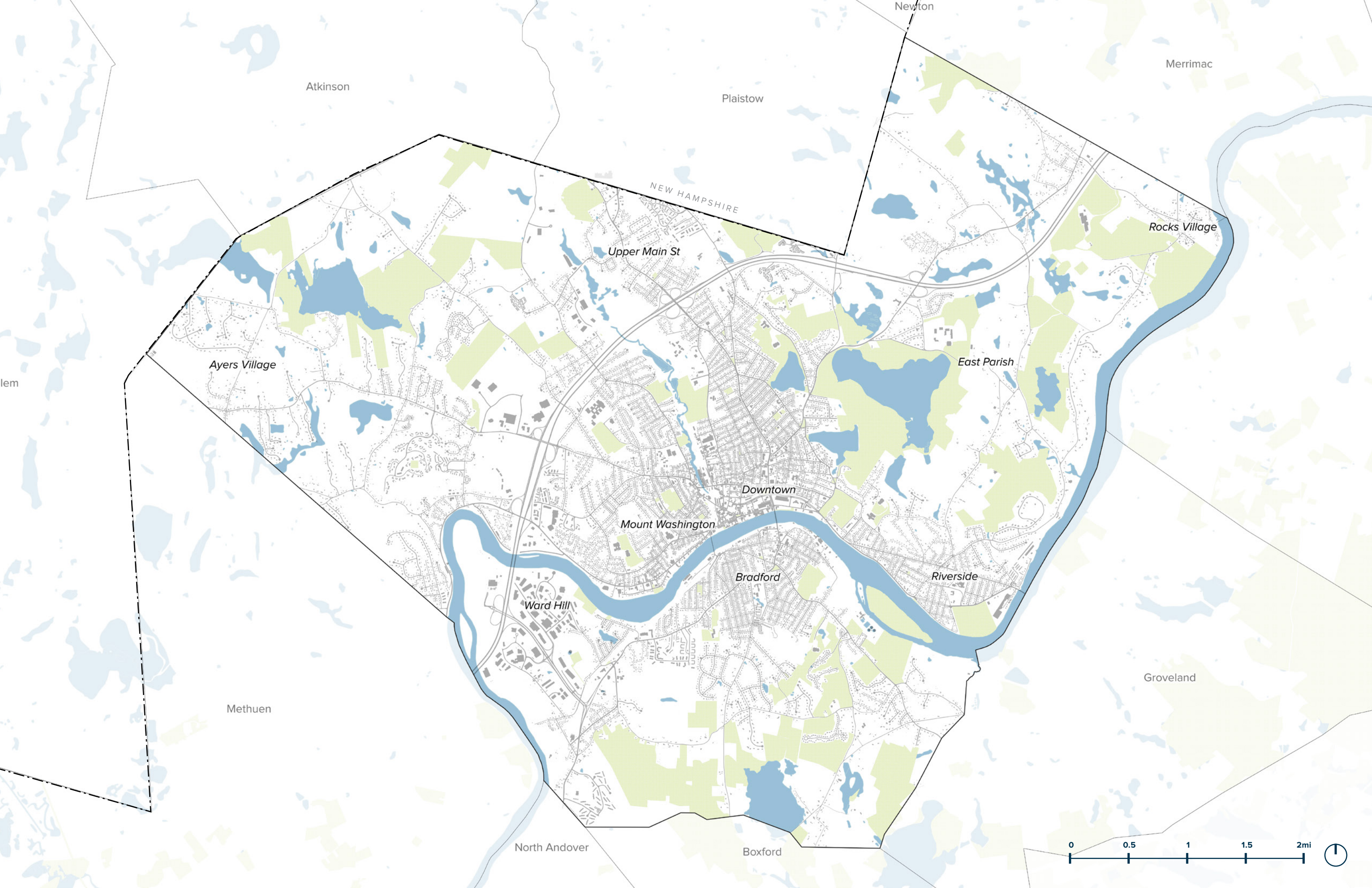




An Interim Report from the
City of Haverhill Master Plan Update
September 2019

VISION
HAVERHILL
2035 →





Introduction

Vision Haverhill 2035 is an initiative to update the City of Haverhill’s master plan. Sponsored by the City of Haverhill and the Mayor’s office, the planning process will craft a vision for the future of Haverhill as we address the issues and seize the opportunities presented to us in this century. The plan will emphasize the needs of our community and embrace our community’s values.

What is a Master Plan?

A master plan, also known as a comprehensive plan, general plan, or land-use plan, is a document that provides a road map for the future of a city. A comprehensive plan includes an analysis of existing conditions, a community vision for the future, and a set of policy recommendations to guide public policy. Most comprehensive plans address the physical, social, and cultural aspects of a community across a range of topics. In Massachusetts, a master plan is defined as a comprehensive plan addresses the following “elements,” or topic areas: Land Use, Housing, Economic Development, Public Facilities and Services, Natural and Cultural Resources, Open Space and Recreation, Transportation, and Implementation.

Why Plan Now?

The City of Haverhill has commissioned extensive studies over the years, and a wide array of additional planning work has been completed or is underway. This includes plans for housing, transportation, open space, and economic development (as outlined on the following pages.) But as local and regional trends are showing a need for robust economic development and revitalization, it is important that Haverhill reexamine the path forward and develop a thoughtful, community-driven plan to achieve these objectives.

The goal of this master plan update is to assist the City in developing a roadmap to achieve these objectives for citywide growth and ensuring a consistent application of the recommendations, policies, and implementation strategies from past plans.

The updated master plan is intended to be a “living” document allowing for periodic review, reconsideration and adjustment; one that recognizes when modification of goals is required to reflect changing conditions. It will consider and integrate all aspects of public and private land use, economic development, city services and infrastructure, and community development.

Summary of Past Plans

Housing Production Plan (2018)

In 2018, the City of Haverhill adopted a housing production plan for 2018–2021. The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission prepared the plan as part of a regional effort. The primary goal set out in the plan is to maintain and grow Haverhill’s housing stock at a pace consistent with projected population growth and to grow the deed-restricted affordable housing stock so that affordable housing is at or above 10% of the total housing in the City. (Haverhill just barely meets the minimum requirement of 10% affordable housing under MGL 40B. The plan states concern that Haverhill may drop below the 10% threshold after the 2020 US Census results are released.) Though not explicitly stated as goals, the plan also identifies housing needs that emerge from the analysis, including a rapidly growing senior citizen population and decreasing affordability of unrestricted (market rate) units.

The housing production plan gives 26 strategies for addressing these needs, broadly grouped under “Planning and Policies,” “Production,” and “Preservation.” Strategies included both broad mandates and specific measures. Broad strategies include encouraging market rate housing units, units affordable to low- and moderate-income households, and accessible units. Specific strategies included measures such as establishing Host Community Agreements, studying the conversion of municipal buildings into affordable housing, converting large single-family homes into small multifamily buildings, and offering supportive services for targeted demographics. Because this plan was adopted less than a year ago, implementation of the earliest actions is still

Lower Acre Revitalization Strategy (2009)

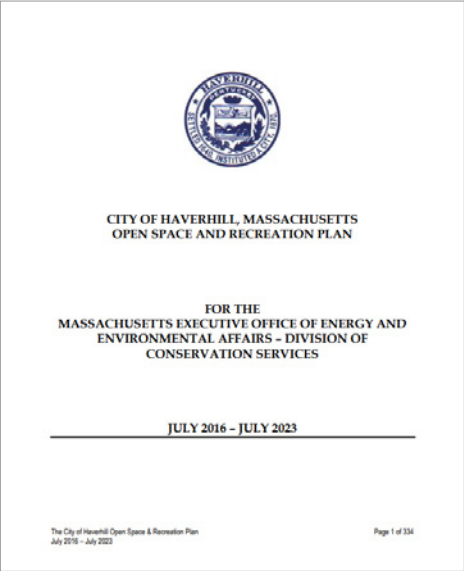
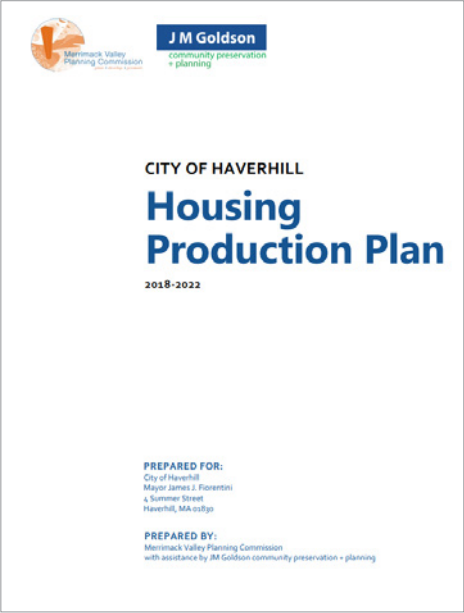
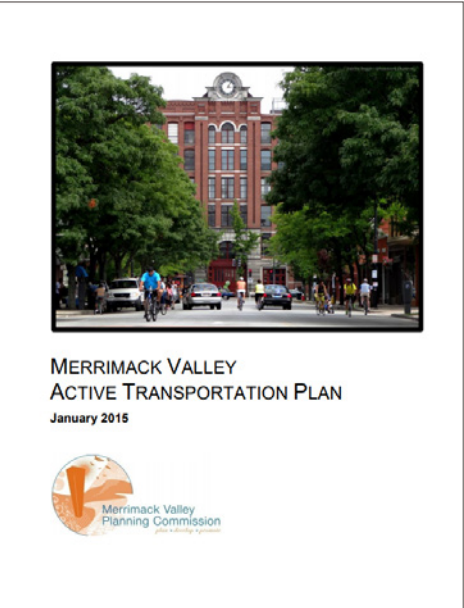
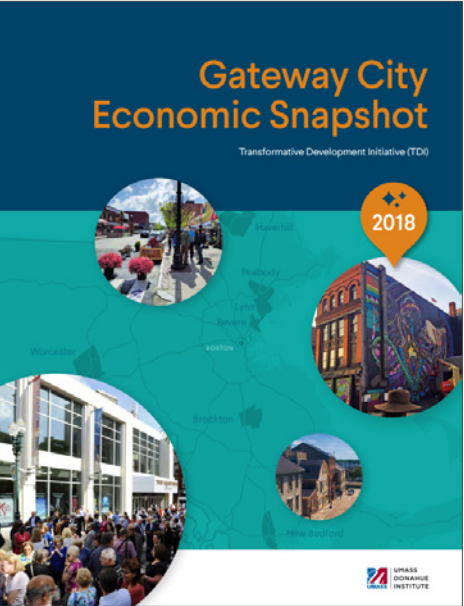
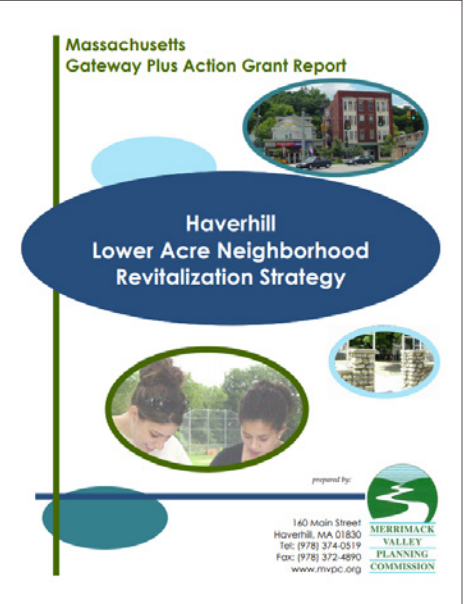
In 2009, the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission prepared this report with funding from the Gateway Plus Action Grant program. The plan made detailed recommendations across several topics, including public transportation, housing, parks & recreation, crime & safety, streets & sidewalk, and career development. The plan’s biggest recommendations were for Lower Acre residents to form a neighborhood organization, for the City to create a “one stop” informational resource for residents, increase federal and state funding, concentrate the City’s revitalization on targeted areas within Lower Acre (similar to its focused efforts to improve Downtown), and revitalize the Winter Street corridor.

Gateway City* Economic Snapshot (2018)

MassDevelopment published this study, which included analysis of Gateway City economies in general, as well as targeted analyses of Transformative Development Initiative districts, such as the Merrimack Street TDI district in Haverhill. The study noted the large amount of investment in the district from 2014–2016 (\$51.5 million in public funds and \$22.5 million in private funds). Nearly half of all built area in the TDI district is devoted to office space, and rents are low compared to those in Haverhill overall for both retail and residential uses. Commercial vacancies in the district are high.

