

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Town of Hancock

2003



Prepared By



This document was prepared with funding from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Executive Office of Transportation and Construction, Department of Housing and Community Development, and Department of Economic Development.

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**Berkshire Regional
Planning Commission**

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Acknowledgements

Hancock's Community Development Plan was developed out of the hard work and dedication of many residents and friends of the Town of Hancock.

Beginning back in 2001, the support and guidance of Selectboard members Sherman Derby, Don Rancotti, and Bob Smith was essential in getting the Community Development Plan Process started.

Town Clerk Genie Daniels was always available to field questions and offer administrative help and deserves many thanks.

The Assessor's office, the building inspector, and health inspector were helpful in providing essential data about the town which is contained within the Plan.

Leslie Reed-Evans and the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation was extremely helpful to the committee, meeting with the committee and attending the town forum to offer her valuable expertise on an issue of great concern to local Residents.

All of the Hancock residents who returned their community development plan town surveys also deserve commendation for their most important contribution.

Perhaps the greatest acknowledgement must go out to the dedicated members of the Hancock's community development advisory committee, without whom there would not be a Plan.

Members ventured out into the cold of winter and the dog days of summer to attend a series of ten meetings to confront some of the most important issues facing the town as it moves into the future. Special thanks goes out to the following committee members:

Wayne & Betsy Canedy
Nancy Cook
Kate Duffy
Brian Fairbank
Marjorie Feathers
John and Nettie Hammond
Steven Johnson
Judy Leab
Andre Rambaud
Judy Raschdorf
Jane Roberts
Bob Ronnow

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

TOWN OF HANCOCK

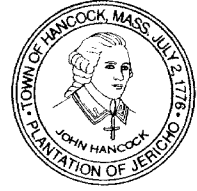
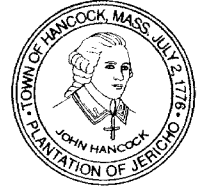


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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF HANCOCK



Introduction to the Community Development Plan Program



Introduction

Introduction

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Introduction to the Community Development Plan Program

On January 21, 2000, then Governor Paul Cellucci issued Executive Order 418, a measure designed to help communities plan for new opportunities while balancing economic development, transportation infrastructure improvements, and open space preservation.

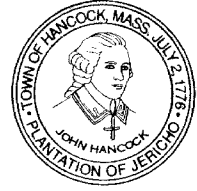
Technical assistance and grants of up to \$30,000 were made available to assist communities in producing Community Development Plans. Community Development Plans are intended to provide guidance as cities and towns consider options and avenues for future development. The plans will focus on housing, economic and community development, transportation, and open space. The plan must also include how the community will develop housing that is affordable to families and individuals across a broad range of incomes.

Hancock began the process of undertaking a Community Development Plan in 2001 after it received a build-out map and analysis showing the community at maximum development based on current zoning and state laws. A Town survey and forum were then held to discuss important issues relevant to the town and the community's vision for the future. After the forum, interested volunteers formed the Community Development Plan Advisory Committee, which met several times in 2002 and 2003 to offer community input to guide the development of a Community Development Plan for the Town.

Executive Order 418 required that the Community Development Plan cover the following four areas: affordable housing; open space and environmental resources protection; economic development and transportation. The Community Development Plan addresses how the community will accomplish its development objectives for each of the four areas.

Hancock is a unique community facing its own set of challenges, and the Plan is a documentation of these challenges. The Plan also contains recommendations from members of the community as to how to address the challenges in a manner consistent with maintaining the desired character of the community. The Community Development Plan is based on the most accurate and detailed information available by Federal, State and local resources, and is based on a vision set forth through community consensus.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF HANCOCK



Executive Summary



Executive Summary

Executive Summary
Community Development Plan Action Map

2

2-1
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Executive Summary

The Community Development Plan outlines the Town of Hancock's concerns for growth and development into the future. The process of developing the Plan began with a survey sent to Town residents, which contained a number of questions related to the residents' views on the community, natural resource protection, protection of agricultural land, affordable housing, economic development, transportation, and town services. The survey was followed by a public forum, which was held to discuss the results of the survey and gain greater detail on the overall concerns that residents have for the future of the Town. After the public forum, the Selectboard solicited members to join a committee to discuss the issues further and guide the development of the Town's Community Development Plan. Throughout each stage of this process, through the town survey, the public forum, and the several advisory committee meetings, the primary topic of discussion concerned open space and resource protection within Hancock. For this reason, the Community Development Plan focuses on issues of Open Space and Resource Protection in Hancock. In fact, the Community Development Plan contains most of the requirements of an official open space plan for the Town, including an inventory of lands of conservation interest and an action strategy for land preservation efforts within the Town. The following is a summary of the results of the plan.

Open Space and Recreation

The Town of Hancock has a wealth of farms, forests, open spaces and natural resources that are highly valued by town residents. Residents of town, large and small and landowners alike, wish to preserve the value of these lands and resources, but also wish to maintain control over their land and decisions that are made concerning their property. There are many different options the town may take to encourage land preservation. Regulations such as the Scenic Mountains Act are one method that was analyzed and considered in this Plan in great detail. This analysis ultimately led to the conclusion that land preservation through regulation is not desirable in Hancock. First, introducing additional regulation in Hancock is viewed as compromising the individual landowner's ability to make decisions concerning their land. Second, many landowners are not averse to preserving their lands, and in fact, many have been preserving them from development for years. Many landowners are simply not aware of the numerous options and programs for land preservation that may be tailored to their individual needs. For these reasons, the committee recommends a voluntary program of land preservation that is supported by education and assistance to landowners by staff from the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation. The strategy for land preservation efforts in Hancock is summarized as follows:

- Build greater collaboration between the Town and the Williamstown Rural Land Foundation (WRLF)
- Inform Town residents of resources available at the WRLF to assist landowners in protecting their Land.
- Encourage additional Hancock residents to join the Williamstown Rural Land Foundation through a solicitation letter
- Hold a Town Forum to educate landowners on available options for voluntary land preservation
- Send a quarterly newsletter to the Town residents on preservation techniques and assistance
- Establish a voluntary donation fund at WRLF dedicated to alleviate administrative costs of land conservation in Hancock
- Establish a local contact in the Town to address ongoing issues of land preservation

Executive Summary (continued)

Economic Development

Economic Development in the Town of Hancock is closely linked with that of the surrounding region, and is largely based upon tourism and service industry jobs. The town's large number of seasonal residents and visitors present a unique economic environment that is dependent on both the Town's natural resources and the existing recreational infrastructure. The Town's zoning regulations limit restrictions on small businesses, but the lack of infrastructure, such as sewers and existing buildings introduce barriers common to a small rural town. The fiscal stability (and relatively low taxes) in town is due to the large percentage of development that is seasonal housing, which largely offsets costs incurred by year-round residences.

Housing

Residents of Hancock wish to maintain housing supply that is affordable to residents of a wide range of incomes. Recent data shows that construction and sales of new housing has decreased in the past few years, while the population and housing prices have continued to increase. Seasonal condominiums now outnumber single-family homes in Hancock. There are a number of older residents in town with older houses that may benefit from housing rehabilitation assistance programs available from the state and administered locally from Berkshire Housing Development Corporation. In order to maintain the Town's goals for affordable housing, the following actions are available to the town:

- Organize or appoint a person or group dedicated to keep issues of affordable housing on the local agenda, and work with regional affordable housing organizations to the benefit of the Town
- Participate in housing rehabilitation programs offered by local Housing Development Corporations
- Educate residents on housing assistance funding programs for home and septic repairs

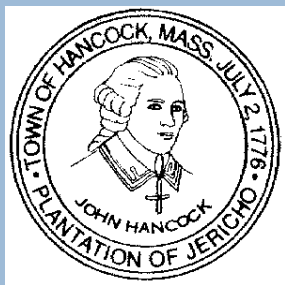
Transportation

Transportation in Hancock is tied to issues of economic development, housing, land use, and community development. As in many small towns, Hancock has limited access to transit for those with limited access to cars. The *CDP Transit Needs Study* outlines options for developing alternative modes of transportation in town as well as listing some regional transit alternatives already available in Town. Hancock also does not have access to any single, official documentation of the legal status of Town roads. Such documentation is crucial in issues of new development, as adequate frontage on an accepted town road is necessary for new construction, and disputes could lead to costly litigation. The Community Development Plan has collected documentation on the current status of all Town roads. If the Town views any inconsistencies or ambiguities in this map, clarifications and alterations could be incorporated and accepted by the town by adopting an "Official Map" based on this Status of Roads map. The Community Development Plan outlines the following transportation actions:

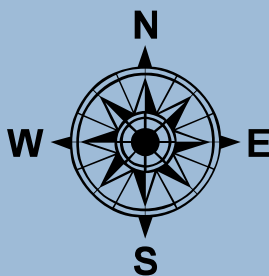
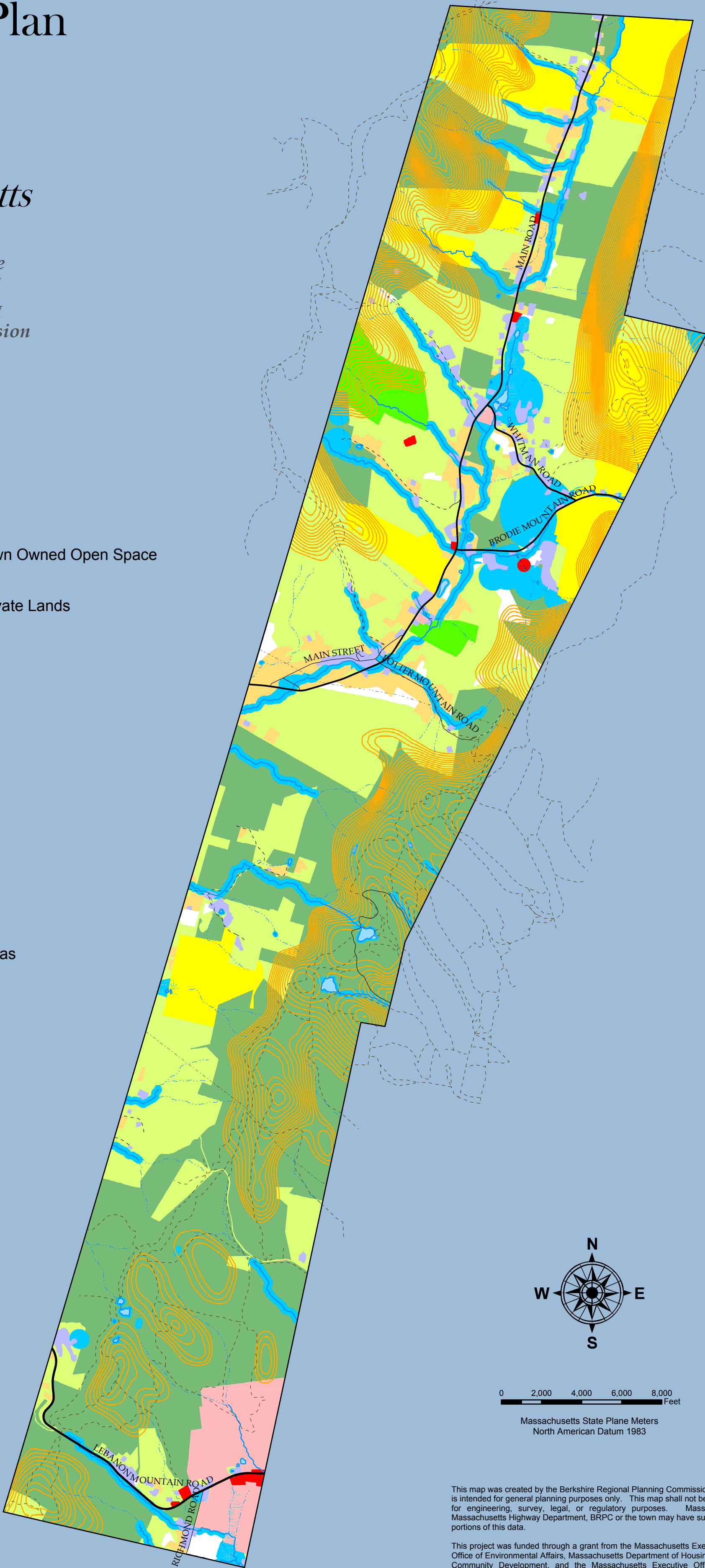
- Conduct formal review of the Community Development Plan Status of Roads map
- Hold a public forum, or a series of working meetings in Town to address potential action on roads where the official status is at question
- Present the agreed-upon map of town roads at Town Meeting for adoption as the Official Map for the Town
- Review Transit options available for the town, as collected in the CDP Transit Needs Study, and pursue the most relevant options for the town with assistance possible from BRTA or BRPC
- Publicize list of transit alternatives currently available to Hancock residents as presented in the CDP Transit needs study

Community Development Plan Land Use Suitability Action Map

Town of Hancock, Massachusetts



- Establish Conservation Easements on the Three Large Parcels of Town Owned Open Space
- Support Voluntary Preservation of Large Parcels of Undeveloped Private Lands
- Support Voluntary Preservation of:
 - Forests
 - Farms, Open Fields and Working Landscapes
 - Water Resource
 - Mountains (Elevations > 1700ft)
- Promote and Enhance Access to Hancock's Trails and Nature Areas
- Maintain a Quality Housing Supply
- Support Existing Businesses and Agriculture
- Support Preservation of Hancock's Cemeteries and Other Historic Areas
- Maintain High Quality Road Infrastructure
- Existing Open Space



0 2,000 4,000 6,000 8,000 Feet

Massachusetts State Plane Meters
North American Datum 1983

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

This project was funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Construction.

Hancock, Massachusetts



Open Space

Areas of Concern:

- Protection of the Town's mountains, open spaces and other valued natural scenic resources
- Education and assistance to landowners in voluntary efforts of land preservation
- Access to the Town's public recreational areas, mountain ridges, forests, and open spaces for hiking and outdoor recreation

Vision for Future Open Space and Resource Protection:

Encourage land preservation in Town by assisting voluntary actions by local landowners.

Recommended Actions:

- Establish a voluntary donation fund at the WRLF dedicated to land preservation in Hancock, and invite Hancock residents to become members of the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation.
- Establish conservation easements on the three large parcels of Town owned land
- Form a volunteer local trail stewardship group to maintain and enhance trails, and to coordinate efforts to promote and enhance access to Hancock's nature areas.
- Complete an official Open Space Plan for the Town of Hancock
- Hold quarterly or bi-annual meetings of the CDP committee to oversee implementation of the Community Development Plan
- Revisit the Scenic Mountains Act if voluntary land preservation efforts are not successful.



Economic Development

Areas of Concern:

- Maintaining an adequate tax base
- Maintaining local agriculture
- Fostering the tourist industry in town
- Development that doesn't drastically alter the natural scenery

Vision for Future Economic Development:

Maintain and improve Hancock's economic infrastructure by proactively identifying and cultivating appropriate commercial opportunities that are consistent with the character of the community.

Recommended Actions:

- Encourage the growth and expansion of existing businesses and employers in Hancock
- Utilize the Fiscal Impact Analysis of land uses in Hancock as a resource for encouraging types of "low impact" developments in town.
- Encourage local agriculture and forestry to maintain the area's scenery and open spaces.

Transportation

Areas of Concern:

- The level of safety and maintenance of all Town roads.
- Potential transit options in town, especially for seniors, disabled, children, single-car families, and others with limited access to cars.
- Determining the official status of town roads, especially those public/private roads of questionable status that may be subject to Approval Not Required developments.

Vision for Future Transportation:

To maintain and improve the safety and utility of Hancock's transportation networks, to provide a more detailed understanding of the current, official status of town roads subject to development, and to publicize available transit alternatives or provide an alternative for those with limited access to cars or without the ability to drive.

Recommended Actions:

- Review the current official status of town roads, identify any undesired town roads, roads of questionable status or of potential liability, and create an Official Road Map to cure ambiguities and legally define all Official Town roads.
- Review Transit options available for the town, as collected in the CDP Transit Needs Study, and pursue the most relevant options for the town with assistance possible from BRTA or BRPC.
- Publicize list of transit alternatives currently available to Hancock residents as presented in the CDP Transit needs study.



Housing

Areas of Concern:

- Maintaining a high quality housing stock in conformance with all current health and building codes
- Development that doesn't drastically alter or negatively affect the landscape or the town's finances.
- Fostering developments that have less of an impact on town services.
- Limited public water and sewer system

Vision for Future Housing:

Maintain and improve Hancock's housing infrastructure by providing seniors, persons with disabilities and citizens of all ages and incomes with quality affordable housing opportunities and access to quality education for their children.

Recommended Actions:

- Continue to support housing production for families across a broad range of incomes in areas with existing infrastructure and minimal environmental impacts.
- Continue efforts to protect the scenic mountain resources of the town from unnecessarily destructive residential development through voluntary preservation efforts and potential future re-analysis of the Scenic Mountains Act.
- Consider formation of a housing committee to do the following:
 - Gain local participation in regional Berkshire Housing Development Corp. programs that help maintain the housing stock, especially for seniors on fixed incomes with limited mobility
 - Direct other home rehabilitation programs available from Habitat for Humanity or local schools.
 - Publicize current below market rate homeownership, home improvement loan and septic repair loan programs available through Berkshire Housing Development Corp, MassHousing and local lenders.
- Consider the adoption of the Community Preservation Act to finance future affordable homeownership options, land preservation and historic resource preservation options in Town.
- Review the local permitting process and other local regulatory barriers to housing construction in Hancock.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF HANCOCK



Community Setting



Community Setting
Community Setting

3

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Community Setting

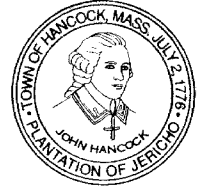
The Town of Hancock, Massachusetts is located in northwest Berkshire County. It is bordered by Williamstown on the north; New Ashford, Lanesborough, and Pittsfield on the east; Richmond on the south; and New Lebanon, Stephentown, and Berlin, New York on the west. Approximately twenty miles long and three miles wide, it is the longest town in Berkshire County. In order to go from the north end of town to the south end, it is necessary to leave the town and the state and then re-enter. Hancock is primarily a residential and agricultural community with limited commercial development. The notable exception is the Jiminy Peak ski area, which draws thousands of skiers to the area each winter.

Hancock has a population of approximately 650, which ranks it 27th out of 32 communities in Berkshire County. The population experienced a slight decline from 1970 into the 1990's, possibly as a result of the loss of employment opportunities in Pittsfield during that time. Indications are that this decline has leveled off and is beginning to reverse. Recent BRPC population projections suggest that Hancock's population could increase by 22% over the next twenty years.

Most of the land area of Hancock is not considered developable due to steep slopes that predominate in the town and a large amount of permanently protected land. Approximately 8,651 acres, or 38% of the total area of the town, is in permanently protected open space. This includes nearly 8,000 acres of state-owned land in Pittsfield State Forest, Forbush Wildlife Sanctuary and Bates Memorial State Park. Most development in the town has occurred in the valley along Route 43 and off of Brodie Mountain Road.

Hancock has unrestrictive zoning, consisting of a single Agricultural/Residential zone that allows all uses by right on a minimum of one acre of land. The town makes extensive use of its Subdivision Regulations to make land use decisions. It does not have a Master Plan or an Open Space and Recreation Plan.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF HANCOCK



Open Space and Resource Protection



Open Space and Resource Protection

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Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest

Introduction

The Town of Hancock has a range of open space resources and recreational areas that add to the quality of life enjoyed by its residents. The fields and farms of the valley are complimented nicely by the hiking trails and scenic vistas over the mountain forests. These areas are under both public and private ownership, and they hold various levels of protection and various amounts of exposure to the possibility of future development, which may limit the current level of public enjoyment offered.

This section contains an inventory of the parks, playgrounds, forests, open spaces, and other areas in town seen of particular interest to the residents of Hancock in terms of recreation and conservation. This section will list the important parcels and give a description of their ownership and management, the level of accessibility to the public, and the level of protection from development they hold. The following lists appear in nine categories based on ownership, recreational possibilities, and level of protection. The categories are defined as follows:

Public Conservation and Recreation Resources: This category is comprised of State Parklands and Town Conservation Lands. These areas are large-parcel forests open to public access and recreation.

Municipal Lands: These properties are owned and managed by the Town of Hancock located throughout the town. Many of these parcels are small cemeteries or public facilities, by some of them are large parcels of undeveloped land. Though these lands are owned and managed by the Town, they have no formal permanent protection.

Cemeteries: Cemeteries in Hancock have both public and private ownership and management, and are a valued historic resource to the Town. Many offer public access for passive recreation and reflection. As with municipal lands, they have no formal protection but are not likely to be developed.

Chapter 61A Lands - Protected Agriculture: Chapter 61A voluntary annual enrollment programs for preferential tax assessment based on current use of the land. Chapter 61A requires a 5 acre minimum of agricultural land which must produce a minimum amount of agricultural products. Chapter 61A prohibits development unrelated to agricultural purposes. The landowner must re-apply for the program each year.

Chapter 61 Lands – Forestry: Chapter 61 is a program similar to Chapter 61A except that the tax abatement is for forest lands managed for timber production. In order to qualify for Chapter 61, landowners must have 10 acres that are suitable for timber production. The program offers 95% tax savings, prohibits development unrelated to timber production, and requires a 10-year forest management plan.

Conservation Restriction Lands and Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Land: These are permanently protected lands. A conservation restriction is a legal agreement between a landowner and a qualified conservation organization or government agency that permanently limits development on a property in order to protect its conservation value. The APR Program is a voluntary, state run program for farms and agricultural landowners seeking to protect their land from development. The program pays farmers for the development rights to their property. The farmers retain ownership and management of their property, but are paid the difference between the "fair market value" and the "agricultural value" of their farmland in exchange for a permanent deed restriction, which precludes any use of the property that will have a negative impact on its agricultural viability.

Private Recreation Lands and For-Profit Recreation Areas: This category contains privately-owned recreational areas that may or may not charge a fee for use of the facilities. It also includes areas that are commonly used by residents but are on private land and are not protected for future use.

Non-Profit Lands and Recreational Areas: This category contains lands owned by non-profit and charitable organizations that allow recreational use. These lands are both formal recreation for a fee, or informal hiking trails that are accessible to the public for free.

Large Parcels of Undeveloped and Unprotected Private Lands: These lands are currently open spaces not participating in Chapter 61A and are operating without conservation restrictions or tax abatements. Their landowners have protected many of these lands for many generations, and it may be in the interest of these landowners to pursue permanent protection for these lands for the future through working with a local land trust or conservation organization. These lands may currently be designated as developable (State Use Code 131) or undevelopable (Code 132). The designation of undevelopable does not signify protection from development, only that an alteration such as a new road would be necessary before development may occur. The 10 largest parcels are listed - a map and listing of all large parcels in Town is attached in the appendix.

Historic Properties and Resources: This category is a brief summary of the Town's historic properties or buildings according to the 2001 State Register of Historic Places. Properties listed have official designation on the National Register of Historic Places and may have permanent or temporary deeded restrictions according to M.G.L. Ch. 184 sec. 31-33. Properties listed on the National Register are eligible for potential historic preservation grants and are subject to historic reviews before their owners make alterations that may affect the historic qualities of these buildings. Also included is a summary of properties without official designation or protection that have been identified in the MA Historical Commission 1996 Inventory of Historic Places in Hancock.

Public Conservation and Recreation Resources

A large percentage of open space in the Town of Hancock is publicly owned. The majority of this land is the Pittsfield State Forest, which covers over 5,000 acres in the southern and eastern side of Town, extending from Potter Mountain Road south to Route 20. The Forbush Wildlife Sanctuary and the Hancock and Taconic Mountain Wildlife Management Areas conserve land in North Hancock to the west of Route 43 and on the Taconic range near the Williamstown border. The Goodrich /Farr Memorial Forest and Bates Memorial State Parks are adjacent to the Pittsfield State forest in Central and Southern Hancock, respectively.

Name	Parcels (Map/Lot #)	Land Acres	Owner/ Manager	Location	Public Access	Level Of Protection	Activities
Bates Memorial State Park	027-001.0-0000	192	Commonwealth of Massachusetts/DEM	South of Route 20	Y	Permanent	Hiking, Picnicking, Fishing, Horseback Riding, Mountain Biking, Skiing, Off Road Vehicles
	027-039.0-0000	100					
	028-029.0-0000	125					
Forbush Wildlife Sanctuary	004-004.0-0000	255	Commonwealth of Massachusetts/DFW	North Hancock	Y	Permanent	Hiking, walking
	004-005.0-0000	150		West of Williams Town Road			
	005-004.0-0000	13					
Hancock Wildlife Management Area	005-010.A-0000	194.63	Commonwealth of Massachusetts/DFW	North Hancock West of Williams Town Road	Y	Permanent	Hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking and other recreation
Goodrich / Farr Memorial Forest	022-011.0-0000	109	Commonwealth of Massachusetts/DEM	East of Goodrich Hollow Road West of Berry Pond	Y	Permanent	Hiking, Picnicking, Fishing, Mountain Biking, Skiing,
Taconic Mountain Wildlife Management Area	002-001.B-0000	51.42	Commonwealth of Massachusetts/FWE	Northwest Hancock on Border with Williamstown and NY	Y	Permanent	Hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking and other recreation
	002-001.C-0000	86.14					
	002-001.E-0000	3.7					
	003-014.1-0000	90					
continued...							

Public Conservation And Recreation Resources (Continued)

Name	Parcels (Map/Lot #)	Land Acres	Owner/ Manager	Location	Public Access	Level Of Protection	Activities
Pittsfield State Forest	019-017.0-0000	162	Commonwealth of Massachusetts	Much of Southern and eastern Hancock from Potter Mountain Road to Route 20	Y	Permanent	Hiking, Picnicking, Boating, Canoeing, Fishing, Horsback Riding, Hunting, Mountain Biking, Skiing, Swimming, All Terrain Vehicles, Snowmobiling
	021-021.0-0000	180					
	021-022.0-0000	156					
	021-023.0-0000	442					
	022-012.0-0000	88					
	022-034.0-0000	23.9					
	022-037.0-0000	99					
	022-038.0-0000	245.7					
	022-039.0-0000	113					
	022-040.0-0000	234					
	023-015.0-0000	35.8					
	023-016.0-0000	42.2					
	023-017.0-0000	88					
	023-018.0-0000	16					
	023-019.0-0000	239					
	023-020.0-0000	60					
	023-021.0-0000	11.5					
	023-022.0-0000	160					
	023-023.0-0000	91					
	023-024.0-0000	31.3					
	023-025.0-0000	52					
	023-026.0-0000	145					
	023-027.0-0000	40					
	023-028.0-0000	46					
	023-029.0-0000	20					
	023-030.0-0000	65					
	024-020.0-0000	60					
	024-021.0-0000	100					
	024-022.0-0000	53					

Public Conservation And Recreation Resources (Continued)

Name	Parcels (Map/Lot #)	Land Acres	Owner/ Manager	Location	Public Access	Level Of Protection	Activities
	024-023.0-0000	10					
	024-024.0-0000	42.5					
	024-025.0-0000	100					
	024-026.0-0000	32					
	024-027.0-0000	70					
	024-028.0-0000	3					
	024-029.0-0000	3					
	024-030.0-0000	6.5					
	024-031.0-0000	22.5					
	024-032.0-0000	86					
	024-033.0-0000	81					
	024-034.0-0000	16					
	024-035.0-0000	8					
	024-036.0-0000	23					
	024-037.0-0000	1021					
	024-038.0-0000	450					
	024-039.0-0000	100					
	026-040.0-0000	7.6					
	026-041.0-0000	177					
	026-042.0-0000	118					
	027-003.0-0000	0.82					
	027-038.0-0000	54					

Municipal Lands

Lands owned or managed by the Town of Hancock are located throughout the Town and the majority are small cemeteries and firehouses. Hancock does have several large parcels of open land, including 278 acres on two adjacent parcels off of Rathbun Road and 90 acres surrounding the Town Hall. The Town has no official parks or playgrounds other than Hancock Central School. The lands have no formal protection from development.

PARCEL (Map & Lot #)	OWNER	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	ACRES
006-022.0-0000	Town of Hancock	Rte 43	Cemetery	0.02
007-019.0-0000	Town of Hancock	Rathburn Road (Rear)	Town Land	181
007-020.0-0000	Town of Hancock	Rathburn Road (Rear)	Town Land	97
008-020.0-0000	Town of Hancock	Williamstown Road	Town Land	0.69
009-034.0-0000	Town of Hancock	Williamstown Road	School	12
012-037.0-0000	Town of Hancock (Firehouse #1)	Rte 43	Fire House	0.75
017-012.0-0000	Town of Hancock	Rte 43 - Nr Town Hall	Cemetery	3.9
017-013.0-0000	Town of Hancock	Rte 43 - Nr Town Hall	Cemetery	2
017-015.0-0000	Town of Hancock	Rte 43	Town Hall	90
018-026.0-0000	Town of Hancock	Main Street	Town Library	0.24
021-002.0-0000	Town of Hancock	Main Road	Cemetery	0.08
022-007.A-0000	Town of Hancock	Goodrich Hollow	Cemetery	0.2
028-005.0-0000	Town of Hancock (Firehouse #2)	Lebanon Springs Road	Fire House	0.06
028-006.0-0000	Town of Hancock (Firehouse #2)	Mt. Lebanon Road	Fire House	0.02
028-030.0-0000	Town of Hancock	Shaker Cemetery	Shaker Cemetery	0.35

Cemeteries

Cemeteries in Hancock have both public and private ownership and management. Many small cemeteries have walking paths that offer visitors aesthetic and historical benefits. In addition to the Town cemeteries listed, there are several small, private cemeteries in Town and limited documentation as to their ownership and management, and many are without map or parcel number listings. The Town is currently in the process of formalizing its inventory of cemeteries.

MAP & PARCEL (if Available)	OWNERSHIP	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	ACRES	Public Access
006-022.0-0000	Town of Hancock	0 Rte 43	Cemetery	0.02	Y
012-029.0 A000	Private	Rte 43	Noah Ely Cemetery	0.3	N
017-012.0-0000	Town of Hancock	Rte 43 - Nr Town Hall	Cemetery	3.9	Y
017-013.0-0000	Town of Hancock	Rte 43 - Nr Town Hall	Cemetery	2	Y
021-002.0-0000	Town of Hancock	0 Main Road	Cemetery	0.08	Y
022-007.A-0000	Town of Hancock	0 Goodrich Hollow	Cemetery	0.2	Y
028-030.0-0000	Town of Hancock	0 Shaker Cemetery	Shaker Cemetery	0.35	Y

Chapter 61A Lands - Protected Agriculture

Chapter 61A voluntary enrollment programs are for preferential tax assessment based on maintaining agricultural use of the land. In fiscal year 2002, several farms in Hancock are took part in this program and a total of over 100 acres of agricultural land hold temporary protection from development.

Location	Map/Parcel Number	Owner/ Manager	Acreage	Public Access	Status	Protection
HANCOCK RD	014-016.B-0000	Private	4.07	N	Private	Temporary
WILLIAMSTOWN RD	012-004.0-0000	Private	25	N	Private	Temporary
RATHBUN RD	007-001.0-0000	Private	79.17	N	Private	Temporary
WILLIAMSTOWN RD	012-004.0-0000	Private	0.3	N	Private	Temporary
WILLIAMSTOWN RD	012-004.0-0000	Private	11.9	N	Private	Temporary
WILLIAMSTOWN RD	014-016.B-0000	Private	2	N	Private	Temporary

Chapter 61 Lands – Forestry

In fiscal year 2002, Hancock has seventeen parcels receiving tax abatements for maintaining private forestlands that are managed for timber production. A total of over 1,600 acres are currently under temporary protection from development under this program.

Location	Map/Parcel Number	Owner/Manager	Acreage	Public Access	Status	Protected
Williamstown Road	005-017.0-0000	Private	220	N	Private	Y
Williamstown Road	005-019.0-0000	Private	28.1	N	Private	Y
Williamstown Road	005-020.0-0000	Private	181	N	Private	Y
Williamstown Road	006-024.0-0000	Private	82	N	Private	Y
Williamstown Road	008-001.0-0000	Private	116	N	Private	Y
Williamstown Road	008-006.0-0000	Private	52	N	Private	Y
Williamstown Road	008-007.0-0000	Private	132	N	Private	Y
Hancock Road	009-005.0-0000	Private	56.7	N	Private	Y
Main Road (Rear)	021-013.0-0000	Private	152	N	Private	Y
Main Road (Rear)	021-014.0-0000	Private	152	N	Private	Y
Berkshire Tree Farm	021-020.0-0000	Private	160.01	N	Private	Y
Goodrich Hollow Road	022-003.0-0000	Private	10	N	Private	Y
Goodrich Hollow Road	022-005.0-0000	Private	20	N	Private	Y
Goodrich Hollow Road	022-006.0-0000	Private	81.72	N	Private	Y
Goodrich Hollow Road	022-007.0-0000	Private	65.47	N	Private	Y
Berkshire Tree Farm	022-010.0-0000	Private	138.61	N	Private	Y
Tower MT Road	022-024.0-0000	Private	32.5	N	Private	Y

Conservation Restriction Lands and Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Land

Landowners in Hancock have voluntarily placed permanent protection on over 470 acres of farmland and open spaces through private conservation restrictions and the State's APR Program.

Location	Map/Parcel Number	Site Name	Owner / Restriction Holder	Acreage	Restriction	Public Access	Level of Protection
Whitman Road	012-027.C-0000	Winterslow Meadow	Private / Berkshire County Land Trust	105	CR	No	Permanent
Williamstown Road	002-001.0-0000	Williams Family Farm	Private / Williamstown RLF	171.84	CR	No	Permanent
Williamstown Road	002-008.0-0000	Williams Family Farm	Private / DFA	53.47	APR	No	Permanent
Brodie Mountain Road	14-16A	Bach Farm	Private / DFA	115.72	APR	No	Permanent
Dee Road	021-017.0-0000	Monaghan	Private / BNRC	111	CR	No	Permanent

Private Recreation Lands and For-Profit Recreation Areas

Hancock contains several recreational areas that offer both structured and unstructured recreational opportunities. The largest private recreational area is Jiminy Peak Resorts Ski Area, located on Brodie Mountain Road in central Hancock. There are also several campgrounds. Many of the privately owned areas are not protected and offer public access for a fee.

Location	Site Name	Map/Parcel Number	Acreage	Owner/ Manager	Activities	Public Access	Level of Protection
Kittle Road	Campgrounds	11-002	119	Folly Land Corp.	Camping	Fee	None
		11-003	55.46	Private	Camping	Fee	None
		11-003A	33.23		Camping	Fee	None
Brodie Mountain Road	Jiminy Peak	14-30	95.45	Jiminy Peak Inc.	Skiing, Hiking, Mountain Biking, Picnicking	Fee	None
		14-29	4.5				
		15-13	14.4				
		15-14	82				
		17-22	70				
Williamstown Road	Privacy Campgrounds	005-019A	22.9	Rambaud	Camping	Fee	None

Non-profit Lands and Recreational Areas

Hancock contains lands owned by various non-profit agencies that may be accessed for recreational purposes. Some of these areas charge a fee, while others allow use free of charge.

Map/Parcel	Location	Owner	Acreage		Activities
028-025.0-0000	Mt. Lebanon Road	Hancock Shaker Vil.	7.5	Fee	Tours and other activities
025-010.0-0000	Mt. Lebanon Road	Shaker Community Inc.	67	Yes	Hiking, walking, mountain biking,
028-022.0-0000			328		
028-026.0-0000			100		
028-036.0-0000			90		
002-007.0-0000	North Hancock East of Williamstown Road	Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation	2.8	Yes	Hiking

Large Parcels of Undeveloped and Unprotected Private Land

A small number of private parcels contain a large amount of open spaces that are without permanent protection from development. The ten largest parcels alone contain over 2,870 acres. Many of these parcels are adjacent to existing protected lands and contain much of the Town's mountain regions.

Location	Map/Parcel Number	Owner/ Manager	Acreage	Public Access	Level of Protection
Sheeps Heaven Mt, North of Brodie Mt Rd, along Lanesborough Border	015-001.0-0000	Private	513.3	N	None
North Hancock, North of Forbush Wildlife Sanctuary	003-014.0-0000	Private	333.26	N	None
North Hancock, South of Hancock Wildlife Mgmt Area	006-005.0-0000	Private	317	N	None
Brodie Mt. Ridge, N. East Corner of Hancock, Bordering Williams Family Farm	002-009.0-0000	Private	276.83	N	None
S Hancock, South of Tower Mt. Road, Bordering PSF	022-023.0-0000	Private	263.9	N	None
North Hancock, South of Hancock Wildlife Mgmt Area	004-002.0-0000	Private	261	N	None
Hancock, South of Ioka Valley Farm	014-010.0-0000	Private	255	N	None
South of Brodie Mt Rd, along Lanesboro Border	015-007.0-0000	Private	231.98	N	None
North Hancock, East of Rte 43 & Hancock Wildlife Mgmt Area	005-017.0-0000	Private	220	N	Temporary
Brodie Mt. Ridge, North Hancock, East of Rte 43	003-011.0-0000	Private	198	N	None

Historic Properties and Resources

The Hancock Shaker Village contains all of the Town's properties listed as National Historic Landmarks. Two of these buildings have permanent preservation restrictions, while the district has temporary deeded restrictions on the property. Hancock Town Hall is the only other property in Hancock with official designation on the National and State Register of Historic Places. The 1996 Hancock Town profile of historical places lists 64 additional buildings, structures, objects, and areas in Hancock that are of historical significance and are without designation or protection.

Name	Location	Properties	Preservation Restriction	Historic Designation
Hancock Shaker Village (HSV)	Lebanon Mt. Rd	25	Temporary Exp. 2007	National Historic Landmark National Register District
HSV Laundry and Machine Shop	Lebanon Mt. Rd	1	Permanent	National Historic Landmark National Register District
HSV Ministry – Wash House	Lebanon Mt. Rd	1	Permanent	National Historic Landmark National Register District
Hancock Town Hall	Rte. 43	1	Temporary Exp. 2006	National Register Individual Property
Other Private Properties	Various Locations	64	None	None

Applying the Scenic Mountains Act in Hancock: An Analysis of Possibilities

Introduction

Residents of the Town of Hancock consider the mountains as a valued resource, which provide the town with beautiful vistas as well as sparkling mountain streams and fresh well water in the valley. Many residents of the town wish to preserve that which is valued about the mountains by protecting the mountain scenery and water resources from types of development that might compromise those values. In general, there are three main ways in which the town may protect these resources from destructive development: 1) Voluntary preservation by landowners, 2) Acquisition of the land or an interest in the land by the town or other public or non-profit entity, or 3) Regulation to limit development in these areas. The Scenic Mountains Act is an example of option number three. The Act is a regulatory tool through which the Conservation Commission delineates the Town's mountain regions and develops regulations that would protect their scenic beauty and water resources. The Town of Hancock Conservation Commission and Community Development Plan Advisory Committee have considered the possibility of presenting the Scenic Mountains Act for adoption at Town Meeting. The committees have held discussions to determine appropriate regulations for development of the Town's mountains in order to best protect their scenic qualities and water resources while maintaining the landowners' rights to development. Discussions have led to the formation of five proposed regulations:

Regulation #1: Driveways shall clear the existing tree cover no more than 60 feet wide from tree to tree.

Regulation #2: Driveways shall be no steeper than 10% in grade. (One foot of elevation for every 10 feet of length)

Regulation #3: All private utilities, such as electric wires and cables, shall be underground.

Regulation #4: All driveways shall contain an engineering site plan that follows best practices for managing stormwater runoff.

Regulation #5: All lighting shall be shielded in such a way as to direct all light toward the Earth's surface and away from all adjacent property unless otherwise required by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Proposed Scenic Mountains Act Boundaries:

The Town Has Three Distinct Mountainous Regions:

The Western Ridge (West of Route 43)

North Eastern Ridge (East of Route 43, North of Brodie Mt. Road)

South Eastern Ridge (East of Route 43, South of Brodie Mt. Road)

Potential Elevation Ranges are:

1500 Feet (SMA Base Elevation for the Housatonic River watershed provided by DEM)

1700 Feet (SMA Base Elevation for the Hudson River watershed provided by DEM)

The following report details the proposed regulations to provide the intended purpose of each of them as well as a documentation of guidelines from engineering standards and previous reports that may serve as potential justifications for any requirements imposed. After the guidelines are detailed, the report documents the procedure through which the Town may enact the provisions of the Scenic Mountains Act.

Engineering Justifications for Preliminary Recommended Regulations

Proposed Regulation #1: Driveways shall clear the existing tree cover no more than 60 feet wide from tree to tree.

Purpose:

Development of driveways involves the clearing of ground cover and the creation of surfaces that impede or block the ability of stormwater to drain naturally back into the soil. In mountainous regions, clearing land not only creates gaps in the natural forest canopy on the mountains, but also alters the drainage patterns, increases the speed of unfiltered stormwater flow along the surface, and results in additional erosion and water pollution as unfiltered water flows directly into the Town's streams and water resources. Therefore, clearing of land for constructing driveways in mountainous regions should have reasonable limitations.

Justifications for Reasonable Width Requirement:

1) Guidelines for appropriate driveway widths are provided in several technical publications. The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Access Management Guidelines, prepared by Fuss & O'Neill, Inc. Contracting Engineers, cites the **Center for Transportation Research & Education** at Iowa State University in giving its recommendations. The guidelines include the following suggested driveway widths:

**Center for Transportation Research & Education
Suggested Driveway Widths**

Land Use	Minimum	Maximum
Residential	10 ft	28 ft
Commercial	24 ft	36 ft

2) In many ways, driveways are similar to low volume, low speed local roads. There is a great deal of research available for designing low volume, low speed roads, including guidelines for such roads that are located on mountainous terrain. The **National Cooperative for Highway Research Program** Report 362: Roadway Widths for Low Traffic - Volume Roads presents recommendations for low volume roads in mountainous terrain. The study states that, for local roads in mountainous or rolling terrain, design speeds are generally in the range of 20 to 30 miles per hour. For lower speed, lower volume conditions the research supports 9-10 ft minimum lane widths with 2-5 ft shoulders. The results are summarized as follows:

Recommended Minimum Local Road Widths for Rolling and Mountainous Terrain

Intended Speed	Recommended Road Width		
	0-250 vehicles per day	250-400 vehicles per day	400-600 vehicles per day
20 mph	Lane: 9 Shoulder: 2 (Total Width: 22 ft)	Lane: 9 Shoulder: 2 (Total Width: 22 ft)	Lane: 9 Shoulder: 2 (Total Width: 22 ft)
30 mph	Lane: 9 Shoulder: 2 (Total Width: 22 ft)	Lane: 9 Shoulder: 2 (Total Width: 22 ft)	Lane: 10 Shoulder: 5 (Total Width: 30 ft)

3) The **US Fire Administration's** regulated street width requirement for fire vehicles is **18 – 20 feet**, which represents the typical "fire lane" width necessary to accommodate a fire vehicle.

4) The Hancock Subdivision Regulations require a minimum road right of way of 50 feet for secondary roads and 60 feet for primary roads.

Proposed Regulation #2: Driveways shall be no steeper than 10% in grade. (One foot of elevation for every 10 feet of length)

Purpose:

Steep driveways combine the harmful effects that steep slopes, long slopes, smooth surfaces, and compacted or impenetrable ground surfaces have on the groundwater by increasing the speed of stormwater flow. This increases erosion and the amount of sedimentation carried by the stormwater, decreases the natural drainage that occurs and increases the pollutants that flow into rivers and streams.

Justifications for Reasonable Steepness Requirement:

1) The **Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's** *Erosion and Sediment Control Guidelines* (March, 1997) presents the following guidelines on slope susceptibility to erosion:

Erosion and Slope Steepness	
Slope Grade	Erosion Hazard
0-6 % grade	Low Erosion Hazard
7-18% grade	Moderate Erosion Hazard
18% and over	High Erosion Hazard

2) As stated previously, driveways may be similar to low volume, low speed local roads. The **American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)** *Policy on Geometric Design for Highways and Streets* is perhaps the most widely accepted resource for Transportation Officials in developing construction guidelines for local roads. The publication presents the following Guidelines for suggested maximum grades for local low traffic rural roads for various types of terrain:

Maximum Road Grade For Each Specified Design Speed

Type of Terrain	Maximum Grade (%)			
	15 mph	20 mph	25 mph	30 mph
Level	9%	8%	7%	7%
Rolling	12%	11%	11%	10%
Mountainous	17%	16%	15%	14%

3) The **Town of Hancock Subdivision Regulations** require a maximum grade of 7.5% for primary streets and 10% for secondary streets, and that the grade of a street within 50 feet of an intersection shall not exceed 1.0% to provide a level at area for traffic safety.

Proposed Regulation #3: All private utilities, such as electric wires and cables, shall be underground.

Purpose:

The visual impact of utility poles and overhead lines in the mountain regions mar the natural scenic beauty of the Town and its mountains. Placing private utilities underground ensures the protection of the aesthetic beauty of the mountains. Underground utilities in mountain environments also preclude safety and maintenance/repair issues for weather related damage such as snow, ice, and wind.

Regulation #4: All driveways shall contain an engineering site plan that follows best management practices (BMPs) for managing stormwater runoff in mountainous areas.

Purpose:

Paved driveways (impervious surfaces) in mountainous areas can be sources of sediment, oil, grease, household chemicals, lawn amendments (nutrients), and de-icers (salts) that can run off into streams. Unpaved driveways can also be a source of sedimentation and erosion and various types of pollution. Construction of driveways in mountainous areas and implementation of Best Management Practices to reduce pollutant transport to streams often requires special consideration and planning.

Reference for Best Management Practices for Mountain Driveways:

Mountain Driveway Best Management Practices Manual, The Colorado Nonpoint Source Council, June 1999 (revised September 1999), available at the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments <http://www.nwc.cog.co.us/>

Proposed Regulation #5: All lighting shall be shielded in such a way as to direct all light toward the Earth's surface and away from all adjacent property unless otherwise required by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

Purpose:

Mountain regions are highly visible areas and light emissions may be seen from long distances. The presence of poorly situated lights and light pollution on the mountains impacts the natural beauty of them at twilight and night hours.

Procedure for Pursuing Scenic Mountains Act Regulations in Hancock

General Procedure for Adopting the Provisions of the Scenic Mountains Act

The Scenic Mountains Act calls for the town to first accept the overall provisions of the Act at town meeting. Acceptance of the act is gained by simple majority vote, and the provisions of the Act call for the Conservation Commission to draft reasonable rules and regulations relative to reducing the impact of development in the mountain regions, and to draft a map, which defines the mountain regions to which the local regulations will apply.

Once drafted, the local regulations, draft map and text delineating the proposed boundaries shall be submitted to the Board of Health, Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, and to the Department of Environmental Management.

The draft regulations are then to be presented to the Town at a public hearing run by the Conservation Commission, and the map of mountain regions is to be presented to the Town at a public hearing run by the Selectboard. After the public hearings the local regulations may be adopted, or amended and adopted, by the Conservation Commission, and the boundary map may be adopted, or amended and adopted, by the Selectboard. Adoptions by the Selectboard and Conservation Commission are to occur with a 2/3rd majority vote of the respective board.

Upon adoption of the map and regulations, the Conservation Commission shall file the map and text delineating the location of final boundaries of mountain regions so adopted with the town clerk, and simultaneously shall send verified copies of such map and text to the Massachusetts Commissioner of Environmental Management and to the register of the registry of deeds for the district in which the land lies. The provisions of the Scenic Mountains Act take effect once the regulations and boundaries are both filed and approved by the Commissioner.

Alternative Procedure for Adoption of the Provisions

Previous history with the Act in Hancock has suggested that the Town may prefer to view the draft regulations and map boundaries prior to accepting the provisions of the Act at Town Meeting. In the past, it was discussed that the Town should be presented with the option of giving conditional approval to its acceptance of the Act in order to maintain the ability to approve the adoption of the actual regulations at a subsequent Town Meeting. However, under the Scenic Mountains Act statute, this option is not allowed and the Town may *NOT* place conditions on the acceptance of the provisions of the Act. The Statute clearly places adoption of the regulations and map boundaries in the hands of the Town Conservation Commission and Selectboard, respectively.

