

CHAPTER 10. LAND USE

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Goals

- To maintain Bakersfield’s rural character and scenic resources through informed land use decisions
- To accommodate future growth in patterns, densities, and locations that respect traditional patterns of development, and that do not compromise the integrity of natural, historic and cultural resources
- To establish public policies that balance development with the town's ability to provide services
- To protect and promote the continuation of agriculture and forestry as integral components of Bakersfield’s local economy and culture through land use planning

Policies

1. Promote new development in areas of existing infrastructure and services (roads, power, and water) and discourage development in areas without existing infrastructure and services.
 - ~~Encourage low development densities where low levels of services are provided, and higher densities only where residences and businesses can be properly served~~
 - ~~Design clustered housing, including housing specifically designed to be affordable, to fit into the cultural, aesthetic, and natural resource landscape of Bakersfield~~
- 2. Promote anti-sprawl initiatives as a measure to maintain the appropriate use of the town’s land resources
- 3. Protect the vitality and importance of ~~the village center Bakersfield Village~~ by designating it as the primary focus for commerce, while simultaneously preserving its essential historic character and beauty
- 4. Discourage development in areas which are hazardous to human health and safety
5. In subdivision review, encourage lot layouts, landscaping and site design that respect the natural features of the landscape and do not create long, narrow lots which contribute to sprawl and waste irreplaceable agricultural and silvicultural resources
 - Strongly encourage landscaping and site design that reduces adverse impacts of new development
 - ~~Protect prime recreational resources from incompatible land uses and protect scenic qualities of agricultural, forest and riparian lands from unnecessary despoliation~~
2. ~~Permit development only in a manner that is safe for existing drinking water supplies, both public and private~~
3. ~~Protect water quality by limiting development in Wellhead Protection Areas, wetlands, and along stream banks~~
4. ~~Protect river corridors by establishing a minimum setback or “buffer” between development and the streambank~~

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- ~~5. Promote environmentally sound construction practices, including control of runoff and erosion during all phases of construction and treatment of wastes off of steep slopes~~
- ~~6. Protect scenic ridgelines~~ Prohibit by regulating their development, including the siting of cellular and wind towers on specific scenic ridgelines identified in this plan.
- ~~7. Steer development away from areas where soils will not support it due to shallow depth to bedrock, instability, or high water table~~
- ~~7. Prohibit land development on slopes greater than 25 percent, and maintain vegetative cover~~
- ~~8. Conduct development on slopes greater than 15 percent carefully in order to avoid environmental degradation and conditions that create health hazards~~
- ~~9. Protect public health, welfare, and safety by prohibiting development in the flood plain and continuing to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)~~
- ~~10. Support and encourage participation in land preservation measures, such as those promoted by the Vermont Land Trust~~
- ~~7. Maintain the character of~~ Development in existing neighborhoods in the village should respect historic resources, maintain compact settlement patterns and avoid potential conflicts between incompatible land uses.
- ~~8. Conserve agriculturally productive lands by accommodating development in areas apart from most farming activity and from areas of prime agricultural soils~~
- ~~9. Encourage sustainable agricultural and silvicultural practices to both protect the use of land and water resources, and to keep a working rural landscape based on a practice of stewardship~~
- ~~11.1. Strongly encourage landscaping and site design that reduces adverse impacts of new development~~
- ~~12. Protect and promote forestry as a valuable land use in Bakersfield through the creation of a town forest~~
- ~~13. Promote alternative small farms which produce products such as cheese, yogurt, market garden, etc.~~
- ~~10. Provide incentives for appropriate commercial growth in the village district~~

In developing the land use plan for Bakersfield, it is important to recognize the many physical constraints to development. ~~Steep slopes limit development in many areas of town, and nearly a third of the land (8,610 acres) has a slope greater than 20 percent. The town also has two small bodies of water, Brown's and Kings Hill Ponds, with a total area of only 16 acres and 1057 acres of class 2 wetlands which account for almost 4 percent of its land area.~~ The overall goal of Bakersfield's land use plan is to encourage development in and around Bakersfield Village and reduce development pressure on rural lands and sensitive areas.

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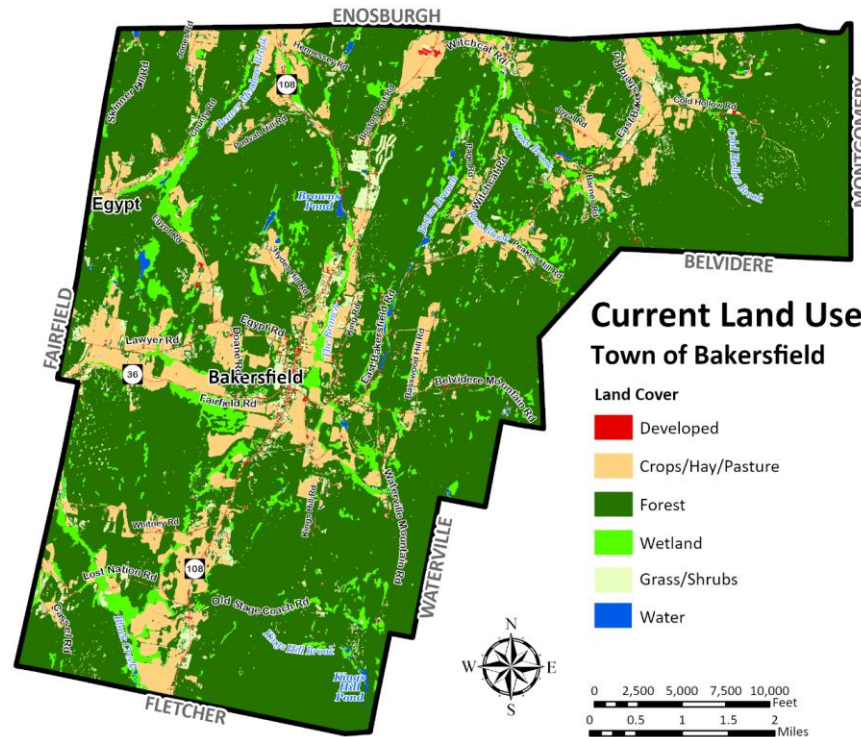
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Current Land Use and Development Trends

Currently, the highest concentration of residential development in Bakersfield lies within the village area. This is also the district where commercial development is considered to be most appropriate. The higher density development that exists within the village creates a strong sense of community and is an efficient use of land. The village also provides important public services including the Town Hall, Post Office, school, library, fire department and ~~dd-rescue-service~~ and historical society.

The village is an important asset and should be promoted and preserved by encouraging historic preservation, economic development, and the adaptive reuse of existing structures. Village sidewalks, the reuse of Brigham Academy. The village sidewalk project, efforts to renovate the Brigham Academy, and other projects intended to maintain and improve the quality of life in Bakersfield village should be encouraged and supported through thoughtful land use decisions. Sprawling development patterns that fragment the landscape and detract from Bakersfield's rural character ~~should be are~~ discouraged.

