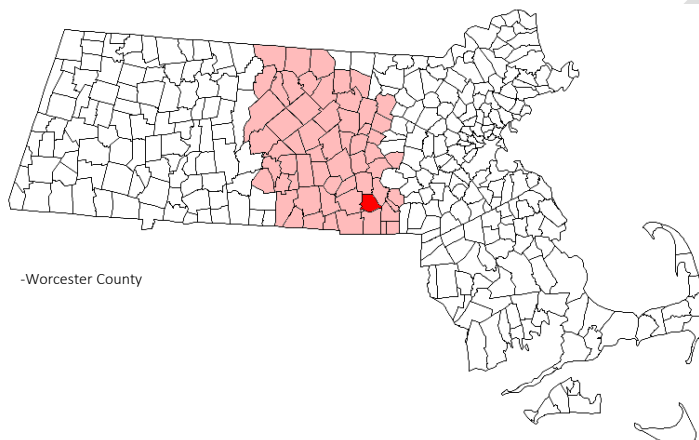


SECTION 3 -COMMUNITY SETTING

- 3.1 REGIONAL CONTEXT
- 3.2 HISTORY OF NORTHBRIDGE
- 3.3 POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS
- 3.4 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POPULATIONS
- 3.5 INFRASTRUCTURE
- 3.6 RECENT GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Northbridge is a growing residential community with a rich local (& national) history. The following “Community Setting” Section provides an overview of the town’s location, history, demographics, infrastructure, and growth patterns.

3.1 REGIONAL CONTEXT



-Worcester County

A suburb of the City of Worcester, Northbridge is located in the historic Blackstone River Valley of central Massachusetts (Worcester County). Northbridge is approximately 17.27 square-miles, sharing its borders with the Town of Grafton (to the north); Upton & Mendon (to the east); Uxbridge (to the south) and Sutton (to the west). Located along Route 146 and near the junction of Interstate 90 Massachusetts Turnpike, Northbridge may be considered a semi-rural bedroom community; 13-miles south of Worcester, 43-miles southwest of Boston and 34-miles north of Providence, Rhode

Island. Northbridge is a member of the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), which includes the City of Worcester and 39 surrounding communities.

Northbridge, made up of 5 villages (Linwood, Rockdale, Riverdale, Whitinsville, and Northbridge Center), was incorporated as a town on July 14, 1772. The Town has a population of 16,335 (US Census 2020) with a tax rate of \$13.77 per thousand (FY 2022).

Situated between Interstates 90, 146, 395 and 495, Northbridge has good highways access within proximity to three (3) major airports: Worcester Regional Airport, Providence’s TF Green International Airport & Boston’s Logan International Airport. The Providence-Worcester freight rail traverses along the Blackstone River running north/south and paralleling Route 122 (Providence Road). MBTA commuter rail service is available via the Grafton line and Union Station (Worcester, MA). The Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) offers local bus shuttle service to various designations within the Blackstone River Valley. With the expansion of Route 146 (Worcester-Providence Turnpike) and improved access to Interstate 90 -Massachusetts Turnpike (Millbury, MA) Northbridge and its neighboring communities have experienced residential growth within the past twenty-years (2000-20).

-see Regional Context Map (Appendix A)

Northbridge is located within the Blackstone River Watershed. *A watershed is the land over which rain and snowmelt drain to a particular waterbody.* The Blackstone River Watershed stretches from the brooks that form its headwaters in Worcester, MA to its mouth in Pawtucket, RI. There, the Blackstone River joins the Seekonk River which flows to Narragansett Bay in Providence, RI. Along the way the Blackstone is joined by six major rivers, in addition to many smaller tributaries. These waterways drain a land area of over 475 square-miles and include over 7,000 acres of ponds, lakes, and reservoirs.

