

Planning for Economic Development in Lanesborough, MA: Build-Out Analysis and Recommendations

Prepared by Williams College students
Kristen Bayrakdarian '20
Korinna Garfield '19
Jessica Muñoz '19



Clients: Laura Brennan, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission &
Andrew Groff, Community Development Director, Williamstown

Professor Sarah Gardner
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Left to Right: Jessica Munoz '19, Korinna Garfield '19, Kristen Bayrakdarian '20, Laura Brennan, and Andrew Groff

Abstract

The overall purpose of this report was to guide the development of Lanesborough in order to invigorate economic revitalization and encourage resident retention and attraction. Our clients directed us to address the main goals of creating a diverse economy with a wide range of employment opportunities, establishing a welcoming environment for business creation and sustainable growth, and identifying land for potential development. Research and input from stakeholders helped determine the recommendations that could be adopted to support these goals. Geographical Information Systems (GIS), in addition to relevant laws and policies, were used to create absolute and partial constraints to determine the net available usable land. Our research and analysis have found that by developing a town center, expanding the agricultural sector through agritourism, and highlighting outdoor recreation, Lanesborough has the potential to diversify its economy, create a welcoming business environment, and provide something for both locals and tourists alike.

Part I: Introduction

(1) Project Goals

The last build-out analysis for Lanesborough, Massachusetts was completed in 2000 by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC). Both Andrew Groff, Williamstown Planner, and Laura Brennan, the Senior Planner of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, requested an updated analysis to better inform planning decision. A build-out analysis is a “broad estimate of the maximum potential development that could occur in a community based on existing land use, environmental constraints, and current zoning, and land use regulation” (BRPC, 2000). The main purpose of a build-out analysis is to help communities think about future growth and stimulate the process of planning for that growth (BRPC, 2000). It is a generalized planning tool to help communities think about growth, not a prediction of when, or even if, maximum buildout will actually occur.

Our project is focused on how to invigorate economic revitalization and encourage resident retention and attraction. Our clients directed us to address certain goals from the Town of Lanesborough Economic Development Plan (2017).

The aim of this project, along with the four goals from the Economic Development Plan (2017), are stated below. For this report, we were asked to focus primarily on Goals 1 and 4.

Aim: To enhance quality of life for current residents, and attract future residents, by fostering a diverse economy, encouraging employment opportunities, and establishing a positive environment for business creation, sustainable growth, and living.

Goal 1: *Create a diverse economy with a wide range of employment opportunities*

Strategy: Communicate Lanesborough’s favorable tax rate for commercial properties,

available commercial spaces, and developable parcels to current and potential investors, while sharing information with current and potential residents about the school system, housing opportunities, and quality of life.

Objective: Improve communication with both business and residential community members, as well as municipal and state officials, while actively planning for improvements to sewer and water infrastructure, and access to transportation options.

Goal 2: *Berkshire Mall redevelopment*

Goal 3: *Raise the profile of Lanesborough as tourism destination*

Goal 4: *Establish a welcoming environment for business creation and sustainable growth*

Strategy: Leverage our network of resources to support the business community of Lanesborough, offering connectivity and marketing opportunities. Work collaboratively with planning and zoning boards.

Objective: Complete the installation of high-speed broadband internet access. Improve and maintain business directory both online and in print and continue to bring the business community together for in-person networking events.

In summary, the goals of this project were to:

- 1) Identify land for potential development
- 2) Create a diverse economy with a wide range of employment opportunities (Goal 1)
- 3) Establish a welcoming environment for business creation and sustainable growth (Goal 4)

(2) Research Plan

In order to create a build-out analysis and give recommendations, there were four steps we needed to take. The first was getting to know Lanesborough. This required looking at resources that were provided by our clients, going to Town Hall meetings, and visiting the town. The second step involved identifying all the potentially developable land in the community. This was accomplished by looking at zoning bylaws and other regulations, and then using them to create maps with Geographic Information System (GIS). The third step involved interviewing stakeholders of this project and understanding the needs of the town. The last step required listing out possible recommendations, evaluating them, and determining the feasibility of the recommendations.

As a result, the following build-out analysis report provides relevant background information on Williamstown, detailed descriptions of our GIS interview methods and analyses, recommendations to the town about how to accomplish the goals, and the feasibility of these recommendations.

(3) Research Resources

There is a substantial amount of preexisting background research that has helped guide our project. In the first meeting with our clients, materials were distributed that have proved useful for understanding the context of our research. These documents included the 2017 Lanesborough Economic Development Plan, the Berkshire Guidebook for 2018/19, the 2000 Report on Potential Buildout, and an updated Lanesborough Zoning Map, which included zoning changes only recently approved at a Town Meeting.

As mentioned above, our primary focus will be on Goals 1 & 4 as outlined in the Lanesborough Economic Development Plan, which was commissioned by Berkshire Regional Planning Commission in 2017. The Berkshire Guidebook offers us a context for the town of Lanesborough as it gives un information about not only Lanesborough, but the surrounding area- - this includes recreational opportunities, and businesses which have had success in Berkshire County. The 2000 Buildout Analysis provides a template to model our study after, particularly regarding the methodology for identifying absolute and partial constraints. Additionally, it serves as a tool for understanding what have already been highlighted as areas for potential development. Finally, the updated Lanesborough Zoning Map is an important asset for our GIS analysis, which required overlaying the current zoning with absolute and partial constraints.

Our clients also pointed to the Williamstown Build-out Analysis, completed by Williams College students in 2016, as a notable example for our report. A place for improvement, however, was mentioned regarding including peer towns. Our clients asked that we research and include the successful economic development work that towns similar in location/demographics to Lanesborough have done.

Overall, the existing resources on economic development and potential buildout in Lanesborough offer a substantial foundation for our report, which will both update the build-out analysis from 2000, as well as make recommendations for economic development.

Part II: Background¹

(1) Site Description

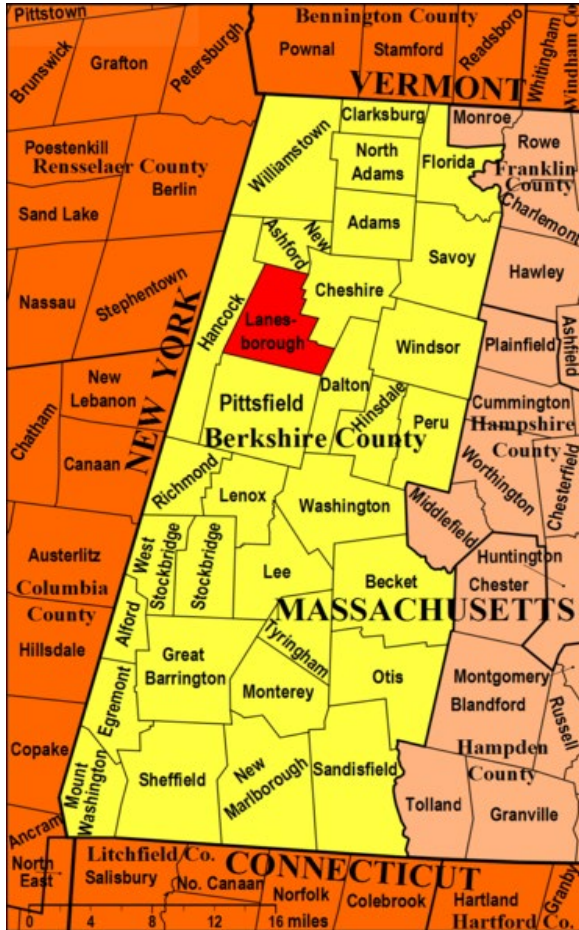


Figure 2: Map depicting location of Lanesborough within Berkshire

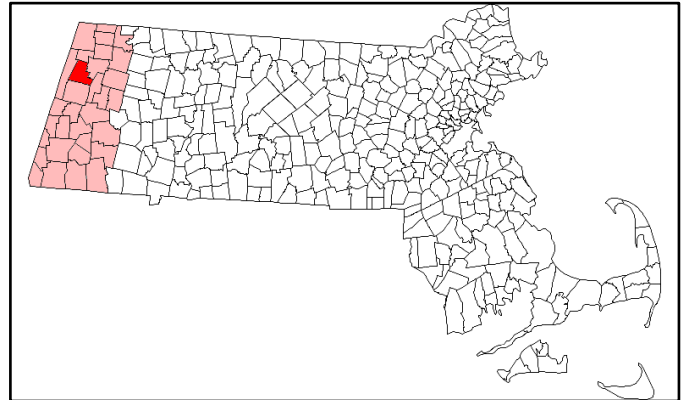


Figure 1: Map depicting location of Lanesborough within Berkshire County, and within the state of Massachusetts

Lanesborough, MA is a rural/suburban town located in Berkshire County in Western Massachusetts. The town is bordered by New Ashford to the north, Cheshire and Dalton to the east, Hancock to the west, and Pittsfield to the south. Lanesborough is located 5 miles north of downtown Pittsfield, and 140 miles west of downtown Boston.

¹ For more in-depth background information, please refer to Cleargov.com (cleargov.com/massachusetts/berkshire/town/lanesborough/2017) and the Lanesborough Economic Development Plan of 2017 (lanesborough-ma.gov/vertical/sites/%7B35069B63-55EF-4033-982E-FE5C4BF36433%7D/uploads/Economic_Development_Plan_2017.pdf)

The town covers a total area of 29.6 square miles, of which 97.3% (28.8 square miles) is land and 2.49% (0.73 square miles) is water.² Of the land, 27% (approx. 8.13 square miles) is prime farmland.³

Along with farmland, Lanesborough is also home to a myriad of natural resources. Pittsfield State Forest covers a large section of the town, with Balance Rock State Park (site of the “Balance Rock” tourist attraction), located in the north-eastern corner of the forest, falling completely within the boundaries of the town of Lanesborough.

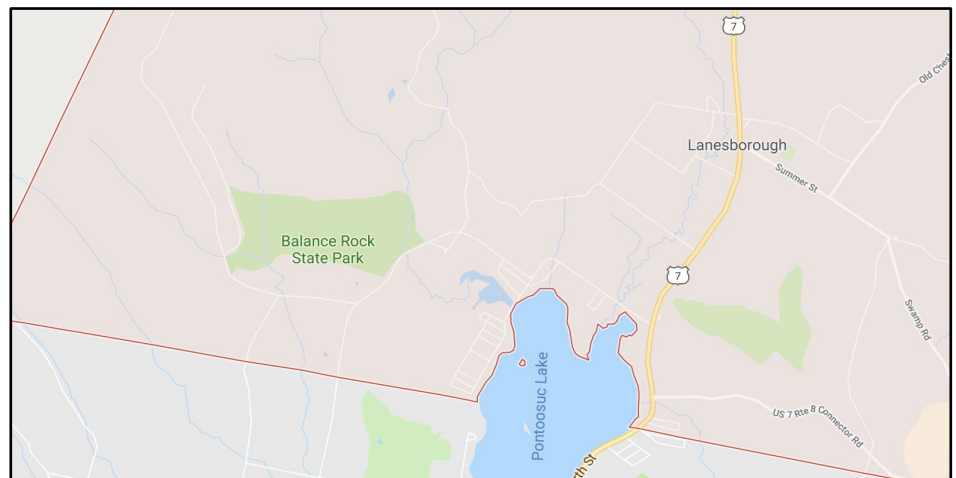
Lanesborough is an access point to Mount Greylock (the highest peak in MA) and site of the Mount Greylock Visitor Center-- the primary information and orientation site for visitors to the Mount Greylock State Reservation.

The Town is also a point of access to Pontoosuc Lake, which it shares use and care of with the city of Pittsfield.⁴ The Skyline Country Golf Club, Cheshire Reservoir and the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail, which is an old railroad track converted into a 11.2-mile-long and 10-foot wide paved

Figure 3: Balance Rock; located in Balance Rock State Park



Figure 4: Balance Rock State Park, located within the boundaries of Lanesborough (area in red)



² Lanesborough Economic Development Plan, 2017 (EDC, 2017)

³ GIS Analysis

⁴ Though a popular recreation site, infrastructure for lake access is not developed on the Lanesborough side of the lake due to the steepness of the banks (*Source:* Interview with Lee Hauge, President of Friends of Pontoosuc Lake)

trail that runs through the towns of Cheshire, Lanesborough and Adams, are other natural attractions of the Town.

U.S. Route 7 is the main road running through Lanesborough. It connects the town of Lanesborough to the town of Pittsfield going south, and Williamstown and Vermont to the north. Public transportation in the region is limited. Only 1% of the Lanesborough workforce utilizes public transportation, while nearly 84% of the Lanesborough workforce drives alone to work.⁵

Off Route 7 lies Route 8, along which the Berkshire Mall resides. Built in 1988, the Berkshire Mall, like most malls in the United States today, has lost its anchor stores and is struggling to stay afloat. The economic development of Lanesborough, particularly related to the Berkshire Mall, has been a hot issue for the town for quite some time. With businesses leaving at high rates and infrastructure problems like temporary loss of electricity, the Mall has faced scrutiny from residents, business owners, and officials. Currently, the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) holds a grant to study how to revitalize the area including the mall, reflecting the state-level attention that the area has attracted. As a result, Milone & MacBroom, a civil engineering/architectural firm, has been brought in by the BRPC to offer alternative uses of the current Berkshire Mall space. At a Town Hall Meeting on October 9th, residents gathered to discuss the solutions proposed by Milone & MacBroom. The potential Berkshire Mall redevelopment project has been compared to other mall revitalization projects that have been taking place nearby in Springfield, MA and Enfield, CT.⁶ Currently the Mall houses a few small stores (most of which are seasonal), a food court, a Target, and the Regal

⁵ Lanesborough Economic Development Plan, 2017 (EDC, 2017)

⁶ <https://www.masslive.com/expo/news/erry-2018/10/222533861f1514/lets-bulldoze-the-mall-the-fut.html>

Berkshire Mall 10 theater. The Berkshire Mall parking lot is the location of the Lanesborough Farmer's Market.⁷

Lanesborough was a primarily rural community until the 1900s when General Electric came to Pittsfield, electricity made its way to the countryside, and new transportation— such as an improved railway system and automobiles— resulted in the suburbanization of small towns, and the bolstering of the economy and tourism. Lanesborough was a “bedroom town”, or suburb of Pittsfield, until General Electric's closing in the 1990s.⁸ Indeed, when one explores the current distribution of land use within the town, one finds that 83% of the town's developed land is residential (*See Appendix A, Figure 1*).

Today, Lanesborough is a small residential community with a few farms and small businesses. Lanesborough has little industry of its own, with many people in Lanesborough employed outside the town.⁹

(2) Community Profile

According to 2016 data from cleargov.com, the total population of Lanesborough is 3,019 people. The median household income is \$74,519 and a median family income is \$87,989 (*See Appendix A, Figure 2.1 and 2.2*).

Compared to Berkshire County, Lanesborough is more affluent with higher incomes and fewer people living below the poverty line (*See Appendix A, Figures 3 and 4*).

The population breakdown of Lanesborough is quite typical for a town of this nature and size. According to the Lanesborough Council on Aging (and backed up with 2016 data from

⁷ Information from Berkshire Mall Site visits, and Lanesborough Town Hall Meeting with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and Milone and McBroom representatives on Oct 9, 2018

⁸ “Route 7 Reconstruction in Lenox, Pittsfield and Lanesborough, Berkshire County, Environmental Impact Statement,” by the US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Public Works. 1982. Pages III-16 and III-33. <https://goo.gl/fmNr9v>

⁹ Lanesborough Economic Development Plan, 2017 (EDC, 2017)

Cleargov.com), one-third of the Lanesborough population is elderly, or above the age of 55.

School-aged children (those aged 6-18), make up 13% of the population (*See Appendix A, Figure 5*).

(3) Business Profile and Taxes

Regarding businesses, the Town of Lanesborough categorized the businesses in town into ten broad categories in its 2017 Economic Development Plan. We wanted to update this information to see what businesses are available today, to analyze what sectors are succeeding in town. We also broke down the businesses by industry according to the Town of Lanesborough's distinctions. *Figures 5 and 6.1* below visualize the updated information in the form of a table and corresponding graph. We found that Home Repair and General Construction was still the most successful business in Lanesborough-- which was interesting given that management, business, science, and arts occupations comprised the largest percentage of Lanesborough's workforce (*Figure 6.2*, below). This observed discrepancy between the thriving business sectors vs. the most popular occupant sector of employment exemplified to us (along with interviews and information from the 2017 EDP which said that many residents are employed outside the town) the inconsistency of the availability of local jobs for residents.

Businesses in Lanesborough		
Industry	Number of Businesses	Percent
Agriculture	9	5.66%
Automotive	8	5.03%
Dining	15	9.43%
Health and Human Services	13	8.18%
Home Repair & General Construction	37	23.27%
Lodging	5	3.14%
Professional Services	33	20.75%
Recreation	11	6.92%
Retail	28	17.61%
Total	159	100%

Figure 5: Updated breakdown of businesses (N=159) in Lanesborough by industry according to the Town of Lanesborough.¹⁰

¹⁰ Town of Lanesborough Business Directory lanesborough-ma.gov/index.asp?SEC=82FE1F41-08B8-498A-931A-D47ACAD294E5&Type=B_BASIC

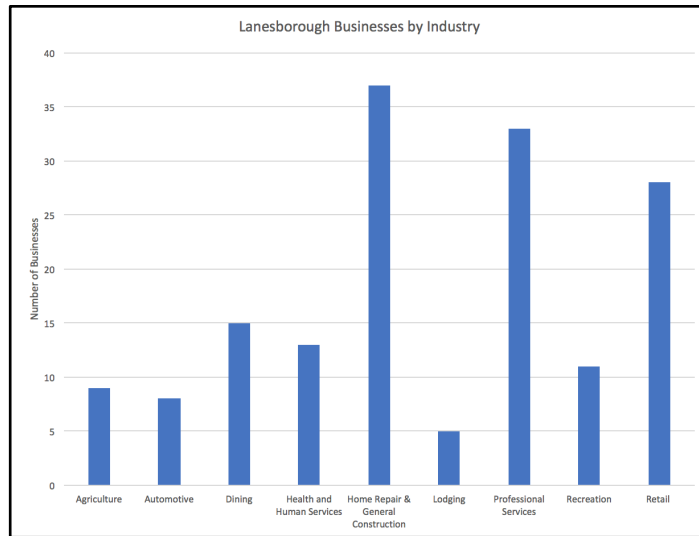


Figure 6.1: Updated businesses in Lanesborough by industry sector according to the Lanesborough online business directory (2018).¹¹

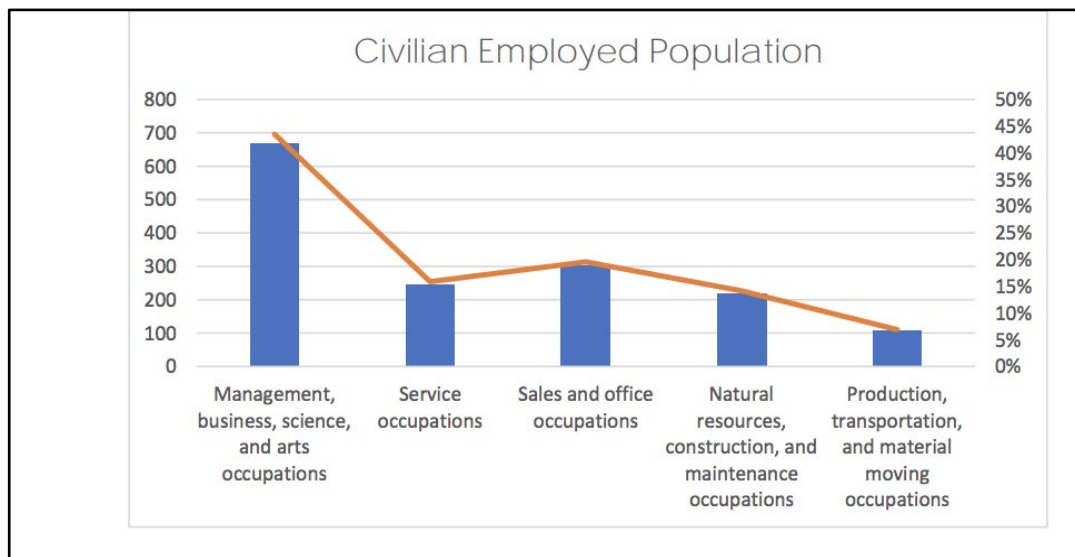


Figure 6.2: Civilian employed population by sector, according to the Lanesborough Economic Development Plan (2017).¹²

¹¹ Town of Lanesborough Business Directory lanesborough-ma.gov/index.asp?SEC=82FE1F41-08B8-498A-931A-D47ACAD294E5&Type=B_BASIC

¹² lanesborough-ma.gov/vertical/sites/%7B35069B63-55EF-4033-982E-FE5C4BF36433%7D/uploads/Economic_Development_Plan_2017.pdf

In addition, we decided to observe the tax rate in Lanesborough, as 44% of our interviewees told us they believed it was too high in comparison to the rest of Berkshire County. This led us to investigate how Lanesborough compares to neighboring towns.