Agriculture and forestry continue to be important components of the local culture and economy. It is important to remember that owners of farms and forests provide a public benefit by not developing their property, and cost the town little in terms of municipal services. These areas provide ~~From popular~~ scenic vistas, ~~to~~ important wildlife habitat, and ~~other these~~ contributions to the well-being of the town ~~cannot be overlooked~~.



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The development of farms and forests for residential use ~~is can be becoming more~~ profitable for ~~the individual individual land owners landowners~~. This creates pressures for development. It is important that this development be guided by good land use planning in order to maintain the unique character of our community and ensure that local services are not overwhelmed.

The use of planned unit development (PUD) ~~may provides~~ a tool ~~for to enable~~ Bakersfield to accommodate some residential development, while protecting the working landscape and open land. PUDs allow for a more flexible design approach and provide an opportunity for the planning commission to work with landowners and developers to create subdivisions that reflect the goals and values of Bakersfield, including clustered development, the provision of common land, and the protection of prime agricultural soils.

As currently implemented, the Town has concerns about the Fixed Area Allocation system that is currently used for subdivisions. The Town should ensure that this system is not contributing to fragmentation and loss of farm and forest land. Other options for zoning in rural areas may be more appropriate meet the goals of the Land Use plan, and should be explored in future zoning updates.

Future Land Use/Current Zoning Districts

The town of Bakersfield ~~currently~~ divides its future land use map into the following ~~zoning~~ districts: Village, High Density Residential, Low Density Residential, Rural, Conservation, ~~Watershed,~~ Aquifer Overlay, and Flood Hazard Overlay (Figure 10.2). The purposes of these districts are summarized below ~~and a complete description can be found in the town of Bakersfield Zoning Bylaws adopted in 2017.~~ These districts represent both the existing and future land uses in the Town of Bakersfield. These districts are implemented through Bakersfield's zoning regulations, and it is important that Bakersfield's zoning conforms to is informed by the Land Use plan.

Village Center District: The Village Center represents the historic center of Bakersfield. This district has a distinct historic character which features mixed residential, commercial and public uses in a historic village setting. Development in this district should protect and preserve existing historic resources, promote pedestrian access and maintain the village character, including its historic settlement pattern, scenic character and sense of community.

High Density Residential District: This district is comprised of the area around the village center where additional high-density development could be accommodated. This district provides a transition between the compact development of the village center and the rural areas of Bakersfield. It is designed to allow a radial pattern of development around the village in an effort to discourage linear sprawl. Development in this district should complement and extend the character and traditional development pattern of the village core. Interconnected street networks and pedestrian access are encouraged in this district.

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Rural District:— It is intended that this district remain rural, agricultural and silvicultural. The preservation of farmland and prime agricultural soils is a major objective.— Rural residential development and compatible rural uses, at a density the land can support are permitted.— Clustered development that protects large, contiguous tracts of farmland or open space is appropriate in this district.— Within the rural district, additional restrictions are included to protect an important Heron Rookery in northwestern Bakersfield, consistent with the requests of the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife.

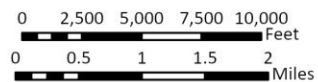
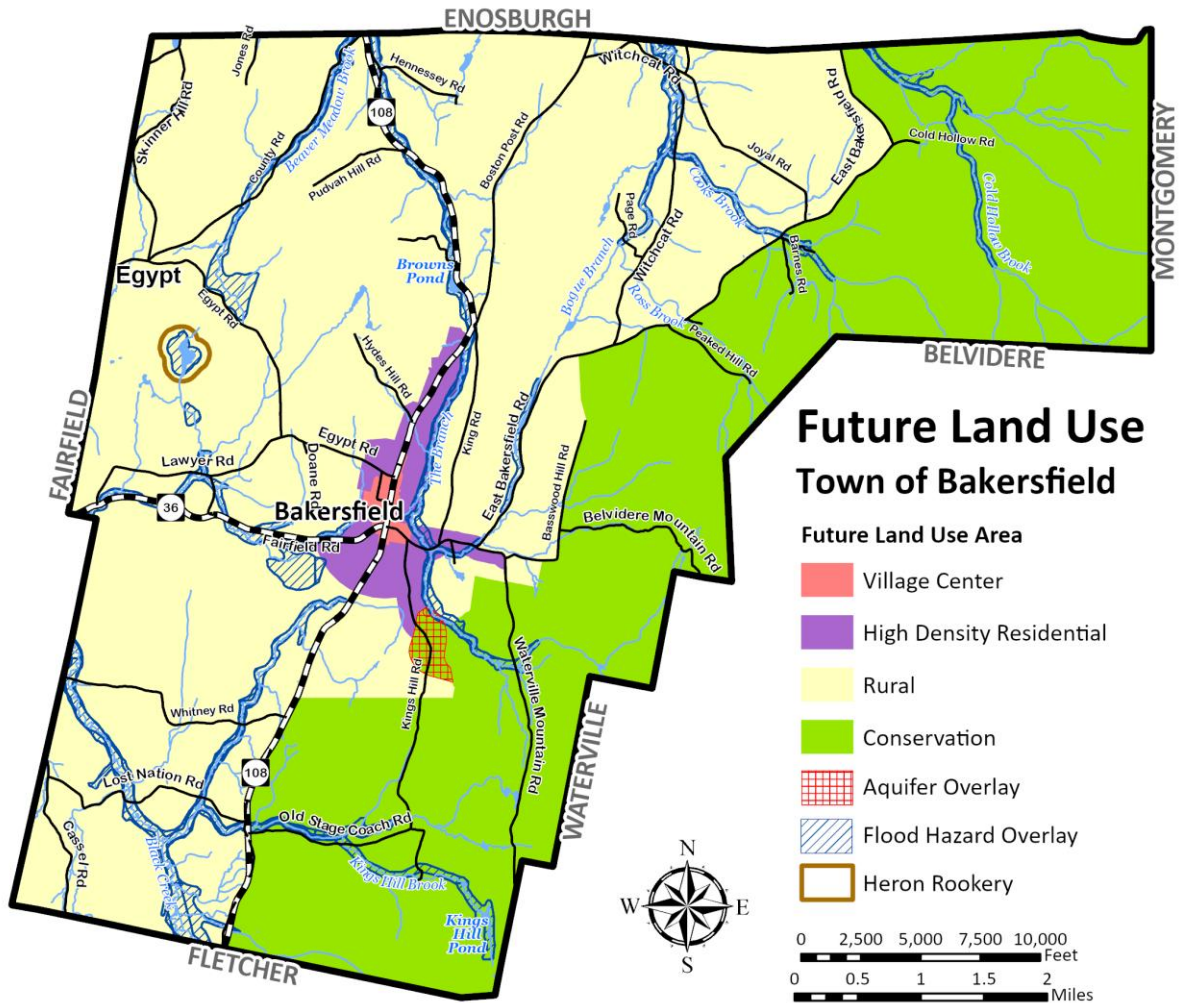
Conservation District:— This district is designated to protect the natural resources and scenic value of mainly forested lands that lack direct access to public roads, are important for wildlife and wildlife habitat, and which are poorly suited for development. Included are areas of high elevation, steep slopes and swamplands. Concern must be given to building on any slope greater than 15% because the soils in these areas tend to be thin and unstable, making them unsuitable for development. The Conservation District includes the watershed that provides Bakersfield's municipal water supply and land uses that might reduce the water quality in this area are restricted.— Only limited, low-density development is to be permitted in this district.