However, slight adaptations of the general procedure may provide the Town with additional visibility into the specifics of the proposed draft regulations before acceptance of the Act is to be voted upon. Given that the Conservation Commission intends to draft preliminary regulations and a preliminary map delineating the boundaries of the mountain areas prior to Town Meeting, one suggested option is for the Conservation Commission and Selectboard hold a joint public hearing directly prior to the Town Meeting to present the draft map and regulations to the Town for review. As in the general procedure above, once drafted, the map and regulations should first -before the public hearing- be submitted to the Board of Health, Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, and to the Department of Environmental Management. Comments from the DEM

should be received and incorporated into the regulations before they are presented at the hearing. Upon acceptance of the provisions of the Act at Town Meeting, the Conservation Commission and Selectboard may adopt, or amend and adopt (to reflect public comments), the regulations and map boundaries at their next meetings. The regulations and map should then be filed as described above.

Summary and Recommendations on the Scenic Mountains Act in Hancock

The Scenic Mountains Act gives the Town of Hancock an ability to develop regulations on development of the Town's mountainous regions. However, though the town wishes to protect its scenic resources and the quality of water, additional regulations are not acceptable to many town residents. Analysis of the mountain regions in Hancock has determined that much of the mountainous regions in Town, especially in southern portions of town, are already protected as part of the Pittsfield State Forest. The remaining mountainous in the north contains land that is owned by a relatively small number of landowners. The Advisory Committee did not wish to alienate these owners with additional regulations, knowing that many of these same landowners have voluntarily protected these lands from development for years to the benefit of the entire Town.

Committee discussions looked towards incentives for voluntary land preservation as a preferred option to regulation. Discussions determined that many large landowners are not aware of the voluntary conservation options available to them that may reduce the burden they may be experiencing by not developing their land. Furthermore, they are unaware of where to find help in order to utilize the available land preservation programs. A local resource to make options known and follow-up to help interested landowners advance the conservation option that is right for them was seen to be potentially a large benefit to the Town.

For these reasons, voluntary conservation in a manner that fits the needs of the individual landowner was seen as the recommended strategy in which to focus current efforts, and the Scenic Mountains Act is not recommended.

Community Goals

A. Description of Process

The Community Development Plan (CDP) Program for Hancock was focused on developing much of what is required for an Official Town Open Space and Recreation Plan. As part of the CDP program administered by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, public input on community land conservation goals and needs was gained from the Town of Hancock 2002 Town Survey, a Town wide public forum held in February of 2002, and monthly meetings of the Community Development Plan Advisory Committee – an ad-hoc, diverse group of local residents and landowners - held throughout 2002 and 2003.

B. Statement of Open Space and Recreational Goals

In the course of the comprehensive Community Development Planning process, open space preservation in Hancock was identified as the primary concern for the Community. The process has also identified a major concern of local landowners in maintaining their ability to make decisions regarding the use of their land. The Community Development Plan has combined these concerns with an overall community vision of encouraging land preservation through voluntary actions by local landowners. The following goals and objectives have been identified to advance this vision:

Primary Goals:

Goal #1: With the support of the Town, protect the Town's mountains, open spaces and other valued natural scenic resources from unnecessarily destructive, highly visible and unsightly development.

Goal #2: Educate and inform the community about the value of land protection and various techniques, programs, and incentives available for the preservation of agriculture, recreation, and forestry lands in Hancock.

Goal #3: Advance voluntary land conservation efforts in Town

Secondary Goals:

Goal #4: Improve access to the Town's public recreational areas, mountain ridges, forests, and open spaces for hiking and outdoor recreation.

Goal #5: Compete an Open Space and Recreation Plan for the Town of Hancock

Analysis Of Resource Protection Needs

A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs

The 2002 Hancock Town Survey found that 78% of respondents would support Town efforts to protect farms, forests and other natural/scenic resources, and that 83% of the respondents felt scenery and natural resources are important for business in the community. The Advisory Committee was called upon to more clearly define the “natural/scenic resources”, identified by the survey as highly valued and worthy of protection.

The Committee listed the following items as valued town resources in need of protection:

- Water Resources: Brooks, streams, aquifers, water recharge areas
- Areas Open for Recreational Use (Hiking/Biking/Cross Country Ski Trails)
- Mountains, forests and undeveloped land of natural and scenic beauty
- Farms, open fields and working landscapes
- Cemeteries and other historic areas

Water Resources

All of the drinking water in Hancock is groundwater obtained from on-site wells. Therefore, the community must be very cautious of pollutants that could contaminate groundwater. The Town’s streams and brooks are also valued for their natural beauty and are important habitat areas for local wildlife.

Areas Open For Recreational Use

Many residents of Hancock enjoy the outdoors and conduct outdoor recreation. Hancock enjoys a wealth of public lands such as the Pittsfield State Forest and the Forbush Wildlife Sanctuary that are open for public access and recreational use. Many of these lands are not easily accessible from the town and its local roads such as Rt. 43. Comments from the town survey and at the public meetings, stated residents desires for better access to these lands, and better information on lands which are open for access and light recreation such as hiking and walking.

Mountains, Forests and Undeveloped Land of Natural and Scenic Beauty

Hancock is a Town full of peaks, valleys, and steep slopes, with a large amount of undeveloped, heavily forested public and private lands. The majority of the Town’s mountainous areas is undeveloped and heavily forested and offers many spectacular views unique to the Town. Hancock’s many scenic vistas work to define the Town and are enjoyed daily by residents and visitors alike.

Farms, Open Fields and Working Landscapes

Below the mountain peaks in Hancock lies a fertile valley, historically comprised of a working landscape of farms and fields. These farms are a rich part of Hancock’s history that play an active role in the present, and are desired elements the Town wished to maintain in the future. The farms and working lands shape the rural culture of the community, and the fields are an important habitat for birds and other wildlife local to the area.

Cemeteries and Other Historic Areas

The inventory of conservation lands identifies several cemeteries and historic areas within Hancock that are both with and without formal historic designation or deeded with historic preservation restrictions. These are valued assets for the Town that are in need of preservation.

B. Summary of Community Needs

Landowner Needs for Information on How to Protect Open Land

Many landowners in Hancock intend to protect their land, and have been doing so for years. However, meetings with the community determined that as many as 90% of large landowners in Town are not aware of the conservation options available to them. Many landowners are particularly unaware of conservation efforts that may be personalized to fit their individual needs. Distributing information about voluntary conservation in a manner that fits the needs of the individual landowner was seen as a major need for the Town.

Need for Legal and Administrative Help for Landowners Wishing to Protect Their Open Land

Many landowners in Hancock are interested in obtaining formal protection for their open lands. In the past, those that were willing to attempt some options were forced to do a great deal of work to utilize the available programs through state agencies. It has been suggested that land conservation in Hancock is not happening now to a large extent because it is a complicated process that requires the time and concentration of a dedicated, full-time person such as staff at a land trust or conservation organization. A local resource to make options known and follow-up to help interested landowners advance the conservation option that is right for them was seen to be potentially a large benefit to the Town.

Need for Funds to Help Advance Voluntary Land Protection Efforts in Town

In order to advance voluntary land conservation efforts in Hancock, it is desirable to develop a voluntary donation fund to help jumpstart the administrative process of conservation without a large financial burden on the landowner. Land conservation can be a complicated, time intensive process that requires legal and administrative action. Local residents wishing to contribute to land conservation efforts may donate to this fund to assist Individual landowners.

Need to Support Local Landowners Dedicated to Protecting Their Open Lands

A relatively small number of landowners control much of the unprotected open land in Hancock. Many of these landowners intend to protect their land and have been doing so for years. The Town already gives large landowners a reduced tax assessment for undeveloped acres of land above a certain minimum limit. The Town has the additional option of creating a different, lower tax rate for open space. There are many different options for land conservation that already exist, and it may be unnecessary, overly difficult and costly to try to invent and administer an option just for Hancock given the Town's resources.

Five-Year Open Space and Recreation Strategy and Action Plan

Primary Open Space and Recreation Goals and Actions for Hancock.

Goal #1: With the support of the Town, protect the Town's mountains, open spaces and other valued natural scenic resources from unnecessarily destructive, highly visible and unsightly development.

Actions:	Responsibility	Time Frame	Measure of Success
Educate and inform the community about land preservation options. (As detailed in Goal #2)	CDP Advisory Committee / Wmstwn Rural Lands Foundation	Spring 2003	Community becomes more involved in local preservation efforts
Take steps to advance voluntary land conservation. (As detailed in Goal #3)	CDP Advisory Committee, Selectboard, Conservation Commission	Spring 2003	Increased local land conserved voluntarily
Hold quarterly or bi-annual meetings of the CDP committee to oversee implementation of the Community Development Plan	CDP Committee	Spring 2004-2008	Plan Actions are implemented
Revisit the Scenic Mountains Act if voluntary land preservation efforts are not successful.	CDP Committee, Conservation Commission	Spring 2008	Significant amounts of land have been conserved voluntarily.

Primary Open Space and Recreation Goals and Actions for Hancock (continued)

Goal #2: Educate and inform the community about the value of land protection and various techniques, programs, and incentives available for the preservation of agriculture, recreation, and forestry lands in Hancock.

Actions:	Responsibility	Time Frame	Measure of Success
Invite the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation to join in a Town Forum on land protection techniques.	CDP Advisory Committee, Wmstwn Rural Lands Foundation	2003 –2005	Meeting is well attended by landowners and residents
Send out informational newsletter to all Town landowners on a regular basis.	CDP Advisory Committee, WRLF	2003	Stable membership gained, Hancock gains board members at WRLF
Provide residents with an established means of access to the conservation services and information available to them.	CDP Committee, WRLF, Conservation Commission	2003	Residents know whom to contact, contacts are responsive to questions.
Hold additional public meetings for landowners if necessary	CDP Advisory Committee, WRLF	Fall 2003	Landowners gain specific knowledge
Make informational material in CDP Plan available to residents at the Town Hall and library.	CDP Advisory Committee	Spring 2003	CDP Plan remains as an accessible Town Resource

Goal #3: Advance voluntary land conservation efforts in Town

Actions:	Responsibility	Time Frame	Measure of Success
Invite Hancock residents to become members of the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation.	WRLF / CDP Advisory Committee	Spring 2003	10-20% Townwide membership response
Establish a voluntary donation fund at the WRLF dedicated to land Preservation in Hancock	WRLF/ CDP Advisory Committee	Spring 2003	Fund is established
Solicit Hancock Residents to volunteer to serve on the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation Board	CDP Committee, Selectboard, Conservation Commission	Spring 2003 – Spring 2004	1-3 local members on the Board
Establish conservation easements on the three large parcels of Town owned land	CDP Committee, Conservation Commission, Selectboard	Fall/Winter 2003 – Spring 2008	Town votes to preserve commonly owned land
Draft annual update on CDP Land Preservation Efforts in the Town Annual Report	CDP Committee	2004-2008	Annual Community Development Update is established.

Secondary Open Space and Recreation Goals and Actions

Goal #4: Improve access to the Town's public recreational areas, mountain ridges, forests, and open spaces for hiking and outdoor recreation.

Actions:	Responsibility	Time Frame
Form a volunteer local trail stewardship group to maintain and enhance trails, and to coordinate efforts to promote and enhance access to Hancock's nature areas.	CDP Committee, Conservation Committee, Selectboard or a Volunteer.	2003-2005
Finalize and publicize the map of Hancock's Trails and other accessible recreational lands in the CD Plan, coordinating with the brochure of Trails, parking areas, access points and accessible nature areas in Hancock being developed by Berkshire Natural Resources Council.	CDP Advisory Committee / Trail Steward Volunteers.	2003- 2008
Locate potential future access areas to State-owned recreational Lands, and work with DEM or other groups to obtain grants or funds for improved access, signage and trailhead markings for existing trails.	Trail Steward Volunteers	2003 -

Goal #5: Complete an Open Space and Recreation Plan for the Town of Hancock

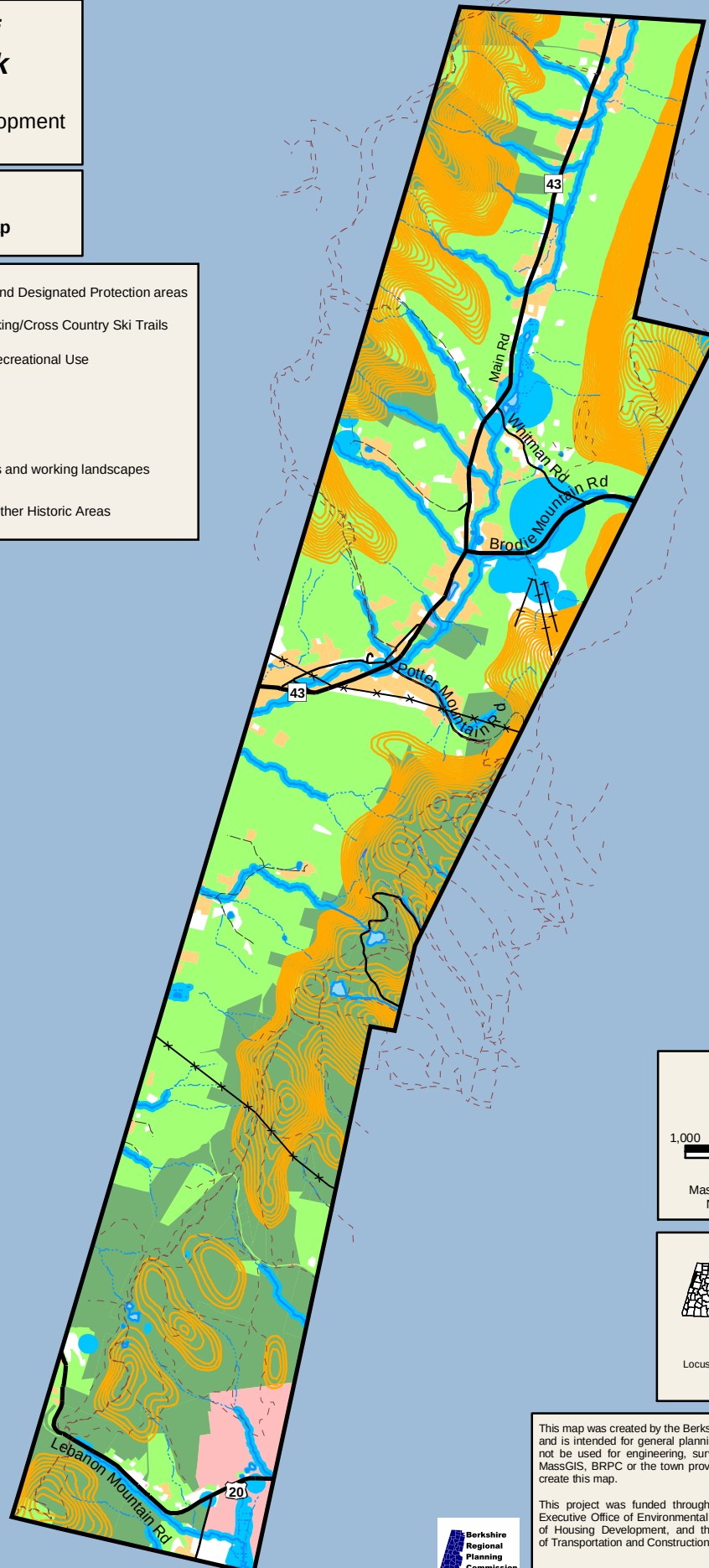
Actions:	Responsibility	Time Frame
Obtain Current List of Open Space Plan Required Components	CDP Committee, Conservation Commission	2003-2005
Develop Environmental Inventory and Analysis	CDP Committee, Conservation Commission	2003-
Incorporate Relevant Sections of the CDP into the Open Space Plan	CDP Committee, Conservation Commission	2003-
Revise list of valued town natural, historical, and cultural resources included in the CDP, if necessary.	CDP Committee, Conservation Commission	2004-
Revise list of goals and actions for Open Space and Recreation in the CDP, if necessary	CDP Committee, Conservation Commission	2004-

Town of Hancock

Community Development
Plan

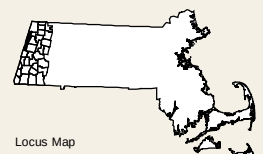
Open Space Suitability Map

-  Water Resource and Designated Protection areas
-  Existing Hiking/Biking/Cross Country Ski Trails
-  Areas Open for Recreational Use
-  Mountain Areas
-  Forests
-  Farms, open fields and working landscapes
-  Cemeteries and Other Historic Areas



1,000 0 1,000 2,000
Meters

Massachusetts State Plane Meters
North American Datum 1983



Locus Map

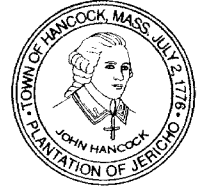
This map was created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and is intended for general planning purposes only. This map shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or regulatory purposes. MassGIS, BRPC or the town provided all of the data layers used to create this map.

This project was funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Department of Housing Development, and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Construction.



/cd/phan/projects/openspace_suit.mxd
June 20, 2003

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF HANCOCK



Housing



Housing

5

The Housing Profile	5-1
Housing Strategy Elements	5-14
Housing Suitability Map	5-18

The Housing Profile

INTRODUCTION TO THE HOUSING PROFILE

This section examines the socio-economic trends in Hancock and in the surrounding area of Berkshire County, which affect housing supply and demand. Planning to maintain an adequate supply of affordable housing while balancing concerns related to open space, natural resources, transportation, infrastructure, and community services is a challenging task. Planning for affordable housing begins with analysis of detailed information on the local housing stock in order to identify specific concerns and potential problems for the Town to address. Several factors may indicate a potential concern for affordable housing and contribute to a town's ability to maintain housing that is affordable to residents of a wide range of incomes. Those are:

- Low supply of existing housing relative to the population.
- High costs of housing that are beyond the affordability of local residents
- Lack of housing production
- Relative scarcity of land available for residential development
- High cost of land
- Higher production costs associated with marginal development sites
- Lack of available infrastructure
- A complex restrictions related to local zoning, subdivision controls and local permitting

This section presents information and analysis on potential factors that may indicate areas of concern for affordable housing in the Town of Hancock. The section ends with a list of several actions that may address the Town's specific concerns for housing that are identified.

Current Housing Stock Statistics

The following is a description of the current housing stock in Hancock as reflected by the Town Assessor data on August of 2002. The local actual data in Table H-1 is presented with Table H-2, which is survey data gained from the US 2000 Census. The data shows a housing stock of 581 total units, comprised largely of single-family homes (279 units) and condominium units (286 units). There are a relatively small number of multi-family units (12) and four mobile homes on individual parcels. The housing stock is increasing rapidly, by almost 24% in the past 10 years. This increase has been in all categories of tenure, but mostly in owner occupied houses. Vacant housing units have more than doubled in the past year, but the census does not determine whether the vacancies are in condos or single family units.

Table H-1: Current Housing Stock

Single Family Homes	279
Condominium Units	286
Multi-Family Units	12
Mobile Homes (In Parks)	0
Mobile Homes (On Individual Lots)	4
Single Room Occupancy Units	0
Other Types of Housing Units	0
Total Housing Stock:	581

Source: Town Of Hancock Board of Assessors, 8/06/02

Table H-2: Housing Tenure

Housing Occupancy:	2000		1990		Percent Increase 1990-2000
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	
Seasonal	131	28%	117	31%	12%
Owner-Occupied	229	48%	184	48%	24%
Rental-Occupied	67	14%	62	16%	8%
Vacant	45	5%	19	5%	137%
Total Housing Stock:	472		382		

Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2000

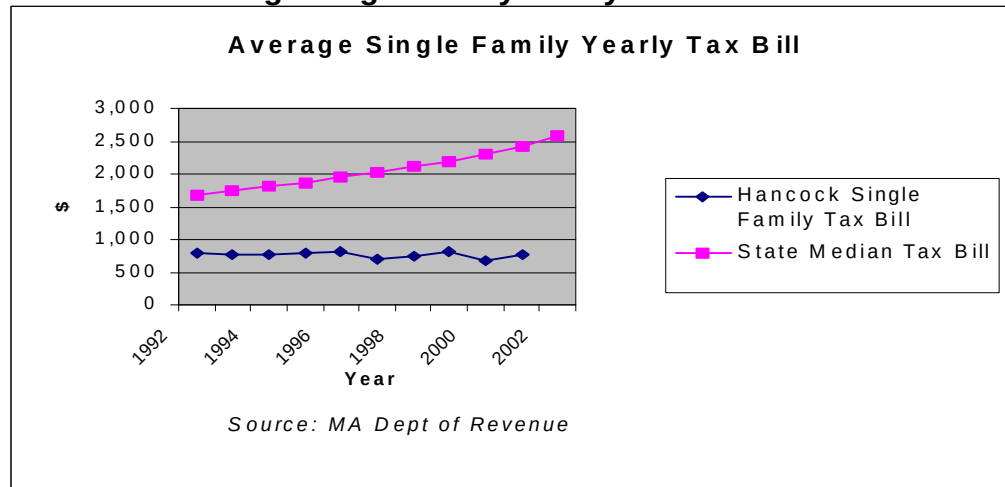
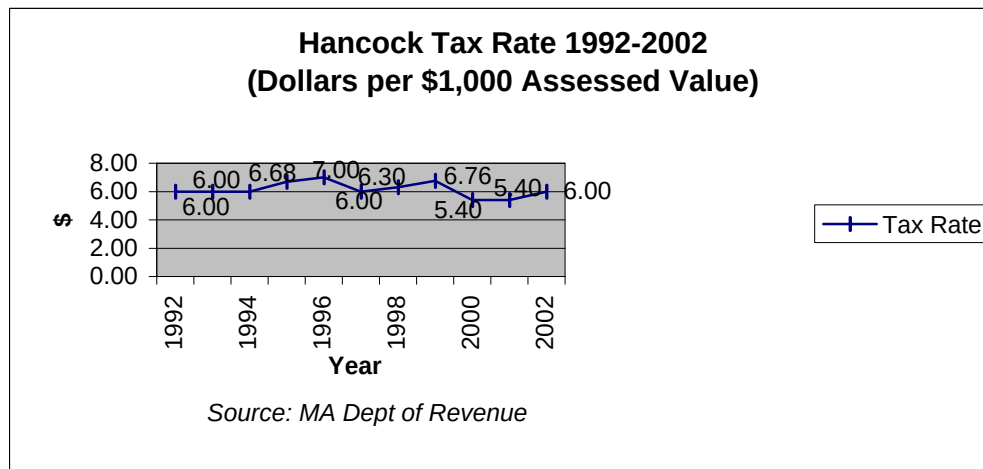
[*2000 Vacancy rate is for all housing as reported by Census 2000]

Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory

According to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development Inventory of CH40B Subsidized Housing Inventory through April 27, 2002, zero (0) of Hancock's 341 reported year-round Housing Units were considered Chapter 40B Units. "Chapter 40B Units" are units considered affordable by low- and moderate-income households with long-term restrictions that ensure that they will continue to be affordable. Chapter 40B authorizes a housing agency or developer to obtain a single comprehensive permit for the construction of subsidized low- or moderate-income housing. If a community in which less than 10% of its total year-round housing stock is subsidized low- or moderate-income housing, denies a comprehensive permit, or imposes conditions that make the project un-economic, the developer may appeal to the state Housing Appeals Committee for review of the local action.

Property Values

The Massachusetts Department of Revenue holds a wealth of detailed data on property values for single family homes in all municipalities, including Hancock. The most recent property value information provided by the Department is from 2001. There were 280 taxable single-family parcels in Hancock in 2001. This number is approximately equal to the number of condominiums, whose detailed data is not available from the State. The tax rate for all residential property in 2001 was \$5.41 for every \$1,000 of assessed home value. Compared to average rate of \$12.67 for Berkshire County Towns, this rate is very low. The average assessed value of homes for 2001 was 140,131. The average single-family tax bill in 2001, at \$757, was very low compared to the State median \$2,418. This number ranked the town 337 of the 340 Massachusetts towns reporting average residential tax bills for 2001. The most unique findings, outlined in the two charts below, are the town's tax rates and yearly tax bills, which are very low compared to the State median.

Chart H-1: Average Single Family Yearly Tax Bill**Chart H-2: Hancock Residential Tax Rates 1992-2002**

Property Value vs. Market Value

Assessed values attempt to reflect actual market values of property. If housing prices rise or fall dramatically in a short period of time, changes in housing assessments may be necessary and may signal fluctuations in the housing market. The average assessed value of single-family homes through the late 1990's remained stable, as had the median sales prices of local homes. (Table H-3) However, assessed values and sales prices rose dramatically in 2000 and 2001, while the number of sales decreased. This suggests that the most recent years have seen fewer single family homes being sold for higher prices. Table H-4 and Chart H-3 demonstrate that homes currently on the market are largely high-end homes, and that new housing is built at higher than average prices for the Town.

Table H-3: Annual Single Family Home Statistics

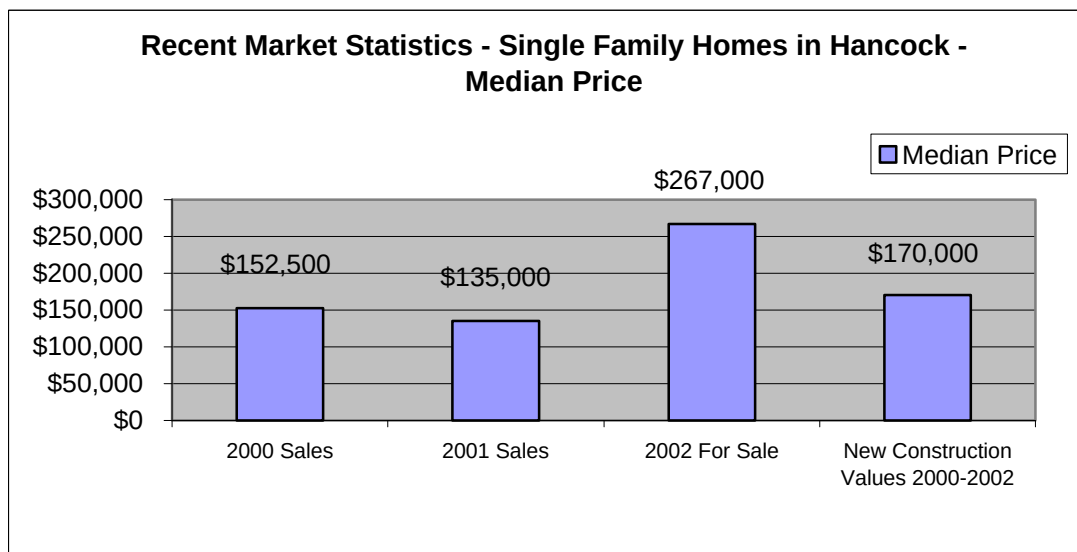
Year	Average Assessed Value	Median Sales Price	Total Number of Sales
1994	127,559 ³	\$117,000 ¹	21 ¹
1995	117,895 ³	\$110,000 ¹	8 ¹
1996	117,872 ³	\$103,000 ¹	16 ¹
1997	117,653 ³	\$106,000 ¹	27 ¹
1998	118,261 ³	\$110,000 ¹	26 ¹
1999	119,338 ³	-	-
2000	123,421 ³	\$152,500 ²	7 ²
2001	140,131 ³	\$135,000 ²	13 ²

Sources: Warren Information Services¹; Town of Hancock Assessors Office²
Massachusetts Department of Revenue³

Table H-4: Recent Single Family Home Market & Value Statistics (2000 and 2001)

	2000 Sales Prices ¹	2001 Sales Prices ¹	2002 List Prices - Properties For Sale ²	New Construction Values 2000-2002 ¹
< 100,000	2	3	0	2
100-149K	1	5	1	1
150-200K	4	2	0	3
200K-250K	0	3	5	1
300K+	0	0	5	0
Avg. Price	\$128,814	\$143,175	\$379,700	\$146,832
Median Price	\$152,500	\$135,000	\$267,250	\$170,000

Sources: ¹ Hancock Town Records ² National Association of Realtors

Chart H3: Recent Market Statistics (2000 and 2001)

Rental Properties

Although the large majority of housing in Hancock is owner occupied, the Town has a significant number of rental units. These units have increased since 1990 and have median rents of \$445, which is slightly higher than the Berkshire County median contract rent of \$428.

Table H-5: Rental Statistics, 1990 vs. 2000

	1990	2000
Total Occupied Rental Units	62	67
Median Contract Rent	\$400	\$445

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 Census

Local Educational Expenditures

The largest municipal costs generated by year-round residential housing are educational costs. Educational expenses accounted for approximately 79% of all Hancock Town expenses in 2000. Each year, the Department of Education reports community educational expenditures. The Net Average Membership Pupils is the number of students residing in Town, averaged over the entire year. The number includes pupils from the Town enrolled in local and regional schools, and those being tuitioned to out-of-town schools. The number does not include non-residents. Cost per pupil is based on the DOE integrated operating costs. The DOE integrated operating cost is one of the most widely accepted measures for comparing educational spending among communities. It reflects the community's share of regional school spending as well as that of its own local schools. The figure does not include capital outlay and construction costs. The following chart shows the total number of membership pupils, and calculated operational costs per pupil for the Town from 1995-2000. It also includes school expenditures as a percentage of all town expenditures from the general fund on government operational costs excluding capital outlay and construction costs.

Table H-6 below compares the town's actual educational expenditures on education with the educational costs as calculated by the department of education as *integrated operating costs*. In 2000, 78% of town expenditures were for educational purpose. This high figure was consistent with other small towns in the area, but was the highest percentage in the County. The DOR lists the Town's 2000 per-capita spending on education to be \$8,777, which resulted from a 22% decrease in total educational spending in the town from 1999 to 2000. The DOE calculation shows the costs per pupil rising past the County average operating cost of approximately \$8,700.

Table H-6: Hancock Town Educational Expenditures 1997-2000

Year	Net Avg. Membership Pupils	Education spending as % of all Town expenditures	Total School Expenditures	Expenditures Per Pupil	Expenditures per Capita	DOE Integrated Operating Cost*	DOE Costs Per Pupil*
1997	97.30	73.33	\$858,536	\$8,824	\$1,473	\$693,722	\$6,989
1998	83.40	74.00	\$887,287	\$10,639	\$1,543	\$727,151	\$8,318
1999	83.80	77.15	\$921,313	\$10,994	\$1,602	\$771,341	\$8,677
2000	82.60	78.53	\$724,970	\$8,777	\$1,280	\$680,139	\$9,338

Source: Massachusetts Dept of Revenue; *DOE Costs are calculated estimates provided by DOE, as opposed to actual expenditures by the Town.

B. Current Development Practices and Constraints to Development

Development Patterns

Development in the Town of Hancock has occurred predominantly in the valley along Route 43 and off Brodie Mt. Road at the Jiminy Peak Ski Area. Most of the development is residential and agricultural, except for the Ski Area itself, which is a major tourist attraction with a hotel, cafeterias, restaurants, and many seasonal condominiums.

Construction Trends & New Construction 1999-2002

Construction of single family homes in Hancock has decreased in the past two years, as construction of multi-unity condos has continued. Table H-7 demonstrates that in 2002, only one new single family home was permitted for construction, while 116 new condo units were built.

Table H-7: New Construction Units Built and Average Values 1999-June 2002

Year	Total Single-Family Units Built ¹	Average New Single Family Home Value ¹	Number of 2 Family Units Built ¹	3 Family Units Built ¹	Multi-Unit Condo Units Built ¹	Avg. Existing Single Family Home Value ²
1999	4	181,928	-	-	48	119,338
2000	4	142,750	-	3	-	123,421
2001	2	175,000	6	-	8	140,131
2002	1	106,824	6	-	116	134,585

Sources: ¹Town of Hancock Building Commissioner, July 2002

²Massachusetts Department of Revenue

Renovations

Common renovations in town include normal repairs to roofs and siding, additions and other improvements, as well as more significant demolitions and septic tank repairs.

(Source: *Town Building Inspector List of Permits for 2000*)

Utilities

Southern sections of Hancock around Route 20 are connected to the City of Pittsfield's municipal water and sewer systems. Overall, only 2% of the Town's total housing stock is served by municipal sewer and water. Phone service for Hancock is provided by three systems, Southern sections along Route 20 are on the Pittsfield-based, Verizon system, central sections are served by the Taconic Telephone Company in Chatham, NY, and northern sections of town are on the Williamstown system, which is also Verizon. Both Western Massachusetts Electric Company and Massachusetts Electric provide electricity service for the Town. Gas service is not available in Town. Trash disposal is done at the Town Transfer station, however trash pick-up service is provided privately for a fee.

Local Zoning Provisions

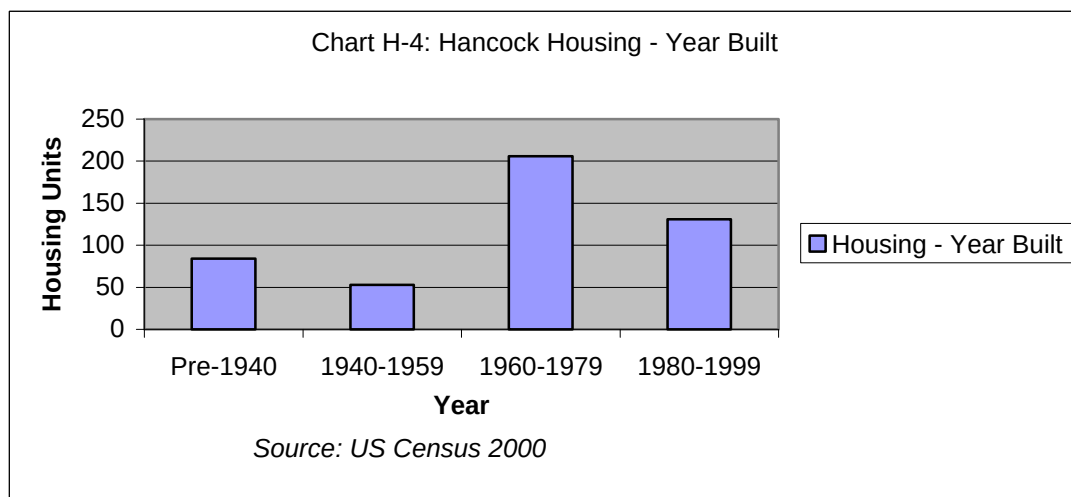
Zoning in Town is not restrictive and not considered a significant barrier to single family housing construction. The Town of Hancock has a single zone covering the entire Town. Use requirements are all by-right except for a minimum of 1 acre of land per dwelling unit. The town makes extensive use of its subdivision regulations to make land use decisions. It does not have a master plan or an open space plan.

Current Housing Conditions

Age of Housing Stock

Hancock is home to many historic homes, as well as several homes built during a local housing boom in the 1960's and 1980's. Much of the new construction has been condominiums, most of which are for seasonal use. The majority of the single family homes inhabited by the town's year-round residents were built prior to 1960 and many are much older.

Chart H-4: Housing Unit Construction – Year Built



Structural Violations

The Building Inspector regarded no single outstanding or noteworthy trend in regards to any building code violations existing within the Town's Housing Stock. All non-compliances in the past few years have been sporadic and have been corrected without the need to issue formal violations.

Health Violations

The Hancock Board of Health Chair offered positive remarks about the condition of the Town's Housing Stock. Singular health issues were mentioned, such as a building that was condemned a year or two ago, but no major problems have been experienced since. The only recurring health problem in Hancock has been with septic failures and failures to pass title 5 inspections. Since repairs to septic tank systems can run up to \$20,000 in some cases, this is seen as a potentially major problem to town's homeowners, especially elderly homeowners on a fixed income.

Population Statistics and Demand For Housing

Historical Population Counts

Similar to other small towns in Berkshire County, the population of Hancock grew by almost 15% from 1990 to 2000. The population in 2000 was recorded as 721, and the peak population ever recorded in Hancock was 1,211 in 1790.

Table H-8: Historical Population Counts

	Town	Berkshire County
1970	675	149,402
1980	643	145,110
1990	628	139,352
2000	721	134,953

Source: BRPC 2001 Data Book 2000 Census Figures

Population By Age

Census figures depicted below in chart H-5 and Table H-9 show that the population of Hancock is aging. From 1980 to 2000 there has been a 21% decrease in residents aged 0-24, while the population aged 65 and older increased by 46%. In 2000, the median age of Hancock residents was listed as 39.6, which was significantly higher than the 1980 value of 31.9.

Chart H-5: Population By Age 1980-2000.

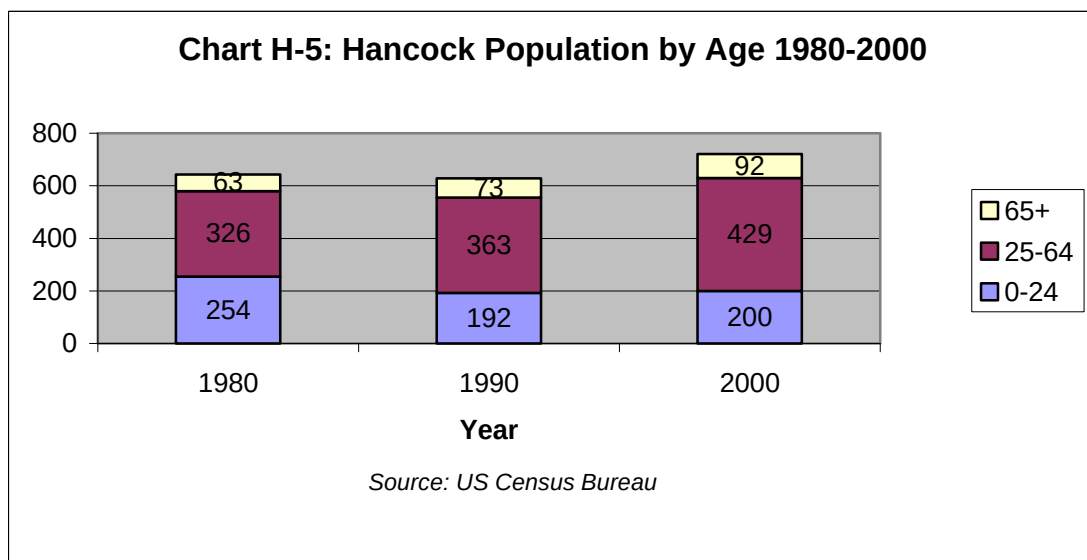


Table H-9: Changes in Hancock's Population By Age, 1980-2000

Age Group	1980	1990	2000	% Change 1980-2000
0-24	254	192	200	-21%
25-64	326	363	429	32%
65+	63	73	92	46%

Source: US Census Bureau

Economic Statistics Related to Housing

Local Household Income Levels

The median household income of Hancock in 2000, according to the 2000 US Census, was \$45,347. This number is higher than the countywide median household income of \$39,047. 27% of Hancock's households were considered low or moderate-income households, earning up to \$36,277, or up to 80% of the Town's median household income. Chart H-6 depicts the percentages of Hancock's households that are low, moderate, middle, and high income according to the Town median. Table H-10 shows how Hancock's median income is higher than the countywide median income due largely to the higher incomes of the Town's renters.

Chart H-6: Household Income Levels

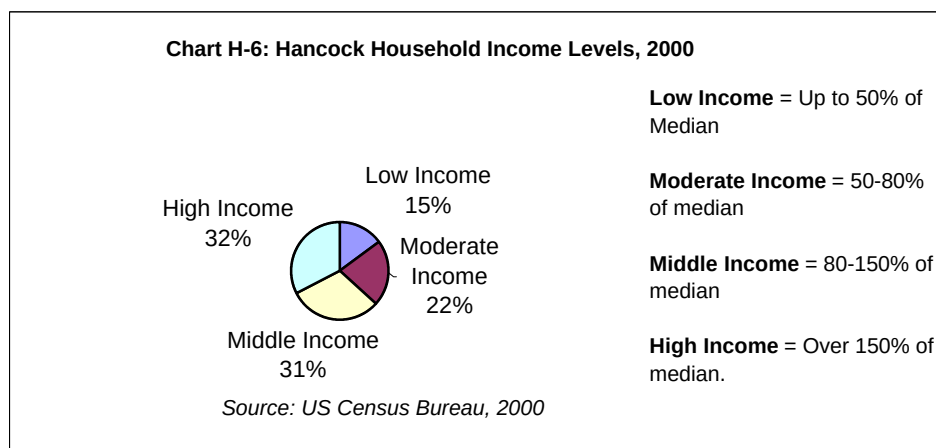


Table H-10 Median Household Incomes, 2000

	Total	Owner occupied	Renter occupied
Hancock	\$44,464	\$47,000	\$34,063
Berkshire County	\$39,038	\$49,420	\$22,621
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000			

Local Employment and Labor Force in Hancock

Local employment, or the number of jobs that are located in Hancock, is detailed in Table H-11, below. Hancock jobs are dominated by the service industry related to the two major tourist attractions in town: Jiminy Peak Ski Resort and Hancock Shaker Village. The largest non-service industry employer in town is Hancock Central School. Service-based jobs have been slowly increasing while trade jobs have been decreasing steadily since 1985.

Table H-12 details the local labor force of residents living in the Town of Hancock. The labor force has decreased dramatically since 1995. The reduction of 36% decreased the labor force from 341 in 1995 to 218 in April of 2002.

Table H-11: Employment and Wages in Hancock 1985-2000

Year	Total Annual Payroll	Avg. Annual Wage	Establishments	Total	Government	TCPU	Trade	Services
1985	\$2,768,800	\$11,164	9	248	28	conf	7	119
1990	\$3,724,844	\$13,303	14	280	conf	conf	14	conf
1995	\$4,681,325	\$14,404	18	325	conf	conf	21	224
1996	\$4,872,043	\$14,587	16	334	conf	conf	16	231
1997	\$4,866,735	\$14,793	15	329	38	conf	17	conf
1998	\$5,106,266	\$15,957	16	320	40	conf	16	223
1999	\$5,540,225	\$15,875	17	349	42	conf	16	251
2000	\$5,551,175	\$16,620	19	334	36	conf	17	236

TCPU = Transportation, Communication and Public Utilities

conf = data suppressed due to confidentiality

Note: Changes in industry definitions occurred in 1988, so data prior to that year are not strictly comparable to the more recent data.

Source: Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training

Table H-12: Laborforce, Employment, and Unemployment in Hancock

Year	Laborforce	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate	Statewide Rate
1995	341	325	16	4.7%	5.4%
1996	332	326	6	1.8%	4.3%
1997	336	330	6	1.8%	4.0%
1998	224	220	4	1.8%	3.3%
1999	220	219	1	0.5%	3.2%
2000	213	212	1	0.5%	2.6%
2001	215	211	4	1.9%	3.7%
April 2002	218	212	6	2.8	4.4%

Note: Employment within this data series is measured by place of residence, rather than by place of employment as in the Employment and Wages Chart

Changes in labor market area definitions occurred in 1990 and changes in methodology occurred in 1987, so data prior to these years are not strictly comparable to the more recent data.

Source: Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training

Market Trends for Housing

In interviews with the Berkshire Eagle, (*Housing Demand Up, Supply Down* June 11, 2002), real estate agents have seen an increase in demand and a reduction of supply throughout Berkshire County. In the short term, there appear a combination of factors increasing real estate investment, such as a low interest rate and a lack of confidence in investing in the stock market. A longer-term factor influencing the Hancock real estate market is an apparent northward encroachment of high demand and higher real estate prices for higher-end homes, most notably high-end second homes, currently being experienced in South County. Realtors in the Central and Northern Berkshires commented on a “greater awareness of the [real estate] opportunities somewhat north of South County”. As of July 31st, 2002, there were 12 houses on the market in Hancock, with prices ranging from \$138,500 to \$749,000 and an average price of \$379,700. Paul Harsch of Harsch Associates, who is broker for some property currently on the market in Hancock, has noted that sales prices in the area are strong and getting stronger.

Housing Affordability Gap Analysis

Housing Affordability Methodology

The housing affordability study was conducted to determine whether or not the “typical” family in Town could actually afford to buy a home in Town at current market values. According to HUD guidelines housing is considered to be affordable when monthly mortgage payments comprise no more than twenty-eight percent (28%) of a household’s total monthly income.

The typical family was defined as a household with an income equal to the median estimated income of the Town. The Town’s median housing price was presented as determined from sales data provided by the Hancock Assessors Office, while an estimate of the Town’s median income for 2000 was given by US Census 2000 figures.

Maximum price affordability levels were determined by an average of mortgage loan qualification calculations provided by local mortgage lenders. The analysis was based on a 10% down payment with no points. Calculations incorporate a mortgage interest rate of 7%, compiled as an average of current rates offered by local lending institutions at the time of the report. A current localized basic homeowners insurance quote for the Town was provided by local insurance brokers. The results estimate a maximum housing price with monthly payments that are no more than 28% of the household income with an assumed maximum of 8% in other debts or obligations forming a combined personal debt payments of no more than 36% of monthly income.

Summary of Housing Affordability Gap Analysis

The results of the gap analysis (Chart H-7 below) suggest that a resident earning the median household income in Hancock, which is \$45,347, could afford to buy the median priced home sold in Town. In fact, 75% of the homes sold in Hancock in 2000 and 2001 were affordable to median income households, which are defined as being 50% of the households. Similarly, there was no affordability gap for middle income households, earning up to 150% of the town median. There was, however, a shortage in homes affordable to low and moderate income residents, or those earning up to \$36,278. These households make up 37% of the households, but could only afford 35% of the homes sold in 2000 and 2001. The relatively small overall number of homes sold in Hancock each year makes the number of houses available for low and moderate income residents harder to find. The small number of rental housing, as well as the higher prices of new construction limit possibilities for lower income residents to live in Town. Lower priced homes also tend to need large investments for repairs not directly accounted for in the sales price.

Chart H-7: 2000 Affordability Matrix

Income Level	2000 Household Income Limits	Median Sales Price (2000-2001)	Calculated Maximum Affordable Sales Price	Number of 2000-2001 Sales Below Max Affordable Price	Number of Households in 2000	% of total households in 2000	% 2000-2001 Sales affordable by these households	Affordability Gap
Low income—up to 50% of Median	\$22,674	\$137,500	\$77,000	3	43	15%	15%	0%
Moderate income – up to 80% of Median	\$36,278	\$137,500	\$125,000	7	108	37%	35%	2%
Middle Income – up to 150% of Median	\$68,021	\$137,500	\$240,000	20	198	68%	100%	none
High Income—over 150% of median	\$68,021	\$137,500	over \$240,000	20	291	100%	100%	none
Median Household Income	\$45,347	\$137,500	\$160,000	15	146	50%	75%	none

Housing Strategy Elements

As a result of the Community Development Plan Housing Study for Hancock, the following actions have been listed as suggested ways in which the Town may continue to meet the housing needs of Hancock residents.

Action #1: Develop local capacity to address housing needs

The community of Hancock may benefit from some type of formalized local person, group, or organization that may keep affordable housing on the Town agenda, which would add to and benefit from the efforts conducted by housing organizations working regionally. A local group or committee, for example, would be involved in decision-making regarding housing development: where does it take place, who is an appropriate developer for Town-owned property, what type of housing should be developed, what will it look like and who will it serve. Such a group may determine how these questions are answered within the town, and how the town may benefit from and contribute to efforts being conducted in the surrounding region.

A local group dedicated to housing could be informal or it could take the form of a Town Committee, Housing Partnership, Housing Trust or other organizational structure. The following actions are relevant for the formation of any type of local housing organization.

- Determine what type of local organization is most appropriate for the Town
- Establish such local housing organization
- Work with the Town Selectboard to:
 - Conduct a more detailed survey of local residents and employers regarding need for affordable homeownership opportunities, housing rehabilitation assistance, septic repair assistance, housing assistance for elderly residents, or any other specific need requiring further study.
 - Develop working relationships with regional and sub-regional Housing Development Agencies/Organizations -, e.g. BHDC, Community Development Corporations, Construct Inc. etc...
 - Work with the Town to identify state, municipally owned land including tax title properties, or private parcels appropriate for housing development
 - Pursue rental housing development as described below.

Action #2: Participation in ongoing local housing rehabilitation programs

The data indicates an on-going need for rehabilitation programs. Continuation of affordable rehabilitation programs will assist low and moderate-income households including elders to maintain their properties in better repair. Two specific programs that may be of particular benefit to the town are already occurring in the area and are readily available to the town. One is the MassHousing program to address septic failures, and the second are ongoing programs administered by Berkshire Housing Development Corporation to address general rehabilitation needs. The MassHousing Septic Repair Assistance Program is available at several local lenders. The programs have not been well subscribed, but have been of specific concern to residents, according to the Town Health Inspector. Septic repair assistance may be needed for older residents or others who may be forced to invest large sums of money to update septic systems in order to sell their house. Berkshire Housing Development Corporation applies for and manages Housing Rehabilitation programs through CDBG for the entire county, but has not included Hancock in recent efforts. A local housing partnership as described above - working with the Selectboard, MassHousing, and the Berkshire Housing Development Corporation - could ensure

Hancock's participation in such efforts to the benefit of the town by undertaking the following items:

- Continue to make local residents aware of MassHousing's Septic Repair Loan Program.
- Continue to work with BHCD to apply for CDBG funds for rehabilitation grants and loans.
- Pursue new rehabilitation funds that may become available.

