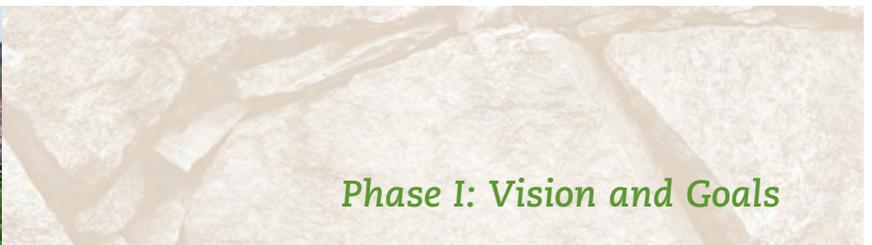




Town of Harvard Master Plan



Phase I: Vision and Goals



Town of Harvard Master Plan

Phase I: Vision and Goals
April 2012

Thank you to all the members of the Harvard community who participated in this community visioning and planning process. Your contributions through stakeholder interviews, the second grade outreach project, working groups, focus groups, the survey, and two public forums have been invaluable in shaping your Community Vision and Goals.

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REPORT OVERVIEW

The following report documents the process and findings of Phase I of the Town of Harvard Master Plan. The report is organized as follows:

The **Executive Summary** briefly outlines the framework for and outcomes of Phase I as well as the goals for Phase II.

A Community Engaged discusses the purpose of Phase I and identifies the various initiatives and events used to engage the Harvard community in the visioning and planning process. Summaries and reports of each are included in the appendix.

Community Vision and Goals describes the future community that Harvard seeks to create and identifies goals that will support it.

Key Issues lists the topics studied within Phase I. For each of the key issues the report outlines the community's goals, key findings based on the community's input, and potential strategies and next steps that should be further studied or addressed in Phase II:

- Devens
- Ayer Road Commercial District
- Housing
- Town Center
- Conservation

Demographics, Energy, Shared Services provides information on these topics explored early in Phase I.

Governance proposes that, based on questions raised during Phase I, an inquiry on the topic of governance should be included in Phase II.

A Path Forward: the Comprehensive Master Plan recommends how Phase II should be structured.

The **Appendix** includes summaries or reports on each of the initiatives and events of Phase I.

References and Resources is an alphabetized list of the studies, reports and documents reviewed by the MPSC and consultant team along with the websites where they can be found.

“Planning is a participatory act of community membership and an expression of belief about the future of one’s community.”

William R. Morrish and Catherine Brown; “Planning to Stay”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Developing a Vision

Phase I of the Master Plan, Defining Harvard's Vision and Goals, has been completed. The Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC), with assistance from independent consultants Brown Walker Planners and Wolf Landscape Architecture interviewed town officials and other stakeholders, held focus groups, convened two, well-attended public forums, and designed a survey completed by 684 residents.

In response, the community has clearly stated that we want to set a direction for Harvard with respect to Devens, and that we have concerns about economic development, the lack of a diversity of housing options, preservation of our open space and natural resources, and preservation of Harvard's small-town character in both appearance and governance, and we see the need to promote a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly Town Center.

Understanding Devens

The Town needs to make decisions about its future; Devens is critical to that decision. Any scenario for Devens' future, whether it calls for Harvard resuming local jurisdiction of part or none of Devens, will have significant impact on our schools, our economic development options, our housing options, and our government. Whether or not Harvard has ready access to Devens' aquifer or to sewer, water, and other infrastructure must be considered in planning Harvard's future. It is clear from community input that Harvard residents need more information and expressed a clear preference for making a decision on Devens within the next two years. Obtaining the best possible information and disseminating it widely will be the first priority of Phase II of Harvard's 2012 Master Plan.