Aquifer Overlay District:— The purpose of the Aquifer Overlay District is to protect the public health and safety by preserving and maintaining the community water source from incompatible development.— No new construction is permitted within the Aquifer Overlay District.

Flood Hazard Overlay District:— The purpose of the Flood Hazard Overlay District is to minimize and prevent the loss of life and property, the disruption of commerce, and the extraordinary costs that result from flooding and other flood-related hazards.— Within this district, the design and

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construction of development should be accomplished in a manner that minimizes or eliminates the potential for flooding and loss or damage to life

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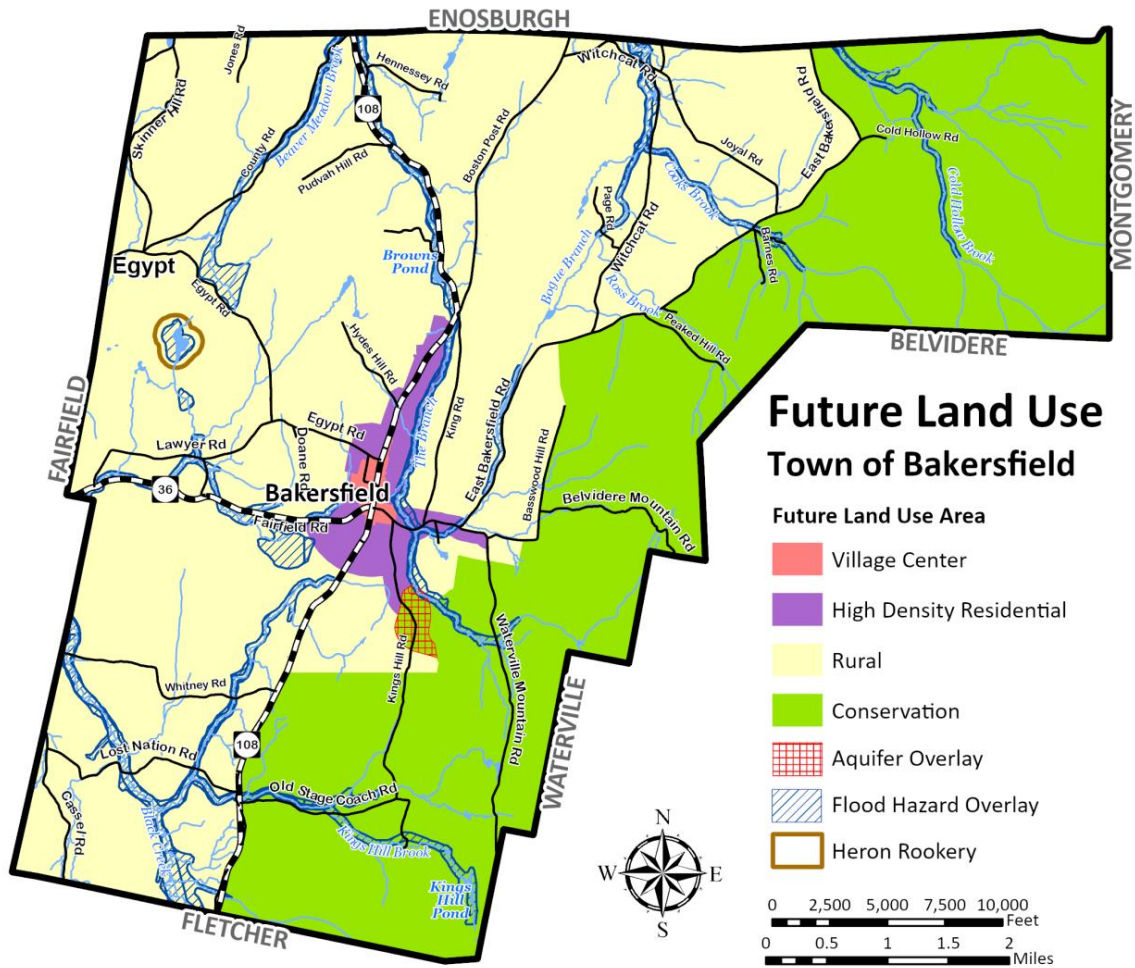
and property. – Uses in the flood hazards areas shall be restricted to agriculture, conservation and outdoor recreation.

The map of Future Land Use Districts is on the next page.

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CHAPTER 89. HOUSING

Goals

- To ensure the provision of adequate, safe and affordable housing for all income and age groups in an environment that is safe and visually attractive
- To promote new and renovated residential development that reinforces and reflects the traditional forms and historic patterns of residential community settlements and efficiently utilizes existing and planned infrastructure

Policies

1. Conserve and protect the quality and vitality of existing residential neighborhoods ~~or areas,~~ and encourage the renovation of old and deteriorating dwellings.
2. ~~To the extent possible,~~ Locate new housing, especially housing for elderly and disabled residents, in proximity to Bakersfield village and existing infrastructure and services. Consider using the Brigham Academy building for this purpose.
3. In rural areas, work with developers to site ~~Encourage siting of~~ new housing ~~in rural areas in a way~~ that blends harmoniously with the surrounding landscape and preserves ~~the greatest amount of open space~~ continuous blocks of agricultural and forest land.
4. Determine residential densities on the basis of topography, soil conditions, proximity to highways, cost of providing mandated public services, and conservation of natural resources.
- ~~a)5.~~ Promote innovative approaches to developing affordable housing, including planned unit developments.
- ~~5-6.~~ Allow the building of accessory dwelling units ~~apartments~~ within or attached to single family residences in accordance with state law.
7. Ensure that land use regulations do not restrict multifamily and manufactured housing in accordance with state law.
- ~~b)8.~~ Support efforts that assist elderly and disabled residents who want to remain in their homes, and community-based health care systems that enable elderly and disabled people to remain in their communities.
- ~~6-9.~~ Encourage high quality design, efficient construction, and energy efficiency to provide affordable housing that minimizes environmental costs.