Often elders, who may most need assistance with rehabilitation, are reluctant to participate in loan programs – even deferred payment loan programs. Whatever type of housing committee is developed could work to determine the need for grant programs and/or technical assistance for elder households. If such need is identified, the committee could identify sources of grant funds, such as foundation funding to provide such grants.

In order to ensure that rehabilitated homes remain affordable and count towards the town's inventory of affordable houses according to M.G.L. Chapter 40B, a use restriction could be placed on these houses for a minimum of 15 years.

Action #3: Pursue development of affordable homeownership options

There are limited year round properties affordable to moderate income households and which are not in significant need of rehabilitation. Development of affordable homeownership opportunities will help maintain a population of families with younger children in the community. Development of affordable homeownership units will also help the community meet its MGL C.40 B requirements. In order to pursue affordable housing ownership, the Town may consider the following:

- Ensure local banks continue to participate in MassHousing's lending programs. In the last 5 years, two Town homeowners have received a total of \$163,000 in loans through MassHousing's First Time Homebuyers Program. These household incomes cannot exceed \$66,000 for a family of two and \$75,900 for a family of three or more. Cost limits are \$277,100 for new construction and \$198,400 for existing single family properties. The loans made in Town suggest these households purchased a moderately priced home.
- Conduct a survey to identify need for affordable homeownership. The survey could be a task of the Town's new housing committee (see Recommendation #1 above). If a need is identified, pursue development in a manner similar to that described for development of rental housing.
- Consider other low-cost models such as working with Habitat with Humanity or pursuing development with the local vocational school programs.

Action #4 Pursue development of affordable rental housing

Hancock has a limited amount of rental housing and 0 units MGL C.40 B housing as of April 2002. Development of affordable rental housing will assist the Town in meeting its MGL C40 B requirement and help insulate the community from outside interference in residential development. In order to pursue rental housing development, the Town may consider the following:

- Establish local organization such as a Housing Committee, Partnership or Trust to ensure local voice in decision-making. See Recommendation # 1 above.
- Work with Berkshire Housing or with another local agency such as CDC of Northern Berkshires to develop mixed-use rental housing. Working with nonprofit partners will assist the community in securing the grant resources needed to make the development affordable at no cost to the Town.
- Identify “no cost” local resources that can make the project work such as state- or Town-owned land that can be used for a rental development. For example, if the town has foreclosed on tax title and derelict properties, there would be an opportunity for the Town to write down the cost of housing development for local residents.
- Work with nonprofit developers to identify grants and low-interest or deferred payment loans for rental development. Possible sources include:
 - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Programs: Section 202 Elderly Housing Program, Section 811 Housing for Persons with Disabilities
 - U.S Department of Agriculture Rural Housing Service Program
 - Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development Programs:
 - Affordable Housing Trust Fund (with MassHousing), HOME, Housing Stabilization Fund, Housing Development Support Program, Local Initiative Program and Section 8 Housing Voucher Program.
 - Massachusetts Housing Partnership loan programs
 - Federal Home Loan Bank’s Affordable Housing Program

Action #5: Pursue the Reduction of Barriers to Housing Development

While the Town’s zoning by-law is minimal and friendly to residential development, a review and update of the subdivision regulations, permitting processes, and even the current zones themselves may find areas for improvement. If a local affordable housing committee of some type is created, this group could work closely with the Planning Board to develop appropriate zoning strategies. Actions may include:

- Complete a local analysis of impediments to development of affordable housing,
- Obtaining the pro-bono services of a real estate attorney or other professional.
- Review Land Suitability Maps and local parcel maps to determine if current zoning accurately reflects existing conditions and current community values with regard to housing
- Implementing administrative procedures to expedite the inspectional services process relating to development of housing. (i.e. one stop shopping for permits)
- Adopt model local rules for responding to comprehensive permit applications.

Action #6: Consider the adoption of the Community Preservation Act to finance future affordable homeownership options in Town

The Community Preservation Act will give approximately \$25 million of State funds to local municipalities every year to put towards creation and support of affordable housing, conservation, and historical preservation. The State monies will match funds gained if a town elects to raise its taxes by up to 3%. Use of these funds is determined locally. In Berkshire County, Stockbridge and Williamstown have elected to participate in the provisions of the Community Development Act, enabling them as the only two municipalities currently able to receive state funds from a pool of funds designed to serve all 32 Berkshire County municipalities.

Action #7: Apply for EO418 Housing Certification for The Town

The Town has not previously been EO418 Housing Certified. Continued Certification gives the town preferential status when applying for over \$400 million in grant opportunities available annually by the State. Grant monies made available by Housing Certification are not necessarily related to housing.

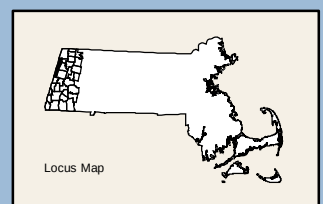
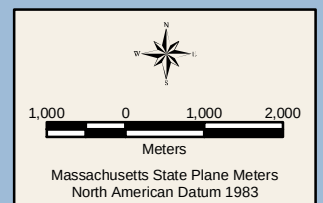
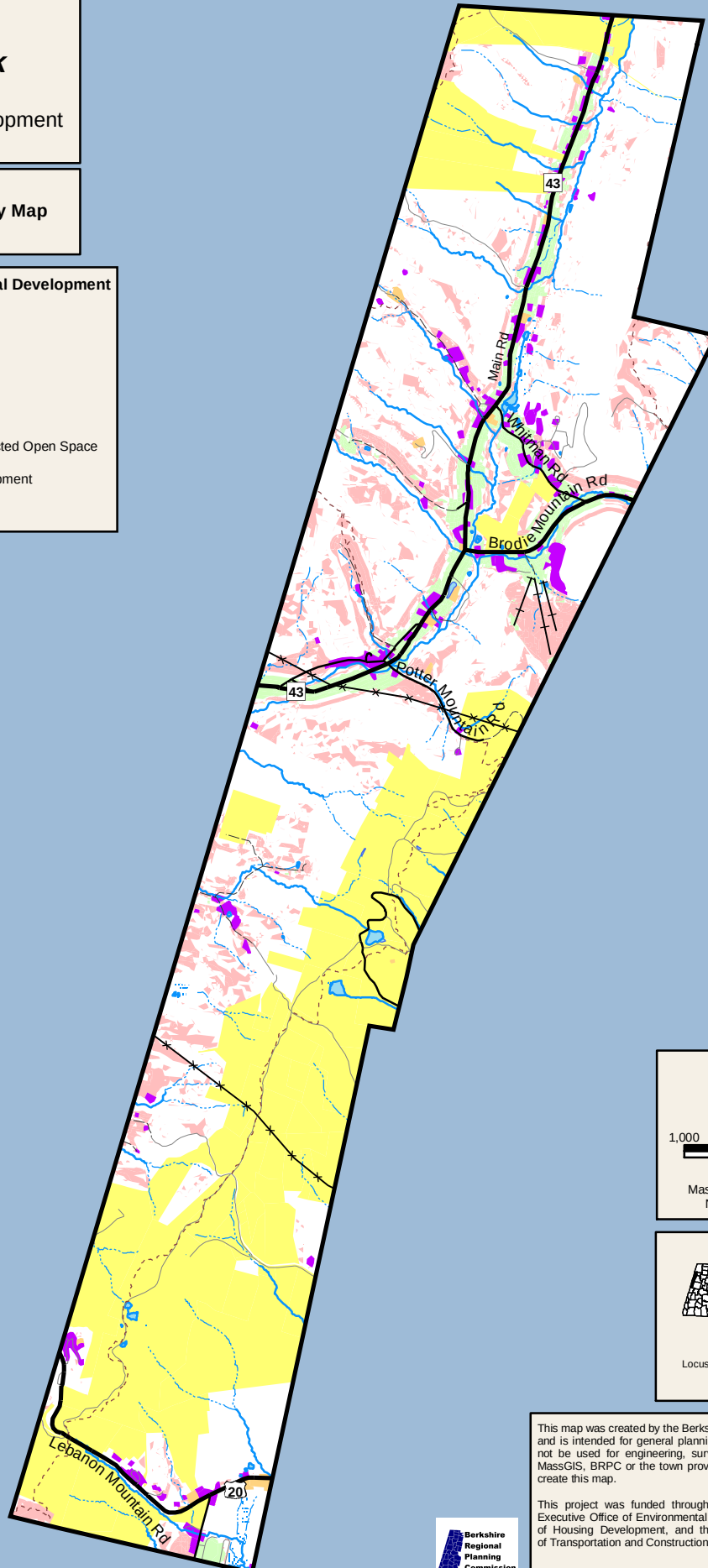
Town of Hancock

Community Development
Plan

Housing Suitability Map

Suitability of Residential Development

- High Suitability
- Medium Suitability
- Low Suitability
- Permanently Protected Open Space
- Residential Development
- Other Developed



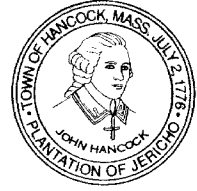
This map was created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and is intended for general planning purposes only. This map shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or regulatory purposes. MassGIS, BRPC or the town provided all of the data layers used to create this map.

This project was funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Department of Housing Development, and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Construction.



/cdp/han/projects/housing_suit.mxd
June 4, 2003

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF HANCOCK



Economic Development



Economic Development

Economic Profile of Hancock
The Fiscal Analysis for Hancock
Economic Suitability Map

6

6-1
6-12
6-23

Economic Profile of Hancock

This section examines the socio-economic trends in Hancock and in the surrounding area of Berkshire County that affect economic development. Planning to maintain an adequate supply of businesses while balancing concerns related to open space, natural resources, housing, transportation, infrastructure, and community services is a challenging task. Planning for economic development begins with analysis of detailed information on the local economy in order to identify specific concerns and potential areas in which the town may encourage business and employment. Several factors may indicate the community's economic stability, strengths and potential areas in which to guide business development that emulates the character of the community. Some of these factors are:

- Supply and diversity of local employment opportunities
- Size, education, and skill level of the local labor force
- Supply of affordable housing and transportation available for local workers
- Amount of existing businesses, buildings, infrastructure, or developable land for new businesses
- Local commercial tax rates, regulations and permitting processes that are conducive to business
- Economic trends and characteristics of the regional economy
- Financial, educational, and developmental resources available

This section presents information and analysis on potential factors that may indicate the Town's strengths and weaknesses in terms of economic development. Economic development is closely linked with the fiscal stability of the town and local residential tax rates. Therefore, planning for new commercial development should include community concern for land preservation and other development. In order to weigh the fiscal costs of different types of development on the town and local taxpayers, the economic profile includes a detailed analysis of fiscal costs of different types of developments within the Town.

Demographics and Population Characteristics

Historical and Projected Population Counts

The past ten years have seen a year-round population increase in Hancock of 15%. The increase marked a turn-around in the steady population decline experience from 1970 to 1990. The population of the surrounding area of Berkshire County continued to decrease, and has been decreasing steadily since 1970 by an average of approximately 3% every 10 years.

Figure E-1 depicts regional population projections provided to the BRPC by Regional Economic Models, Inc (REMI), of Amherst Massachusetts. The population decline in Berkshire County is expected to end sometime between year 2000 and year 2010. The BRPC expects the population of Hancock to follow this trend and continue its population increases in the next decades. REMI population projections have been a reliable model for regional population trends in the past 20 years, but they are susceptible to unforeseen changes, and have been less reliable forecasting future trends for individual municipalities such as Hancock.

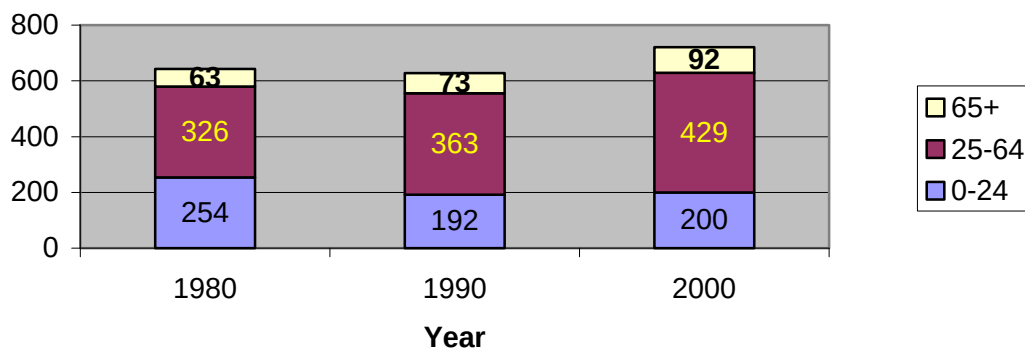
Figure E-1: Historic and Projected Population Counts

	Hancock, MA	Berkshire County
1970	675	149,402
1980	643	145,110
1990	628	139,352
2000	721	134,953
2010*	778	135,700
2020*	892	145,875
2030*	1057	162,650

Source: U.S Census Figures from BRPC Data Book, 2001

Population By Age

The last ten years have seen a 37% increase in the town population aged 55 or older. (see Figure E-2 below) This demographic now represents 26% of the total population of the town, increasing the median age to 39.6 – which is younger than the countywide median age of 40.5. The working-age population aged 25-54 years increased by 11% from 297 to 331, and the number of residents aged 24 and under increased by 4%.

Figure E-2: Hancock Population by Age 1980-2000

Source: US Census Bureau

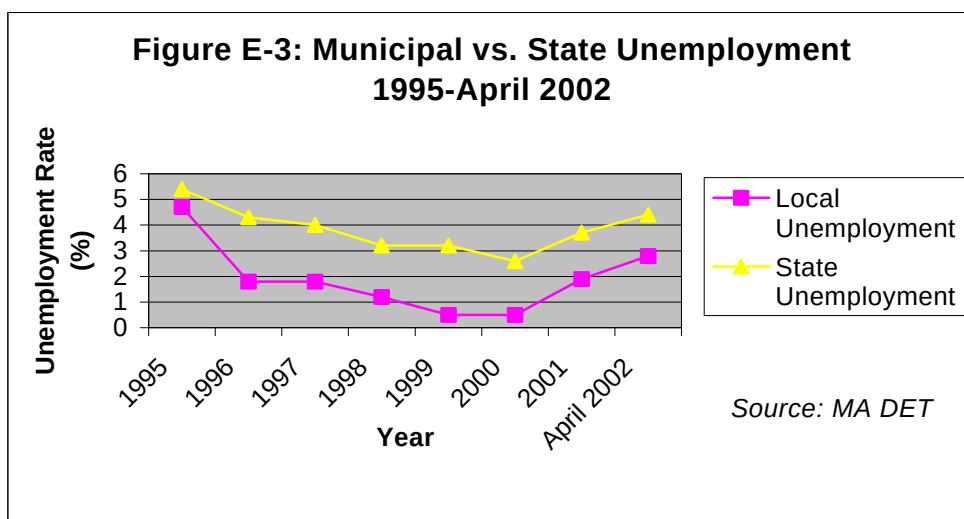
Educational Attainment

According to the 2000 census, 89.4% of the Town's residents aged 25 years or older had at least a high school degree, while 29.5% had at least a bachelor's degree. Throughout Berkshire County, 85.1% of this demographic have high school diplomas and 26.0 % have bachelor's degree.

Employment and Income Characteristics

Employment and Unemployment in Hancock

Labor force statistics record the number of employed residents living in town. The town's labor force is not necessarily employed within the town. According to the Massachusetts Dept. of Employment and Training, (see figure E-3 below) the Town's Total Labor force as of August 2002 was 218. As businesses in Town employ a total of 198 employees, the large majority of the labor force is employed outside of town. From 1995 to 2000, the number of jobs in town has decreased from 341 to 218. Town residents experienced a 2.8% unemployment rate in April 2002, which was lower than the statewide unemployment rate of 4.4%.



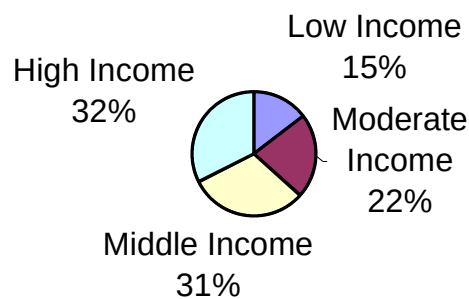
Municipal vs. State Unemployment 1995-April 2002

Year	Local Labor Force	Local Residents Employed	Local Unemployment Rate	State Unemployment Rate
1995	341	325	4.7	5.4
1996	332	326	1.8	4.3
1997	336	330	1.8	4.0
1998	332	328	1.2	3.2
1999	220	219	0.5	3.2
2000	213	212	0.5	2.6
2001	226	211	1.9	3.7
August 2002	218	214	1.8	5.0

Source: Massachusetts DET, <http://www.detma.org>

Local Household Income Levels

In the US Census of 2000, the Town had a median household income of \$45,347. As depicted in Figure E-4 below, fifteen percent (15%) of the Town's households were considered low income by EO418 guidelines (earning from zero to 50% of the Town's median income), and 22% of the town was considered moderate income (earning 50-80% of the median income).

Figure E-4: Household Income Levels, 2000

Low Income = Up to 50% of Median

Moderate Income = 50-80% of median

Middle Income = 80-150% of median

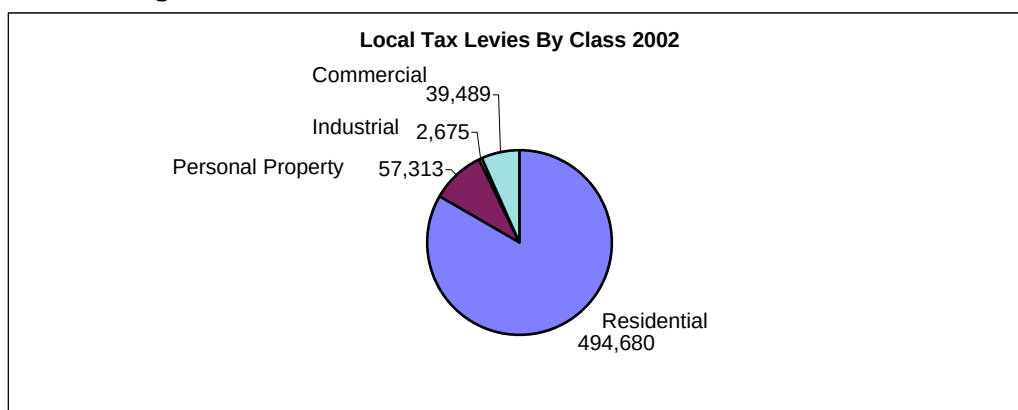
High Income = Over 150% of median.

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

Local Business Characteristics

Local Tax Revenues and Local Commercial & Industrial Property

The Town's tax base is primarily residential. Only ten percent (10%) of the town's tax levy was gained from Commercial and Industrial Property in 2002. Half of the residential taxes are derived from condos related to the Jiminy Peak Ski Area, and the other half is single-family housing. Tax rates in town have been significantly lower than the Berkshire County Average in the past 5 years. The Community Development Plan Fiscal Analysis section profiles the Town's Tax revenues in greater detail.

Figure E-5: Hancock Tax Levies for Fiscal Year 2002

Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Personal Property	Total
\$494,680	\$57,313	\$2,675	\$39,489	\$594,157
Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue, 2002				

Local Business Inventory

The local business inventory describes the jobs that are located in the town of Hancock. The Town has a history as a Resort area. The local economy is greatly influenced by tourism and many of the jobs in town are in the service industry. Approximately 83% of the Town's employers and 96% of Town jobs are in service producing Industries. According to the survey (Figure E-6), only two of the town's employers (14%) and eight jobs (4%) are in goods producing industries. Service industry jobs are traditionally lower paying jobs than goods producing jobs, which is demonstrated by Figure E-6 showing the average weekly wage of service producing jobs is \$506.35 a week, while the average weekly wage of goods producing jobs is \$229.98.

Figure E-6: Industry Employment and Wages in Hancock

	Employers	Jobs	Avg. weekly wage
Goods Producing Industries:	2 (14%)	8 (4%)	229.98
Service Producing Industries:	12 (86%)	190 (96%)	506.35
Total For All Industries:	14	198	495.18

Source: [MA Dept of Employment and Training](#), 2002

Employment and Wages

Since 1985, the economy of the town has grown steadily. However, employment in town has remained stagnant in the past 5 years. From 1995 to 2000, the number of jobs in town has increased from 325 to 334 while the number of employers in town has increased from 18 to 19. The number of employers and employees in town varies by source. The most reliable source of data is the DET (see Figure E-7), which lists 19 employers in Town and 334 employees as of 2000. A private firm, Americas Labor Market Information Services (ALMIS), lists 25 non-governmental employers in Hancock in 2001.

Figure E-7: Employment and Wages by Industry

Year	Total Annual Payroll	Avg. Annual Wage	Employers	Total	Govt.	Const	Trade	Services
1985	\$2,768,800	\$11,164	9	248	28	0	7	119
1990	\$3,724,844	\$13,303	14	280	Conf	Conf	14	Conf
1995	\$4,681,325	\$14,404	18	325	Conf	Conf	21	224
1996	\$4,872,042	\$14,587	16	334	Conf	Conf	16	231
1997	\$4,866,735	\$14,793	15	329	38	Conf	17	Conf
1998	\$5,106,266	\$15,957	16	320	40	Conf	16	223
1999	\$5,540,225	\$15,875	17	349	42	2	16	251
2000	\$5,551,175	\$16,620	19	334	36	Conf	17	236

Conf = Confidential

Source: [MA Dept of Employment and Training](#), 2002

Current Local Growth Trends

DET figures show that since 1985 the total number of jobs in Town has increased. Total annual payroll of the Town's employers has increased an average of approximately 7% a year since 1985. Average annual wages have been increasing slightly rising at approximately 4.5% a year since 1985. Growth in town has been seen in service industry jobs increasing from 119 to 236 from 1985 to 2000, and remains the largest growth industry in town.

Regional Business Overview

According to an analysis of employment in the Berkshires by the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board (“Blueprint”) 9 industry segments (Figure E-8) are defined as “critical” to the region since these 9 provide the preponderance of employment opportunities, or about 78% of the jobs – in the region.

Figure E-8 – Critical Industries in Berkshire County

Industry	(% Workforce)
Health & Human Services	16%
Travel & Tourism	14%
Retail	14%
Education	11%
Paper/Plastics	9%
Construction	5%
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	4%
Business Services	3%
Applied Technology	2%
Total:	78%

Source: Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, 2001

Current Regional Growth Trends & Emerging Industries

The 2001 Regional Employment Board Workforce Development Blueprint has identified business services atop 5 other industry sectors with growth rates in employment in excess of 10%. These represent the region’s “emerging” industries (Figure E-9).

Figure E-9: Emerging Industries in Berkshire County

Industry:	Growth Rate (%):	% of Workforce Employed:
Business Services	25	2.8%
Misc. Retailing	18	4.5%
Spec. Trades Contractors	18	2.6%
Gen'l. Building Contractors	18	1.0%
Amusement & Recreation	15	2.3%
Personal Services	12	1.2%

Source: Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, 2001

Another recently recognized growth area in Berkshire County is in the Technology Enterprise sector, which is comprised of four major types of activity: Software and Systems Design; Design and Art; Content and Publishing; and Information Technology (IT) Business Consulting. The University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute recently completed the first major study of the growth of technology enterprise sector in Berkshire Country. The study, *Technology Enterprise in Berkshire County: Economic Analysis, Feb 2002*, reports that since 1993, the Technology Enterprise sector has grown at a higher rate than every major division of the Berkshire economy in terms of firm growth, employment growth, and real annual payroll growth. The study shows

that payroll for Technology Enterprise firms increased by 190% from 1993-2002, while total payroll in the region increased by only 13.5%.

Future Growth Areas Regionally

Berkshire County's future base is very much tied to its strong past manufacturing base industries – though with substantially fewer employees, but unprecedented output value as measured by Gross Regional Product

Economic forecasts provided by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission using the REMI model indicate that while the service sector will continue its upward trajectory in numbers of employees, high technology and high productivity manufacturing will continue to be the structural and economic base of the region's economy.

Job growth within the major sectors of the regional economy is slated to continue and remain roughly the same proportionally out to 2025. Services are expected to continue to climb in employment to almost 50% of total employment by 2025, with healthcare services being the leading employer regionally within this sector. Increasing numbers of service jobs can be expected to affect overall wages and income in this region.

Technology Enterprise is also expected to continue to increase its substantial impact on Berkshire County's economy. According to an anonymous survey by the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute, companies associated with this sector reported a positive business outlook, with 75% expecting increased revenues over the next three years and 96% reporting they are likely to remain in Berkshire County for the next 5 years.

Regional Employment Outlook

Concerns have been raised both by the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board and the Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training's publication on regional workforce trends that much of the job growth taking place in the Berkshires is in low wage segments of the service and retail sectors. At the same time, businesses throughout the region have experienced a difficulty in recruiting qualified employees with job skills and technical abilities matching employer needs.

The number of higher paying small, or "micro" businesses has been growing in the area. The role of small or "micro" businesses is of interest in Town and in the surrounding region for its importance in economic development – especially because of changes in where and how people work. Advances in telecommunications technology and the growth of personal computers in the home have meant many more people can – and do – work at home as self-employed contractors and consultants. Results of the Donahue Institute study on Technology Enterprise found that Berkshire County was home to 1,500 Technology Enterprise sole proprietorships, as well as 154 employer firms with an average of eight employees. This contrasts with the 39 per firm average in manufacturing businesses, and the 15 per firm in the average services industry business in Berkshire County.

Self-employment has been increasing at a faster rate than wage and salary employment both regionally and on a national level. Data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis for 1998 for the Berkshire region indicate that proprietorships (both farm and non-farm) represent about 18% of total regional employment, and have increased in number about 2.8% from 1994.

Additional Factors Influencing Economic Development in Hancock

Agriculture and Natural Resource Preservation

Agriculture has historically been a large part of the culture as well as the local economy in Hancock. Scenic and natural resources also add to the rural characteristic of the town, which has made the town an attractive place to live, work, recreate and vacation. The recent town survey 83% of the town felt that scenery and natural resources are good for business in Town, and over 78% would support protecting the Town's farms, forests and open spaces.

Housing Availability for a Future Work Force

Housing information provided by town officials and the 2000 census show evidence that the new housing stock is not being developed for a future local workforce. Approximately half of the town's housing stock, and the majority of new development has been condominiums intended for seasonal use relating to Jiminy Peak Resorts. In the ten years from 1990 to 2000, the year-round population of Hancock increased fifteen percent (15%), while assessor data from 1999-2001 shows that new construction of non-condo single-family housing is occurring at a rate of 3 per year, a rate bringing only a 10% increase in ten years. In order for Hancock's local service industry to continue to grow at its current pace, additional housing development will be needed.

Compatibility with Existing Land Use & Regional Plans

The town has a single zone with all dimensional uses by right. The only local zoning stipulation calls for a minimum of 1 acre of land for every dwelling unit. The lack of zoning enables a variety of business, commercial, or industrial uses in town, though the town is rural with little commercial development beyond the Jiminy Peak Area or the Route 20 corridor.

Infrastructure, Service Demands & Available Utilities

The town does not have a municipal water and sewer system. According to the BRPC 2001 Data Book, 2% of Town's housing units are served by public sewer and 98% are served by on-site waste disposal. Both Massachusetts Electric Company and Western Massachusetts Electric Company provide electricity service for the Town, but no gas service is provided. Trash disposal is done at the Town Transfer station, however trash pick-up service is provided for a fee.

Financial Resources in the Berkshires

At this point there is no central "clearinghouse" for information on community development or economic development funds sought or granted for projects or initiatives undertaken in this region. Funding for these purposes in the past has been sought by multiple agencies and organizations, and separate communities with minimal coordination of efforts or region-wide prioritization. As a result, a priority regional goal was established with the intent of improving communication and collaboration on economic development planning and activities for a better, targeted use of resources and a clearer vision of the desired future economy of the region.

Workforce Availability & Local Educational Opportunities

Companies in emerging sectors of the economy, especially Technology Enterprises, are highly dependent on the attraction and retention of a well-educated and professional workforce. A variety of creative and intellectual skills are in demand along with specific technical expertise. Residents in Town have access to higher education (Associate's Level) and technical training programs at Berkshire Community College in Pittsfield. The Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in North Adams also offers undergraduate and graduate level programs accessible to both

day and evening students. Two other residential private colleges serve the region: Williams College and Simon's Rock. Simon's Rock offers high school age students the opportunity to enroll in college programs. The University of Massachusetts also offers a MBA program in Pittsfield. Additional opportunities for technical training or skill-building are viewed as critical to workforce development in the region.

Workforce Development Programs

Residents in Town have access to a number of workforce development programs and economic development organizations offering workforce development activities, access to training grants, youth employment and training opportunities, and strategic planning resources. Listed below are key organizations – both public and private – and a brief summary of recent activities in support of regional economic development and/or recent assessments or studies, which have fostered understanding of regional economic issues:

Berkshire Council for Growth

Leading the coalition-building effort has been the Council for Growth, established in 1998 as a regional outgrowth of the Cellucci Administration's Berkshire Jobs Task Force. The Council and its committees, in partnership with volunteers from many private businesses and support from the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board and the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, have coordinated/spearheaded a number of important regional initiatives including a regional jobs website, www.berkshirejobs.com.

Berkshire Applied Technology Council

Formed in 1997/1998 as a partnership of businesses and government, local schools, Berkshire Community College, and regional 4-year colleges, the Council's mission is to establish the Berkshire region as a technology center of excellence. The Council's goal is to address the workforce needs of manufacturing companies and industries in the region through a long-range strategy of technology-focused educational initiatives. Providing state of the art educational programs, financial assistance, training, and professional support targeting students and incumbent workers, the Berkshire Applied Technology Council addresses a key factor in attracting and retaining technology-based industries and firms – the need for technically trained employees. Berkshire Applied Technology Council has sponsored the following:

TECHPATH: This workforce/educational program was developed in 1997 as a 2+2+2 sequence to link high school to associate to baccalaureate degrees with a high technology curriculum specifically integrating local industry applications. The TECHPATH program is designed to be accessible to incumbent workers, as well as a seamless link in motivating and developing future high tech workers. Over 50 students are currently enrolled in the program.

Women on Tech Path Program: A collaboration with Berkshire Community College, this project will offer after-school training to 22 young women (from the 11 regional public schools) in engineering, graphics/animation, and information technology. A follow-up summer program – the Internet Academy – will also provide job shadowing and electronic networking components.

Berkshire Connect

A regional initiative cited by the Federal Communications Commission in 2000 as a national model for efforts to improve telecommunications access in rural or under-served areas with a cost-effective solution to help drive regional economic activity. The partnership agreement with

Global Crossing/Equal Access Networks has resulted in building sufficient telecommunications infrastructure and services to support the needs of businesses and industry in this region at a competitive and affordable price.

Berkshire County Regional Employment Board (BCREB)

The BCREB is the local organization responsible for assisting employers with workforce development activities, access to training grants, youth opportunities, and strategic planning & oversight. It helps access the following programs: Career Center, Workforce Training Fund, Department of Employment and Training, Berkshire Training and Employment Program, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Advantage Employee Network and Full Employment Program. It also promotes the School-to-Work Initiative, Summer of Work and Learning and Welfare-to-Work Initiative. Two key documents published by the BCREB are its Workforce Development Blueprint (1998, 2000 & 2001 draft) and Workforce Needs Assessment (May, 2000).

Economic Development Organizations

There are a number of regional and local economic development organizations, each with defined geographic service areas and unique missions. These include:

- Berkshire Enterprises:
Berkshire Enterprises runs ten-week training programs addressing a wide range of issues that serve as the foundation for new entrepreneurs. The focus is on business plan development, financing, marketing and management.
- Berkshire Housing Development Corporation
- Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
- Berkshire Training and Employment Program
- Berkshire Visitors Bureau
- Community Development Corporation of Southern Berkshire
- Division of Employment and Training
- Lee Community Development Corporation
- Massachusetts Office of Business Development
- Northern Berkshire Community Development Corporation
- Northern Berkshire Industrial Park and Development Corporation
- Pittsfield Economic Development Authority
- Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation (serving Berkshire County)

State Funded Economic Development Grants Available to Berkshire Communities

The following is a brief summary of several economic development funding and assistance programs provided by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development and Department of Agriculture. For additional information on these funding sources and how they may be utilized by the Town, contact Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, or visit the Massachusetts State website: www.mass.gov.

Massachusetts Dept of Agriculture Farm Viability Program

This is a voluntary program supplying funding and technical assistance to farmers seeking to increase the economic stability and viability of their farms or agricultural enterprises.

Community Development Fund (CDF)

Communities are eligible for this grant depending on a scale that determines the level of needs based upon an assessment formula. These would be considered communities of moderate needs.

Housing Development Support Program

This grant is limited to communities building smaller housing developments. It provides partial support to such projects.

Ready Resource Fund

Communities that are creating small to medium size economic development projects are eligible for this grant.

Massachusetts Community Capital Fund

Depending on eligibility, this can provide grants to communities for assisting businesses. Industrial, commercial and real estate, including mixed -use development projects may be eligible.

Mini Entitlement Program

This is a program designed for the communities with the highest needs as designated by the DHCD.

Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program

This is a loan guarantee of a HUD loan for communities to use to assist businesses. Industrial, commercial and real estate, including mixed use developments may be eligible.

Data References

Technology Enterprise in Berkshire County: Economic Analysis, University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute, February 2002.

Workforce Development Blueprint, Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, Inc., July 2002.

America's Labor Market Information System Employer Database, 2nd edition. InfoUSAGov., 2001.

Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training. <http://www.detma.org>
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The Fiscal Analysis for Hancock

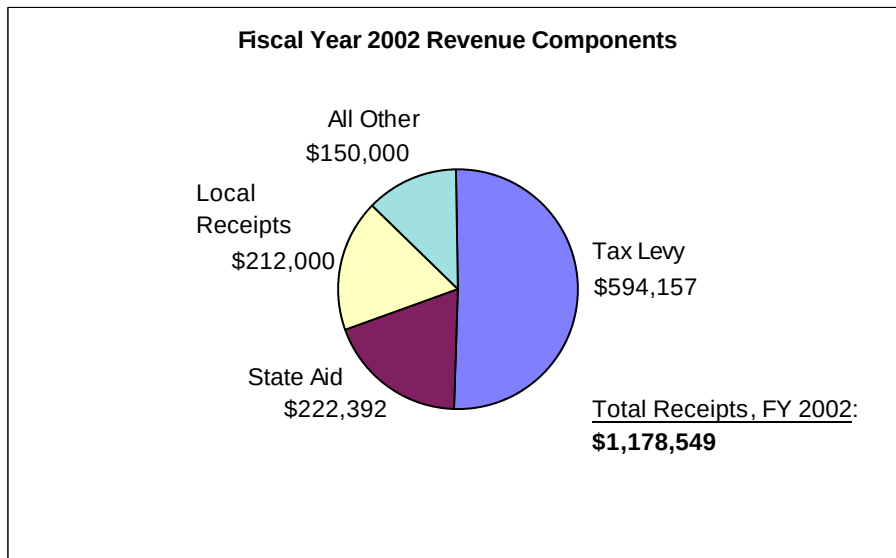
Introduction

The Fiscal Analysis is an attempt to outline the net impact that certain types of uses have upon the town's annual finances. The analysis determines land use for a parcel of land by the parcel's Property Class, as defined by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue. Single family housing, multi-family housing, vacant land, industrial, and commercial are each examples of property classes. In theory, each parcel of land places a certain cost burden on the town according to its use. Businesses rely on the town to maintain roads in order to move goods and services, and residents rely on the town to educate their children in public schools. To make up for these shared costs, each parcel of land is given an assessed value, by which the land is taxed and an annual source of revenue, or tax levy, is generated for the town.

TOWN REVENUES/INCOME

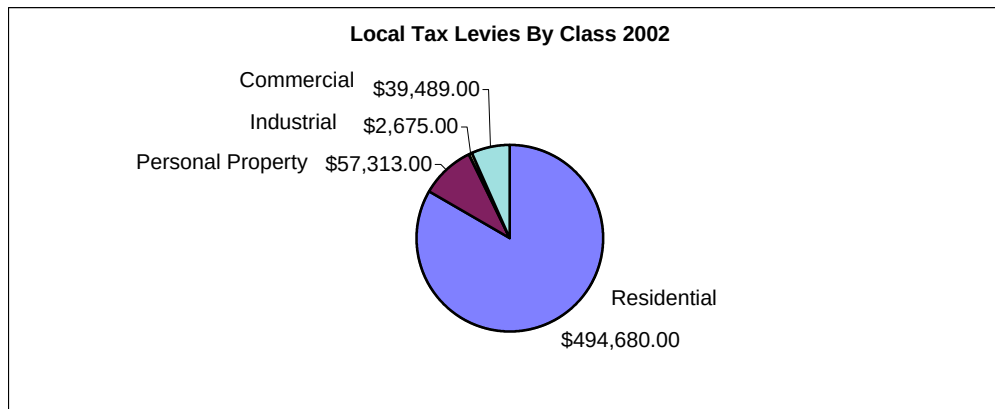
Revenue Components

The tax levy isn't the only source of income for the town. In fact, it is one of four general town income sources. The Chart titled *Fiscal Year 2002 Revenue Components* outlines the town's 4 sources of income at the most general level. Tax Levy, State Aid, Local Receipts, and Other sources are the categories of town funds. The next four charts outline the four general revenue components in greater detail.



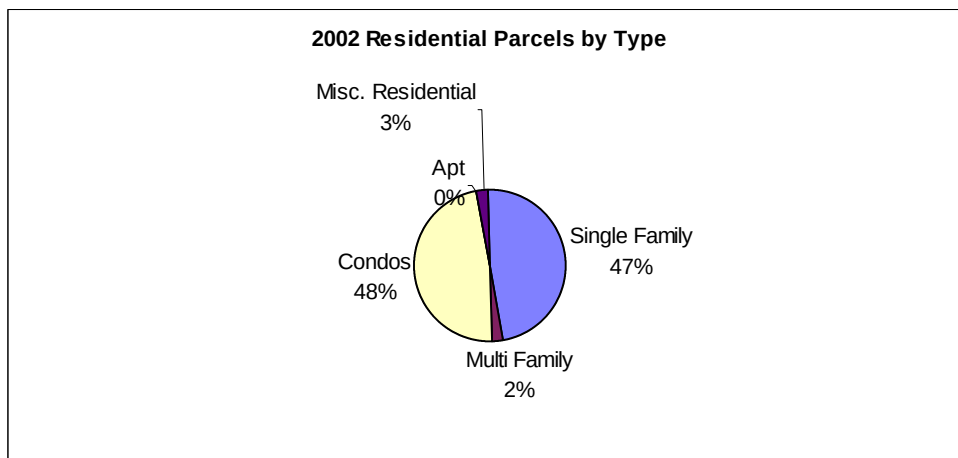
Local Tax Levies by Class

The first type of revenue source is the Tax Levy. In 2002, the Town received \$1,178,549 in total receipts. Approximately half of this (\$594,157) was from the local tax levy. The local tax levy is largely based on four property classes covering Residential, Open Space, Commercial, and Industrial properties. The fifth property class is Personal Property, which is gained from taxes on second home furnishings and certain types of equipment and machinery. A broad tax base, derived from an even distribution of parcel types, reduces the town's dependence on any one population. The majority of the town's tax levy in 2002, 83.3% of all town levy, was from residential class (47%) or condos (48%). Residential levy is outlined in more detail in the *Single Family Tax Levy* chart.



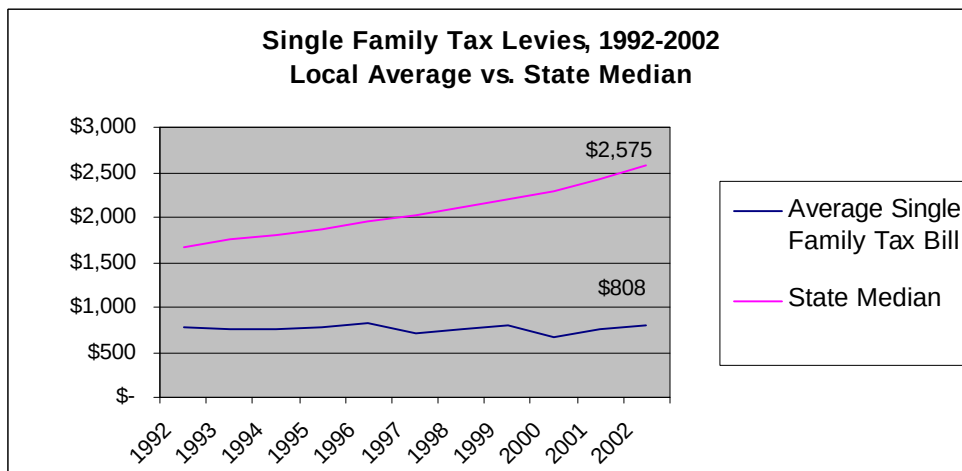
Parcel Counts by Property Class

Local tax levies are assigned by land parcel. This chart shows the makeup of the town's land parcels. A broad tax base, derived from an even distribution of parcel types, reduces the town's dependence on any one particular business or use. The majority of the town's parcels, 95% of all town parcels, are used for single-family homes (47%) or condos (48%). Ten percent (10%) of the town's total 2002 tax levy was gained by commercial property taxes from only 32 commercial parcels.



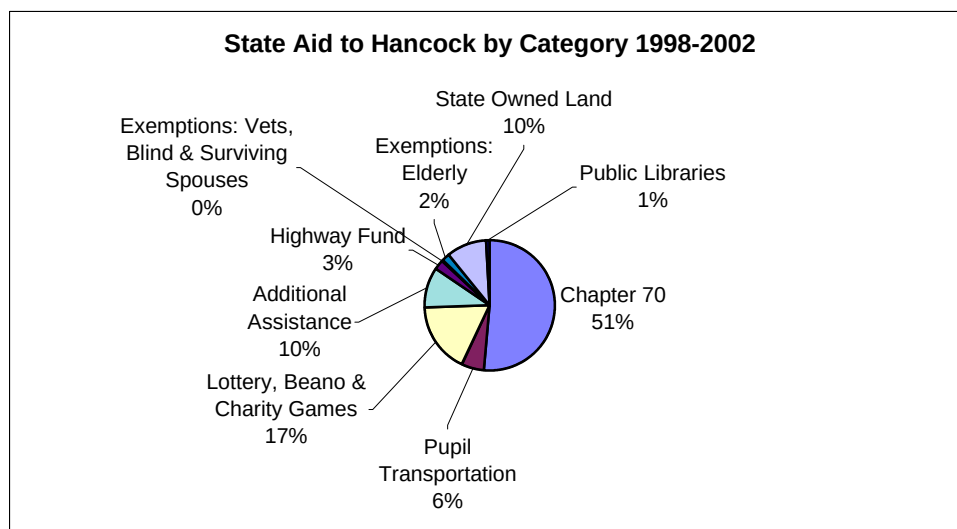
Single Family Tax Levies

The Massachusetts Department of Revenue's *Property Class Definitions* shows that Residential tax levies are gained from Single Family tax levies, Multi-Family and apartment tax levies, and condominium tax levies. This chart details the residential levies from single-family residential parcels in Hancock. The chart shows that single family levies resulted in \$225,295 in town revenue, or 45.5% of the residential tax levy. Data from the town assessor shows that the second largest contributor to the residential tax levy was condos, generating \$190,947 in levies, or 38.6% of the total residential levy. The remaining levy was generated from multi-family and apartment parcels.



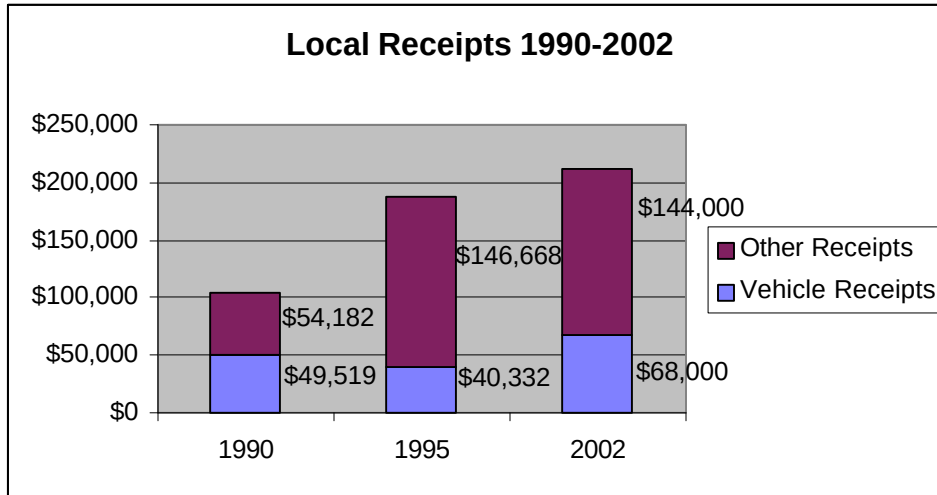
State Aid to Hancock by Category, 1998-2002

Nineteen percent (19%) of Hancock's 2002 total receipts were from State Aid, totaling \$222,392. The majority of State Aid to Hancock (\$114,048 or 51%) was Chapter 70 funding for education. The second largest contributor was Lottery monies (\$38,668 or 17% of State Aid) and the next largest was PILOT funds for State owned lands (\$22,014 or 10% of State Aid). State Aid is not always a stable form of revenue, and is subject to budget cuts annually.



Local Receipts and Actual Motor Vehicle Excise

The last component of the town's annual revenue to be detailed is local receipts. Local receipts amounted to \$212,000, or 18% of the town's annual revenue in 2002. Local Receipts include revenues from auto excise taxes, penalties, fines, and permits. Auto excise receipts are the largest component of Local Receipts, comprising \$68,000, or Thirty-two percent (32%) of all local receipts.



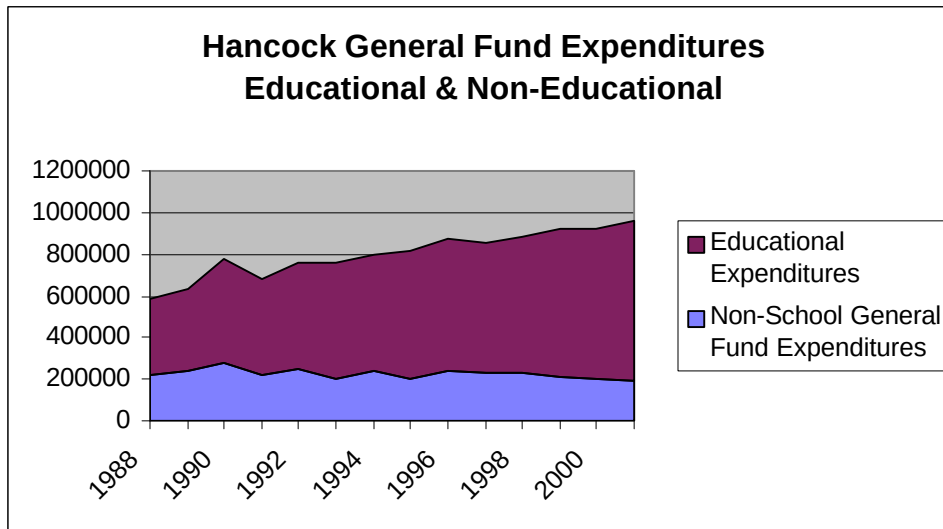
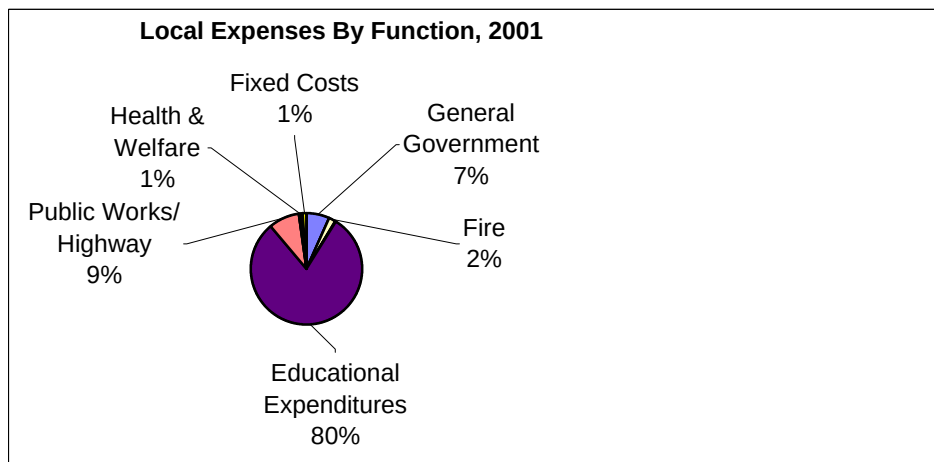
Other Revenue

Twelve percent (12%) of Hancock's 2002 revenues were from other sources. These sources include chapter 90 highway funds, free cash, and other miscellaneous State sources that vary year to year.