Taking the Next Steps

Phase II will begin with the process of hiring consultants to help us gather the needed information and help lay out an action plan for achieving the goals confirmed in Phase I. Phase II will emphasize public outreach and education. Goals for Phase II include, but are not limited to:

- Understanding the impact of Devens on Harvard's municipal budget, schools, economic development options, housing, town culture, and government.
- Diversifying Harvard's economy and tax base with an appropriate mix of residential and commercial development.
- Increasing the diversity of housing types in Harvard to meet the needs of a greater variety of households while ensuring that new housing is harmonious with the character of the community.
- Emphasizing Town Center's role as the central community gathering place while providing safe, convenient and attractive circulation choices for pedestrians that reduce parking demands.
- Conserving natural, historic and cultural resources to improve and sustain Harvard's rural and historic character and assure the health of its natural resources.

2012 Community Vision

In 2020 Harvard will be a town that continues to foster a strong and vibrant sense of community and place, embraces careful stewardship and enhancement of its natural, historic and cultural resources, understands a clear direction in its role in Devens' governance, and employs best practices for achieving long-term sustainability. An informed and involved community is critical to accomplishing this vision.



A Community Engaged

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Phase I of Harvard's master plan focused on creating a shared Community Vision and identifying supporting goals through a public visioning process. Our public visioning process has engaged the local community in a concerted and meaningful way drawing on the collective intuition, experience, and expertise of the greater Harvard community to create a vision and goals that are grounded to our town at this time and that will lead us decisively forward. Our visioning process centered on first sharing information about the identified issues, discussing and analyzing the issues in various settings, and then reporting back the community's ideas and ideals.

Our goals in this process have been to:

- Optimize diversity and extent of participation
- Increase awareness, knowledge, and interest
- Identify common values to inform a community vision
- Set objectives for Phase II of the Master Plan

Our objectives have been to:

- Provide unbiased, inclusive, and open communications with the greater Harvard community to create a baseline of information to underpin the vision and goals
- Make participation easy, meaningful, and enjoyable, seek a diversity of opinions and ideas, and respect differences
- Create opportunities for dialogue within and outside the formal planning process
- Encourage interest in being proactive rather than reactive in planning for the future
- Incorporate information received into a blueprint for an action plan to implement our vision

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES AND EVENTS

Summaries and reports for each initiative and event of Phase I outlined below are included in the Appendix

Stakeholder Interviews

Conducting stakeholder interviews is an effective strategy for gathering input from “local experts” – people knowledgeable about key topics and active in the town's government, culture, and or activities involving the key topics. Stakeholder groups for the initial key topics, Town Center, Commercial District, Devens, Housing, Regionalization, Energy and Conservation, and Population Demographics were established early in the planning process. Stakeholder interviews were conducted in a series of group meetings and by telephone for those unable to attend the meetings.

These stakeholders provided the baseline information on existing conditions and trends and helped identify challenges and opportunities. The information gathered through these interviews helped to frame the discussion at Public Forum One.

Public Forum One

The Harvard Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC) hosted a public forum on November 19th, 2011 at the Old Library in Town Center. The purpose of the forum was to provide an opportunity for community members to come together to consider what they like about the town and want to preserve in the future, what they would like to change in the future, and to identify challenges and opportunities for the community. More than seventy-five participants representing neighborhoods throughout Harvard attended the forum.

Working and Focus Groups

Working Groups are ad-hoc groups developed to provide an additional forum for discussion about key issue areas pertinent to the Master Plan, to provide technical assistance to the Master Plan Steering Committee, and to review principal deliverables. Following the first public forum, the MPSC formed a number of working groups as an extension of the Master Plan Steering Committee to provide input on Town Center, and Conservation. Working Groups were made up of individuals with particular knowledge and interest in a particular key issue area. A designated MPSC member led each working group and reported group findings to the MPSC and consultant team.

Focus groups had similar composition to working groups but were established to meet only once. The consultant team led focus groups for Devens and Ayer Road Commercial District. The information shared through the focus group discussions helped identify areas of consensus and disagreement and suggested strategies for moving forward with planning.