Merrimack Valley Active Transportation Plan (2015)

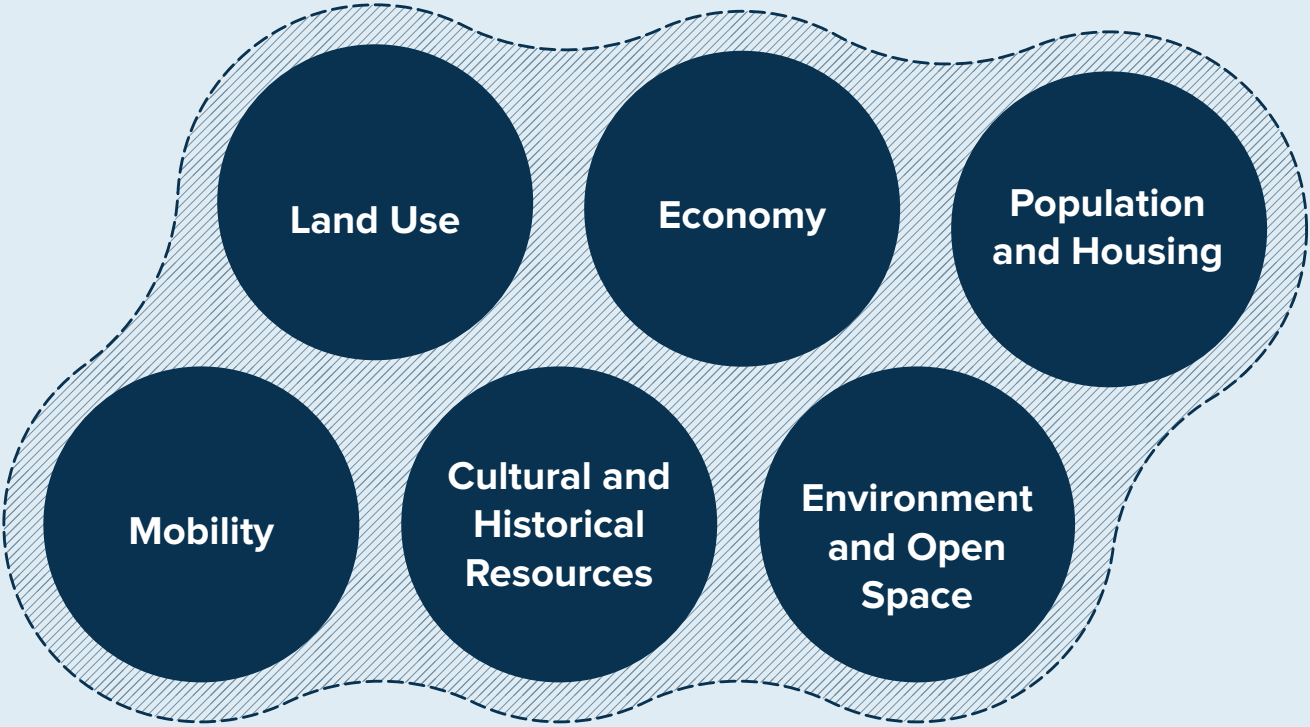
The MVPC published this plan in 2015, laying out a regional approach to developing an Active Transportation Network in the Merrimack Valley. The report notes the development of the Riverwalk and Bradford Rail Trail and bike lanes on Water Street. The report also identifies pedestrian and bicycle safety concerns of the time, including Merrimack Street, Winter Street, Lafayette Square, and Washington Street. It also highlights the city’s wider streets, developed to accommodate trolleys, and gives examples of how those rights-of-way could be allocated to support active transportation. Active transportation priorities identified during the plan’s engagement process include an on-road bicycle network, sidewalks around Ward Hill, the Riverwalk and rail trails, bicycle parking downtown, safety concerns, and bike/ped improvements on Route 110.



* Massachusetts Gateway Cities are midsize urban centers that anchor regional economies around the state, often facing stubborn social and economic challenges while retaining many assets with unrealized potential.

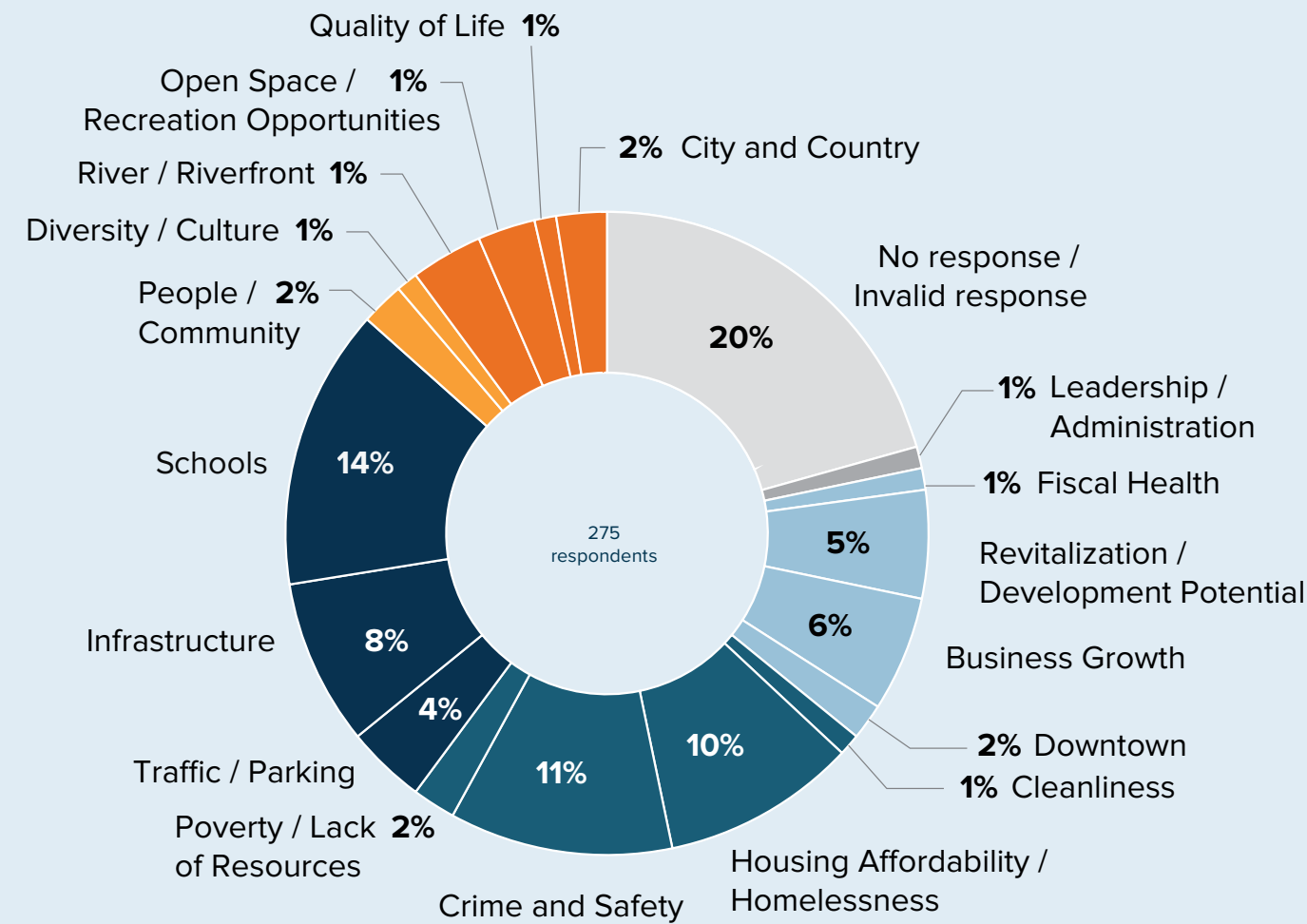
What is included in a Master Plan Update?

A master plan, also known as a comprehensive plan, or general plan is a document that provides a road map for the city’s growth with an emphasis on it’s land use and physical development. It includes an analysis of existing conditions, a community vision for the future, and a set of recommendations to guide public policy, including land use, infrastructure investment, and economic development. Most master plans address the physical, social, and cultural aspects of a community across a range of topics. The Haverhill master plan update will focus on the areas below.

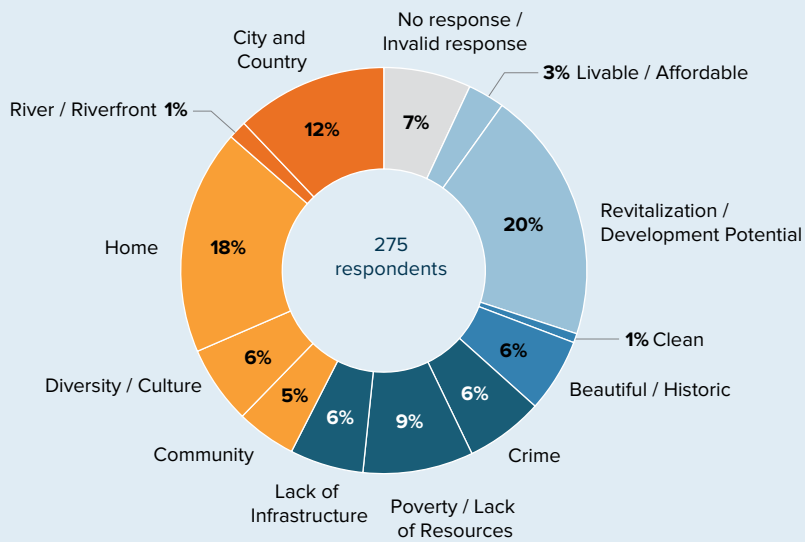


What We Heard So Far

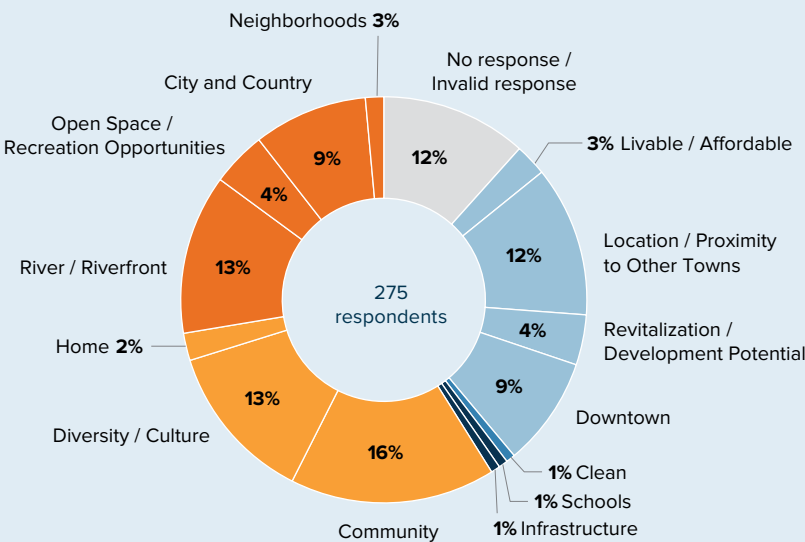
What do you hope this plan will address?



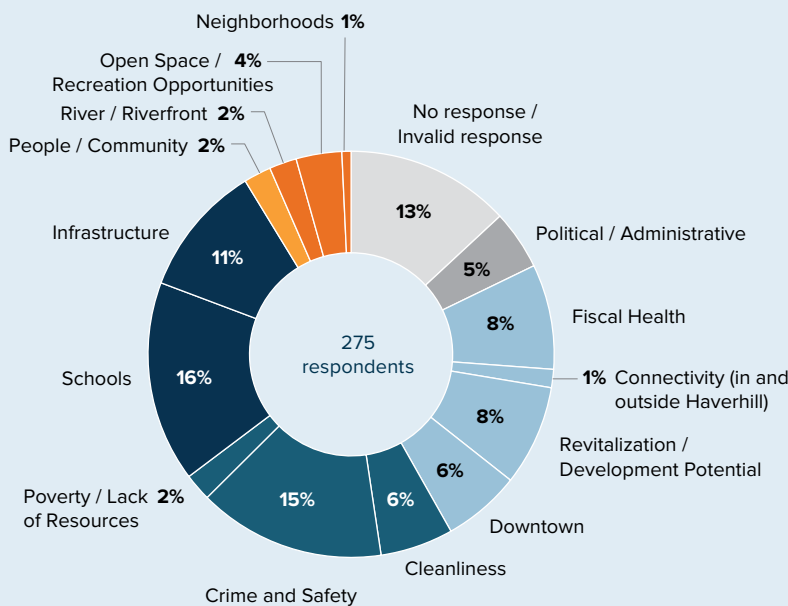
When you think of Haverhill, what words or phrases come to mind?



What do you love about Haverhill?