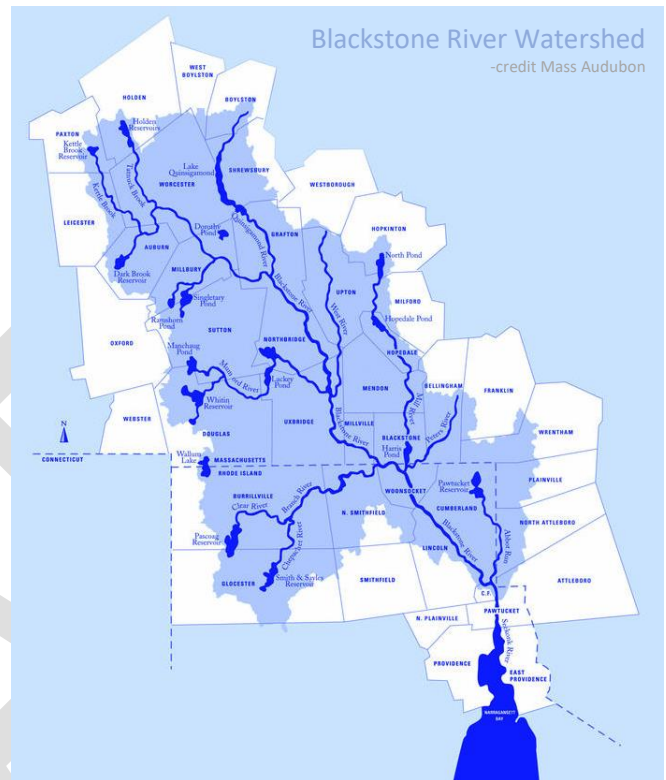
Three rivers flow through Northbridge; the Blackstone River, the West River and the Mumford River. The Blackstone River flows north-south through the eastern portion of the Town. The West River and the Mumford River serve as two main tributaries to the Blackstone River. The West River flows through the southeast corner of the Town. The Mumford River, originating in Sutton flows eastward through the village of Whitinsville (Northbridge) to the connection with the Blackstone River in Uxbridge. *Whatever land use occurs within the watershed impacts the quality of all our rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds.*

The Blackstone River Valley is the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution. The waters of the Blackstone River powered the country's first textile mills. In recognition of the historical and cultural significance of the area, in 1986 the U.S. Congress established the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. In 2015, the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park was established, becoming the National Park Service's 402nd park unit located within Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The National Historical Park was created for the purpose of preserving, protecting, and interpreting the industrial heritage of the Blackstone River Valley, where the village of Whitinsville is included in the boundaries of the park (1 of 5 primary nodes).

Unfortunately, its long history of industrial use has left the Blackstone River a legacy of pollution and has been characterized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as one of "the most polluted rivers in the country" with respect to toxic sediments. Efforts to clean and restore the Blackstone River continues, including ZAP the Blackstone, a grassroots initiative started in the 1972, aimed to educate and undertake water monitoring, focused on improving the health of the Blackstone River to improve water quality and promote environmental restoration to return the Blackstone River to a swimmable and fishable waterbody.

On August 27, 2022, ZAP the Blackstone celebrated its 50th anniversary, where hundreds of volunteers throughout the Blackstone River Valley cleaned up riverways and travelways from Providence, RI to Worcester, MA. In May 2022, the Town (Board of Selectmen) adopted a resolution in support of protecting and restoring the Blackstone River Watershed, partnering with the Blackstone River Collaborative as part of the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program.

Northbridge shares its public water supply with neighboring Sutton. Water is provided by Whitinsville Water Company, a private public utility regulated by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). The public drinking water supply originates from two (2) groundwater sources: the Whitin Wellfield



(Carr Street, Northbridge) and the Sutton Wellfield (Mendon Road, Sutton). The Whitinsville Water Company owns a series of five (5) reservoirs that are used to recharge the groundwater from where the wells withdraw water from the ground. These reservoirs are generally protected as the water company owns over one thousand acres of land dedicated to watershed protection. An Aquifer Protection District adopted by Northbridge (Zone I & Zone II Aquifer Protection Districts) includes provisions to safeguard and protect from contamination of the ground and surface water resources providing public water supply.

3.2 HISTORY OF NORTHBRIDGE

Northbridge was part of the Colonial Mendon Grant of 1667 and was first used by settlers as pasture and haying meadow along the river. Northbridge and neighboring Uxbridge broke off from Mendon in 1727, and Northbridge became a separate town in 1775. Although Northbridge was primarily a dispersed agricultural community during the Colonial Period, an iron works was established in present-day Whitinsville by 1729. The earliest grist and sawmills were built in Riverdale before 1740.

