

Massachusetts Community Types

A classification system developed by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council

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In order to support planning, analysis, and policy development, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council has created a classification system of municipalities in Massachusetts. MAPC has identified five basic community types across the state, four of which can be subdivided further to yield nine sub-types. The criteria used to define Community Types include land use and housing patterns, recent growth trends, and projected development patterns. The Community Type system can be used to understand how demographic, economic, land use, energy, and transportation trends affect the Commonwealth's diverse communities.

Each city and town is unique, but communities within each type share important characteristics that will influence their development over the coming decades. While any classification system has its limitations, it is clear that a "one size fits all" approach to planning and policy development fails to meet the needs of the state's diverse communities. This classification system is one tool that can be used to make regional and statewide policies more responsive to local conditions.

We anticipate that a community classification system can be used in a variety of ways:

Analytical Questions

- How have different communities changed over time?
- How does this change relate to past policy decisions?
- How do trends vary across community types, and what are the implications for regional equity?

Policy Questions

- How might certain policy changes be applied under different circumstances?
- What would be the different costs and benefits of these policy changes?
- How can policy proposals be communicated effectively to different types of communities?

The classification system is summarized below as follows:

Inner Core

- Metropolitan Core Communities
- Streetcar Suburbs

Regional Urban Centers

- Major Regional Urban Centers
- Sub-Regional Urban Centers

Maturing Suburbs

- Mature Suburban Towns
- Established Suburbs and Cape Cod Towns

Developing Suburbs

- Maturing New England Towns
- Country Suburbs

Rural Towns

- Rural Towns

This document includes the following elements:

- A summary description of the Community Types
- A summary data sheet showing key attributes of the Types
- A statewide map of Community Types

Massachusetts Community Types – Summary Description

Inner Core	<p>Metropolitan Core Communities <i>High density inner cities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban environment with mix of apartment buildings, multifamily houses, single family houses • Completely “built-out” • New growth: redevelopment, infill, and conversion from industrial uses to residential • Large minority and immigrant populations; recovering from urban disinvestment/suburban flight in the 1960s and 1970s
	<p>Streetcar Suburbs <i>Historic, high-density suburbs near the urban core</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village-oriented residential neighborhoods dominated by multifamily homes and smaller apartment buildings • All are essentially built-out • Very little new growth: limited redevelopment, infill, and expansion of existing structures • Moderately diverse population; stable or losing population due to decreasing household size.
Regional Urban Centers	<p>Major Regional Urban Centers <i>Large, high-density urban centers not proximate to Boston</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large urban communities (>70,000 residents) with a mix of housing types (predominantly multifamily) • Nearly built out; scattered parcels of vacant developable land (<15% of land area is vacant & developable) • New growth: redevelopment, infill, and conversion from industrial uses to residential uses • Have been growing slowly or losing population; low tax base per capita
	<p>Sub-Regional Urban Centers <i>Small/ mid-sized urban downtowns, diverse neighborhoods</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban-scale downtown core surrounded by more suburban residential neighborhoods • May be built out, or may have undeveloped land around the periphery • New growth: redevelopment in downtown/industrial areas; greenfield development on periphery • “Built-out” cities have been stable or growing slowly; those with undeveloped land growing more rapidly
Maturing Suburbs	<p>Mature Suburbs <i>Moderate density, nearly built out</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-century suburbs; owner-occupied single family homes on ¼ - ½ acre lots • Nearly built out; scattered parcels of vacant developable land (<15% of land area is vacant & developable) • New housing units: infill development, some redevelopment, teardowns • Population is relatively stable
	<p>Established Suburbs and Cape Cod Towns <i>Lower density, approaching buildout</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower density suburbs; owner-occupied single family homes on ¾ - 1 acre lots • Approaching buildout; limited amounts of vacant land (<20% of land area is vacant & developable) • New growth: teardowns, small-scale greenfield development, some redevelopment. • Population is stable or growing moderately
Developing Suburbs	<p>Maturing New England Towns <i>Well-defined town center, mixed densities, room to grow</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed-use town center surrounded by compact neighborhoods (¼ - ½ acre lots); low-density outlying areas • Large amounts of vacant developable land (>25% of total town area is vacant & developable) • New growth: conventional subdivision development on vacant land • Population and households growing rapidly; adding residential land rapidly
	<p>Country Suburbs <i>Very low density, room to grow, country character</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low density communities with no significant town center and no compact neighborhoods • Large amounts of vacant developable land (>35% of total town area is vacant & developable) • New growth: conventional low-density subdivision development on vacant land • Generally growing rapidly (population and households)
Rural Towns	<p>Rural Towns <i>Small, scattered population; slow growth</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very low density communities with no significant town center and scattered “farmstead” settlements; very few subdivisions; very limited economic development • Very large amounts of vacant developable land (>40% of total town area is vacant & developable) • New growth: small amounts of scattered residential development (average below 15 acres/year) • Population less than 2,500 and growing slowly