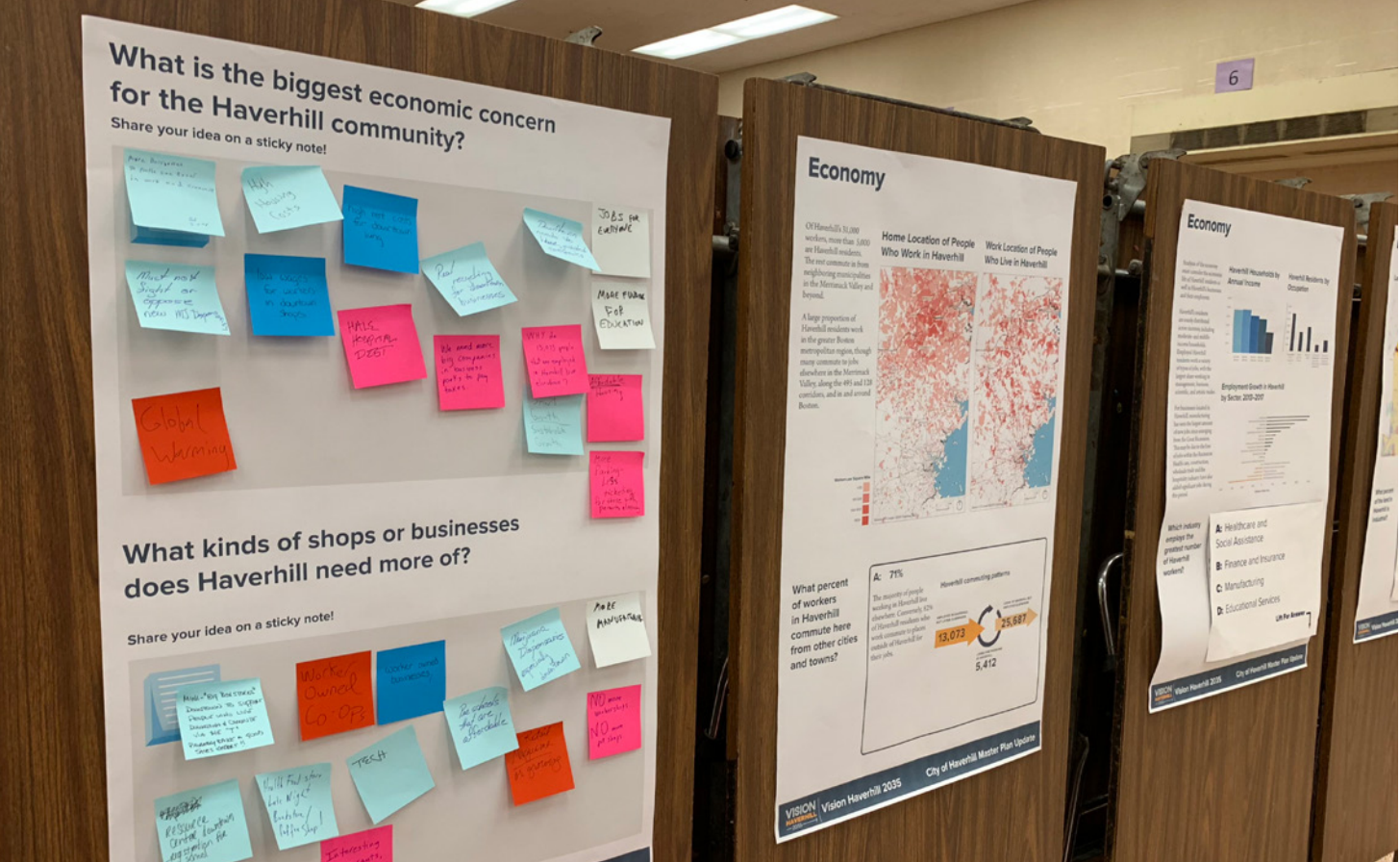
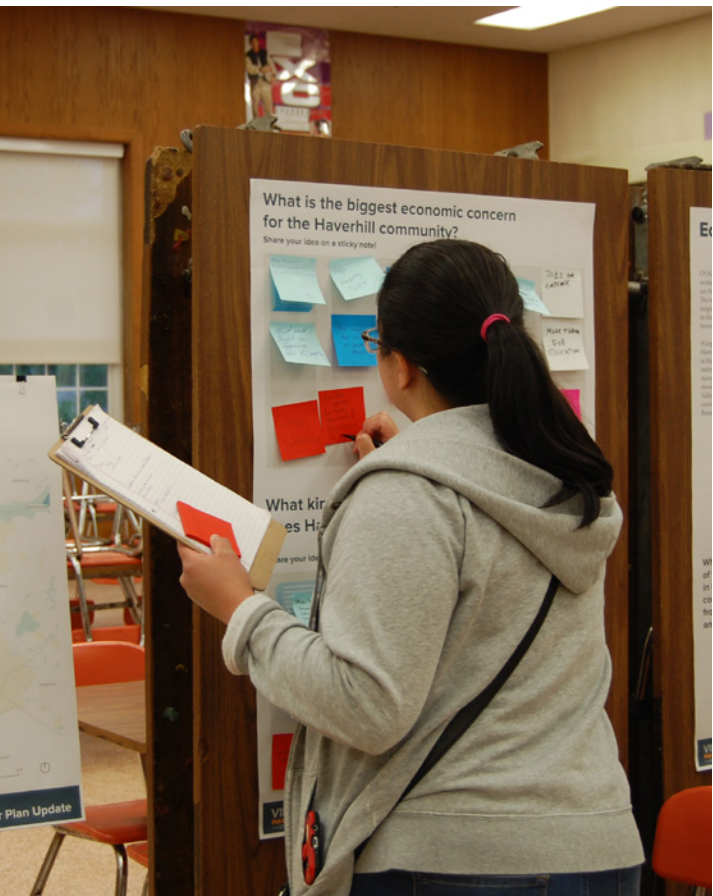


What would you change about Haverhill?



Public Meeting

Vision and Goals, May 29, 2019

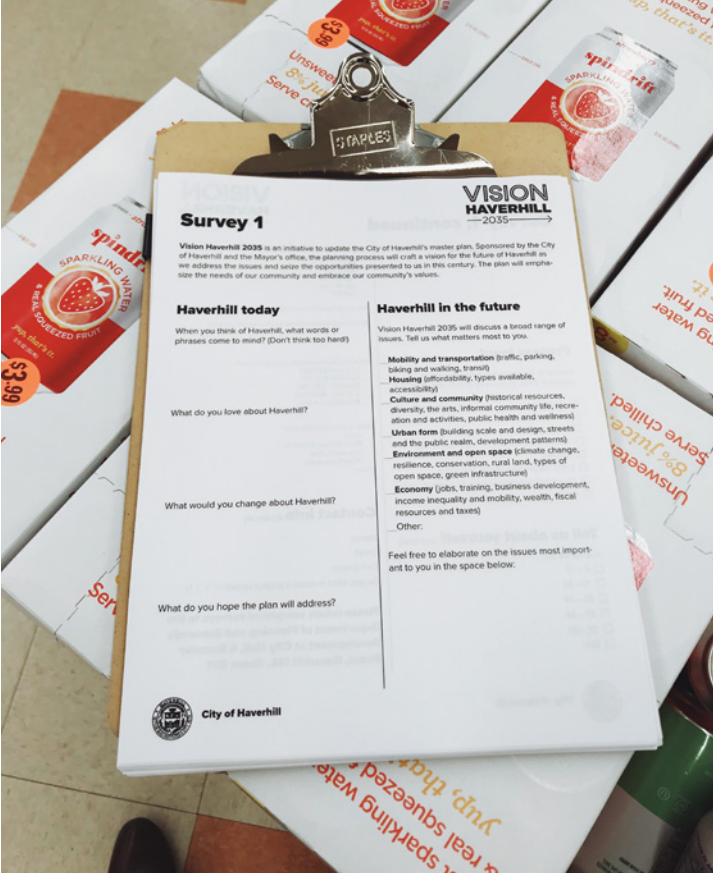




Haverhill Farmer's Market, Aug 17, 2019 (above and below)



Team Haverhill, Aug 12, 2019



Market Basket Community Survey, Jun 21, 2019



National Night Out, Aug 6, 2019 (above and below)



Outreach Events

We want to hear from you!

We anticipate this conversation and public engagement process will unfold over the rest of 2019. There will be a number of opportunities for feedback from you, the community. So join the conversation.

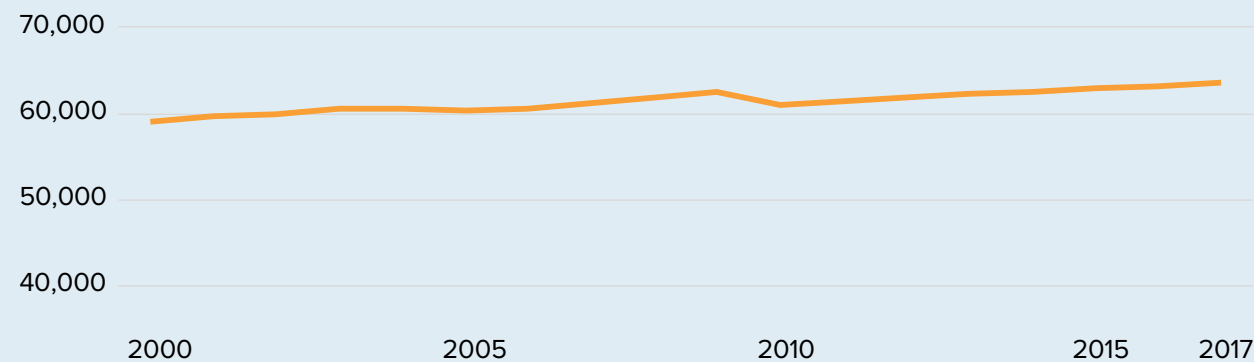
- 1. Sign up on the website **visionhaverhill2035.org** to receive project updates
- 2. On social media, follow **@CityOfHaverhillMayorsOffice**
- 3. Look for opportunities for engagement at **summer outreach events** and **upcoming public workshops**.



Existing Conditions

Population and Housing

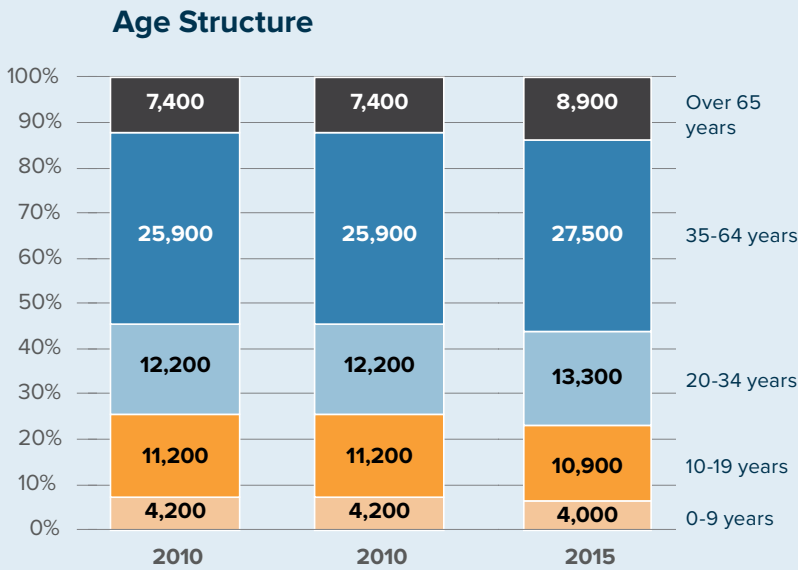
Haverhill has grown by approximately 7.1% since 2000, averaging approximately 0.4% growth per year. The population growth in this period represents approximately 4,500 new Haverhill residents, including new births and people moving to the city.



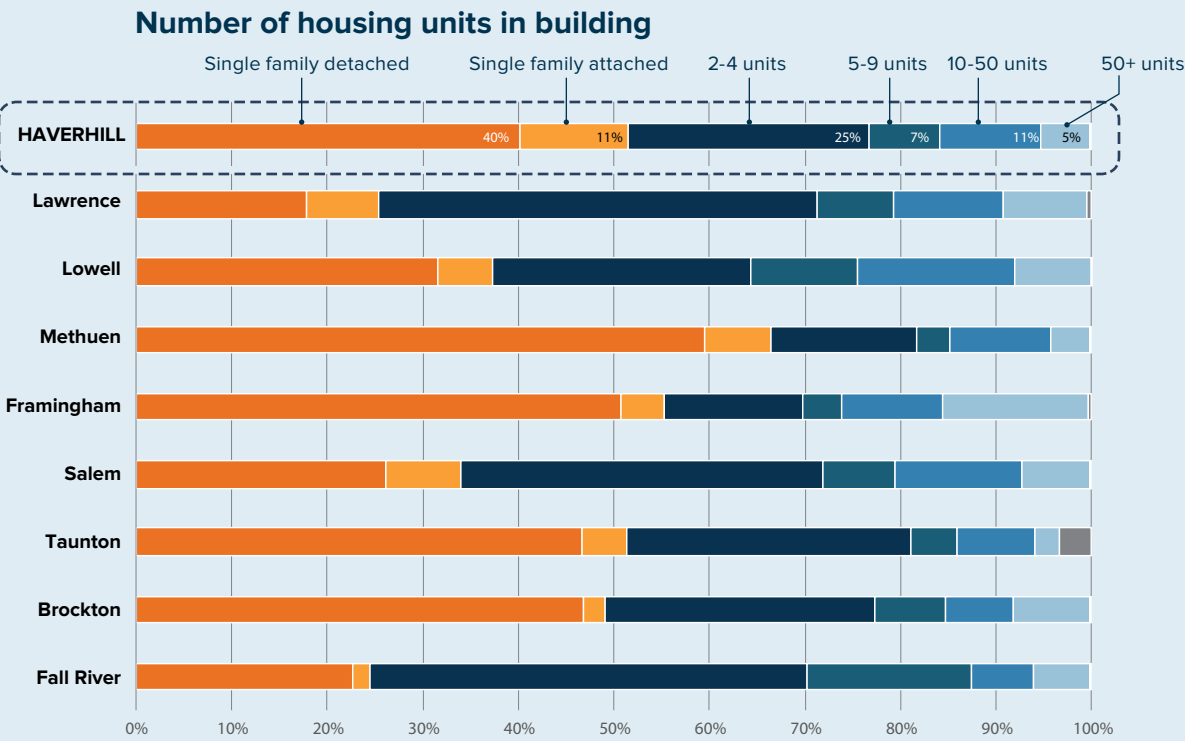
Source: US Decennial Census, 2000 and 2010; Census Bureau Population Estimates Program for all other years.