Northbridge Center and its surrounding agricultural lands remained the focus of town during the Federal Period (1775-1830), with a secondary center around the Friends meetinghouse on the east side of the Blackstone River. During the pre-Civil War years, more acreage in Northbridge was under cultivation to hay, potatoes, corn, and grain than at any other time. In 1814, however, a mill village began to grow where Rockdale is today, and that industrial area subsequently became an important transportation hub: the junction of the Providence Road, the Central Turnpike, and the Blackstone Canal (replaced by the Providence and Worcester Railroad in 1847).



Whitinsville, MA -1891

By far the greatest industrial growth took place at Mumford River Falls (now Whitinsville), south of Northbridge Center. An early cotton manufactory was built near the iron foundry in 1809, with workers' housing and two more cotton mills built by 1830.

Forty years later, Northbridge's population had tripled. Northbridge Center had lost much of its importance, supplanted by growing mill villages along the Blackstone and Mumford Rivers: Rockdale, Riverdale, Linwood, and Whitinsville. The Town's main focus shifted to Whitinsville, as the Whitin family, inspired by matriarch Betsy Fletcher Whitin, expanded their two related businesses: manufacturing cotton yard goods and state-of-the-art textile machinery. By the beginning of the Civil War, the Whitins were among the leading manufacturers in the Blackstone Valley. Between 1864 and 1869, John Whitin consolidated all his machine shop operations in Whitinsville, leading to extensive construction activity including worker cottages and tenements, a distinct residential area for management, and numerous large proprietors' estates. In addition, a library (1844), a high school (1865) and the Whitinsville National Bank (1865) were established.



Whitinsville and the Whitin family's industrial operations continued to dominate Northbridge in the Late Industrial Period (1870-1915). By the beginning of the 20th century, Northbridge was a thoroughly industrial town with parts of it densely populated, where 78% of the men were employed in the factories. Farm acreage had decreased by a third from its mid-19th century high, although this may have had less to do with the rise in population than with a shift in farming from mixed agriculture to dairying; a change that was echoed throughout the Blackstone Valley including at the Whitins' scientifically managed model dairy farm on Castle Hill.

The construction of a streetcar line from Northbridge to Worcester in the 1890s gave residents access to the larger stores of the city, putting an end to Northbridge Center as a commercial focus, although Church Street in Whitinsville began to develop as a local commercial district. Streetcar service was replaced by improved roadways for automotive traffic during the 1920s. The Whitin family's factories continued to prosper until a depression hit the textile industry in 1923. This economic downturn forced the closure of cotton mills throughout the region, including the Whitinsville Cotton Company, the Linwood Cotton Company, and mills in Rockdale and Riverdale. The Whitin Machine Works put most of the buildings to use for some part of their continuing operation and carried the business through to a brief spike in activity during World War II, when the company manufactured magnetos for American aircraft. Labor unrest and worker strikes in the late 1940s discouraged the Whitins from further involvement in industry. Over the next decade they sold their business interests in Northbridge, as well as remaining company housing and the historic Castle Hill Farm.

3.3 POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

The Town developed around the mill villages of Rockdale, Riverdale, Linwood, and Whitinsville.

Today, Northbridge (village of Whitinsville) presents a remarkably picture of one of the distinct byproducts of the Industrial Revolution in New England, the company town. The Town shows its evolution from an agrarian settlement to urbanized industrial mill village along the banks of the Blackstone and Mumford River. Where development was concentrated in the area surrounding the mills. The housing types ranged from single-family to six-family units and boarding housing.

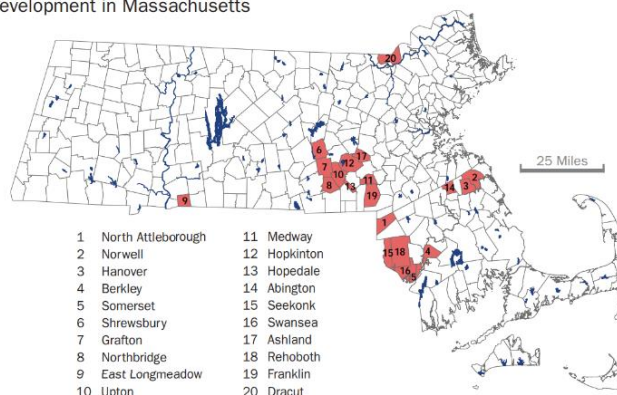
The population of Northbridge has generally increased since 1850. A decrease in population occurred during two decades, from 1920 to 1930 and from 1990 to 2000. The decade of greatest growth prior to 2000 was between 1890 and 1900, when the population grew by 2,433, or more than half the previous decade's population. The largest decade of growth overall for Northbridge was 2000 to 2010, when the population grew by 2,525 individuals, or 19.2%, during this time period.