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All Bakersfield residents, present and future, should have safe and affordable housing. However, if poorly planned, housing development can increase demands on available facilities and services and may adversely affect environmentally sensitive areas. Planning is necessary to meet anticipated needs, to avoid overburdening services, and to protect natural resources. Planning should include not only the character of the housing stock, but also the patterns of development within the community and housing affordability. The function of this plan is to guide the writing and

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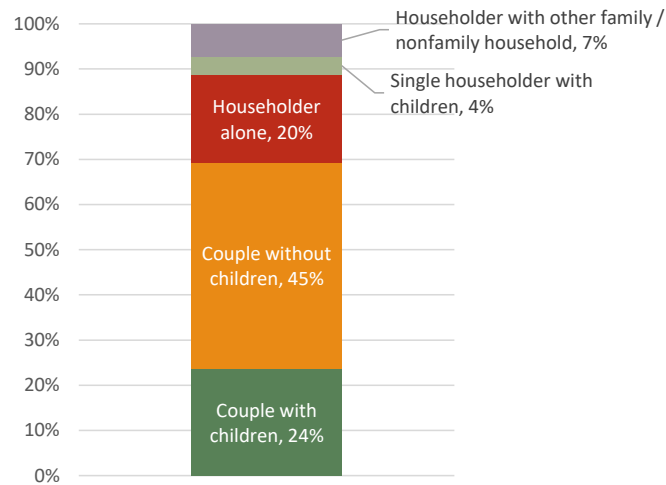
passage of regulations that will encourage reasonable and well-planned growth in Bakersfield. Planned residential development is a priority among the residents of Bakersfield. In a 2006 town survey by the Bakersfield Bylaw Advisory Committee, 37 out of 69 respondents expressed that the rate of residential development in town was “just right”. And that the existing controls on development should continue according to 31 out of 71 respondents. This plan aims to keep living and housing costs affordable in Bakersfield and to accommodate a rate of residential growth that will not exceed the town’s ability to provide adequate facilities and services.

Housing Data

Households

The 2020 Census reported 497 households in Bakersfield. Overall, households are getting smaller. The average household size was 2.56, compared to 2.77 in 2000. The most common household type are couples without children, which account for almost half of all households in Bakersfield. Roughly 17% of Bakersfield residents live alone.

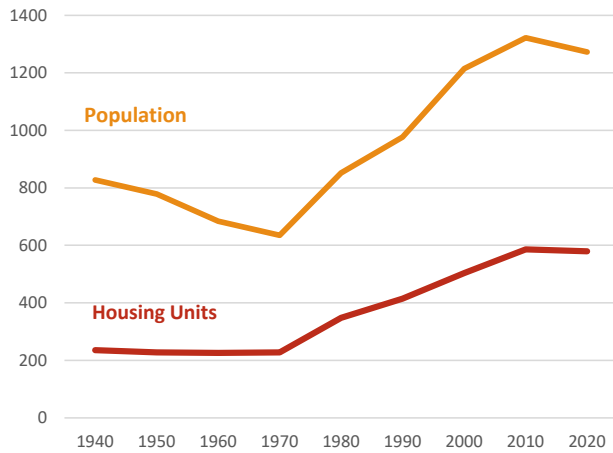
Figure 8.1: Households by type (2024)



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Figure 8.2: Housing Units vs. Population, 1940-2020



Housing Stock Trends

Bakersfield had a period of rapid growth in housing stock between 1970 and 2010. During that period 358 housing units were added, which more than doubled the housing supply. However, this period of growth has not continued since 2010, and the number of housing units declined slightly from 2010 to 2020. This is consistent with a similar slight loss of population during the same period.

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Recently, 3-6 building permits for new homes have been issued each year in Bakersfield. -20 years ago, this number was much higher. Today, most housing units in Bakersfield were built either before 1940 or between 1980-2000.

The 2020 Census showed a total of 579,586 housing units in Bakersfield, an increase of over 150 percent since the 1970s. -Of these units, 426 only 27 are renter-occupied according to the 2024 American Community Survey. 97% of housing units are single-family homes, and 3% are mobile homes. ACS data also estimates that Bakersfield has about 57 units that are seasonally occupied. were owner-occupied, 69 were renter-occupied year-round housing, 67 were seasonal or recreational housing units, and 9 were vacant housing units. The rate of housing development has exceeded the rate of population increase (Figure 9.1). Total housing units increased by over 16 percent from 2000 to 2010, while population increased at a rate of only 8 percent.

The number of building permits for new houses issued per year has gradually increased between 2000 and 2005 (Figure 9.2). The number of permits for new housing in the last 3 years 2011 to 2013 was 14. The vast proportion of new housing in Bakersfield is year-round housing with vacation homes accounting for only a small percentage of new construction.

Affordable Housing Housing Affordability

Figure 8.3: Number of Building Permits Issued per Year in Bakersfield, 2000-2025



Figure 8.4: Bakersfield Housing Units by Age (2024)

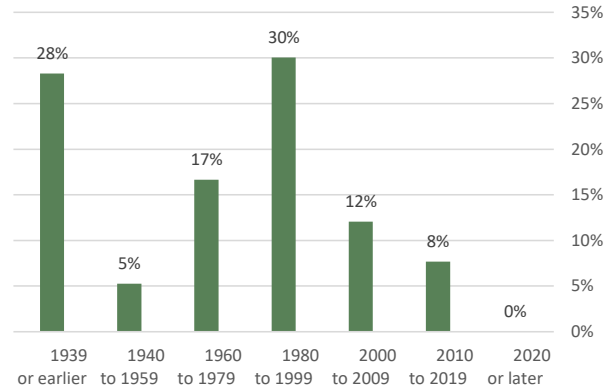
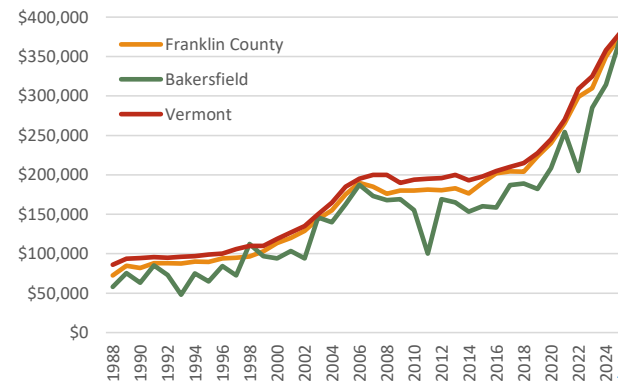


Figure 8.5: Median Primary Home Sale Price



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The demand for affordable housing is an important issue in many Vermont communities. Housing costs have increased rapidly statewide in recent years (Figure 9.5), which makes access to affordable housing an important issue across Vermont. Bakersfield's median home sale price has more than doubled since 2019. The median cost of a home in Bakersfield was \$370,000 in 2025, which is similar to the county (\$375,000) and state (\$379,000) median. In the 2006 survey of Bakersfield residents, 28 respondent out of 70 respondents, or 40% noted that support for affordable housing is an important or very important planning goal for the town.

