

## 2018 Community Development Strategy - Town of Buckland

### The Town

The Town of Buckland is a small, rural community with a population of approximately 1,900. The main employer in Buckland is the Mohawk Trail Regional School. Buckland shares a village business district, known as Shelburne Falls, with the Town of Shelburne.

### Location

Located in northwestern Massachusetts, Buckland is 10 miles west of Greenfield, 42 miles northeast of Pittsfield and 105 miles west northwest of Boston. It is bordered on the north by Charlemont, the south by Ashfield and Conway, the west by Hawley and the east by Shelburne.

### Overview

Volunteers, paid staff, elected officials and appointed members of various committees undertake Buckland's governance, community development, and planning efforts. The Community Development Strategy (CDS) incorporates priorities and needs identified through local community assessment and strategic planning processes. This CDS was reviewed and discussed at public meetings held by the Buckland Board of Selectmen on December 26, 2017 and January 9, 2018 and carried on local Cable Access TV. It was also published on the Town's Website. ([www.town.buckland.ma.us](http://www.town.buckland.ma.us))

### **BUCKLAND'S COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

***Mixed Use Development:*** Goals: *To promote development that conserves land, protects historic resources and integrates uses - pedestrian friendly districts and neighborhoods that mix commercial, civic, cultural, educational, and recreational activities with open space and homes.*

***Housing:*** Goal: *To make preservation of existing housing a priority and expand housing opportunities.*

- Use the creation of the 2016 Buckland Housing Plan to support regional housing priorities and support the reuse and redevelopment of existing buildings for housing.
- Continue to use CDBG program income for rehabilitation loans including; correction of code violations; and septic system repair through the FCRHRA. The balance of rehabilitation loan mortgages outstanding in Buckland as of December 31, 2017 is \$1,154,086.52 and the available balance to loan as of January 1, 2018, is \$37,728.40.

***Recreation, Open Space and Resource Protection:*** Goal: *To rehabilitate existing recreational facilities, to conserve and protect land and the town's rural character and sense of community.*

- PARC Grant of \$32,000 to match \$18,000 in Town funds for a playground at the Recreation Area.
- Raise additional funds to support design and construction of a new pool for the Recreation Area.
- Relocate access road and pool house septic system to protect river front resource area.
- PARC Grant of \$50,000 to match donation to Town of \$50,000 to purchase and preserve the Veterans/Cricket Field recreation area as permanent Town park land.
- Continue to support and run the Mohawk Summer Camp Program -Serving area youth for 6 weeks each year by offering nature, art and sports activities; and employing local youth as Jr. Counselors.

***Economic Development:*** Goals: *To promote businesses that will create and maintain jobs and advance opportunities that are compatible with the Town's environment and historic character.*

- Maintain designation as a Cultural District (the Shelburne Falls District) through the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC). 5 year renewal in 2017.
- Support Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association's job creation activities for the area; coordination of economic development activities; leveraging of financial assistance; supporting the

growth and expansion of local industries and reinvestment in vacant or underutilized spaces in Buckland.

- Support local enterprises using the efforts of the Franklin County Community Development Corporation and other state and federal resources.

***Senior and Social Services:***

- Provide support for identified social service needs using a variety of funding sources; particularly programs that meet the needs of income eligible residents and households, for example, the Self-Sufficiency and the Neighbor-to-Neighbor Program at the Shelburne Falls Senior Center.
- Support Food Services through the West County Emergency Food Pantry (Community Action).
- Continuing membership in the Shelburne Falls Senior Center, congregate meals, computer classes, and various programs. Working with member towns to find funding for Senior Center Planning and new Senior Center priorities. Town voted \$15,000 to support planning for new Senior Center.

***Transportation: Goals: To create well-maintained transportation infrastructure for all users and prioritize projects that encourage local/regional commercial growth.***

- Implement Complete Streets Policy adopted by Town – February 24, 2016 and approved MassDOT 4/16/2016 through development of a Prioritization Plan through grant funds (\$29,009); contract signed with Franklin Regional Council of Governments 10/2017 to identify areas for Complete Street projects.
- Continue Pavement Management Program by reviewing, documenting and updating road conditions annually. Evaluate for eligibility for CDBG, TIP, Small Bridge, Chapter 90, and MassWorks funds.
- Complete Conway, South, Summer Street and Conway Road TIP Project estimated at \$5,000,000. At 25% design. The Town has expended \$229,000 to date on the engineering.
- Local Roads/Operations: To promote smart growth through sustainable and equitable development goals to maintain and reconstruct Town roads listed on the Town's priority list, including William Street, Green Street, North Street and Union Street.
- Improve and renovate new Highway Department site purchased in February 2016. Support Town Highway Garage Committee and Selection and funding of project designer in December 2017.
- Provide sufficient convenient and safe parking areas for Downtown residents, businesses, and tourists. Priorities include upgrade of the Salmon Falls and William Street Parking Lots.

