mauserts Pond to East Mountain and the Green Mountains in Vermont.

Municipal Recreational Properties

Pfc. Peter A. Cook Veterans Memorial Field, also known as Town Field, is the premier town-owned recreational opportunity. The field, located on the school property, features a pavilion, basketball court, and a softball field. The field hosts community events. Clarksburg is currently redesigning the field with anticipation to reconstruct it in the near future and improve connections with the Community Center and the school.

The town also has sports fields located behind Town Hall. However, the facility has been unused for

years and is in need of renovation to support active recreation. The location potentially could provide better access to the Hoosic River.

Local Sentiment

The top activities, according to survey respondents, is walking and hiking (68% and 63% respectively) followed by fishing (32%), gardening (29%), and canoeing and kayaking (29%).

When asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the existing recreational areas in Clarksburg, respondents gave an average of 6. Survey respondents had an opportunity to report improvements they would like to see. The responses includes several requests for new and improved trails at Mauserts Pond, removal of leeches in Mauserts Pond to allow for swimming, increased parking at recreational locations, creating a public playground that is not attached to the school, fencing around the school playground, accessibility improvements, and increasing the number of activities and programs.

The survey asked respondents to list as many as three outdoor recreational assets that are currently not in Clarksburg they would like to see. Mountain biking trails is the top response among followed by an ice skating rink, walking trails, and pickleball courts. Many residents specifically noted improvements to Town Field.



Mountain biking and hiking trails topped the list of open responses survey respondents provided when asked what recreational asset they would like to see created in Clarksburg.

Municipal Finances

The town operates on an approximately \$6 million budget, including enterprise funds. The town relies on state aid to fund more than 40% of its budget. The local tax levy in 2025 is approximately 2.2 million.

The town utilizes a single tax rate of \$13.06 for all properties. There is total assessment for residential properties is significantly higher than the few commercial entities operating in town. The town relies on residential taxpayers to fund 95.71% of its local levy obligation. Compared to nearby towns, Clarksburg derives a larger percentage of its budget from residential property taxes.

The Commonwealth owns 3,540.2 acres of land in Clarksburg, representing approximately 43% of the total land. The Commonwealth values the land at \$704.47 per acre, resulting in a PILOT payment of \$2,494,900.

Reforming the PILOT program in Massachusetts would be especially beneficial to a town like Clarksburg, which received \$9 per acre in funding compared to \$102 per acre in Plymouth.

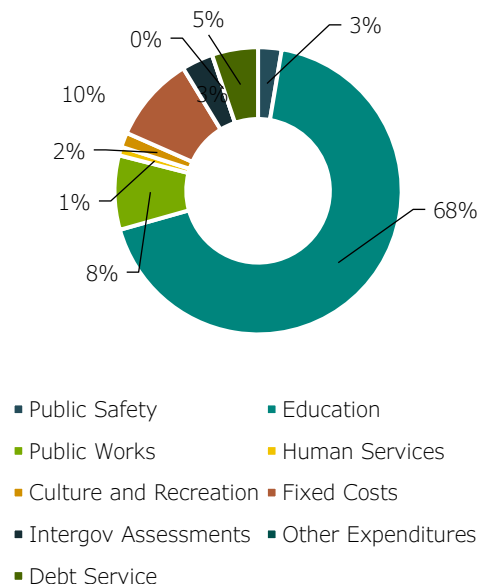
The average single-family bill in FY25 is \$3,195, which is on par with neighboring communities and one of the lowest tax bills in the state. Despite lower tax bills than other areas of the Commonwealth, Clarksburg is limited by Proposition 2 ½, which caps the amount a community can tax. Clarksburg operates with \$36,057 in levy capacity. Clarksburg has more levy capacity than North Adams, Erving, and Cheshire but less than Whatley, Hinsdale, and Florida.

The town of Clarksburg values its education system, spending more than 60% of its annual budget to support the education system. Fixed costs represent 9% of the budget, public works 8%, general government 7%, debt service 5%, and culture, public safety, intergovernmental agreements, and

Percentage of Levy From Residential Property Taxes

Municipality	Residential Levy as a % of Total
Clarksburg	95.71
Cheshire	91.07
Erving	13.11
Florida	22.06
Hinsdale	78.47
North Adams	64.57
Whatley	77.75

Budget expenditures



The chart shows the distribution of the town's budget by category.

human services ranging from 1% to 3% of the budget.