According to the Vermont Housing Finance Agency, a household would need a median income of \$123,748 to afford the median home in Bakersfield. This means that currently only the top 20% of Bakersfield households by income can affordably buy a home in their community.

According to the 2024 American Community Survey, 1 out of 5 homeowner households in Bakersfield are cost burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs.

Because the portion of renter households in Bakersfield is very small, it is difficult to obtain accurate data about the affordability of rental units. The estimated median rent in Bakersfield is \$1,200 (2024 ACS), which is affordable for a household with an income of \$48,000. This indicates that rental units are generally affordable, but the supply of rental units is still very small (only 27 total).

Housing Needs

Housing Goals

2030: 28-43 units

2050: 82-168 units

Defining Affordable Housing

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At an individual level, housing is considered affordable when a household spends 30% or less of their total income on housing. At the community level, affordability is defined based on the metropolitan statistical area or county median household income. Bakersfield is within the Burlington-South Burlington Metropolitan Statistical Area (Chittenden, Franklin and Grand Isle Counties) and has a similar median income to the MSA as a whole. Therefore, this plan uses the MSA median income to determine affordability.

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Rental housing: Rent affordable to a household earning 80% of the MSA median income (\$71,652)

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Home purchase: Mortgage affordable to a household earning 130% of the MSA median income (\$107,338)

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Bakersfield's future depends on increasing the supply and affordability of housing in the Town. Otherwise, future generations may have to leave the community to find housing elsewhere. As required by state law, the housing goal for Bakersfield is to have at least 28 new housing units by 2030 and at least 82 new housing units by 2050. If development trends of the last 5 years continue, Bakersfield will have 18 new units by 2030. Meeting housing goals will require a major change in the amount of housing built in Bakersfield.

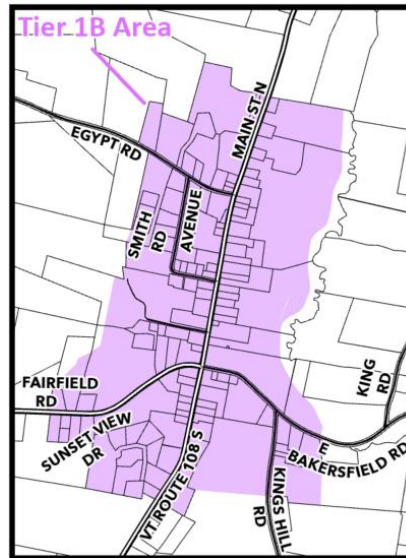
Housing cost and supply are largely determined by large-scale control. However, there are still steps that the Town can take. Bakersfield has opted in to Tier 1B, which makes housing of Bakersfield Village exempt from Act 250 (see map). Tier 1B Plan and are separate from zoning boundaries. The Town can ensure that they are not overly restrictive.

Most new housing should be built in Bakersfield Village and zoning district. The Town supports gentle infill in the Village, duplexes, and small multi-unit apartments that fit the existing also supports rehabilitation of historic structures for housing

Outside of the village, development should be at a rate area. The Town supports Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), development to conserve rural countryside and the working Town also supports affordable housing options such as

High housing costs place a greater strain on lower income economically better off. Therefore, affordable housing initiatives generally emphasize the importance of providing affordable housing to households that are at or below the median income of the area.

The price of housing in Bakersfield has generally followed the regional and statewide trends (Figure 9.3). According to the Vermont Housing Data website in 2014, the median sale price of a primary residence in Bakersfield (\$153,250) was slightly below that of Franklin County (\$176,500) and the state as a whole (\$193,000). However, when compared with other local housing markets, including St. Albans Town (\$199,900), Fairfield (\$226,000), and Fletcher (\$164,750), Bakersfield appears to be a more affordable community in which to buy a home.



economic forces outside of the Town's at a local level to support housing, developments of up to 50 units in areas are based on the NRPC Regional also review its zoning regulations to

the surrounding High-Density Residential such as adding accessory dwelling units, historic settlement pattern. The Town where appropriate.

consistent with the rural nature of the which allow for the clustering of agricultural and forest landscape. The manufactured homes.

households than on households that are

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According to Vermont Statute, housing is considered affordable when a household earning not more than 80 percent of the county median income or the metropolitan statistical area's median income, if it applies, pays no more than thirty percent of their income on housing.

All municipalities in Franklin County are deemed part of the Burlington South Burlington Metropolitan Statistical Area by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The figures for median income, however, do not paint an accurate picture for many of the municipalities within Franklin County, including Bakersfield. The median household income according to the 2009-2013 American Community Survey for the Burlington-

South Burlington MSA was \$61,763, while it as \$56,240 in Franklin County. For this reason, the Northwest Regional Planning Commission uses the county median household income to compute affordability statistics.

Table 9.1 shows the affordability gap for Bakersfield, which is the difference between the maximum affordable mortgage and the median sale price for primary residences.

100 percent of the median income represents moderate income households, 80 percent represents low income households, 50 percent represents very low income, and 30 percent represents very, very low income households.

Moderate income households can afford a mortgage with monthly payments that do not exceed 30 percent of their monthly income. In Franklin County, this equates to a mortgage of not more than \$191,000. This figure is higher than the 2001 median sale price for single-family dwellings of \$153,250 and therefore there is no affordability gap at the County median household income level. However, at 80% of the median household income level there is an affordability gap of negative \$11,575, which indicates that house at the median sale price in Bakersfield would be unaffordable. For those with an income below this level, owning a home at the median sale prices is even further beyond their reach.

Table 9.1: Homeownership Affordability in Bakersfield

Percent of Franklin County Median Household Income	30% of Income		Taxes and Insurance	Income Available for Housing /Month	5% Down Payment	Maximum Affordable Mortgage	Median Sale Price for Primary Residences in Bakersfield (2014)	Affordability Gap	
	Per Year	Per Month							
100%	\$56,240	\$16,872	\$1,406	\$414	\$992	\$8,425	\$201,056.83	\$153,250	\$47,807
80%	\$44,992	\$13,498	\$1,125	\$414	\$711	\$8,425	\$141,675.49	\$153,250	-\$11,575
50%	\$28,120	\$8,436	\$703	\$414	\$289	\$8,425	\$52,603.48	\$153,250	-\$100,647
30%	\$16,872	\$5,062	\$422	\$414	\$8	\$8,425	\$6,777.96	\$153,250	-\$160,028

Data Source: Median income based ACS 2009-2013 estimates; taxes and insurance are an estimate; median sale price for primary residences in Bakersfield was obtained from the Vermont Department of Taxes; all other figures computed by the NRPC. Maximum affordable mortgage rates include a 4% mortgage rate.