Lanesborough, which has a single tax rate, has a significantly lower commercial tax rate when compared to neighboring towns. This was implemented specifically to encourage business growth within the town. Currently the tax rate in Lanesborough is \$21.40 per \$1,000 assessed property value and will increase to \$22.63 in 2019.

In Figures 7 and 8 below, we compared Lanesborough's tax rate to other towns in northern Berkshire county. We looked at both residential and commercial tax rates, which indicated that Lanesborough has a favorable tax for commercial areas, but a slightly higher tax for residences.

Town	Residential Tax Rate	Commercial Tax Rate
Lanesborough	2.14%	2.14%
Williamstown	1.794%	1.794%
North Adams	1.838%	3.985%
Adams	2.221%	2.552%
Cheshire	1.306%	1.306%
Dalton	1.991%	1.991%
Pittsfield	2.001%	3.998%
Hancock	0.294%	0.294%
New Ashford	1.838%	3.985%

Figure 7: Residential and Commercial Tax Rates in Lanesborough and surrounding towns¹³

¹³ Source: Berkshire Realtor's Website. Tax rates are 2018 tax rates. (berkshirerealtors.net/2018-berkshire-ma-property-tax-rates/).

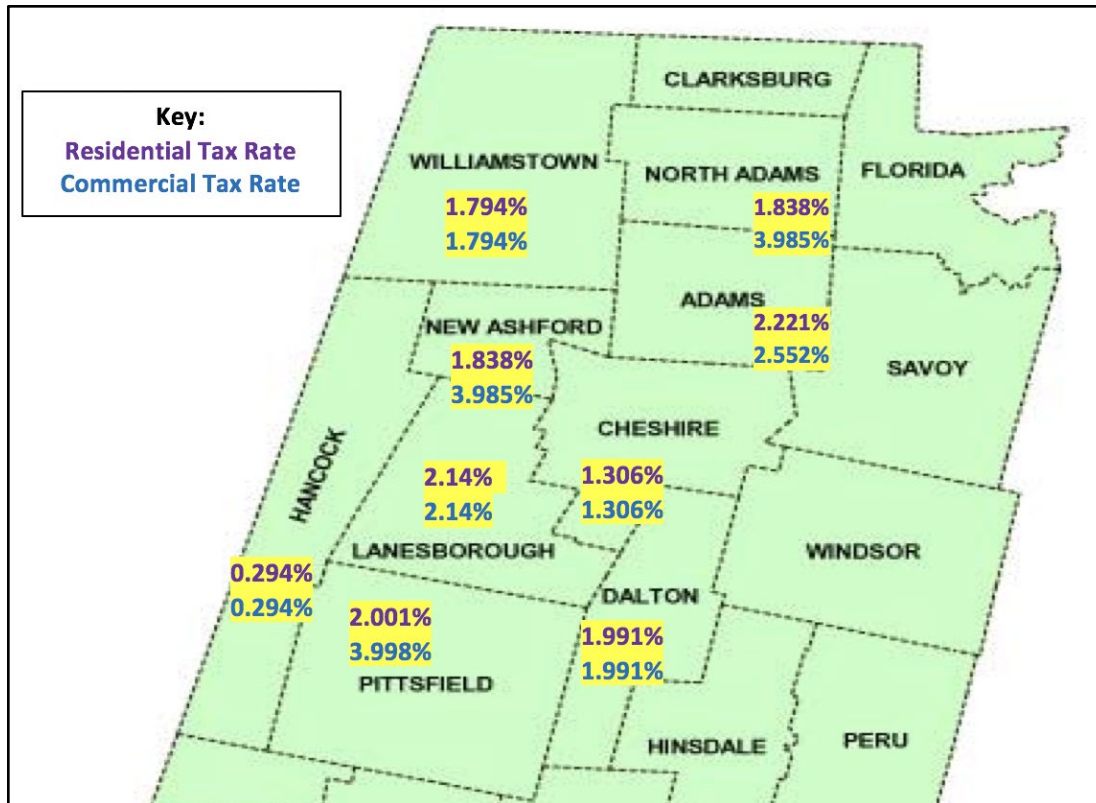


Figure 8: Map of 2018 Residential and Commercial Tax Rates in towns near Lanesborough¹⁴

In addition to taxes, we examined the revenues and expenses of the Town of Lanesborough. According to the Clear Gov website, as of 2017, Lanesborough has a revenue of \$10.5M, which is 39% higher than similar/peer towns¹⁵. We then looked at the breakdown of the revenues and found that 78% of revenue comes from taxes (*see Appendix A, Figure 6*). When comparing the tax revenues from neighboring towns, such as Adams and Cheshire, Lanesborough's tax revenues were 48% higher. When we broke down the tax revenues, we found that 92.5% came from property taxes, which is 18% higher than similar towns and 53%

¹⁴ Source: Berkshire Realtor's Website. Tax rates are 2018 tax rates. (berkshirerealtors.net/2018-berkshire-ma-property-tax-rates/).

¹⁵ Similar/peer towns are defined as towns similar in population, median home value, commercial assessment, and close in distance to Lanesborough.

higher than neighboring towns (see *Appendix A, Figure 7*). The expenses in Lanesborough are \$10.8M, which is 43% higher than similar towns and 73% higher than neighboring towns.

According to Cleargov.com, around 52% of Lanesborough's taxes go to education, which includes all school operations and administration, building, and facility maintenances, faculty salaries, and related expenses (see *Appendix A, Figure 8*). This is 27% higher than similar towns and 62% higher than neighboring towns as Lanesborough spends about \$21,786/student¹⁶ in the Lanesborough public schools, and about \$23,240/student who attends the Mount Greylock Regional School. Other relatively higher/of note expenditure sectors include benefits and withholding items (i.e. retirement plans, social security taxes, unemployment insurance, etc.), public safety (police, animal control, etc.), public works (e.g. highways), culture, etc. (see *Appendix A, Figure 8*).

(4) Zoning Bylaws and Other Laws

Zoning determines the type of development permitted in certain areas of towns and can be designed according to the preference of the municipality. Lanesborough is broken up into six primary zoning districts. These are Residential (R), Residential and Agricultural (R-A), Business (B), Limited Business (MR), Major Retail (MR), and Industrial (I) (Lanesborough Zoning Bylaws, 2012). As their titles suggest, specific kinds of development are allowed in each zone, with Residential-Agricultural representing a more rural landscape that allows for small farm operations and caps maximum building area at 20% of the total lot area. Each zone also has a

¹⁶ The Expenditure per Student includes all related costs to the education systems including health care and retirement benefits. As such, these may differ from expenditures reported in the budget since these costs may be reported elsewhere.

different setback and parcel size, depending on the type of structure that occupies the land, which made it difficult to standardize buffers accordingly. Therefore, the following analysis did not add buffers for properties because of the lack of consistency and the unavailability of GIS data to suggest where buildings are in Lanesborough. Overall, the results are likely an overestimation of the amount of land available for development, but probably not by a significant amount considering the extensive number of constraints considered.

Additionally, the zoning districts determine the permissible land uses and what activities are prohibited. Our final net usable land available will be broken down by zone to highlight what kind of uses can occur in each. Furthermore, the Lanesborough zoning bylaws include several exceptional circumstances where development is restricted. For some of these factors, like slopes over 25%, development can occur with the approval of the Lanesborough Planning Board or Conservation Commission. Although these bylaws serve as a bureaucratic hindrance to business growth, for the most part the town was not overly strict on what uses could occur on a given land parcel.

The primary state law which influenced the following build-out analysis was the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act¹⁷ and the Massachusetts Drinking Water Regulations.¹⁸ The first of which affects any attempt to “remove, dredge, fill, or alter any bank, freshwater wetland, coastal wetland, beach, dune, flat, marsh, meadow, or swamp bordering on the ocean or on any estuary, creek, river, stream, pond, or lake, or any land under said waters or any land subject to tidal action, coastal storm flowage, or flooding.” This applied to a number of hydrological constraints that exist within the Lanesborough borders including Lake Pontoosuc, Town Brook, and more. Furthermore, the drinking water regulations given by the Massachusetts

¹⁷ <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXIX/Chapter131/Section40>

¹⁸ https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/10/us/310cmr22_372_16185.pdf

Department of Environmental Protection were responsible for the wellhead protection areas that were treated as a partial constraint in our GIS analysis. The aim is stated “to promote the public health and general welfare by preventing the pollution and securing the sanitary protection” of public water supply sources.

Part III: Methods

(1) Overview

To create the build-out analysis, we had to identify land for potential development and understand the needs and wants of the town. This was done by using Geographic Information System (GIS) and by conducting interviews of stakeholders. These steps were important to determine recommendations to accomplish the proposed goals.

(2) Geographic Information System (GIS)

In order to develop recommendations for economic development in Lanesborough, the one of the steps involved identifying all potentially developable land. By analyzing state legislation, national legislation, and town bylaws, we were able to discern the absolute constraints, in which no development could occur, and partial constraints, in which development would be subject to special permits from the Lanesborough Planning Board. Of course, the land we identify from this build-out analysis is not owned by the town and therefore not accessible for immediate development, however this exercise is meant to envision what the total potential for build-out is and what the future of Lanesborough could look like with maximum development.

The zoning map of Lanesborough was provided by Andrew and Laura; the data for the constraints was downloaded from the MassGIS website.¹⁹ All constraints were overlaid on GIS and a map of the developable land after both absolute constraints and partial constraints was created (see Appendix B, Figures 2-3). Because there was not specific enough data available to map out the available land with existing structures, the total area that could be built out was dependent on the percentage available per zone. This information was calculated after all constraints had been considered and is reflected in *Table 3*.

(A) Absolute Constraints

Determining absolute constraints was dependent on identifying land that is not considered developable, including land which is already developed, approved for development, permanently protected, or has environmental features or regulations which restrict development. In total, the net usable land available for development after considering all these factors was about 16.37 square miles. This land is identified in *Appendix B, Figure 4* and the list of constraints is below in *Table 1*.

Absolute Constraints	
Major Roads (12')	Minor Roads (9')
Municipal and State Owned Land (includes Solid Waste Facilities)	Protected Open Space
100-year Floodplain	Wetlands
Ponds and Lakes	Rivers (100')

Table 1: Absolute constraints on development in Lanesborough, MA.

(i) Roads (Major and Minor)

Road centerline data was acquired from the MassGIS Data Layers website and was used to determine both major and minor roads throughout Lanesborough. However, because setbacks

¹⁹ <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/massgis-data-layers>

varied from zone to zone and ranged from 25 feet to 50 feet, the road was given a buffer corresponding to the width of just the road and did not include the abutting properties (Lanesborough Zoning Bylaws). On average, major roads, like Route 7, have a lane width of 12 feet whereas minor, local roads have a lane width of 9 feet (Federal Highway Administration²⁰). Therefore, our absolute constraints encompassed the estimated widths of the roads given our data limitations.

(ii) Municipal and State-Owned Land

A variety of land in Lanesborough is already owned by the town, but there also are a number of properties that are owned and operated by the State of Massachusetts, like Mount Greylock and Pittsfield State Forest. Because many of these lands already serve a purpose such as housing town hall and the police department, we considered them to be already serving a purpose in the community and an opportunity to be capitalized on rather than redeveloped. Additionally, these municipal lands include Solid Waste Facilities which are never eligible for development, and thus are treated as an absolute constraint. All this information was found on the MassGIS website which lists the tax parcels and can be joined to owner information to distinguish which parcels belonged to the municipality or state.

(iii) Protected Open Space

Our definition of protected open space is in accordance with the MassGIS data layer which includes all kinds of conservation land, recreation land, protected forests, aquifer/wellhead protection district, and agricultural land that is part of the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program. According to mass.gov, the “APR Program helps to preserve and protect agricultural land to keep valuable farmland soil from being built on by development companies

²⁰ https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/geometric/pubs/mitigationstrategies/chapter3/3_lanewidth.cfm

for non-agricultural purposes that could be detrimental to the environment.”²¹ The types of conservation land can range from habitat protection to cemeteries that have been recognized as conservation zones. Although not all lands in this layer have been protected in perpetuity, they represent important lands to the character of Lanesborough and for that reason have been considered absolute constraints.

(iv) 100-year Floodplain

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which oversees natural disasters and relief in the U.S., defines the 100-year floodplain as an area which statistically has a 1 percent chance of occurring in any given year, or, in other words, is expected to flood once every 100 years. This floodplain is considered a risk for development and therefore “no new building or structure shall be erected, constructed, altered, enlarged or moved, no dumping filling or earth transfer or relocation shall be used for any purposes” (Lanesborough Zoning Bylaws). However, there are several uses that are exempt from this bylaw including outdoor recreation, conservation, farming, and forestry. The 100-year floodplain is also known as Zone A according to the FEMA flood zones and therefore has a corresponding insurance program required for properties cited within the boundaries.

(v) Hydrology

There are a variety of hydrological features in Lanesborough which constrain development. Outside of the actual boundaries of bodies of water there are considerations for buffers where development can never occur around rivers according to the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act. In all, hydrology and bodies of water account for 5.17 square miles out of the 16.37 square miles that absolute constraints totaled.

(vi) Wetlands

²¹ <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/agricultural-preservation-restriction-apr-program-details>

Wetlands were largely found in the area surrounding Pontoosuc Lake, however, despite what many residents said, they were not a substantial portion of the water feature constraints. According to the Wetlands Protection Act, a special permit from the Conservation Commission is necessary for development on land buffering a wetland, but some uses can still be allowed. For this reason, wetlands alone were considered an absolute constraint, and the buffer was added in the partial constraints section.

(vii) Ponds and Lakes

There are two major bodies of water in Lanesborough— Lake Pontoosuc and the Cheshire Reservoir. Both of these do not have specific buffers that limit development up to the coastline, but there are some partial constraints that will be considered in the next section. These bodies of water are a unique aspect of Lanesborough compared to other Berkshire towns, which have relatively few bodies of water, let alone bodies of water over 10,000 square feet, like Lake Pontoosuc and Cheshire Reservoir.

(viii) Rivers (100')

There are not any major rivers in Lanesborough, but there are two brooks which separate the steep western part of the town which connects to the Taconic Crest from the central Route 7 corridor. Because these are both perennials, they fall under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, which restricts development within 100 feet of a river (Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 131, Section 40, hereby referred to as the “Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act).

(B) Partial Constraints

Unlike absolute constraints which prohibit any kind of development, partial constraints allow for some development but often require a permit to be obtained from either the

Conservation Commission or the Planning Board in Lanesborough. Especially of interest is the treatment of slope in Lanesborough. Most towns restrict any kind of development in steep areas, but there is no absolute threshold in Lanesborough, suggesting that development is encouraged wherever possible. However, partial constraints do represent a bureaucratic obstacle for interested developers and still may limit the number of projects proposed within these boundaries as seen in *Appendix B, Figure 3*.

Partial Constraints	
Wetlands (100')	Rivers (100'-200')
Slope over 25%	Ponds and Lakes (100')
Partially Conserved Forest	Wellhead Protection Zones

Table 2: Partial constraints on development in Lanesborough, MA.

(i) Wetlands (100')

Although there are no absolute restrictions on development near wetlands, the Wetlands Protection Act does give legal authority to the municipality to issue permits on land within 100 feet of a wetland. The Conservation Commission is expected to weigh the environmental impact of the proposed development to assess its potential impact and issue a permit accordingly. With proper environmental consideration a permit is likely to be granted but the process nonetheless may be a deterrent for potential developers.

(ii) Rivers (100'-200')

In addition to the restrictive 100-foot buffer around rivers, there is an additional 100 feet beyond that which requires a permit for construction under the Wetlands Protection Act. Again, though there are no major rivers in Lanesborough, river is defined as “a natural flowing body of water that empties to any ocean, lake, or other river and which flows throughout the year and

thus the Town Brook, which runs parallel to Route 7, is treated as a river (Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act).

(iii) Ponds and Lakes (100')

Like wetlands, development within 100 feet of ponds and lakes are under the authority of the Conservation Commission in Lanesborough. According to the Wetland Protection Act, lakes and ponds over 10,000 square feet are subject to the 100-foot buffer to protect habitat for a range of species and wildlife. Because both Lake Pontoosuc and the Cheshire Reservoir exceed this area, they require permits to build within 100 feet of the shoreline.

(iv) Slope over 25%

In most towns, there is a bylaw which restricts development on slopes of a certain incline, but Lanesborough allows for any type of development so long as a permit is awarded by the Planning Board. This policy likely is meant to allow for any type of development so long as the contractor can find a way to make their project economically feasible. Furthermore, the steepest part of Lanesborough is on the western part of the state leading up to the Taconic Crest, which is already home to a number of protected lands. Therefore, the slope constraint does not add substantially to the unavailable land in the town.

(v) Wellhead Protection Zones

In Lanesborough, the Wellhead Protection Zone is referred to as the Water Supply District as both suggest that they protect drinking water supply. There are three different zones radiating out from a direct wellhead, which allow for some development but not all, including outdoor recreation and types of agriculture, among others. Zone I include the protective radius required around a public water supply well or wellfield, Zone II is a wellhead protection area that has been determined by hydro-geologic modeling and approved by the DEP, and Interim

Wellhead Protection Area (IWPA) is the primary, protected recharge area for public water supply sources. As a result, Zone I, II, and IWPA were considered partial constraints because they are not entirely restrictive of development. In total they accounted for 1.39 square miles out of the approximately 19 square miles that include both partial and absolute constraints.

(vi) Partially Conserved Forest

There are lands in Lanesborough that are partially conserved and thus allow for some types of activity but not all. This is a comparatively small portion of the total land not available for development, at 0.61 square miles. Under the Forestry Stewardship Program, landowners can apply to the State of Massachusetts for assistance with sustainably managing their lands at no cost to them. The program is defined as “helping landowners achieve their goals for wildlife, aesthetics, wood products, and recreation through forest management planning and support” (Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation). This is a form of preservation that still allows some of the land to be developed but not entirely, so it was considered a partial constraint given its unique position between completely privatized land and protected land.