The limited excess capacity, large amount of state-owned land, and limited commercial operations lend urgency to the town's effort to encourage greater development to strengthen the tax base.

Additionally, in recent years Clarksburg exhausted much of its stabilization account and has just .13% of what it would need to fund the budget for a full year. The town will need to replenish its reserves in the coming years, establishing a goal of having a balance equaling approximately 10% of its budget.

Through prudent operations in recent years, the town received its largest free cash certification in several years in 2026.

The trend, if it continues, provides the town the ability to build reserves, make capital improvements, and strategically plan for future investments.

Average Single-Family Tax Bill

Municipality	Average Single-Family Tax Bill
Clarksburg	\$3,195
Whatley	\$5,570
Hinsdale	\$5,157
North Adams	\$3,767
Cheshire	\$3,472
Erving	\$2,526
Florida	\$1,756

Town Services

Community Center/ Council on Aging

The town operates a Community Center that is home to the Council on Aging and Veterans of Foreign Wars. The building also serves as the town's emergency shelter. The center provides services on Mondays and Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to noon and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The Council on Aging's services extends beyond Clarksburg to neighboring towns. Approximately 400 individuals attended programs in fiscal year 2022, which translated into approximately 3,000 total visits. That same year, the agency benefited from 2,176 hours of volunteer assistance. Among the services offered to clients at the CoA are health benefits counseling, a food pantry, supportive day care, wellness checks, medical equipment loans, transportation, fitness and exercise classes, congregate meals, recreation, and more. The Council on Aging is staffed by one person.



The Senior Center/Community Center is located on West Cross Road.

Clarksburg Library

Clarksburg's public library is located next to the elementary school and doubles as the school library.

It is open to residents Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Wednesday from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. Approximately 24 patrons visit weekly. The library director recently began implementing more programming to reintroduce the library to the community and expand services. The Massachusetts Broadband Institute recently granted the library new computers to support community members, including assisting people with telehealth services. The new programs include game nights, learning lectures, and gardening in the outdoor area.



Clarksburg Library has limited operating hours.

The introduction of active programs such as family game nights, online telehealth support, and marketing the library's services are expected to reestablish the library as a community third space, complementing the concentration of activity in the town's Cross Road area.

Clarksburg Volunteer Fire Company

The fire company is an independent non-profit that provides the town with public safety services. The department consists of a chief and approximately 35 volunteers.

The town pays an annual stipend of approximately \$20,000 per year for public safety services. The town is also the major contributor to purchasing new fire trucks.

The company owns and maintains the fire house, located on Cross Road. The company replaced the roof and the heating system. There is no immediate large capital needs.

The company does not operate an ambulance service but has trained staff responding to medical calls. Northern Berkshire EMS provides ambulance service for the town of Clarksburg. The company responds to approximately 150 calls per year, with the chief estimating that approximately 90% of those are medical. The number of calls is up significantly in recent year mostly related to the aging population having greater medical needs and drug use among the younger population.

The biggest challenges for the company is the increasing cost of equipment and vehicles. The company provides its members with turnout gear, uniforms, badges, radios, and pagers. The department also replaces 30 Scott packs on a rotating basis, replacing five each year unless a grant opportunity provides for more.



The Clarksburg Fire Department is challenged by the increasing cost of equipment and vehicles.

Town Hall

The town clerk manages vital records and elections. Town election in 2024 saw a turnout of 272 voters and town meeting had 74. The clerk's office recorded five births, four marriages, and 23 deaths. The clerk's office also issued 179 dog licenses and five business certificates.



Clarksburg town hall.

The treasurer's office is responsible for billing and collecting real estate, sewer, and motor vehicle taxes. The office is also responsible for initiating tax takings and in 2024 issued notices for 22 property owners with delinquent payments. There are nine land court cases pending.

The veterans services officer assists veterans not only in Clarksburg but also Adams, Cheshire, Dalton, Florida, Lanesborough, North Adams, Savoy, and Williamstown.