Table 1
Historic Population, 1850–2020
Source: US Decennial Census

Census	Population	Change	Percent Change
1850	2,230	--	--
1860	2,633	403	18.1%
1870	3,774	1,141	43.3%
1880	4,053	279	7.4%
1890	4,603	550	13.6%
1900	7,036	2,433	52.9%
1910	8,807	1,771	25.2%
1920	10,174	1,367	15.5%
1930	9,713	-461	-4.5%
1940	10,242	529	5.4%
1950	10,476	234	2.3%
1960	10,800	324	3.1%
1970	11,795	995	9.2%
1980	12,246	451	3.8%
1990	13,371	1,125	9.2%
2000	13,182	-189	-1.4%
2010	15,707	2,525	19.2%
2020	16,335	628	3.9%

In report issued by Mass Audubon (in 2005) “Losing Ground: Beyond the Footprint” Northbridge was ranked as one of the top twenty hot spots for development in Massachusetts, along with neighboring communities of Grafton, Upton, Medway, and Hopedale (other Blackstone River Valley communities).

Figure 1.3: Hot spots of development: 20 Towns with the highest rate of development in Massachusetts



*Credit -Mass Audubon “Losing Ground: Beyond the Footprint”

Much of the mill housing exists today and provides Northbridge with a variety of dwelling types to meet the demands of a diverse population. In recent years, the relatively low land costs, and availability of public infrastructure (water/sewer) has incentivized developers to build single-family subdivisions.

From 2000 to 2022, Northbridge permitted twenty by-right and open space cluster subdivisions. Some of these developments are located within proximity to the locus area of the village centers, while others extend development (infrastructure/services) to the periphery of the town’s border.

As shown in the table below, over 950 housing units were created since 2000 (excludes frontage lots along public roads). This figure does not include the 75 senior housing units created as part of the historic Linwood Mill adaptive reuse development completed in 2011.

Since 1960, the Northbridge population experienced steady growth until 1990, where there was a decades-long lull in development. Growth began again in earnest after the 2000 Millennium to the most recent census figure (2020) of 16,335; a 38% increase in population in 50 years.

Age	Population	Percentage
Under 5 years	1,110	6.90%
5 to 9 years	1,168	7.30%
10 to 14 years	1,080	6.70%
15 to 19 years	1,174	7.30%
20 to 24 years	839	5.20%
25 to 34 years	1,922	11.90%
35 to 44 years	2,122	13.20%
45 to 54 years	2,513	15.60%
55 to 64 years	922	5.70%
65 to 74 years	1,081	6.70%
75 to 84 years	679	4.20%
85 years & over	342	2.10%

Raw population numbers do not provide sufficient information to determine the open space and recreation needs of the community. Breaking down the population into various age groups makes it easier to identify patterns of need and interest. Prior Federal Census data used the following groups: under 15 years of age; 15 to 44 years old; 45 to 64 years old; & 65 years and over.

The age demographic for Northbridge is similar to Massachusetts and the United States. The percentages over time show a steady aging population. Over the last 20 years, the 45 to 64 age group has increased by 8% and the 65 and over has increased by 2%. This aging trend is predicted to continue. The impact of demographic again should be considered in long-term planning with age-appropriate

amenities such as walking, biking, and hiking trails, as well as maintenance of existing parks and preserving open spaces for passive recreation.

The Northbridge School District consists of three (3) schools: Northbridge Elementary School; Northbridge Middle School and Northbridge High School.

Northbridge School Enrollment (PK-12)					
School Year	1995	2000	2010	2020	2022
Total # of Students	1,958	2,422	2,539	1,999	1,975

These figures do not include school-age population who reside in town but attend the Whitinsville Christian School, Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School, or other out-of-town school.

Roughly 18% of the population is 15 years or younger, and more than 37% of the total population is between 15 and 44 years of age. These figures indicate a need for recreational facilities to serve these segments of the population.