(vii) Other Partial Constraints: Maximum Development by Zone

The available land after development restraints according to Lanesborough bylaws was then calculated to account for the existing structures that are on individual tax parcels. Without a GIS layer to visualize these structures, the only way to calculate this was to run the statistics function on the tax parcel information to calculate the sum of the building area and the total area of each zone. Then the bylaws were applied for the maximum buildout by zone which restricts Residential-Agricultural to 20% max buildout, Residential to 30%, Business to 30% or 50% depending on the type of structure, Limited Business to 30%, Industrial to 50%, and Major Retail to 97%. The final results can be seen below in *Table 3*.

Zone	Available Land (based on maximum development after constraints)
B	41.3% (116 acres) OR 21.3% (60 acres)
LB	29.6% (384 acres)
R	25.3% (132 acres)
RA	19.54% (908 acres)
MR	NA
I	NA

Table 3: Available land in Lanesborough to achieve maximum build-out in each zone. Data was not available on the MassGIS website for the Major Retail (MR) and Industrial (I) zones.

(C) Relevance of GIS Analysis

These GIS results are important because they help identify the physical restraints surrounding development. By using GIS, we can highlight the areas that can be developed and what overall potential there is for development within the existing constraints of the town bylaws. The results specifically show us that there is no lack of available land, and that there are a number of resources that Lanesborough already has that would not require extensive development. For instance, nearly 27% of the town (8.13 acres) is on prime farmland and there

are a number of existing hiking trails near Mount Greylock, Pittsfield State Forest, the Boulders property, and more. A comprehensive image of this potential can be seen in Figure 9. Ultimately, our GIS results were helpful in identifying the existing opportunities and restraints within Lanesborough, which we can keep in mind as we move forward with interviews to try to shape specific recommendations to address Lanesborough’s economic goals.

(3) Interview, Meetings, and Visits

In addition to the GIS analysis, we visited the town multiple times, went to several Town Hall meetings, and conducted multiple interviews of stakeholders to understand the needs and wants of the town. We believed it was crucial to visit the town (4 times), go to town meetings (3 meetings), and talk to anyone who would have an interest in this project, in order to understand

the needs, desires, and culture of the space, so that our recommendations are carefully tailored to that particular community. Our interviewees included municipal officials, recent homebuyers, residents, businesses, and farmers.

In order to create our interview questions, we referred to the Lanesborough Economic Development Plan-- a report conducted by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) in 2017. The report included a SWOT Analysis and a Resident Survey.

The SWOT in SWOT Analysis stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. A SWOT analysis basically indicates what should be preserved and brought into the community, and what should be avoided and eliminated in a community. The Economic Development Committee examined and identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the town that were specific to economic development (See *Appendix C, Figure 1*).

This SWOT Analysis led to a set of Priority Needs and Opportunities. The top 3 Priority Needs were 1) Developing a Marketing Campaign and Branding, 2) Redeveloping the Berkshire Mall, and 3) Improving the Aesthetics of the Route 7 Corridor. The top 3 Priority Opportunities were 1) Promoting Agribusiness, 2) Creating a Favorable Commercial Tax, and 3) Focusing on Branding and Marketing (See *Appendix C, Figure 2*).

In addition to the analysis, a community-wide survey was conducted. This survey asked for respondent's level of concurrence with pre-formulated statements and solicited their open-ended feedback on topics which Lanesborough should prioritize. A total of 237 random citizens responded to the survey. From that survey, we identified the top 4 developments residents would like to see take place in Lanesborough by aggregating the number of people who "agreed" and "strongly agreed" to the pre-formulated statements. The top 4 are as follow:

- 1) Market natural features and capitalize on what makes the Berkshires unique (79%)

- 2) Market and promote local agriculture (76%)
- 3) Redevelop the Berkshire Mall into a mixed-used space (74%)
- 4) Hold events and festivals (72%)

We then created our own survey to expand upon the SWOT analysis and Resident survey. Our survey was intended to fill in the gaps from the analysis and survey by asking specific questions. For instance, one of the Priority Needs was to improve the aesthetics of the Route 7 corridor. We wanted to know how this could be done, according to a local perspective. As a result, one of the questions we asked was: “How can the town of Lanesborough improve the aesthetics of the Route 7 corridor?”. Other sample questions we asked were “If Lanesborough was to diversify its economy to help business growth and/or resident attraction/retention, in what sectors would you see this happening?” and “How can the town of Lanesborough help improve communication between municipal officials and townspeople?”

We conducted interviews of municipal officials, recent Lanesborough homebuyers, Lanesborough residents, businesses, and farmers, and tailored specific questions for each of these stakeholders. We conducted our interviews either in-person, over the phone, or allowed them to answer our survey online. Our interviews lasted from 30 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes. We interviewed a total of 26 stakeholders and then quantified our interviews to identify the top trends.

Please see Appendix C for a list of date of our visits, the meetings we attended, the list of interview questions for specific stakeholders, and the list of our interviewees.

Part IV: Analysis and Findings

(1) GIS Analysis

After overlaying all absolute and partial constraints, the net usable land available for development totals 11.08 square miles, the majority of which is zoned as Residential-Agricultural (RA). Again, this conveys only that there is substantial room for development if Lanesborough wanted to maximize its buildout (see *Appendix B, Figure 4*). However, the most compelling visual provided by the GIS maps was the natural resources that were abundant in Lanesborough as seen in Figure 9. Nearly 27%, or 8.13 square miles, of the town is located on prime farmland, demonstrating a huge potential for agriculture. Also, there are existing trail networks to the southwest where Pittsfield State Forest is and to the northeast where Mount Greylock is and where thousands of visitors flock every year. Furthermore, the Ashuwillticook bike trail provides access for cyclists and the bodies of water are available for water recreation, therefore appealing to all types of visitors. Upon analysis, there is a great potential for development within the community, but there are also a number of assets which Lanesborough could more effectively market as something that makes them unique.

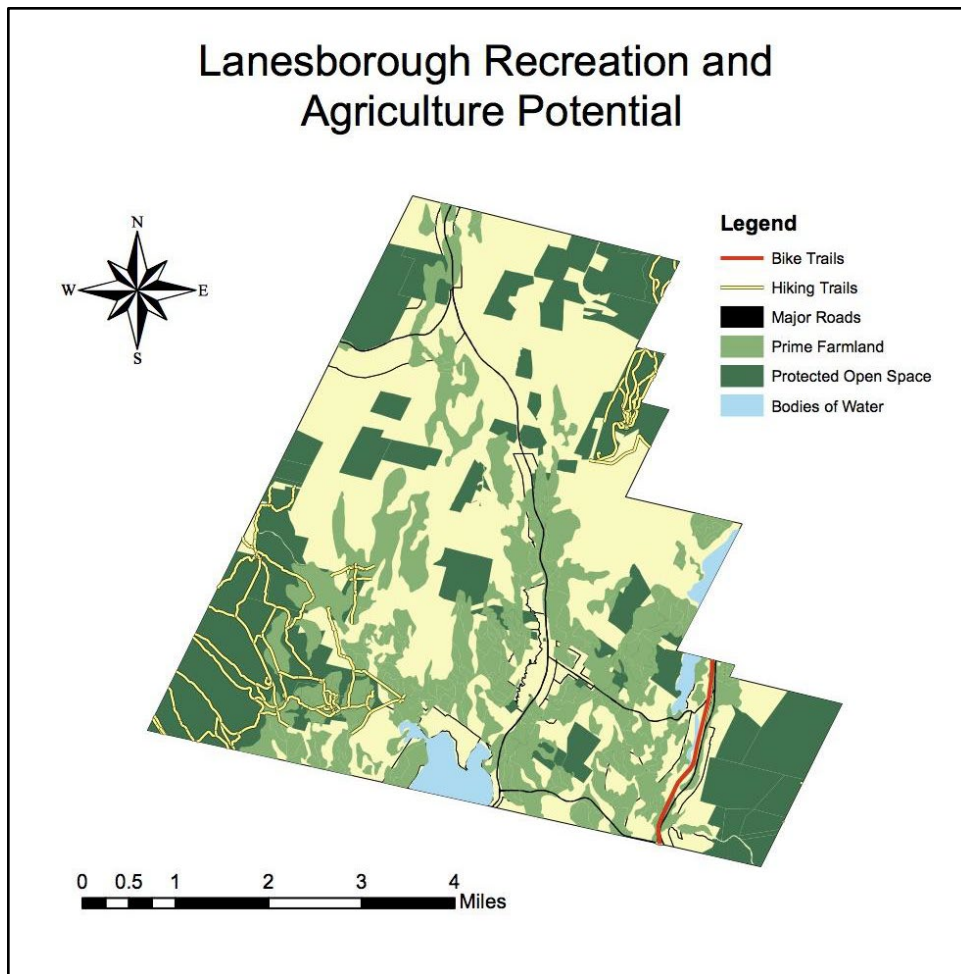


Figure 9: Recreational and agricultural assets in Lanesborough, MA.

(2) Interview Analysis

Quantification of Interviews and Overall Trends²²

In order to quantify our primarily qualitative survey results, we decided to tally each time someone mentioned a particular idea or theme. In total we interviewed 26 people but represented here are the first 23.

The top 3 themes that emerged (in order of most-mentioned theme) were:

²² Notes from our interviews can be found at this link: <https://goo.gl/9kZk5x>

1. People's dissatisfaction with the high tax rate (part of which had to do with the lack of resources they felt they were getting from them)
2. Pride in the good school system
3. The desire for a downtown/town center

Other themes that emerged were centered around the ideas of Aesthetics, Identity, and Community.

Regarding aesthetics, the ideas discussed were a need for renovation of dilapidated store fronts, along with a facelift for the Route 7 corridor. Respondents saw this happening by: slowing down the road, planting flower beds/plants/trees, putting up new signage, and adding bike lanes, pedestrian crossings, sidewalks, and street light.

In terms of identity, interview respondents identified the need for the town to create and promote a unique identity to distinguish itself from other towns. Some ways respondents saw this happening was through the creation of a unique logo and motto for the town.

Community, and the importance of fostering a sense of community, was the other big idea that arose. The desire for a town center/downtown area/main street to increase sense of community was brought up, with interviews offering recommendations for items to put in this town center. Some recommendations included a coffee shop, grocery store, and community center (of all kinds --senior center, youth center, performing arts center). The need for affordable housing in order to take care of fellow members of the community was also mentioned. Please see *Appendix C, Figure 3* for full quantification and exact numbers.

Our interviewees also identified what they believed to be the positives (strengths) and negatives (weaknesses) of the town. Access to Greylock was the highest identified strength of

the town, and bureaucracy and lack of amenities were the highest identified weaknesses of the town. Please See *Appendix C, Figure 4* for full quantification and numbers.

Lastly, although some of these themes were identified and incorporated into our top 3 recommendations for the town, in *Appendix C, Figure 5*, we generated a list of specific recommendations based around our interviews, that are rooted in interviewee support and desires.

Part V: Recommendations and Feasibility

(1) Evaluation Matrixes

(A) Solution Overviews

As mentioned above, we began our project by analyzing the Town of Lanesborough Economic Development Plan from 2017, created by Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. In this document was the original survey given to residents of Lanesborough to gauge what was important to them when it came to prioritize certain changes/improvements/investments in the town. This plan also contained a SWOT analysis for the town, which assessed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Upon a deeper reading and analysis of the SWOT analysis and survey, along with GIS analysis and a reading of the possible constraints we might be dealing with in the Lanesborough bylaws, we developed a set of tentative recommendations, along with a survey that asked more specific questions than the original survey. The aim was to identify exactly how our project goals of diversifying the economy and promoting sustainable growth could be achieved. We also created an Evaluation Matrix in order to quantify our recommendations and identified five solutions given below.

Solution #1: Communication

The first recommendation is to improve government services through an updated website, expanded town hall hours, a full-time staff member in town hall, and clear communication with businesses about bureaucratic matters-- preferably through a newsletter or the official website. The benefits of doing this include creating a connection between town government and residents so that residents feel like valued members of the community, which in turn encourages them to stay in town and improve it.

However, this solution would cost taxpayers and might require reallocation of funds away from other services like the school system and public safety. The environmental impact would be neutral because this could encourage new development that might destroy land but could be made more sustainable if businesses are encouraged to adhere to government policies.

Group	Cost	Benefit	Net
Town Government	-1	1	0
Business Owners	-1	1	0
Long-time Residents	-1	0	-1
New Residents	0	0	0
Tourists	0	0	0

Table 4. Evaluation of the costs and benefits for improving communication between all stakeholders based on a negative (-1), neutral (0), or positive (+1) scale.

Solution #2: Marketing/Branding

The second recommendation is to create a coherent Lanesborough identity through an outward-facing marketing and branding campaign that highlights the area as a gateway to the

Berkshires with abundant natural beauty and opportunity for engagement with the natural world. Overall this would create a sense of cohesion and community that would significantly improve the social environment of the town. However, it would cost significant taxpayer money to hire a marketing agency, develop a logo, and generate materials for distribution. In terms of the environment, it may encourage more visitors on trails which could accelerate erosion. But, an access to natural places could also make tourists more inclined to appreciate the outdoors.

Group	Cost	Benefit	Net
Town Government	-1	+1	0
Business Owners	-1	+1	0
Long-term Residents	-1	0	-1
New Residents	0	0	0
Tourists	0	+1	+1

Table 5. Evaluation of the costs and benefits for developing a marketing and/or branding campaign for each stakeholder group based on a negative (-1), neutral (0), or positive (+1) scale.

Solution #3: Town Center

The third recommendation is to develop a pedestrian-friendly town center by expanding sidewalks, slowing down traffic, putting in benches, and creating a central common that attracts various new, enticing, and necessary businesses (coffee shops, supermarkets, etc.) in front of the old supermarket. This would provide a much-needed social gathering place for all stakeholders in Lanesborough but would come at a cost to redevelop a deteriorating building and area. However, the “complete streets” program could offer some state funding on state-owned and town-owned streets. A town center could also improve the green spaces available to pedestrians

and encourage walking, but it also may spur more construction and development which could harm the environment.

Group	Cost	Benefit	Net
Town Government	-1	+1	0
Business Owners	-1	+1	0
Long-time Residents	-1	+1	0
New Residents	0	+1	1
Tourists	0	+1	1

Table 6. Evaluation of the costs and benefits for developing a pedestrian-friendly town center for each stakeholder group based on a negative (-1), neutral (0), or positive (+1) scale.

Solution #4: Agriculture

The fourth recommendation is to focus on the existing agricultural economy in Lanesborough to attract tourists and support local farmers. This likely would not be a significant cost for any stakeholder because there are already a number of farms within the area. Farms, however, can have potential ambient impacts that may be seen as burdensome to other businesses. For example, certain smells and sounds from farms may impact nearby businesses or deter outdoor recreation in the area. Overall though, the right-to-farm bylaw has helped potentially displeased businesses understand the benefits of farming, and the right of farms to produce a reasonable amount of farming byproducts. In particular, agricultural promotion is a niche area that Berkshire county is not filling completely and that Lanesborough can capitalize on and create an identity around.

Group	Cost	Benefit	Net
Town Government	-1	+1	0
Business Owners	-1	+1	0
Long-time Residents	0	+1	1
New Residents	0	+1	1
Tourists	0	+1	1

Table 7. Evaluation of the costs and benefits for highlighting agriculture for each stakeholder group based on a negative (-1), neutral (0), or positive (+1) scale.

Solution 5: Outdoor Recreation

Our final recommendation is to promote outdoor recreation through increased marketing and visibility of existing natural resources. Unlike Solution #2, this would be a narrower target which could be promoted easily by linking to existing resources online and having a comprehensive list of outdoor recreation in the area. Bringing in more tourists to the area would simultaneously increase customers for other businesses and the general economy of the town. Still, marketing and visibility would be funded by the town and thus would come at a cost to them.

Group	Cost	Benefit	Net
Town Government	-1	+1	0
Business Owners	0	+1	1
Long-time Residents	0	+1	1
New Residents	0	+1	1
Tourists	0	+1	1

Table 8. Evaluation of the costs and benefits for promoting outdoor recreation for each stakeholder group based on a negative (-1), neutral (0), or positive (+1) scale.

Solution (#)	Net Totals	Ranking
Solution 5	+4	1st
Solution 4	+3	2nd
Solution 3	+2	3rd
Solution 2	0	4th
Solution 1	-1	5th

Table 9: Final ranking of goals based on an evaluation of the aggregate of net positive or negatives from the various stakeholders.

This ranking highlighted solutions 3, 4, and 5 as the recommendations with the greatest overall benefit to the town. We then ran these by our clients to assess whether they matched their perspectives and cross-referenced them against what our interviewees said. Additionally, we began to research case studies of peer/neighboring communities who have focused their attention towards similar recommendations, to see if they have been successful and whether there are best practices that could be applied to Lanesborough. Speaking with our clients and interviewees not only affirmed our proposed recommendations, but also provided us with directions for more specific solutions for implementation.

(2) Overview of Main Recommendations

Our recommendations can be broken down into three main categories: town center development, focus on agriculture, and the promotion of outdoor recreation opportunities. A pedestrian-friendly town center could be created near the old supermarket, which has historically been the center of town and is already connected to popular businesses like Bob’s Country Kitchen and municipal services like the Library. This could be achieved through clearer

crosswalks, more sidewalks, green spaces, and lighting. Our second recommendation is to focus on the agricultural economy that already exists in Lanesborough to attract tourists and support local farmers. Farming is a successful economic enterprise that Berkshire County is lacking in terms of representation, which represents a void which Lanesborough could fill considering that 27% of the town is made up of prime farmland. Finally, our third recommendation is that the town of Lanesborough promote outdoor recreation through increased marketing and visibility of existing natural resources. There has already been some action on this front, such as the creation of the Outdoor Recreation brochure, but there is still more that can be done to highlight the opportunities for water recreation, hiking, cycling, and more.

(3) Specific Recommendations and Feasibility

(A) Town Center and Cohesion

According to the study done by BRPC in 2017, improving the aesthetics of the Route 7 corridor was one of the top needs of the town. Furthermore, our study found that nearly half (48%) of all residents asked about town identity-- indicating the need for a town center.

In order to attract businesses and customers, our interviewees suggested the creation of a town center, which would improve aesthetics and safety for pedestrians.

To address aesthetics more concretely, we have identified the potential to develop a sign and/or lighting ordinance, as has been done in the neighboring town of Lee, MA. In the 2017 Economic Development study, a sign ordinance was suggested by BRPC. This has yet to be implemented but is something that should be advanced forward. This solution would unify the type of signage allowed on the business corridor, with Lee as the example of a town that has successfully integrated a pedestrian downtown around Route 7. Their ordinance reads that the

purpose of such an ordinance is “to protect and enhance the visual environment of this town (its public and private investments in buildings and open spaces) and the safety, convenience and welfare of its residents.” (Town of Lee Zoning Bylaws, 29). This could certainly be used in Lanesborough in order to promote a unique downtown character and regulate the signage of chains like Dollar General, among others.