The town employees a plumbing and gas inspector, building inspector, and health inspector. The town recently signed an agreement with the Berkshire Public Health Alliance for additional support

conducting health inspections and following up on property matters. Permitting applications are available online.

The town employs approximately 47 employees in total, at varying levels, in town hall, including election workers, stipend board members, and professional administrators.

Local Sentiment

The survey asked residents to say whether they wanted various services to expand, kept the same, or reduce. Survey takers felt the town need to expand its communication with the public the most, with 72% voting for expansion. Public safety was the second-most service survey takers want to expand, with 69%, and 48% wanted to expand services at the Community Center.

Related to communication, the survey asked respondents how they get location information. Social media (39%) is currently the most utilized way for people to get information followed by the town's website and word of mouth. The town does not have locations for paper fliers, nor does it have a newsletter and those ranked at the bottom of the list as ways people get local information. Local media was the fourth most utilized resource.

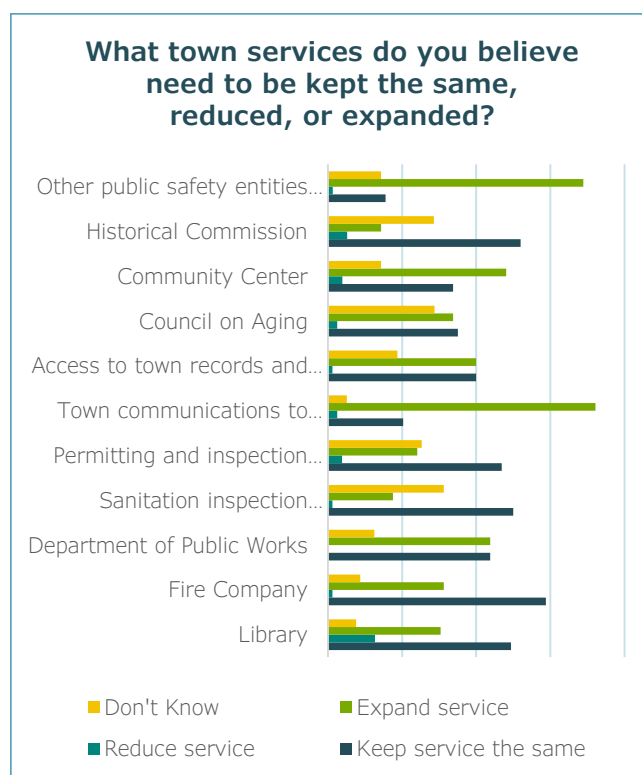
Common themes during public outreach events included increasing police presence, expanding the types of services and activities at the Community Center, and hosting more events to bring people together.

At the first community meeting, attendees voiced support for revisiting an agreement with North Adams to extend police services while also recognizing that the Massachusetts State Police has provided a greater presence since the town closed its department. While establishing goals and objectives at the second meeting, attendees again voiced support for expanding policing in town.

Residents also said the Community Center is currently only providing services for seniors and would support expanding the use of the building.

Other top service-related actions supported by attendees include continuing with plans to upgrade the town field, expanding services at the community center, developing a capital plan to improve town-owned facilities, exploring opportunities to integrate the school community with town operations, developing a robust communications plan, and creating a recreation committee that consists of three different age groups.

"Bring back the police department, we feel the difference in our neighborhood and it's not in a positive way." – Survey response



Town communications and public safety are top priorities among survey takers.



Clarksburg's Future



Remaining Rural

Clarksburg's scenic landscapes, farmlands, and natural resources will remain a defining characteristic of the town.

The town's scenic landscapes and rural nature rank as one of the most important reasons for residents and visitors. The open spaces are threatened by climate change and development. The town will take several actions in the next decade to preserve the valuable open space.

Residents place high priority on preserving existing farmlands, which are especially vulnerable to development. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that between 2017 and 2022, the number of farms throughout the nation declined by 7% and the number of acres tallying to 20.1 million. In Berkshire County in the same period, four farms closed⁶. The town already took a significant step to protect the farmlands by adopting a Right To Farm Bylaw.

Encouraging farm owners to preserve their land through Agricultural Protection Restrictions, or to a lesser degree through Chapter 61A, will help ensure that the properties stay farmland for generations to come.