The number of seniors in Haverhill is expected to nearly double between 2015 and 2035. This aging population will require new forms of housing and amenities to allow for healthy and active lives and remain in the community.

Source: US Decennial Census, 2010; American Community Survey, 2011–2015 5-year estimates; UMass, Donahue Institute, 2013.

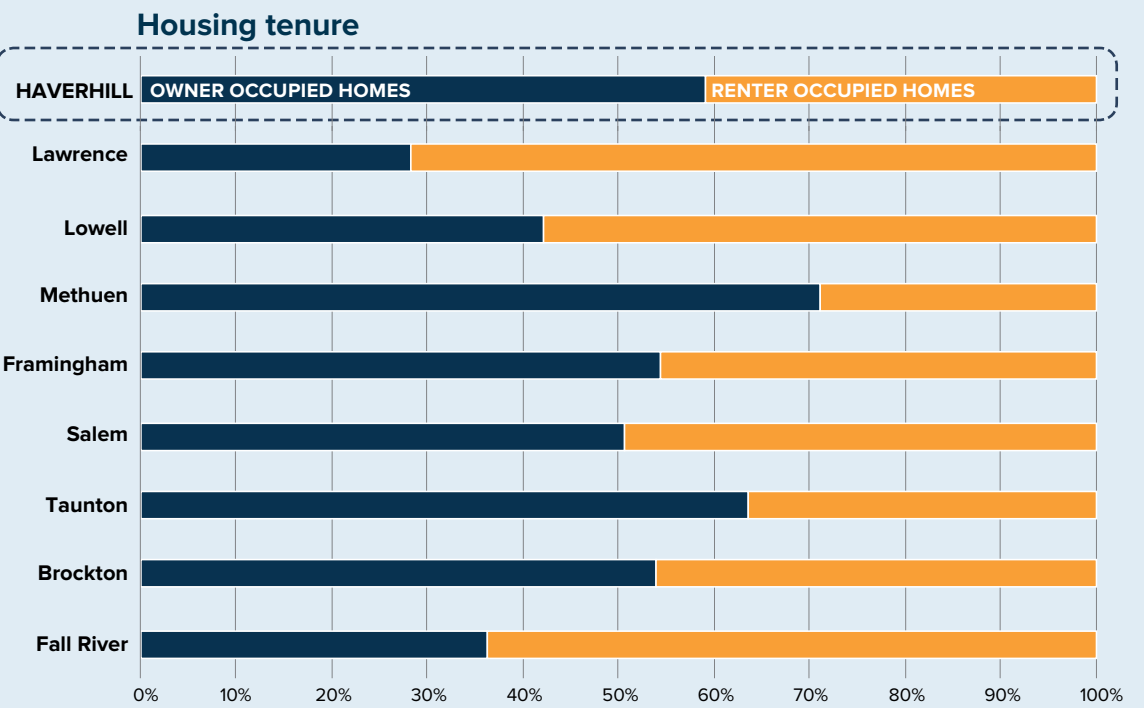


53% of the housing stock in Haverhill, i.e. 13,300 homes, are single-family and detached.

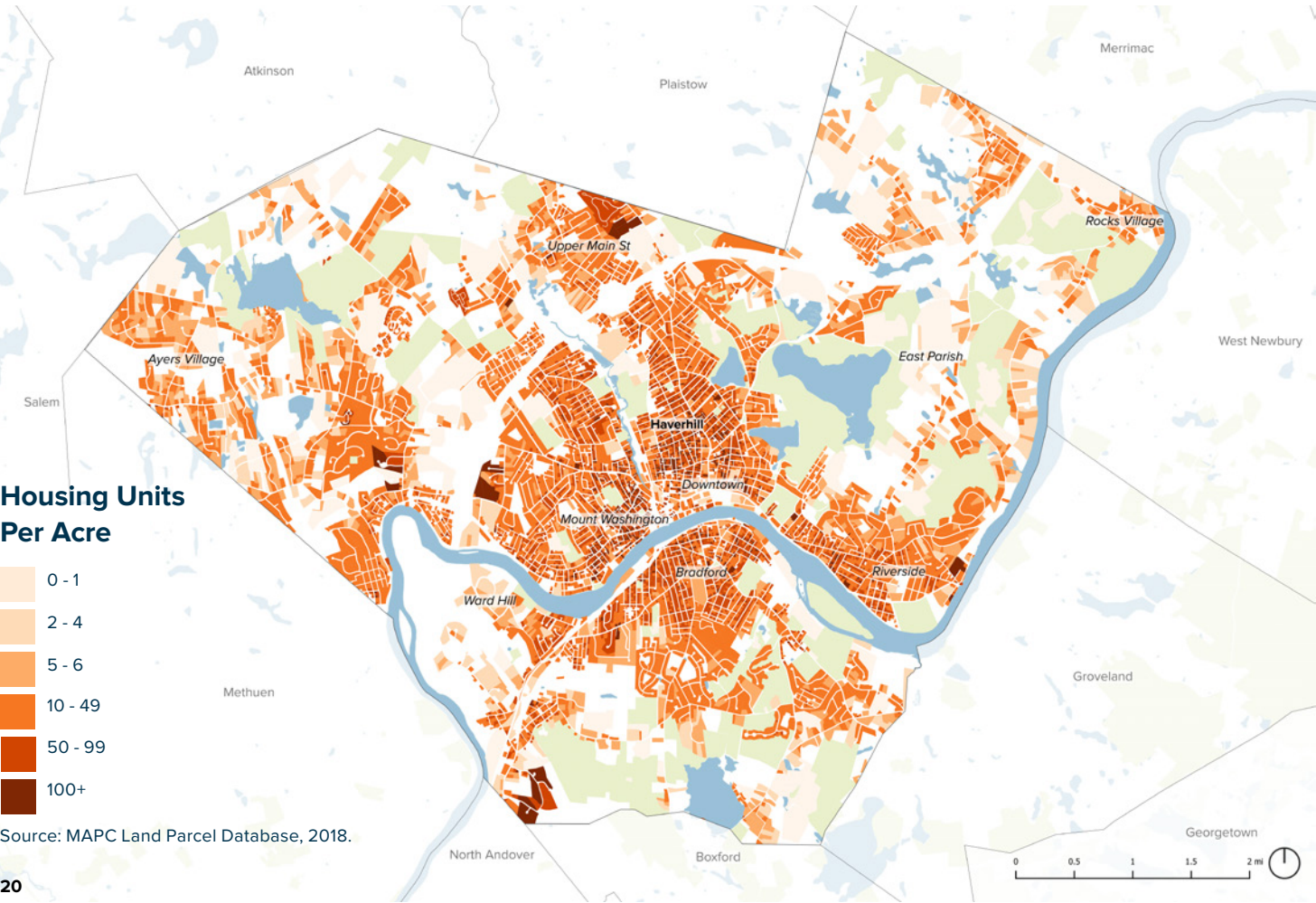


Source: American Community Survey, 2012–2017 5-year estimates. These categories are self-identified and follow Census Bureau definitions. Latina/o includes people who identify as Hispanic or Latina/o of any race.

39% of Haverhill’s households rent while 59% own their homes. Except for households containing only one person, the majority share of other household sizes own their homes.



Source: American Community Survey, 2012-2017 5-year estimates.

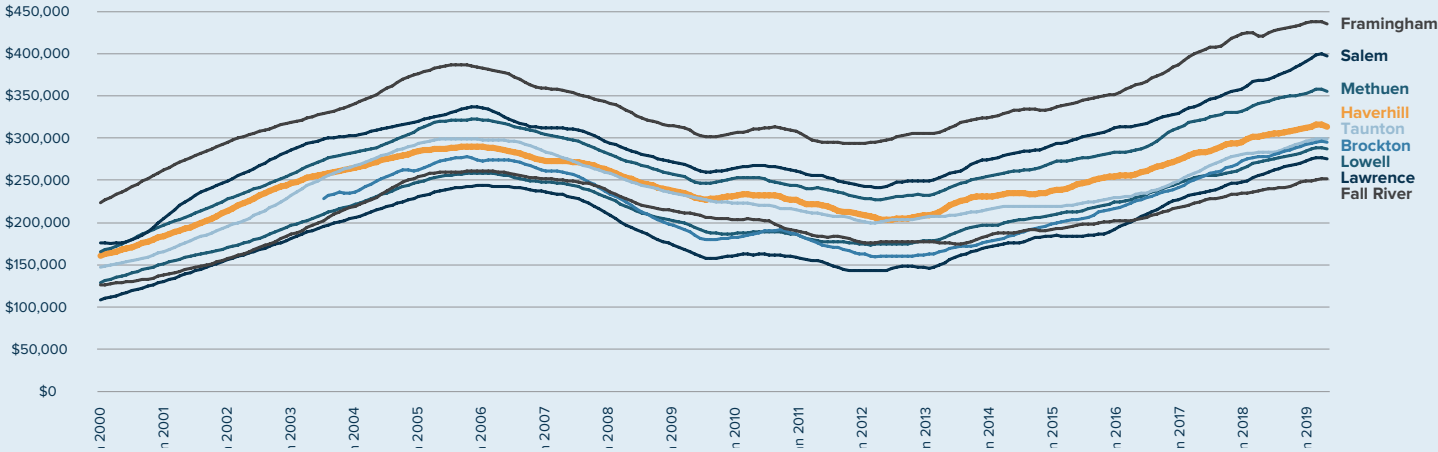


Over three-quarters of Haverhill’s housing stock is similar to the examples above, i.e. it is single-family or has 2-4 units per building.



Like many cities and towns in Massachusetts, home values and rents in Haverhill have trended upward in recent years. In January 2019, the median home value in Haverhill was \$314,000. Home values have increased an average of 7% each year since 2014.

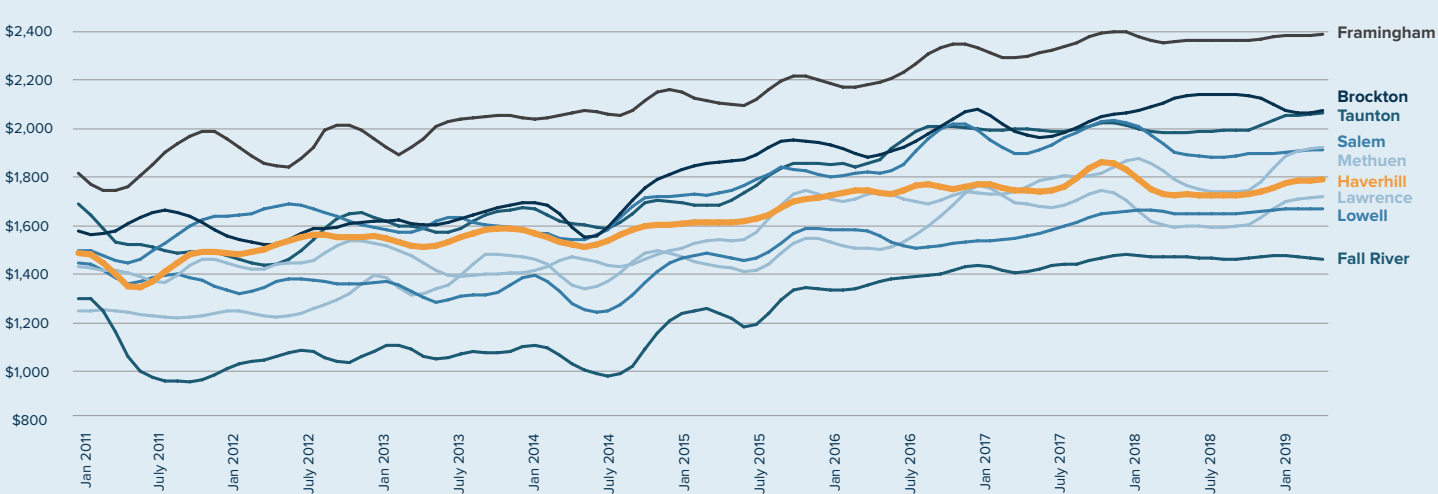
Median home values, 2000–2019



Source: Zillow Home Value Index, 2019. Data is for all homes. The Zillow Home Value Index (ZHVI) is a smoothed, seasonally adjusted measure of the median estimated home value. ZHVI is similar to a median sale price, but it is less affected by the changing mix of homes sold.

The estimated median rent for all housing units in Haverhill is nearly \$1,800. Rents have remained fairly stable since 2017 after a period of rapid rent increases exiting the Great Recession.

Median rents, 2011–2019



Source: Zillow Home Value Index, 2019. Data is for all homes. The Zillow Home Value Index (ZHVI) is a smoothed, seasonally adjusted measure of the median estimated home value. ZHVI is similar to a median sale price, but it is less affected by the changing mix of homes sold.