Additionally, we have identified the Complete Streets program as an area for great potential in Lanesborough. Already BRPC is working on submitting proposals to Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Mass DOT) for approval, and BRPC has already passed a complete streets policy in Lanesborough, which is the first step in the process. Some of the areas identified for sidewalk redevelopment include Summer St, Bull Hill Rd, and Narragansett Ave. However, we also think that the Church Street intersection with Route 7 is a major connector to the downtown area, as it includes the library, town hall, and police station. There are currently no sidewalks on Church Street and the crosswalk in front of the former “Lanesboro Supermarket” forces pedestrians to the south rather than inviting them to explore the area. This is also where the annual Christmas Tree lighting is done and could continue to be a cultural center for the town.

Unfortunately, Route 7 itself is owned and operated by the state so it does not fall under the purview of the Complete Streets program. Mass DOT has informed BRPC that they plan to install sidewalk from Bill Laston Park to Town Hall-- an important step in making this area more accessible to pedestrians. However, more needs to be done on Route 7 to make it accessible for pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicles alike. Slowing down traffic is one way to reduce potential accidents. This can be achieved in the downtown area through flashing lights at crosswalks, or simple signs signaling that cars are entering a pedestrian zone. Similarly, bike

lanes would provide access for cyclists. Towns like Stoneham, MA can serve as great examples for how to make a town center accessible specifically for seniors.²³

All these recommendations would have to be done in conjunction with Mass DOT, so Lanesborough should maintain a relationship with them looking forward to future projects along Route 7.

Should Lanesborough seriously begin considering the development of a town center, there is a state program called the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) which can be a resource for planning such a project. The program offers a variety of services ranging from design, to wayfinding, to economics of downtown, with no cost to the town, up to \$15,000. The nearby town of Greenfield, MA²⁴ is a great example of how a design project can reimagine a downtown in western Massachusetts, should Lanesborough want to investigate this solution.

Looking forward, establishing a historic preservation zone in the downtown area could help maintain the character of Lanesborough and open up a potential stream of funding for maintenance. The Economic Development Committee explicitly suggested this as potential option for the old Lanesboro supermarket area. Historic preservation has been an area that the nearby community of Charlemont has also investigated for town center redevelopment, so they could be a resource if the town continues to explore the feasibility of implementing something similar in Lanesborough.²⁵ There are a number of factors that need to be considered if Lanesborough considers this solution, as highlighted in the case study of Rutland, MA which had differing opinions from public residents on the historic preservation as part of their plan for town

²³ m.stoneham-ma.gov/sites/stonehamma/files/u80/best-complete-streets-initiatives-of-2017_0.pdf

²⁴ mass.gov/files/documents/2018/08/28/Greenfield-Court-Square-Streetscape-Report-2018-0502.pdf

²⁵ <http://charlemont-ma.us/town-center>

center refurbishment.²⁶ Nonetheless, we wanted to draw attention to some actions that could be taken down the road.

In terms of the cost feasibility, all the programs mentioned so far are eligible for state funding which would greatly reduce the burden on the town government for redevelopment. However, some action on part of the town is required to create a town center that is welcoming to businesses and pedestrians alike. We have identified the Lanesboro Supermarket as one area that could potentially be converted into a town center. In historical memory the Lanesboro supermarket served as a meeting place for residents and fulfilled a function of providing food for the town, which now is sourced from Target or elsewhere in Pittsfield. Our interviewees had a fond memory of the role that the supermarket played many years ago and expressed interest in its revitalization. It is already connected by sidewalk to other points of interest like the library/town hall, Bob's Country Kitchen, the Olde Forge, and the town elementary school. Therefore, it is at the epicenter of the most popular areas of Lanesborough. The total assessed cost for the supermarket was about \$611,000 (MassGIS, Standardized Assessors' Parcels). Unfortunately, that is a significant cost restraint. However, the current owners have been trying to sell for many years and may be able to be persuaded on that front.

This would be a perfect spot for a mixed-use building that could facilitate a number of activities and people. Although the Lanesborough demographics suggest that their population is aging, there are still a significant number of families (out of 1,154 households in Lanesborough, 68% are family households, which is 7% higher than the state average²⁷) which make use of the

²⁶

https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1035&context=larp_ms_projects

²⁷ Cleargov.com, 2017 data

<https://www.cleargov.com/massachusetts/berkshire/town/lanesborough/2017/demographics>

good school system, and all types of activity should be encouraged-- including performances and events for seniors, along with spaces for children. Because several of our interviewees mentioned the need for a supermarket, aside from Target, in Lanesborough, refurbishing the old supermarket could be a great way to bring people together.

Next to the supermarket is a seasonal farmer's market which could be used to support Recommendation B: highlighting and expanding agriculture in Lanesborough. Making this space a year-round farmers market would give farmers improved visibility, especially as compared to the current location in the parking lot of the Berkshire Mall, and has the potential to create a unified town identity. It would also help with the promotion of agricultural businesses which bring in revenue for the town and provides an opportunity for Lanesborough to fill a niche that is lacking in Berkshire County.

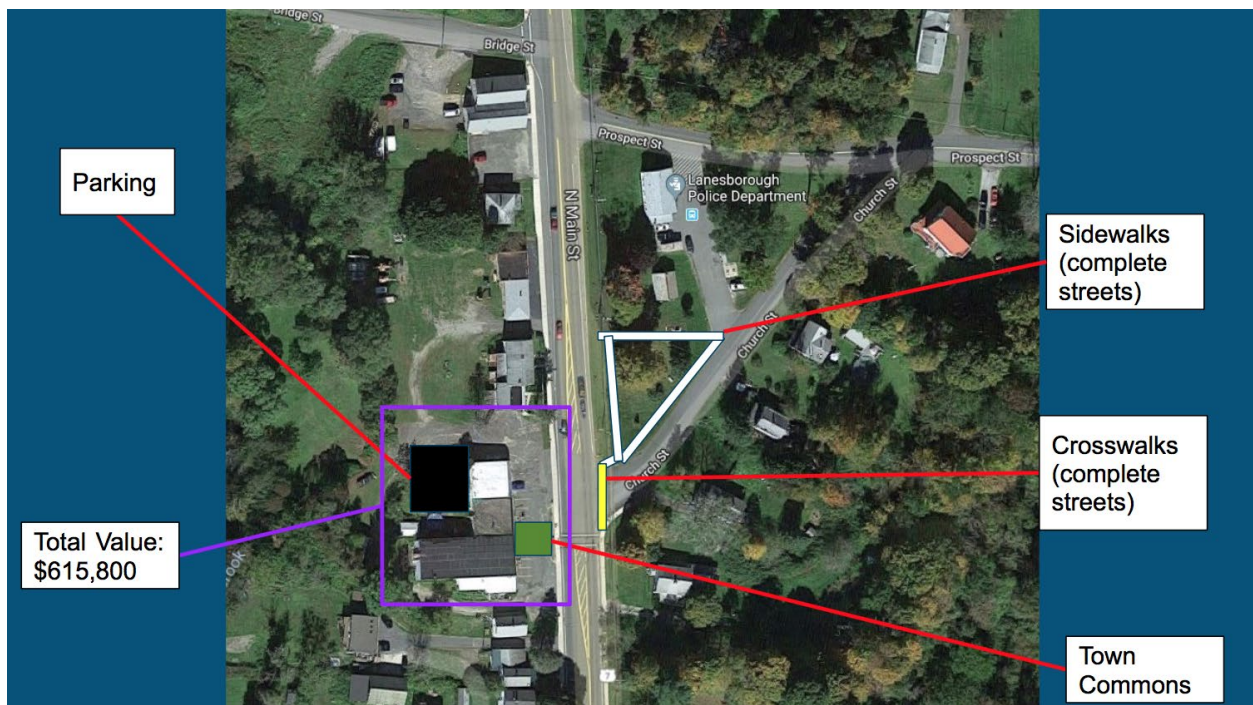


Figure 10: Proposed site for complete streets and downtown redevelopment.

(B) Agriculture

The Agricultural sector was another area that our research identified as a potentially valuable place to invest. Not only are the resources already available (Lanesborough currently consists of 27% prime farmland and is home to at least 9 farms and 4 stables), but growth of, and investment in, the agricultural sector is an action supported by the citizens of Lanesborough.

In the Economic Development Plan of 2017, 79% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Lanesborough should market natural features and capitalize on what makes the Berkshires unique, 76% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Lanesborough should market and promote local agriculture, and 72% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Lanesborough should hold events and festivals.²⁸ Through the development of the agricultural sector, the Town of Lanesborough has the opportunity to address all three of these desires.

Before diving into the recommendations, we would like to mention that there are quite a few resources farmers in Lanesborough currently have the opportunity to take advantage of, namely the Chapter 61, 61A, 61B bylaws, the Right-to-Farm bylaw, and the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program (APR).

The Chapter 61 laws (Massachusetts General Laws Chapters 61, 61A, and 61B) state that lands in active forestry, agricultural, and outdoor recreation use may apply for a reduced tax rate as incentive to maintain their land in its current use. These laws provide not only an incentive, but a means for farmers to keep their land farmland/in agricultural usage.²⁹

The Right-to Farm bylaw requires that a home seller inform a home buyer that the community allows farming. The disclosure is intended to alert residents that farming activities

²⁸ EDP, 2017. https://www.lanesborough-ma.gov/vertical/sites/%7B35069B63-55EF-4033-982E-FE5C4BF36433%7D/uploads/Economic_Development_Plan_2017.pdf

²⁹ <http://www.townofberlin.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Berlin-MP-w-appendices.pdf>

may create noises, smells and dust (and slow traffic) but that those are *not a legal nuisance*. What that means is that someone who complains of any of these farming factors has no legal standing. The idea behind the Right-to-Farm bylaw is to allow farmers to farm in peace near residents who appreciate their life in the country, but don't appreciate so much the realities of farm work.³⁰

The Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program (APR) Program is a Massachusetts state run program. Its goal is to help preserve and protect agricultural land in order to keep valuable farmland soil from being built on by development companies for non-agricultural purposes that could be detrimental to the environment. The program offers to pay farmland owners the difference between the "fair market value" and the "agricultural value" of their farms in exchange for a permanent deed restriction which precludes any use of the property that will have a negative impact on its agricultural viability. It is a voluntary program which offers a non-development alternative to farmers who are faced with a decision regarding future use of their farms. The main objective of the APR program is to protect productive farmland through the purchase of deed restrictions and revitalize the agricultural industry by making land more affordable to farmers, and their operations more financially secure.³¹

Now we would like to present our recommendations for promotion and stimulation of the Agricultural sector. In order to make the follow recommendations, we consulted the Lanesborough Economic Development Plan of 2017, our GIS analyses, the survey we created and conducted this fall, as well as research on what resources already exist in Lanesborough that can be enhanced, and what other towns have done to boost their agriculture sector that can be

³⁰ <http://berkshirerealtors.net/re-business-news/right-to-farm-communities/>

³¹ <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/agricultural-preservation-restriction-apr-program-details>

applied and implemented in the town of Lanesborough. The following is a list of recommendations, in no particular order:

- A. Create a collective and comprehensive list of farms and stables in Lanesborough
- B. Highlight the CSA (Community-Supported Agriculture) program
- C. Ensure proper direction signage to farms
- D. Create a more accessible and visible Farmer's Market
- E. Organize town events/festivals
- F. Encourage and support Farm-School and Farm-Business partnerships
- G. Support the Agricultural Commission in aiding farmers

A. Create a collective and comprehensive list of farms and stables in Lanesborough

Currently, there does not exist a comprehensive and informational list of farms and stables in Lanesborough. One useful tool for both locals and tourists alike would be the creation of such a collective list of farms and stables in Lanesborough with information regarding certain useful aspects of the farm such as services provided, products, contact information, etc. When it comes to boosting the agricultural sector, visibility is vital. Therefore, it would be best to have not only an updated and easy-to-access informational list/graphic online, but a paper copy as well. The internet is the means by which most people access information, but a physical copy is not only convenient and useful as a handout for various touristic locations and at various events, but it also serves as a helpful resource to those who may not use or have access to the internet.

The Williamstown Farm Map brochure (See *Appendix D, Figure 1*) is a perfect example of a comprehensive list of farms done right, and we recommend that the Town of Lanesborough follow the Town of Williamstown's lead in designing a similar informational pamphlet (see

Appendix D, Figures 2). Williamstown's farm brochure has all the necessary information: Farm name, location on map, address, contact information, and services and products offered. We would like to especially draw your attention to the "Open to Public" category. This is very important to be specific about, as some farms/farmers may not want visitors. We would also like to draw your attention to the fact that the chart also includes which farms offer a CSA program (and defines what that is) as well as the location and times of the Williamstown Farmer's market. Also, of importance is that the creators of this brochure utilized the opposite side of the pamphlet to inform people about the importance of agriculture, and how the citizen himself can support the sector.

Returning to online resources, having this comprehensive list of farms, stables, and the services/products they provide available on the official Lanesborough website would be a helpful tool that is bound to boost the agricultural sector through visibility and knowledge of existing options. Also important for visibility is ensuring that the full range of resources provided in Lanesborough is visible on both the Mass Grown and BerkshireGrown websites. Currently, only a few farms are mentioned on all three sites, and it would be in the town's interest to ensure all options are available on all three platforms.



Figure 11: Screenshot from the Official Lanesborough Website, indicating a list of farms and stables that need updating

B. Highlight the CSA (Community-Supported Agriculture) Program

A Community-Supported Agriculture Program, or CSA, is essentially a farm to table program in which farmers and consumers connect directly. That is, one buys farm fresh foods and products directly from the farmer himself. Currently, at least four farms in Lanesborough have CSA programs advertised on their websites, with many other farms, though not offering food, offering other products such as homemade soaps. However, the only way to purchase from these farms is to go directly to their website and/or contact them directly. There is no simple, easy, and streamlined process for purchasing. Our recommendation, therefore, is to streamline the process through the creation of a collective food-hub CSA-purchasing website. Making the ordering process easier should encourage people to buy local.

Many towns have already streamlined the process by making an accessible, aggregated Food Hub-type online platform. For farms in Vermont, for example, there exists the Intervale Food Hub program, which allows people to pick their products, pick-up location (or choose a

delivery option, depending on the farm), and pay-- all from the comfort of their own home, and with little to no extra research on their part.³²

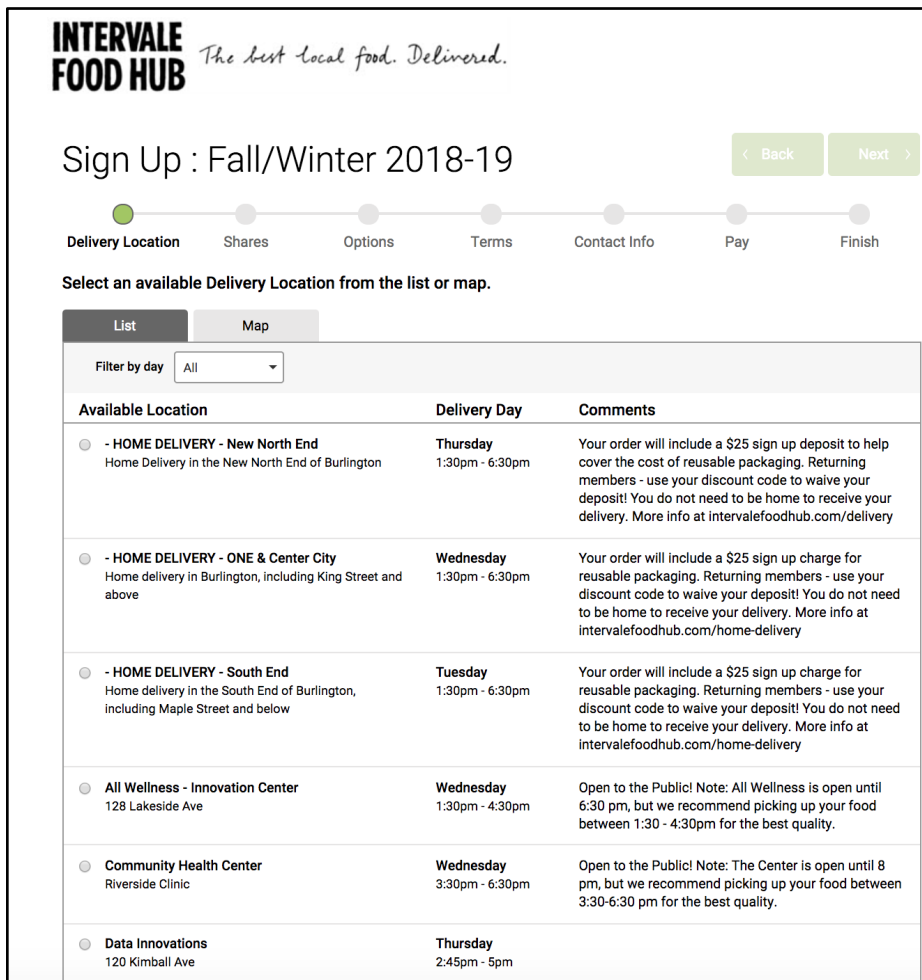


Figure 12: A screenshot from the Intervale Food Hub website exemplifies the simple, easy-to-use and navigate platform that has streamlined the local food purchasing system for Vermont

C. Ensure proper direction signage to farms

Visibility, knowledge of the resource, and ease of access is key. Including farms on the blue road signs located along major roads and highways (and if possible, providing images of the resources the farm provides, as exemplified below in *Figure 13*) increases visibility and

³² <https://www.intervalefoodhub.com/>

promotes the agricultural sector. By making sure that signage on the road is not only available for certain farms (it is important to ensure that the farm *wants* its business advertised so publicly before including it on the sign), but is easy to follow, farms will get a lot of coverage.



Figure 13: Road sign that informs drivers of the location and products for offer at Valley View Farm in Haydenville, MA

D. Create a more accessible and visible Farmer's Market

Currently, Lanesborough hosts a farmer's market in the Berkshire Mall parking lot. However, this farmer's market is not very well advertised, and information regarding the farmers/groups featured, their products, and contact information for market organizers is virtually non-existent. Similarly, the Market is a bit out of the way for most people (given the location of the Berkshire Mall), and due to the outdoor nature of the market, the Lanesborough Farmer's Market closes for the winter months.

For these reasons, one of our recommendations is the creation of an online platform where sellers and their products are featured, information on where and when the market will take place, and contact information and Market updates are easily available and accessible. Likewise, in order to ensure year-round profits, we recommend having both indoor and outdoor farmer's markets. This is a tactic employed by many towns. North Adams, MA, for example, employs such a model³³. Lanesborough is fortunate enough to already have a potential space for such an indoor farmer's market. There currently exists a building behind the farm stand on Route 7. This would be a perfect location given that a farm stand already exists, the area used to house a supermarket, so the space is still seen in recent memory as a place of food access and given our recommendations for reimagining this area as a town center, there will be visibility and traffic in the area, which should encourage purchasing.

E. Organize town events/festivals

72% of Lanesborough citizens agree or strongly agree that the town of Lanesborough should host events and festivals. When we interviewed local businesses about either hosting or co-sponsoring events, many were excited about the option, as a lack of community cohesion was a concern voiced by many interviewees (it appears as if a sense of community exists mainly among parents of school-aged children and churchgoers), and town-organized, overseen, or co-sponsored events would encourage community interaction, while also promoting local businesses. When we brought up some of our ideas, people were very excited and began praising past events, such as summer concerts, summer berry-picking events, fall apple and pumpkin picking events, and the programming for 250th anniversary of Lanesborough. A

³³ <https://explorenorthadams.com/item/north-adams-farmers-market/>

recommendation we were asked to pass along was that of continuity-- certain events and festivals should take place regularly, so citizens have something to look forward to.