The town's scenic landscapes and nearby North Adams' significant tourism draw makes Clarksburg an ideal place to capitalize on agritourism, which allows farmers to diversify income streams by inviting the public in for various uses. The town can support farmers by providing them with the regulatory structure that allows them to take advantage of opportunities to host small-scale events and overnight rentals. Additionally, the town can support farm education to raise awareness of agricultural contributions to the town.

The town can take several steps to protect natural resources other than farms. Climate Change reflects the most significant impact on not only the properties but on public safety as well. The town adopted a Hazard Mitigation Plan, which identifies numerous projects the town can undertake to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change. Diligently implementing those recommendations will serve the town well in protecting the environment.

The town can additionally play its part in mitigating climate change and reducing its energy consumption, which additionally reduces the costs to operate town buildings. By developing a Net Zero Energy Plan, converting streetlights to lower energy use products, converting vehicles to electric, and installing solar on municipal rooftops, the town will be less dependent on the ebbs and flows of energy producers.

Recognizing town officials' desire to encourage development, the town can also adopt zoning mechanisms that both preserves open space and create new residential opportunities. Such mechanisms include Open Space Residential Zoning, which allows for developers to create greater density in a development in exchange for preserving abutting open spaces. Additionally, the town can incentivize development in the current footprint, particularly in its historic villages by providing greater allowances for types of

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https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Full_Report/Volume_1_Chapter_2_County_Level/Massachusetts/mav1.pdf

structures, lot sizes, and setbacks. The gentle increase in density will not take away from the town's character while still supporting the types of housing and commercial activities residents would like to see in their community.

There are several regional partners working to protect the Northern Berkshires the town can collaborate with to implement sound strategies and best practices to improve environmental stewardship. Hoosic River Revival and the Woodlands Partnership represent two organizations with shared goals that can support the town's initiatives.

The town can also utilize its open space to support the health and wellbeing of residents. The town can work with the state to provide additional hiking opportunities at Mauserts Pond, continue with the plans to renovate Town Field, and encourage events to raise awareness and appreciation of the natural resources available.

Collectively, the efforts will protect critical lands from unwanted development and strengthen the town's cultural around its Right to Farm proclamation. The scenic landscapes that signal to residents that they are home will remain a vital part of the town's character.

Supporting Growth

Clarksburg will have new commercial developments that support the community's needs while making low impacts on the environment and residents' quality of life.

The rural nature of Clarksburg is a draw for residents but there are a lack of housing options and places for services, which makes it more difficult for people to stay in Clarksburg. Residents currently love the rural nature but would like to see a coffee shop or general store to increase social interaction and to purchase necessities.

The town will encourage development in its historic districts, where there is greater access to water and sewer. Eventually the town should create a pathway to expand the sewer and water infrastructure to make more lots available for development.

The town can start with reducing the minimum setbacks and lot sizes in Houghtonville and Briggsville to allow for greater density. Increasing density in those areas will have little impact on the town's budget for services while creating additional revenue and directing development away from the scenic landscapes the town cherishes. Mechanisms like cluster housing or backlot developments can also provide opportunities to gently increase density.

Seeking opportunities to incentive or partner with operators to open a small-scale country store or coffee shop would be a significant step toward fulfilling residents' wants. There are several models elsewhere in the United States representing the successful return of corner markets and/or country stores the town can position itself to utilize.

One of the first steps the town should take to attract new development is continually re-examine its Zoning Bylaws to ensure that the process clearly allows for the types of development the town would like to encourage and creates an easy and predictable process.

Senior housing remains a stop priority for residents. The town is mostly large-lot single-family homes and the homes can become unmanageable for older adults. Supporting the creation of condominiums or other smaller housing options will not only allow for older adults to live in town longer but also put homes on the market for younger families.

The town also has homes that are older and in need of repair. The town can preserve those homes through rehabilitation programs to assist residents and preserve the existing housing stock.

A strategy to increase development that makes low-impacts on the rural nature of Clarksburg will help stabilize the town's financial position and meet the needs of current and future residents.