Median Household Income per capita income (\$)	
Northbridge	\$85,503.00
Worcester County	\$77,155.00
Massachusetts	\$84,385.00
United States	\$64,994.00

The 2020 US Census reports that Northbridge has 6,691 households, with an average household size of 2.62 individuals. The population density varies depending on location and availability of public sewer/water, the population per square mile is 946.1 per the 2020 US Census. The median age of Northbridge residents is 40.9, with 16.5% over the age of 65 and 21.1% under the age of 18. The employment rate is 68.1%, with a homeownership rate of 64.3%. According to 2020 ACS 5-year estimates, Northbridge has a poverty rate of 5.5%. Approximately 52.0% of families contain children under the age of 18. Northbridge's housing units are primarily occupied, with relatively low vacancy rates. The rental vacancy rate is 5.1% which is slightly lower than the regional average vacancy rate of 5.8%. This lower rate means that affordable housing may be less available for residents, as property owners may be able to charge a higher rent for the fewer available units.

3.4 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POPULATIONS

Environmental Justice neighborhoods are defined in Chapter 8 of the Acts of 2021: "Environmental justice populations, a neighborhood that meets 1 of more of the following criteria: (i) the annual median household income is not more than 65% of the statewide annual median household income; (ii) minorities comprise 40% or more of the population; (iii) 25% of more of households lack English language proficiency; or (iv) minorities comprise 25% or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150% of the statewide annual median household income."

Environmental Justice (EJ) is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental hazards and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment. EJ is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits.

The Environmental Justice Block Group in Northbridge (BG 2, Census Tract 7501, Worcester County, Massachusetts) meets the criteria of: Minority, with a median household income of \$75,346; this is 87.8% of the MA median, with a total minority population of 27.4%. Northbridge has a median household income of \$81,504 which is 94.9% of the Massachusetts median household income. In 2019 this block group had a population of 3,473.

Environmental Justice (EJ) Population Data is derived from the 2019 American Community Survey based upon demographic criteria developed by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs.

Since 2002, the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) has implemented an Environmental Justice Policy to help ensure that all Massachusetts residents experience equal protection and meaningful involvement with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits. This policy was instituted recognizing that communities across the Commonwealth, particularly those densely populated urban neighborhoods in and around the state's older industrial areas; are facing many environmental challenges associated with Massachusetts' industrial legacy. Residents in these predominantly low-income and minority communities lack open space and recreational resources and often live side-by-side with numerous existing large and small sources of pollution and old abandoned, contaminated sites, which can pose risks to public health and the environment. Critical to advancing Environmental Justice (EJ) in the Commonwealth is the equitable distribution of environmental assets such as parks, open space, and recreational areas. Towards that end, municipalities shall identify and prioritize open space sites in their Open Space & Recreation Plans that are socially, recreationally, and ecologically important to EJ populations with the community.

Northbridge's EJ population encompasses the "New Village" neighborhood located within Whitinsville which was planned and developed by the Whitin family (circa 1900's) as worker housing for the nearby mills. Much of the housing stock still exists today and consists of single-family, duplex, and multifamily units that were occupied by workers depending on a hierarchy of employment and ability to pay rent.

A "town beach" located at Whitin Pond, within the EJ neighborhood closed some 15 to 20-years ago due to potential liability and other concerns of the private property owner (Whitinsville Water Company). The Northbridge Elementary School, located within the EJ neighborhood offers some recreation facilities in the form of ballfields and a playground within the school grounds. The Elsa Whitin Mason Conservation Land is located within the EJ neighborhood; there are no public parks or formal access to water bodies within close proximity to the EJ community other than informal fishing along Main Street causeway. Opportunities to provide open space and access to Arcade Pond (within EJ neighborhood) may be a possibility, however, may require land acquisition, collaborative efforts, and future funding expenditures. -See Environmental Justice Population Map (Appendix A).

3.5 INFRASTRUCTURE

The Whitin Machine Works and the Whitin family provided the financial support for many of the municipal services in Northbridge, including the construction of its schools, fire department, library, community center, and town common. Residents were able to enjoy rather sophisticated infrastructure and amenities without directly paying for it. While this era has long passed, a mindset may still remain in some residents that someone else will provide the Town's needs rather than local taxes. Attempts to pass debt exclusions and proposition 2 ½ overrides are challenges to overcome the normal opposition, as well as overcome the embedded belief that someone else (no longer the Whitin benefactors) but perhaps State or Federal dollars will pay for the costs of needed or desired improvements.