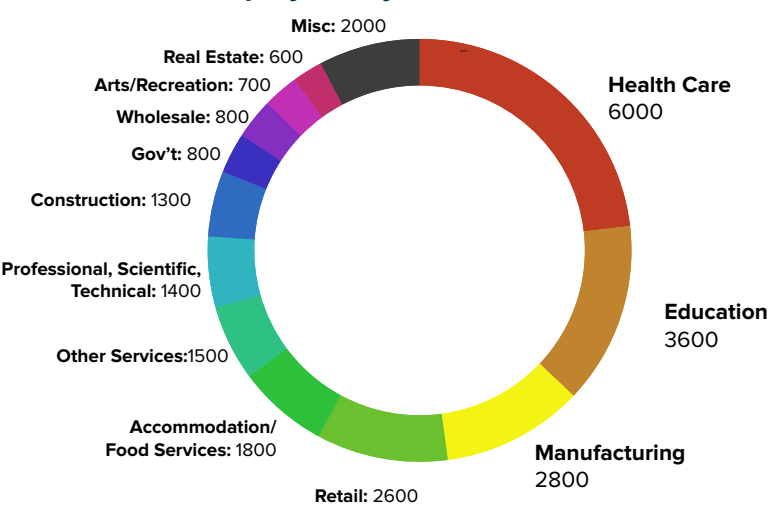
Note: Analyzing Haverhill's housing and population data relative to other Massachusetts cities allows for a nuanced understanding of these existing conditions. This is possible because of the wealth of statewide data available to make these comparisons. While this is desirable across all topic areas of the plan, the available data for other topics is not as reliable or directly comparable, and detailed comparisons would not be accurate.

Economy

Health care is Haverhill's top employment sector. Education and manufacturing are the next two largest employers in the city. While health care and education are commonly top employers in eastern Massachusetts, it is unusual for manufacturing to continue to play such an important role in the local economy.

Source: ReferenceUSA, 2019

Haverhill Employees by Sector



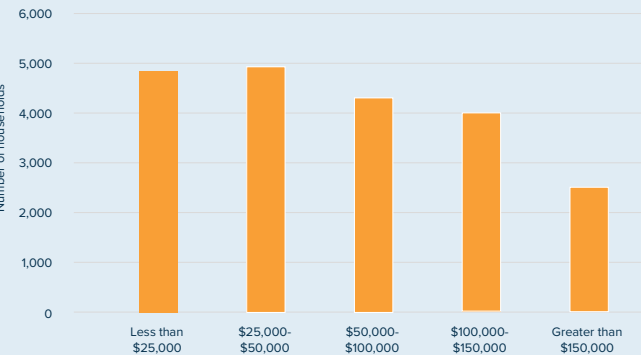
Manufacturing has seen the largest amount of new jobs in Haverhill since emerging from the Great Recession. Health care, construction, wholesale trade and the hospitality industry have also added significant jobs during this period.

Number of Jobs

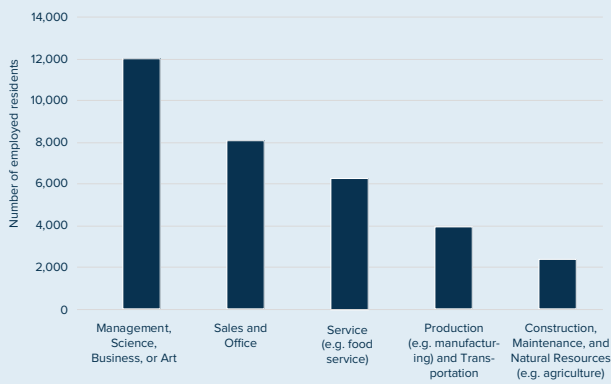


Haverhill’s residents are evenly distributed across incomes, including moderate- and middle-income households. Employed Haverhill residents work a variety of types of jobs, with the largest share working in management, business, scientific, and artistic trades.

Haverhill Households by Annual Income



Haverhill Residents by Occupation



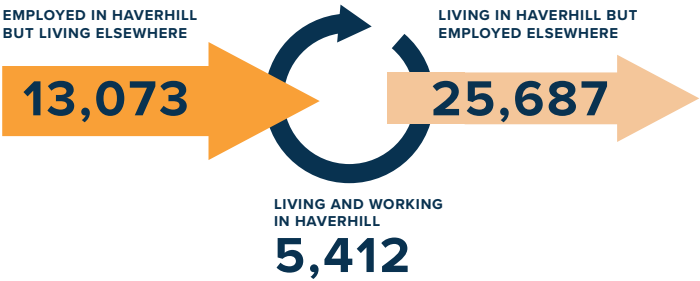
Jobs in Haverhill’s food service and retail industries, both of which are seeing growth, are largely concentrated downtown.



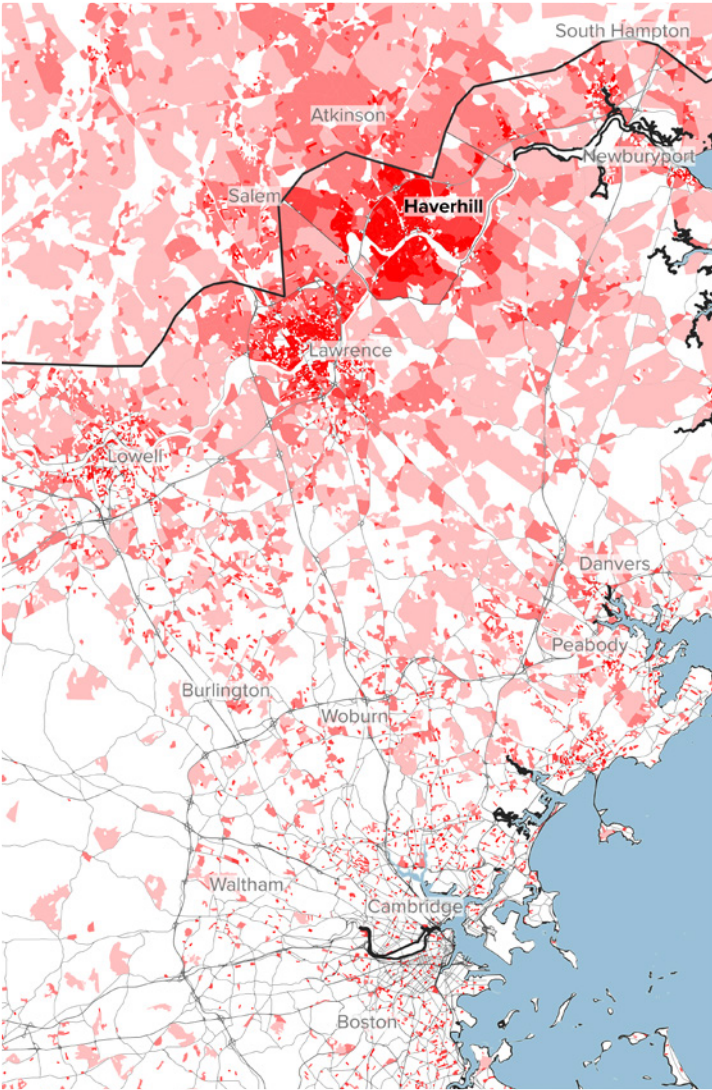
Of Haverhill’s 31,000 workers, only about 5,000 are Haverhill residents. The majority of people working in Haverhill live elsewhere.

Source: US Census LEHD Database, 2015.

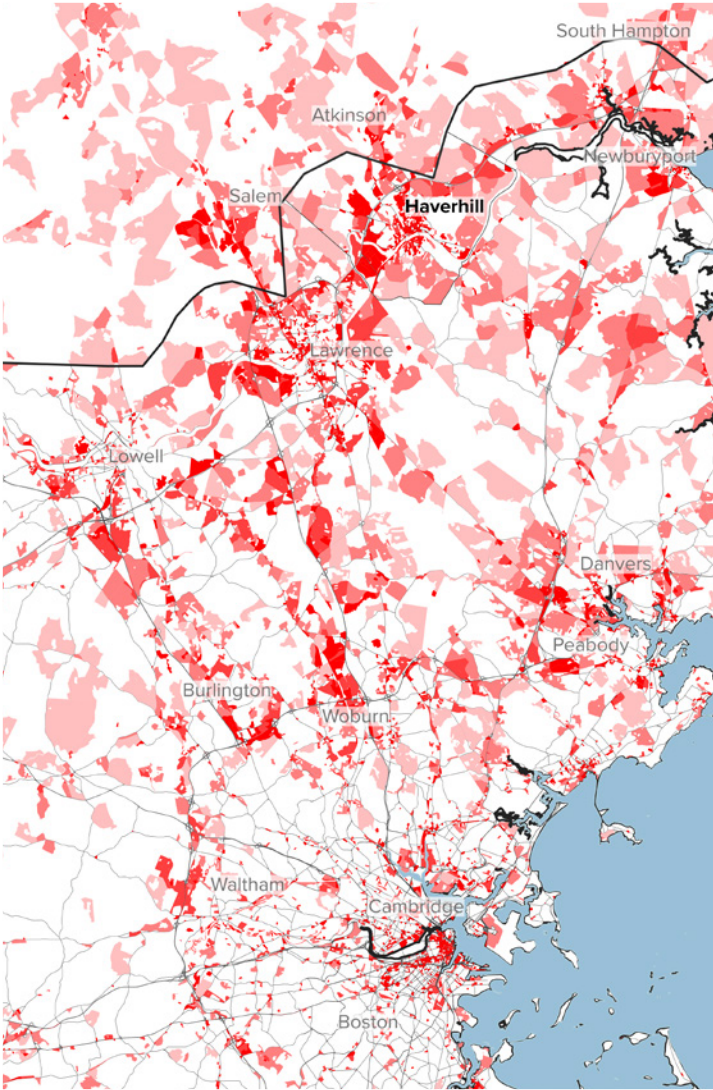
Haverhill Commuting Patterns



Where do Haverhill Workers Live?

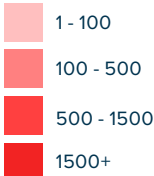


Where do Haverhill Residents Work?



Haverhill workers commute in from neighboring municipalities in the Merrimack Valley and beyond. Conversely, a large proportion of Haverhill residents work in the greater Boston metropolitan region or commute to jobs elsewhere in the Merrimack Valley, along the 495 and 128 corridors.