For this reason, regarding recommendations for festivals and events, we recommend centering events and festivals around holidays and seasons, which are recurring. For example, there can be Halloween and Thanksgiving events and programming, as well as fall festivals. Some festival ideas that take advantage of the agricultural nature of Lanesborough include pie festivals, honey and jam festivals, produce festivals, berry-picking events, pumpkin and apple-picking events, outdoor movie events and/or concerts (potentially hosted by a farm, or on Laston field), etc. Businesses and farms could potentially co-sponsor, host, or set up stands for a fee at these events to encourage citizen and local business interactions, as well as to promote their businesses.

F. Encourage and support Farm-School and Farm-Business partnerships

Another area for potential growth of the agricultural sector in order to invigorate the Lanesborough economy is through the support and encouragement of Farm-School and Farm-Business partnerships. Through such partnerships, local citizens will have the opportunity to learn more about, and become more involved and excited about, the agricultural sector and its success.

One such partnership opportunity exists through the creation of a Farm-to-School program between local farms and Lanesborough public schools. Another Williams College Environmental Planning group is working with the town of North Adams to connect Berkshire farms with North Adams public schools to provide schoolchildren with healthy, local food. They have found that the best way to limit costs and create lasting partnerships is to reach out and

make connections with farmers directly. Of Lanesborough farmers that the North Adams group has reached out to, both Red Shirt Farm and Square Roots Farm were interested in partnering with the North Adams public schools. Therefore, should the Town of Lanesborough choose to pursue such a recommendation, Red Shirt and Square Roots Farms would be good primary contacts. In addition, the North Adams group created a tool-kit for creating Farm-to-School partnerships, linked [here](#). Though created with North Adams in mind, North Adams, MA is a similar enough town to Lanesborough that the tool-kit should be easily adaptable to Lanesborough.

Other partnership opportunities include the encouragement of educational field trips for school children to farms, farm internship programs, and summer jobs for high schoolers during the major growing season (Red Shirt Farm, for example, occasionally employs high schoolers). Such partnerships between farms and youth encourage interest and care in local food and agriculture.

G. Support the Agricultural Commission in providing assistance to farmers

The purpose of an agricultural commission is to protect agricultural lands, preserve rural character, provide a voice for farmers, and encourage agriculture-based businesses.³⁴ The Lanesborough Agricultural Commission consists of three members, but at the moment the group is not very active.³⁵ However, the Agricultural Commission has the potential to be a wonderful resource. The Williamstown Agricultural Commission, for example, came together to create a wonderful brochure to advocate for the town's farms. In Berlin, MA (a peer town), an Agriculture Commission website was developed as a resource for farmers and as an education

³⁴ https://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/publications/documents/ag_com.pdf

³⁵ <https://www.lanesborough-ma.gov/?SEC=9E46284C-423A-46F5-9F9C-90E6ED34D3C8>

and outreach tool for the Commission, in order to create opportunities to highlight the benefit of working farms and sustainable farming practices. In addition, Berlin, MA began work with local farmers to create trails and tours through farmlands.³⁶

Reanimation of the Lanesborough Agricultural Commission through Town support has the potential to encourage activity in the agricultural sector by working with local farms to promote and grow their farm businesses. Some things the Agricultural Commission can do to support local farmers include assisting farmers with grant applications & other paperwork for farm viability grants; being familiar with farm assistance programs available in Massachusetts such as the MA Farm Viability Enhancement Program³⁷, Agricultural Business Training Program (ABTP)³⁸, and Incubator Farm Training Program³⁹; Publicizing economic, fiscal & environmental benefits of agritourism businesses; Highlighting clean energy benefits and implementation strategies for farms; and including a list of potential Agritourism growth ideas for farmers⁴⁰.

(C) Recreation

Our final main recommendation is to highlight the recreational opportunities available in Lanesborough. There are several specific tasks that could be done to highlight these opportunities. They are as followed:

- (i) Update the Sports/Recreation page on the Lanesborough website

³⁶ <http://www.townofberlin.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Berlin-MP-w-appendices.pdf>

³⁷ <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/farm-viability-enhancement-program-fvep>

³⁸ <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/agricultural-business-training-program-abtp>

³⁹ <https://nesfp.org/farmer-training/incubator-farm>

⁴⁰ Some Massachusetts farmers, for example, have developed doggie daycare programs on their farms, while others have allowed couples to use their land as a wedding venue. Many good ideas of things farmers have done on their land can be found in Appendices B and C in the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Owner's Survey of 2017 (https://www.farmbureau.co/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/APR_SURVEY.pdf)

- (ii) Update the “The Official Guide to the Berkshires”
- (iii) Make slight changes to the “Outdoor Recreation” brochure
- (iv) Improve access to Pontoosuc Lake and Cheshire Reservoir
- (v) Trails
 - (a) Highlight existing trails in Lanesborough
 - (b) Support Berkshire Natural Resource Council to create a connection between Constitution Hill and Bill Laston Park
- (vi) Host seasonal events

(i) Update the Sports/Recreation page on the Lanesborough website

The current [“Sports and Recreation” page](#) on the Lanesborough website is quite sparse and only identifies opportunities for recreation on municipal lands (i.e. Bill Laston Memorial Park). We acknowledge that the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission is working on an updated town website, but we would like to share some of our thoughts to guide their updates. Some ideas include the addition of specific outdoor attractions, the addition of specific businesses in the outdoor recreation sector, highlighting Mount Greylock and Pontoosuc Lake, and including a link to existing trails, which can be found at <http://masstrails.com/lanesborough.html>. A list of specific attractions can also be found in Appendix D. Charlemont, Massachusetts is a peer town whose [website](#) would prove a useful reference. Their page includes photos of specific attractions, businesses in Charlemont related to outdoor recreation, and a link to trails in town (see Figure 14).

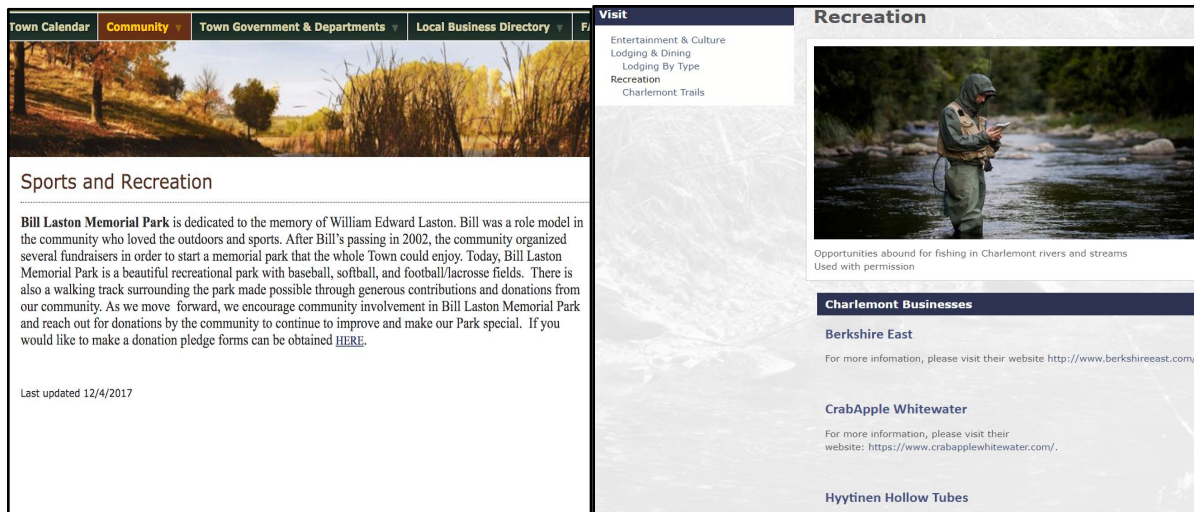


Figure 14: Recreation Section on Town Website of Lanesborough (left) and Charlemont (right)

(ii) Update the “The Official Guide to the Berkshires”

In addition, there are specific attractions we hope to add to the [Official Guide to the Berkshires](#). This includes Balance Rock, Pontoosuc Lake, Cheshire Reservoir, and Berkshire U-Drive rentals/public boat rental. We acknowledge that these access points and boat rentals are not in Lanesborough, but Lanesborough shares these water resources with Pittsfield and highlighting these unique opportunities would potentially attract people to visit Lanesborough. Furthermore, as these recreational attractions are near the Town, they have the potential to spur economic growth to the Lanesborough businesses nearby.

(iii) Make slight changes to “Outdoor Recreation” brochure

The Economic Development Committee created a pamphlet this past year focusing on outdoor recreation in Lanesborough (See Figure 15). We really liked this pamphlet and would like to offer some suggestions to make it more visually appealing. Figure 15 below is an image of the current pamphlet. We suggest that the text be shortened and include different information.

In the preliminary sample brochure, we have designed, located in *Appendix D, Figure 3*, we limit the amount of text, include more images, include information on farms, some trail names, and a link to the Mass Trails website for other trails.



Figure 15: Current Lanesborough brochure for Outdoor Recreation

(iv) Improve access to Cheshire Reservoir and Pontoosuc Lake

Another one of our recommendations is to highlight current access points to the Cheshire Reservoir (see *Figures 16 and 17*) and Pontoosuc Lake (see *Figure 18*). Currently, there is no access point to Cheshire Reservoir from Lanesborough, but there is access in Cheshire that is near Lanesborough. There is space for parking, benches, and a sign leading to the Rail Trail at this access point. As the lake extends into Lanesborough, we recommend advertising this access point so that people can visit the town before and after visiting the reservoir.



Figure 16: Access point (green dot) in Cheshire that could be highlighted (Source: alltrails.com)



Figure 17. Benches and parking are factors to highlight at the Cheshire Reservoir access point

We would also like to highlight Lanesborough’s cooperation with Pittsfield regarding Pontoosuc Lake (see Figure 18). The following information was gathered from our correspondence with Lee Hauge, President of the Friends of Pontoosuc Lake.

Currently, there is no Lake development on the Lanesborough side (such as a dock) because the lake's banks are too steep. However, there are about 20 public access points to the lake, but their use is limited, as there is little parking space available at these points. The access points are good for the residents but are limiting to the rest of the public.

Pittsfield has two parks on either side of the dam with ample parking. The park on the south shore, west of the dam, includes the state funded, city-maintained public boat launch. The park on the east shore offers a grassy area for sunbathing, and a seawall on the shore with stairs to the water. We felt that the following recommendations, suggested by Lee Hauge regarding management of the lake, were important to bring to your attention:

- a. Provide support to Pittsfield for improving public access points in their parks.
There needs to be work done on the shoreline to improve access for swimming, and on the stairs and path from the parking lot to the shore.
- b. Continue lake management work in cooperation with Pittsfield to control the invasive weed species and maintain water quality
- c. Expand the above lake management to include assessment of algae. Some local lakes have experienced algae blooms which have inhibited lake use, and climate change has and will continue to worsen this trend.
- d. Continue work towards controlling the storm water runoff problem from Lanesborough dirt roads, which are a threat to the long-term life of Pontoosuc Lake.



Figure 18: Pontoosuc Lake

(v) Trails

(a) Highlight existing trails in Lanesborough

After speaking with Karen Ross from the Taconic Hiking Club, there are some trails in Lanesborough that we suggest should be highlighted. One such trail is the Potter Mountain Trail (also known as Widow White). [This trail](#), owned by the Berkshire Natural Resources Council, connects to the Taconic Crest Trail, which is popular among tourists. Highlighting and maintaining this existing trail in Lanesborough could increase visitation to not only these trails, but to the town in general.

Another trail to highlight is the [Boulders Reserve trail](#), owned by BNRC. There should be improvements in signage and publicity of this trail. Access is best in Dalton, but there could be better access points in Lanesborough to promote visitors to town.

Another trail is [Constitution Hill Trail](#). The history of this trail should be promoted. There could be events to teach children and visitors on the history. For a brief history, the BNRC website states the following of this trail:

“In 1788, a Lanesboro farmer named Jonathan Smith was chosen to represent his town at the convention in Boston that would decide whether Massachusetts should ratify the proposed new US Constitution. At the convention he made a persuasive argument in favor of it as a way to prevent outbreaks of violence like Shays’ Rebellion in Western Massachusetts. The bonfire he had organized atop “Bald Headed Hill” alerted residents of Lanesboro and surrounding towns that his view had prevailed, and Massachusetts had ratified the Constitution. The hill is no longer bald and was renamed “Constitution Hill” by Smith. The forest has long since reclaimed the landscape, though there are winter views from the ridge after leaves have fallen. A plaque marks the bonfire site, near an oak that was planted in 1921 to replace an oak that was the solitary sentinel on the hill in Smith’s day. Near the trailhead and its two parking areas is a reclaimed orchard and the site of the home of a 19th century humorist, Josh Billings. He is now memorialized by Berkshire County’s annual Josh Billings RunAground triathlon.”⁴¹

(b) Support Berkshire Natural Resource Council to create a connection between Constitution Hill and Bill Laston Park

Currently, the Berkshire Natural Resource Council (BNRC) is working on the High Road Project⁴². The goal of the High Road Project is to create a completely hike-able Berkshires, as many tourists and year-round residents must drive to parks or reservations to hike. The High Road project would change this by allowing people to walk the entire county as the project is “a system of trails that connects all of the Berkshires, creating a web, sewing towns, and trails

⁴¹ <http://bnrc.org/trails-and-maps/constitution-hill>

⁴² <https://www.bnrc.org/the-high-road/>

together”.⁴³ As a result, BNRC is strategically selecting and buying lands and easements throughout the Berkshires in order to link these lands together to create the Berkshire High Road.

After our conversations with Mackenzie Greer from the BNRC, one of the recommendations we have is to create a connection from Constitution Hill to Bill Laston Park. Constitution Hill is a moderate 60 to 90-minute hike that offers an easy walk, views of Mount Greylock, and is relatively close to the Park. There is, however, little parking available, and it is tough to access. The town could push the BNRC to place the creation of a connection from these two points high on their priority list. This could likely spur economic development by increasing foot traffic in the town.

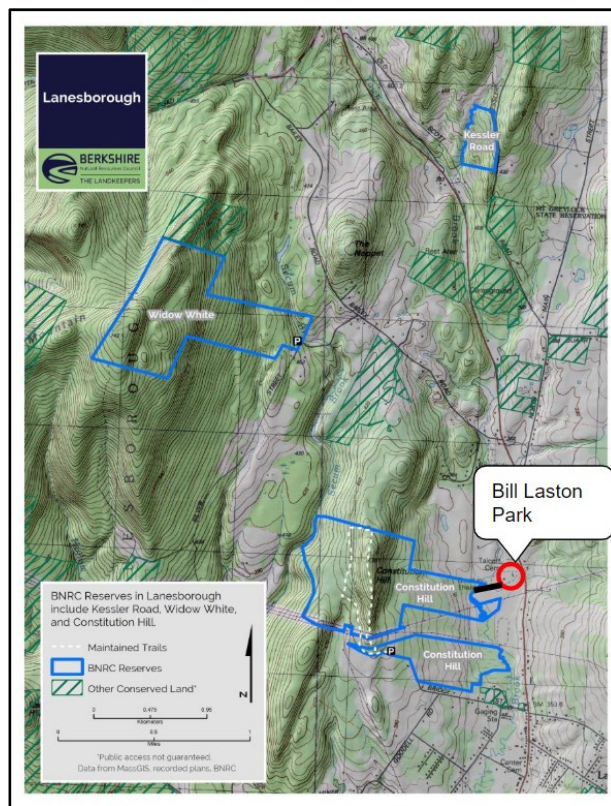


Figure 19: BNRC Reserves denoting connection from Constitution Hill to Bill Laston Park and Widow White Trail (Source: bnrc.org/trails-and-maps/constitution-hill/)

⁴³ <http://bnrc.org/trails-and-maps/constitution-hill/>

(vi) Host seasonal events

Another recommendation is to host consistent seasonal, recreational events. This was relayed by several of our interviewees and was even a point that came up after our final presentation at the Lanesborough Town Hall on December 12, 2018. The specific events that could be held should be investigated, but there is high enthusiasm and willingness from businesses and townspeople to make this happen. Potential sites could be by the Berkshire Mall, the “town center” area, and Laston Park. Connecting with local businesses to host events that highlight the recreational nature of the area, such as tree-climbing contests, hiking races, etc., is also an option to look into.

(D) Additional Recommendations

There were several other themes that we came across in our interviews that were relevant to the Economic Development Plan (2017). This includes a desire to facilitate communication between all constituents. This includes improving the frequency of, and access to, the monthly newsletter in both print and online version for all ages to access. Community listservs have been successful in towns like Egremont, MA and Alford, MA because they allow for direct contact to all citizens. People can ask questions or make announcements and help one another out. Rather than being limited to online connection, there is also the potential for an increase in business-to-business events to help form relationships within the business community, or government-to-citizen events to increase transparency within the government. Recent home-buyers in Lanesborough suggested that having events for new community members would also contribute to a sense of community and form new ties between residents.

Other recommendations are related to infrastructure.

Increasing town-wide internet connection has been flagged as an issue that the town should continue to work towards.

Looking forward, climate resiliency should be a factor considered in future infrastructure projects, particularly considering the vulnerable elderly and youth populations of Lanesborough. Increasing temperatures, and frequency and velocity of storms, will change the way that infrastructure must be designed. The question of climate change also brings up the possibility for clean energy development in Lanesborough. Although there is not an extensive history of clean energy development in the town, clean energy exists in town and is an option for town development that would diversify the economy while investing in the future of the next generation.

Another area to look at is programming for the elderly. According to the Town Report (2017), Section: Council on Aging⁴⁴, there currently exists a Transportation Program that drives seniors to appointments and takes them food shopping and to social events. This allows seniors with limited access and those in need of wheelchair accessible transportation to continue to participate in everyday activities. There also exists a Volunteer Tax Write off program which offers seniors over the age of 60 a property tax break in exchange for service to the Town (this includes, for example, volunteer work in the elementary school, with a recycling program, in the town hall, and/or in the town library). This is great program to highlight in that it encourages community inclusion and returns to the elderly of the community a sense of independence and self-respect. We recommend these services become more widely known, and that the Senior Newsletter become more widely distributed, particularly by mail. Affordable housing for the

⁴⁴https://www.lanesborough-ma.gov/vertical/sites/%7B35069B63-55EF-4033-982E-FE5C4BF36433%7D/uploads/Lanesborough_Town_Report.pdf

elderly is another important component of retaining citizens in Lanesborough. As the population trends towards older demographics, it is important to make Lanesborough an inclusive environment with housing available for everybody-- including residents who are restricted by a fixed income.

Part VII: Conclusion and Future Directions

Our recommendations for economic development in Lanesborough are all interconnected, and thus require a multifaceted strategy for their implementation. All three components of our main recommendations-- creating a town center, highlighting agriculture, and promoting outdoor recreation-- draw in users who may be interested in the other components of the Lanesborough plan. For instance, when a visitor is inclined to stop at a town center that showcases farmers markets or has a space for an indoor marketplace, this visitor can then be directed to local farms and stables in the area. Agriculture and outdoor recreation are oftentimes tailored to the same type of tourist, and thus sometimes share a client base. By (re)developing a town center, agriculture will benefit from improved visibility. This in turn could bring in tourists who may also be interested in outdoor recreation. The increase in tourism will raise more money for the town, which can then be directed into maintaining-- and improving-- the downtown space, the agricultural economy, and access to outdoor recreation. Such a vision for a cohesive Lanesborough is what has guided our interconnected recommendations.