Instilling Civic Pride

Residents cited the community as an important component of living in Clarksburg. There are opportunities for the town to build upon its community feel through the creation and expansion of third-spaces for residents to congregate, events to bring people together, being more inclusive, and diligently providing the services to meet residents' needs.

The Town Field already serves as the heartbeat of the community. It is strategically located between Clarksburg Elementary School and the Community Center. Attached to the school is the library. The connection between the three make for a symbiotic relationship for placemaking.

The proposed project to renovate town field will enhance the community's experiences through opportunities for open space play and exercise to attending community events. The town recognizes that the Town Field and adjacent properties can be the "town center."

Community events held at the Town Field are big attractions for residents. The town has intentionally sought to increase opportunities and will continue to organize and host events for people of all ages to build community.

Both the Community Center and Library have capacity to offer more robust and modern services contributing the community. The library has already begun to modernize its services beyond loaning of books and embracing its role as a community hub. The town can support that growth and change to build the library's role as a third space bringing the community together. The Community Center currently serves the Council on Aging primarily, but the space is open to the public, and the town can seek opportunities to utilize the space to add needed and wanted youth programming or other services.

Building community spirit starts with communication. The town has limited options for communicating with its residents. It has begun growing its social media presence and the town should continue to find new ways to reach residents through e-mail newsletters, direct mailers, and new and emerging social media.

The highly valued school community represents a strong opportunity to build community spirit. The town's strengthening of the relationship with the school and creating opportunities for students to engage in town operations and the town to engage and support the schools' operation will serve as a catalyst to strong community bonds.

Additionally, the town should make sure its facilities and services are accessible to all. The town currently has an ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan to ensure the facilities and services are accessible for people with disabilities and should follow it to meet the needs of residents.

Foundational to providing new services, reactivating underutilizes spaces, and increasing community spirit is the town's ability to fund and operate initiatives and ensuring that people feel safe.

The town's Haszard Mitigation Plan represents a detailed blueprint to increase safety during expected changes in climate and storms. The town can also support public safety in its transportation system to

help people feel welcomed and safe attending community events and seek to give residents security by knowing there are police and fire protections in place.

The town should continue to discuss with North Adams and the Massachusetts State Police on ensuring police coverage following the closure of the Clarksburg Police Department, support the long-term viability and needs of the Volunteer Fire Company, and ensure it has a role and place in regional emergency management.

Additionally, the town's finances should be stabilized to provide the opportunity to make capital investments and/or expand services. The most impactful way to stabilize the town's financial position is through statewide PILOT reform, for which the town should continue to advocate. The Commonwealth has purchased a significant amount of land in Clarksburg to meet its carbon sequestration and climate change goals. However, in return the current PILOT provides approximately \$10 per acre, significantly below the statewide median of \$127. The formula incentivizes the Commonwealth to purchase land in communities like Clarksburg, limiting its taxable properties. Reforming the PILOT program would make up for revenue lost through the Commonwealth taking ownership of a significant portion of the town's plan and recognizes the important role the town plays in supporting the Commonwealth's stated goals.

PILOT reform, however, is a complicated and statewide legislative change advocates sought for many years. The town should take steps internally to create sustainable finances while still advocating for PILOT reform.

Through land use practices, the town can increase the tax income through new developments while minimizing the services provided. Large-lot single family homes cost more in the long-term for the town than the revenue it receives. The town should enact strategies to increase development in areas where there is existing infrastructure the town currently pays to maintain and discourage sprawling development.

The town should also adhere to accounting best practices by building its reserves. The town should create a capital plan and strategically fund it through one-time revenue sources, such as free cash, and reduce its borrowing when possible. The town should also seek opportunities to lower its energy costs and acquire better prices through group purchasing programs with its neighbors.

Regionalization efforts and studies will provide financial decisions for the town regarding the school budget.

Preserving History

The town has a rich history, well documented back to the 1600s. The historic structures add charm to the town's character and creates the New England small-town feel that residents appreciate it. The town's goal of building civic pride and community is bolstered by the shared past the residents can take pride in.

The Historical Commission is an asset making significant strides in preserving the town's history. The Commission can serve as the activation point for local history programs, such as historic walks/drives, programming at the school or library. The town's placemaking at the Town Field can be bolstered by events centered on local history, such as Earl Taylor Day.