TOWN EXPENDITURES

Local Expenses by Function 1987-2001

Tax levies, as described above, are put in place to pay for necessary town expenditures. The chart titled *Local Expenses by Function* outlines how the town's annual revenues are spent to pay for various town expenses. The expenses are called "General Fund" expenses related to operational costs of maintaining local government, town utilities and infrastructure, health, and education. Schools are such a major part of most towns' expenses that many times it is useful to separate them into school vs. non-school expenses. Such an analysis in Hancock shows that school expenditures have been steadily increasing while non-school expenditures have been steady or decreasing as a trend.



Overall Town Expenditures by Source Comparison: Hancock vs. Similar Communities

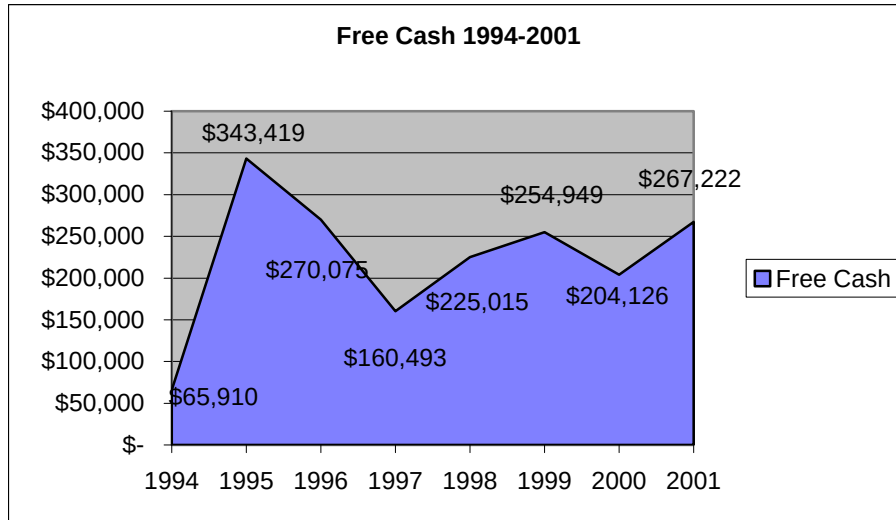
The Massachusetts Department of Revenue categorizes towns by Kind Of Community, or KOC. The KOC is a grouping formed to compare towns with other towns of similar sizes, with similar infrastructure and budgets. Using this comparison for Hancock, we see that Hancock's expenses are well below those of similar kinds of communities. Hancock places a greater emphasis on education and public works spending, and less on debt services, fixed costs, and police. The high percentage of spending on education is typical for Berkshire County Towns with limited infrastructures and low overall town and governmental expenses.

Overall Town Expenditures by Source: Hancock vs. Towns listed in Hancock's Kind Of Community (KOC) Category

Source	Hancock Average Percent of Town Expenses (1991-2001)	Hancock Average Amount of Expense (1991-2001)	Average Percent of KOC Expenses (2001)	KOC Average Amount of Expense (2002)	Percentage Difference btw Hancock & KOC Average
General Government	7%	\$60,460	7%	\$337,865	0%
Police	0%	\$1,085	6%	\$287,329	-6%
Fire	2%	\$14,608	2%	\$117,904	-1%
Other Public Safety	0%	\$3,343	2%	\$94,055	-2%
Educational Expenditures	74%	\$618,417	55%	\$2,639,277	+19%
Public Works/ Highway & Other Public Works	13%	\$108,962	9%	\$442,155	+4%
Health & Welfare	0%	\$2,755	1%	\$53,871	-1%
Culture & Recreation	0%	\$3,540	2%	\$78,665	-1%
Debt Service	0%	\$67	8%	\$379,649	-8%
Fixed Costs	1%	\$12,200	7%	\$325,948	-5%
Intergovernmental	1%	\$12,183	3%	\$155,262	-2%
Other Expenditures	0%	\$1,212	0%	0	0%
Total Expenditures		\$838,831		\$4,812,283	0%

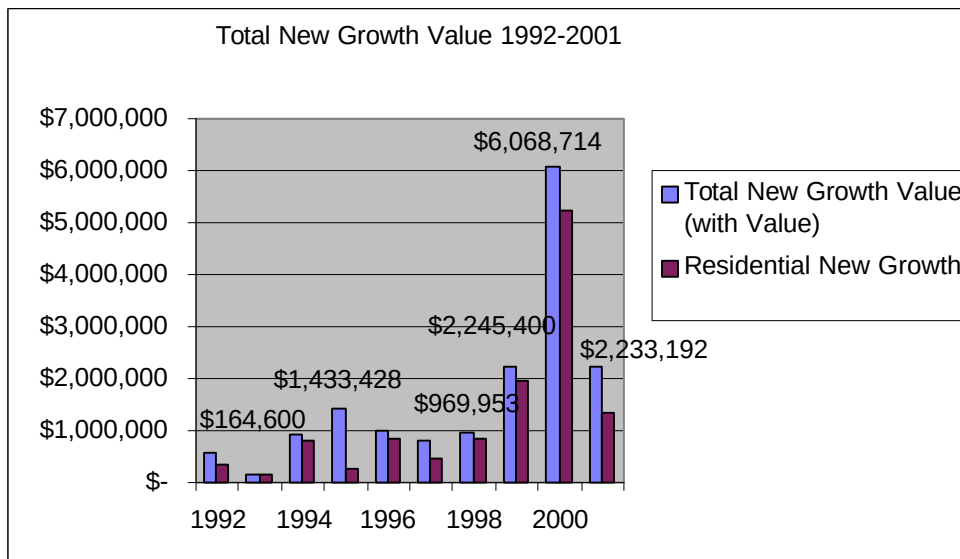
Overlay Reserves and Free Cash

Overlay reserves and free cash are kept on hand in order to pay for various town expenses and purchases not covered by the town's general fund and operational expenses. Since 1995, Hancock has collected \$1.7 million in free cash. Free cash in 2001 amounted to 23% of the Town budget.



Fiscal Year 1992-2001 New Growth Analysis

New Growth is a measure of the amount of new value added to the town's tax levy. Hancock's new growth has been largely residential, and is increasing, showing that the level of new construction in Hancock is increasing. New Growth shows that over \$10 million has been added to the town's tax rolls in the last three years from 1999-2001.



FISCAL COST/REVENUE ANALYSIS BY PARCEL

Background/Methodology

This worksheet compares the total costs and revenues for each type of parcel in Hancock. The methodology uses the three assumptions listed below to assign both costs and revenues to a particular type of parcel.

Three Assumptions:

1. Aside from educational expenses, each residential, commercial, and industrial parcel generates an equal share of Town expenses for infrastructure and government.
2. Students in town do not live in the condos at Jiminy Peak; therefore condominiums do not incur educational costs.
3. Vacant land requires no utilities or infrastructure, and therefore poses no cost to the town.

Using these three assumptions, costs and revenues were assigned to each parcel as categorized by land use. For example, State Aid that is allocated by population is assigned as revenue gained by the types of parcels where the year-round population resides, such as single-family, multi-family, and apartment categories. Similarly, these types of parcels are also responsible for costs that are incurred by year-round residents, such as educational expenses. Following assumption 2, we declare that condos do not house year-round residents, and therefore are not assigned responsibility for either State Aid revenues or educational expenses attributed to year-round residential use.

If more than one type of parcel is responsible for a cost or revenue, the costs and revenues are split among the appropriate categories at a ratio according to the number of parcels of each category. For example, if single family parcels (consisting of 279 total parcels) and multiple family parcels (consisting of 12 total parcels) share a cost, 12 units of that total cost go to multi-family category, while 279 units of that total cost go to the single family category. When the total costs and the total revenues are determined for each parcel category, the net revenue, or net fiscal impact is determined for a single parcel of each category.

The revenue and expense components of the fiscal analysis were gained from the records of the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services. Assessed values and parcel numbers used to determine property tax levies for 2002 were retrieved from Town of Hancock's Assessors Data in August of 2002. The tax rate of 6.0 dollars per \$1,000 of assessed value was used to determine the local tax levy totals for each category. Figures for the town's expenses and the town's state aid receipts used in this analysis were an average of the expenditures and aid receipts for years 1998-2002. Due to the constantly fluctuating nature of these items year to year, it was assumed that an average figure would be the most consistent measure for the most probable receipts and expenditures.

Results of the Analysis

The analysis of costs and revenues by parcel resulted in several interesting findings summarized in Table 1. The report shows that the greatest benefit to the town is the condos, with annual net revenues of \$233,500. Commercial parcels generate the next highest net revenue to the town, at \$61,707. The greatest net loss incurred by the town stems from single family parcels, which incurred a net revenue loss of \$153,674, stemming primarily from educational expenditures.

Analyzing the data by parcel, we discover the largest revenue generator for the town is commercial properties, with average net revenue of \$1,763 per parcel. The second largest revenue generator for the town is condos, which nets the town \$816 per parcel. The greatest net loss for the town comes in misc. residential, which are mainly mobile homes due to the relatively low assessed values. Single family residences created an average net loss of \$565 per parcel.

Table E1: Summary of Cost/Revenue Analysis By Parcel

	Parcels	Total FY2002 Assessed Value	Total Net Revenues	Net Revenues By Parcel
Single Family	279	\$ 37,579,100	-\$157,674	-\$565
Multi Family	12	\$ 1,950,200	-\$4,778	-\$398
Condos	286	\$ 31,824,600	\$233,500	\$816
Apt	1	\$ 137,400	-\$549	-\$549
Misc. Residential	16	\$ 1,914,800	-\$10,484	-\$655
Vacant Land	296	\$ 7,199,000	\$43,194	\$146
Open Space	20	\$ 121,300	\$728	\$36
Commercial	35	\$ 8,546,500	\$61,707	\$1,763
Industrial	7	\$ 500,400	\$5,088	\$727
Other Usage	29	\$ 3,167,100	\$23,317	\$815
Tax Exempt	84	\$ 4,888,500	\$40,397	\$481

Implications of the Data

One of the major implications of the Cost/Revenue analysis is that Single-Family homes, inhabited by year-round residents and the second most common types of parcel in town, do not pay for themselves at the current tax rate.

Single –Family Parcels

At the current tax rate, Single Family parcels do not generate enough revenue to balance out the expenses they incur. In order for single-family homes to pay for themselves at the current assessed values, the tax rate would have to increase from the current 6% to 10.2%, which would increase property taxes by 70%.

	Total FY2002 Assessed Value	Tax Rate	Total Net Revenues	Net Revenues By Parcel
Single Family, 2002	\$ 37,579,100	6%	-\$157,674	-\$565
Single Family, Calculated	\$ 37,579,100	10.2%	\$0	\$0

Open Spaces, Tax Exempt Properties and State Owned Lands

One of the greatest concerns for small towns is conserved open space and preserved lands that are exempt from taxation. Of particular interest to this analysis is the figure showing that per-parcel, tax-exempt properties generate positive net revenue for the town that is higher than that of non tax-exempt property currently on the tax rolls. This revenue is entirely based upon revenue the town receives from the state's PILOT program, and is not guaranteed annual revenue for the town. However, the option for conserving lands at zero net gain or loss may be a factor in comparison with net loss incurred by certain types of development.

Implications for Future Development

The chart titled *Total New Growth Value 1992-2001*, above, shows that development, or new growth in Hancock is increasing, and it is almost entirely residential. This is a trend that is expected to continue, forming a definite impact upon the town's finances. Using the results of the by-parcel analysis, we may see the fiscal impact of different types of residential development. Two scenarios are presented to compare the development of single family, year round residences with seasonal condominium developments.

Scenario 1: Year-Round Single Family Housing: The Subdivision

Scenario 1 is an example of a type of residential subdivision allowed in Hancock. The example subdivision is on approximately 45 acres and contains 40 single-family houses intended for year-round use. Assuming that these houses are built at an assessed value average for the town, and number of children living in these homes are consistent with that of existing Hancock neighborhoods, each new house will cost the town \$565 once built. The total annual cost of this development would be \$22,600, and according to 2002 values, the town's tax rate would have to be raised from 6% to 6.2% to make up for the loss in net revenue.

Scenario 2: The Condo Development

Scenario 2 is an example of a type of condominium subdivision allowed in Hancock. Assume that, like scenario 1, the example contains approximately 45 acres and contains approximately 40 condominium parcels. Assuming that these condos are built at an assessed value average for the town, and that their use is seasonal, each new condo will generate net revenues of \$816 for the town. The total annual net revenue of this development would be \$32,640.

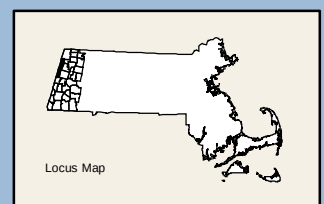
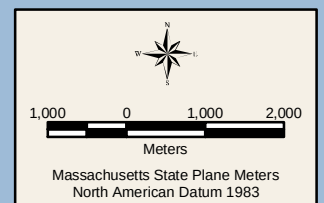
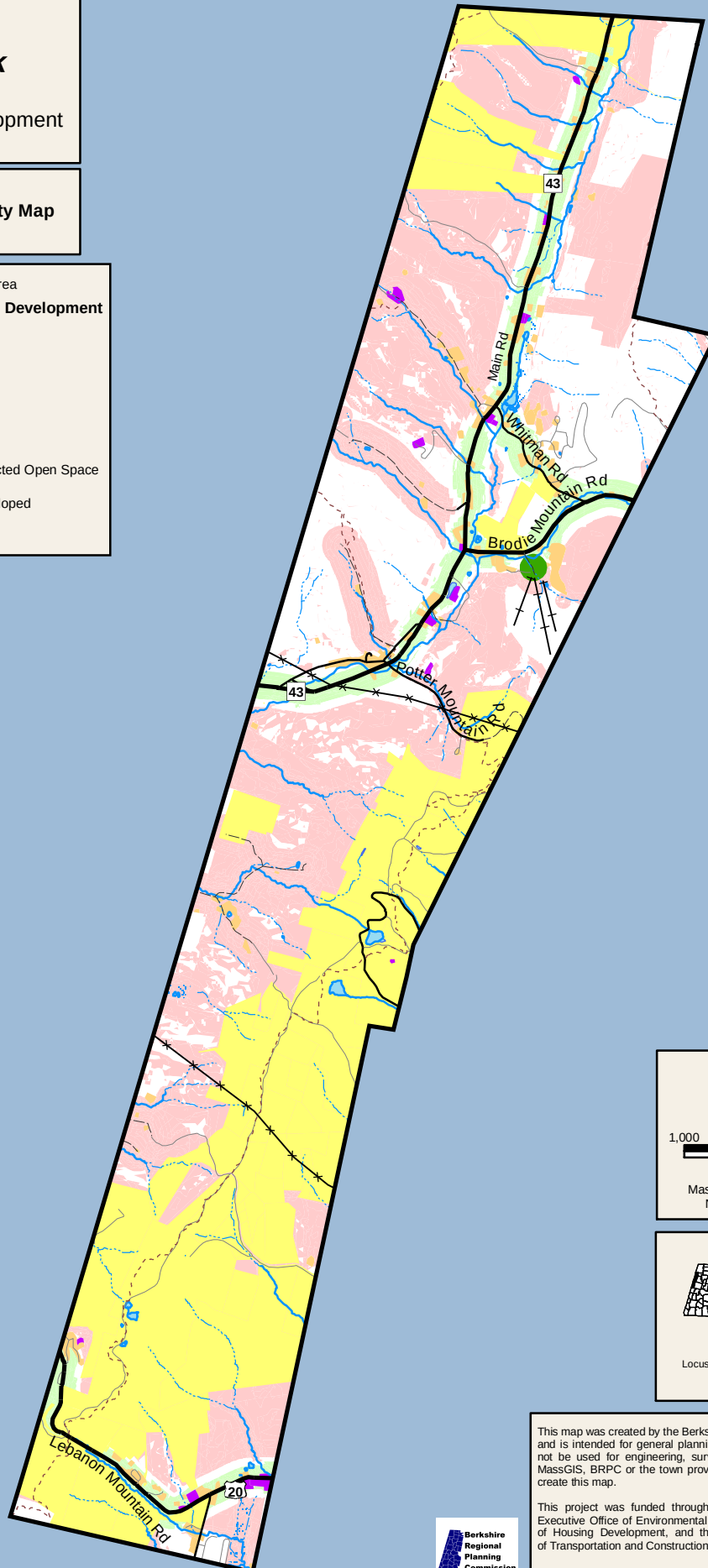
Summary

The analysis of costs and revenues by parcel shows that the greatest fiscal resource for the town is the seasonal condominium, with high annual net revenues and low costs to the town services and education. Commercial parcels also generated high revenues for the town. As seasonal homes and businesses have enlarged the town's tax base, local governmental costs have remained low, enabling year round residents to enjoy quality education and town services while maintaining a relatively low tax rate.

Town of Hancock

Community Development
Plan

Economic Suitability Map



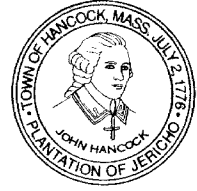
This map was created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and is intended for general planning purposes only. This map shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or regulatory purposes. MassGIS, BRPC or the town provided all of the data layers used to create this map.

This project was funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Department of Housing Development, and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Construction.

/cdp/han/projects/economic_suit.mxd
June 4, 2003



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF HANCOCK



Transportation



Transportation

Transit Needs and Options Study
Status of Town Roads Study w/Maps

7

7-1
7-8

Transportation Issues

The Town of Hancock's primary transportation issues relate to Route 43, which is a major north-south highway in Berkshire County, the continued maintenance of their current roads, and providing transit access to those in need of or wanting such access. As a result of the public forum the following transportation goals are related to Hancock's Community Development Plan.

- Continued outstanding maintenance of town roads and public facilities
- Maintain a high level of public safety on town roads
- Increase access to public transportation

Two distinct tasks were conducted through this Community Development Planning process to address those goals. Those are described below:

1. Conduct a limited special transportation needs improvement study. This task conducted a limited special transportation needs improvement study to determine possible ways to increase transportation access for people without cars or with limited access to them. It included a limited analysis of possible van service or alternative public transportation for Town residents.
2. Conduct a Status of Roads Study and Prepare a Status of Roads Map. This task developed a road map that identified and classified the status of roadways within the Town of Hancock with respect to ownership, maintenance responsibilities, suitability for development, and eligibility for public road improvement funds. Inactive and abandoned roads were identified and a GIS map was prepared.

Hancock Transit Needs and Options Study

Introduction

The Transportation Needs Study presents a brief analysis of the existing conditions, resources, and transportation needs of people without access or with limited access to private vehicles in Hancock. The study begins with documentation of local transportation and transit goals collected during the Community Development Plan process. Next, the study presents an evaluation of existing conditions to estimate the size of the population without access to a car. The Study then outlines the existing transportation resources as seen in the BRPC “Inventory of Transportation Services.” Finally, the Study presents a limited analysis of potential solutions and improvements for further use by the town or other agencies.

Local Transportation Goals and Objectives

As a rural town, Hancock has limited access to public transit. The remoteness of the town and lack of local businesses leaves many residents dependent on cars to get to the grocery stores and doctor’s offices in neighboring locations. Forty eight (48%) percent of the respondents to the 2002 CDP survey of Hancock residents stated that there are not adequate public transportation alternatives available in the Town as opposed to the 24 percent that felt alternatives are adequate. A CDP Town forum enabled residents to clarify their concerns for public transit. At the forum, residents stated that public transportation is not viewed as an option for the town, or at least not a well-known option, and is a concern shared especially by seniors. Some opportunities may exist, but they are not publicized and little used. The resulting goal of the forum was to develop a more detailed picture of the existing public transportation services available to Town residents, and review opportunities to improve such services to best fit the needs of the community.

Evaluation of Existing Conditions

Census figures included in *Transportation Attachment A* of this report demonstrate that Hancock residents rely overwhelmingly on private cars, as 94 percent of Hancock workers commute to work by either driving alone or carpooling. Accordingly, all but four of the town’s 297 households own a vehicle. Having one vehicle is not always sufficient to meet the transportation needs of households with more than one person for example, if the household has one vehicle and the car is at work with one person all day. A large percentage, 34 percent (102 of the town’s 297) households have only one car. Countywide, four out of every ten households having one car complain of insufficient access to the car, which would translate to over 40 households in Hancock with insufficient access to cars. Sixty four (64 %) percent of the town’s households reportedly had access to two or more cars per household.

With 4 of the town’s households having zero cars and 102 households with only a single car, and given the town’s heavy dependency on private transportation and lack of options for alternative modes of travel, there is a potential for a significant number of Hancock residents without sufficient access to a car.

Studies on access to transportation, such as *Problems of the Carless*, (USDOT; Office of University Research, Office of the Secretary, 1976), have discovered that women and elderly are most likely to be disadvantaged by being without access to a car, which is supported by

comments given at the Hancock public forum. Hancock has a growing population and a growing number of older residents, which has increased the median age from 36.8 to 39.6 since the 1990 census even as the number of children in town has increased. As the population shifts to include a higher percentage of older residents, there may be more people in Town with a vehicle but without the ability to drive themselves all of the time.

Options for Improving Transportation in Hancock

There are several options available that may improve transportation for people of Hancock without vehicles or with limited access to them, such as teenagers, senior citizens, families with a single car, people with low incomes, handicapped people, families with young children, and others. The recent Northern Berkshire Community Transit Study identified a range of actions Hancock may wish to pursue to increase access in town, such as:

- Coordinating assistance for getting to medical appointments within and outside of the Berkshires
- General ride coordination for volunteer drivers and people who need rides
- Obtaining and operating a town van
- Increased education and communication about the regional transportation services available to residents of the town.

Getting to Medical & Human Service Appointments

Getting to medical appointments is an issue that comes up regularly, with agencies saying there is more demand than they can meet. This is particularly a problem for regular appointments, such as dialysis. Even households with a car may find it useful to have additional options for getting to on-going treatment. This problem is compounded when people need to go to the broader regional medical centers such as Albany, Worcester, Springfield, or Boston. A related issue is getting to human service meetings (especially at night) or other important meetings.

This is a difficult need to meet. One possible way is to further coordinate volunteers through establishing a local Council on Aging or family support group, or a ride coordination committee as described in the following section.

Category:
Overall

Mainly Helps:
Seniors,
Handicapped

Time Frame:
Short

Project Cost:
Medium

Cost/Ride:
Medium

Increased communication and education can also help. For example, there is an array of special transportation services provided by public and non-profit health-related agencies that may not be widely known. Also, some people eligible for Medicaid transportation report not knowing about it. There is some discussion in Washington D.C. of providing transportation for people with Medicare too. Medical offices may be able to work more efficiently with existing transportation services. For example, some organizations report volunteers are more available in the morning but this isn't necessarily considered at doctors' offices when appointments are made.

Pros

- There is a need being expressed and this may be a issue people care about enough to support
- There may be additional funding sources available

Cons

- People may not be willing to take a ride from a stranger
- Volunteers may be asked to commit to transporting one person on a regular basis
- Some offices and programs are concerned about helping coordinate rides for fear of liability
- Medical office front desk staff may feel too busy to further educate themselves on medical transportation options

Estimates

- For a person to spend two hours per week on outreach and coordination (approximately 100 hours/year at total cost of \$25/hour would be \$2,500.)
- Copying & postage, especially for doctors' offices understand resources available \$500
- Paying for lunch vouchers (\$5) or gas (\$5 coupons) at a total of 10 per week would cost \$50 times 52 weeks for \$2,600. Arrangements for discounts or donations might bring this down to \$2,000.
- Rough cost estimates total: \$5,000
- Rough effects: 15 additional rides per week for a year would round to 800 people helped.

Who Might Do It

This may be done by a general volunteer coordinator or a single point of contact in the town such as the town clerk, a Council on Aging coordinator, or some other town staff or board member.

Examples/References

American Red Cross of the Berkshires-Joe Coates (413) 442-1506

Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) – Norma Powers (413) 499-9345

Transportation Association of Northern Berkshires (TANB)- Roger Brechner - Brechner@ctaa.org -(413) 664-0300

Ride Coordination

Rural towns are specially considered with this techniques because of the limited transportation options available and the level of need—people without cars in rural, mountainous areas may become dangerously isolated more quickly than in urban areas. Several ideas are relevant to rural towns, such as building upon the efficiency of people already gathering at a council on aging, or trying to further utilize existing services through a single point of contact. There are, however, two ideas of special relevance to this area: ride coordination and having a town van (see next page).

Help coordinating rides may be useful and viable in a rural setting where there is often a strong sense of community and likelihood of people knowing each other. Particular applications would be to help local families or seniors get to the grocery, or help teenagers get to and from school after extra-curricular activities. A ride board oriented to seniors, families, or teenagers, or

Category:
Overall

Mainly Helps:
Rural

Time Frame:
Short

Project Cost:
Low

Cost/Ride:
Low

contacts at the school or in the towns could be established. Ride coordination or carpooling can also help with other transportation needs of the community.

Pros

- Low cost
- Potentially supports community cohesiveness by helping people who go to school or work outside the town stay somewhat linked to a local resource center
- May be the most flexible and locally acceptable approach

Cons

- People may be unwilling to accept any kind of assistance
- Liability and safety are always concerns

Estimates

Eight bulletin boards with cards & pushpins at \$25 each=\$200

Copies of one or two fliers to be distributed with a town mailing=\$200

Use: at five people per week getting 2-way rides for 50 weeks per year (to account for holidays)=500

Who Might Do It

Town volunteer, Town staff or board member, Council on Aging, or the Parent Teacher Association

Examples/References

Regional ride-matching already available from Caravan for Commuters at 1-888-4-commute or www.commute.com.

Town Van

Rural towns have limited transportation options available, and people without cars or without access to them may become dangerously isolated more quickly than in urban areas. Fixed route bus service is not viable in a very rural setting and taxi service in the area has limited availability and high cost. Therefore, the town may find worth in evaluating dial-a-ride van service and/or having a van for various local needs, such as grocery shopping or youth recreation trips.

Obtaining a Town Van

One option for obtaining a town van is to appropriate town funds. Alternatively, the town may elect to become a BTRA member community and have the BRTA apply for a low-cost van for the town through the State's Mobility Assistance Program (MAP). The Mobility Assistance Program provides for capital assistance to public agencies for the purchase of vehicles and related equipment to be used in the provision of transportation services to residents in need. BRTA offers technical assistance and support in obtaining a town van as well as coordinating maintenance of the vans. The town may prepare its own MAP van application, but the program is very competitive and applying through the BRTA may make for a more competitive application.

Category:
Transit

Mainly
Helps:
Everyone

Time
Frame:
Medium

Project
Cost:
Medium

Operating a Town Van

Van coordination and operation is most commonly run by a local Council on Aging, but could be done by some other town group. Hancock could establish a Council on Aging, or it may wish to join with Councils on Aging from neighboring towns. Council on Aging vans are allowed to be used for other purposes after the needs of elderly or handicapped people have been met. The vans can be painted so the name of the council on aging can be covered with a magnetic sign when in more general use. This could be important in terms of sensitivity to what vehicle is seen driving up to a person's home.

Pros

- A town van may be the most efficient transit solution in a rural area
- It may be most successful if it is operated by a local person
- The program is already used in Towns of Florida, Clarksburg, Williamstown, North Adams, and Adams.
- There are different types of service that can be provided; subscriptions for regular trips, reserved rides set up in advance, rides on-demand, or availability of a van for coordinated outings.
- BTRA may apply for MAP vans for member communities and offer them help and support.

Cons

- It costs money to run a van.
- The town does not currently have a body, such as a Council on Aging, to operate the van.
- BRTA MAP van applications require commitments for routine maintenance of the vans at BRTA.
- Council on Aging vans are required to prioritize rides for seniors. BRTA will request that the vans also prioritize paratransit trips for handicapped people.
- There is a growing waiting list for MAP vans.

Estimates

Acquisition: In the MAP program, towns pay for 20% of acquisition costs of the vehicles, and all of the operating costs. For example, a lift-equipped van costs approximately \$40,000, so towns are expected to provide approximately \$8,000, with the rest of the acquisition funds obtained from reimbursement grants.

Operation: On average it costs roughly \$25,000 per year for a Northern Berkshire Council on Aging (COA) to run a van. Local COAs are fully responsible for their own operating budgets and costs of MAP vans. A rough cost per passenger is on the order of \$5.

In 1995, the average cost (nationally) of running a rural transit vehicle was approximately \$27 per hour. Average cost per mile was \$2.35 (pp 42-43, TCRP Report 6, 1995)

Examples/References

Town of Florida – BRTA member community and MAP Van applicant - Jana Brule, Town Administrator – 662-2448

Williamstown Council on Aging – MAP van operators – Bryan O'Grady, COA Chairman – 458-8250

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority - Chuck MacNeil - (413) 499-2782

Education and communication of special transportation services available to the town

Increased communication and education of established special transportation services available might be of benefit to local residents. The array of special transportation services provided by public and non-profit agencies (*See Transportation Attachment B*) may not be widely known. Some people may be eligible for Medicaid transportation and not be aware of it. Medical offices may be able to work more efficiently with existing transportation services, and it may be more timely and cost effective for the town to better utilized existing resources. Additionally, many existing transportation services simply need the support of additional local volunteers in order to provide transportation to a community. Education on the existing services may enable potential volunteers to support existing services of their choice while at the same time assisting with the transportation needs of the local community. Incentives for volunteering may also encourage local residents to volunteer.

Category: Overall
Mainly Helps: Everyone
Time Frame: Medium
Project Cost: Low
Cost/Ride: N/A

Pros

- Many existing transportation services are available but not widely known.
- Reinventing existing organizations may not be effective or efficient for the community.
- Need for local volunteers at existing organizations may be addressed locally through outreach.

Cons

- Existing regional services may not be as embraced as a locally run service
- Existing services face an ongoing need for volunteers

Estimates

- Eight bulletin boards with cards & pushpins at \$25 each=\$200
- Copies of one or two fliers to be distributed with a town mailing=\$200

Who Might Do It

The Town in coordination with BRTA, Transportation Association of Northern Berkshires (TANB), BRPC or other organization with knowledge of local transportation options.

Examples/References

Note: This has recently been put in place in Florida and Clarksburg
 Berkshire Regional Transit Authority - Chuck MacNeil
 67 Downing Parkway
 Pittsfield, MA 01201
 (413) 499-2782

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
 1 Fenn Street, Suite 201
 Pittsfield, MA 01201
 (413) 442-1521

Hancock Status of Roads Study

Objective

The purpose of this study is to develop a status of roads report and map for the Town of Hancock that identifies and classifies the status of roadways within the Town with respect to ownership, maintenance responsibilities, suitability for development, and eligibility for public road improvement funds. Inactive, abandoned and discontinued roads are also identified and evaluated. A large-scale Status of Roads Map is included with this report.

Preliminary Survey of Roads

The BRPC presented Town of Hancock officials, namely assessors Andre Rambaud and Julie Bourassa, with an orthomap, a high-quality aerial photograph of the town depicting a GIS overlay of roads listed in the 2002 MassHighway Road Inventory File (RIF). The roads were color-coded according to jurisdiction (e.g. MassHighway, State Forest, Town, Unaccepted or Unknown). The BRPC then compared the roads shown on the orthomap with roads shown on the 1988 County Engineer's map (the last revision) and those shown in the 1998 *Official Arrow Street Atlas of Western Massachusetts*. (See Map 1 for a blow-up of Hancock from the 1988 County Engineer's map and Map 2 for a blow-up of the *Official Arrow Street Atlas* map of Hancock.) All inconsistencies in location, distance, naming and status were cataloged, and BRPC verified any roads shown on the County Engineering map as "discontinued by vote" or "abandoned for use" by checking the book and page citations listed on the map from the County Commissioner's records at the Registry of Deeds in Pittsfield, MA.

Inventory of Ways

As the second step in building a status of roads map, the BRPC prepared the comparative inventory of all documented roads and ways within the Town of Hancock shown in Table 1 (below). The table gives a comprehensive overview of the status of all roads known or identified in the Town of Hancock. It is easy to identify roads in question by reading across each row: any road missing information or with parenthetical information requires clarification or action. Mileages shown are derived from MassHighway RIF data or from Town of Hancock assessor's records. Some characteristics were indeterminable from information available to BRPC. Such roads require clarification, whether by simply refining the data available for a given road (e.g. spelling of name) or by fixing particular questions of legal status (e.g. administration, mileage, maintenance responsibilities) by action of the select board or Town Meeting vote.

Table 1. Summary of Road Status

Street Name	Admin System	Miles	Mass Highway RIF	Official Arrow Road Atlas	County Engineer's Map
Lebanon Mountain Road (RT 20)	Mass Highway	3.175	✓	✓	✓
Main Road (RT 43)	Mass Highway	7.90	✓	✓	✓
Albany Road	Town Accepted	???	Shown as Lebanon Mountain Road (Rt. 20)	✓	
Alhert Road (Lebanon Springs Rd. through Pittsfield State Forest)	DISCONTINUED				
Berry Pond Circuit Road	State Forest	2.14	✓	✓	
Birch Grove Road	Private	0.58	Shown as Unknown	✓	
Brodie Mountain Road	Town Accepted	1.80	✓	✓	✓
Clark Road	Town Accepted	0.25	✓	✓	✓
Corey Road	Town Accepted	0.24	✓	✓	✓
Cranberry Circle	Private	0.14	Shown as Unknown	✓	
Dee Road	Town Accepted	0.60	✓	✓	✓
Estes Road	Town Accepted	0.15	✓	✓	✓
Francis Avenue	Private	0.09		✓	
Goodrich Hollow Road	Town Accepted	1.19	✓	✓	✓ (Goodrich Rd.)
Hancock Road	Town Accepted	???	Shown as Main Rd. (Rt. 43)	✓	
Jericho Road	Private	1.12	Shown as unknown	✓	
Kittle Road	Town Accepted	1.396	✓ (Kittel Road)	✓	✓
Lebanon Springs Road	Town Accepted	0.63	✓	✓	✓ (shown traversing entire width of town through state forest)
Madden Road	Town Accepted	1.14	✓	✓	✓
Main Street	Town Accepted	1.416	✓	✓	✓
Old Smith Road	Town Accepted	0.177	✓		
Potter Mountain Road	Town Accepted	1.89	✓	✓	✓
Rathburn Road	Town Accepted	1.48	✓	✓	✓
Richmond Road	Town Accepted	0.626	✓	✓	✓
Shaker Road	Town Accepted (Old Shaker Road)	0.35	Shown as Unknown	✓	✓
Smith Road	Town Accepted (Old Smith Road)	0.18	Shown as Partially Unaccepted	✓	✓ (shown as Partially Private)

Street Name	Admin System	Miles	Mass Highway RIF	Official Arrow Road Atlas	County Engineer's Map
Taylor Road	Town Accepted	0.205	✓	✓	✓
Theresa Avenue	Private	0.16		✓	
Tower Mountain Road	Town Accepted	0.58	✓	✓	✓ (shown traversing entire width of town through state forest)
Upland Road	Private (Upland Drive)	0.05	Shown as Unknown	✓	
Washington Avenue	Private	0.16		✓	
Whitman Road	Town Accepted	1.336	✓	✓	✓
Unknown Road (from New York state)	Broken line on assessors' map	???	Shown as Unknown		
Unnamed Road (from Richmond)	1. DISCONTINUED				

Of the 35 roads listed, 14 are designated consistently by MassHighway, the Road Atlas and the County Engineer's Map according to name, centerline mileage and administration (where available). These 14 roads should pose no problems with regard to status in cases of land use, maintenance obligations or legal liability. Another 19 roads require clarification of one kind or another, and two roads are listed as discontinued.

Roads Requiring Clarification/Action

Table 2 details the clarifications or actions needed for all roads in question, including the roads listed as discontinued.

NOTE: The terms “discontinue” and “abandon” do not mean the same thing legally. Discontinuance ends the public right of way along a road; the road ceases to exist legally and all land uses requiring public access along that discontinued portion of the road, such as Approval Not Required (ANR) subdivision development, disappear. Abandonment has no official definition in Massachusetts General Laws. Though the Town of Hancock has voted at Town Meeting to “abandon” roads, the Town has in fact taken no legal position on the status of the roads. In most cases, the intent of the abandonment was most likely to either cease the Town's responsibility for maintenance along a road or part of it or discontinue the right of way altogether. For ceasing maintenance, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 82, Section 32A requires that the Town vote to “discontinue maintenance” for roads that the board of selectmen has deemed “abandoned and unused for ordinary travel....” Where the Town intended to cease both maintenance and the public right of passage, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 82, Section 21 requires that the Town vote to “discontinue” a Town way.

Table 2. Roads Requiring Clarification/Action

Road	Clarification	Recommendation							
Albany Road	Clarify if this is an accepted name for RT 20 (as shown in Atlas), and if so where it ends and Lebanon Mt. Road begins	Confirm usage or non-usage of name and appropriate distance, if any, for “Albany Road” portion of RT 20. Vote at Town Meeting to establish Albany Road as the name along a specified portion of Rt. 20 or to specify that all of Rt. 20 is named Lebanon Mountain Rd.							
Ahlert Road (also eastern portion of Lebanon Springs Road through Pittsfield State Forest)	Establish endpoint for Town accepted portion of Lebanon Springs Rd. and confirm abandonment, discontinuance of maintenance, or discontinuance.	See Lebanon Springs Road.							
Berry Pond Circuit Road	Clarify absence from County Engineer’s Map.	Confirm: <table><tr><td>Name</td><td>Berry Pond Circuit Rd</td></tr><tr><td>Admin system</td><td>State Forest</td></tr><tr><td>Distance</td><td>2.14 miles</td></tr></table>		Name	Berry Pond Circuit Rd	Admin system	State Forest	Distance	2.14 miles
Name	Berry Pond Circuit Rd								
Admin system	State Forest								
Distance	2.14 miles								
Birch Grove Road	Clarify absence from MassHighway RIF	Confirm: <table><tr><td>Name</td><td>Birch Grove Road</td></tr><tr><td>Admin system</td><td>Private</td></tr><tr><td>Distance</td><td>0.58 miles</td></tr></table>		Name	Birch Grove Road	Admin system	Private	Distance	0.58 miles
Name	Birch Grove Road								
Admin system	Private								
Distance	0.58 miles								
Cranberry Circle	Clarify absence from MassHighway RIF	Confirm: <table><tr><td>Name</td><td>Cranberry Circle</td></tr><tr><td>Admin system</td><td>Private</td></tr><tr><td>Distance</td><td>0.14 miles</td></tr></table>		Name	Cranberry Circle	Admin system	Private	Distance	0.14 miles
Name	Cranberry Circle								
Admin system	Private								
Distance	0.14 miles								
Francis Avenue	Clarify absence from MassHighway RIF and County Engineer’s map	Confirm: <table><tr><td>Name</td><td>Francis Avenue</td></tr><tr><td>Admin system</td><td>Private</td></tr><tr><td>Distance</td><td>0.09 miles</td></tr></table>		Name	Francis Avenue	Admin system	Private	Distance	0.09 miles
Name	Francis Avenue								
Admin system	Private								
Distance	0.09 miles								
Goodrich Hollow Road	Clarify name (“Goodrich Road” or “Goodrich Hollow Road”)	Confirm <table><tr><td>Name</td><td>Goodrich Hollow Rd.</td></tr><tr><td>Admin system</td><td>Town</td></tr><tr><td>Distance</td><td>1.19 miles</td></tr></table>		Name	Goodrich Hollow Rd.	Admin system	Town	Distance	1.19 miles
Name	Goodrich Hollow Rd.								
Admin system	Town								
Distance	1.19 miles								
Hancock Road	Clarify discrepancy between MassHighway name (Main Road) and Atlas name (Hancock Road)	Confirm: <table><tr><td>Name</td><td>Main Road</td></tr><tr><td>Admin system</td><td>MassHighway</td></tr><tr><td>Distance</td><td>7.90 miles (all of Rt. 43 through Hancock)</td></tr></table> Consider voting at Town Meeting to establish names for specific sections of Rt. 43. Designate specific distances, beginning and endpoints for Williamstown Road, Main Road, and Hancock Road, or establish one name for the entire length of Rt. 43 through the Town.		Name	Main Road	Admin system	MassHighway	Distance	7.90 miles (all of Rt. 43 through Hancock)
Name	Main Road								
Admin system	MassHighway								
Distance	7.90 miles (all of Rt. 43 through Hancock)								
Jericho Road	Clarify absence from MassHighway RIF and County Engineer’s map	Confirm: <table><tr><td>Name</td><td>Jericho Road</td></tr><tr><td>Admin system</td><td>Private</td></tr><tr><td>Distance</td><td>1.12 miles</td></tr></table>		Name	Jericho Road	Admin system	Private	Distance	1.12 miles
Name	Jericho Road								
Admin system	Private								
Distance	1.12 miles								
Kittle Road	Clarify name (Kittle Road or Kittel Road)	Confirm: <table><tr><td>Name</td><td>Kittel Road</td></tr><tr><td>Admin system</td><td>Town</td></tr></table>		Name	Kittel Road	Admin system	Town		
Name	Kittel Road								
Admin system	Town								

Road	Clarification	Recommendation	
		Distance	1.39 miles
Lebanon Springs Road	Clarify Town accepted endpoint and whether State Forest portion has been “abandoned,” discontinued for maintenance or officially discontinued	11/29/82 Special Town Meeting records show “abandonment” from NY state line to the Pittsfield line, except for summer maintenance provided from NY state line to the Daoust property (approximately 0.31 miles). Right of way still legally available to public. Consider discontinuing maintenance for the portion from Daoust property to Pittsfield, or discontinuing the portion altogether.	
Old Smith Road	Clarify Town accepted endpoint and abandonment or discontinuance	11/29/82 Special Town Meeting records show “abandonment” from Ahlert driveway to Lebanon Springs Road. Right of way still legally available to public. Consider voting to discontinue maintenance or to discontinue portion altogether.	
Shaker Road	Clarify absence from MassHighway RIF/ misnaming of Old Shaker Road	Confirm:	
		Name	Old Shaker Road
		Admin system	Town
		Distance	0.35 miles
Theresa Avenue	Clarify absence from MassHighway and County Engineer’s Map	Confirm:	
		Name	Theresa Avenue
		Admin system	Private
		Distance	0.16 miles
Tower Mountain Road	Clarify inconsistent admin and accepted distance	2/4/46 Town records show Town voted to “close” portion from “the driveway of Norman McVeigh to the Hancock-Pittsfield line.” Consider voting to either discontinue maintenance or discontinue that portion, so as to make Town’s intent compliant with the language of current Massachusetts General Laws.	
Upland Road	Clarify absence from MassHighway RIF and County Engineer’s Map; clarify Upland “Road” or “Drive”	Confirm:	
		Name	Upland Drive
		Admin system	Private
		Distance	0.05 miles
Washington Avenue	Clarify absence from MassHighway RIF and County Engineer’s Map	Confirm:	
		Name	Washington Avenue
		Admin system	Private
		Distance	0.16 miles
Unnamed Road (from Richmond)	Clarify legal status	Verify County Commissioner’s records; consider voting to discontinue again, citing specific endpoints and distances.	

The road listed as Unnamed Road in Tables 1 and 2 is shown as “discontinued by vote” on the County Engineer’s map. It was located at the very southern end of Hancock, leading southeast from what is now Route 20 into the Town of Richmond. Officials in Richmond believe it may once have been known as the Old Post Road. BRPC has procured documentation of this discontinuance from County Commissioner’s minutes (see Transportation Attachment D), found at the Registry of Deeds in Pittsfield, MA. At Richmond’s annual Town Meeting May 28, 2003, the Town voted to discontinue the Old Post Road right-of-way to eliminate any possibility of confusion as to its status from that day forward. As part of the discontinuance process, the Town

of Richmond was required to notify the Town of Hancock of the intent to discontinue and to have a public hearing, which took place April 14, 2003, because one portion of the road to be discontinued lay within 500 yards of the towns' border. As required by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 82, Section 1, the Selectmen of Hancock gave the Town of Richmond written approval of this discontinuance. The Town of Hancock, for its part, may wish to consider a Town Meeting vote to discontinue its portion of the same road.

Roads of Unknown Status, "Paper Roads" and Gagnon Heights

The MassHighway RIF and the orthomap shown to Town officials included many ways listed as "unknown" or "unaccepted." Most of these turned out to be private driveways leading to individual homes. Others, however, were private roads that were never built, but approved by the planning board as part of a subdivision plan and drawn onto assessors' maps. Such private ways, often called "paper roads," are planning perplexities. In Hancock, the problem of paper roads appears in the Gagnon Heights subdivision. The MassHighway RIF lists only three named private roads in the subdivision: Washington Avenue, Theresa Avenue, and Francis Avenue. These three roads actually exist on the ground. (See Map 3 for a blow-up orthomap of the area.) Town of Hancock assessors map #27 shows four additional roads that do not appear to exist on the ground: Williams Avenue, Laura Avenue, Vivian Avenue, and Gregory Avenue. These roads are classic paper roads, drawn into the approved subdivision plan and then never actually built. It appears that several residences treat the way planned as Williams Avenue as their own driveways.

Theoretically, these private roads can serve as acceptable access for developers looking to build a new subdivision. A developer who is willing to upgrade the way shown as Williams Ave., for example, could approach the planning board with a subdivision plan and lawfully assert the right to build on any purchased property abutting Williams Ave. The planning board must assess the merits of the access along Williams Ave. *as it is laid out on the assessors' map*, not as it is laid out on the ground. Residents who currently treat Williams Ave. as their own driveways may not be aware of that possibility.

The Town of Hancock can take better control over land use in and around Gagnon Heights by having the planning board modify the original approved subdivision plan to allow right of ways currently serving access to residents to remain and to rescind right of ways that serve no access to residences. Property under unused ways would revert to abutters to the centerline of rescinded ways. The plan itself would have to be amended and corresponding modifications made to the assessors' map. Any modifications would best be done in consultation with affected Gagnon Heights residents, and all assessment ramifications (i.e. parcel distributions) should be considered before such action by the planning board. It is recommended that the planning board also seek an approval letter for its actions from the select board.