Survey

A community survey provided residents an opportunity to respond to a series of questions on issues including community character and quality of life, opportunities and challenges, conservation, housing, Ayer Road Commercial District, Town Center and Devens. The survey was advertised in the local newspaper as well as by mail to each resident address. In addition, hard copies of the survey were available at Town Hall, Town Library and Hildreth House.

Survey participants responded electronically and in written form to 23 questions; responses included 5,490 “hand-written” comments. Six hundred eighty-four residents responded to the survey (591 on-line, 93 hard-copy), representing 36.1% of Harvard’s total households, a very strong response rate for a community Master Plan. A copy of the Survey Summary and Analysis is in the Appendix.

Public Forum Two

The MPSC hosted a second public forum on Saturday, March 3, 2012, which brought over forty participants together to provide feedback on the Community Vision and Goals and on potential strategies for each of the focus areas presented: Town Center, Housing, Conservation, Ayer Road Commercial District and Devens. Community input confirmed the validity of the vision and highlighted some additional goals and strategies.

Youth Outreach

The Master Plan Steering Committee led a youth outreach initiative at the beginning of the planning process. The student activity included a take-home survey and mapping activity for families to identify priority areas and activities

of families with young children and to identify fundamental patterns of family life that occur both inside and beyond Harvard’s boundaries.

In addition, members of the Master Plan Steering Committee visited participating classrooms to speak about the Master Plan and share the results of the student survey and mapping activity. The MPSC also facilitated a “Mini-Planning Charette” that asked students to identify and vote for their favorite family activities that they participate in outside of Harvard that they would like to bring to Harvard at some point in the future.

Results of the youth outreach activity were shared at the first town wide public planning forum on November 19th, 2011.

Phase II of the master plan process will include outreach to Bromfield students for senior projects in the areas of mapping, journalism, and conservation.

Website

A Master Plan project website offers information on upcoming events and initiatives, introduces the Master Plan Steering Committee and the Consultant Team, provides a link to relevant planning documents, and provides information on key topics (Devens, Town Center, Housing, Ayer Road Commercial District, Shared Services, Demographics and Diversity, Conservation and Energy). It also provides an opportunity for site visitors to send comments or questions to the Master Plan Steering Committee.



Community Vision and Goals

Harvard's community vision is the picture that the town has painted of its future; it's an inspiration and a focus on what is possible. It answers the question "Where do we want to go," and articulates the dreams and hopes of Harvard's residents, what they want Harvard to look like into the next decade, beyond 2020 and into a future that will be shaped by decisions we make as a town over the next few years. In the context of the Master Plan, our goals define the results that we expect after having taken actions outlined in the plan.

Harvard's shared vision comes from the hearts and minds of the hundreds of residents who engaged in Phase I of the master planning process and who shared their ideas about what they like about Harvard and about what they felt should change in town. The commonalities indicate shared beliefs, values, and desires, and are the basis for Harvard's community vision. It is important to note that these commonalities also show a great consistency across time as can be seen in Harvard's vision statement from its 2002 Master Plan (http://www.harvard.ma.us/Pages/HarvardMA_BComm/Planning/exec.pdf).

Vision

In 2020 Harvard will be a town that continues to foster a strong and vibrant sense of community and place, embraces careful stewardship and enhancement of its natural, historic and cultural resources, understands a clear direction in its role in Devens' governance, and employs best practices for achieving long-term sustainability. An informed and involved community is critical to accomplishing this vision.