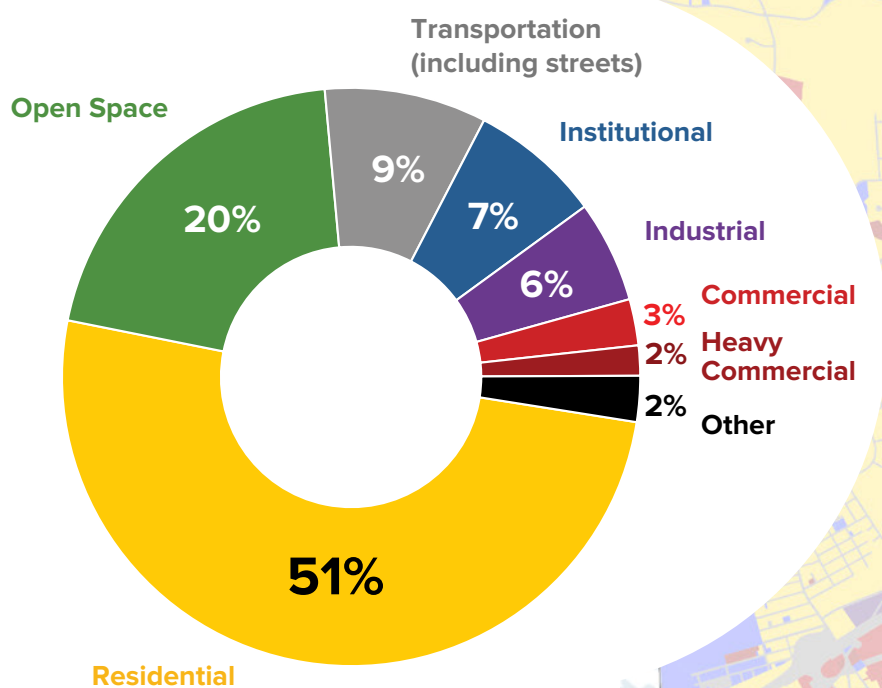
Number of workers per sq.mi



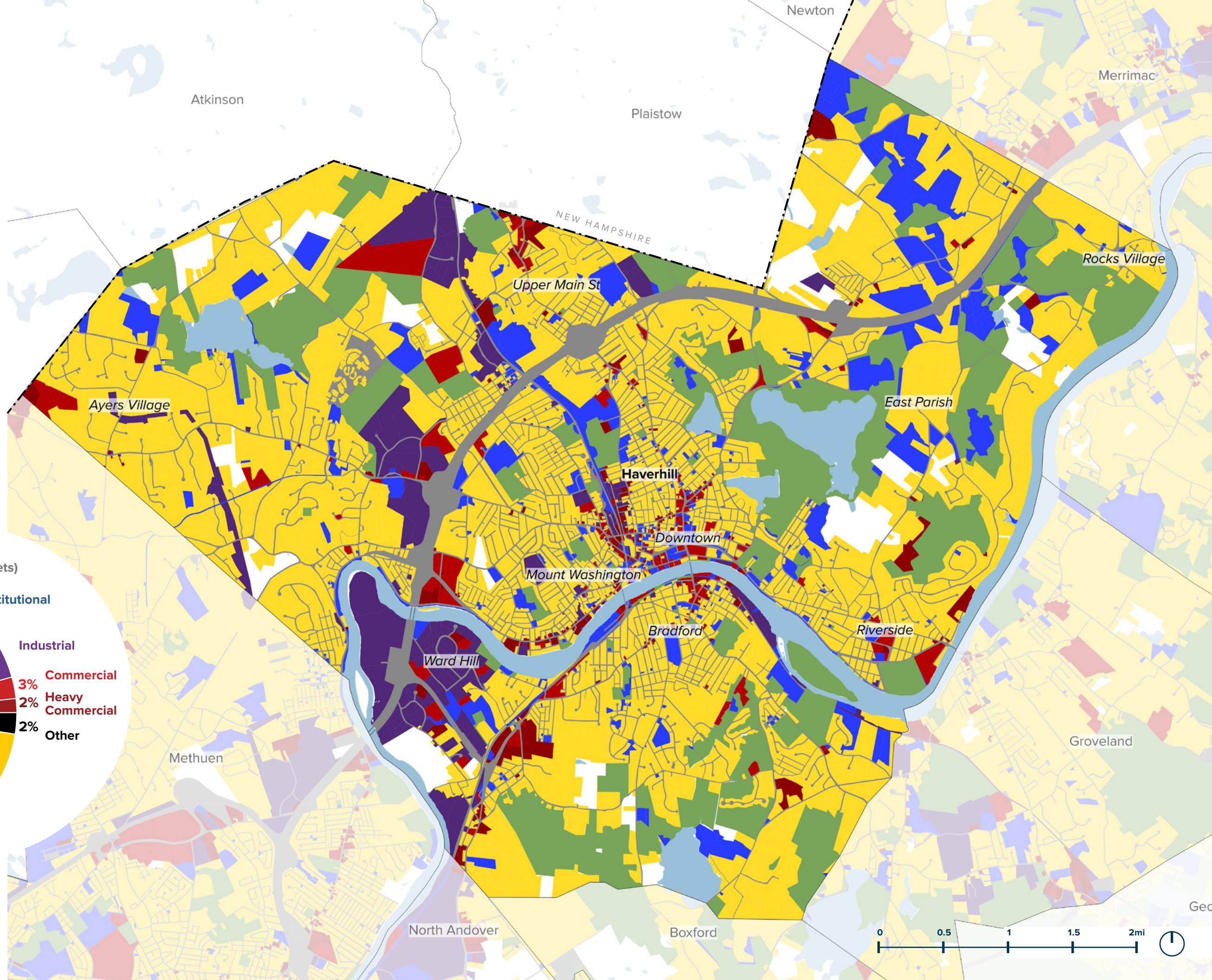
Source: US Census LEHD Database, 2015.

Land Use

Industrial uses occupy 6% of land in Haverhill. This is greater than the percent of land occupied by commercial uses and “heavy commercial” uses—those that have intensive service commercial use of a non-retail nature, including automobile-oriented businesses or heavy equipment related businesses.

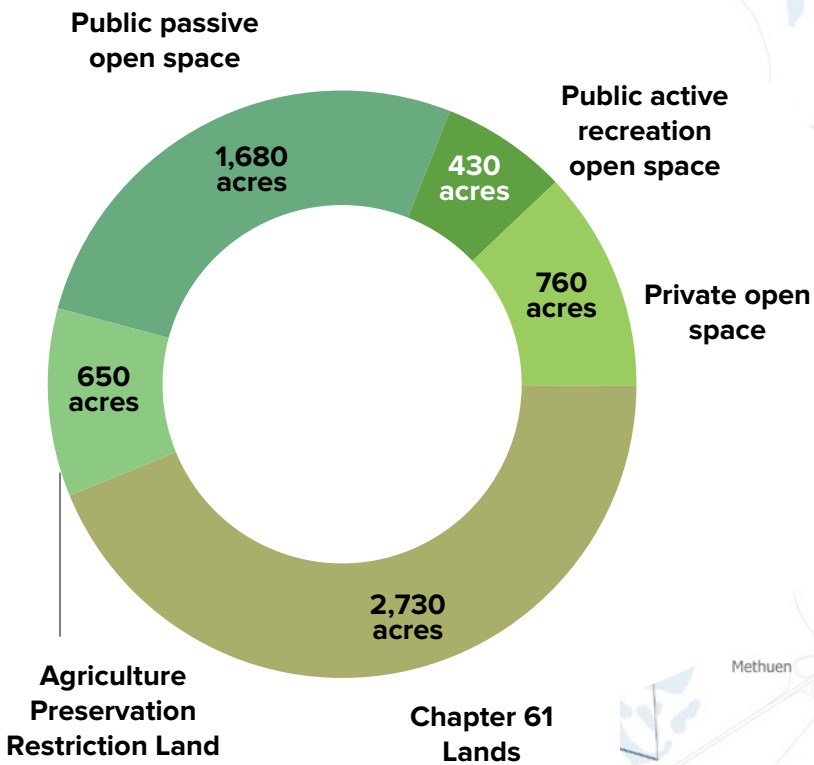


Distribution of Land Uses by Land Area
Source: MAPC Land Parcel Database, 2018.

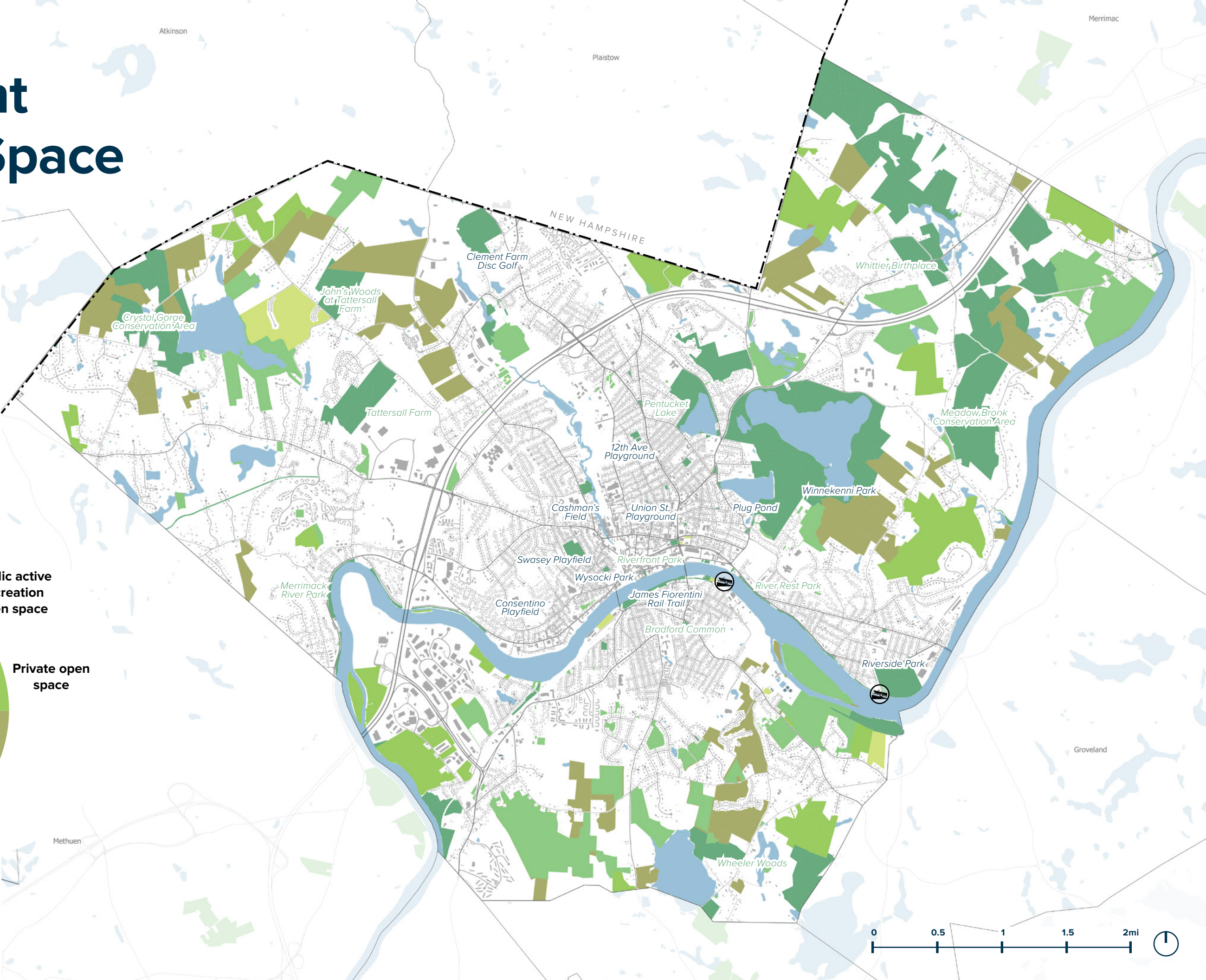


Environment and Open Space

Open spaces in Haverhill offer opportunities for both passive or active recreation, on the riverfront and inland. Nearly 3,400 acres are held for agriculture, forestry, and conservation. This includes “Chapter 61” lands, which make up 44% of all open space in Haverhill. These privately held parcels are incentivized to maintain agricultural or conservation uses, but they are not legally restricted from development.

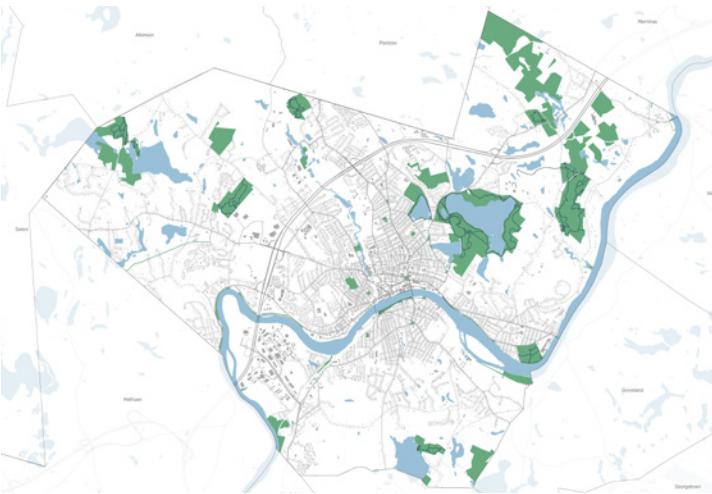


Open Space Classification by Land Area
Source: MassGIS Protected and Recreational Open Space, 2019.

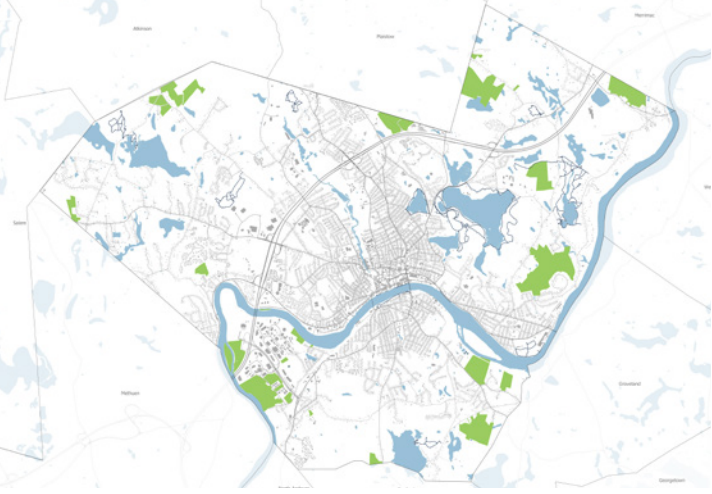


Haverhill has a combination of active, passive, public and private open spaces. These offer a wide variety of recreational and environmental amenities for the city’s residents.

Public Open Space



Private Open Space



Renaissance Golf Club is a 200 acre private country club very close to Downtown Haverhill.

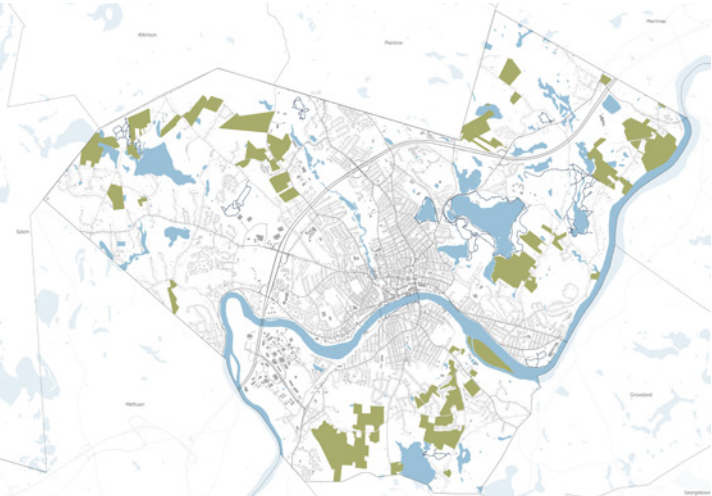


Crystal Gorge Conservation Area includes 65 acres of publicly accessible land. There are over 2,100 acres of public open space in Haverhill.



Swasey Field, like many of Haverhill’s parks offers multiple recreational facilities including a splash pad, playground and multiple ball fields.