Discontinued or Abandoned Roads

Appended are Town of Hancock municipal records showing any and all known select board or Town votes to "abandon," "close," discontinue maintenance or discontinue ways in the Town. The records refer often to landmarks that may or may not be applicable to this day, such as particular residents' driveways. The status of roads map accompanying this report attempts to reflect as accurately as possible the actions specified in the Town records. The roads named in Town records are as follows:

Table 3. Roads Documented as Discontinued, Abandoned or Accepted by Town

Road	Action	Date of Action
Tower Mt. Road	Article 38, Annual Town Meeting: “close from driveway of Norman McVeigh to Hancock-Pittsfield line”	February 4, 1946
Goodrich Hollow Road	Article 54, Annual Town Meeting: Town accepted one-quarter mile of road between Harold Goodrich Farm and the Clark B. Goodrich Homestead	February 6, 1956
Corey Road	Article 41, Annual Town Meeting: discontinue part of road from 2 nd bridge to end of road	February 9, 1970
Estes Road	Article 28, Annual Town Meeting: Town accepted road leading to “Estes Cottages” on the hill back of Shaker Village, as of June 1, 1936.	February 3, 1936
Madden Road	Article 2, Special Town meeting: abandon road at first Hirsey Driveway, maintained summer only	November 29, 1982
Smith Road (Old Smith Road)	Article 3, Special Town Meeting: abandon road at Ahlert driveway, easterly to Lebanon Springs Road	November 29, 1982
Lebanon Springs Road	Article 4, Special Town Meeting: abandon road from New York state line, easterly from Daoust property to Pittsfield line to be abandoned; maintained summer only from state line to Daoust property	November 29, 1982
Dee Road	Article 5, Special Town Meeting: maintain road summer only	November 29, 1982
Shaker Road	Article 6, Special Town Meeting: maintain road summer only	November 29, 1982
Potter Mountain Road	Article 7, Special Town Meeting: maintenance to be continued, summer only	November 29, 1982
Unnamed Road (formerly Old Post Road from Richmond, MA)	Book 12, Page 439, County Commissioner’s minutes: discontinued road leading from “State Road near summit of New Lebanon Mountain to a point near... Dewey Farm belonging to Hancock Shakers,” at request of Selectmen of Richmond and Hancock	July 7, 1903

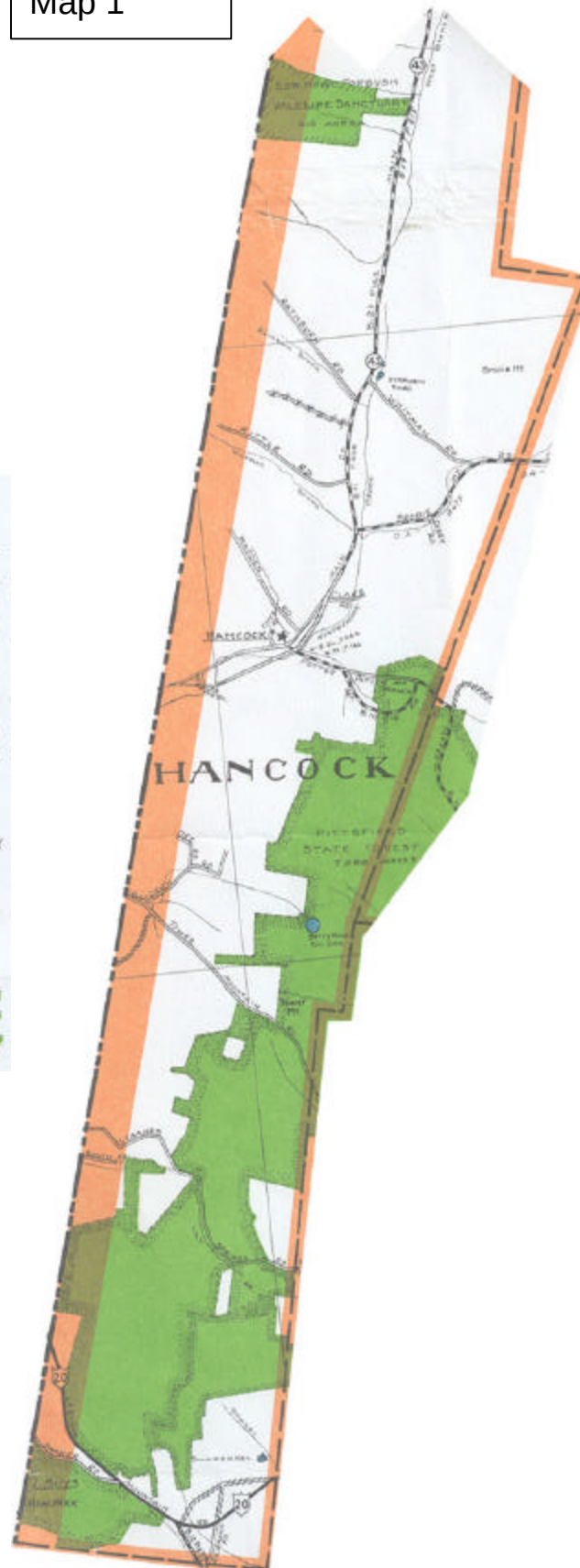
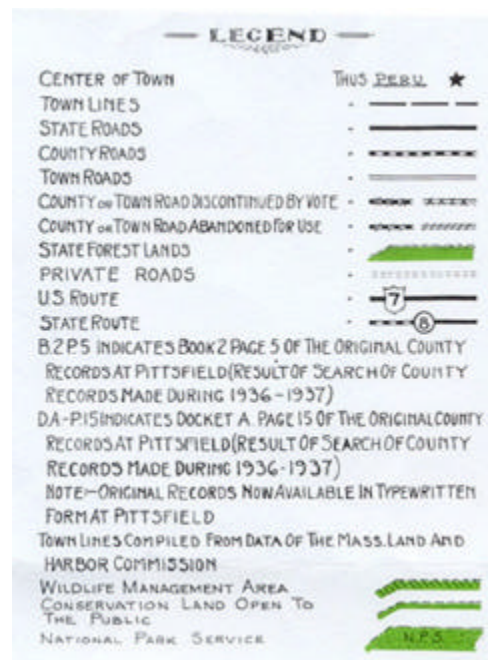
Copies of the documentation for these actions from the Town of Hancock and from the County Commissioners records can be found in Attachment Transportation D of this report.

Of note concerning “abandoned” roads is a July 2003 Massachusetts Appeals Court decision regarding the rebuilding of an abandoned public road in the Town of Leverett for the purpose of developing abutting land. According to the “Around the Commonwealth” column in the September 2003 *Beacon*, the court ruled that a public road must be passable by emergency vehicles at the time of the development application. The court decision makes accessibility by emergency vehicles at the time of application the determining factor in denying an “approval not required” (ANR) endorsement, as outlined in the Subdivision Control Law (Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 81, Sections K-GG). Development of the land in Leverett would have required the Town to rebuild a road no longer in use, a cost the Town did not want to bear.

It should be noted also that The Boston Globe has reported cases in other Massachusetts towns, notably Marshfield, where developers are actively seeking roadways that may be unused, or “abandoned,” but that were never legally discontinued. Developers have claimed that such roads provide legitimate access for “approval not required” subdivisions, which a planning board must endorse so long as certain criteria are met, as laid out in the Subdivision Control Law. “Abandoned” roads in Hancock may therefore present land use quandaries if their status is not clarified legally before a developer approaches the planning board with an ANR subdivision plan.

One powerful land use tool that the Town of Hancock may wish to consider is the Official Map, as prescribed in Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 41, Sections 81E-I. By law, an Official Map would establish the legally recognized status of all Town ways and parks and could be used authoritatively in all cases of proposed development or land use planning and disputes. (See Attachment Transportation C for a comparison of Official Maps and Status of Roads maps.)

Map 1



2. Map of Hancock, MA

Official Arrow Street Atlas of Western Massachusetts, 1998 Second Edition.

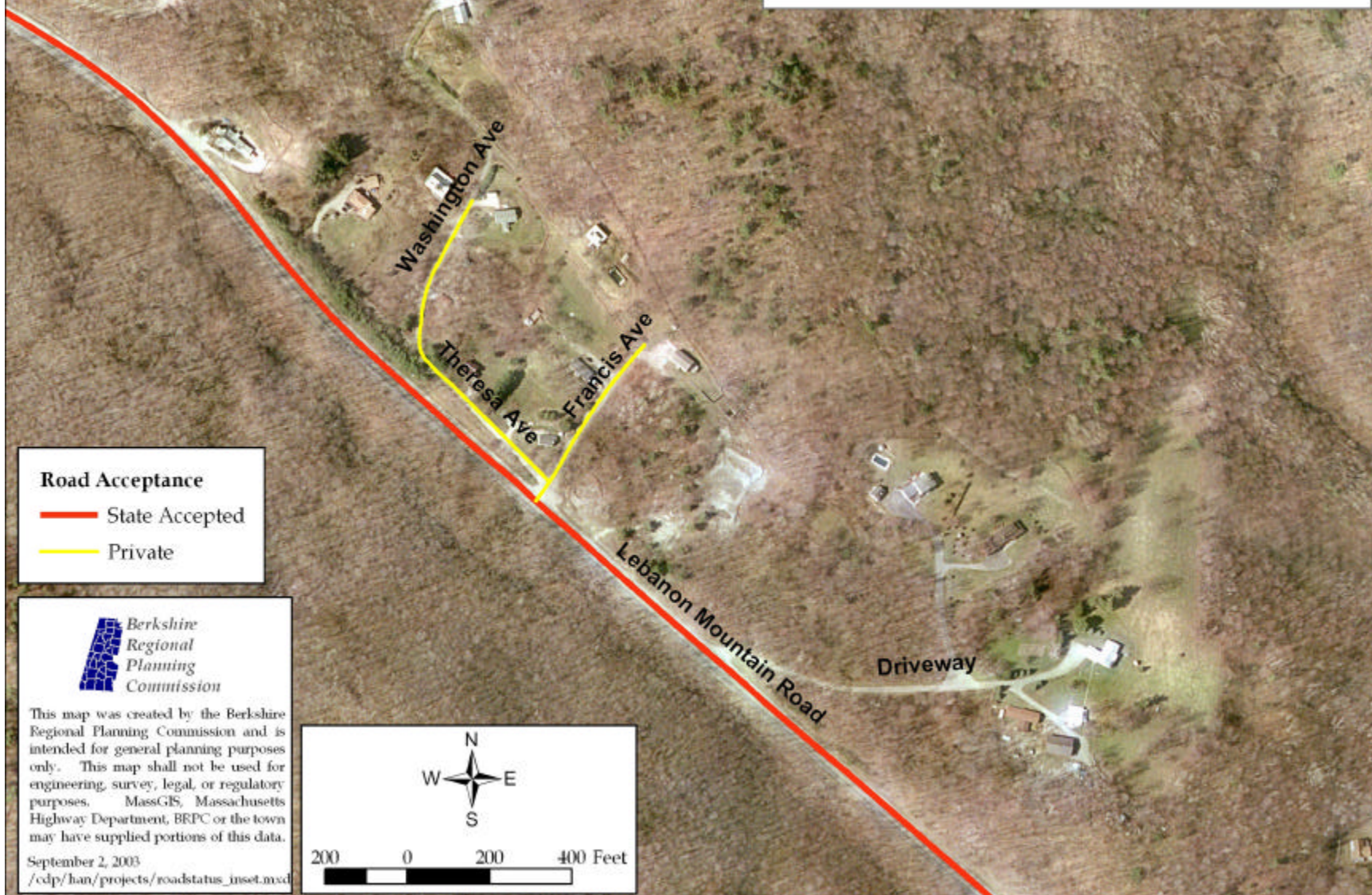


MAP INDEX

Hancock Rd..	B2	Points of Interest	
Jericho Rd ..	C3	Bates Memorial State Park	H2
Kittle Rd	C2	Campground	E3
Lebanon		Fire Stations	
Mountain Rd		North	C2
.....	H2	South	H3
Lebanon		Forbush Wildlife Sanctuary	A2
Springs Rd..	F2	Hancock Cemetery	D2
Madden Rd ..	D2	Hancock Central School	C2
Main St	D2	Hancock Shaker Village	H3
Potter Mountain		Jiminy Peak Ski Area	C3
Rd	D2	Library	D2
Rathburn Rd ..		Pittsfield State Forest	E3, F2
.....	B2	Post Office	D2
Richmond Rd ..		Privacy Campground	A3
.....	H3	Town Hall	D2
Shaker Rd	H2	Community Profile	
Smith Rd	F2	County	Berkshire
Taylor Rd	D2	Area (Sq. Miles)	35.6
Theresa Av	H2	Population	686
Tower Mountain		Form of Govt	Open Town Meeting
Rd	E2	Area Code	413
Upland Rd ...	G2	Zip Code	01237
Washington Av ..	H2		
Whitman Rd	C3		

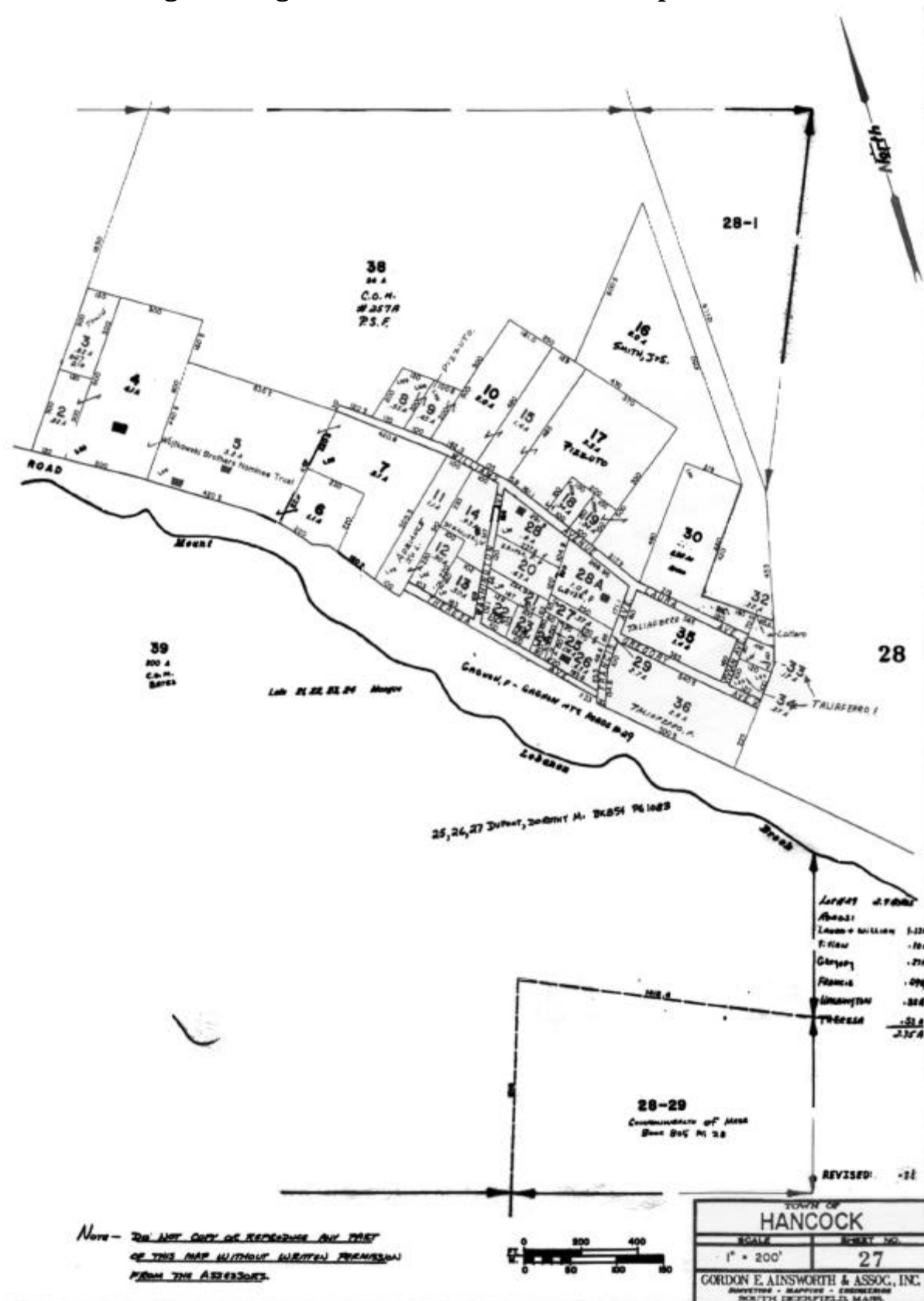
Map 3

Town of Hancock - Status Of Roads - Inset



Map 4 - Assessor Map #27

Gagnon Heights Subdivision Plan with "Paper Streets"



Status of Roads

Town of Hancock, Massachusetts



Legend

Power Line

Roads

Unknown

Public Ways

- State accepted, paved, rural, minor arterial
- State accepted paved, rural, major collector
- Town accepted paved, local road
- Town accepted paved, rural, major collector
- Town accepted paved, rural, minor collector
- State Forest accepted paved, rural, minor collector

Private Ways

- Private paved, local road

Hydrology

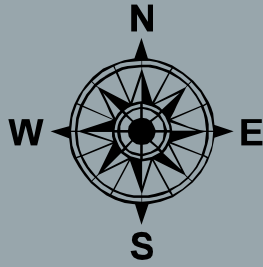
- Perennial stream
- Intermittent stream
- Wetland
- Lake, pond or reservoir

Administration	Street Name	Length (Miles)	Grid
MassHighway	Lebanon Mountain Road	3.17	A8
MassHighway	Main Road	7.90	C2
Town	Clark Road	0.25	C4
Town	Corey Road	0.24	C3
Town	Dee Road	0.60	B5
Town	Estes Terrace	0.15	C4
Town	Goodrich Hollow Road	1.19	B5
Town	Kittel Road	1.39	C3
Town	Lebanon Springs Road	0.31	A6
Town	Madden Road	1.14	B3
Town	Main Street	1.42	B4
Town	Old Shaker Road	0.35	A8
Town	Old Smith Road	0.18	A6
Town	Potter Mountain Road	1.89	C4
Town	Rathburn Road	1.48	C2
Town	Richmond Road	0.63	B8
Town	Taylor Road	0.21	B4
Town	Tower Mountain Road	0.58	B5
Town	Brodie Mountain Road	1.80	C3
Town	Whitman Road	1.33	C3
State Forest	Berry Pond Circuit Road	2.14	C5
State Forest	Radio Tower Access Road	0.30	C5
Private	Access Road	0.46	C4
Private	Babcock Hill Road	0.21	C3
Private	Birch Grove Road	0.58	A7
Private	Cranberry Circle	0.14	A7
Private	Francis Ave	0.09	A8
Private	Jericho Road	1.12	C3
Private	Lamppost Road	0.41	C3
Private	Logging Road	1.88	C2
Private	Mercury Lane	0.39	C2
Private	Mountainside Drive	0.75	C3
Private	Neptune Ave	0.36	C2
Private	Pipeline Road	0.73	D2
Private	Privally Ave	0.30	C2
Private	Theresa Ave	0.16	A8
Private	Upland Drive	0.05	A7
Private	Uranus Ave	0.42	D2
Private	Venus Ave	0.20	D2
Private	Washington Ave	0.16	A8
Private	Jiminy Peak Roads	2.11	C3
Unknown	Unknown	0.35	A7



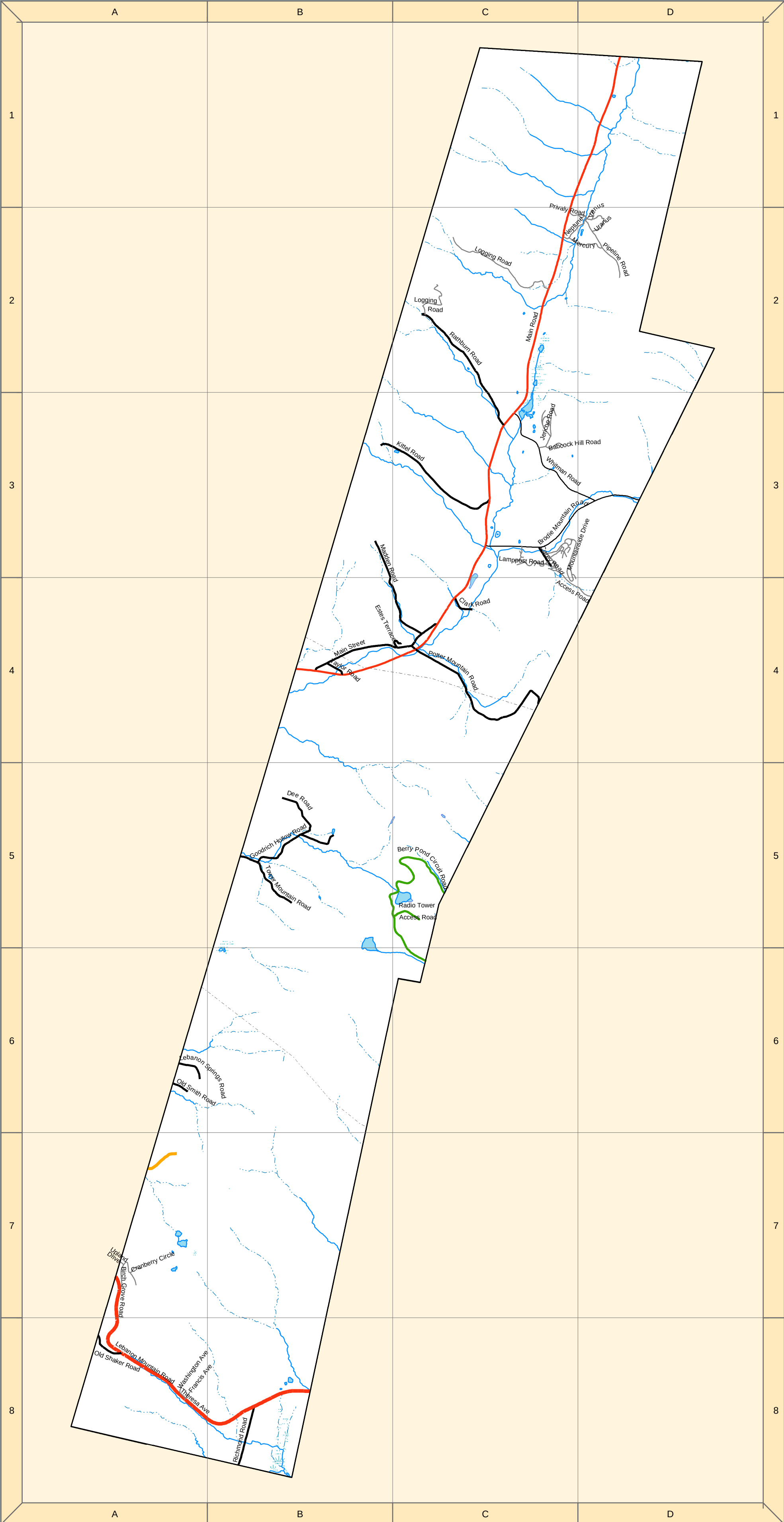
This map was created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and is intended for general planning purposes only. This map shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or regulatory purposes. MassGIS, Massachusetts Highway Department, BRPC or the town may have supplied portions of this data.

June 4, 2003
/cdp/han/projects/roadstatus.mxd



0 2,000 4,000 6,000 8,000 Feet

Massachusetts State Plane Meters
North American Datum 1983



Attachment Transportation A: Existing Transportation-Related Data

Gathered & Analyzed to Better Focus Transportation Ideas

Historic and Current Population Counts

Population in the county is not changing uniformly. In general, the population of rural areas is increasing while the urban centers are losing population. Hancock's population gain was the highest higher than the regional average.

Community	1990	2000	1990-2000 % Change
Hancock	628	721	+15%
Northern Berkshires	41,462	38,629	-7%
Berkshire County	139,352	134,953	-3%

Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Databook, 2000 Update

Resident Births 1990-1999

Births are down in Hancock, in all North Berkshire Communities and also in the County.

Community	1990	1999	1990-1999 % Change
Hancock	10	5	-50%
Northern Berkshires	496	321	-35%
Berkshire County	1,786	1,296	-27%

Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Databook, 2000 Update

Population by Age 2000

Over 34 percent of the population of Hancock is under the age of 15 or over age 65.

Countywide, there is roughly an even split between people whose transportation options may be limited by youth or advancing age, by Hancock has higher percentage of transportation-limited youth.

Community	<15	>65	Total
Hancock	156	92	721
Northern Berkshires	6,583	7,103	38,629
Berkshire County	24,455	24,223	134,953

Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Databook, 2000 Update

Children Attending Public School by Residence

Children may attend schools in other communities, but this gives a sense of changing demand and general need for transportation. The increase in demand in Hancock was greater than that of the northern Berkshires or the county.

Community	1990	1997	1990-1997 % Change
Hancock	79	96	+ 22%
Northern Berkshires	5,603	5,461	- 3%
Berkshire County	19,579	19,878	+ 2%

Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Databook, 2000 Update

Population Densities per Square Mile

Hancock is a rural town with one of the lowest population densities in the County, which limit the areas ability to maintain viable fixed-route transportation service.

Community	Land Area (square miles)	1990	2000
Hancock	36	18	20
Northern Berkshires	204	203	190
Berkshire County	931	150	145

Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Databook, 2000 Update

Commuting To Work

The majority of residents in Hancock and the County commute to work by car.

Community	Workers 16 years and over	Car, truck, or van - - drove alone	Car, truck, or van - - carpooled	Public transportation (including taxicab)	Walked	Other means	Worked at home	Mean travel time to work (minutes)
Hancock	359	310	26	2	3	4	14	26.0
		86%	7%	1%	1%	1%	4%	-
Berkshire County	64,058	50702	6213	938	3392	493	2320	19.2
		79%	10%	1%	5%	1%	4%	-

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census.

Vehicles Available Per Household

Hancock has a much higher number of vehicles available per household than the Berkshire County average. 6 % of households in Hancock have no car.

Community	None	1	2	3 or more
Hancock	4	102	157	34
	1%	34%	53%	11%
Berkshire County	6,140	22,302	20,879	6,685
	11%	40%	37%	12%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census.

Attachment Transportation B: Transportation Services Available to Hancock Residents

(Excerpted from *The User-Friendly Guide to Northern Berkshire Transportation Services*, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, October 2001.)

Index of Services

American Cab Co.

American Cancer Society

American Red Cross

Berkshire Community Action Council (BCAC)

Berkshire Regional Transportation Authority (BRTA)

Berkshire Works

Bonanza Bus Lines

CARAVAN for Commuters

County Ambulance, Inc.

County Rainbow Taxi, Inc.

Elder Services of Berkshire County

Lenox Taxi and Limousine

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission- North Adams

MassHealth Transportation Program (Medicaid Transportation)

North Adams Ambulance Service

Transport the People, Inc.

VA Van Services

Veterans Outreach Center, Inc.

Veteran's Taxi

Village Ambulance Service

Detail of Transportation Services

American Cab Co.

420 Curran Memorial Highway

North Adams, MA 01247

(413) 662-2000

7 Days, 6 am – 1 am

Areas Served: all of Berkshire County**Clientele:** able bodied people**Criteria:** none**Fare:** call for fares**Additional Info:** They accept BRTA taxi tickets.

They also operate a service to airports.

American Cancer Society

788 South Street

Pittsfield, MA 01201

(413) 445-0018

Monday-Friday: 9 am – 5 pm

Areas Served: all of Berkshire County**Clientele:** able-bodied elderly and non-elderly**Criteria:** cancer-related appointments**Fare:** freeAmerican Red Cross

480 West Street

Pittsfield, MA 01201

(413) 442-1506

Monday-Friday 6 am – 8 pm

Areas Served: all of Berkshire County (note: only offers transport between towns/cities in Berkshire County and to regional medical resources such as in Boston)**Clientele:** able-bodied elderly and non-elderly, not able to transport clients with oxygen tanks.**Criteria:** medical necessity. Call in advance to set up time.Berkshire Community Action Council (BCAC)

428 Merrill Road

Pittsfield, MA 01201

(413) 499-4420

Monday – Friday 6:30 am – 5:30 pm

Area: Berkshire County**Clientele:** clients of the Department of Mental Retardation, other contracting human service agencies**Criteria:** day care and sheltered workshops only**Fare:** freeBerkshire Regional Transportation Authority (BRTA)

67 Downing Parkway

Pittsfield, MA 01201

(413) 499-2782 (800) 292-BRTA

Monday-Saturday

Areas Served: much of Berkshire County**Clientele:** all**Fare:** fixed route service is \$.75 per town traveled, half-fare for people over 60 or with disabilities (file form with BRTA)**Additional Services:**

Contracts to provide curb-to-curb (taxi tickets) and door-to-door (para-transit) services for people who met certain criteria. They are also the Access-to-Jobs transportation contact for people transitioning off social services (call for information)

Berkshire Works

37 Main St.

North Adams, MA 01247

(413) 663-1111 Monday-Friday 8:30 am – 5 pm

Areas Served: all of Berkshire County**Clientele:** all**Criteria:** income requirement, transportation for job search and

Fare: free

Additional Info: relies on volunteer drivers & can always use more.

Bonanza Bus Lines

(888) 751-8800

www.BonanzaBus.com

7 days

Areas Served: Berkshire County between Vermont & New York City

Clientele: ambulatory

Fare: for example, Williamstown-NYC \$35 one-way

Additional Info:

Stops in Williamstown, then Pittsfield for transfers to Peter Pan to travel east or west.

CARAVAN for Commuters

(888) 4-COMMUTE

www.commute.com

Monday - Friday

Areas Served: Massachusetts

Clientele: commuters

Fare: free

Additional Info:

Matches commuters willing to carpool or share rides

County Ambulance, Inc.

175 Wahconah Street

Pittsfield, MA 01201

(413) 499-2527

24 hours

Areas Served: all of Berkshire County

Clientele: disabled elderly and non-elderly, able-bodied elderly

Fare: \$27.60 initial fare plus \$2.20/mile

training only

Fare: free

County Rainbow Taxi, Inc.

10 Pleasant Street

Pittsfield, MA 01202

(413) 499-4300

24 hours

Areas Served: all of Berkshire County with advance notice

Clientele: all except wheelchair bound

Fare: call for fares

Elder Services of Berkshire County

66 Wendell Avenue

Pittsfield, MA 01201

(413) 449-0524

Monday-Friday 8 am - 5 pm

Areas Served: mainly northern and central Berkshire County

Clientele: able-bodied and disabled elderly, but not wheelchair bound

Criteria: must be at least 60 years of age

Fare: free

Additional Info:

They rely on volunteer drivers and can always use more.

Lenox Taxi and Limousine

8 Fairview Avenue

Lenox, MA 01240

(413) 637-3014

Sunday-Saturday 6 am – 12 am

Areas Served: all of Berkshire County

Clientele: able-bodied persons only

Extra Services: child car seats provided upon request

Fare: call for fares, limousine service is approximately \$35.00/hour

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission- North Adams

85 Main Street, Room 426

North Adams, MA 01247

(413) 663-5391

Monday-Friday 8:45 am – 5 pm

Areas Served: mainly northern and central Berkshire County

Clientele: non-elderly disabled

Criteria: medical, vocational evaluations, and work only

Fare: free

MassHealth Transportation Program (Medicaid Transportation)

(800) 841-2900

TTY for Hard of Hearing (800) 497-4648

Areas Served: all of Massachusetts

Clientele: MassHealth clients going for approved medical treatments

Fare: free

Additional Info:

MassHealth provides non-emergency transportation service as authorized by the client's medical provider. This only applies to going to and from a MassHealth provider for a MassHealth covered service.

To use this program, ask your medical provider to complete a PT-1 Form/Request for Transportation Services. This form needs to be sent to the MassHealth Transportation Unit for approval. If approved, you will receive written notification outlining how to arrange rides.

The program guideline is that it is for when public and/or private transportation is not otherwise available, although there are exceptions. Please call the number above for further information.

Transport the People, Inc.

10 Pleasant Street

Pittsfield, MA 01202

(413) 443-7111 24 hours

Areas Served: Berkshire County to destinations in the Northeast

Clientele: all except non-ambulatory

Fare: call for prices

Criteria: primary destinations are airports

VA Van Services

Community Care at the Eagle Building, Pittsfield

(413) 499-2672 or

Veterans Services, Leeds

(413) 582-3078

Monday – Friday, mainly morning and early afternoon

Areas Served: New England

Clientele: veterans

Criteria: medical appointments at various VA hospitals

Fare: free

Additional Info:

First come, first served basis. Afternoon appointments are more difficult. They rely on volunteer drivers and can always use more.

Veterans Outreach Center, Inc.

163 North Street

Pittsfield, MA 01202

(413) 499-0256

Tuesday-Thursday

Areas Served: Berkshire County

Clientele: veterans and their families

Criteria: medical appointments at VA hospitals only

Fare: free, donations requested

Additional Info:

North Adams Ambulance Service

10 Harris Street

North Adams, MA 01247

(413) 664-6680

Monday-Friday 8 am – 4 pm

Areas Served: all of Berkshire County and southern Vermont

Clientele: disabled elderly and non-elderly, able-bodied elderly

Fare: \$23.00 base fee plus \$1.25 per mile (after five miles)

Veteran's Taxi

376 State St.

North Adams, MA 01247

(413) 663-8300

7 Days, 7 am – Midnight

Areas Served: all of Berkshire County

Clientele: all

Fare: call for prices

Additional Info:

As of September 2001 they do not accept BRTA taxi tickets.

They also operate a limousine service.

First come, first served basis. This service is only between the Berkshires and the VA hospitals in Albany and Northampton.

Village Ambulance Service

30 Water Street

Williamstown, MA 01261

(413) 458-4889

7 Days, 24 Hours

Areas Served: Williamstown, Hancock, Hancock

Clientele: sick/handicapped people in stretchers

Criteria: medical need to go to doctor's appointments (note - this is not a chaircar service)

Fare: Call for information

Attachment Transportation C: Legal Status of Roads and Official Maps

What is a Legal Status of Roads Map?	What is an Official Map?
A map showing the names, locations, distances, maintenance and liability responsibilities, and legal status or ownership of all roads in a Town. This is an unofficial, advisory document with no legal authority under Massachusetts General Laws.	A map showing the accepted names, locations, distances, maintenance and liability responsibilities, and legal status or ownership of all roads and parks in a Town. This is a formal document, accepted by Town Meeting vote, with legal authority under Massachusetts General Laws Chap 41, Sec. 81E-I.

The procedures for creating a Legal Status of Roads Map and an Official Map are very similar, except that Official Maps require legislative action, namely adoption of the map by Town Meeting vote. The research process for either kind of map can be involved, requiring investigation of Town and County records as well as extensive public input and feedback. In the end, one thing will distinguish the two kinds of maps: a Legal Status of Roads map is, despite its name, not a legal document under Massachusetts General Laws, whereas an adopted Official Map is.

Why Pursue Status of Roads or Official Maps?

Legal Status of Roads Maps can help a municipality identify and understand the potential problems or inconsistencies in legal, geographical or historical records regarding its roads. The map will display all roads and attempt to specify the legal status or possible statuses of roads in question. It will, however, do nothing to officially establish legal road status or resolve inconsistent records. A Legal Status of Roads Map is thus not as powerful a document as an Official Map. Official Maps *do* establish legal road statuses and resolve inconsistent records. While Official Maps have yet to be extensively tested in the Massachusetts courts, they can provide a critical tool in a municipality's land use control and legal planning arsenal. In the one case where an Official Map was challenged in a Massachusetts court over an issue of land development (*Warwick v. Rivers*, 1994), the court ruled in favor of the municipality based on its Official Map.

The municipalities in Massachusetts with Official Maps on file with the Department of Housing and Community Development are: Burlington, Georgetown, Northboro, Sudbury, Warwick, Weston, Wilmington and Worcester. The BRPC has obtained copies of a number of these Official Maps for use as models. As of May 2003, the Town of Richmond became the first Berkshire municipality to adopt an Official Map, pending Town Meeting vote later this month. The Towns of Alford, Florida, Peru and Tyringham have Official Maps as transportation items in their CDP scopes of work, with Hinsdale also expressing an interest in pursuing an Official Map. The Towns of Dalton, Hancock and New Ashford have requested Status of Roads maps as part of their CDP transportation elements. The BRPC is in the process of producing these documents.

Pros and Cons

The following is a chart of advantages and disadvantages for municipalities considering a Legal Status of Roads Map.

Legal Status of Roads Map

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Provides a single visual display of legal status or questions of legal status (ownership, maintenance and liability responsibilities) of roads.	A significant amount of effort and research are required to develop an accurate and meaningful Legal Status of Roads Map.
Does not require legislative action, public hearings, or Town Meeting adoption	Not a formal legal document with authority in cases of land use control or legal liability
Deals only with roads	Does not deal with parks
Shows road distances, road layouts or locations, functional classes, other road characteristics	Records may not agree on road characteristics; map will not settle disputes

The following is a chart of advantages and disadvantages for municipalities considering an Official Map.

Official Map

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Provides a tool for local land use control, particularly as related to ANR, subdivision and strip development.	A significant amount of effort and research are required to develop an accurate and meaningful Official Map.
Provides a formal graphic depiction of locally recognized ways and parks.	The map must be amended & updated each time a new way is added, discontinued or modified.
Identifies ownership of all ways within a municipality.	To be most effective, an Official Map needs to be followed up with corollary actions such as the discontinuance of roads and local zoning by-laws.
Establishes official road distances and functional classes, road and park layouts or locations, other characteristics	Requires updating if road and park characteristics change

BRPC Process for CDP Legal Status of Roads/Official Map Projects

1. Ask Town for its own official list of roads and ways and any relevant documentation.
2. Print out an orthomap (a large-scale aerial photo) of the Town, with a GIS overlay of roads and ways cataloged by administrative status (e.g. MassHighway, Town, Private, Unknown) in MassHighway's 2001 Road Inventory File (RIF). Provide a draft of this orthomap to the Town planning or select board for feedback on status of roads and parks shown and not shown.
3. Digitally scan the 1988 County Engineering Map (the last available revision) to make a blown-up version of the Town, and then identify and research the map's Book and Page citations from the County Commissioners' records (available at the Registry of Deeds in Pittsfield, MA) for roads marked as "abandoned for use," "discontinued by vote," or otherwise altered in any way.
4. Draft a status of roads or Official Map report, documenting Town, MassHighway RIF, County Engineering, County Commissioner and road atlas (1998 *Official Arrow Street Atlas for Western Massachusetts*) records of roads and ways, identifying any inconsistencies in road names, distances, locations and legal status.
5. Meet with Town's Community Development Advisory Committee to discuss the BRPC Official Map draft report, orthomap questions and County Commissioners' records (if any)
6. Decide with the Town whether any roads or ways require discontinuance by Town Meeting vote (under M.G.L. Chap 82, Sec. 21), *discontinuance of maintenance* by Select Board (M.G.L. Chap 82, Sec. 32A), a change of status from public way to "private statutory way" by Select Board and Town Meeting vote (M.G.L. Chap 82, Sec. 21), or alteration or addition by Select Board. Note that each of these actions is a separate local action, independent of the adoption of an Official Map (Chap 41, Sec. 81 E-I).

Pursuing these actions is by BRPC recommendation only. In theory, Official Map adoption will establish the legal status of ways as shown, without separate actions on roads in question. These following actions will make certain that the status of roads in question is clarified and on record before Official Map adoption.

Discontinuance by Town Meeting vote under M.G.L. Chap. 82, Sec. 21 completely ends the public right of passage along a road or way: the Town ends all legal responsibility for the road's maintenance and its liability for use. In most cases, the discontinued road can no longer serve as frontage or access for development of land abutting the discontinued road, including strip or frontage development and Approval Not Required (ANR) development under the Subdivision Control Law (Chap 41, Sec 81 K-81GG). Depending on the Town's zoning by-laws and subdivision regulations, new development can only occur along land abutting a discontinued road via the full subdivision approval process, which can often be lengthy and expensive. Discontinuance is thus an important tool in 1) legal responsibility and liability and 2) growth management.

Discontinuance of maintenance under M.G.L. Chap 82, Sec. 32A is a relatively new law (approved May 27, 1983) and has yet to be extensively interpreted by the courts. BRPC's present understanding is that this action results in the cessation of the Town's responsibility for maintenance and liability for use of the road (so long as the road is adequately posted as not maintained), but the *road remains a public way with a public right of passage, and with the potential for strip and ANR development*. Discontinuance of maintenance in Section 32A is a Select Board action intended for roads that have become "abandoned and unused for ordinary travel and that the common convenience and necessity no longer requires said town way ...to be maintained in a condition reasonably safe and convenient for travel...."

Statutory private ways are actually public roads, with public right of passage, but no responsibility by the Town for maintenance. Maintenance is provided by the abutters. This is a good option for the Board of Selectmen if it is unclear that the road in question meets the "unused for ordinary travel" requirements of Sec. 32A but the Town wants to end maintenance and legal liability obligations for the road. Towns can re-institute maintenance along a statutory private way, or along part of one, by town ballot vote or by town meeting by-law. In practice, the Select Board can recommend discontinuing the road in question by Town Meeting vote, and then lay it out as a statutory private way and vote to accept it as such at the same Town Meeting. According to a Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruling (*Casagrande v. Town of Harvard*, 1979), statutory private ways are not considered sufficient for public access under the Subdivision Control Act, and therefore cannot be used as frontage for ANR lots or strip development. It is up to local interpretation of Town zoning and subdivision regulations whether statutory private ways meet the public access requirements for the full subdivision approval process. In some cases, statutory private ways may have to be laid out again and accepted at Town Meeting as full-fledged Town roads, with public right of passage *and* maintenance.

NOTE: Towns can re-establish maintenance of a statutory private way or a portion of one by town ballot vote (M.G.L. Chap 40, Sec. 6D) or by a Town-wide by-law (M.G.L. Chap 40, Sec. 6N).

Laying out or altering ways is prescribed by M.G.L. Chap 82, Sec. 21. A Select Board can add or alter roads, either public with maintenance or private without, that may not appear on any map or that may have been discontinued or discontinued for maintenance but that the Town now requires for "ordinary travel."

7. Draw up a draft Official Map showing all accepted public and private ways and parks, with a key and table of roads as well as a chart of official road distances on the back of the map.
8. Draft official map article language for Town Meeting warrant and schedule, announce and hold all necessary public hearings or comment periods for alterations to road status (where applicable).
9. Vote at Town Meeting to alter any roads in question and then, in a separate action, vote on the Official Map, showing all accepted parks and road locations, distances and names. Official Map adoption and amendments pass by simple majority vote.
10. Submit the final Official Map to the Registry of Deeds and to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), as stipulated in M.G.L.

Chap. 41, Sec. 81E-I. The state requests that, for the sake of accuracy and ease of updating, official maps be provided in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) format.

11. SUBSEQUENT CHANGES to the Official Map (M.G.L. Chap 41, Sec. 81F), *except plans approved under the Subdivision Control Law*, must be adopted by Town Meeting with two additional requirements:

- ❑ The select board must hold a public hearing, after at least 10 days official advertisement and notice to abutters, prior to any vote on the action. The planning board may modify or remove any way, "which is not a public way," without a Town Meeting vote, so long as the amendment is uncontested at the public hearing. In the event the amendment is contested, special procedures are required as outlined in M.G.L. Chap 41, Sec. 81F.
- ❑ A majority vote at Town Meeting is required for amendment of public ways or parks shown on the map or for addition of ways or parks to the map. Variances to plans approved by the Planning Board require a 2/3 vote at Town Meeting.

An approved subdivision plan is to be added to an Official Map as soon as the plan's certificate of approval is recorded. No Town Meeting vote is required to add the roads or ways in the plan to the Official Map. (M.G.L. Chap 41, Sec. 81E)

Attachment Transportation D: Legal Status of Roads Documentation

- **Listing of Annual Town Meeting votes concerning statuses of roads**
- Special Town Meeting Warrant, November 29, 1982
- Minutes of the Special Town Meeting, November 29, 1982
- County Commissioners' Records, Book 12, Pages 439-443 concerning the 1903 discontinuance of a road leading between Richmond and Hancock

All Town of Hancock documents were received by BRPC Associate Planner Peter Falcier from Town of Hancock Clerk Marjorie Southard.

Listing of Annual Town Meeting Votes Concerning Statuses of Roads*

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING, FEBRUARY 4, 1946

Article 38, To see if the voters will vote to close the Tower Mt. road from the driveway of Norman McVeigh to the Hancock-Pittsfield line.

Passed

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING, FEBRUARY 6, 1956

Article-54, To see if the Town will vote to accept that piece of road between the Harold Goodrich Farm and the Clark B. Goodrich Homestead, a distance of approximately one-quarter mile more or less.

Passed-one-quarter of a mile

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING, , FEBRUARY 9, 1970

Article-41, To see if the Town will vote to discontinue the part of Corey Road from the second bridge to the end of the road as a public way or take any other action thereon.

Passed

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING, FEBRUARY, 3, 1936

Article 28, To see if the Town will accept the road, as now laid out, leading to the so-called "Estes Cottages" on the hill back of Hancock Village, as a Town Road, Provided the present owners of the property, will give to the Town the right of way.

A survey is to be done and staked for boundaries. The Town will accept the road on June 1, 1936

Passed

* Photocopy of Town of Hancock records provided to BRPC Associate Planner Peter Falcier July 22, 2003 by Town Clerk Marjorie Southland.

Special Town Meeting Warrant November 29, 1982*

Abandonments and Seasonal Maintenance Articles

TOWN OF HANCOCK

HANCOCK, MASSACHUSETTS

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

HIRE, SS.

Eugene Jorges, Constable of the Town of Hancock, Mass.

ings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are
y directed to notify and warn the inhabitants of the Town
ncock qualified to vote in Town Affairs, to meet at Hancock
l in said Hancock, on Monday, the twenty-ninth day of November
at 7:30 p.m., then and there to act on Articles 1 through 7

: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash
f Two Thousand Eight Hundred and Twenty-Five Dollars and eight
cents (\$2,825.83) to pay for the overdrawn School Department
nt, Fiscal 1982.

D: To see if the Town will vote to permit the Board of Select
andon Madden Road at the Hirsey driveway; north-westerly, to
e property, to be maintained summer only. From the Greene p
-westerly to the end of the road, to be abandoned.

: To see if the Town will vote to permit the Board of Select
andon Smith Road at the Ahlert driveway, easterly to the Leban
gs Road.

R: To see if the Town will vote to permit the Board of Select
andon Lebanon Springs Road from the New York State line; east
e Daoust property, to be maintained, summer only. From the D
erty to the Pittsfield line, easterly, to be abandoned.

: To see if the Town will vote to permit the Board of Select
aintain Dee Road, summer only.

i: To see if the Town will vote to permit the Board of Select
aintain Shaker Road, summer only.

TH: To transact any other business that may legally come befo
meeting.

You are hereby directed to serve this warrant by posting at lea
attested copies thereof in public places in Town at least four
days before said meeting---hereof fail not and make due returns
of the meeting

* Photocopy of Town of Hancock records provided to BRPC Associate Planner Peter Falcier July 22, 2003 by Town Clerk Marjorie Southland.

Special Town Meeting Minutes November 29, 1982

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
NOV. 29, 1982

23

*PURSUANT TO THE FOREGOING WARRANT THE VOTERS QUALIFIED TO
VOTE IN TOWN AFFAIRS MET AS USUALLY AND CAST THEIR VOTES
AS RECORDED BY FRANK PATTERSON, ACTING CLERK.*

TOWN OF HANCOCK

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING 11/29/82

*Rec'd
12/7/82
CIV. DISTRICT
12/6/82*

Articles 1,2,3,4,5 & 6 were passed by unanimous vote.

Article 2 was unanimously amended to include the word "first" between the words "the" and "Hirsey".

The article was then passed unanimously as amended.

The 7th article was used to request town counsel provide answer to the following question: are roads that are under summer maintenance only, allowed building permits with legal frontage as are roads with your own side of road.

The town also voted unanimously to favor that summer maintenance of Potter Mt. Road be continued.

There being no other business the meeting was adjourned.

Frank Patterson
Frank Patterson
Acting Clerk

The minutes shown above read:

Town of Hancock

Special Town Meeting

11/29/82

Articles 1,2,3,4,5 & 6 were passed by unanimous vote. Article 2 was unanimously amended to include the word "first" between the words "the" and "Hirsey." The article was then passed unanimously as amended. The 7th Article was used to request town counsel provide answer to the following question: Are roads that are under summer maintenance only, allowed building permits with legal frontage as are roads with your... [illegible]. The Town also voted unanimously to favor that summer maintenance of Potter Mt. Road be continued. There being no other business the meeting was adjourned.

Signed
Frank Patterson
Acting

Clerk

County Commissioners' Minutes Book 12, Page 439*

Discontinuance of Road Belonging to Hancock Shakers, January 7, 1903

B.12 439

Jan'y 7th 1903: And now on January 7th 1903, being the first Wednesday in said month, William P. Wood Esq., having been elected County Commissioner for the term of three years from this date, and having duly qualified, takes his place on the Board, and the Board proceeded to organize for the ensuing year. Upon ballot being taken for Chairman of the Board, William P. Wood was duly elected.

O r d e r e d : That the County Treasurer be authorized to transfer from any money remaining in the County Treasury, the following amounts, to the following accounts:-

Salaries and Expenses of District & Police Courts,	\$267.54
Truant School,	77.53

No. 187: Selectmen of Hancock & Richmond, Petitioners
for the discontinuance of a Highway in said towns.
-of-
Richmond Pittsfield Mass., Oct. 14, 1899- To the County Commissioners of Berkshire
-to- County:- The Selectmen of Hancock & Richmond petition your Honorable Body; that
Hancock, the discontinuance of the road leading Southeasterly from the State-road, near the
Petra. summit of New Lebanon Mountain, to a point near the so called Dewey farm, belonging
Discontinu'ce to the Hancock Shakers is desired by the towns represented by your petitioners.
of Highway
in said towns. D. L. Whitman, Wm. H. Sherill, Selectmen of Hancock & Richmond.