***Energy: Goals: To maximize energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities.***

- Apply for future funding to make the new Highway Facility more energy efficient.
- Green Community since 2011 and have been awarded over \$200,000 in multiple grants to make efficiency improvements to the Buckland Town Hall and Police Station.
- Solarize Mass Grant with the Towns of Ashfield and Plainfield. Awarded 2014, Completed in 2016 with 38 homes in Buckland receiving solar installations.

***Wastewater Treatment: Maintenance to the Wastewater Treatment Facility and infrastructure.***

- Reed bed maintenance – \$25,000 estimated cost.
- Inflow and Infiltration Study - \$25,000 estimated cost.

***Telecommunications: The Town is committed to internet access for all residents and businesses.***

- MBI (Massachusetts Broadband Institute) and Comcast working to bring end mile fiber optic through Buckland to facilitate buildout to 94% minimum coverage.

***Public Health and Safety/Emergency Management: Goals: To enhance public safety through local and regional health initiatives and emergency management.***

- On-going Co-operative Regional Sheltering planning with the Town of Shelburne and the Mohawk Trail Regional High School – Agreement signed 2016.
- Train town officials for use of Blackboard Connect town-wide communication system for timely notifications.
- On-going participation in the regional Franklin County Cooperative Public Health Service, to increase public health protection for residents.
- On-going participation in the regional Franklin County Cooperative Inspection Program (FCCIP).

***Town Management and Operations:*** Goals: To foster an environment in which land, water, transportation and infrastructure projects have clear, predictable, coordinated and timely processes as well as regional/community benefits while considering long-term costs and benefits.

- Certification in the Community Compact for Round two. Best Practices include: Financial Management/Revenue Forecasting and Sewer Infiltration and Inflow.
- Continue participation in regional accounting through Franklin Regional Council of Governments.

### **STRATEGIC ACTION PLANS / PRIORITY PROJECTS**

- **Housing:** Use findings in the 2016 Buckland Housing Plan to improve neighborhoods by assisting in rehabilitation and/or removal of blighted or abandoned properties.
- **Open Space and Resource Protection:** Support the Buckland Recreation Committee in their efforts to pursue funding for new playground and pool, as well as continue support for Summer Recreation Camp, Cricket Field and the Buckland Recreation Area, and other Town open space resources. Relocate access road and pool house septic system to protect river front resource area.
- **Economic Development:** Support GSFABA and review findings of Shelburne Falls Slums and Blight Study to support job creation in the area; coordination of economic development activities; leveraging of financial assistance; supporting the growth and expansion of local industries and reinvestment in vacant or underutilized spaces in Buckland.
- **Senior and Social Services:** Support programs at the Shelburne Falls Senior Center, as well as Emergency Food Services through the West County Emergency Food Pantry (Community Action). Work with member towns to find funding for Senior Center facility planning and priorities.
- **Transportation:** Implement Complete Streets Policies and establish Prioritization Plan in order to improve infrastructure for all users including, pedestrians, bikers and motorists by upgrading sidewalks, road surfaces and drainage on North Street, Green Street, Union Street and William Streets, and downtown Buckland neighborhoods. Improve and renovate new Highway Department site to support public works operations. Upgrade Salmon Falls and William Street Parking Areas to support tourist, commercial and residential uses.
- **Energy:** Continue to apply for and complete Green Community Grants increasing energy efficiency in town buildings and supporting use of renewable sources of energy. Apply for available funds to make the new Highway Facility energy efficient. Educate residents about weatherization, energy conservation and strategies for energy use reduction and lowering carbon emissions.
- **Wastewater Treatment/Water Services:** Continue improvements to water and sewer infrastructure. Complete Inflow and Infiltration Study and plan to implement recommendations.
- **Telecommunications:** Work with Comcast and other providers and neighboring communities to make broadband available to all residents of Buckland.
- **Public Health and Safety/Emergency Management:** Prepare and coordinate assistance to residents and businesses with emergency preparedness planning to aid in mitigation of damage as well as disaster recovery, including restoration of damaged or destroyed public facilities and infrastructure.
- **Town Management and Operations:** Complete Community Compact Initiatives, including updating financial management documents and procedures and implementing revenue forecasting models.