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Appendix A:

Background

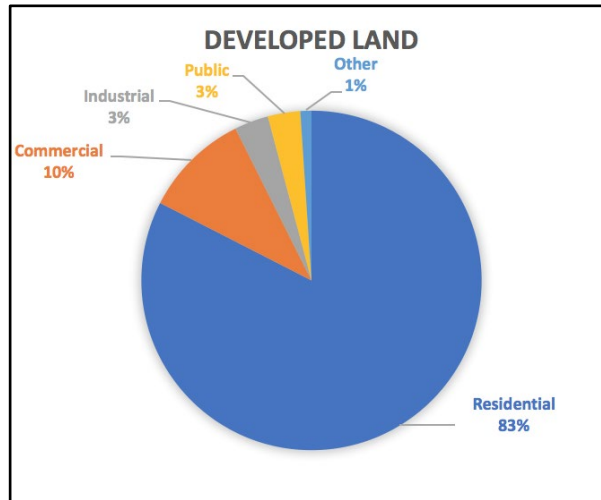
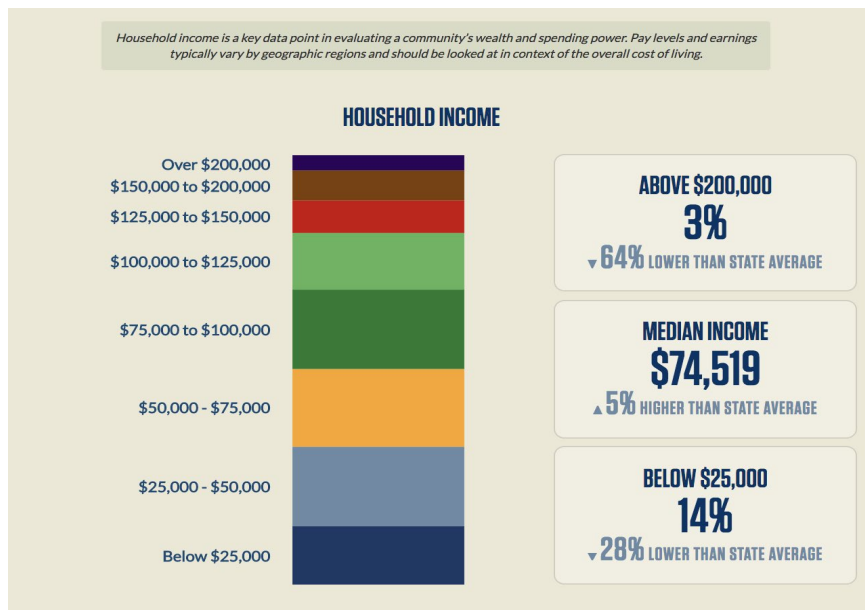
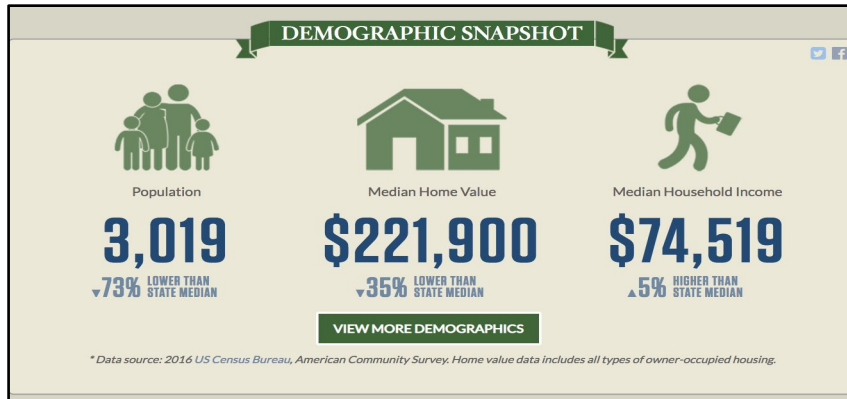
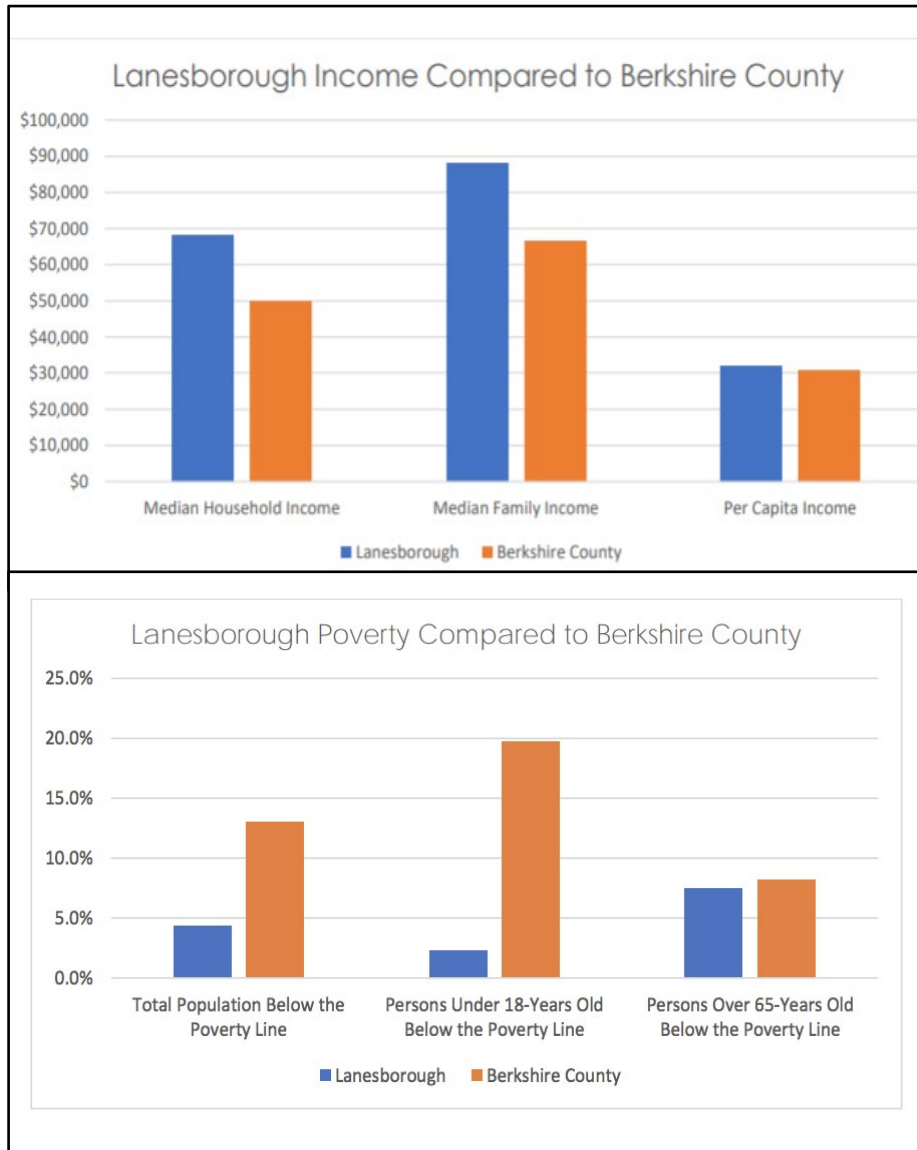


Figure 1: 83% of developed land in Lanesborough is residential (Source: EDP, 2017)



Figures 2.1 and 2.2: The total population of Lanesborough is 3,019 people. The median household income is \$74,519 and median family income is \$87,989. (Source: Cleargov, 2016)



Figures 3 and 4: Compared to Berkshire County, Lanesborough is more affluent with higher incomes and fewer people living below the poverty line (Sources: U. S. Census 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, as presented in Lanesborough Economic Development Plan, 2017).

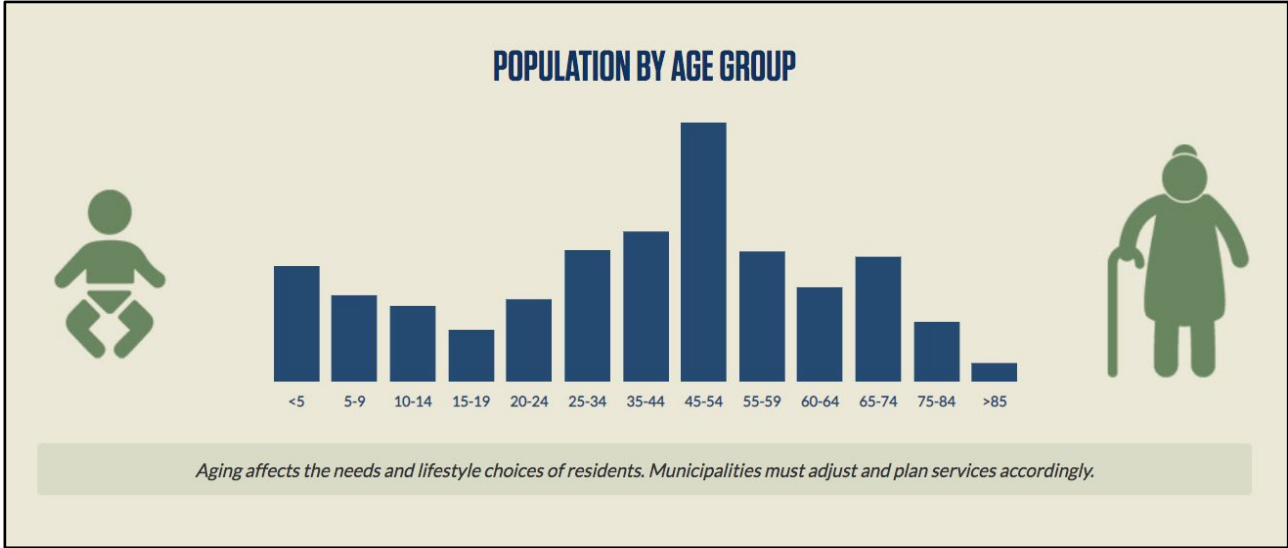


Figure 5: According to the Lanesborough Council on Aging, 1/3 of the Lanesborough population is elderly, or above the age of 55. School-aged children (those aged 6-18), make up 13% of the population. (Source: Cleargov, 2016)

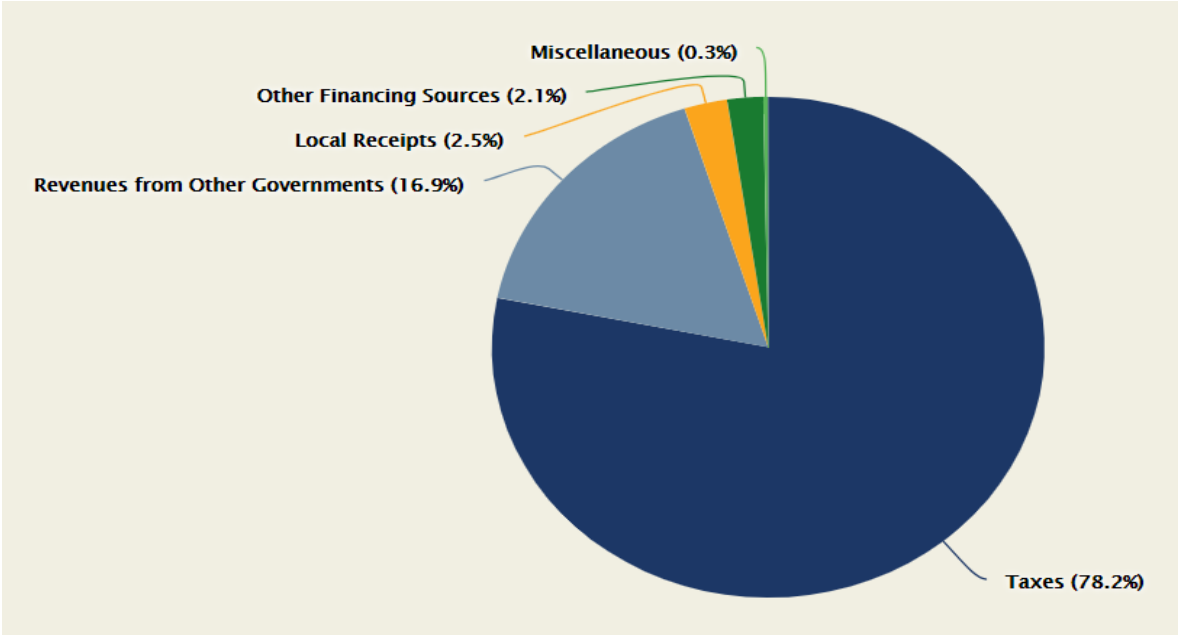


Figure 6: Breakdown of FY17 revenues (\$10.5M) indicate that 78.2% come from taxes.

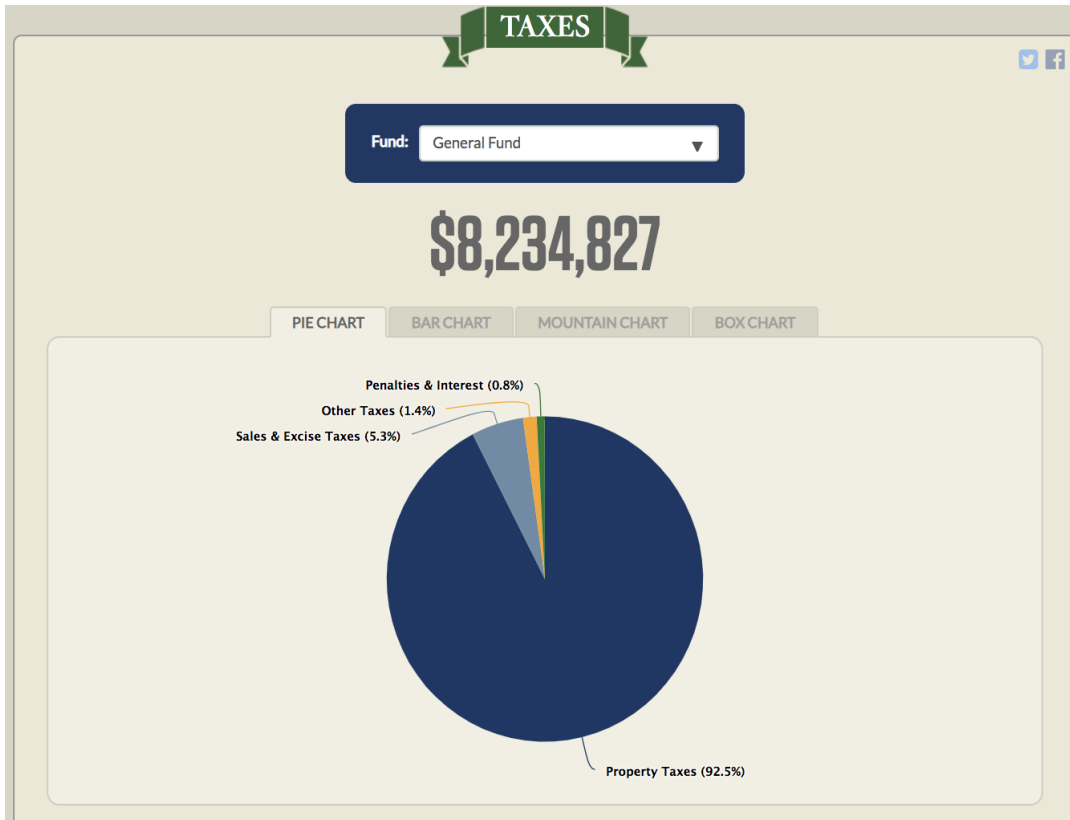


Figure 7: Breakdown of FY17 tax revenues (\$8.2M) indicate that 92.5% come from property taxes.

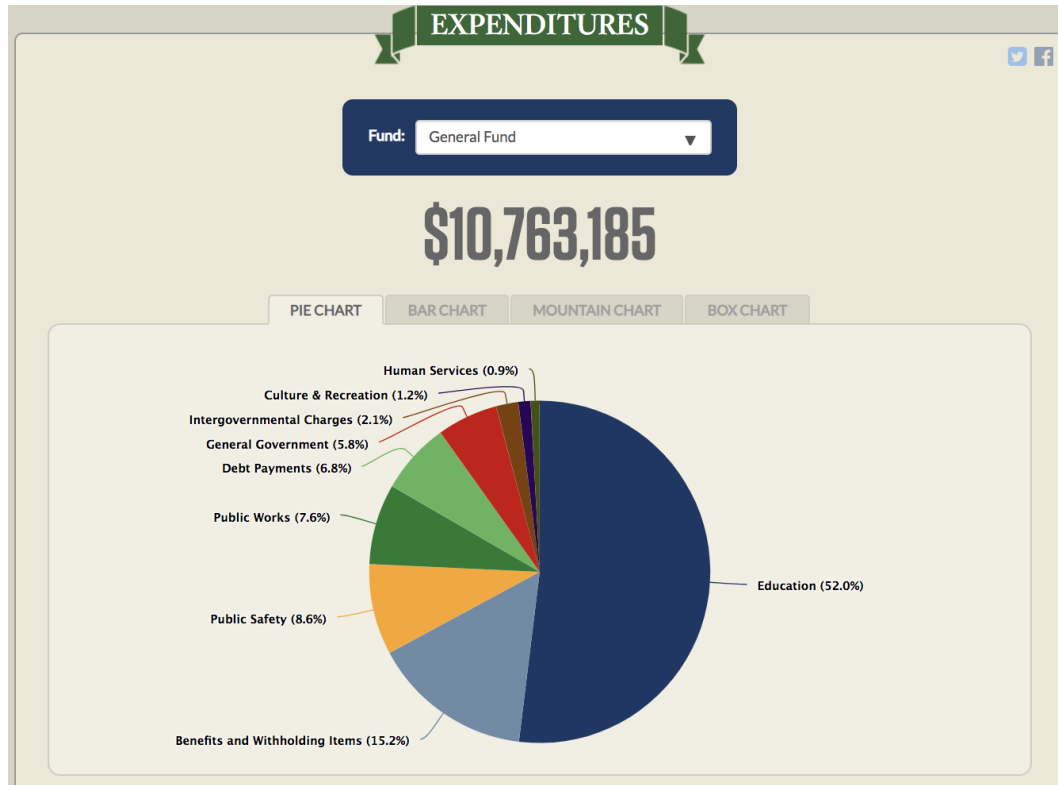


Figure 8: Breakdown of FY17 expenses (\$10.8M) indicate that 52% go to education.