This petition was entered in the Clerk's office at Pittsfield within and for our said County of Berkshire, October 14th 1899, at which time C. H. Dorr of Richmond appeared as principal, and C. H. Wells of Hancock, appeared as surety, and recognized to the County in the sum of \$200., for the Costs which might accrue upon said Petition, as on file.

And at the meeting of the County Commissioners holden at Pittsfield within and for said County, on the first Tuesday of October A.D. 1899, and by adjournment on Wednesday November 8th A.D. 1899, upon the petition aforesaid, it was then and there determined by said Commissioners to view the premises and hear all persons and corporations interested therein, and to meet for that purpose at the Store of the Hancock Shakers, in Hancock in said County, on Friday the Eighth day of December

* County Commissioners' book and page citations are listed on County Engineer's Map. Records are on file at the Registry of Deeds in Pittsfield, MA.

County Commissioners' Minutes Book 12, Page 440

Discontinuance of Road Belonging to Hancock Shakers, January 7, 1903

440

January 7th next at Twelve o'clock noon. And it was ordered, that the Sheriff of said County or his Deputy give notice thereof by serving a true and attested copy of said petition and order thereon, upon the Clerks of the Towns of Hancock and Richmond in said County, thirty days at least before the day appointed for said view and hearing, and also by causing a copy thereof to be published in the Evening Eagle a newspaper printed at Pittsfield in said County, three weeks successively, the last publication to be fourteen days at least before the day appointed for said view and hearing, and by posting up copies of said petition and order thereon, in two public places in said towns of Hancock and Richmond in said County, fourteen days before the day of said view and hearing; and said Sheriff is to make return of his doings therein to William F. Wood Esq., Chairman of said Commissioners, on or before the day appointed for said view and hearing.

And this petition was thence continued from meeting, to the meeting of the County Commissioners holden at said Pittsfield, on the first Tuesday of January A.D. 1901, at which time, the Commissioners filed their Report on "view, which was read and accepted, and is as follows:

Report
on
view:

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Berkshire S.S.

In pursuance of an Order of Notice, on the petition of the Selectmen of Hancock and Richmond, representing that the public convenience and necessity require that the road leading Southeasterly from the State road near the summit of New Lebanon Mountain to a point near the so called Dewey Farm belonging to the Hancock Shakers, as is more at large set forth in said petition, a copy whereof is hereto annexed; which order was passed at a meeting of the County Commissioners holden at Pittsfield within and for said County, on the first Tuesday of November 1899. The Board met at the Store of the Hancock Shakers in Hancock in said County, on the eighth day of December 1899, at 12 o'clock M., the time and place appointed in said order, for the purpose of viewing the route, hearing the parties, and determining what should be done in the premises. It then appearing to the Board, that the Towns of Hancock and Richmond and all persons and corporations interested in said petition had been duly and legally notified, in all respects as required by law, and in ac-

County Commissioners' Minutes Book 12, Page 441

Discontinuance of Road Belonging to Hancock Shakers, January 7, 1903

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January 7th 1895: accordance with said order of said petition and order, a copy of which, with the officer's return thereon, is hereto annexed, and the petitioners, and divers other citizens of said towns being present, and no objections made to the Board proceeding to view the premises: The Board did, in the presence of said petitioners and others, proceed to view the route indicated in said petition, and to hear the parties upon the question of public convenience and necessity, at the close of which meeting, the case was submitted to the decision of the Board, and the Board adjourned for the further consideration and determination of the matter to their next regular session at Pittsfield on the first Tuesday of January 1900, and from then until this meeting. And now, on said first Tuesday of January 1901, the Board having carefully considered the whole matter, do adjudge and determine, that public convenience and necessity require that in accordance with said petition, and between the termini named therein, said road be discontinued.

Wm. P. Wood	}	County Commissioners.
W.C. Palzell		
Frank S. Richardson		

Notice to Discontinue: And at the meeting last aforesaid, to wit; the January meeting, A.D. 1901, it was ordered: That notice be given to all persons and corporations interested therein, that said Commissioners will meet at the Court House in Pittsfield in said County, on Tuesday the Fifth day of February next, at Eleven o'clock in the forenoon, for the purpose of discontinuing said road or highway, by publishing a copy of said adjudication and this order thereon, in the Berkshire Evening Eagle, a public newspaper printed at Pittsfield in said County, three weeks successively, the last publication to be fourteen days at least before said Fifth day of February next: And it was further ordered by the County Commissioners, that the Sheriff of said County, or his Deputy serve the Clerks of the towns of Hancock and Richmond, with a copy of said adjudication and this order thirty days at least, and post up an attested copy thereof in two public places in said towns of Hancock and Richmond, fourteen days at least before the said Fifth day of February next, at which time the said Commissioners will proceed to discontinue said road, and will hear all persons and

County Commissioners' Minutes Book 12, Page 442

Discontinuance of Road Belonging to Hancock Shakers, January 7, 1903

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January 7th 1903: corporations interested therein who may then and there desire to be heard, and assess such damages as in their opinion may be just and proper by reason of the discontinuance of said road, and that return be made by said Sheriff of his doings therein to William F. Wood Esq., Chairman of said Commissioners, on or before the said Fifth day of February next.

And this petition was thence continued, to the adjourned meeting of the County Commissioners holden at Pittsfield aforesaid, on Tuesday March 26th A.D. 1901, at which meeting, the Commissioners, filed their Notice of Discontinuance, which was read and accepted, and is as follows, to wit:

Notice of Discontinuance-
 Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Berkshire S.S.
 At a Meeting of the County Commissioners of the County of Berkshire, held at Pittsfield in said County, on the first Tuesday of January in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and one, and by adjournment on Tuesday March 26th A.D. 1901. Whereas upon the Petition of the Selectmen of Hancock and Richmond-
Representing that the public convenience and necessity require that the road leading Southeasterly from the State Road near the summit of New Lebanon Mountain to a point near the so called Dewey Farm belonging to the Hancock Shakers, be discontinued-
After due proceedings had, it was by the County Commissioners adjudged and determined that common convenience and necessity require that said road be discontinued, as prayed for in said petition, as more fully appears from the report on view filed in said case. And whereas, at a meeting of the County Commissioners held at Pittsfield in and for said County, on the first Tuesday of January 1901, an order of notice was passed appointing a time and place for a meeting of the Board for the purposes of discontinuing said road, or so much thereof as the Board had adjudged necessary, of hearing all persons and corporations interested therein, and assessing damages to all persons who might sustain damage thereby. The Board met in pursuance of said order, at the Court House in Pittsfield in said County, on Tuesday the Fifth day of February 1901, at Eleven o'clock in the forenoon, the time and place appointed in said order, and it then appearing that the

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Discontinuance of Road Belonging to Hancock Shakers, January 7, 1903

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Jan'y 7th 1903: Towns of Hancock and Richmond and all other persons and corporations interested therein had been duly notified of said petition and the view and adjudication thereon, and of the time place and purposes of said meeting, in the manner prescribed by law in accordance with the requirements of said order, a copy whereof, and of the officer's return thereon, is on file in the case, and the petitioners and divers other citizens being present, and no objection being made to any proceeding of the Board since the view and adjudication, the Board proceeded to discontinue said road according to their previous adjudication, and said road is, and is hereby declared to be discontinued. No person appearing to claim damages by reason of the discontinuance of said road, we do not assess any damages therefor.

Wm. P. Wood	}	County
W. C. Palzell		Commissioners.
S. A. Hickox		Associate Commissioner.

And this petition was thence continued from meeting to meeting to this meeting, and now at this meeting, to wit: the January Meeting A.D. 1903, no further proceedings being required in the case, the same is

- E N D -

No. 203: George Z. Dean & others, Petitioners for the relocation of Street in Cheshire.
 Dean et. als.
 Pet'rs
 To the Honorable Board of County Commissioners within and for the County of Berkshire:- The undersigned inhabitants, legal voters and tax-payers of the town of Cheshire in said County. Respectfully Represent: That the boundaries of the highway from a point in Main Street, so called, in said Cheshire, opposite the residence of Frank A. Martin, running westerly to the highway leading from Pittsfield to Adams, have become obliterated and uncertain; that the location of the same is indefinite and needs revision and that public necessity and convenience require that alterations should be made in the course and width of the same and that it should be extended westerly and northwesterly across said highway leading from Pittsfield to Adams and to the intersection of the highway leading from Cheshire

Boston Globe Article on Implications of Unresolved Ancient Ways (Page 1)

Boston.com August 3, 2003

Boston Globe Online: Print it!

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THIS STORY HAS BEEN FORMATTED FOR EASY PRINTING

Ancient way divides neighborhood

By Anthony Flint, Globe Staff, 8/3/2003

MARSHFIELD -- To most of the residents in the Furnace Street neighborhood, it is a barely recognizable pathway beside a barn, dotted with trees and half-buried stones.

But to Hugh France, it is Eames Way, laid out in 1692 as a thoroughfare "two poles wide," or 33 feet. And it is the key to his fortune.

In an increasingly common practice among developers looking to build subdivisions quickly, France is trying to prove Eames Way is a legally recognized street, so he can build eight homes off it without getting any approvals from the Planning Board.

Town officials won't concede the street is real, so France has sued, arguing that the existence of Eames Way should trigger an obscure process under the state zoning law known as "approval not required."

While the lawsuit is battled out in Plymouth Superior Court, neighbors are getting an education in so-called ancient ways -- laid out and built 300 years ago -- and wondering whether Marshfield's Colonial past could open the floodgates for development in the real estate market of the present.

"What street? There's no street there," said James Connell, whose house on Route 3A is directly across from where Eames Way would let out, a spot now occupied by two boats on trailers. He then pointed to Proctor Street, visible from his front yard and added, "Now that's a street."

Roy Kirby, a carpenter who built his house on Furnace Street in 1979, and later a barn at the edge of what he thought was his property, said he knew there was an old carpath leading into the woods behind his house, but town officials assured him it was abandoned. A legally recognized Eames Way would slice through his woodshop.

"I was at the hearing and [France] made a very impressive presentation, getting into all the history," Kirby said. "But what scared everybody was, there are a lot of carpaths in Marshfield. Some of them go right through people's houses. This could open up a real can of worms."

The real issue, said Angus Jennings, the Marshfield town planner, is the zoning law that is motivating France to prove that Eames Way exists. The "approval not required" process, which is unique in the nation, lets developers build without approvals or conditions from the

Boston Globe Article on Implications of Unresolved Ancient Ways (Page 2)

Boston.com August 3, 2003

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local planning board, as long as the home lots are on an established street.

"The hard part for me is explaining to abutters that there is no hearing on these. They say, 'What about the traffic?' or 'What about the drainage?' and I just have to tell them, they don't need our approval, that's the law," Jennings said, noting that Marshfield gets about 35 such cases every year.

A bill is currently before the state Legislature that would eliminate "approval not required" and other aspects of the Massachusetts statewide zoning law.

The zoning law contains many loopholes and "approval not required" is routinely exploited, say those who want it changed. Because an "approval not required" designation means quick and painless construction, it is sought by developers who scour old maps and local historical records, hunting for paper streets.

There has been no definitive statewide study, but planners say "approval not required" development easily constitutes 30 percent of all development -- and much more in rural areas.

"We might get 25 houses plopped on old farm with no one getting to say anything," said Douglas Albertson, the town planner in Belchertown, where 449 "approval not required" lots have been created off such streets since 1995. It has been particularly frustrating, he said, because just as development pressures are intensifying, the town has no control over a whole class of building.

In many cases, developers need only show a map or two to prove that a street exists, in subdivision plans filed as long ago as 1920. Hugh France is trying to take a similar tack, but he's reaching farther back into history.

France's lawyer, Paul Driscoll, filed a stack of historical records, journal entries, meeting notes, and maps, all going back more than 300 years, as evidence in the lawsuit against the town. Driscoll and France both declined to be interviewed.

Streets and highways were laid out with great care in Colonial Massachusetts, Driscoll argues in court papers, and meticulous records were kept on their route, construction, and how much they infringed on private property. One document describes Eames Way as a public way "two poles wide," running "over a brook, as the way now leadeath between the house and shop of John Foster. and so through the land of Arthur Howland." At least one resident, John Sherman, was compensated for the road going through his property, according to the lawsuit.

The road was referred to as a public way by the town in 1968, 1982, and 1983, the lawsuit states; even if it is overgrown, it remains a street as long as it has not been officially discontinued, according to state law.

In an opinion issued in April, Marshfield town counsel Robert Marzelli acknowledged that the paved part of Eames Way, which ends at Furnace Street, has been recognized by officials. But trying to establish that Eames Way went farther is impossible, he suggested. The historical records refer to piles of stones and barns that have not existed for centuries.

Boston Globe Article on Implications of Unresolved Ancient Ways (Page 3)

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Driscoll says in the lawsuit that Eames Way was laid out as a county highway, part of a network reaching into Duxbury and Scituate.

While the existence of Eames Way is battled out in court -- a process that could take up to two years -- Kirby, the carpenter whose barn is threatened, said he has mixed feelings about France's proposal for the 14 acres behind his property. France lives a few doors down, and Kirby used to plow his driveway.

"I know there's a tradition of development in this country and that's how we got where we are," Kirby said. "But I don't think our forefathers envisioned this as a street with sidewalks on both sides. I know it's there -- I go back there to walk my dogs. I used to let people take a vehicle back there. But King George has been dead for a long time now. If it's an ancient way, keep it as a historic path."

Kirby is keeping his sense of humor about the situation, even as he contemplates the way Marshfield, population 25,000, has grown since its founding by Mayflower passenger Edward Winslow circa 1640.

"If they prove it's a county highway and it goes through my barn," he said, "I'm going to cut out a window and put a Dunkin' Donuts in there."

Anthony Flint can be reached at flint@globe.com.

This story ran on page B1 of the Boston Globe on 8/3/2003.
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Massachusetts Appeals Court Makes Emergency Vehicle Accessibility Determining Factor in Denying an “Approval Not Required” Endorsement

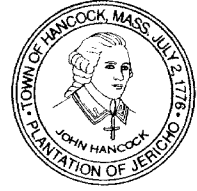
Around the Commonwealth, *The Beacon*, September 2003

Development decision made**Town of Leverett**

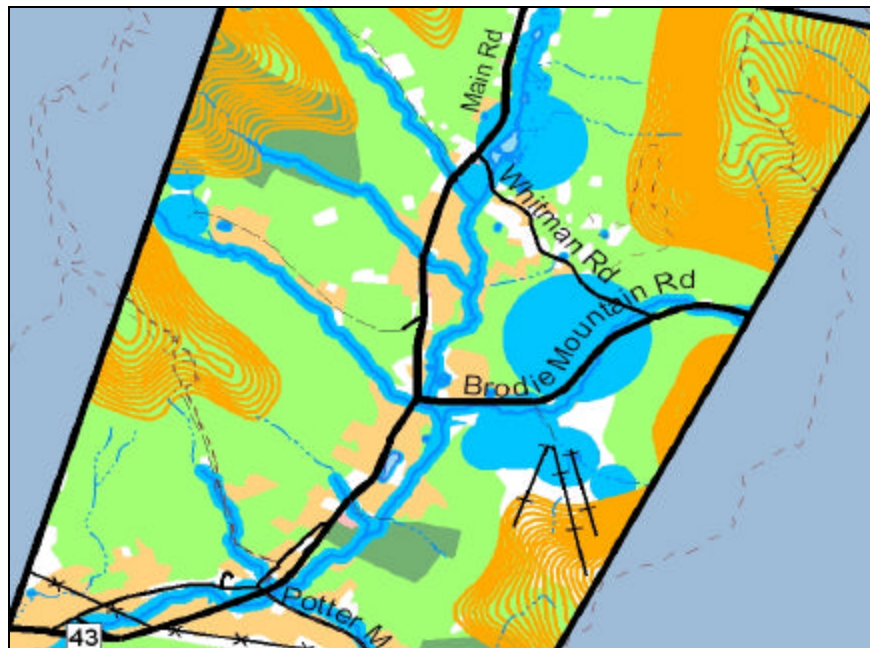
A July Appeals Court decision spared the town of Leverett the cost of rebuilding an abandoned public road so that land could be developed. The court ruled that a public road must be passable by emergency vehicles at the time of the development application. The court decision makes accessibility by emergency vehicles at the time of application the determining factor in denying an “approval not required” endorsement, as outlined in the Subdivision Control Act. Development of the land in Leverett would have required the town to rebuild a road that was no longer in use, a cost the town did not want to bear.

*From: Around the Commonwealth, The Beacon, September 2003
This monthly column features regional and local news briefs related to local government in Massachusetts. To suggest a news item for this column, contact Katie Carroll at the MMA (phone: (800) 882-1498; fax: (617) 695-1314; e-mail: kcarroll@mma.org).*

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF HANCOCK



GIS Maps



GIS Mapping

Introduction to GIS Mapping
Introduction to Development Suitability Maps
Base Maps

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Introduction to GIS Mapping

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are quickly becoming a staple of our times. Defined broadly, GIS is a computer-based system “for capture, retrieval, analysis, and display of spatial (locationally defined) data.” The essential elements in this definition for local governments are “spatial” and “analysis”: where are things, why do we want to know about them, and how can our community use this information to make better decisions?

GIS is a system of computer software, hardware, data, and personnel to help manipulate, analyze and present information that is tied to a specific location on the earth. Aspects of GIS include:

spatial location – usually a geographic location

information – visualization of analysis of data

system – linking software, hardware, data

personnel –the key to the power of GIS

GIS applies modern computer graphics and database technology to the efficient, cost-effective management and planning of the local government’s assets. It provides enhanced capabilities for data storage, retrieval, and analysis. GIS does this by linking (1) maps and (2) databases. This marriage lets us easily explore the relationship between (1) location and (2) information.

The real key for small city governments is that GIS quickly integrates *information with location*. Through its use of computer technology, GIS provides a better, faster, easier way for local officials to find answers to questions and carry out analyses based on spatial relationships.

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission uses GIS in projects covering almost all aspects of planning. This includes environmental, land use, community development, transportation, economic and housing projects. BRPC uses our GIS for map creation, data development and spatial analysis.

Throughout the Community Development Plan, GIS has been used to create a series of base maps illustrating what is in each community and has allowed community officials to determine where the most suitable locations are for various types of development / preservation. Some communities also used suitability maps to assist them in determine where the best locations for development / preservation were. These suitability maps were created by evaluating the importance of various environmental, housing, economic, and transportation items and plotting the best and worst locations based on the combination of all these factors. The final maps presented throughout the report show the decisions that were arrived at by the community. In this section, the base maps are presented as reference to show what is currently in the town. The descriptions of the mapped items that you will find within these base maps are listed below.

Description of Map Attributes

Environmental Resources

Drinking Water

Aquifers – shows medium and high yield aquifers as delineated by USGS Water Resource Division. The original data is from the USGS 1:48,000 hydrologic atlas series on groundwater favorability.

Interim Wellhead Protection areas – shows the primary, protected area for PWS groundwater sources in the absence of an approved Zone II. The radius around the well is determined by the pumping rate in GPM of the well. Wellhead protection areas are important for protecting the recharge area around public water supply (PWS) wells.

Lakes/Ponds Resource Area – shows a 100 ft. buffer around the lakes and ponds that are on the USGS topographical maps. This buffer shows the area that has an immediate impact of the lakes and ponds.

Outstanding Resource Water – shows waters which constitute an outstanding resource as determined by their outstanding socioeconomic, recreational, ecological, and / or aesthetic values and which shall be protected and maintained as determined under Massachusetts Surface Water Quality Standards of 1995

Wellhead Protection Zone I – shows a 400 ft. buffer around public water supply points.

Wellhead Protection Area Zone II – shows the primary, protected area for PWS groundwater sources based upon the area of an aquifer which contributes to a well under the most severe pumping and recharge conditions that can realistically be anticipated. Wellhead protection areas are important for protecting the recharge area around public water supply (PWS) wells.

Water Bodies and Protection Areas

FEMA 100yr. Floodplain – shows areas of possible risk associated with flooding. This layer was created by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) from the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM)

Lakes / Ponds Resource Areas – 100 ft - shows a 100-foot buffer around lakes and ponds that defines the resource area that contributes to the lake/pond. The lakes and ponds are derived from USGS topo maps.

River Protection Area – 200 ft. – Shows a 200-foot buffer delineating the resource area of perennial streams. These areas were created as an addition to the long-standing Wetlands Protection Act. The law establishes protected riverfront areas that extend 200 feet from the mean annual high-water line.

Surface Water Protection Area Zone A – shows land between the surface water source and the upper boundary of the bank, the land within a 400 foot lateral distance from the upper boundary

of the bank of a Class A surface water source and the land within a 200 foot lateral distance from the upper boundary of the bank of a tributary or associated surface water body. These areas are included in the Massachusetts Drinking Water Regulations as Surface Water Supply Protection Zones.

Surface Water Protection Area Zone B – shows the land within one-half mile of the upper boundary of the bank of a Class A surface water source or the edge of the watershed, whichever is less. Zone B always included the land area within a 400 ft lateral distance from the upper boundary of the bank of the Class A surface water source. These areas are included in the Massachusetts Drinking Water Regulations as Surface Water Supply Protection Zones.

Wetland Resource Areas – shows a 100-foot buffer around wetlands that defines the resource area that contributes to the wetland. The wetlands are derived from USGS topographical maps.

Wetlands – shows wetlands derived from USGS topographical maps.

Soils / Geology

Excessively Drained Soils– shows soils that have too much or too rapid loss of water, either by percolation or by surface flow. The occurrence of internal free water is very rare or very deep. This layer was derived from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database.

Highly Erodible Soils – shows soils that are highly susceptible to erosion from wind and/or water. This layer was derived from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database.

Hydric Soils – Soils that are wet long enough to periodically produce anaerobic conditions, thereby influencing the growth of plants. This layer was derived from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database.

Poorly Drained soils– shows soils that do not lose water very rapidly. The occurrence of free water is common. This layer was derived from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database.

Scenic Landscapes – shows areas identified as having distinctive or noteworthy scenic landscapes as part of the Massachusetts Landscape Inventory Project, Department of Environmental Management, 1981.

Slopes Greater than 15% - shows slopes that are greater than 15% based on slope information derived from either 3 or 10-meter contours generated by MassGIS

Biological

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern – shows the location of areas that have been designated ACECs by the Secretary of Environmental Affairs. This designation requires greater

environmental review of certain kinds of proposed development under state agency jurisdiction with the boundary.

Contiguous Natural Lands – shows large, contiguous tracts of natural land. “Contiguous” lands are defined to be at least 250 contiguous acres and “Natural” lands are defined based on the land use codes for water, forest, shrubland, pasture and wetland. The data is part of the Massachusetts Resource Identification Project (MRIP).

Natural Land Riparian Corridors – shows contiguous natural lands within a 100-meter corridor encompassing perennial streams and river features. These areas within the riparian corridor remain in a “natural state”, potentially functioning as a corridor for select species movement, as well as additional ecological purposes. These data is part of the Massachusetts Resource Identification Project (MRIP).

NHESP BioMap Core Habitat - Depicts the most viable habitat for rare species and natural communities. The polygons may consist of many individual species or natural communities.

NHESP BioMap Supporting Natural Landscapes – buffers and connects the Core Habitat polygons and identifies large, naturally vegetated blocks that are relatively free from the impact of roads and other development. The quality of undeveloped land considered in the landscape analysis was evaluated based on four major components: natural vegetation patch characteristics, size of relatively road less areas, sub watershed integrity, and contribution to buffering Bore Habitat for plants and exemplary communities.

NHESP Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife – shows estimations of the habitats of state-protected rare wildlife populations that occur in Resource areas. These habitats are based on rare species records maintained in the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program’s (NHESP) database.

NHESP Priority Habitats of Rare Species – shows areas that represent estimations of important state-listed rare species habitats in Massachusetts. These habitats are based in rare species population records maintained in the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program’s (NHESP) database.

Riparian Corridors – shows a 100-meter corridor, which encompasses perennial streams and river features. The 100 meter buffer distance is a subjective value derived from existing conservation plans, as well as current literature. The data is part of the Massachusetts Resource Identification Project (MRIP).

Vernal Pools – shows a 100-foot buffer around NHESP Certified Vernal Pools. Certified Vernal Pools are protected if they fall under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act Regulations. They also are afforded protection under the state Water Quality Certification regulations, the state Title 5 regulations, and the Forest Cutting Practices Act regulations.

Community

Developed

Commercial Land – shows land that is classified as commercial in the most recent land use update.

Gravel Pits / Mining - shows land that is classified as Gravel / Mining in the most recent land use update.

Industrial Land – shows land that is classified as industrial in the most recent land use update. Industrial land is defined as Industrial, Mining, and Waste Disposal.

Multi-Family Residential - shows land that is classified as Multi-Family residential in the most recent land use update.

Residential Land – shows land that is classified as residential in the most recent land use update. Residential land is defined as lots smaller than ¼ acre lots, ¼ to ½ acre lots, lots larger than ½ acre, and multi-family lots.

State Registered Historic Resources – shows land that is listed with the State Register of Historic Places as being of historical interest.

Village / Commercial Centers – an area defined by the community as representing the village or community center.

Non-Developed Land

Agriculture Land – shows land classified as agriculture in the most recent land use update. Land that is defined as agriculture is composed of cropland, pasture, and woody perennial.

Agricultural Preservation Restriction Land – shows land that is permanently protected as agricultural land due to an APR designation

Buildable Land – shows land that was determined to be buildable based upon existing development, protection, and restricted land during the 1999/2000 Buildout Analysis

Forested Land – shows land that is classified as forest in the most recent land use update.

Non-Protected Open Space – shows land that is classified as open space, but is not permanently protected.

Partial Constraints – shows land that is buildable but is limited based on land characteristics, such as slope, wetlands, and proximity to water.

Protected Open Space – shows land that is classified as open space and is permanently protected.

Recreational Resources – shows land that is classified as recreational in the most recent land use update. Recreational land is defined as Participation Recreation, Spectator Recreation and Water based Recreation.

Housing and Population Densities

Owner Housing Density – The percentage of housing that is owned by the resident on a per acre basis. The values are derived from the Census 2000 data.

Population Density - The population of the census block on a per acre basis. The values are derived from the Census 2000 data.

Rental Housing Density - The percentage of housing that is rented by the resident on a per acre basis. The values are derived from the Census 2000 data.

Seasonal Housing Density - The percentage of housing that is seasonal on a per acre basis. The values are derived from the Census 2000 data.

Infrastructure

Roads

Dirt / Unpaved Roads – roads that are considered dirt or unpaved based on the latest MassHighway inventory.

Local Roads – roads that are considered local roads based on the latest MassHighway inventory.

Minor Roads – roads that are considered collectors based on the latest MassHighway inventory.

Major Roads / Highway Access – roads that are considered arterials or interstate on the latest MassHighway inventory.

Other Transportation

Para Transit – This data layer is only useful for regional analysis. A town that is a member of BRTA receives para transit

Transit access – Roads that have existing BRTA bus service.

Rail Access – Existing rail lines that are currently used.

Air Access – The area surrounding the airports that are considered part of the airport complex.

Bike Trails – The Ashuwillticook bike trail from Lanesborough/Pittsfield line to downtown Adams.

Utilities

Public Water – a line approximating the location of the public water lines. This data was verified by DPW staff during summer of 2001.

Sewer – a line approximating the location of the sewer lines. This data was verified by DPW staff during summer of 2001.

Solid Waste Facilities – Compiled by DEP to track the locations of landfills, transfer stations, and combustion facilities.

Bureau of Waste Prevention - Major Facilities – facilities that are regulated by the DEP. These are considered to have the greatest environmental significance. Facilities included are:

- Large Quantity Generators of Hazardous Waste
- Large Quantity Toxic Users
- Hazardous Waste Recyclers
- Hazardous Waste Treatment, Storage and / or Disposal Facilities
- Facilities with Air Operating Permits
- Facilities with Groundwater Discharge Permits

Introduction to Development Suitability Maps

As part of the Community Development Plan, BRPC has been working on a way to measure the suitability of land attributes for various development types. Development suitability maps show the areas within a community that are suitable for various types of development. The maps show a gradient from dark green (optimum) to light green (acceptable) to white (neutral) to light red (not preferred) to dark red (worst case). The suitability of any given piece of land is based on the existing land features that are found on that land, like wetlands or slope, or in proximity to the land, like roads or sewer. Each attribute is given a weight based on the combination of the attribute's importance in enabling certain types of development to occur and the attribute's conduciveness to a certain type of development. For example, areas with fertile soils are both important to a farm's success and conducive to agriculture, so areas with quality soils would be given a high rating for agricultural use. On the other hand, road infrastructure may be important for enabling commercial development to occur, but dirt road may be not conducive to commercial development. Therefore, areas along dirt roads would not be given as high a score as areas along paved roads.

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) has devised regional values for each potential land feature for each development type. These values are combined for all land features and the result is shown in these development suitability maps.

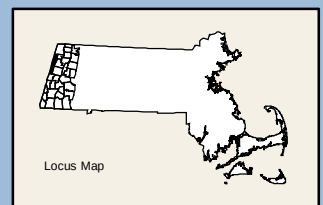
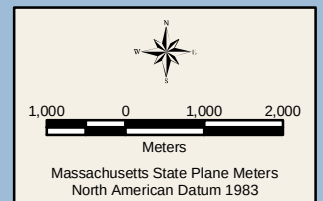
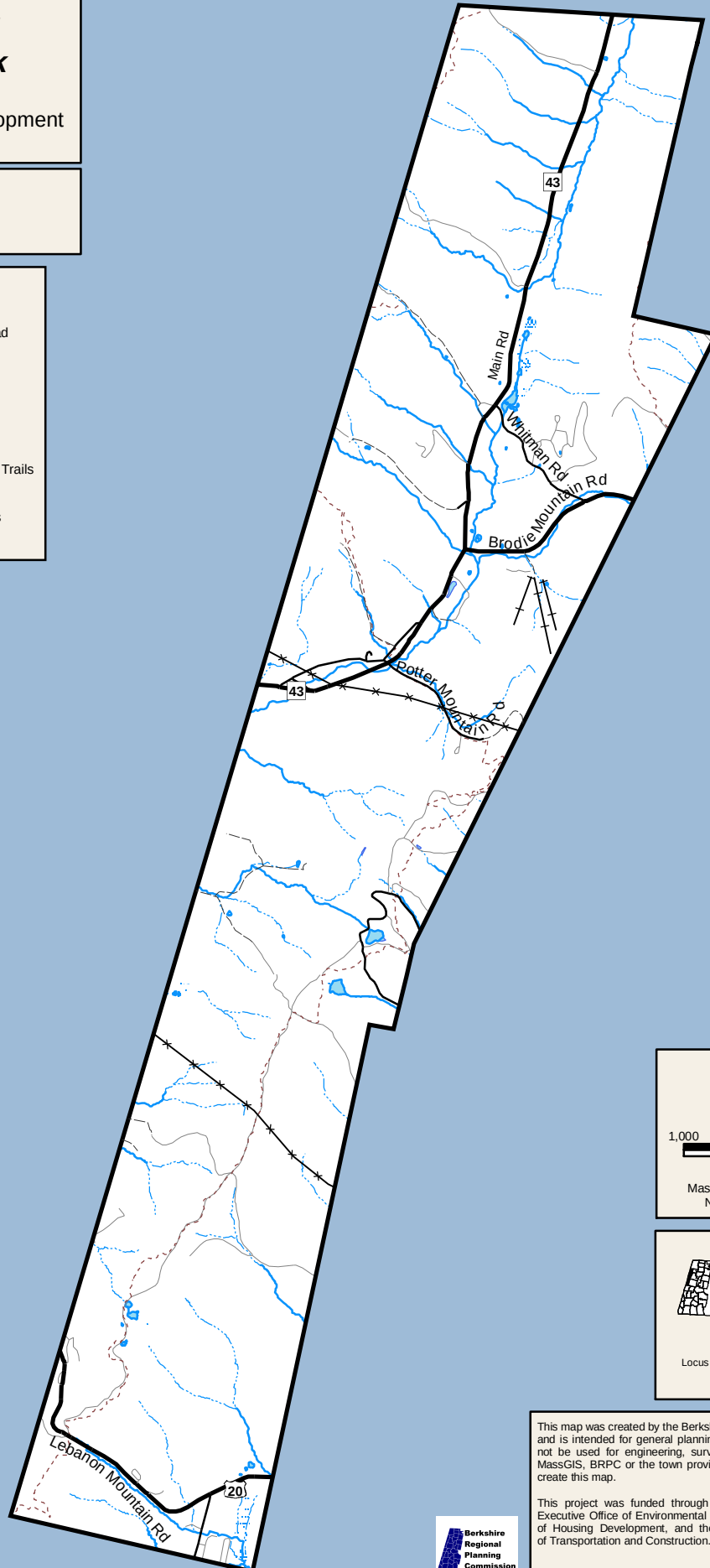
These maps are intended to provide guidance for general planning purposes only and do not mean that development should or will occur in specified areas.

Town of Hancock

Community Development
Plan

Base Map

- Major Road
- Local Road
- - - Unpaved Local Road
- Stream
- - - Intermittent Stream
- Lake / Pond
- Wetland / Marsh
- - - Private Roads / Old Trails
- - - Trails
- × Transmission Lines
- + Chair Lifts



This map was created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and is intended for general planning purposes only. This map shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or regulatory purposes. MassGIS, BRPC or the town provided all of the data layers used to create this map.

This project was funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Department of Housing Development, and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Construction.

/cdphan/projects/basemap.mxd
August 8, 2002



Town of Hancock

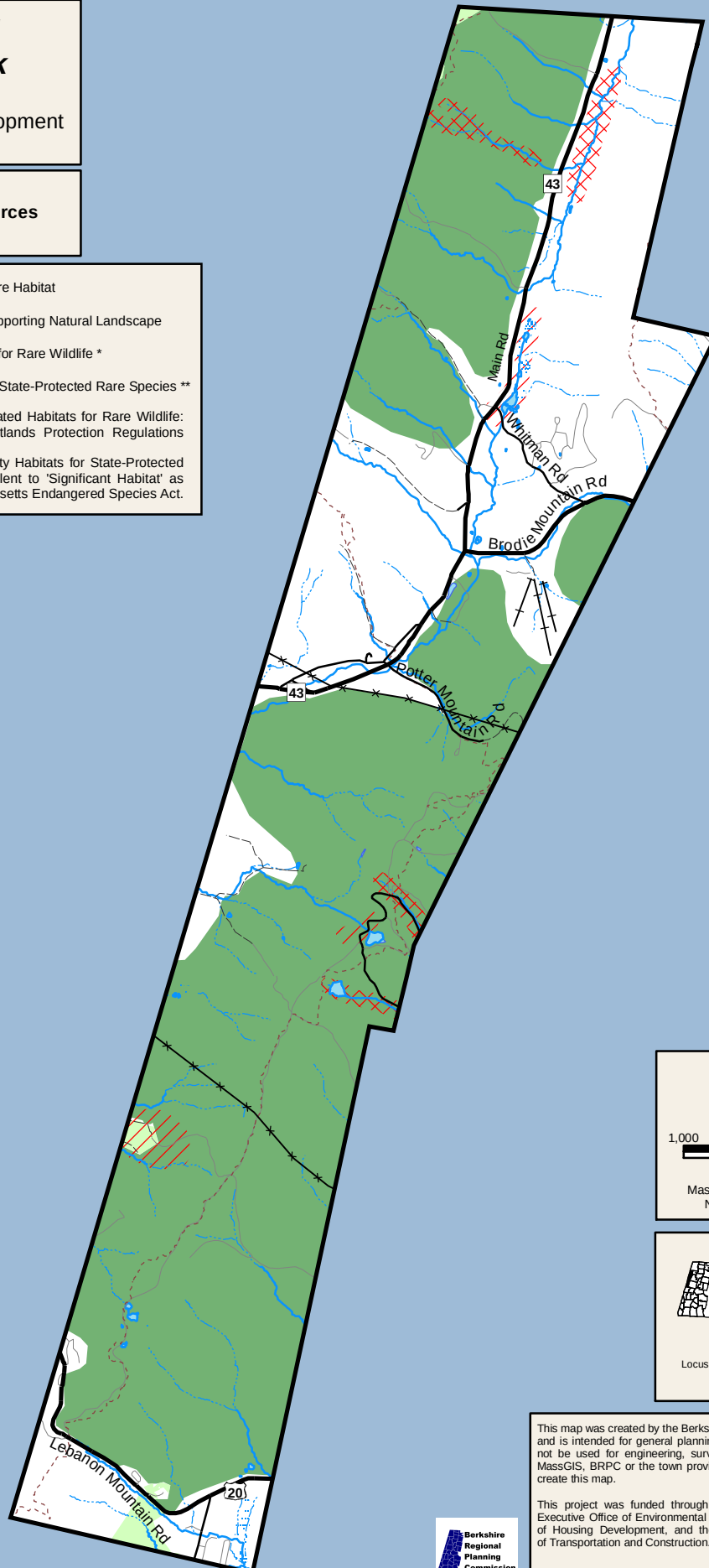
Community Development
Plan

Biological Resources

-  NHESP BioMap Core Habitat
-  NHESP BioMap Supporting Natural Landscape
-  Estimated Habitats for Rare Wildlife *
-  Priority Habitats for State-Protected Rare Species **

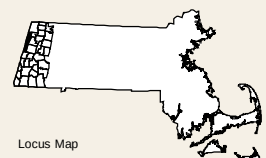
* NHESP 1999-2001 Estimated Habitats for Rare Wildlife:
For Use with the MA Wetlands Protection Regulations
(310 CMR 10).

** NHESP 1999-2001 Priority Habitats for State-Protected
Rare Species: NOT equivalent to 'Significant Habitat' as
designated under Massachusetts Endangered Species Act.



1,000 0 1,000 2,000
Meters

Massachusetts State Plane Meters
North American Datum 1983



Locus Map

This map was created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and is intended for general planning purposes only. This map shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or regulatory purposes. MassGIS, BRPC or the town provided all of the data layers used to create this map.

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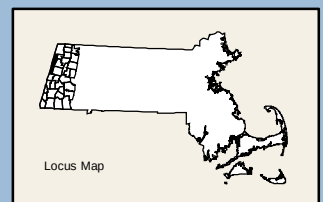
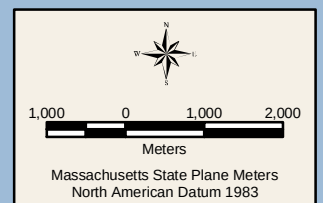
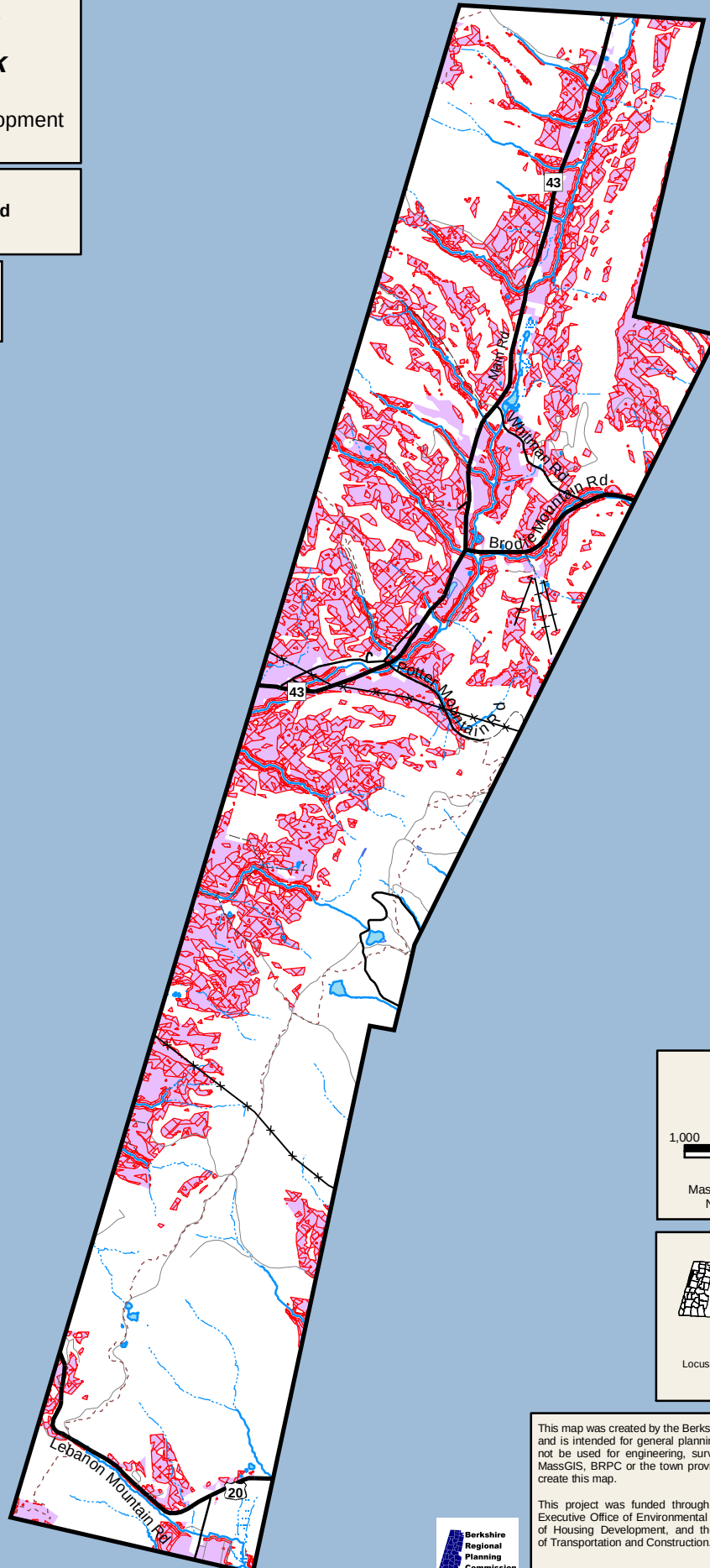
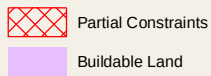
/cdp/han/projects/biological.mxd
August 8, 2002



Town of Hancock

Community Development
Plan

Buildable Land



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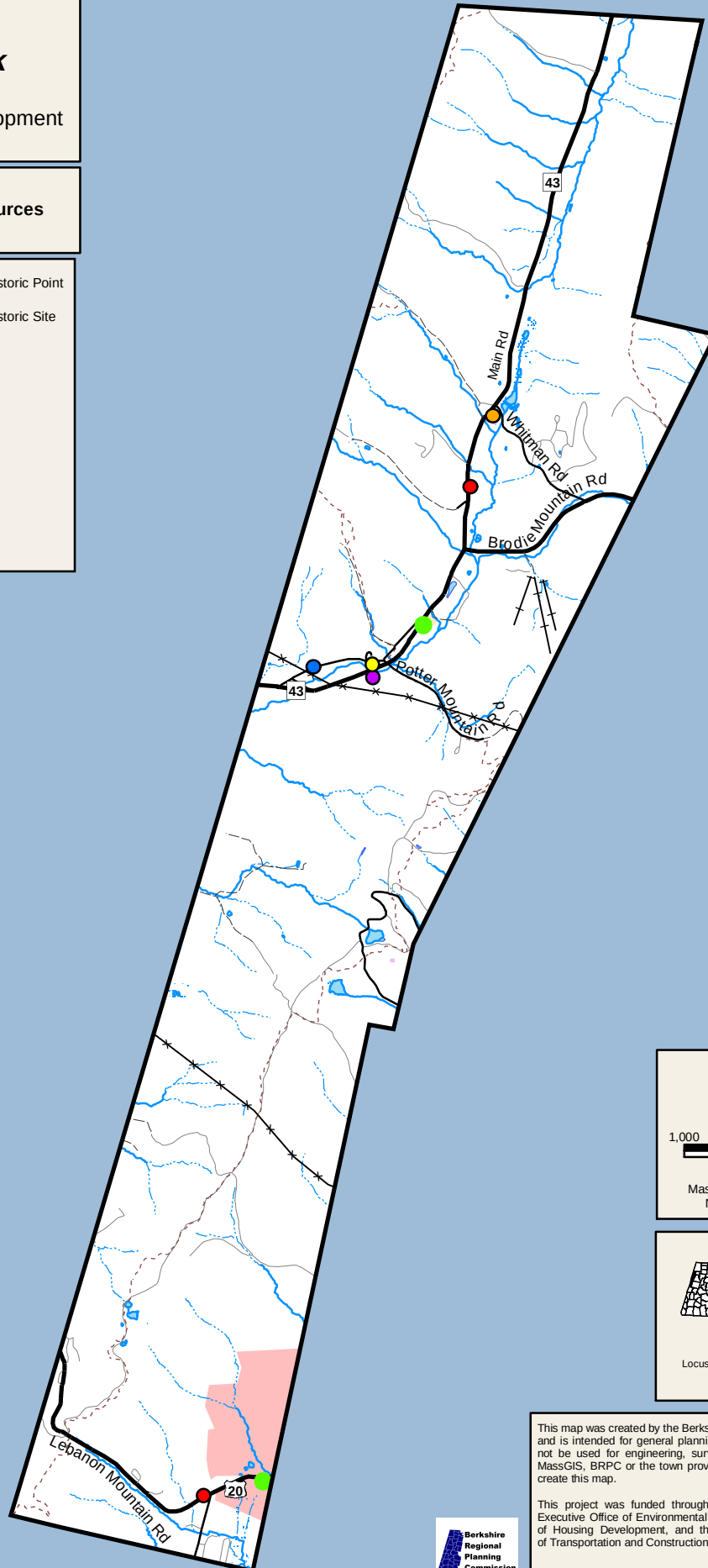
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August 8, 2002

Town of Hancock

Community Development Plan

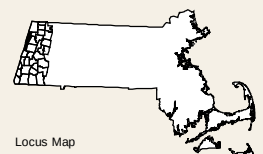
Community Resources

- State Registered Historic Point
- State Registered Historic Site
- Fire House
- Library
- Post Office
- School
- Town Hall
- Public Facilities
- Cemeteries



1,000 0 1,000 2,000
Meters

Massachusetts State Plane Meters
North American Datum 1983



Locus Map

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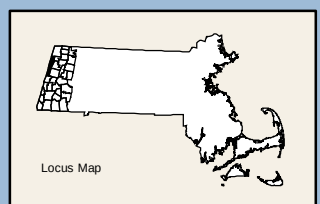
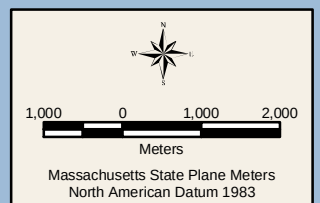
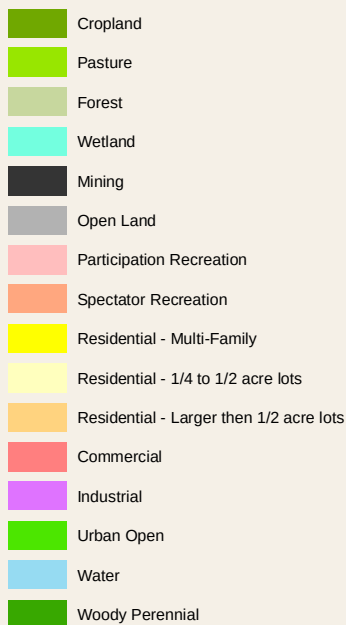
/cdp/plan/projects/community.mxd
August 8, 2002



Town of Hancock

Community Development Plan

1999 Land Use



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/cdphan/projects/currentlanduse.mxd
August 8, 2002