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Senior Housing

Currently, the town of Bakersfield currently does not have specific group-housing for senior citizens. The 2010 US Census reported that 9.9 percent of Bakersfield residents were age 65 and over. The median age for Bakersfield residents has risen the last twenty years from (32.2 years in 1999, 35.2 years in 2000 and 39.2 years in 2010). The 2010 median age in Bakersfield is similar to the median age of Franklin County (38.9 years) and slightly lower than the state of Vermont (41.5 years). The town, county, and the state have all seen a steady increase in their median ages since 1970. Because the population is aging as a whole, steps need to be taken to ensure that there is adequate and affordable housing available for senior citizens. The Town currently has a purchase and sales option with a private developer to convert the Brigham Academy building in Bakersfield Village into units of building has been identified as a potential location for senior housing. This project will be an important step in accomplishing the Town's housing goals.

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Planned Unit Developments

One of the intents of this plan is to keep living and housing costs affordable in Bakersfield, and to provide for the growth of residential facilities without speculative development. Planned Unit Development (PUDs) have the potential to help Bakersfield attain its goals for land use and housing as they allow for the clustering of development, conserving rural countryside, protecting contiguous woodlands and the working landscape, and providing a more efficient and affordable means of housing development, especially as the population of Bakersfield ages.

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The effect of major subdivisions on school facilities, town roads and other town facilities must be carefully considered. It is preferable to have these developments phased and conditions should be set to

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50%	\$28,120	\$8,436	\$703	\$414	\$289	\$8,425	\$52,603.48	\$153,250	-\$100,647
30%	\$16,872	\$5,062	\$422	\$414	\$8	\$8,425	\$6,777.86	\$153,250	-\$160,028

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ensure that the impacts on town services, neighbors, and community character are minimal.

CHAPTER 911. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goals

- ~~Encourage the development of appropriate and compatible industry and business in the town;~~
- ~~P~~To promote a balanced, diverse economic base where residents have , with a focus on locally-owned enterprises that utilizes the local labor force access to satisfying and rewarding job opportunities at a livable wage.;
- To promote and sustain the local agricultural and forestry economies.;
- To support the Village as the economic center of Bakersfield and encourage the growth of small businesses that serve the needs of local residents. Promote a mix of new development in the designated village area, and focus a majority of any new commercial development within the village;
- ~~To~~ Support and encourage low-impact, home-based businesses throughout the town.

Policies

1. Investigate opportunities to attract small businesses to the Village that serve the needs of the community, including a cooperative-based general store that sells products from local businesses.
- 2. Maintain zoning bylaws to support the development of home businesses and home industries that fit with the rural character of the community.
- 3. Support the maintenance and upgrade of broadband internet and cell phone service to of and/or upgrade to reliable telecommunications services that support existing and future businesses, and attract commercial development, such as broadband internet and cell phone service.
- 1.4. Provide infrastructure in appropriate areas to attract and retain for the retention and attraction of businesses that are consistent with land use goals.the town's character
- 2.5. Support agriculture and forestry related businesses, and protect productive agricultural and forestry lands from conversion to incompatible land uses.
- 3.6. Commercial and industrial development should not place an undue burden on the Town in terms of services and facilities required from their development and its associated impacts.

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Overview

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The Bakerfield term “economy” includes the natural resources, businesses production, jobs, income and activities in the town and region that contribute to the economic well-being of local residents, businesses and industries. A healthy well-planned economy is one with Economic planning can assist in providing well-paying jobs that match the skills of residents commensurate with the skills and aims of local residents, which has a more balanced tax base to meet community needs, where the protection of important economic resources are protected, and which supports local businesses that provide the provision of services and products needed in to support the local community. The future economy of Bakersfield must be one where goods and services are accessible, resources are used sustainably, local strengths are built upon, and all residents can achieve success. Poorly planned economic development can adversely affect the local environment, strain municipal services, cause dislocations of businesses and labor, and adversely impact community character.

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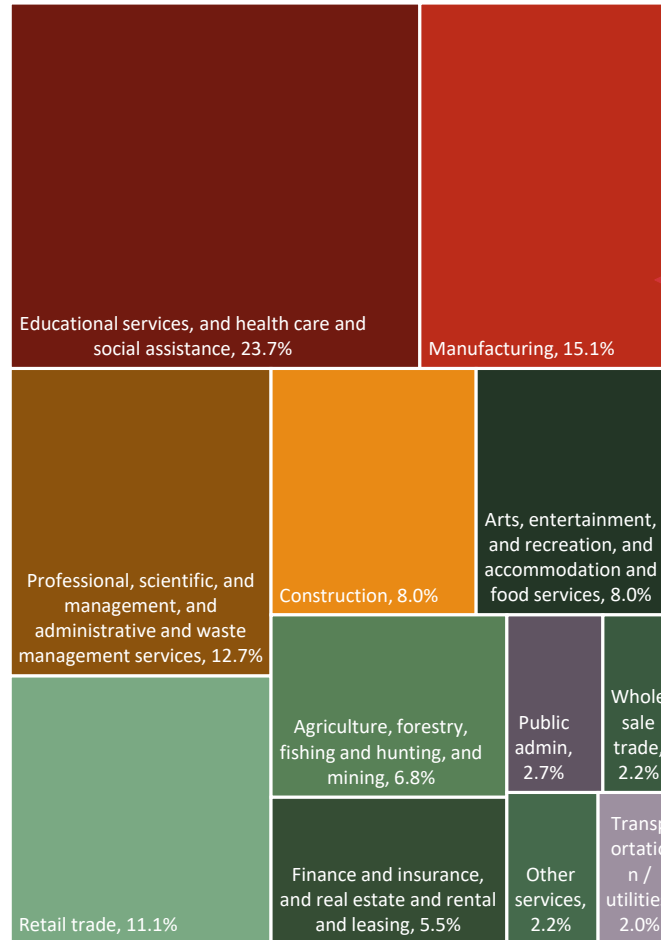
Bakersfield's local economy remains predominantly rural, agrarian, and resource based. Planning for other forms of economic development in small, relatively isolated communities such as Bakersfield, which have limited infrastructure to support business, retail and industrial growth, is a challenge; but such planning can help highlight local needs, strengths and opportunities.

Local Economy

Employment Characteristics

Historically, the Bakersfield economy has relied heavily on agriculture, forestry and education. Today, the largest employment sector for Bakersfield residents isare educational services, health care and social assistance, with retail trade, construction, and manufacturing. Table 13.1 Figure 9.1 shows the industry sectors within which Bakersfield residents are employed.