Appendix B:

Geographic Information System (GIS)

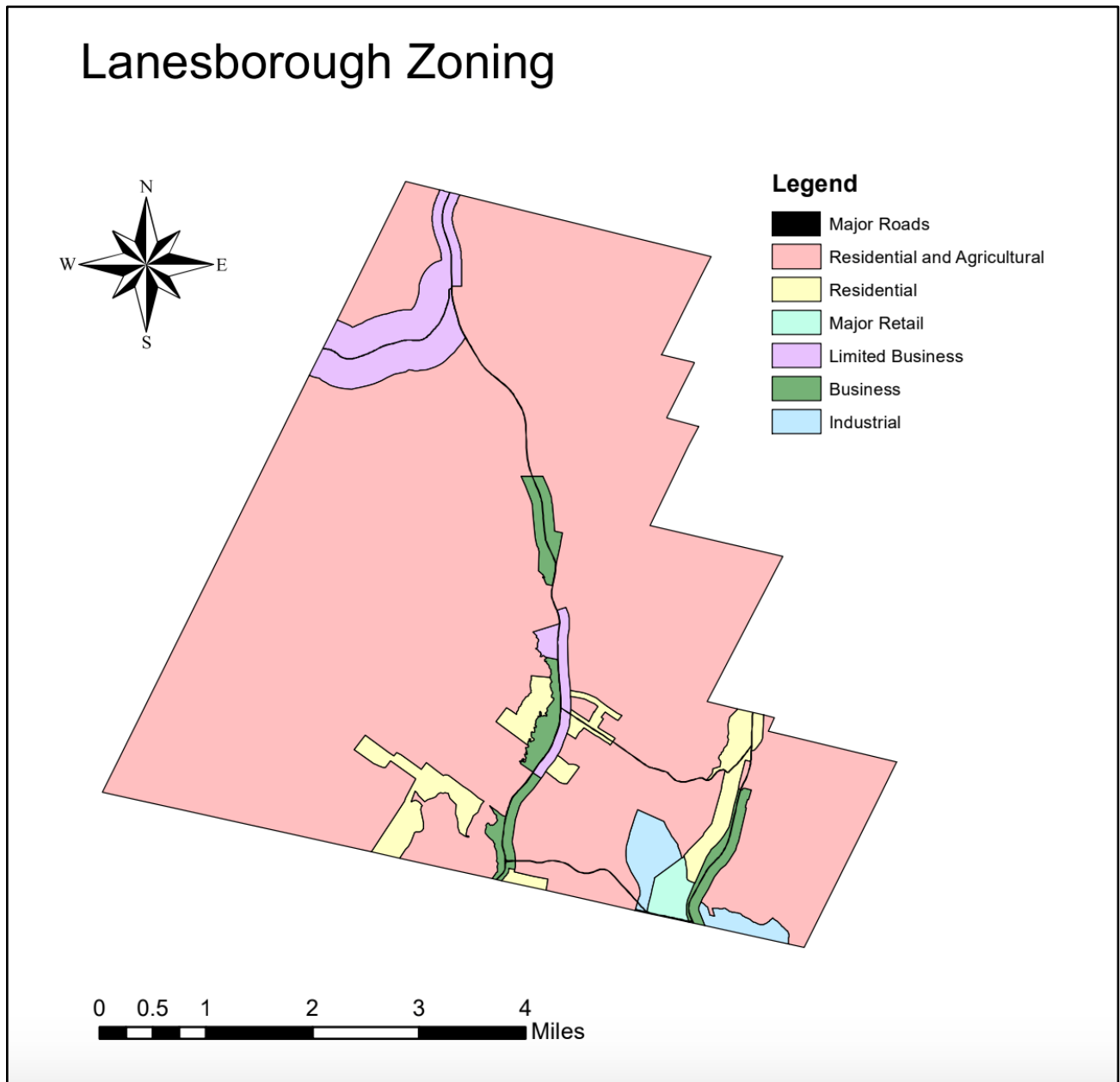
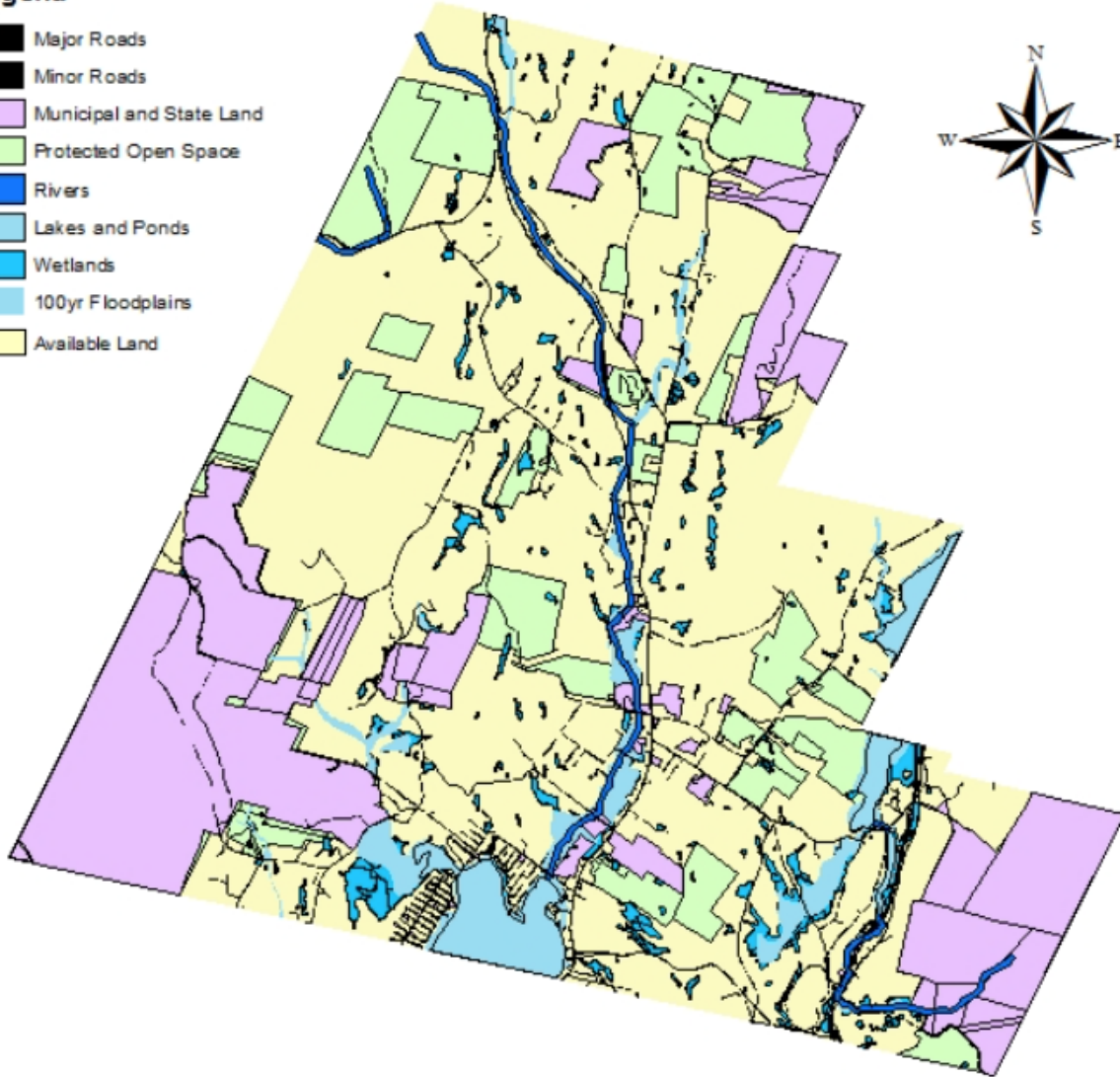


Figure 1: Zoning in Lanesborough, MA as of 2017.

Lanesborough Absolute Constraints

Legend

- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Municipal and State Land
- Protected Open Space
- Rivers
- Lakes and Ponds
- Wetlands
- 100yr Floodplains
- Available Land



0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Miles

Figure 2: Absolute constraints in Lanesborough, MA according to zoning bylaws.

Lanesborough Absolute and Partial Constraints

Legend

- Slope over 25 Percent
- Zone I (Wellhead Protection)
- Zone II (Wellhead Protection)
- WPA (Wellhead Protection)
- Forest Stewardship Program
- Rivers (200')
- Wetlands (100')
- Major Roads
- Minors Roads
- Municipal and State Land
- Protected Open Space
- Lakes and Ponds
- 100yr Floodplains
- Available Land

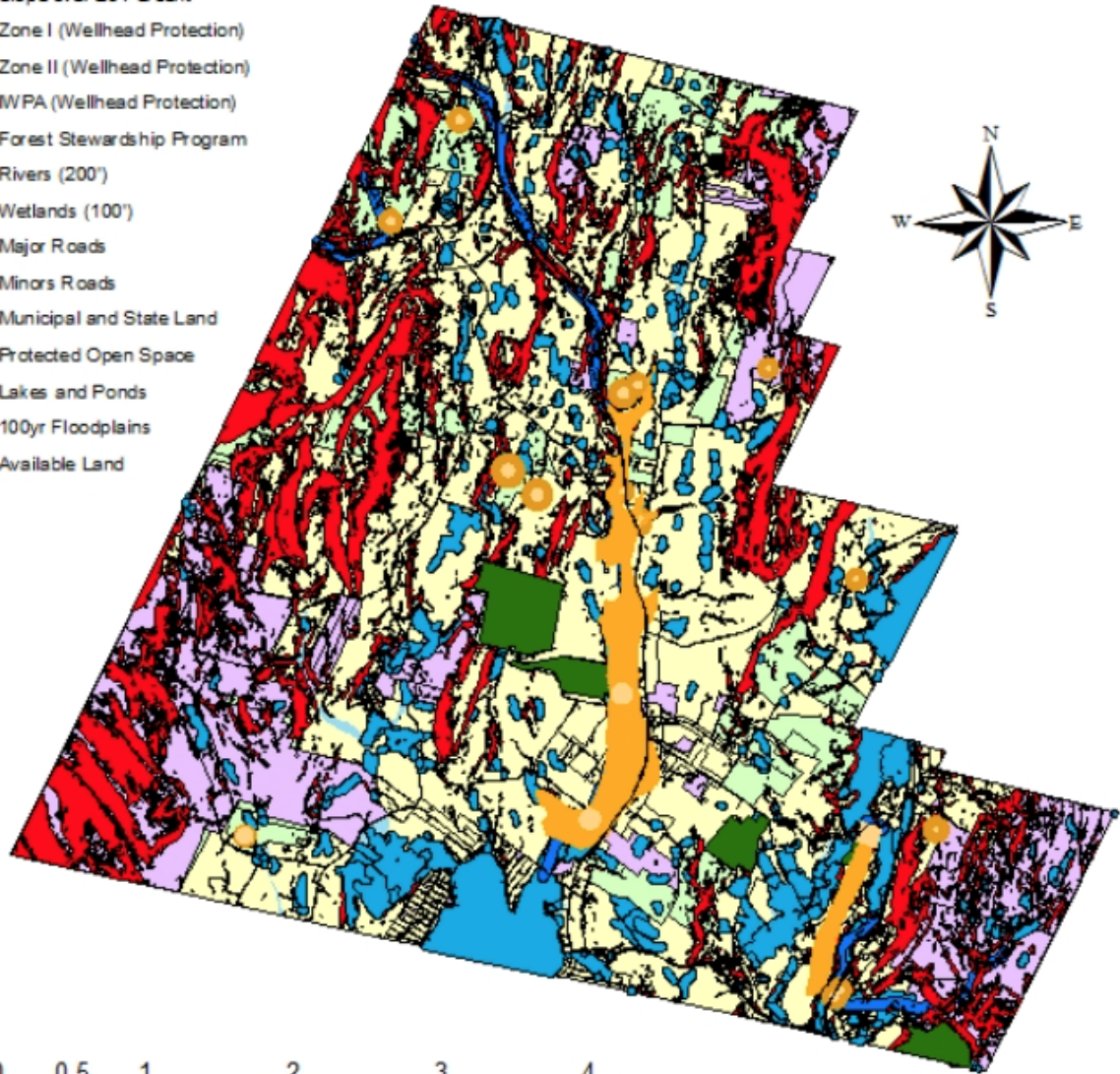


Figure 3: Partial constraints in Lanesborough, MA according to zoning bylaws.

Lanesborough Final NULA by Zone

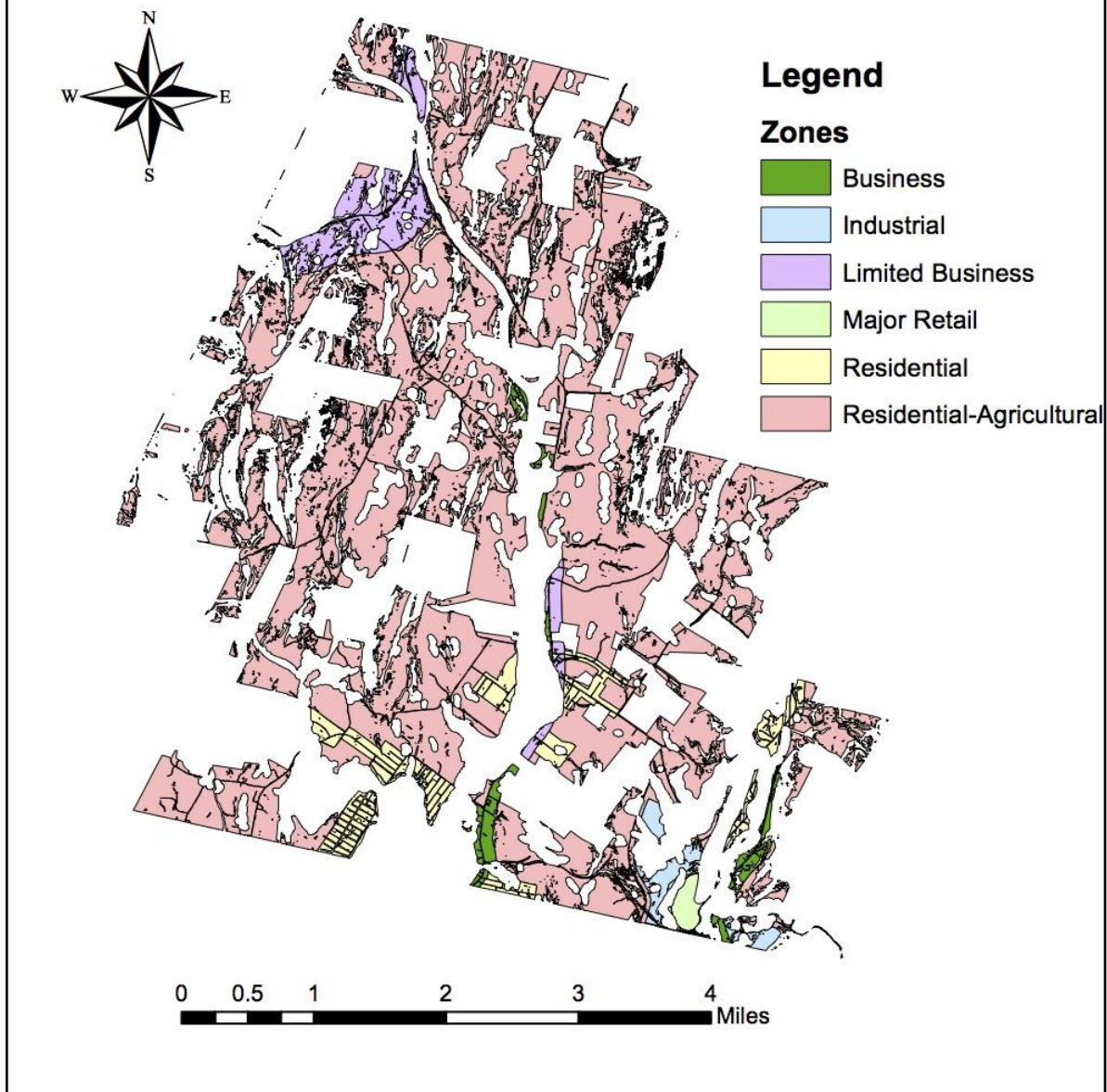


Figure 4: Net Usable Land Available after absolute and partial constraints by zone in Lanesborough, MA.

Appendix C:

Visits, Meetings, and Interviews

Meetings Attended:

- 1) Berkshire Regional Planning Commission on the Berkshire Mall (October 09, 2018)
- 2) Economic Development Committee Board (November 15, 2018)
- 3) Planning Board (November 19, 2018)

Visits to Lanesborough:

- 1) Town Visit to gain familiarity (November 02, 2018)
- 2) Interview with Patricia Hubbard (Mt. Greylock Campsite, November 02, 2018)
- 3) Berkshire Mall Visit (November 13, 2018)
- 4) Final Presentation (December 12, 2018)

Total of 7 trips to Lanesborough



Economic Development Committee Meeting at Lanesborough Town Hall on November 15, 2018

SWOT Analysis for Lanesborough, 2017

<p align="center">Preserve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ History & heritage of Lanesborough ❖ High quality K-12 schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ all Lanesborough schools are above average Level 1 schools) ❖ High Quality of Life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Low crime rate ➢ Low traffic volumes ➢ Ease of mobility ➢ Great water quality ➢ Healthy, clean air ➢ Reasonable housing costs ❖ Outdoor Lifestyle Hiking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Biking ➢ Skiing ➢ Lakes ➢ Golf courses ❖ Open space ❖ Premier outdoor spaces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Mount Greylock ➢ Balance Rock State Park ➢ Ramblewild ❖ Berkshire Mall ❖ Regal Berkshire Mall Theater ❖ Convenient central location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Arts & culture (Multiple museums, Tanglewood, etc.) ➢ Transportation (Easily accessible: Albany and Bradley International Airports, Amtrak, Metro-North) ❖ Organic foods ❖ Horses & stables 	<p align="center">Eliminate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Neglected/dilapidated housing ❖ Neglected/dilapidated business properties ❖ Overhead utilities ❖ Septic systems ❖ Out migration – especially young people ❖ Unsightly signs ❖ Vacancies at the mall ❖ Duplicative services ❖ Private garbage pick-up
<p align="center">Achieve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ High-Speed Broadband Internet Service – fully connected (96%) ❖ Attractive Route 7 corridor ❖ Access to transportation – air & rail ❖ Sewer and water infrastructure improvements ❖ Increase the commercial tax base (lower the reliance on residential property tax) ❖ Senior housing (all types – independent and assisted living) ❖ Better access to healthcare ❖ Food Co-op ❖ Agri-business with a regional focus ❖ Master Plan 	<p align="center">Avoid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Incompatible development (Heavy industry • Waste • Big box store • Adult shops • Unscreened developments of any type) ❖ Overdevelopment near Pontoosuc Lake ❖ Unbalanced development (keep an appropriate ratio housing: commercial) ❖ Gas transmission lines ❖ Fast food restaurants with drive-through on Route 7 (avoid traffic issues) ❖ Stand-alone ATMs ❖ Heavy traffic on Route 7

Figure 1: SWOT Analysis conducted in 2017 by the Lanesborough Economic Development Committee⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Source: EDP, 2017: https://www.lanesborough-ma.gov/vertical/sites/%7B35069B63-55EF-4033-982E-FE5C4BF36433%7D/uploads/Economic_Development_Plan_2017.pdf



Figures 2 and 3: Chart of prioritized needs and opportunities for the town of Lanesborough, as identified by the Economic Development committee. This chart was determined by the Committee's analysis of the SWOT Analysis.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Source: EDP, 2017: https://www.lanesborough-ma.gov/vertical/sites/%7B35069B63-55EF-4033-982E-FE5C4BF36433%7D/uploads/Economic_Development_Plan_2017.pdf

Sample Email to Interviewees:

Dear _____,

I hope you are doing well.

My name is Jessica Munoz, and I am working on a class project with two other Williams College students cc'd here (Korinna and Kristen).

We received your contact information from Professor Sarah Gardner. We are working with Laura Brennan and Andrew Groff to create an analysis in order to aid in town revitalization and economic stimulation of Lanesborough.