Ch. 61 Lands

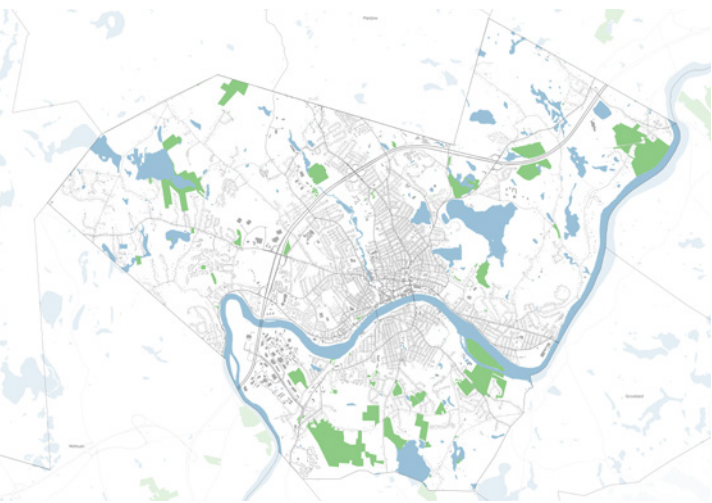


Roger's Spring Hill Farm & Garden Center is one of 11 active farms in Haverhill. There are more than 2,700 acres of Ch. 61 (agriculture, forestry & recreation) land protected in the city.



Plug Pond Recreation Area sits on the edge of Lake Saltonstall. The area includes a beach, picnic and play areas and a publicly accessible boat launch.

Agricultural Preservation Restriction



Chris' Farm Stand at Silsby Farm is set on 132 acres of land protected in perpetuity, under an Agricultural Preservation Restriction.



Haverhill’s natural resources like the Merrimack River (right) and Bradford Trail (above) provide a variety of opportunities for active and passive recreation.

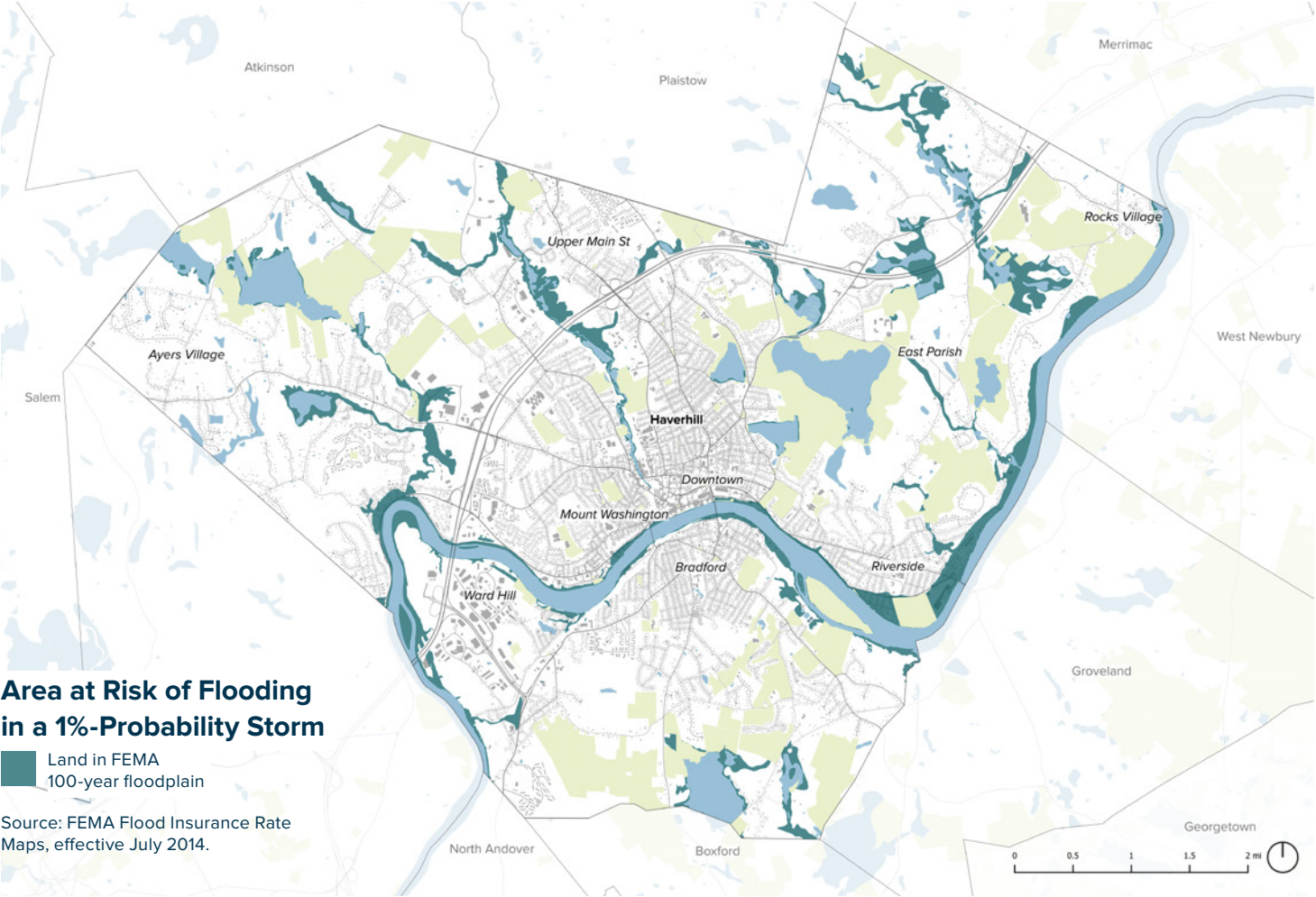


An estimated 1,000 housing units in Haverhill lie within the 1%-probability, or 100-year, floodplain. Elsewhere in Haverhill, open spaces placed in the floodplain mitigate flood waters.

What is a ‘1%-probability flood’?

A ‘1%-Probability flood,’ commonly called a ‘100-year flood,’ is a flood that has a 1% chance of taking place in any given year. Experts prefer not to use the “100-year” term since it gives the impression that a certain level of flooding will only occur once every 100 years. In fact, it has a one percent chance of occurring in any given year and can even occur multiple

times in a single year or decade. Over a 30-year period, there is almost a one in three chance that a 1 percent annual chance flood will occur at least once. While properties within the 100-year flood plain are generally required to purchase flood insurance, properties outside this zone can still be subject to the effects of rain and hh overflow.



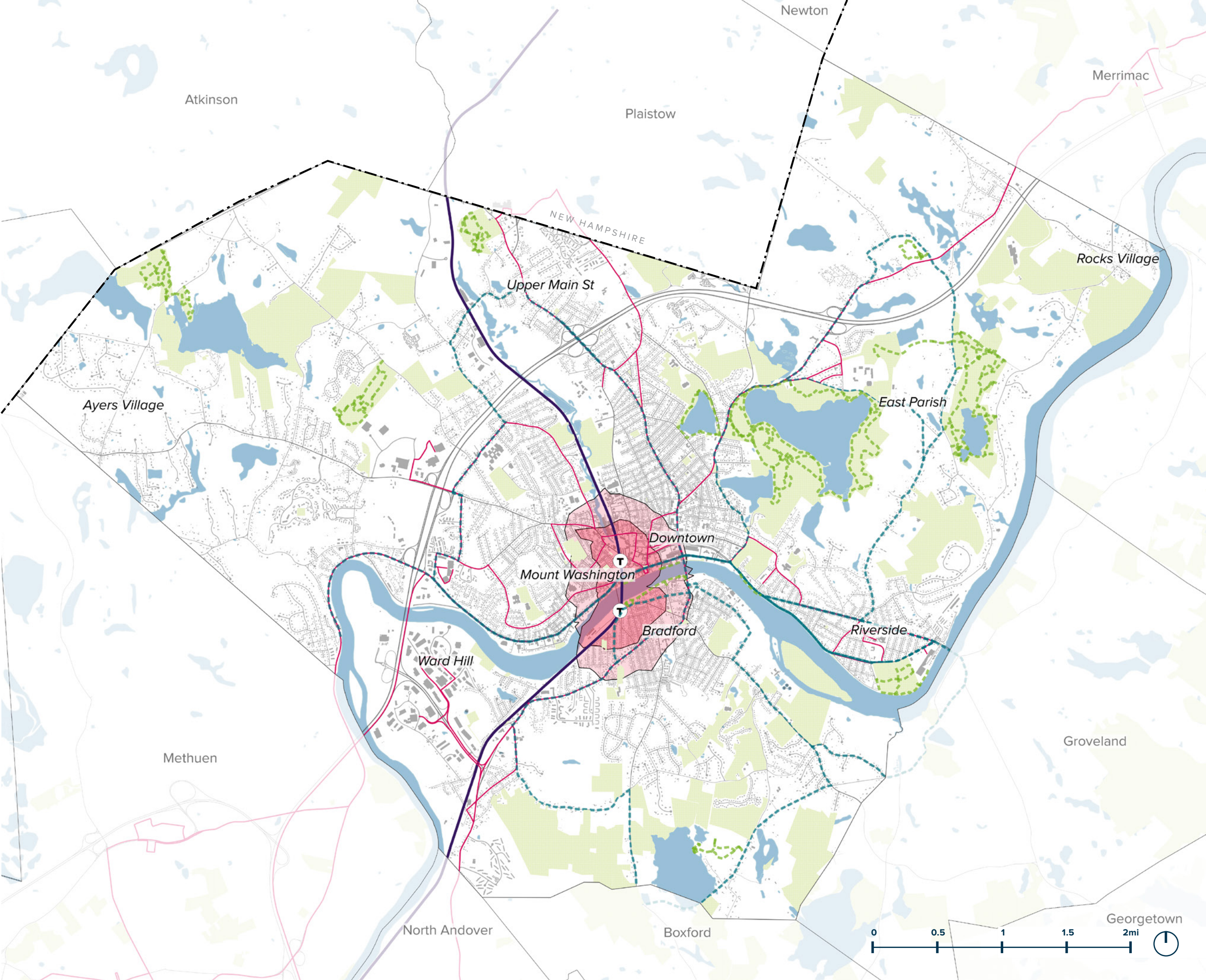
Mobility

The commuter rail is a valuable but underutilized asset in Haverhill. Enhancing access to this resource has the potential to unlock employment and recreational opportunities for residents throughout the Greater Boston region.

Commuter Rail Walksheds, Bike Routes, and Trails

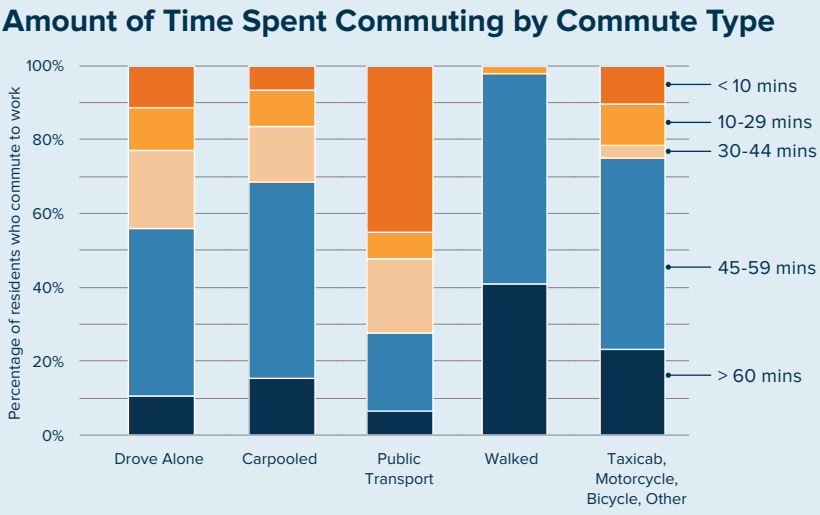
- MBTA Commuter Line / Amtrak
- Ⓣ MBTA Commuter Line Station
- 5-min, 10-min, and 15-min train station walksheds
- MVRTA Bus Routes
- Designated Bicycle Route
- Walking Trail or Bike/Pedestrian Path (not all trails are mapped)

Source: MassGIS



The average commute time for Haverhill residents is about 30 minutes.

Most Haverhill residents who commute by driving have commutes less than 30 minutes long. However, nearly half of public transit commuters have commutes of greater than an hour, largely reflecting commuter rail trips to Boston, or to a lesser extent, difficult bus-based commutes.

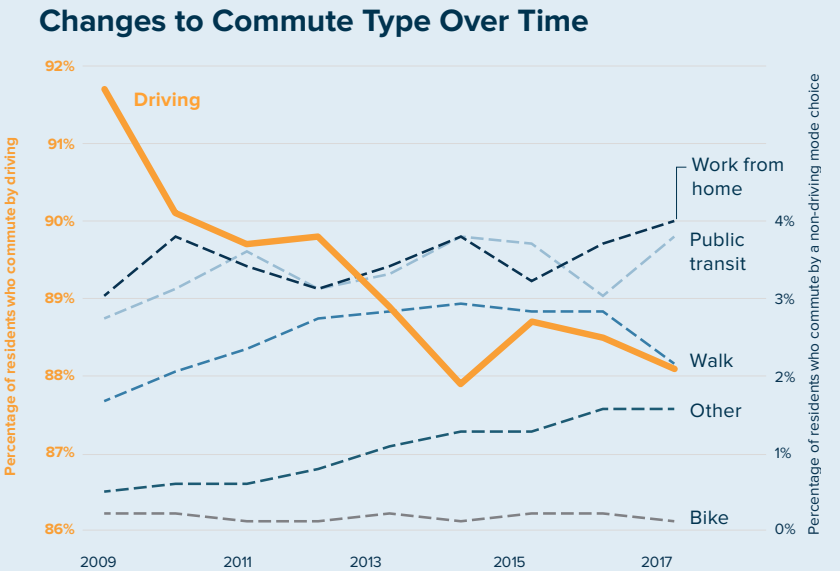


Source: American Community Survey, 2012-2017 5-year estimates.