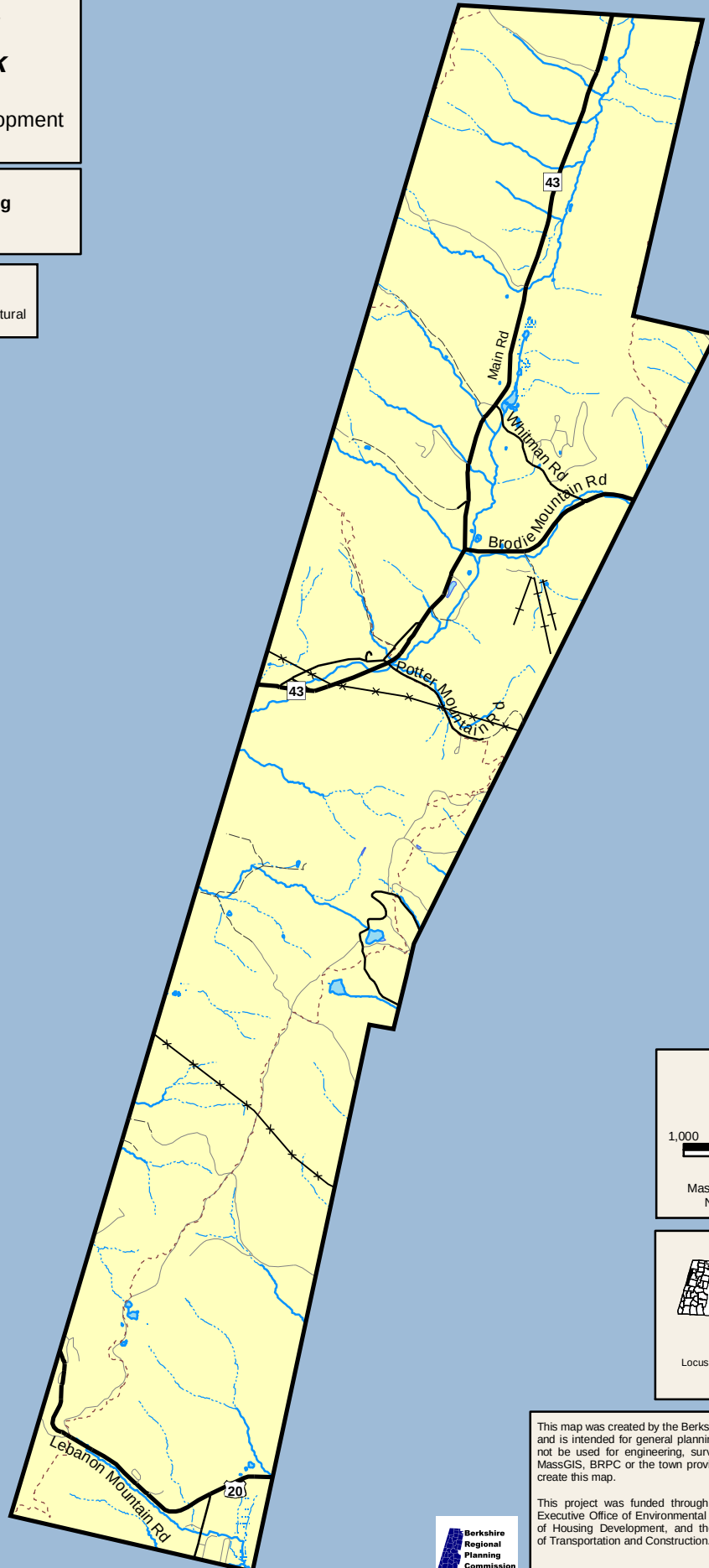
Town of Hancock

Community Development
Plan

Current Zoning
2001

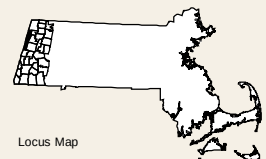
Zone Name

Residential / Agricultural



1,000 0 1,000 2,000
Meters

Massachusetts State Plane Meters
North American Datum 1983



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./cdp/han/projects/currentzoning.mxd
August 8, 2002

Town of Hancock

Community Development
Plan

Ecological Resources

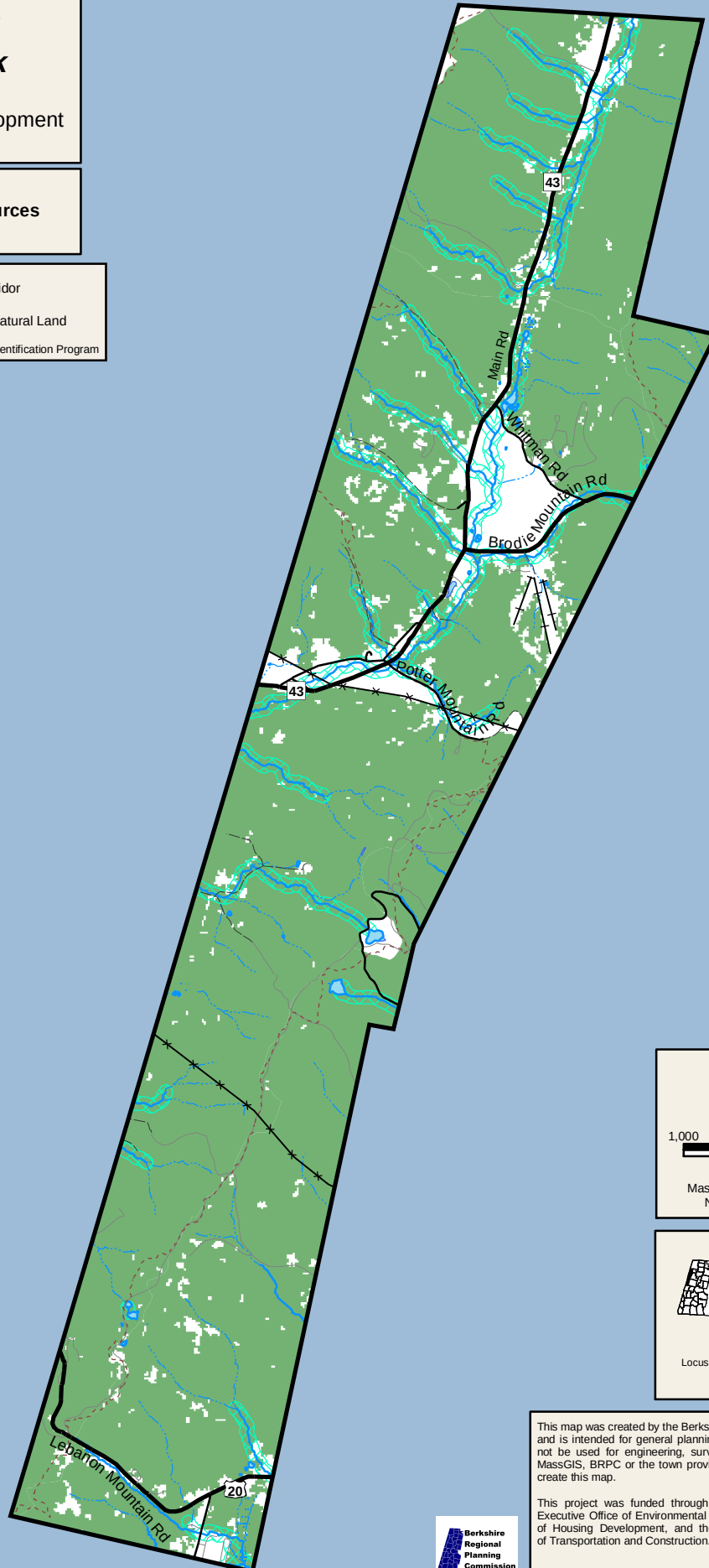


MRIP Riparian Corridor



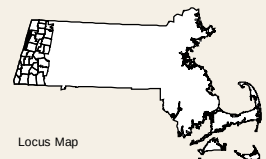
MRIP Contiguous Natural Land

MRIP - Massachusetts Resource Identification Program



1,000 0 1,000 2,000
Meters

Massachusetts State Plane Meters
North American Datum 1983



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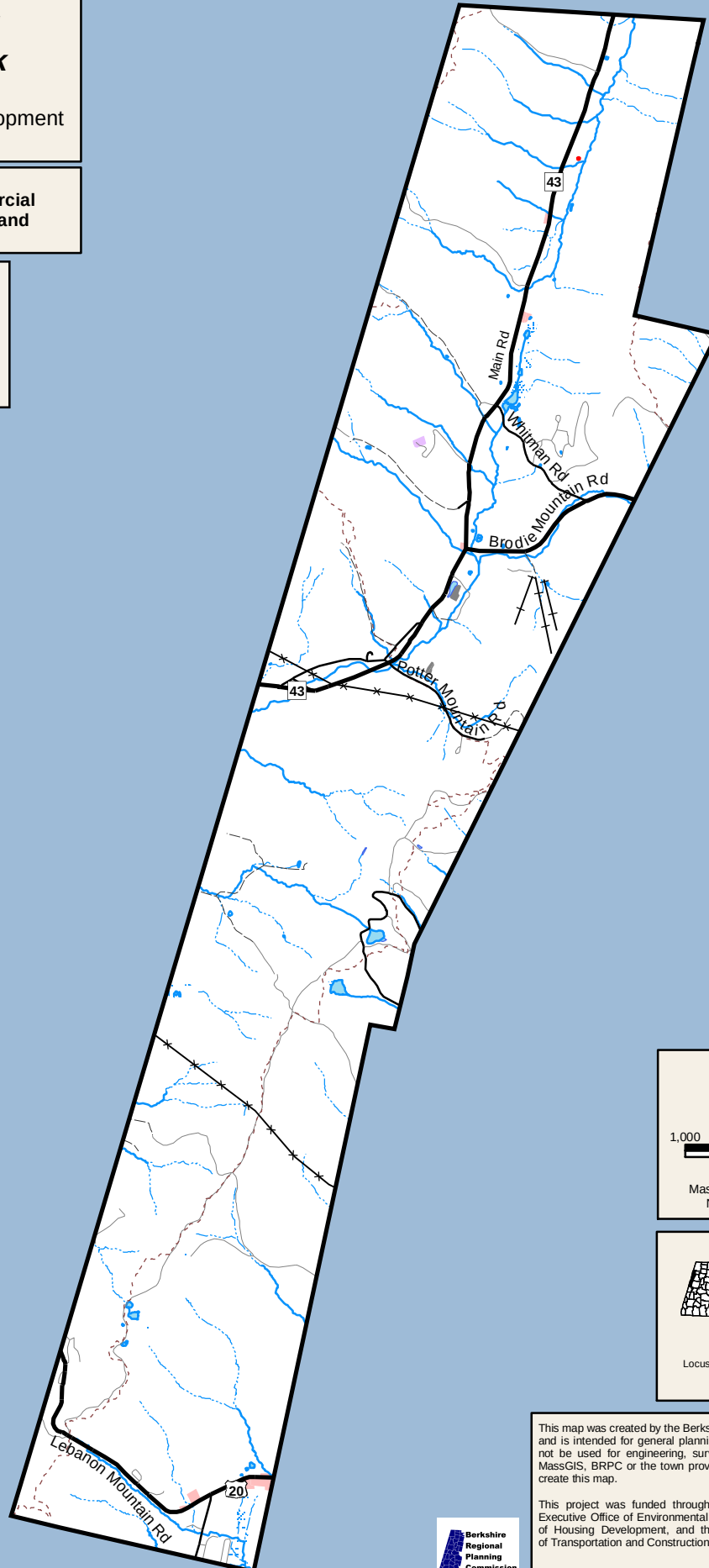
/cdphan/projects/ecological.mxd
August 8, 2002



Town of Hancock

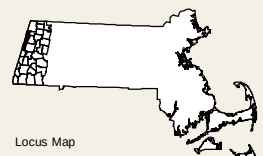
Community Development
Plan

Existing Commercial and Industrial Land



1,000 0 1,000 2,000
Meters

Massachusetts State Plane Meters
North American Datum 1983



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/cdp/han/projects/existingcommind.mxd
August 8, 2002



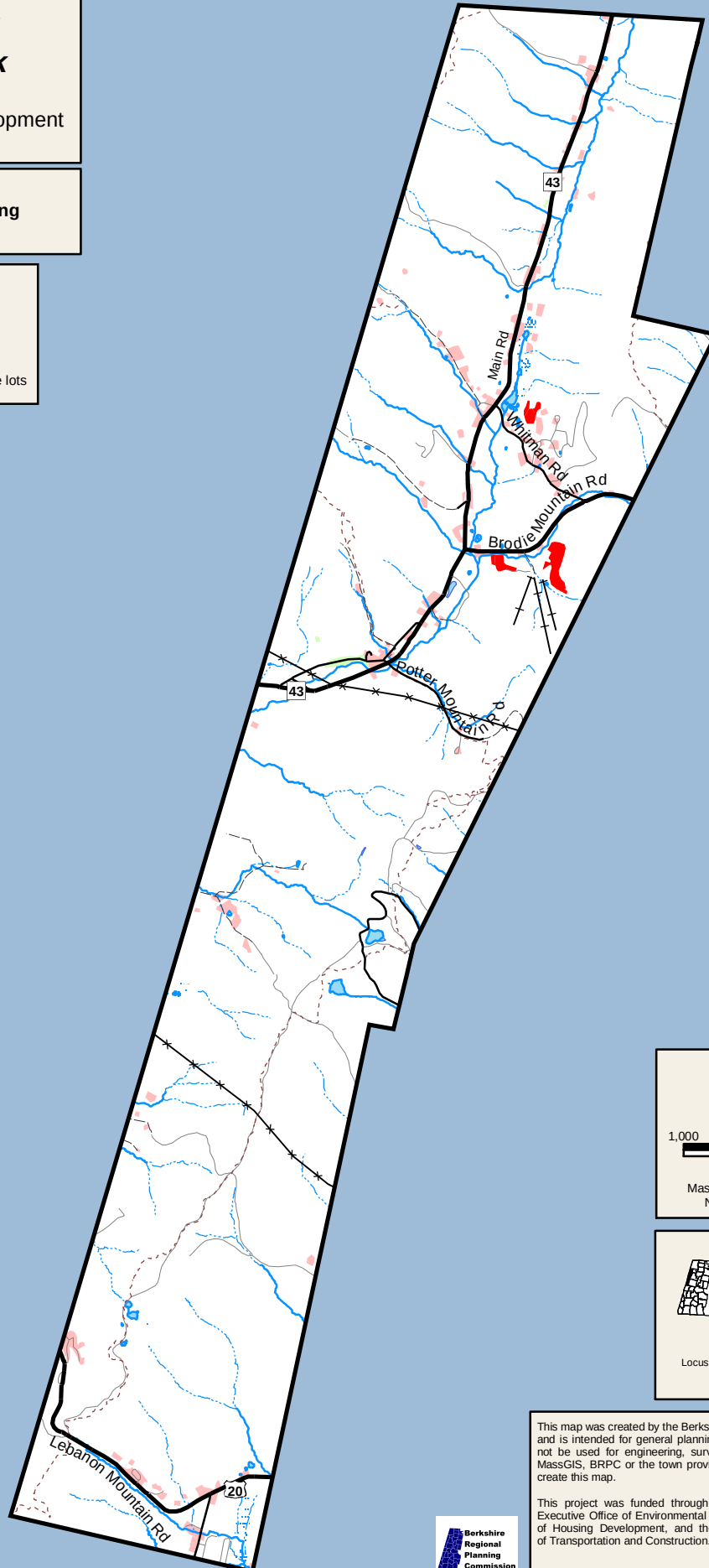
Town of Hancock

Community Development
Plan

Existing Housing

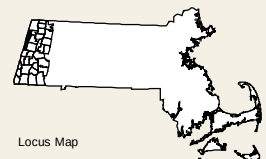
Residential Lot Size

- Multi-Family
- 1/4 to 1/2 acre lots
- Larger then 1/2 acre lots



1,000 0 1,000 2,000
Meters

Massachusetts State Plane Meters
North American Datum 1983



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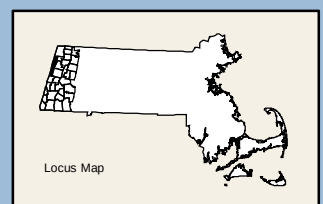
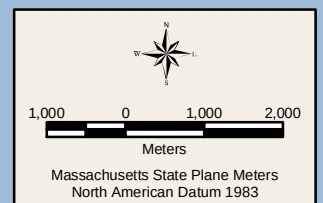


/cdp/phan/projects/existinghousing.mxd
August 8, 2002

Town of Hancock

Community Development Plan

Future Land Use based on Current Zoning at Maximum Buildout



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./cdp/han/projects/futurelanduse.mxd
August 8, 2002



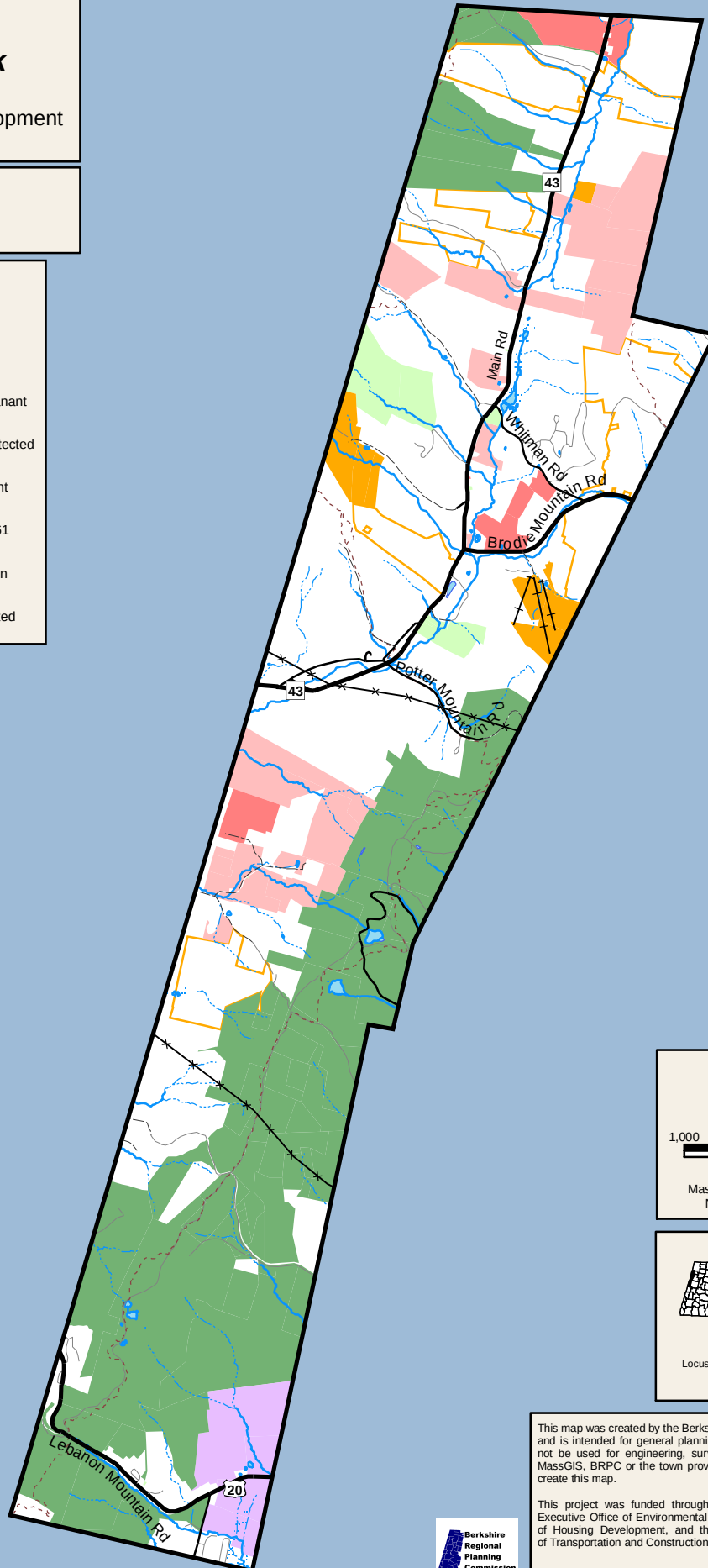
Town of Hancock

Community Development
Plan

Open Space

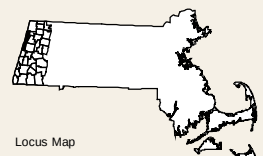
Open Space Status

	State - Permanent
	Municipal
	Non-Profit - Permanent
	Non-Profit - Unprotected
	Private - Permanent
	Private - Chapter 61
	Private - Recreation
	Private - Unprotected



1,000 0 1,000 2,000
Meters

Massachusetts State Plane Meters
North American Datum 1983



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/cdp/plan/projects/openspace.mxd
April 18, 2003

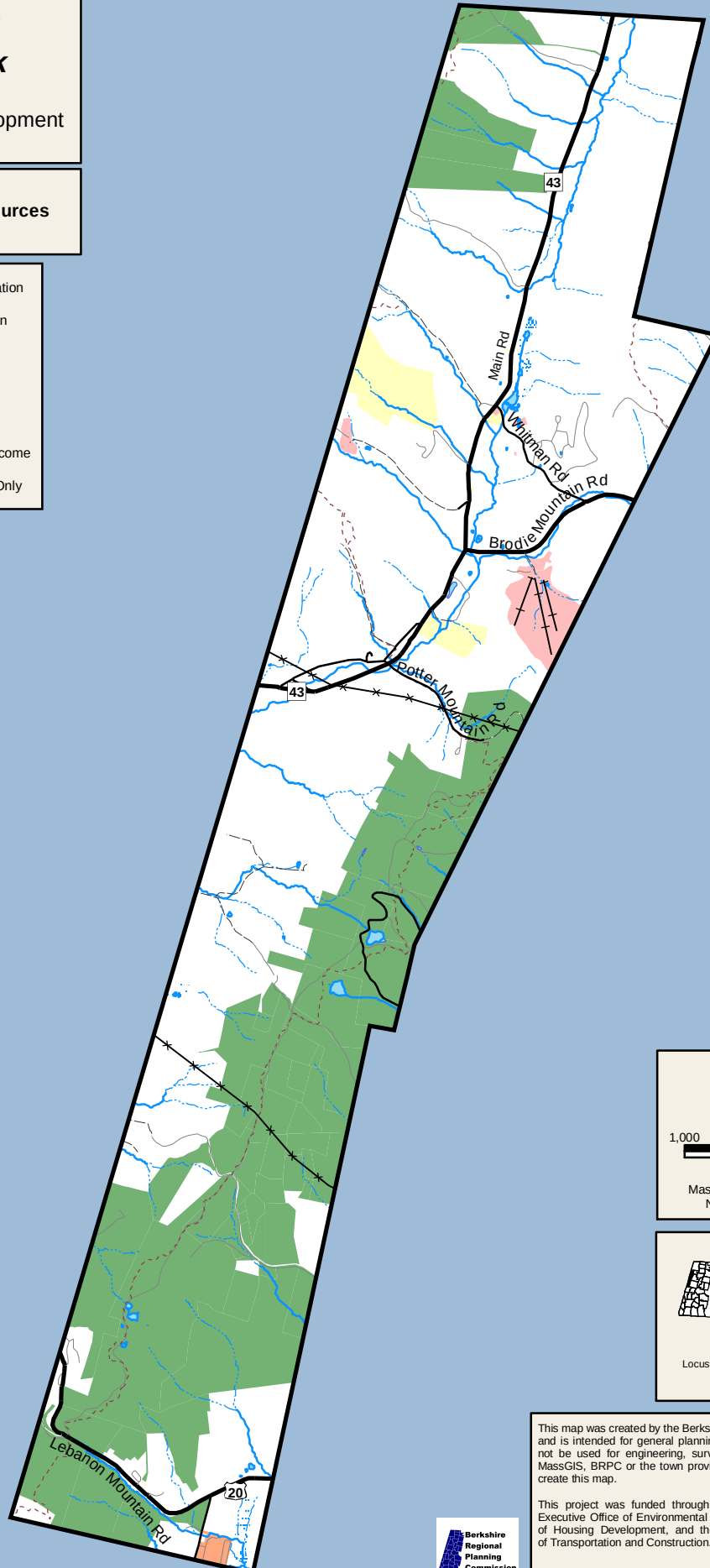


Town of Hancock

Community Development Plan

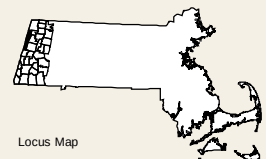
Recreational Resources

- Participation Recreation
- Spectator Recreation
- State
- Municipal
- Non-Profit
- Private - Public Welcome
- Private - Members Only



1,000 0 1,000 2,000
Meters

Massachusetts State Plane Meters
North American Datum 1983



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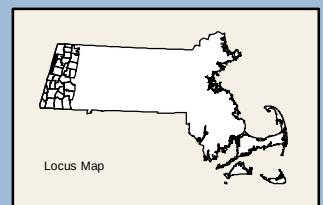
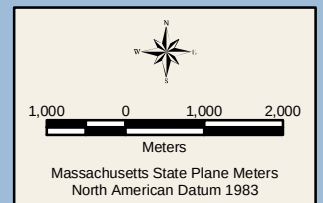
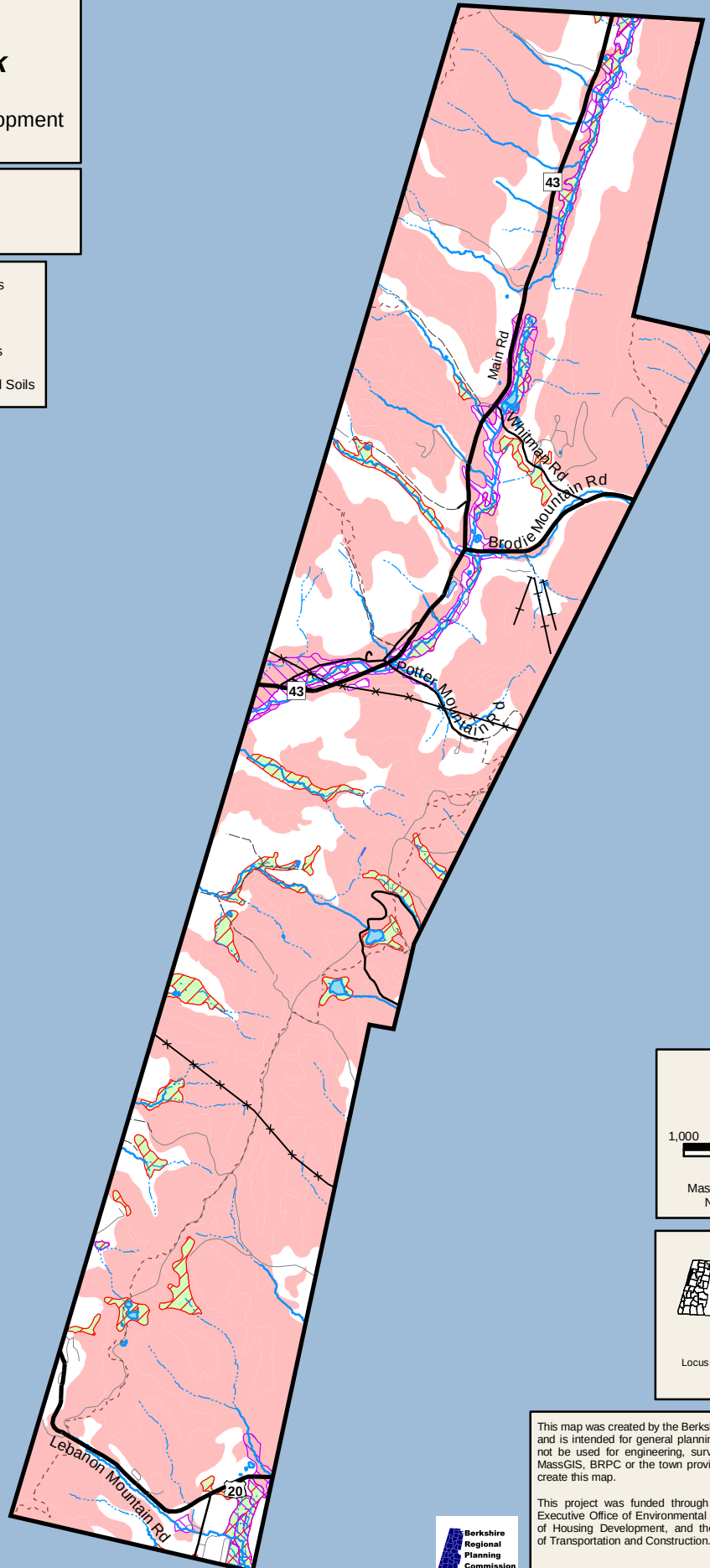
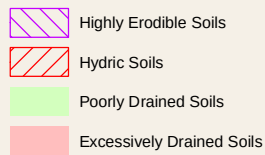


/cdphan/projects/recreational.mxd
August 8, 2002

Town of Hancock

Community Development
Plan

Soils Map



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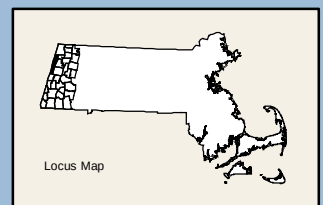
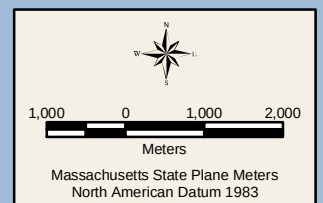
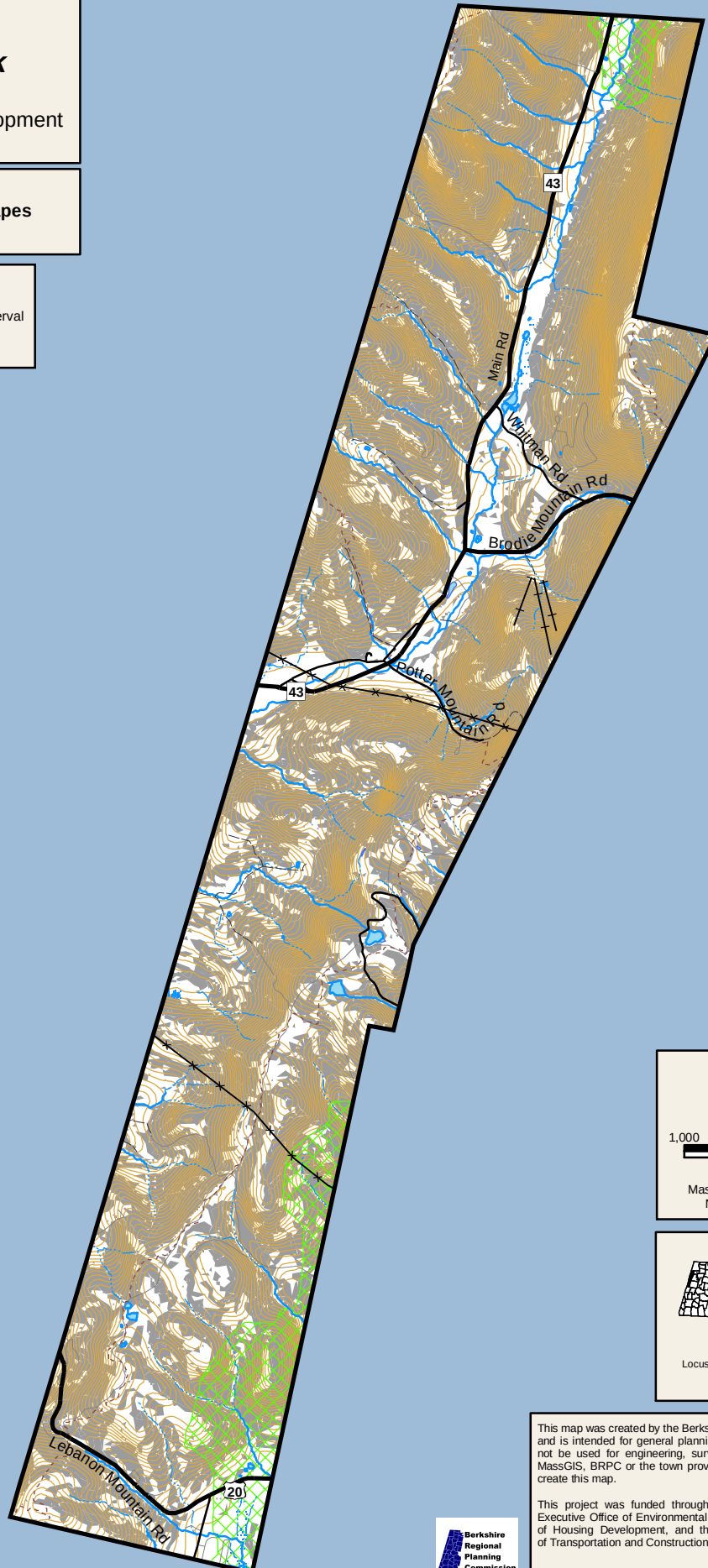
/cdp/plan/projects/soils.mxd
August 8, 2002

Town of Hancock

Community Development
Plan

Special Landscapes

-  Scenic Landscape
-  Contours - 10m interval
-  Slope > 15%



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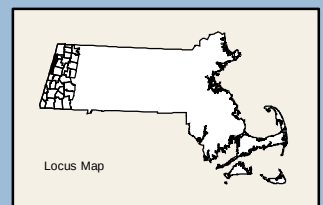
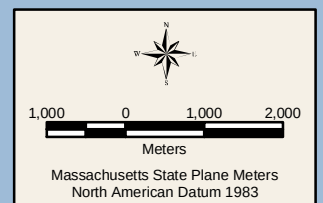
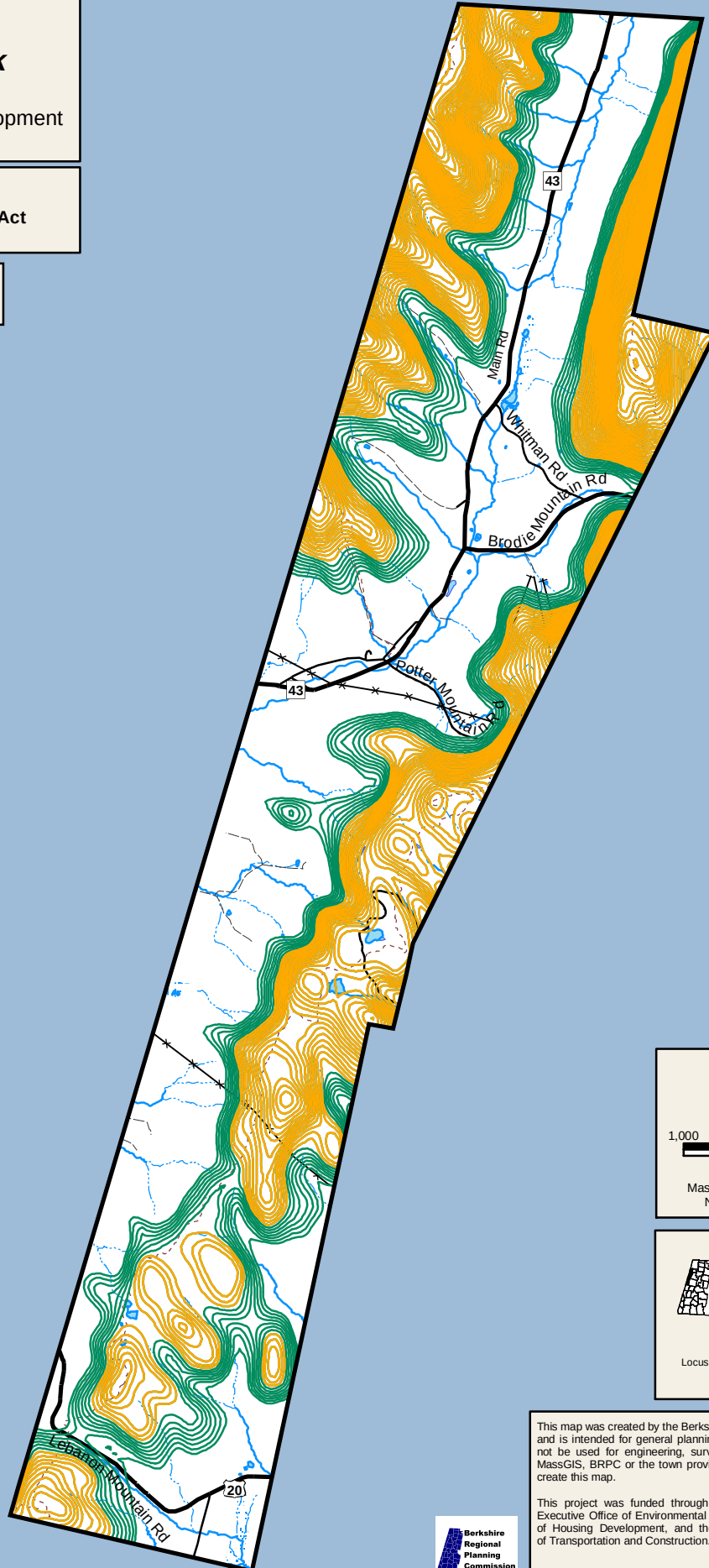
/cdp/han/projects/speciallandscapes.mxd
August 8, 2002

Town of Hancock

Community Development
Plan

Scenic Mountain Act

- Contours > 1700 ft
- Contours > 1500ft



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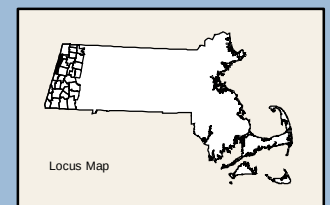
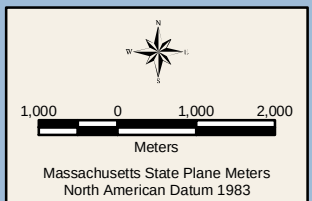
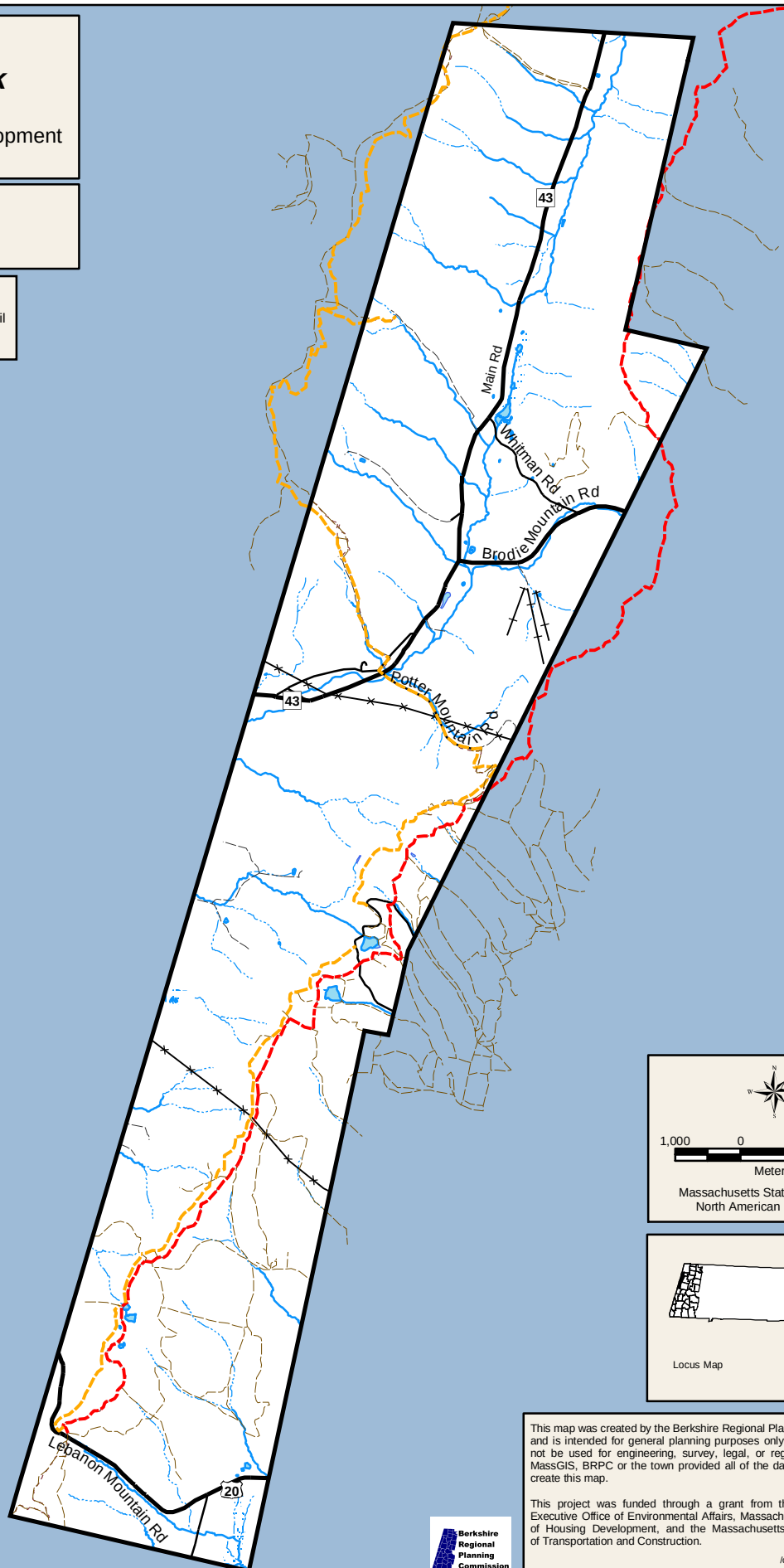
/cdp/han/projects/sma.mxd
June 3, 2003

Town of Hancock

Community Development
Plan

Trails

- Trails
- Taconic Skyline Trail
- Taconic Crest Trail



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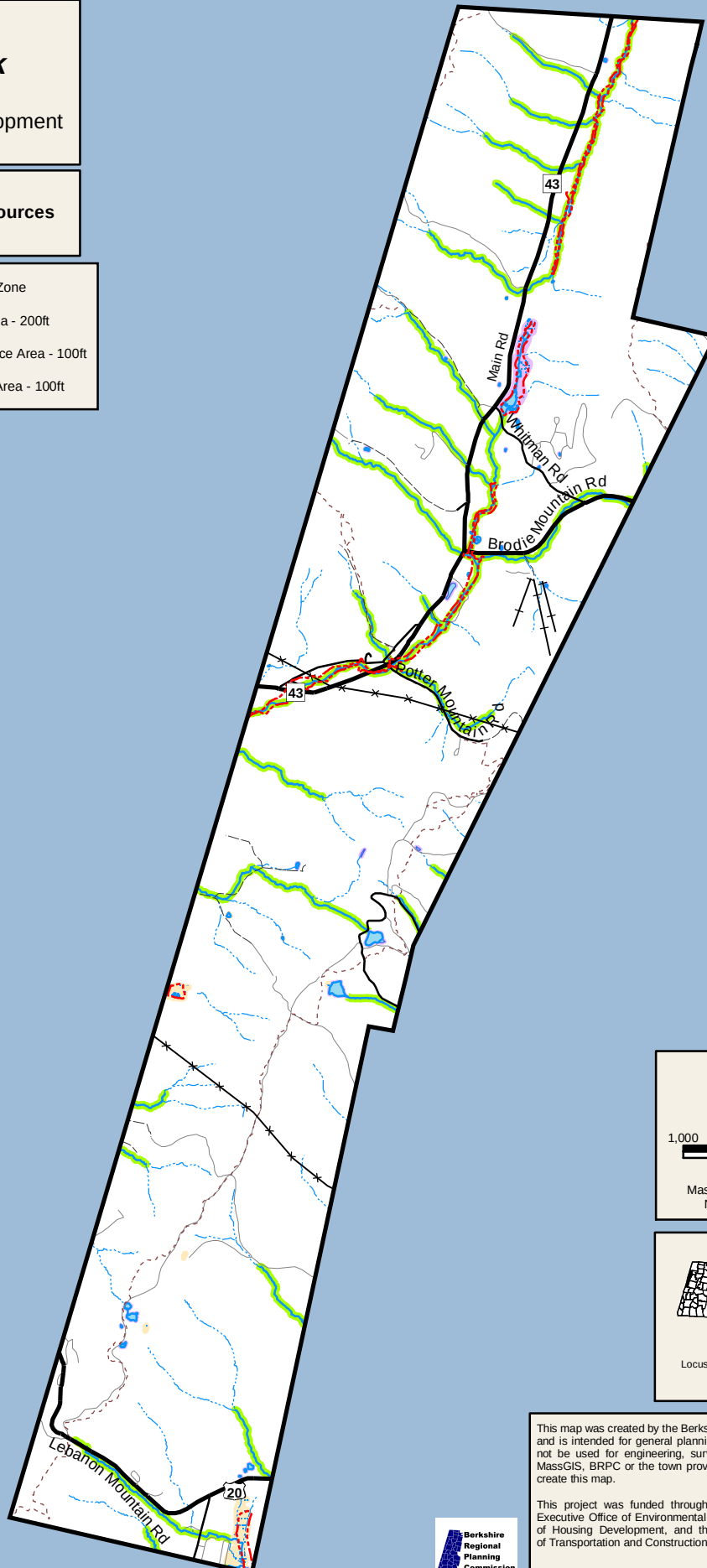
/cdp/han/projects/trails.mxd
March 5, 2003

Town of Hancock

Community Development
Plan

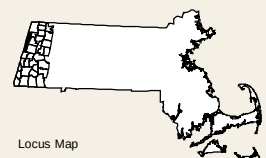
Surface Water Resources

- FEMA 100yr Flood Zone
- River Protection Area - 200ft
- Lake / Pond Resource Area - 100ft
- Wetland Resource Area - 100ft



1,000 0 1,000 2,000
Meters

Massachusetts State Plane Meters
North American Datum 1983



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/cdp/phan/projects/surfacewater.mxd
August 8, 2002

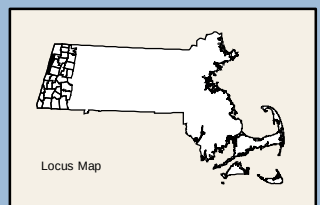
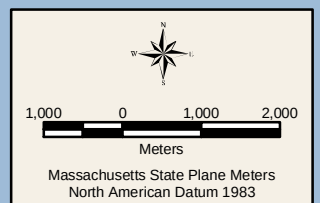
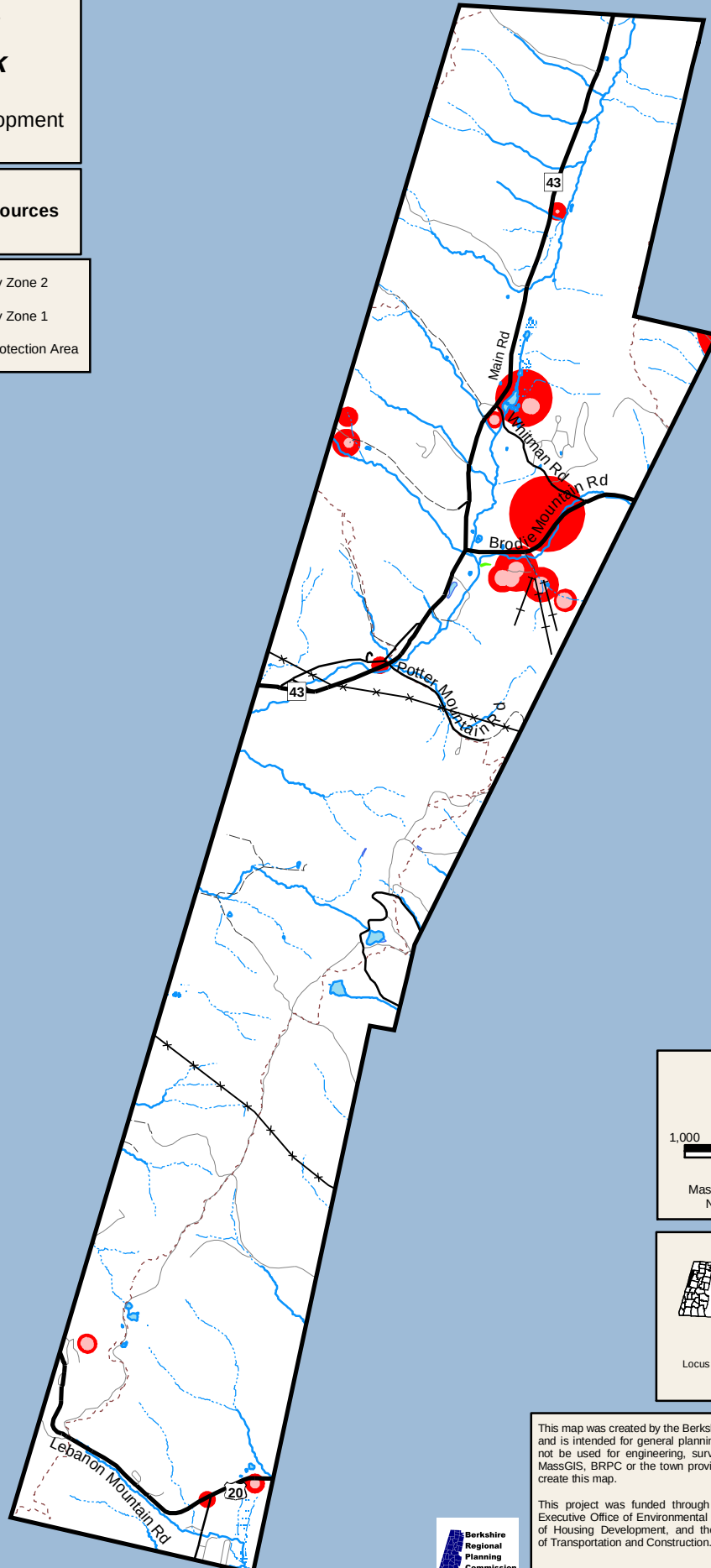


Town of Hancock

Community Development
Plan

Drinking Water Resources

- Public Water Supply Zone 2
- Public Water Supply Zone 1
- Interim Wellhead Protection Area



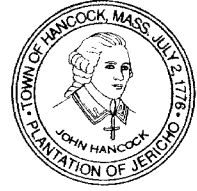
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./cdphan/projects/drinkingwater.mxd
August 8, 2002

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF HANCOCK



Appendix



Appendix

Town of Hancock 2002 Survey Results
Notes From the Public Forums and Committee Meetings
References and Informational Resources

A

A-1
A-15
A-31

Town of Hancock 2002 Survey Results

Background/Methodology

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) has conducted the following survey as a means of determining community need and interest in developing plans for a Comprehensive Plan in the Town of Hancock.