The commission can also play a significant role in retaining the town's historic structures. The Historical Commission can serve as the lead to creating a historic district, providing the town greater control over the redevelopment of historic buildings, and the development of a demolition delay bylaw to help preserve structures.

Throughout Massachusetts there are several programs to preserve historic barns and other structures, which serves an important role in preserving the rural character of Clarksburg. The town can also seek to adopt the Community Preservation Act to fund local historic preservation, outdoor recreational, and affordable housing projects.

The town's future is built upon its history and the people who live here. Each of the goals outlined in the master plan is supported by preserving and building upon the town's history. From preserving Clarksburg's rural character to supporting appropriate growth in its historic villages to instilling civic pride, Clarksburg's future will be interwoven with its past.

Action Plan

Goal 1: Clarksburg's scenic landscapes, farmlands, and natural resources will remain a defining characteristic of the town.

Objective 1.1: Protect scenic landscapes and natural resources.

Action Items	Responsible Party	Timeline	Potential Resources
Encourage land managers of farms to protect their land through Chapter and/or Agricultural Preservation Restrictions.	Town Administration Agricultural Commission Planning Board	Ongoing	Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Consider Dark Skies bylaw and noise ordinances	Planning Board	2027	EEA Planning Assistance Grant BRPC DLTA Program
Adopt open space zoning mechanisms to balance additional housing with the protection of open spaces	Planning Board	2027-2030	EEA Planning Assistance Grant
Create an Invasive Species Management Plan and educational materials for property owners to mitigate impacts.	Town Administration Conservation Commission Agricultural Commission	2027-2030	MassWildlife Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program
Investigate Adopting Berkshire Scenic Mountain Act.	Planning Board	2027-2030	EEA Planning Assistance Grant BRPC DLTA Program

Maintain partnership and engagement with the Woodlands Partnership.	Town Administration	Ongoing	N/A
Participate in Hoosic River watershed protection initiatives.	Town Administration Conservation Commission	Ongoing	N/A
Develop and implement a Net Zero Energy Plan.	Town Administration	2027-2030	Local funds
Convert vehicles, streetlights, and building infrastructure to electric.	Town Administration	2027-2037	Local funds
Consider putting solar on municipal building rooftops.	Town Administration	2027-2037	Local funds
Objective 1.2: Support and protect existing farms			
Create greater flexibility for farms to engage in agritourism, operate farm stands, host events, and other commercial activities.	Agricultural Commission Planning Board	2027-2037	EEA Planning Assistance Grant Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Support farms, CSAs, farm stands, and encourage other businesses to work collaboratively to support each other	Town Administration Agricultural Commission	2027-2037	Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Provide farmers with business and succession planning assistance	Agricultural Commission	Ongoing	American Farmland Trust Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition Center for Agriculture

			and Food Systems
Update zoning to better define agriculture and allow more opportunities for agricultural uses not expressly protected by M.G.L. c.40A §3.	Planning Board Agricultural Commission	Ongoing	Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources EEA Planning Assistance Grant
Adopt Short-term Rental bylaw that allows farms to rent properties and adopt local tax.	Planning Board	2027	EEA Planning Assistance Grant BRPC DLTA Program
Encourage the school to create or bring in programs to educate students about local farms and agriculture.	School Department Agricultural Commission	Ongoing	Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Objective 1.3: Utilize open space and recreation resources to support economic growth, improved health outcomes, and residents and visitors' enjoyment.			
Work with the state to build new hiking trails in Clarksburg State Forest.	Town Administration Department of Conservation and Recreation	Ongoing	DCR
Encourage local organizations to hold events about natural resources.	Agricultural Commission Town Administration	Ongoing	BNRC Hoosic River Watershed Association DCR Appalachian Mountain Club Other local clubs, farms,

			and organizations
Create star gazing event opportunities/events at town field.	Town Administration	2028	N/A
Strengthen connection and marketing with Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway.	Town Administration	Ongoing	Woodlands Partnership
Objective 1.4: Mitigate the negative impacts of climate change.			
Implement the town's Hazard Mitigation Plan and Municipal Vulnerability Plan.	MVP Committee Conservation Commission	Ongoing	EEA
Evaluate roads for stormwater runoff needs and projections.	Town Administration Conservation Commission	Ongoing	BRPC
Develop a Tree Committee to oversee the planting and maintenance of public shade trees.	Town Administration	2028	DCR

Goal 2: Clarksburg will have new commercial and residential developments that support the community's needs while making low impacts on the environment and residents' quality of life.