We believe that input from stakeholders is crucial to ensure proper understanding of the economic climate and community needs. We would love to set up a phone interview or in-person interview, whichever works best for you. If you want, we can send you a list of the questions we will ask beforehand.

Would you happen to be available on _____ or _____ from 1 to 4 pm? The interview should last around 30 minutes. If those dates/times do not work for you, please let us know which dates do.

Thank you for your time.

Best,
Jessica, Korinna, and Kristen

Interview Questions

Municipal Official (Paid or Volunteer) of Lanesborough

1. What is your current position? Can you give me a short description of your role?
2. How many years have you held your current position? How many years have you held a government position?
3. Do you think the current state of Lanesborough's economy is conducive to business growth and/or resident attraction/retention? Why or why not?
4. Have you seen any changes in the economic climate since you've started working in Lanesborough? For example, is the economy more or less favorable to business growth?
5. Communication:
 - a. In your opinion, how can the town of Lanesborough help improve communication between municipal officials/Board of Selectmen and townspeople? (e.g. e-newsletter, website, social media)
 - b. Between municipal officials/Board of Selectmen and business leaders?
6. If Lanesborough was to diversify its economy to help business growth and/or resident attraction/retention, in what sectors would you see this happening? (e.g. agriculture, entertainment, etc.)
7. What do you think the Town of Lanesborough can do to improve marketing and branding strategies to boost the town's economic revitalization efforts? (e.g. town square, entry signs/logos, social media presence)
8. If the town were to organize small events or festivals to increase cohesion among residents and encourage interactions between residents and local businesses, would you be willing to work with the town in organizing and/or financially supporting or sponsoring these festivals? (some examples of activities include Wood-Chopping contests, Tree-climbing contests, Hiking races, Scavenger hunts, Photo contests, etc.)
9. What do you think the town of Lanesborough can do to improve the aesthetics of the Route 7 corridor? (e.g. adding attractive street lights, adding bike lanes, creating entry signs)
10. Are there any changes to taxes or zoning laws that you think could lead to improvements in Lanesborough's economy?
11. Do you have any additional comments or questions?

Business Owner/Worker in Lanesborough

1. What is your business name or what business do you work for? Can you give me a short description of your role?
2. How many years have you had your business or how many years have you worked here? Have you always been located in the place you are currently in?
3. If you own your business, what was your experience of opening up in Lanesborough? Did you consider other locations in the Berkshires?
4. Do you think Lanesborough's current economic climate is conducive to business growth and/or resident attraction/retention? Why or why not?
5. How has Lanesborough's economy changed from when you first started your business? For example, is the economy more or less favorable to business growth?
6. Communication:
 - a. In your opinion, how can the town of Lanesborough help improve communication between business leaders and townspeople? (e.g. e-newsletter, website, social media)
 - b. Between business leaders and municipal officials/Board of Selectmen in Lanesborough?
7. If the town were to organize small events or festivals to increase cohesion among residents and encourage interactions between residents and local businesses, would you be willing to work with the town in organizing and/or financially supporting or sponsoring these festivals? (some examples of activities include Wood-Chopping contests, Tree-climbing contests, Hiking races, Scavenger hunts, Photo contests, etc.)
8. (For farmers in particular): Given the enormously agricultural nature of Lanesborough, if the town were to organize small events or festivals to increase cohesion among residents and encourage interactions between residents and local farms, would you be willing to work with the town in organizing and/or financially supporting or sponsoring these festivals? (some examples of activities could include a Pie festival, Produce festival, Honey and Jam festival, Apple Festival; Corn Festival, Craft fairs)
9. If Lanesborough was to diversify its economy to help business growth and/or resident attraction/retention, in what sectors would you see this happening? (e.g. agriculture, entertainment, etc.)
10. What do you think the Town of Lanesborough can do to improve marketing and branding strategies to boost the town's economic revitalization efforts? (e.g. town square, entry signs/logos, social media presence)
11. What do you think the town of Lanesborough can do to improve the aesthetics of the Route 7 corridor? (e.g. adding attractive street lights, adding bike lanes, creating entry signs)
12. Are there any changes to taxes or zoning laws that you think could lead to improvements in Lanesborough's economy?
13. Do you have any additional comments or questions?

Resident of Lanesborough

1. How long have you lived in Lanesborough? Have you always lived in the place you are currently in?
2. Do you work in Lanesborough or outside of town? Can you give me a short description of your role? If you work outside of Lanesborough, is there any particular reason why you do?
3. What was your experience of moving to Lanesborough? Did you consider other locations in the Berkshires?
4. Do you think Lanesborough's current economic climate is conducive to business growth and/or resident attraction/retention? Why or why not?
5. What is your experience in living in Lanesborough so far? Has Lanesborough changed from when you first came to Lanesborough? For example, is the economy more or less favorable to business growth and/or resident attraction/retention?
6. Communication:
 - a. In your opinion, how can the town of Lanesborough help improve communication between townspeople and business leaders? (e.g. e-newsletter, website, social media)
 - b. Between townspeople and municipal officials/Board of Selectmen in Lanesborough?
7. If the town were to organize small events or festivals to increase cohesion among residents and encourage interactions between residents and local businesses, would you attend? What would you like to see? (some examples of activities include Wood-Chopping contests, Tree-climbing contests, Hiking races, Scavenger hunts, Photo contests, Pie festival, Produce festival, Honey and Jam festival, Apple Festival; Corn Festival, Craft fairs)
8. If Lanesborough was to diversify its economy to help business growth and/or resident attraction/retention, in what sectors would you see this happening? (e.g. agriculture, entertainment, etc.)
9. What do you think the Town of Lanesborough can do to improve marketing and branding strategies to boost the town's economic revitalization efforts? (e.g. town square, entry signs/logos, social media presence)
10. What do you think the town of Lanesborough can do to improve the aesthetics of the Route 7 corridor? (e.g. adding attractive street lights, adding bike lanes, creating entry signs)
11. Are there any changes to taxes or zoning laws that you think could lead to improvements in Lanesborough's economy?
12. Do you have any additional comments or questions?

Interviewees:

Berkshire Mall Business Owners, *A Dollar, PhoneBros, DJ's Gifts*

Eammon Coughlin, *Senior Planner at Berkshire Regional Planning Commission*

Michael Gallagher, *Owner of Square Roots Farm*

Mackenzie Greer, *Associate of Berkshire Natural Resources Council*

Lee Hague, *President of Friends of Pontoosuc Lake*

Barb Hassan, *Chair of Economic Development Committee (EDC)*

Josh Hochberg, *Recent Homeowner*

Patricia Hubbard, *Owner of Mt. Greylock Campsite Park*

Marya LaRoche, *Administrative Manager at Amenitek*

Lance Madewell, *Owner of Truly Independent*

Gwen Miller, *Recent Homeowner and Lanesborough Planning Board*

Stacy Parsons, *Chair of Conservation Commission*

Kelli Robins, *Lanesborough Town Manager*

Karen Ross, *Vice President of Taconic Hiking Club*

Mark Siegers, *Chairman of the Council on Aging*

Jim Schultz, *Co-Owner of Red Shirt Farm and Agricultural Commission*

Cory, *Property Manager and Caretaker at Lakehouse of the Berkshires*

Tim Sorrell, *Chief of Police in Lanesborough, Recreation Committee, and Resident*

Jamie Szczepaniak, *Resident of Williamstown and Planning Board*

Ron Tinkham, *Chairman of Board of Appeals and Member of the Planning Board*

Kevin Towle, *EDC, Energy Committee, Zoning Board, Department of Public Works*

David Vogel, *EDC and Conservation Commission*

Tom Voisin, *Retired Schoolteacher, EDC*

Deborah A. Wall, *Owner of Wedgewood Stables*

Total of 26 interviews

Figure 3: Themes in Interviews

In order to quantify our primarily qualitative survey results, we decided to tally each time someone mentioned a particular idea or theme. In total we interviewed 26 people but represented here are the first 23.

Theme	# of people who mentioned	Notes
Berkshire Mall = +	3	At least 2 of these people were those who had stores in the mall
Berkshire Mall = -	7	
People complaining about the tax rate	10	
Schools = +/- a draw	7	At least one (maybe 2 people) mentioned though how the population is not that young so perhaps diverting too much money to the schools...
Store fronts need to be renovated= dilapidated	3	
Route 7 - Town should add: 1. Slow down road 2. flowerbeds/plants/trees 3. New signage 4. Bike lanes 5. Pedestrian crossing and sidewalks 6. Street lights	1. 3 2. 3 3. 3 4. 4 5. 2 6. 3	
Need for town identity 1. Create logo for town 2. Map at Post-Office is a nice example 3. Motto for town	2 1. 3 2. 2 3. 1	
Accessibility/Transportation, and lack thereof	2	
Need for affordable housing	2	

Revitalizing supermarket area	2	People discussed what they wanted to see (revamped supermarket, town center, drug store, community center.)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Need for town center/downtown area 2. Need for main street 3. Coffee shop 4. Sandwich shop 5. Grocery store 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 6 2. 4 3. 2 4. 1 5. 2 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need for community centers of all kinds 1. Senior center 2. Youth center 3. Performing arts center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 1. 4 2. 3 3. 2 	Combinations were also mentioned, like a center for performances
Lack of cohesive sense of community	3	<p>-Community is found among churchgoers and people who have kids in the school system or who work in the school system</p> <p>-Also, apparently a bit difficult to break into the social scene if not a native/originally from Lanesborough</p> <p>-But at the same time, people care</p>

Figure 4: Lanesborough + and - as Mentioned by Interviewees

Our interviewees identified positives (strengths) and negatives (weaknesses) of the town. They are provided below in chart form. The bolded number in each mention how many people out of the 23 we asked this question mentioned the following positive (+) or negative (-) of Lanesborough:

Lanesborough Positives/Draws	Lanesborough Negatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Location and Natural Beauty → 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Campgrounds in Lanesborough voted best in Berkshire county by Berkshire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A Lot of bureaucracy, paperwork = slow

eagle	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greylock → 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No orientation/welcome for new businesses/homeowners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rich history 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to understand certain applications & lack of communication from town hall → 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single Tax rate = good for businesses → 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of amenities (4), No: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Town water ○ Sewage ○ Garbage ○ Gas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm tax reduction is an option → 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage regulations are too strict → 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have local police and fire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worried about certain businesses i.e.: Dollar General <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Govt should vote/have a permit process for what businesses can come in and where → 2

Figure 5: Recommendations based on Interviews/Interviewee Support/Wants

Although some of these themes were identified and incorporated into our top 3 recommendations for the town, in *Appendix C, Figure 3*, we generated a list of specific recommendations based around our interviews, that are rooted in interviewee support and desires. The bolded number represents the amount of people who supported/specifically mentioned a certain solution.

Recommendation	Support	Notes
<p>Town Communication, Connection, and Cohesion is very important!</p> <p>1. Need updated list of residents</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. (<i>emails and phone numbers</i>), that is available for all → kind of like a <i>White Pages</i> (should be online -- on Town Website -- as well as sent annually, for the older population)</p> <p>2. Newsletter</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. Need emails of businesses and residents, as well as the addresses of the more senior members/less tech savvy to send information updated</p> <p>3. Website Redevelopment/Online Presence</p> <p>4. Business to Business Events</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. People really</p>	<p>1. 2</p> <p>2. 9</p> <p>3. 5</p> <p>4. 7</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● People need to and want to know what the government is doing-- they want updates without having to go to Town Hall ● Should include a list of useful contact information in every email ● Monthly updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Town Hall meeting update ○ Events in town ○ Events outside of town ○ Meetings ○ Valuable information ● Should encourage people to go on website, where explain certain concerns (i.e.: why it is not possible for the Town to provide sewage)

like these		
Town-wide internet connection	4	
More full-time municipal/Town Hall workers		-Understaffed - Lanesborough doesn't have a full-time person working on community development unlike its neighbors. Pittsfield has even hired someone to reach out directly to businesses.
Be more sustainable! Alternative energy!		Always a good thing
Highlight Agricultural Sector	3	Should highlight/encourage certain things on the website, like buying from local farms through CSA/supporting local farms
Highlight Greylock	4	
Get young people involved	2	-Programming at town hall? If are discussing anything about the school, invite students to hear what they think! -Park clean-ups, etc.
Highlight Entertainment 1. Recreation/Outdoor	1. 9 2. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This question was asked later, so the

<p>Tourism</p> <p>2. Indoor tourism</p> <p>3. Seasonal festivals</p> <p> a. Already have events at local farms → highlight them!</p> <p> b. Used to have boat parades (stopped by a lot of work for volunteers, not by of lack of interest--- maybe compensate volunteers or have a town hall employee be involved in planning town events</p> <p> c. Have brought people for concerts → very well attended</p> <p> d. Should have events for different holidays (as recommended by one person) and should be consistent with the events</p> <p>4. Retail</p>	<p>3. 7</p> <p>4. 2</p>	<p>numbers are not representative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Important to point out that everyone responded positively about festivals and competitions once the question was introduced; majority wanted to be involved, and were interested in helping organize/sponsoring, depending on the time and event
<p>Improve Aesthetics of Route 2 with recommendations/ideas given above → people need to see/imagine Lanesborough as</p>		

a wonderful place to live and be		
Housing and Programming for the elderly		1/3 the population is 55+-- need to take care of them

Appendix D: Brochures

Working Farms in Williamstown		OPEN TO PUBLIC	By Appointment	Bakery	Beef	Berries	Cheese	Chicken	Christmas Trees	CSA*	Dairy	Eggs	Farm Visits	Firewood	Fruit	Hay	Hiking / XC Skiing	Horseback Riding	Horse-Drawn Rides	Maple Syrup	Nursery Plants	Pork	Straw	Vegetables	Volunteering	Wool / Fiber / Yarn
1	Bonnie Lea Farm 511 North St. 413-441-6349	✓	✓																							
2	Caretaker Farm 1210 Hancock Rd 413-458-9691	✓		✓																						
3	Clover Hill Farm 249 Adams Rd 413-458-3376	✓																								
4	Chenall Farm 481 Luce Rd 413-458-4910	✓																								
5	Cricket Creek Farm 1255 Orlong Rd 413-458-5888	✓																								
6	East Mountain Farm 582 Henderson Rd 413-261-7291	✓																								
7	Fairfields Farm Jay Calusha 413-822-7830	✓																								
8	Haley Farm Rich Haley & Carl Sweet 413-458-3971	✓																								
9	Justin Jennings 413-684-4659	✓																								
10	Peace Valley Farm Bill & Susan Simson 413-458-4066	✓																								
11	Blair Farm 2138 Hancock Rd 413-458-5402	✓																								
12	Ridgeview Farm Bill Young 413-458-3424	✓																								
13	Sleepmeadow Farm 1491 Hancock Rd 413-458-5036	✓																								
14	Sweet Brook Farm 580 Orlong Rd 413-894-4912	✓																								
15	Wendling Farm Avenil Cook 413-458-5326	✓																								

*Community Supported Agriculture -- members or subscribers pledge ahead of the farmer's producing season for a share of anticipated harvest, which is distributed as weekly shares once production harvest begins.

SUPPORT WILLIAMSTOWN AGRICULTURE

BUY LOCAL FARM PRODUCTS
When you buy locally, you support farm families, help preserve Williamstown's rural character, and give a boost to the local economy. Produce is fresh and healthy when you purchase near the source. Frequenting restaurants and markets that sell and prepare locally produced food is another way to support local agriculture. For a list of those businesses, visit BerkshireGrown.org.

UNDERSTAND THAT FARMING IS A BUSINESS
Get to know your farming neighbors. While we are all responsible for being good neighbors, it sometimes means tolerating noise, dust and odors associated with agricultural production.

WATCH OUT FOR FARM TRAFFIC
Farm vehicles are not built for speed. If you get behind a tractor, be patient and share the road, realizing that farm machinery is a necessary and important part of a farming business. Give the farmer a thumbs up to show your support for Williamstown agriculture.

HELP AGRICULTURE BENEFIT WILLIAMSTOWN

Farms provide a stable tax base at low cost. Support efforts to protect farms through land preservation programs such as the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program.

RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY
A farm can look like a nice place to go for a walk or ride, but there can be hazards associated with a farm operation. Gain permission from the farmer first. Respect posted signs and gates.

VOLUNTEER
The Williamstown Agricultural Commission can always use volunteers to promote agriculture and protect our rural character.

WEBSITE
Check our website frequently for updates on *Buy Local* initiatives and Williamstown agricultural news.
www.WilliamstownFarms.com

OUR PURPOSE

The Agricultural Commission supports commercial agriculture and other farming activities in the Town of Williamstown. The Commission's duties include:

- Encourage and promote Williamstown agriculture.
- Promote agricultural-based economic opportunities in Town.
- Act as mediators, advocates, educators, and negotiators on farming issues.
- Work for the preservation of agricultural lands.
- Advise the Town's many different commissions on issues involving agriculture.
- Pursue all initiatives appropriate to creating a sustainable agricultural community.

www.WilliamstownFarms.com
or on Facebook

Williamstown Agricultural Commission

Figure 1. Williamstown Farm Map (an example Lanesborough could look at when creating one)

LANESBOROUGH FARM MAP

- Encourage and promote agriculture and other farming activities
- Promote agricultural-based economic opportunities
- Work for the preservation of agricultural lands

1. Red Shirt Farm	8. R & R Wirtes Grain
2. Lakeview Orchard	9. Wedgewood Stables
3. Square Roots Farm	10. Equinius Farm
4. Mountain View Farm	11. Echo Farm
5. Gray Raven Farm	12. Four Seasons Stables
6. Whispering Pines	
7. Sky Dance Farm	

★ = Lanesborough Farmers Market
(Berkshire Mall Parking Lot)

FOR MORE INFO VISIT:
lanesborough-ma.gov

Figure 2. Sample brochure for Lanesborough Farm Map.

Lanesborough OUTDOOR RECREATION




YOUR ESCAPE
IN THE BERKSHIRES

lanesborough-ma.gov

YOUR PLACE FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

**GATEWAY TO MT. GREYLOCK,
THE HIGHEST PEAK IN MA!**

BALANCE ROCK STATE PARK

ASHUWILLTICOOK RAIL TRAIL





OTHER ACTIVITIES:

BAKER'S GOLF CENTER
DONNYBROOK COUNTRY CLUB
RAMBLEWILD AERIAL OBSTACLE
(ZIPLINE AND ROPE COURSES)
SKYLINE COUNTRY CLUB



WATER ACTIVITIES:

BERRY POND
CHESHIRE RESERVOIR
PONTOOSUC LAKE
PUBLIC BOAT RENTALS
(IN PITTSFIELD)



**TRAILS CAN BE USED FOR
HIKING, MOUNTAIN
BIKING, SKIING,
SNOWSHOEING, OR
WALKING**

THE BOULDERS
CONSTITUTIONAL HILL
KESSLER ROAD PRESERVE
POTTER MOUNTAIN (ACCESS TO
TACONIC CREST TRAIL)



**VISIT FARMS FOR CIDER DONUTS,
MEATS, PRODUCE, OR FRUIT**

LAKEVIEW ORCHARDS
MOUNTAIN VIEW
RED SHIRT FARM
SKY DANCE FARM
SQUARE ROOTS
WEDGEWOOD STABLE

MASSTRAILS.COM/
LANESBOROUGH

**VISIT
LANESBOROUGH!**

Figure 3. Sample brochure for Lanesborough Outdoor Recreation.