With the increase in residential units (via subdivision development), today the town's infrastructure network has also increased to include over 81 miles of roadway, 52 miles of sewer mains, and 62 miles of water mains. Water is provided by Whitinsville Water Company, a private public utility regulated by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). The public drinking water supply originates from two (2) groundwater sources: the Whitin Wellfield (Carr Street, Northbridge) and the Sutton Wellfield (Mendon Road, Sutton).

In an attempt to assist the town in future funding of roadway improvement projects, Northbridge adopted MassDOT's Complete Streets Funding Program to help address critical gaps in transportation. Eligible projects include simple resurfacing to major reconstruction. Projects under the Complete Streets Program incorporate a series of core principles into their design where all modes of transportation are to be considered as part of a project design. This includes pedestrian travelways, bike lanes, and other available transit options. Redesign and reconfiguration of roadways will not only include traffic calming techniques, but also environmental green infrastructure to capture and treat stormwater.

In addition to participating in the State's Complete Streets Program, Northbridge is an MVP community. The Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grant program (MVP) provides support to cities and towns in Massachusetts to begin the process of planning for climate change resiliency and implementing priority projects. The State awards communities with funding to complete vulnerability assessments and develop action-oriented resiliency plans. Communities who complete the MVP program become certified as an MVP community and are eligible for MVP Action Grant funding.

As part of our MVP initiative, Northbridge recently completed a Source Water Protection Plan for Carpenter Reservoir (June 2022). The project identified opportunities to address stormwater-driven flooding hazards and improve drinking water quality and resilience through nature-based, green infrastructure practices. With input from the public a prioritization of green infrastructure concepts was created. The projects identified will be included in planning of future capital funding within the watershed area of Carpenter Reservoir.

The Blackstone River Greenway is a planned 48-mile multiuse trail network through the Blackstone Valley from Worcester, MA to Providence, RI. Approximately 23-miles have been constructed in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, including sections in Worcester, Millbury, Uxbridge, Millville, and Blackstone, MA. The Northbridge section (approx. 10-miles) is to parallel right-of-way of the active Providence & Worcester Railroad, alongside the Blackstone Canal (towpath) and Blackstone River. The Northbridge segments include steep topography, narrow access, and multiple river crossings. The design/layout for Northbridge has not been completed (MassHighway & MA Department of Conservation & Recreation) and will need to go through environmental permitting before final design and construction. Due to costs and potential conflicts with the railroad and Blackstone River, portions of Northbridge sections may need to be on-road (Providence Road/Rt 122).

3.6 RECENT GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Northbridge began as a rural community, where early settlers cleared the land for agricultural use. During the American Industrial Revolution, the Town developed around compact villages, centered at the mills and along the Blackstone River (Rockdale) and Mumford River (Whitinsville). Since the 1970s, the Town has experienced a substantial increase in housing stock. Between 1980 and 2000, the entire Blackstone Valley saw a significant growth in its population, rising from 72,414 residents in 1980 to 95,674 residents in 2000, increasing 32.1%.



Although Northbridge may have lost land to development over the past decades, the Town still retains some of its rural character; including five (5) local farmlands: Foppema, Kroll, Szerlag, West End, and Castle Hill.

Foppema Farm (pictured) located on Hill Street is a 43-acre family-owned farm and farmstand that produces over 40 different fruits and vegetables.

Today West End Creamery, located on Purgatory Road is still a working farm, growing hay, pumpkins, and feed corn. In an effort to preserve the farm, an agritourism component was added in 2005, creating a popular destination consisting of mini-golf, ice cream shop, corn-maze & other family friendly experiences.

Portions of the Szerlag dairy farm located on Hill Street have been developed into housing, where 47-acres were able to be protected through an Agriculture Preservation Restriction and retained as open space under the ownership and land stewardship of Metacomet Land Trust. Both Kroll's farm, located south of Foppema farm (Hill Street) and Castle Hill farm (Castle Hill Road) remain undeveloped agricultural land, zoned residential and under private ownership. Development pressure exists for these two relatively larger tracts of land, where subdivision proposals have been submitted in the past.

In 2017, the Town of Northbridge approved the Community Preservation Act, adopting a 1% surcharge on all real estate property tax bills. Proceeds from the Community Preservation Act, or CPA Funds as its commonly referred to, is collected, and deposited into special municipal accounts identified for Community Housing, Historic Preservation, Open Space & Recreation, and Administrative Expenses. Among other project initiatives, CPA funds may be used to acquire, create, and preserve open space, as well as rehabilitate and create recreational facilities. Efforts are currently underway to acquire Castle Hill farm utilizing Community Preservation Act funds.