Objective 2.1: Establish the regulatory framework that supports new commercial and residential activity in the town's historically developed areas.

Action Items	Responsible Party	Timeline	Potential Resources
Adopt policies to support the development of small-scale country stores and restaurants in the town's historically developed areas.	Planning Board Town Administration	2027-2030	EEA Planning Assistance Grant BRPC
Enact bylaw to encourage mix-used development in the town's historic villages of Briggsville and Houghtonville	Planning Board	2027-2030	EEA Planning Assistance Grant BRPC
Reduce minimum lot sizes and setback in historic village areas.	Planning Board	2027-2030	EEA Planning Assistance Grant
Review existing permitting process and identify opportunities to make it more predictable and understandable.	Planning Board	2027-2030	EEA Planning Assistance Grant BRPC
Work with owners of Hewitt Mill to redevelop commercial space and preserve the building.	Town administration	2027-2030	MassDevelopment Community One Stop for Growth Program BRPC Priority Redevelopment

Objective 2.2: Expand housing options

Identify and pursue opportunities for senior housing.	Town Administration	2027-2037	Hearthway Private Developers
Adopt an Accessory Dwelling Unit Bylaw.	Planning Board	2027	BRPC
Participate in housing rehabilitation programs to preserve existing homes.	Town Administration	Ongoing	CDBG BRPC
Create a Housing Needs Assessment and Housing Production Plan.	Town Administration	2028	EEA Planning Assistance Grants
Consider creating an Affordable Housing Trust.	Town Administration	2029	BRPC
Connect first-time home buyers with supportive resources.	Town Administration	Ongoing	Local financial institutions Affordable Housing Trust

Objective 2.3: Ensure infrastructure meetings residents and businesses' needs.

Explore potential options for expanding water and sewer infrastructure to unserved properties located south of the four corners.	Town Administration Briggsville Water District Conservation Commission	Ongoing	Hoosac Water Quality District EPA Clean Water Loan Programs
Seek opportunities to upgrade the Briggsville Water District.	Town Administration Briggsville Water District Conservation Commission	Ongoing	Hoosac Water Quality District EPA Clean Water Loan Programs

Seek opportunities to improve access to high-speed internet.	Town Administration	Ongoing	Massachusetts Broadband Institute
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Goal 3: Clarksburg will have a robust offering of community services and events and residents feel included in decision making and proud of community successes.

Objective 3.1: Develop a “town center.”

Action Items	Responsible Party	Timeline	Potential Resources
Focus placemaking activities in the “town center” in the area of the school, community center, and town field.	Town Administration	Ongoing	Partner organizations
Consider renovations/expansion of the Community Center to support greater government functions.	Town Administration Finance Committee	2027-2030	Library School Department Recreation Committee
Proceed with MVP renovation project.	MVP Committee	2027-2030	MVP PARC Grant
Support a community garden at the library.	Library	Ongoing	Gardening Club
Expand use of Community Center to include youth programming, community meetings, and other events.	Town Administration	Ongoing	Library School Department Recreation Committee
Make pedestrian transportation improvements in the town center to make it more walkable.	Town Administration Department of Public Works	Ongoing	Safe Routes to School Program Complete Streets Program

Modernize the library's services and offerings to include more events, digital services, one-on-one support, and more.	Library	Ongoing	Massachusetts Library System
Organize a recreation committee to continue hosting events at town field.	Town Administration	2027	N/A
Objective 3.2: Seek financial stability to ensure town services continue and grow.			
Continue to advocate for PILOT reform.	Town Administration	Ongoing	State Legislature
Develop a capital plan for all town buildings and properties.	Town Administration Finance Committee	2027	N/A
Build municipal reserves/stabilization.	Town Administration Finance Committee	Ongoing	N/A
Reduce the use of free cash to lower the tax rate and use it for capital instead.	Town Administration Finance Committee	Ongoing	N/A
Continue with school regionalization study to ensure long-term sustainability of Clarksburg Elementary School.	School Department	2027-2030	N/A
Participate in group-purchasing with neighboring communities.	Town Administration Department of Public Works	Ongoing	BRPC
Assess the impact development on available lots will have on municipal services.	Planning Board	Ongoing	N/A
Objective 3.3: Improve communications with residents.			