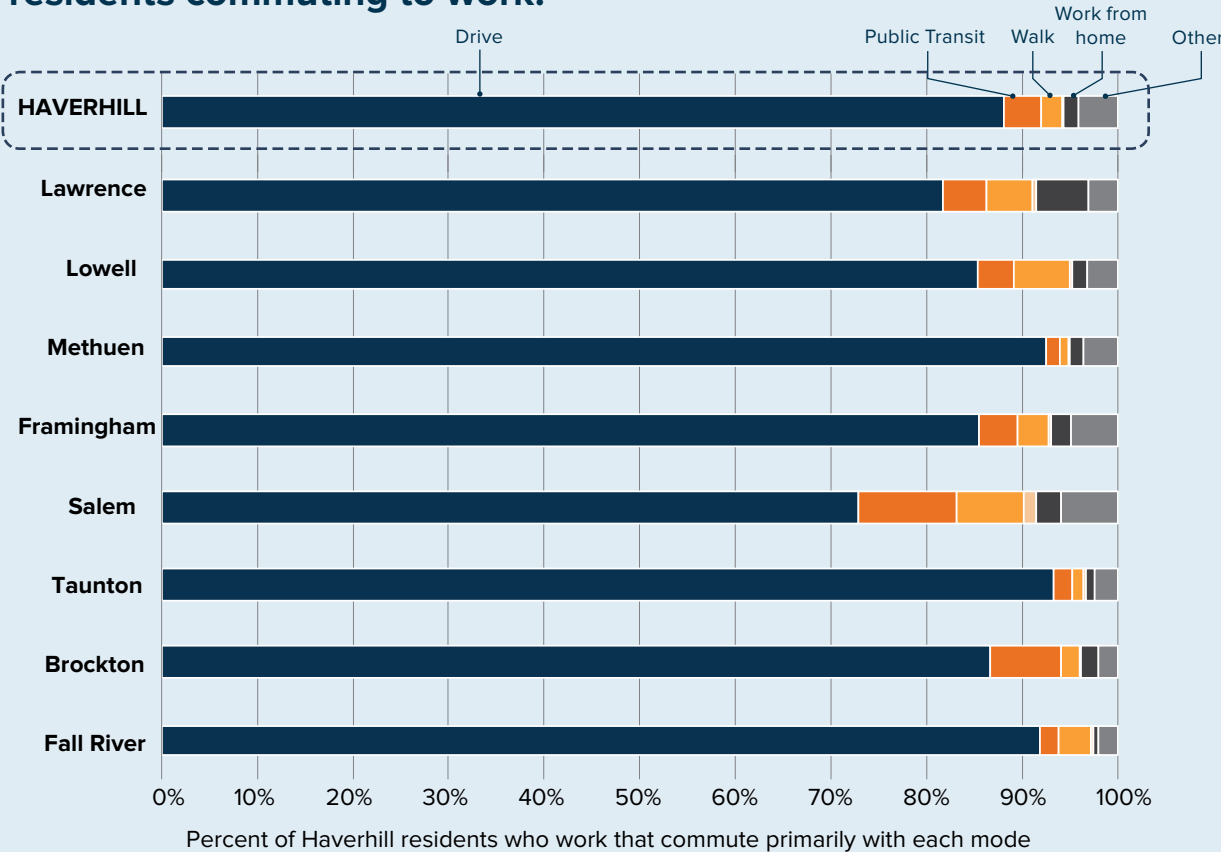
Nearly all Haverhill residents commute to work by driving. However, the proportion of residents driving to work is going down.

Sustainable transportation choices—transit, walking, and biking—have not been growing in use, while the miscellaneous “Other” transportation choice has, perhaps reflecting the growing use of ride-hailing services like Uber and Lyft.

Source: American Community Survey, 2012-2017 5-year estimates.



Walking, biking, and public transit, the most sustainable forms of transportation, only account for 6% of the mode share for Haverhill residents commuting to work.



Source: American Community Survey, 2012-2017 5-year estimates.

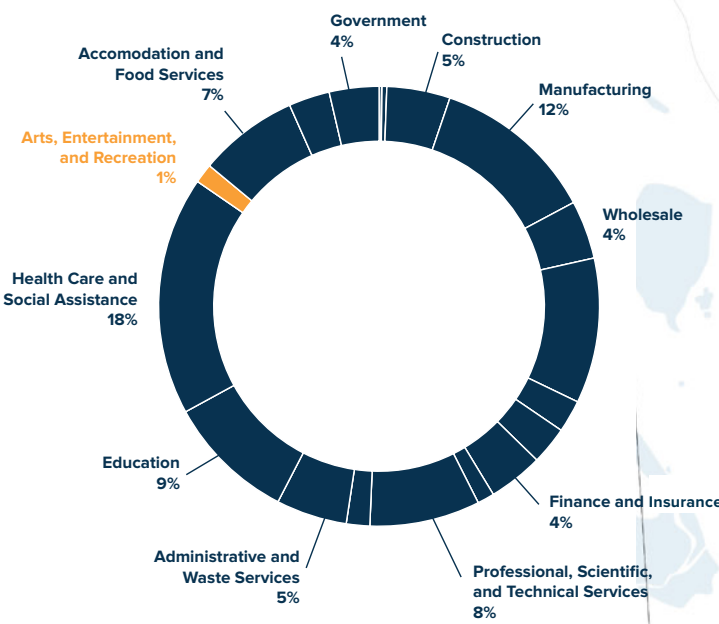


The MBTA Commuter Rail and MVRTA are the only two public transit options available to the Haverhill community.



Cultural and Historic Resources

Despite the success of Riverfront Cultural District and the city’s cultural institutions, fewer than 2% of Haverhill residents are employed in Arts and Recreation. A comparable number of workers within Haverhill are employed in these industries. However, the social and downstream economic impacts of Haverhill’s cultural assets cannot be measured in employment alone.

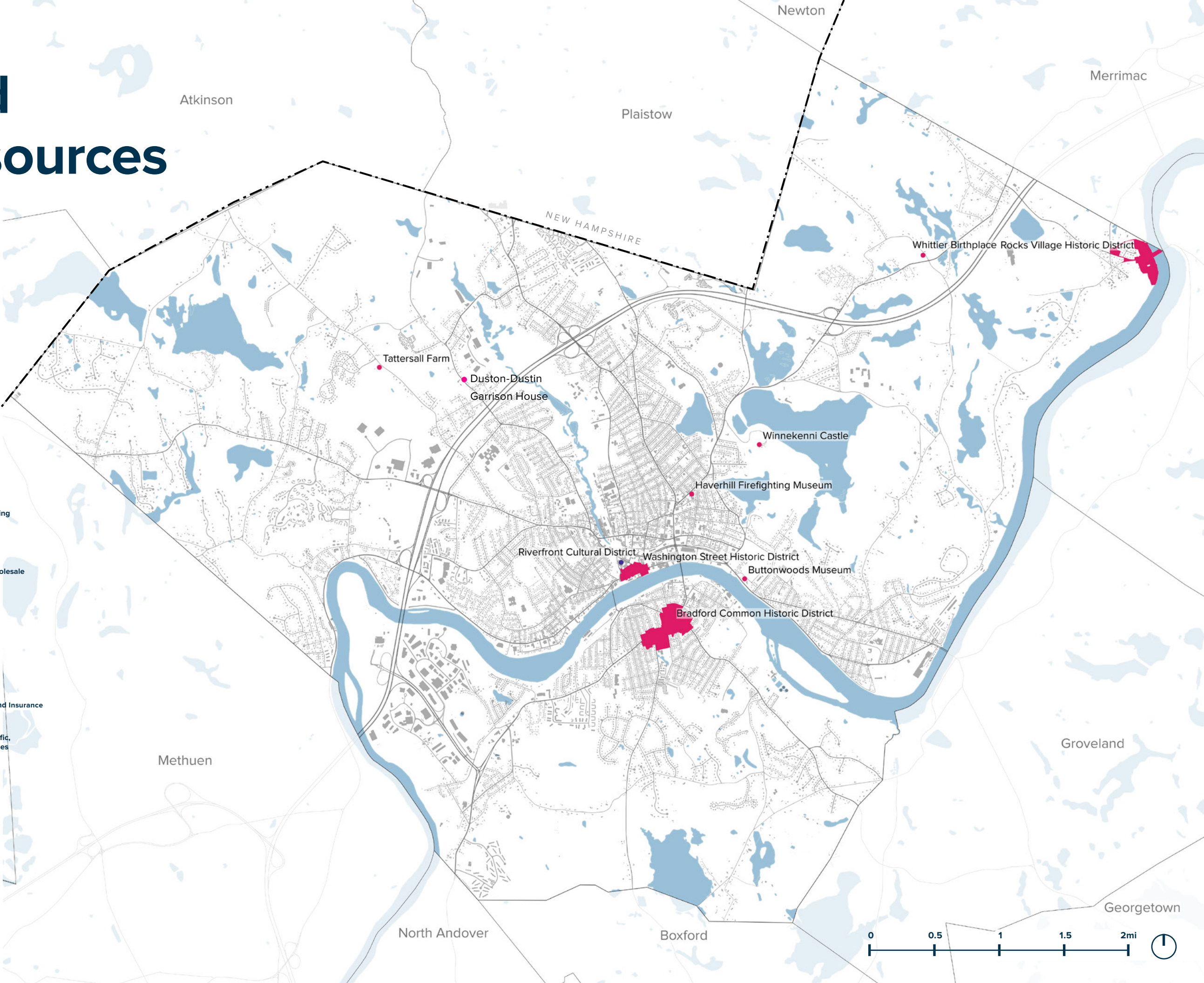


Source: US Census LEHD Database, 2015.

Officially Recognized Cultural Assets

- Historic District
- Cultural Treasure
- Cultural District

Source: City of Haverhill, Creative Haverhill



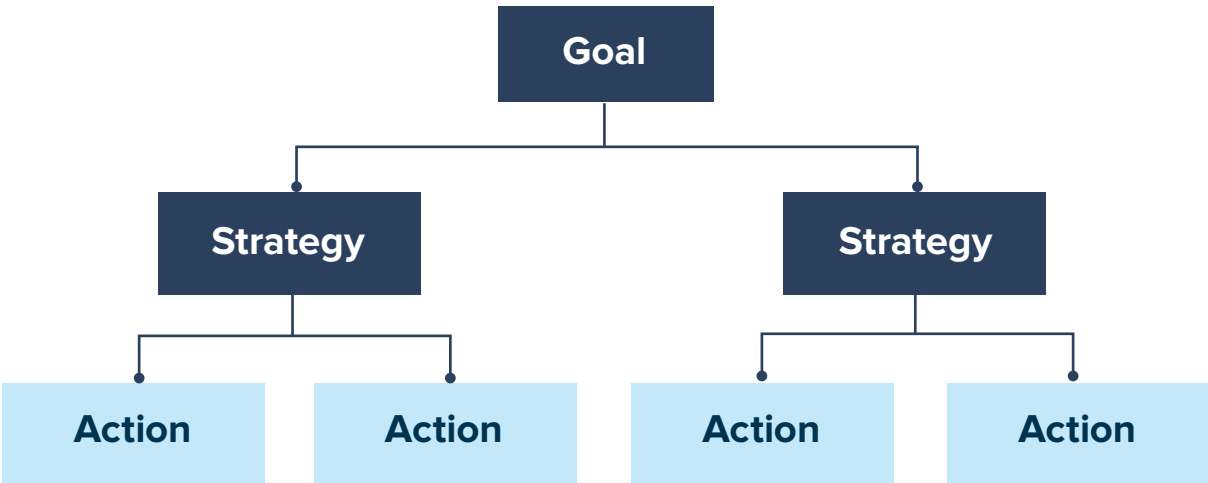
Where Do We Go From Here?

This document lays out data and trends to understand how Haverhill is changing. While a city is certainly more than a collection of data or an array of policies, this information is useful to determine how this information relates to the lived experiences of its residents. The next stage of Vision Haverhill will be a robust public conversation about the new policies and plans needed to guide change in Haverhill while continuing to align with the community’s shared future vision.

Planning Framework

As we move forward from understanding trends and begin planning for Haverhill’s future, this framework and key definitions will help the community debate and discuss the future of Haverhill.

- Goals**
Goals are broad, aspirational statements of what we want to achieve for each planning topic.
- Strategies**
Strategies define the general approaches needed to achieve the goals. Strategies can help achieve one or more goals.
- Actions**
Actions are the specific policies, programs, studies, capital investments or other tools that City departments use to implement each strategy.



Spatial Approach

Throughout our listening tour, the Haverhill community has expressed an overwhelming appreciation for the quality of life that the city offers. This, in part, is enabled by the existing balance of natural resources and urban amenities clustered within. The planning framework for Vision Haverhill should be one that preserves and thoughtfully enhances existing patterns of city development. An important step in achieving this result is to develop a spatial understanding of the city. Studying the existing built form and the policies that regulate it, such as zoning, is a critical next step.