Massachusetts Community Types

Summary Data

All data are *median values* for the type

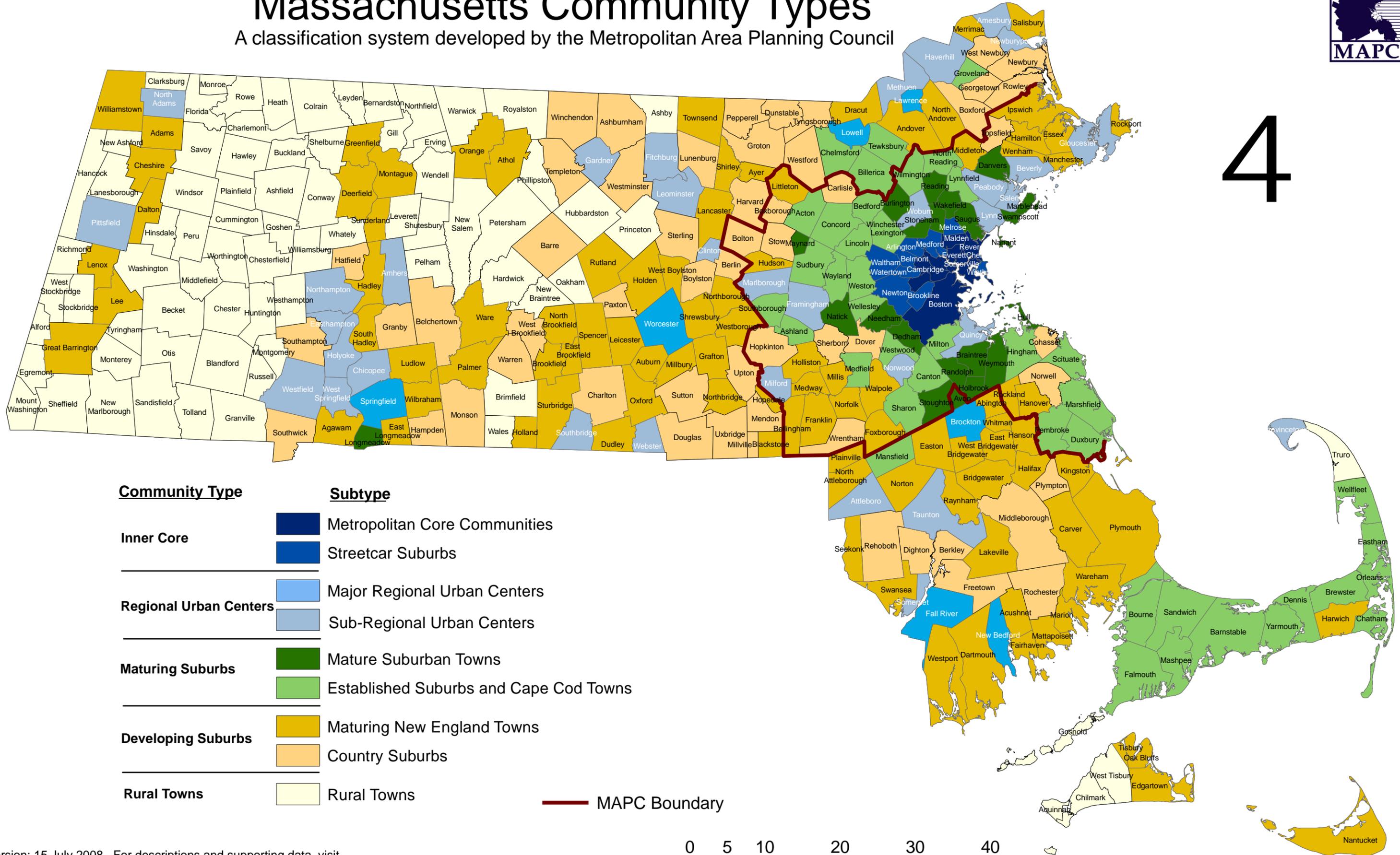
Community Type (TYPE 5)	Community Sub-Type (TYPE 9)	2000 Population	Population Density (residents/acre)	Housing Unit Density (units/residential acre)	% of housing units that are single-family detached homes	% of housing units in multifamily structures	Owner-occupied housing units	Developed Land (%)	Vacant Developable Land	%built-out (excludes undevelopable land)	How much residential land is multi-family and high-density (>4 units/acre)?	How much residential land is medium-density (2-4 units/acre)?	How much residential land is low-density (<2 units/acre)?
Inner Core	Metropolitan Core Communities	56,340	18.6	19.6	12%	83%	32%	90%	0%	92%	98%	2%	0%
	Streetcar Suburbs	42,389	10.3	7.9	37%	58%	59%	86%	3%	94%	80%	7%	2%
Regional Urban Centers	Major Regional Urban Centers	94,304	7.2	8.7	31%	64%	43%	74%	12%	85%	77%	21%	2%
	Sub-Regional Urban Centers	36,757	2.5	3.6	48%	46%	59%	42%	25%	60%	39%	40%	21%
Maturing Suburbs	Mature Suburbs	23,170	3.6	3.4	69%	26%	76%	62%	11%	83%	17%	68%	12%
	Established Suburbs & Cape Cod Towns	16,927	1.3	1.7	83%	14%	83%	45%	17%	72%	6%	42%	50%
Developing Suburbs	Maturing New England Towns	10,466	0.9	1.6	70%	21%	77%	28%	39%	42%	9%	40%	49%
	Country Suburbs	6,141	0.4	1.0	85%	13%	85%	20%	51%	28%	1%	21%	77%
Rural Towns	Rural Towns	1,361	0.1	0.8	87%	5%	85%	6%	56%	10%	0%	5%	94%
Community Type (TYPE 5)	Community Sub-Type (TYPE 9)	Population change 1990-2000	Population change 1970-2000	Change in Residential Land Use 1971-1999	Change in Developed Land 1971-1999	% of housing units built before 1939	% of housing units built 1940 - 1970	% of housing units built 1970-2000	housing units on public sewer (1990)	Commercial and Industrial land/developed acres	FY03 Operating Budget	Total property valuation per capita (2002)	Total Jobs
Inner Core	Metropolitan Core Communities	6%	0%	1%	1%	53%	27%	21%	99%	21%	126,454,031	\$72,134	17,515
	Streetcar Suburbs	-1%	-13%	2%	2%	53%	30%	15%	99%	8%	101,306,288	\$122,547	16,434
Regional Urban Centers	Major Regional Urban Centers	2%	-2%	9%	8%	43%	33%	23%	97%	18%	270,442,217	\$34,845	37,737
	Sub-Regional Urban Centers	3%	4%	30%	26%	38%	31%	27%	94%	15%	93,763,170	\$59,939	17,875
Maturing Suburbs	Mature Suburbs	1%	-1%	13%	13%	31%	41%	26%	94%	12%	62,218,312	\$114,053	9,227
	Established Suburbs & Cape Cod Towns	12%	27%	44%	43%	15%	40%	45%	14%	6%	52,825,757	\$173,262	6,051
Developing Suburbs	Maturing New England Towns	7%	30%	53%	49%	24%	32%	41%	40%	7%	23,049,513	\$83,538	3,710
	Country Suburbs	12%	56%	93%	79%	20%	26%	51%	8%	4%	14,980,647	\$89,666	1,508
Rural Towns	Rural Towns	9%	50%	64%	57%	31%	24%	43%	2%	2%	2,706,193	\$77,234	180