The survey consisted of 29 questions and was mailed to a target audience of 293 households. The survey response was very strong. Thirty-six percent (105) of the surveys were completed and returned and input into a database. BRPC staff has tabulated and analyzed the survey data, and a discussion of the results is the subject of this report.

This report will be presented to the Town of Hancock Select Board and will also be included in the Town of Hancock's Scope of Services for the Community Development Plan.

Survey Results

What do you see as the advantages or disadvantages of living in Hancock?

The top items in each category are:

Advantages

Rural Nature	57%
Low Taxes	30%
Cost of Living	16%
Scenic Views	13%
School System	10%
Job Opportunities	4%

Disadvantages

Lack of Community Facilities	7%
Lack of Job Opportunities	5%
Lack of Public Transportation	4%
Too Much Development	3%
School System	2%
No Zoning	2%
Cell Phone Access	1%

2. Hancock is a small "country" town with a rural atmosphere. Which statement best describes your feelings about the town?

A large majority of responding residents want to protect the rural atmosphere of Hancock.

	Number of Respondents	Percent
Would oppose Hancock Losing this rural atmosphere.	66	63%
Like things the way they are Now, but would not oppose some additional development.	37	35%
Would prefer more development.	3	3%

Is it your expectation that the state will provide funding to protect open spaces?

The most significant number of respondents expect state funding to protect open spaces.

Number of Respondents		Percent
Yes	44	42%
No	24	23%
Unsure	26	25%

Would you volunteer to financially support this type of project?

The most significant number of respondents, by a factor of two to one, will not volunteer to financially support this type of project.

Number of Respondents		Percent
No	42	40%
Yes	24	23%
Unsure	28	27%

Would you like to see Hancock develop a "Town Center"?

A majority of respondents, fifty-five percent, would not favor the development of a "Town Center".

Number of Respondents		Percent
No	58	55%
Yes	29	28%
Unsure	16	15%

4. The development of a "Town Center" would likely occur over many years and require a high investment to the town. Would you support local taxes used for this purpose?

The majority of respondents, by almost three to one, would not favor local taxes to support the development of a "Town Center".

Number of Respondents		Percent
No	61	58%
Yes	22	21%
Unsure	18	17%

5. Would you support a town effort to protect farms, forests and other natural/scenic resources?

A great majority of respondents, seventy-eight percent, would favor a town effort to protect farms, forests and other natural resources.

Number of Respondents		Percent
Yes	82	78%
No	13	13%
Unsure	11	11%

Is it your expectation that the state will provide funding for this?

The majority of respondents, fifty-nine percent, expect the state to provide funding.

Number of Respondents		Percent
Yes	62	59%
No	15	14%

Unsure 23

22%

Would you volunteer to financially support this type of project?

The most significant number of respondents, forty-two percent, would not volunteer to financially support this type of project.

Number of Respondents**Percent**

No 44

42%

Yes 28

27%

Unsure 29

28%

Do you think the town should have more areas designated for open space?

Number of Respondents**Percent**

Yes 41

40%

No 26

25%

Unsure 32

31%

If yes, choose any of the following you would do to accomplish this.

The most favorable choices for protecting open spaces are to use the Community Preservation Act, with twenty percent of the respondents favoring this technique; to establish a town land acquisition fund, with sixteen percent of the respondents favoring this technique; and to sell or contribute a “conservation restriction”, with thirteen percent of the respondents favoring this technique.

Number of Respondents**Percent**

Support use of the Community Preservation Act.

21

20%

Vote for a town supported land acquisition fund.

17

16%

Sell or contribute a “conservation restriction” to protect your land from future development.

14

13%

Donate money to buy land.

3

3%

Contribute some land to town

2

2%

Sell some land to the town at market price.

1

1%

Sell land to the town at a discounted price.

1

1%

None of the above.

5

5%

Please list any recreational activities that you enjoy doing in Hancock:

The most popular recreational activities enjoyed by respondents of Hancock are Hiking/Walking, with fifty-five percent of the respondents enjoying this activity; Skiing/XC skiing, with thirty-five percent of the respondents enjoying this activity; and Biking, with seventeen percent of the respondents enjoying this activity.

Number of Respondents**Percent**

Hiking/Walking

58

55%

Skiing/XC skiing

37

35%

Biking

18

17%

Hunting

12

11%

Fishing	9	9%
Snowshoeing	7	7%
Off-road vehicles	6	6%
Horseback riding	4	4%
Gardening	2	2%
Bird watching	2	2%
Other (see below for detail)	14	13%

Question 7 Comments: Other Recreational Activities	Number
Camping	2
Golfing	2
Photography	1
Library	1
Church	1
Soccer	1
Geological excursions	1
Swimming	1
Shopping	1
Sight seeing	1
Mountain-biking to top of Jiminy	1
spectating at local soccer games	1
rollerblading	1
running	1
canoeing	1
basketball	1

Are there any recreational amenities you would like to see developed in Hancock?

The three most popular amenities that respondents would like to see developed in Hancock are walking/biking trails (twenty-nine percent), swimming/picnic areas (twenty percent), and a golf course (seventeen percent).

Number of Respondents	Percent
Walking/Biking trail	30 29%
Swimming/picnic areas	21 20%
Golf course	17 17%
Tennis Courts	15 14%
Playground	11 10%
Athletic fields	7 7%
Basketball courts	4 4%
Campground	3 3%
Off-road vehicle trails	2 2%

Is it your expectation that the state would pay for this?

The most significant number of respondents, forty percent, feel the state will not pay for any recreational amenities to be developed.

	Number of Respondents	Percent
No	42	40%
Yes	21	20%
Unsure	24	23%

Would you volunteer to financially support this project?

The most significant number of respondents, forty-five percent, will not financially support the development of recreational amenities.

	Number of Respondents	Percent
No	47	45%
Yes	18	17%
Unsure	22	21%

Do you think the town should take a position on how state lands, within the town, should be used?

The majority of respondents, seventy-eight percent, feel the town should take a position on how state lands should be used.

	Number of Respondents	Percent
Yes	82	78%
No	8	8%
Unsure	14	13%
Comments (see Below for Detail):	17	16%

Question 9 Comments: Town's position on State Lands	Number
state should communicate with town before use	2
Town should take more interest to maintain dialogue with state to express concerns and influence use	2
keep in natural state to protect the environment	2
More local control over land use	1
town should support continued protection & watershed status	1
within reason and comments from townspeople	1
we should ask to remain undeveloped - enlarge Pitts St. Forest	1
town votes (People)	1
why not	1
town should make decisions	1
town should have a position on land use, but shouldn't expect special treatment	1
I wouldn't want to see any highways widened	1
I think the town is less likely than the state to be pressured by or to succumb to tactics of single issue groups	1

Do you think the town should have more areas designated for commercial or non-residential use?

	Number of Respondents	Percent
No	62	59%
Yes	27	26%

Unsure

12

11%

If yes, would you like to see any of the following?

The top choices the respondents would like to see are a town common (thirteen percent), restaurants (eleven percent), a community center, retail facilities, and cultural facilities (ten percent).

	Number of Respondents	Percent
Town common	14	13%
Restaurants	12	11%
Retail facilities	10	10%
Community center	11	10%
Cultural facilities	10	10%
Industrial facilities	6	6%
Institutional facilities	4	4%
Other:	2	2%

Question 10 Comments: Other businesses for Town	Number
Rural setting B&B's	1
Grocery Store Closer to Home	1

If you own building lots, do you expect them to be developed:

The most significant number of respondents, thirty-three percent, do not expect to develop building lots they own. A fairly large number, eighteen percent, are unsure whether they will develop building lots they own.

	Number of Respondents	Percent
never	35	33%
unsure	19	18%
1 – 5 years	4	4%
6 – 10 years	3	3%
Within one year	0	0%

In your opinion are the Town of Hancock's scenery and natural resources important for business in the community?

The majority of respondents, eighty-three percent, feel that the scenery and natural resources are important for business in the community.

	Number of Respondents	Percent
Yes	87	83%
No	8	8%
Unsure	9	9%

Should the Town of Hancock do more to market, develop, and/or improve the town's tourist attractions, and, if so, what do you feel needs to be accomplished?

The majority of respondents (sixty-eight percent) does not feel that the town should do more to market, develop, and/or improve the town's tourist attractions.

	Number of Respondents	Percent
No	70	68%
Yes	18	18%
Unsure	12	11%
Comments:	23	22%

Question 13 Comments: Marketing Town's Tourist Attractions	No.
The Businesses Should Market Themselves	7
Nothing is needed	3
Hancock depends on tourist \$ and should do more to market the present tourist activities, B&B's, \$ Motels.	2
More promotion with State	1
More Shopping Attractions	1
Too much already	1
Berkshire Visitors Bureau will handle this	1
The Best way to promote commercial/cultural attractions is to implement proper planning & zoning to secure the rural environment and attractiveness	1
unsure of the Town's Role in this	1
Absolutely Not	1
Promote and make sure roads are clean for accessibility	1
Jiminy could open up recreational facilities to members of the town and could offer outdoor theater like Williamstown	1
Advertise Shaker Village as Pittsfield does in its literature	1
Jiminy Peak is developing quickly enough	1

What are your economic priorities for Hancock?

The two most popular economic priorities for the respondents are: maintaining property values (seventy-five percent), and lowering taxes (twenty-six percent).

	Number of Respondents	Percent
Maintaining property values	79	75%
Lower taxes	27	26%
Job creation	12	11%
Workforce development	9	9%
Commercial development	8	8%
Residential development	8	8%
Higher taxes	0	0%
Other:	11	10%

Question 14 Comments: "Other" Priorities for Town	Number
keeping taxes down	3
preserve the rural atmosphere of the town	2
economy is strong - no need for economic priorities	2
non-development	1
increase tourism	1
small grocery store in N. Hancock	1
controlled growth through proper planning	1

Is it important to have quality affordable housing in the Town of Hancock?

The majority of respondents, fifty-two percent, feel it is important to have quality affordable housing. Thirty-one percent do not feel it is important to have quality affordable housing.

	Number of Respondents	Percent
Yes	55	52%
No	33	31%
Unsure	13	12%

Do you have any suggestions on how we can keep housing affordable for future generations and seniors?

Twenty-three respondents made suggestions on this topic.

Question 16 Suggestions for keeping housing affordable	Number
restrict large developments	1
tax incentives for first time home owners in single family homes	1
keeping property taxes low as they are	1
affordable housing not a reality without state lands & money	1
why do we have to have "affordable" housing?	1
lower taxes for those over 65	1
give seniors a lower tax rate	1
develop a comprehensive zoning package	1
keep property taxes reasonable	1
keep the town rural	1
low interest loans	1
assisted living or nursing facility in town	1
limit growth that forces locals out	1
revisit the zoning issue	1
keep things "as is"	1
Question 16 Suggestions for keeping housing affordable (continued)	Number
cluster housing - there's been a lot written about this	1
small apartment house(s)	1
just keep connected with issues and development initiatives	1
tax big business more	1
Education - motivated people with solid education do not need help	1
reasonable zoning & tax breaks for income-qualified seniors	1
is there a case to be made for the need for affordable housing?	1
the state could offer tax assistance, but taxes are so low, its hard to believe it's a burden	1
pass property down through generations	1
keep taxes low to avoid pressure to sell	1
tax relief for income-qualified seniors	1
accessory "mother-in-law" apartments	1

Is it your expectation that the state would pay for this?

The greater number of respondents (forty percent) do not expect the state to pay for affordable housing.

	Number of Respondents	Percent
No	42	40%
Yes	19	18%
Unsure	18	17%

Would you volunteer to financially support this project?

The largest number of respondents (forty-nine percent) would not financially support this project.

	Number of Respondents	Percent
No	51	49%
Yes	8	8%
Unsure	16	15%

Over the past 10 years the number of homes in Hancock has increased (on average) by more than 22 dwelling units per year. Do you feel that this level of growth is:

Forty-four percent of respondents feel the level of growth is too much, while forty three percent feel the level of growth is too much.

	Number of Respondents	Percent
Too much	46	44%
Appropriate	45	43%
Not enough	4	4%
Other	5	5%

In order to travel from northern Hancock to southern Hancock, one must leave the state to do so. Do you feel this is a problem for your community?

	Number of Respondents	Percent
No	70	67%
Yes	23	22%
Unsure	6	6%

Is it your expectation that the state would help pay for this?

More respondents, by a ratio of two to one, do not expect the state to help pay for this.

	Number of Respondents	Percent
No	30	29%
Yes	15	14%
Unsure	4	4%

Would you volunteer to financially support this project?

The greater number of respondents, thirty-nine percent, would not volunteer to financially support this type of project.

	Number of Respondents	Percent
No	41	39%
Yes	2	2%
Unsure	3	3%

In your opinion, are there adequate public transportation alternatives available in the Town of Hancock?

More respondents, by a ratio of two to one, do not feel there are adequate public transportation alternatives available.

	Number of Respondents	Percent
No	50	48%
Yes	25	24%
Unsure	22	21%
If no, what should be provided	24 responses	

Question 19 Suggestions for transportation alternatives	Number
bus service	4
there are no alternatives, but it is needed	2
nothing - we don't need public transportation	2
Limited service bus would be nice but unlikely	2
seniors transportation to doctors & shopping	1
local buses or taxis should be available	1
bus service to pittsfield/williamstown	1
bus to williamstown	1
busses when family vehicles are unavailable	1
elderly transportation	1
high speed railway to pittsfield	1
bus once a week to pittsfield	1
horse-drawn carts as a tourist attraction	1
would be costly	1
buses to Jiminy	1

Are there any traffic-related problem areas on Routes 22 or 43?

The majority of respondents, fifty-eight percent, do not feel there are any traffic-related problems on Routes 22 or 43. Twenty-seven percent of the respondents feel there are traffic-related problems.

	Number of Respondents	Percent
No	61	58%
Yes	29	28%
Unsure	9	9%

Comments

31 responses

Question 20 Traffic Problems	Number
Truck traffic is heavy	4
43 & Brodie Mt. Road intersection is dangerous	4
Speed	4
better winter road conditions	3
stop light needed at 43 & Brodie Mt. Road	3
better maintenance of town roads	2
Trucks on 43 & 22 are too loud & too fast	1
several accidents call for better traffic regulation	1
turning lanes needed	1
5 corners	1
Paved cut-through between 22 & 43 (like Provost Road)	1
reduced speed/speed bumps in village	1
Speeders on Whitman Road	1
Whitman road/rt 43	1
town roads are adequately maintained	1
road shoulder should be cleaned & marked for biker safety	1
higher speed limit on rt 43	1
rt 43 should be as wide as it is in the village	1
43 is great	1
speed limit should be 55 on rt 43	1

In general, are there any other important areas or issues that the town should address?

Question 21 Comments: Other Issues	Number
improve or complete Zoning bylaws	13
zoning	4
Embrace Windmills & Alternative energy	2
Town Planning	2
avoiding wind farms	2
Too many multidwelling residences around jiminy peak	1
security	1
better communication about town issues/newsletter	1
Tax assessment - treat all townspeople equally	1
significant recreation like a swimming pool	1
zoning for density limits	1
long-term sustainable environmental protection & recreation	1
There is no Town Fire Dept. anymore	1
Better Cell phone reception	1
Closing the School	1
Issues that preserve the character of the Town	1

Increase Environmental and ecological sensitivity	1
Town leadership	1
town leaders do a good job	1
Avoiding zoning and grant money	1
property values	1
no pre-fab housing	1
parking atvs out of sight of the road	1
Mail service to Shaker Heights	1
Individual Zip code for Hancock	1
slow development around jiminy peak	1
scenic mt. Act	1
controlling large scale development	1
mobile homes on main rd	1

Do you think the Town of Hancock provides adequate services in the following areas? If not, please indicate if you wish to see improved services.

Overall, the responding residents of Hancock considered most of the services that the Town provides to be adequate. The service that received a significant inadequate rating was zoning and code enforcement, where respondents voted forty-five percent inadequate and forty percent adequate.

Adequate

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Fire	90	86%
Trash Disposal	80	76%
Police	49	47%
Road Maintenance	73	70%
Cemetery	73	70%
Education	72	69%
Ambulance	70	67%
Enforcement of		
Environmental Laws	62	59%
Emergency Prep	55	52%
Recreation	55	52%
Zoning or code		
Enforcement	42	40%
Health Services	37	35%
Elder Services	31	30%
Handicap Services	28	27%

Inadequate

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Zoning or code		
Enforcement	47	45%
Police	40	38%
Elder Services	31	30%
Health Services	28	27%
Handicap Services	26	25%
Road Maintenance	22	21%
Recreation	21	20%
Enforcement of		
Environmental Laws	17	16%
Ambulance	14	13%
Emergency Preparedness	14	13%
Education	10	10%
Trash Disposal	10	10%
Fire	5	5%
Cemetery	3	3%

Are you:

Ninety-one percent of the respondents indicated that they were property owners. Five percent indicated they were renters.

Number of Respondents	Percent	
A property owner	96	91%
A renter	5	5%
Other:	2	2%

Do you reside in Hancock:

Seventy-one percent of the respondents live in Hancock full time. Twenty-five percent of Hancock consists of part time residents.

	Number of Respondents	Percent
Full time	75	71%
Part time	26	25%

How long have you resided in Hancock?

The largest percentage of respondents has resided in Hancock for over 26 years.

	Number of Respondents	Percent
26+ years	43	41%
11 – 25 years	30	29%
6 – 10 years	17	16%
2 – 5 years	10	10%
0 – 1 year	2	2%

If you own, how long have you owned property in Hancock?

The largest percentages of property owners have resided in Hancock for over 10 years.

	Number of Respondents	Percent
26+ years	36	34%
11 – 25 years	34	32%
6 – 10 years	18	17%
2 – 5 years	11	10%
0 – 1 year	0	0%

If you own land in Hancock, how much?

The most significant number of respondents (forty percent) own 1.5 to 5 acres of land in Hancock. The second highest percentage (twenty-six percent) is from respondents owning more than 25 acres of land.

	Number of Respondents	Percent
1.5 - 5 acres	42	40%
More than 25 acres	27	26%
Less than 1.5 acres	10	10%
6 – 10 acres	9	9%
11 – 25 acres	8	8%

As a landowner, how do you use your property and indicate how many acres are used for the following:

Twenty three percent of respondents use their land for Forestry.

	Number of Respondents	Percent
Residence	92	88%
Forestry	24	23%
Farming	13	12%
Business	7	7%
Other	13	12%
Acres used for:	Total Acres	
Residence	377	
Farming	591	
Forestry	1732	
Business	938.5	
Other	151.75	

Which of the following best describes your current living situation?

Family with children, senior family, and couple, with no children are the largest respondent groups.

	Number of Respondents	Percent
Family with children	29	27%
Senior family	27	26%
Couple, no children	23	22%
Single adult, living alone	12	11%
Senior living alone	4	4%
Single adult with children	1	1%
Other	1	1%

Notes From the Public Forums and Advisory Committee Meetings

Notes for the First Hancock Town CDP Visioning Meeting

Hancock Town Hall

2/14/02

Items Mentioned and discussed:

Open Spaces:

Local money sources for local control

- State in lieu of taxes funds for town open space are not reliable

How to gain more local Control of Town Open Spaces:

- APR Program to partner local finds with state funds to buy land & control it.
- What qualifies for APR funds?
 - Actively farmed lands
 - Leased land must have good proof of farming being done
 - APR is underfunded and priority-based only most active and only most endangered farms will gain funds.
- Options for landowners to sell to a land trust and not just developers.
Possible Hancock Land Trust.

Importance of maintaining an active agricultural base in town

- For character and qualification for APR funds

How to keep open space that's just open and not farmed?

- Options of conservation restrictions that allow retention of current land useage.

Local Economy and Town Money:

- Maintaining enough developable land to keep an adequate tax base for local services (And not "shorting" the town of necessary funds by allocating too much low-tax open space.)
- Fostering developments that have less of an impact on town services.
 - second homes which bring tax money but not school children
 - development in areas already covered by town services so as not to extend them too far at a greater expense.

Local money sources for local control

- Gaining funds from the 80% of tax base (tourists and foreign landowners) who can't vote.
- Tourism is largest industry in town, bringing in money.
- Town should be more welcoming to their "low impact" tax town revenue, and should look into ways to show full impact upon the town for different types of developments.
- Low Cost Tourist/Resident attractions that access the trails in town.

New Housing Developments:

- Development that doesn't drastically alter the landscape such as the Brodie Mt. Road which has ugly, clear-cut trees and altered mountainside.
- Establishing development practices to be followed so past mistakes aren't repeated.
- The Scenic Mountains Act – How to keep mountains scenic?

Transportation:

- Lack of transportation options, especially for elderly, seen as a large inadequacy on the town survey.
- Need to further define goals in respect to this and other transportation needs.

Advantages to living in Hancock:

Scenic Mountains, Open Spaces, and Access to Nature and Outdoor recreation

Safety

Great Schools

Farms

Peace and quiet.

Access to the town's many natural assets. Trails and trail systems

Notes for the Meeting of the
Hancock Community Development Advisory Committee
July 10, 2002

Attendees:

Judy Raschdorf
Brian Fairbank
Bob Ronnow
Wayne Canedy
Betsy Canedy
John Hammond

Judy Leab
Andre' Rambaud
Marjorie Feathers
Nancy Cook
Kate Duffy

Also In attendance were Tom Matuszko, Assistant Director, BRPC, and Dan McCue, Associate Planner, BRPC.

The Meeting began with an introduction to the CDP program, the role of BRPC, and the role of the Advisory Committee. Marjorie Feathers began with a comment stating her view that the planning tasks written in the scope of services didn't reflect what she thought was expressed by the survey. It was explained that the CDP needed to balance the input from the survey as well as from the public visioning meeting, and must also include data required by the state.

Concern was expressed about tailoring the four planning categories to a small town such as Hancock.

Concern was raised about any emphasis on developing affordable housing, and about what exactly affordable housing is. TM explained that affordability of housing is determined by a measurement of the income of the community, and the degree to which community members would be able to afford to buy a house in town with their current income.

TM expressed that he viewed the main concern coming out of the public visioning meeting was for Open Space Preservation and the Fiscal Costs involved in preservation. Members who attended the meeting concurred that these were important issues.

Concern was expressed by BC as to if there was a formula to determine how much open space was enough. TM explained there were no formulas, but fiscal analyses can be conducted upon various alternatives to determine the result of development, or lack of development, on town taxes.

JL further emphasized concern on how the uniqueness of Hancock would affect such a study.

AR expressed concern that several of the largest landowners in town were not present at the meeting.

Interest was expressed about options for land preservation.

TM explained APR program as well as the definition of a Conservation Restriction.

TM explained that Conservation Restrictions bought by the State are different than State-Owned land and are not vulnerable to land-swaps.

BR further explained that the local Conservation Commission can act as a local co-holder of any conservation restriction to keep local interests represented.

Benefits of a Restriction?

TM explained that conservation restrictions give landowners:

An initial payment to make up for the loss in land value

A lower tax value because of the reduced land value.

Potential Tax Benefits beyond simply lower taxes.

Bob Ronnow expressed concern that the ridgelines were not as unsusceptible to development as may be thought, and as was expressed in the buildout analysis.

Notes from July 10, 2002 (continued)**Accessibility of Open Space Concerns**

BC and BR expressed concern about a lack of public open space for walking and recreation, and that most open space in town was privately owned and restricted.

Transportation:

JR and MF expressed that transportation should not be overlooked. The survey and personal experience showed that many people, especially elderly, depend on others for transport.

BR expressed that there is a need for some market research on elderly, and possible after-school transport within the town.

Meeting Schedules and “TO DO” List

There was an expressed concern to include as much diversity within the meetings as possible, for not everyone, even those long-time residents, didn’t know the issues.

AR repeated his concern over the lack of large landowners on the Committee.

JL remarked that several large landowners were indeed present, but remarked that all participants were from a single part of town.

JR expressed her desire to start dealing with transportation, since it seemed to be the least controversial topic. BF also expressed a desire for progress and obtaining small gains where they are reachable. TM asked the committee to get the BRPC an issue they thought would lead to the least controversy within town, so that it may be discussed and begin progress for the CDP.

There was expressed a Need for information to make good decisions

Examples include:

- Menu of available options for housing, transportation, open space, and economic development – BR – “non-forceful ways to enable conservation.
- Ways to Raise Money
- “New Growth” figures from Andre
- Issues for possible Consensus
- Inventory of Town-owned land.
- Census Trends and demographic figures on population by-age
- Economic and environmental projections five years into the future.
- Write-in answers to the survey.

NEXT MEETING
Weds, August 21st 6:30

Notes for the Community Development Advisory Committee Meeting
August 21, 2002

Attendees:

Jane Roberts
Wayne Canedy
John Hammond
Nettie Hammond
Marjorie Feathers
Brian Fairbank
Nancy Cook
Judy Raschdorf
Andre' Ramboud
Kate Duffy

Also attending were Tom Matuszko and Dan McCue of the BRPC

Decisions from the Meeting

Keeping Planning Information Public

- 1) The public should be kept informed as to the progress of the planning effort
- 2) A website/email list will be advertised around town and in a mailing.
- 3) The mailing will include a place to add your own email to be kept on a list
- 4) In the future, mailing updates will occur

Transportation

- 1) In response to the specific need identified in the town survey, it is the goal of this committee to pursue options for alternative public transportation for town residents.

Open Space

- 1) It is the goal of this committee to learn more about the Scenic Mountains Act, how the act may or may not be applied and adapted to a town's specific needs and desires, and how it may or may not be a good fit for the town of Hancock.
- 2) It is also a goal of this committee to learn more about the Community Preservation Act, to understand the specific measures of the Act, and to determine if there are specific needs in town that may be addressed by the provisions of the Act.

Housing

- 1) It is the goal of this committee to pursue positive steps towards keeping housing affordable to town residents in order to protect the character of the Town; especially from the threat of comprehensive permits by outside developers.
- 2) It is the goal of this committee to identify options that make housing affordable to our children and young families in town, such as spreading the word about state financing and mortgage assistance programs.

Actions to Pursue for Next Meeting

Transportation

BRPC will have transportation planners compile viable options for alternative transportation for Hancock including, but not limited to the following ideas expressed:

- A network of local volunteer elder-services drivers to contact for rides.
- Determine Costs involved in various options.
- Possible outside funding for some transportation / community services
- Gauge possible town support for funding some type of transportation.

(continued)

August 21, 2002(continued)**Open Space**Scenic Mts. Act Information Gathering

- BRPC will compile information on the Scenic MTS act and ways this ordinance may be approached, passed, and enacted by a town such as Hancock.
- BRPC will find ordinances from Berkshire Towns that have recently enacted the Scenic Mts. Act Provisions in their town.
- BRPC will invite the ConsCom to the next meeting dealing with open space, and will work with the ConsCom on the environmental section of the open space plan.

Community Preservation Act

- BRPC will compile information regarding the specifics of utilizing the CPA.
- BRPC will look into the specifics behind receiving matching funds for its CPA money.
- Town will try to identify specific targets and specific reasons for the potential use of a CPA.

Housing

- BRPC will compile information regarding ch40B, including updates of any pending legislation or administration related to comprehensive permits.
- BRPC will compile information related to Housing Certification for Hancock.
- Town and BRPC will organize a way to inform the public about housing assistance programs.

Economic Development

- Town will review the fiscal information presented at the meeting
- BRPC will build an Economic Profile for the Town.

Notes from the Hancock CDP Advisory Committee Meeting
Wednesday October 16, 2002

In attendance were:

Steven Johnson
Judy Leab
Judy Raschdorf
Andre Rambaud
Wayne Canedy
Tom Matuszko (BRPC)
Dan McCue (BRPC)

Main Issues/Resolutions

- The Internet Discussion Board will be advertised at Hancock Library, School, Post Office, Town Hall, & Town Dump.
- The Draft Plan Workbooks were handed out to the committee; one copy was left at the Town Hall for Public viewing.
- Next meeting is on open space. 46% of survey responses put open space as top priority issue. Committee members will try to get further input about the town's feelings of preserving open space.
- Incentives were discussed for reducing burden on large landowners to keep open space, i.e. taxing open space lower than developed land.
- Fiscal impacts of development types were shown, along with the town's economic profile.

Approval of Notes for Meeting on 08/22/02

Notes were approved

Community "e-Group" Update

The e-Group is set up on www.berkshireplanning.org. Posters will be placed around town at various locations.

Review Preliminary CDP Goals & Objectives

The preliminary goals and objectives were reviewed. One possible economic goal was discussed: Encouragement of businesses related to the town's cultural and natural resource tourist attractions.

Housing Meeting Follow-Up

The following handouts were distributed that explain what is meant by the term 'affordable' housing, what are Ch. 40B Comprehensive Permits, and what is EO 418 Housing Certification.

Economic Development Item & Introduction to Fiscal Analysis

Town employment figures and other socio-economic data were presented, along with a summary of the fiscal expenses incurred by different types of development in town. Some discussion was around the following:

- It was seen that due to low spending in other areas, the town's budget is over 70% dedicated to educational spending.
- Condominiums, with property taxes but no educational expenses, were seen as very good for the town's finances. However, condo development may have negative cultural impacts and impacts upon the town's rural character.
- Discussed were ways to allow condo development, but limited to certain parts of town without infringing on the rights of others.

Presentation of GIS Maps

The Base GIS Maps were presented. These maps present physical aspects of town. Committee members were asked to review the maps and report any errors in the data. Data was gained from MassGIS, a statewide mapping information database.

Other Business and next meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for ~~Wednesday, December 11th @ 6:30 pm~~ **Wednesday, January 22, 2003 @ 6:30pm** at the Hancock Town Hall.

Hand Outs:

Notes for 8/22/02 Meeting; Draft Economic Development Profile; GIS Base MAPS; CDP Plan Workbooks

Notes for the Advisory Committee Meeting of Wednesday January 22, 2002

Summary Results of the Meeting

- ☐ In the coming months before Hancock's annual town meeting, The CDP Committee will work with the Conservation Commission to assist in the Commission's efforts to develop effective Scenic Mountains Act Regulations to direct "common sense" standards for development on the Town's mountain ridges.
- ☐ Three meetings will address the Scenic Mts. Act regulations development before the town meeting: 1) a CDP meeting (FEB), 2) a joint meeting between CDP committee and Conservation Commission(MARCH), and 3) a public hearing/forum to present the regulations to the town and get feedback(APRIL).
- ☐ The CDP committee will meet on the first Wednesday of each month, starting February 5 at 6:30 in the town hall, in order to advance the Plan.

Meeting Notes

Notes for Meeting on 10/16/02 were accepted. The notes are on the BRPC website and the notes for the current meeting will be placed on the website.

One member of the committee voiced concern that the advisory committee has received a lot of information during the community development plan process, but has not yet made any decisions on plans or strategies in the plan. In response, it was stated that review of a wealth of information is necessary before making informed decisions, and that the future process will involve the advisory committee's decisions on recommended actions and strategies for the town to address problems uncovered in the information presented to the committee.

Review Open Space Preservation Goals & Objectives

The town has identified 2 preliminary main goals for the open space segment of the CDP

- (1) Work on a future, more in-depth formal Open Space and Recreation Plan for Hancock.
- (2) Education of town residents on how it can help open space conservation in town.

The following community open space goals have also been outlined by the CDP Committee

- (1) Improved access to the hiking trails along the town's protected areas, mountain ridges, forests, and open spaces that available for hiking and outdoor recreation.
- (2) Protection of the mountains from unnecessarily destructive or highly visible unsightly development.

Defining and mapping of Hancock's highly valued natural resources for potential conservation. The town survey announced that 78% of respondents would support town effort to protect farms, forests and other natural/scenic resources, and that 83% of the respondents felt scenery and natural resources are important for business in the community

The Advisory Committee was called upon to more clearly define the "natural/scenic resources", that the town expressed to be highly valued and in support of protecting:

The Committee listed the following items as valued town resources:

- ☐ Water Resources
- ☐ Areas Open for Recreational Use (Hiking/Biking/Cross Country Ski Trails)
- ☐ Access to Areas Open for Recreational Use / State Lands
- ☐ Mountains
 - o As areas where the streams generate and recharge
 - o As areas of natural beauty and scenic beauty
- ☐ Natural Scenery/ Undeveloped land seen every day driving to and from work.
- ☐ Open Fields
- ☐ Historical Cemeteries
- ☐ Brooks/Streams (i.e. Kinderhook)
- ☐ Aquifers/ Water Recharge areas
- ☐ Working Landscapes
 - o Forests
 - o Open Fields

- o Areas Compatible for walks, hikes or low impact recreational uses.

The BRPC started to present maps of these resources to begin preparation of a “Valued Resources Map” to include in the Town of Hancock’s Community Development Plan.

The map presenting mountains (all lands above 1500’ as well as all lands above 1700’) began discussion on the Conservation Commission’s efforts to draft Scenic Mountains Act regulations for the next town meeting.

Discussion on Improved Access to Hiking Trails

Currently hiking trails are informally accessed by residents

Private land is usually accessible for hikers and walkers with the permission of the owner, yet some residents aren’t aware and look for more formal areas to access state-owned recreation land.

There is interest in developing a map of trails and access routes to the trails for Hancock residents which could be available from the Conservation Commission.

Motorized recreation is a different story.

The state has recently bought/protected lands accessible from route 43, yet has been unresponsive in developing new trailheads or rerouting trails away from private land.

There is interest in developing formal trail access, yet formal trail access with parking/signage, but this brings increased use and increased maintenance issues.

There may be an opportunity for a volunteer corps of trail stewards who may also double as proponents and coordinators of increased access to nature areas in Hancock.

Discussion on Scenic Mountains Act & Regulations

The Conservation Commission is currently working on a draft of regulations for scenic mountains act in Hancock, and representatives wished to gain the feedback of the committee

- ☐ Members of the CDP committee included proponents and opponents.
- ☐ It was commented that the Scenic Mountains Act does not have to be restrictive, because high elevation areas already have restricted access by nature.
- ☐ It was suggested that the scenic mountains act regulations be “common sense” regulations that may be drafted to allow more than is actually feasible. Such regulations would allow landowners the ability to build on their high-elevation property, but would protect the town from ridiculous, unnecessary, overly destructive development in highly visible areas.
- ☐ Members agreed that any regulations should be short, simple, and straightforward
- ☐ One option was presented to the committee that included 6 points:

Roads

- o Roads shouldn’t be any steeper than 10 % grade (avoids erosion, damaging steep slopes)
- o Roads should be no wider than 60 feet. (to avoid large scarring of mountain)
- o Roads should be forced to bend every X feet (to avoid long scars in the mountain)

Development

- o Building footprints should be as small as possible. (minimize visibility)
- o Footprint variances should be available in less-visible areas.

Utilities

- o All utilities should be underground. (minimize visibility)

Next CDP Meeting Feb 5, 6:30 Hancock Town Hall

Discussion on conservation issues and the scenic mountains act will continue at the next meeting, and meetings are schedule for the first Wednesday of each month until the plan is complete.

**Notes from the Community Development Plan Advisory Committee Meeting
Wednesday, March 5, 2003 at 6:30 PM – Hancock Town Hall**

The main topics of this meeting were the Scenic Mountains Act Draft Regulations and a continued discussion about open space and resource protection in Hancock.

Main Results from the Discussion

Open Space preservation has been identified as the primary concern for the Community Development Plan Advisory Committee. The remainder of the Advisory Committee's efforts for the Community Development Plan will focus on advancing the following two items:

1. The Committee recommends a strategy of encouraging voluntary land conservation to advance scenic resource protection in the Town.
 - a. The Committee will recommend a Town-wide effort to educate landowners on options for land conservation that are currently available to them.
 - b. The educational effort will be strengthened by a plan to secure the services of a local land trust as a resource available to landowners seeking guidance on how they may preserve their land.
 - c. The Committee will recommend some type of voluntary donation fund for the Town in order to obtain the dedicated services of the land trust.
2. With the help of the BRPC, the committee will hash out language on the Scenic Mountains Act Regulations and provide justifications for recommendations on appropriate boundaries for the land to be covered by the proposed Scenic Mountains Act regulations.

Many landowners in Hancock intend to protect their land, and have been doing so for years. However, it was commented that 90% of large landowners are not aware of the conservation options available to them that may reduce the burden they may be experiencing by not developing their land. Furthermore, those willing to attempt some options were forced to do a great deal of work to utilize the available programs through state agencies. A local resource to make options known and follow-up to help interested landowners advance the conservation option that is right for them was seen to be potentially a large benefit to the Town. Voluntary conservation in a manner that fits the needs of the individual landowner was seen as the recommended strategy.

Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation was determined to be a local resource with a common goal of preserving the character of the community. Leslie Reed Evans of the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation will be invited to the next meeting to discuss the potential for the WRLF's involvement in Land Preservation efforts in Hancock; how the staff and resources of the WRLF could be secured to assist the Town's landowners; whether or not an informational forum could be arranged for the town, and what type of commitment would be required by the Town to start this process.

It was commented that conservation is not happening now to a large extent because it is a complicated process that requires the time and concentration of a dedicated, full-time staff person such as those at a land trust or conservation organization. The Town Conservation Commission is a voluntary board without the time or expertise necessary. The Rural Lands Foundation would be someone close by to call, providing a newsletter with up to date information on conservation options and methods.

The town has the additional option of creating a different, lower tax rate for open space. However, this already occurs somewhat for owners of large parcels of open space, which are assessed at a lower rate after certain acreage. There are many different options for land conservation that already exist, and it may be unnecessary, overly difficult and costly to try to invent and administer an option just for Hancock given the Town's resources.

The Scenic Mountains Act Requires that the Town vote to direct the Conservation Commission to draft regulations to be presented upon at the town hearing, the Committee would like to know if the Town may require a 2/3rd vote for approval and if the town may give approval with the condition that the town approve the final regulations before they are submitted to the DEM.

Next Meeting – April 9, 2003 @ town hall, 6:30 pm

**Community Development Plan Advisory Committee Meeting Notes
Wednesday, April 9, 2003***Approval of Notes for Meeting on 3/05/03*

Notes for the last meeting were given informal approval.

**Discussion on the conservation and resource protection strategy for Hancock
with Leslie Reed-Evans of the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation**

Ms. Reed-Evans discussed the role of the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation with the group and answered the questions of the committee.

In summary, the Williamstown rural lands foundation has a mission to serve Williamstown and its environs, and Hancock is included within this mission.

With the approval of the Foundation's Board, the WRLF would be willing to dedicate services to the town of Hancock. This approval would be based on an expressed commitment by the Town to receive help from the Foundation. Commitment has already been expressed through her invitation to the current meeting. The number of members in Hancock is seen as a positive sign of support.

The Foundation would be willing to send a mailing to the Town residents to encourage their membership, which is \$25 a year. Memberships would fund quarterly informational newsletter mailings, which would be sent to all residents. Voluntary Conservation efforts are long-term efforts based on providing information to the entire public until the time is right for them to pursue conservation of their land. Therefore, newsletters are suggested to be sent to the entire town, and not just members. It is suggested that the initial letter is sent with the attached approval of Town Officials so that it is clear that it is a Town-based and Town-supported effort and not an unsolicited Williamstown-based effort.

It is suggested that residents of Hancock volunteer to serve on the foundation's board of directors.

Work done by the Foundation is not biased towards any municipality, and Hancock projects would be given equal weight against Williamstown projects. Since the Foundation does have limited staff, projects are usually weighed by their promise for success in order to maximize the productivity of their resources.

Hancock members could donate to the general conservation fund, or could give to a Hancock-Only fund to service projects in Hancock.

Ms. Reed-Evans will meet with the Board of the WRLF and ask for their permission to work in Hancock and to develop a member base to support that work. The results will be reported at the next CDP meeting in order to plan the next steps.

Inventory of Protected Lands in Hancock

The inventory of protected lands in Hancock is progressing, and will be finalized and presented at the next meeting.

Update on Scenic Mountains Act Draft

To add to the previous discussion on recommended development guidelines for the Scenic Mountains Act, Engineering guidelines and Documented Best Practices were presented to the committee for discussion at the next meeting.

Next Meeting – Date and agenda

The next Meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, May 7 at 7 pm.

Note the later time due to the season.

**Minutes from the Hancock Advisory Committee Meeting
of Wednesday May 7, 2003**

Attendees of the Meeting:

Andrea Rambaud
Bob Ronnow
Bryan Fairbank
Judy Leab

Judy Raschdorf
Marjorie Feathers
Steven Johnson
Wayne Canedy

Also attending were Tom Matuszko and Dan McCue of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.

Actions Resulting From the Meeting

- A public meeting will be held on June 18th at 7pm to review the results of the plan and begin the WRLF initiative. Future informational meetings may be held if necessary as follow-ups to that meeting. Solicitation will follow the education effort.
- BRPC will draft a meeting announcement to be mailed to the Town, which will be given to Committee for review.
- BRPC will revise the Action Plan to include the following items:
 - Timelines and benchmarks to determine success of the plan
 - Success for the solicitation would be based on response, 20% participation would be very good.
 - Success for the voluntary land preservation would be based on participation by landowners after 5 years.
 - Placement of three Hancock residents to serve on the Board of the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation
 - Working with the Town and Selectboard to put conservation easements on large parcels of Town-owned land
 - Use of a single Donation Fund, already established at WRLF, dedicated to Land Preservation in Hancock.
 - Pledge by Conservation Commission to revisit of the Scenic Mountains Act in five years if the voluntary land preservation effort is not successful
 - Goals for the Plan will be tightened up and clarified based on input received.
- The Scenic Mountains Act will not be a recommended initiative at the current time, however, the compiled results of the research and discussion will be included in the CDP as reference, and to revisit if the voluntary land preservation initiative is not successful.
- The CDP Committee will request WRLF draft a solicitation letter to Hancock residents, and will review the draft, which will be sent as a follow up to the town forum on open space on June 18.
- The CDP Committee will meet on a less frequent basis (1-4 times per year) in the future to oversee that progress is made in implementing the CDP and “keep the plan alive” BRPC will attend as well.

Approval of Notes for Meeting on 4/9/03

Notes were approved with request to have attendees of the meeting listed.

Notes from the Community Development Plan
Public Forum

June 18, 2003
Hancock Central School

Major Results

- The informal vote showed a large majority of participants agreed with the goals and actions recommended in the Community Development Plan.
- A Pulse-Check of the Progress of the Land Preservation Efforts is Important, and should be publicized in the Hancock annual report.

Meeting Notes

Introduction

- Several CDP Committee Members were introduced
- Mr. Matuszko offered a brief summary of the Community Development Plan Initiative and the planning process that occurred in Hancock.

Summary of Work and Major Findings

Mr. Matuszko gave a quick run-through of the Hancock CDP Open Space Goals. Committee members lead discussion on the Committee's findings and the recommended actions for each goal. The following discussion ensued:

Goal 1: Protection of Valued Resources (Discussion led by Marjorie Feathers)

Ms. Feathers gave an overview of the general actions and recommendations for preserving the Town's valued landscapes.

Discussion:

Why did the committee recommend pursuing voluntary land preservation?

- The committee felt that mandatory regulation was intrusive to the rights of large landowners, and imposing any additional regulation was not viewed to be popular or politically acceptable in town.
- Voluntary efforts were also seen as a more effective way to conserve valued lands, especially when landowners in Hancock have informally been conserving lands voluntarily for years. It is time to offer voluntary assistance and not mandatory additional regulations to these preservation efforts.

Why wait five years for results before revisiting the Scenic Mountains Act?

Responses:

- Leslie Reed-Evans, of the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation described that voluntary preservation of private lands is a time consuming process, and even immediate results would take 3 to five years.

A pulse-check on local land preservation is important, how are results to be measured?

- Results could be measured in a number of ways, acres protected, participants included. A detailed method could be worked out in future community development committee meetings.
- Progress on Land preservation efforts could be included in the Annual Report so that the town is aware. However, progress takes time and momentum, and could be up to five years before major advances occur.

I've seen conservation lands that are overgrown and not maintained: How can conservation lands be maintained when they are restricted?

- Voluntary land conservation allows landowners to decide how their land is to remain.
- Open space can be defined in many ways, such as farms, fields or forests. An overgrown lot such as the one mentioned may have a landowner who intends for the land to be conserved as forest, and therefore it becomes overgrown in the process of reforestation. It is the decision of the landowner.

Goal 2: Education (Judy Leab w/ Leslie Reed-Evans)

- Judy Leab described the committee's recommendation that education of landowners is crucial to advancing voluntary conservation efforts.
- It was emphasized that the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation was invited to speak to residents of Hancock, and they were requested to invite fellow Hancock residents to join the Foundation and benefit from their expertise.

There was no additional discussion on this topic

Goal 3: Advancing Voluntary Efforts (Bob Ronnow w/Leslie Reed-Evans)

- Mr. Ronnow briefly described the role of a land trust and the technical assistance and expertise that they can offer to Hancock residents.
- It was also announced that Hancock residents may join the Williamstown rural lands foundation and their annual membership dues of \$25 may be put directly to land preservation efforts in Hancock.

Discussion:

How can we join the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation?

- WRLF will be sending a solicitation letter to all residents of Hancock sometime in the late summer or early fall.
- Residents can also visit the Foundation's website at <http://www.wrlf.org>

The recommendations call for placing a conservation restriction on Town owned land: Who would set the restrictions on that land?

- Since normally the owner decides how conservation lands are to remain, and the owner of Town-owned land is the Town, then there would be a Town decision process to develop the details, which would most likely be led by the Conservation Commission.

Goal 4: Access to Trails (Bob)

Mr. Ronnow described the committee's recommendation on increasing access to the town's wealth of recreational lands. He described the concerns of the committee that increasing availability of access may increase need for maintenance of the trails.

Discussion:

- To publicize trails for local residents, it may be appropriate to post a trail map in the next annual report and at town hall.
- The 90 acres of land surrounding the Town Hall would be a prime location for hiking trails.
- WRLF does work as trail stewards, and improving trail systems for all types of residents of all abilities.

Goal 5: Open Space Plan (Steve)

Mr. Johnson described the goal of open space planning and emphasized the survey responses, which gave overwhelming Town support for the preservation of farms, forests, and natural resources. It was also described that the entire town has gained benefit from the preservation efforts of a few large landowners who have been stewards of much of the town's mountains, fields, and forests, and that the actions recommended in the community development plan enable the entire town to take part in conservation.

Determination of overall approval of goals and actions.

Mr. Matuszko asked for a show of hands to determine if the attendees agreed with or disagreed with the recommendations of the Community Development Plan. The response was overwhelmingly positive.

Volunteers for future work in implementing the plan were solicited.

It was announced that additional information about the Plan would be mailed to residents, and the complete plan would be made available at the Town Hall.

Next Meeting

All attendees were invited to attend the next meeting of the CDP Advisory Committee, which was scheduled for

Wednesday, September 3, 2003 at 7pm at the Hancock Town Hall.

References and Informational Resources

Housing

U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

Buildout Analysis, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, 2000

Taking the Initiative: A Guidebook on Creating Affordable Housing Strategies, Citizen's Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA), 2002

Economic Development

Technology Enterprise in Berkshire County: Economic Analysis, University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute, February 2002.

Workforce Development Blueprint, Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, Inc., July 2002.

America's Labor Market Information System Employer Database, 2nd edition. InfoUSAGov., 2001.

Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training. <http://www.detma.org>

Data Book, 2001, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Berkshire County, 2000, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.