Goals

Harvard has a robust sense of community and place:

- Encourage a strong volunteer government and provide necessary staff support
- Encourage active civic life through public and private institutions and organizations
- Develop housing to accommodate a diversity of needs and population

- Foster a variety of gathering places for all generations
- Maintain the Town Center as the institutional, civic and cultural heart of the community, as envisioned in the 2005 Town Center Action Plan

Harvard has a defined role in Devens:

- Analyze fiscal and community impact of Devens on Harvard
- Use public outreach and education to ascertain Harvard's preferred direction and encourage and promote the awareness of the stake Harvard has in Devens in terms of governance, schools, and the civic life of the town
- Collaborate with Devens' stakeholders, including Ayer, Shirley and MassDevelopment
- Decide on Harvard's role in governance of Devens

Harvard is assured long-term sustainability:

- Develop plans for investment in public infrastructure, buildings and equipment
- Diversify and strengthen the town's revenue base
- Invest in near and long-term energy efficiencies
- Encourage retail and commercial activities of appropriate size and in appropriate locations as determined by residents and market

Harvard engages in judicious stewardship of natural, historic and cultural resources:

- Preserve and enhance historic buildings and cultural resources
- Identify and protect critical natural resource areas
- Restore and/or maintain key viewsheds
- Support agricultural heritage and farms
- Preserve stone walls and shade trees along rural roads
- Adopt best management practices on public conservation lands and disseminate them to the public



Key Issues

Five key issues were focused on throughout Phase I:

- Devens
- Ayer Road Commercial District
- Housing
- Town Center
- Conservation

Phase I of the Master Plan process also provided data and insights on demographics, energy, shared services, and governance.

DEVENS

Goals

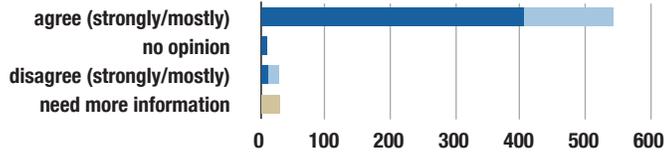
- Be engaged and informed participants in planning for Devens' development and governance.
- Set a timeline for determining Harvard's preferred direction with respect to local governance of Devens.
- Understand the full scale of potential benefits and liabilities related to governance decisions.
- Ensure decision on local governance results in a positive outcome for Harvard and other stakeholders, including the Commonwealth, the region, and our neighbor towns.
- Keep Devens' neighborhoods intact.

Today, Devens is a Regional Enterprise Zone (DREZ), governed by the Commonwealth through Mass Development under the legislative regulations of Chapter 498 of the Acts of 1993. Approximately 61% (2700 acres) of the 4,400-acre DREZ is within the historic geographical boundaries of Harvard, with the remaining 23% and 16% within the boundaries of Ayer and Shirley respectively. The zone was designed as an industrial and commercial engine and has become the stated model for economic development for the Commonwealth. The DREZ continues to host a substantial number of military facilities as well as a federal prison. Zoning at Devens allows for 282 residential units; today there are 126 built or permitted units, many of which are within Harvard's historic boundaries. The area is rich in open space and natural resources (2100 acres), including lands of the Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge, Mirror Lake and significant aquifers.

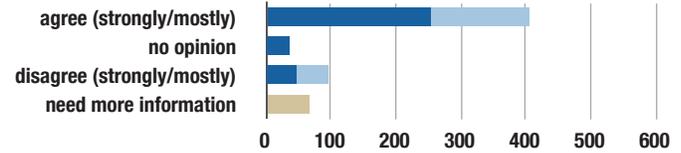
FIGURE 1: Responses to Survey Question 19

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

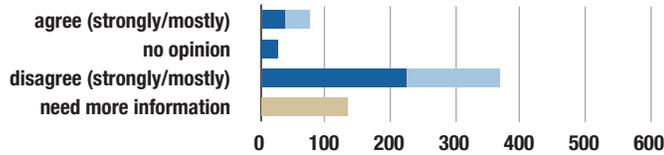
“In order to plan effectively, it is critical that the Town of Harvard decide on a direction to take with respect to the disposition of Devens.”