Fig. 9.1: Occupation of Bakersfield Residents

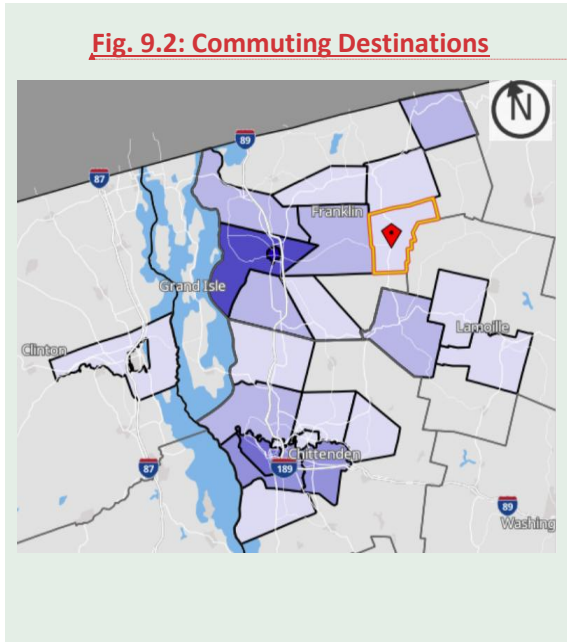


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Among workers who commute, 50% commute to other towns in Franklin County and 30% commute to Chittenden County (2023 U.S. Census OnTheMap Tool). Less than 2% of Bakersfield residents work for Bakersfield based-employers. Note that this does not count self-employed or remote workers who but anecdotal evidence pandemic and residents



live in Bakersfield. Data on remote work is difficult to obtain, shows that remote work has grown since the COVID-19 may have more opportunities to work from home.

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95% of Bakersfield residents over age 24 have a high school diploma or higher. This rate is roughly the same as in Franklin County and statewide. 36% of Bakersfield residents over age 24 have a Bachelor's degree or higher. This rate is higher than Franklin County as a whole but lower than the state average.

Local Businesses in Bakersfield

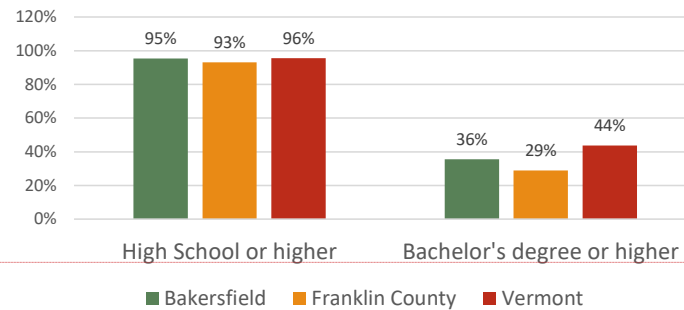
Agriculture continues to have a substantial presence in Bakersfield. ~~This includes five dairy farms in Bakersfield, and there are, as discussed in Chapter 3, there~~ are a growing number of small farms engaged in livestock and local/organic food production. ~~There are also several maple sugar producers that process and market their own syrup, and two tree-free farms that raise and sell Christmas trees.~~

According to a ~~2012-2024~~ report from the Vermont Department of Labor, there were ~~910~~ commercial establishments in Bakersfield ~~and approximately 113 workers employed in the Town that had 56 employees total.~~ ~~Main Street in the Village has historically been Bakersfield's commercial center, however there are currently no longer any businesses there beyond a gas station/convenience store in addition to various other types of businesses and a small café. The Bakersfield Village Market general store closed in 2021.~~

Table 11.2 Unemployment rates from 2009-2013 (not seasonally adjusted)

~~Source: Vermont Department of Labor, Economic & Labor Market Information.~~

Fig. 9.3: Educational Attainment Age 25+, 2024



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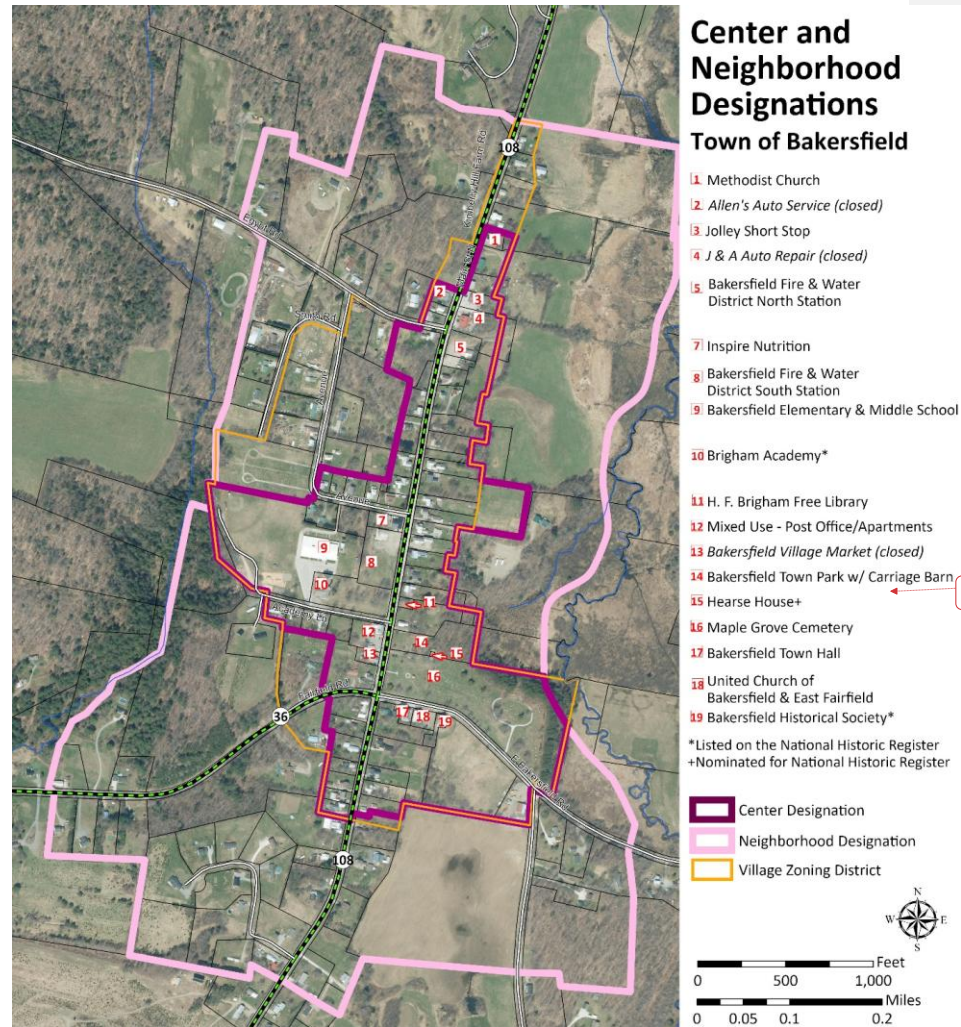
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Designated Designated Village Center and Neighborhood

Bakersfield has a Designated Center which extends along Main Street, and a Designated Neighborhood which extends into the surrounding area. These areas are designated by the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development. The Center and Neighborhood Designations qualify Bakersfield for grants, tax credits, and other incentives from the State of Vermont to encourage economic development in these areas.

