Discovery: Land Use

Shrewsbury Master Plan

ABOUT

How a community balances the use of its limited land is important for a community's future. Massachusetts towns play a role in balancing competing needs within their communities, including municipal services such as town hall, schools, and public safety stations; businesses, industries, and services where residents work, shop, and receive care; open space for residents to play and experience nature; and of course, housing for all of the community's residents that ideally meets all of their diverse needs.

Land uses ultimately develop in towns through zoning, which dictates where different uses are allowed and the general form buildings can take.

Historically a community composed of single-family houses, in recent decades Shrewsbury has worked to increase commercial and industrial growth and add more multi-family housing to rebalance its land use patterns and shift the tax burden away from single-family house owners.

Since the last master plan, Shrewsbury experienced a rapid period of growth, especially in the Lakeway and Route 20 zoning overlay districts. While the Route 20 overlay has produced mixed-use and residential developments, commercial development in the area continues with the road's easy access to local highways.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS SINCE THE 2016 MASTER PLAN

- ✓ Several major sites were redeveloped including Spag's and the Edgemere drive-in
- ✓ Increased development led to resident concerns about infrastructure impacts and a two-year moratorium on the Lakeway and Route 20 overlay districts
- ✓ In 2024, Shrewsbury adopted a new Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Overlay District to satisfied the requirements of the new MBTA Communities law

DID YOU KNOW?

Shrewsbury's Bylaw outlines 17 land use districts and 7 overlay districts:

- **9 Residential Districts** which range from typical rural land uses in addition to single-family houses to an Apartment district
- **5 Business Districts** that provide varying levels of commercial activity.
- **2 Research and Industrial Districts** that provide space for offices, laboratories and production work, as well as light industry.
- **5 Overlay Districts** including three unique to certain areas of Town: The **Edgemere Village Overlay District, Route 20 Overlay District**, and the **Lakeway Overlay District**.

SHREWSBURY LAND USE BY ACREAGE

Land Use	Acreage (2017)	Acreage (2026)	Percent Change
Single-Family Residential	5,112	5,157	0.9%
Roads, rights of way, and other unidentified parcels	2,012	2,020	0.4%
Federal, state, municipal, non-profit, or religious use	1,133	1,850	63.3%
Vacant Land (Residential, Commercial, Industrial)	1,419	1,308	-7.8%
Open Space	1,487	1,206	-18.9%
Commercial	962	794	-17.4%
Other Residential Land	393	475	20.9%
Industrial	637	361	-43.4%
Multi-Family Residential	285	329	15.6%
Chapter 61 Protected Lands	405	264	-34.9%
Mixed Use	79	161	103.6%
Total		**13,924**	

Source: MassGIS