Develop a communications plan which could include using social media, e-blasts, printed newsletters, and direct mailers.	Town Administration	2028	N/A
Consider using CodeRed or similar program to inform residents of safety hazards and upcoming events.	Town Administration	2030	MEMA Northern Berkshire Emergency Planning Committee
Identify online tools the town could purchase to increase transparency in government.	Town Administration	Ongoing	N/A
Consider hosting a citizens academy.	Town Administration	2030	N/A
Objective 3.4: Build Stronger Relationship with School Community.			
Create opportunities to integrate the school community with town operations.	PTG School Department All town departments and committees	Ongoing	N/A
Support the Parent Teacher Group.	Town Administration PTG School Department	Ongoing	N/A
Support Pre-K education programs.	Town Administration School Department	Ongoing	N/A
Develop a shared plan for school renovations/repairs.	School Department Town Administration	2027	N/A

Objective 3.5: Ensure Public Safety.

Continue negotiations with North Adams and the Massachusetts State Police to ensure coverage.	Town Administration	Ongoing	MSP NAPD North Adams
Support the Clarksburg Fire Company with equipment and training.	Town Administration Finance Committee Clarksburg Fire Company	Ongoing	Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant Program Volunteer Fire Capacity Program FEMA MEMA
Adopt a Complete Street Policy to make safety improvements to roadways.	Town Administration Department of Public Works	2030	MassDOT
Implement the town's Hazard Mitigation Plan.	MVP Committee	Ongoing	MVP Program
Maintain an active role in regional emergency management planning.	Clarksburg Fire Company Department of Public Works Board of Health	Ongoing	Northern Berkshire Regional Emergency Management Committee MEMA
Work with MassDOT to make safety improvements to the intersection of Middle Road, River Road, and Henderson Road.	Town Administration Department of Public Works	2027	MassDOT

Objective 3.6: Increase accessibility.

Update the town's ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan.	Town Administration Commission on Disabilities	2028	Massachusetts Office on Disability BRPC
Seek opportunities to ensure that adaptive equipment is available.	Commission on Disabilities	2029	Massachusetts Office on Disability Local organizations DCR
Reactivate a Commission on Disabilities.	Town Administration	2027	Massachusetts Office on Disability
Adopt policies and procedures to ensure residents are aware and know how to get assistance.	Town Administration	2026	Massachusetts Office on Disability

Goal 4: Clarksburg's historic character, buildings, and people is preserved.**Objective 1: Educate the community about the town's history.**

Action Items	Responsible Party	Timeline	Potential Resources
Launch local history educational programming.	Historical Commission	Ongoing	Mass Historic
Organize historic drives.	Historical Commission	Ongoing	Mass Historic
Host Earl Taylor Day celebration.	Historical Commission Recreation Committee	Ongoing	N/A

Objective 2: Preserve historic structures and neighborhoods.

Consider adopting Community Preservation Act as a funding resource to preserve historic resources, outdoor recreational spaces, and create affordable housing.	Historical Commission Recreation Committee Affordable Housing Trust	2028	Community Preservation Coalition
Pursue the creation of a historic district.	Historical Commission	Ongoing	Mass Historic
Develop a demolition delay bylaw.	Historical Commission Planning Board	2029	BRPC Mass Historic
Create a land acknowledgement statement.	Historical Commission Library	2027	Stockbridge Munsee Community
Increase awareness of Historic Tax Credit opportunities to support preservation.	Historical Commission	Ongoing	Mass Historic

Explore Preservation Massachusetts' historic barns and agricultural structure program.	Historical Commission Agricultural Commission	Ongoing	Preservation Massachusetts
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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Survey

Appendix 2 – Student Outreach Questions

Appendix 3 – Buildout Analysis Map

Appendix 4 – Utilities Map

Appendix 5 – Historic Inventory