Bakersfield gained a Center designation in 2011, when the program was known as the Designated Village Center program. In 2026, the Center area was expanded, and the new Neighborhood designation was established.

In June 2011, Bakersfield received "Village Center" designation from the State of Vermont for the area surrounding the village green (See Figure 11.1). This designation entitles those within the Village Center with certain benefits such as tax credits for façade improvements, tax credits for code compliance, and priority consideration for Municipal Planning Grants (MPG) and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). The Town did receive a Municipal Planning Grant to plan for the redevelopment of Brigham Academy (discussed later), but there has been no other redevelopment associated with the designation program at present.



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~~These designated areas. It is envisioned that designation as a Village Center will be intended to~~ foster investment in ~~the village area and around the Village.~~ This will in turn further the goals included in this plan, such as promoting a mix of development in the village and focusing any economic development within Bakersfield within the village. ~~It will also help further state planning goals such as maintaining~~ “historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside” and “provide a strong and diverse economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities and that maintains high environmental standards.”

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~~In 2012, Bakersfield received a Municipal Planning Grant, to assess the structural integrity the currently vacant Brigham Academy building, to generate enthusiasm for finding a reuse of the Academy and to identify ways that the building could be reused. The Village Center designation definitively helped strengthen the Town's grant application.~~

~~The Brigham Academy is the envisioned foundation of the Village Center. The structure, currently undergoing sale from the school district to the Town, has high redevelopment potential. Future uses could include a space for small business incubation and classes for local entrepreneurs. The Academy gymnasium could be used for exercise and fitness classes for the young and old. Other uses of the space within the Academy could include satellite offices for visits by health care providers including physicians, dentists, nurses, therapists, social workers and mental health counselors.~~

Survey Question: If you could change one thing about Bakersfield, what would it be?

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Future Economic Development

General Store

Bakersfield’s general store closed in 2021. There are currently no other local options available for purchasing groceries, food, and other day to day needs. Some items are available at the gas station convenience store, but it is not locally run and selection is limited. Residents largely have to travel to businesses outside of Bakersfield to eat and shop.

Public outreach has shown strong support for establishing a cooperative general store in the Village. A general store would allow residents to support a local business for their daily needs. Like many other small towns in Vermont, the general store would be a gathering place and a center of community that brings life to the Village. The store would also be an opportunity to sell products from local based businesses, further supporting Bakersfield’s economy.

The Town should collaborate with community groups and investigate funding opportunities to bring a cooperative general store to the Village. Opportunities include the Village Trust Initiative, which has funded similar projects statewide. Strong local support is necessary for such a project to work, and outreach results show that this is a high priority for residents.

Brigham Academy

The Brigham Academy is envisioned as the foundation of Bakersfield Village. The Town currently has a purchase and sales option with a private developer to convert the building into senior housing. Adding a commercial component or community space would bring further economic benefits to the Village. The Town should continue to play an active role in its redevelopment to ensure that its restoration brings as much benefit to the Village as possible.



“In a dream world, there would be a way to revitalize a town store. Communal, casual gathering places are historically essential to the fabric of a society, of any size. My



“A small store, like a co-op, that carried fruits and vegetables, bread, local products, etc. The history and people in the community who



“We need to have the general store back. it was a great loss. The quaintness, sidewalks, school, the village square, music in the park

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Other Economic Development

Continued economic health for the Town of Bakersfield lies in the maintenance of viable agricultural soils to support all forms of agricultural activity and the provision of goods and services that support an agrarian economy. ~~The Town should encourage efforts that support its agricultural base, including the protection of primary agricultural soils and enrollment in the farmers' rights to farm; support of tax abatement programs, such as the Use Value Appraisal Program (Current Use) program, better known as Current Use.~~

However, Economic and Labor Market information trends show that agricultural employment has been in steady decline, and more people commute outside of the Town to work. ~~To complement agriculture in Bakersfield's rural economy the rural character of the Town and agrarian economy, small commercial enterprises, home and farm based businesses, occupations and light industry, in appropriate locations, should be encouraged. Locally produced products and services, included value-added agricultural products, can enhance the Town's economy and provide more economic opportunities for residents. One way to encourage the growth of small businesses~~

~~The Town recognizes that a particularly effective means to accomplish these goals would be to bring more reliable high-speed (broadband) internet connectivity and cellular and internet service to residents and businesses throughout the Town. Broadband internet connections would encourage and enable small and home-based businesses, and enhance existing businesses in ways that current connections cannot.~~

Tourists, attracted by the beauty of the town's agricultural landscape, may also play a greater role in the Town's economic future. ~~Related development such as bed and breakfasts, farmers markets, craft shops, or eateries could add to the local economic base.~~

Challenges to Economic Development

The Town is faced with ~~several~~ challenges to local economic development. ~~By working on these challenges, including sewer capacity, calming traffic, improving the safety of pedestrian activity, and encouraging improvements to telecommunication, the Town will encourage the continued development of a healthy economy in the village area.~~ Many of these challenges are discussed in other chapters of the plan, but are referred to here as they relate to economic development:

- *Sidewalks and paths.* A safe pedestrian and bicycle environment in the Village will contribute to its economic vitality. The Village currently has a small sidewalk network along Main Street. Sidewalks completed in 2010 connect Brigham Academy and the school with the library

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~~and village park.~~ Continued efforts to improve safe walking and biking could attract future development and encourage tourism. ~~As new development occurs in these areas,~~ attention should be given to improving and adding new bike and pedestrian connections.

- ~~Sewer Infrastructure.~~ ~~A major barrier to attracting new business in Bakersfield Village is the lack of septic capacity of public sewage disposal facilities.~~ ~~Bakersfield does not currently have a public wastewater system.~~ ~~At present, there is no plan to add a public wastewater system in public sewage disposal infrastructure in Bakersfield.~~ Shared wastewater solutions may be necessary to meet economic development goals in the Village.
- ~~Current Technology Cell Service and Internet.~~ ~~To be able to both serve the small businesses and provide for opportunities for working at home, businesses need the Town needs reliable access to broadband and internet and cellular service.~~ Much of Bakersfield lacks cell service, which is a major barrier to economic development. Expanding cell and internet service would bring major economic development benefits. ~~Such advances in telecommunication technology have the potential to significantly impact the local economy as they make rural Bakersfield more attractive to home-based businesses, telecommuters, and other businesses that increasingly rely on broadband for their services.~~ ~~As technology evolves, Bakersfield should continue to work the public and private sectors to improve the local telecommunication infrastructure to ensure that residents have fast, reliable network connections.~~

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Working to implement the goals of the Bakersfield Town Plan as a whole will help to address these challenges and make economic growth possible.

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