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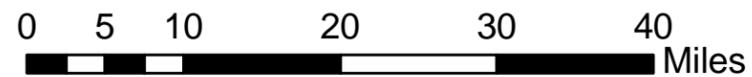


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Community Type	Subtype
Inner Core	Metropolitan Core Communities
	Streetcar Suburbs
Regional Urban Centers	Major Regional Urban Centers
	Sub-Regional Urban Centers
Maturing Suburbs	Mature Suburban Towns
	Established Suburbs and Cape Cod Towns
Developing Suburbs	Maturing New England Towns
	Country Suburbs
Rural Towns	Rural Towns

MAPC Boundary



List of Municipalities by Type

Inner Core

Metro Core Communities
Boston
Cambridge
Chelsea
Everett
Malden
Revere
Somerville
Streetcar Suburbs
Arlington
Belmont
Brookline
Medford
Melrose
Newton
Waltham
Watertown
Winthrop

Regional Urban Centers

Major Regional Urban Centers
Brockton
Lawrence
Lowell
New Bedford
Worcester
Springfield
Fall River
Sub-Regional Urban Centers
Amesbury
Amherst
Attleboro
Beverly
Chicopee
Clinton
Easthampton
Fitchburg
Framingham
Gardner
Gloucester
Haverhill
Holyoke
Leominster
Lynn
Marlborough
Methuen
Milford
Newburyport
North Adams
Northampton
Norwood
Peabody
Pittsfield
Provincetown
Quincy
Salem
Somerset
Southbridge
Taunton
Webster
West Springfield
Westfield
Woburn