Development pressure has the potential to impact and reduce existing natural open space significantly. While maintaining open space is a necessary component of having an adequate supply for recreational opportunities, it is increasingly critical to provide essential habitat space for wildlife due to constraints caused by development and climate change.

Subdivision / Res Development (Constructed / Under construction)	Date (of Approval)	# of Units (Lots/Units)	Development (Approx. Acres)	Open Space (Approx. Acres)	Use (Active / Passive)	Status (of Ownership)
Eben Chamberlain	2000	14	25.07	0.88	Active	Tennis Court (private)
Deer Track Court	2000	4	6.72	0.00	N/A	
Reservoir Heights	2000	73	130.89	73.83	Passive	Town (Conservation)
The Hills @ Whitinsville	2000	202	225.43	115.86	Passive	Town (Conservation)
Presidential Farms	2001	105	135.07	47.20	Active & Passive	APR Land & Metacomet Property
Shining Rock Village	2001	18	20.35	0.00	N/A	
Farnum Circle	2002	2	4.51	0.00	N/A	
Shining Rock Golf Community	2002	150	206.17	162.80	Active & Passive	Private & Town (Conservation)
Ash Street Extension	2003	8	5.52	0.00	N/A	
Marlino Estates	2003	23	42.11	0.00	N/A	
Quaker Ridge Estates	2003	10	21.06	6.39	N/A	
Rocky Hill Farms Estates	2004	13	28.76	0.00	N/A	
Carpenter Estates	2007	18	63.59	45.28	Passive	Town (Conservation)
Hemlock Estates	2008	53	49.47	19.94	Passive	Developer (to be conveyed to Town)
Hillside Garden Estates	2009	9	12.23	0.00	N/A	
The Camelot	2010	65	90.99	26.20	Passive	Developer (to be conveyed to Town)
Leonardo Estates	2014	18	30.77	0.00	N/A	
Moon Hill Estates	2019	40	66.4	8.25	Passive	Developer (to be conveyed to Town)
Stone Hill Development	2019	104	37.3	0.00	N/A	
Mike's Way	2020	18	31.47	0.00	N/A	
Winston Woods	2022	16	9.33	0.00	N/A	
		Total # Units	Total Acres	Total Open Space		
		963	1243.21	342.95		

Protected Acres *Excludes Shining Rock Golf Course & Tennis Courts (private)

Over the past two decades, development pressures have increased due to the opening of the Route 146 Connector to the Massachusetts Turnpike and the construction of an MBTA Commuter Rail Station in adjacent Grafton with daily trains into Boston and an improved local and regional economy. There is no indication that development pressure will decrease in the immediate future. With over 85% of the land area in Northbridge zoned Residential, this fact should be considered during future open space planning in Northbridge and the larger region.

Northbridge is part of the Blackstone River and Canal State Park. In a regional context, neighboring Upton has an unusually large amount of protected open space: approximately 25% of the land in Upton is protected in some way. Protected space in neighboring towns includes the Upton State Forest, Whitehall State Park in Hopkinton, the West Hill Dam in Uxbridge, and Grafton's Pell Farm and Great Meadows Natural Area. The proximity of these areas offers opportunities to create greenways linking large blocks of protected open space and regional trail systems.

Northbridge participates in a regional land trust, the Metacomet Land Trust. Other member communities include Franklin, Bellingham, Blackstone, Millville, Sutton, Norfolk, Mendon, Upton, and Millbury.

In 2019, the Town established/adopted the Whitinsville -Downtown Crossroads Historic District, a local historic district encompassing public and private properties that reflect the growth of a paternalistic mill village from the early beginnings of the American Industrial Revolution. The twelve (12) properties included in the district, represent housing, industry, government, recreation, religion, education, open space, commerce, and community institutions. The Whitinsville -Downtown Crossroads Historic District is centered at the heart of the village of Whitinsville, where six (6) main roads intersect at the Memorial Town Hall and the Mumford River (Main Street, Church Street, Hill Street, Linwood Avenue, Douglas Road, and Fletcher Street). Whitinsville, along with the Blackstone River, its tributaries and the historic canal are designated as a National Historical Park, recognizing the important part of the region's history took place in Northbridge.