List of Municipalities by Type

Maturing Suburbs

Mature Suburban Towns
Avon
Braintree
Burlington
Danvers
Dedham
Holbrook
Hull
Longmeadow
Marblehead
Maynard
Nahant
Natick
Needham
Randolph
Reading
Saugus
Stoneham
Stoughton
Swampscott
Wakefield
Weymouth
Winchester
Established Suburbs and Cape Cod Towns
Acton
Ashland
Barnstable
Bedford
Billerica
Bourne
Brewster
Canton
Chatham
Chelmsford
Concord
Dennis
Duxbury
Eastham
Falmouth
Groveland
Hingham
Lexington
Lincoln

Lynnfield
Mansfield
Marshfield
Mashpee
Medfield
Milton
North Reading
Orleans
Pembroke
Sandwich
Scituate
Sharon
Southborough
Sudbury
Tewksbury
Wayland
Wellesley
Wellfleet
Weston
Westwood
Wilmington
Yarmouth

List of Municipalities by Type

Developing Suburbs

Maturing New England Towns
Abington
Acushnet
Adams
Agawam
Andover
Athol
Auburn
Ayer
Bellingham
Blackstone
Bridgewater
Brookfield
Carver
Cheshire
Dalton
Dartmouth
Deerfield
Dracut
Dudley
East Bridgewater
East Brookfield
East Longmeadow
Easton
Edgartown
Essex
Fairhaven
Foxborough
Franklin
Grafton
Great Barrington
Greenfield
Hadley
Halifax
Hamilton
Hanover
Hanson
Harwich
Holden
Holland
Holliston
Hopedale
Hudson
Ipswich
Kingston

Lakeville
Lancaster
Lee
Leicester
Lenox
Littleton
Ludlow
Manchester
Marion
Mattapoissett
Medway
Merrimac
Middleton
Millbury
Millis
Montague
Nantucket
Norfolk
North Andover
North Attleborough
North Brookfield
Northborough
Northbridge
Norton
Oak Bluffs
Orange
Oxford
Palmer
Plainville
Plymouth
Raynham
Rockland
Rockport
Rutland
Salisbury
Seekonk
Shirley
Shrewsbury
South Hadley
Spencer
Sturbridge
Sunderland
Swansea
Tisbury
Townsend
Walpole

List of Municipalities by Type

Ware
Wareham
Wenham
West Boylston
West Bridgewater
Westborough
Westport
Whitman
Wilbraham
Williamstown
Country Suburbs
Ashburnham
Barre
Belchertown
Berkley
Berlin
Bolton
Boxborough
Boxford
Boylston
Carlisle
Charlton
Cohasset
Dighton
Douglas
Dover
Dunstable
Freetown
Georgetown
Granby
Groton
Hampden
Harvard
Hatfield
Hopkinton
Lunenburg
Mendon
Middleborough
Millville
Monson
Newbury
Norwell
Paxton
Pepperell
Plympton

Rehoboth
Rochester
Rowley
Sherborn
Southampton
Southwick
Sterling
Stow
Sutton
Templeton
Topsfield
Tyngsborough
Upton
Uxbridge
Warren
West Brookfield
West Newbury
Westford
Westminster
Winchendon
Wrentham

List of Municipalities by Type

Rural Towns

Rural Towns
Alford
Aquinnah
Ashby
Ashfield
Becket
Bernardston
Blandford
Brimfield
Buckland
Charlemont
Chester
Chesterfield
Chilmark
Clarksburg
Colrain
Conway
Cummington
Egremont
Erving
Florida
Gill
Goshen
Gosnold
Granville
Hancock
Hardwick
Hawley
Heath
Hinsdale
Hubbardston
Huntington
Lanesborough
Leverett
Leyden
Middlefield
Monroe
Monterey
Montgomery
Mount Washington
New Ashford
New Braintree
New Marlborough
New Salem
Northfield

Oakham
Otis
Pelham
Peru
Petersham
Phillipston
Plainfield
Princeton
Richmond
Rowe
Royalston
Russell
Sandisfield
Savoy
Sheffield
Shelburne
Shutesbury
Stockbridge
Tolland
Truro
Tyringham
Wales
Warwick
Washington
Wendell
West Stockbridge
West Tisbury
Westhampton
Whately
Williamsburg
Windsor
Worthington