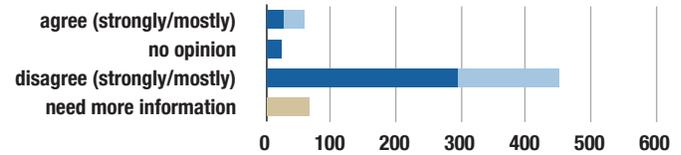
“The Town should make a decision about Devens in the next 5 years.”



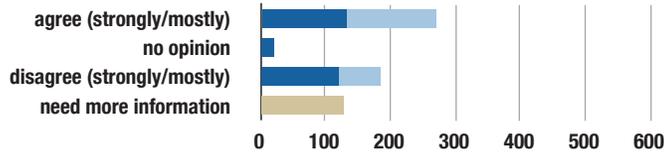
“The Town should pursue governance of all of Devens.”



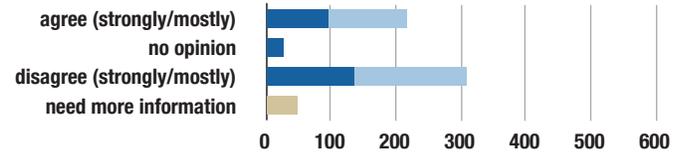
“The Town should defer any decisions about Devens until the planning deadline of 2031.”



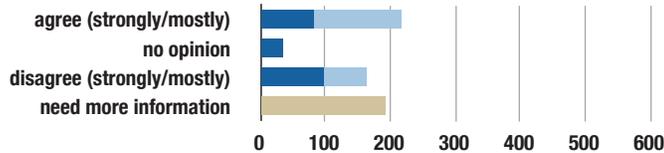
“The Town should resume governance of the portion of Devens that is within the Town’s boundaries.”



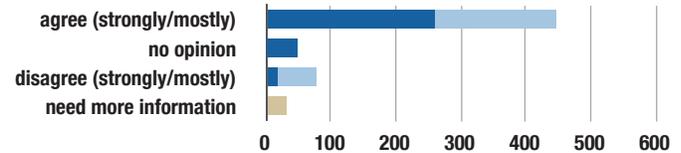
“The Town’s residents are informed about what decisions need to be made about Devens.”



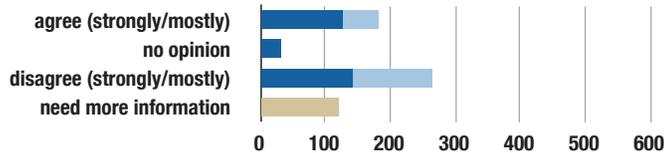
“The Town should resume governance and adjust town boundaries so Devens’s neighborhoods will remain intact.”



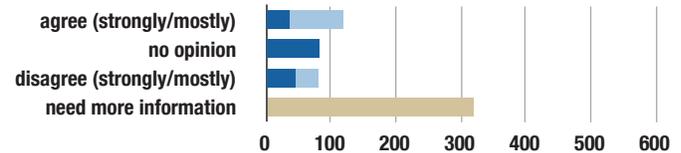
“The Town can do a better job of communicating with residents about Devens.”



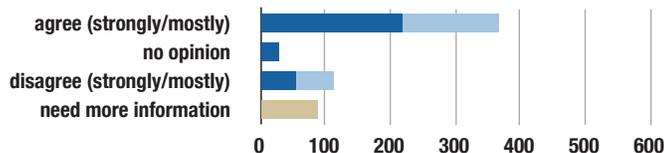
“The Town should not pursue governance of any portion of Devens.”



“I believe Devens redevelopment is in keeping with the Reuse Plan and Bylaws adopted by Harvard Town Meeting in 1994.”



“The Town should begin planning for Devens immediately.”



Bars represent the number of survey participants choosing each option among the 619 respondents to Question 19.

In bars that have two differently-shaded portions, the darker portion represents respondents who “strongly” agree or disagree, and the lighter portion represents respondents who “mostly” agree or disagree.

The issue of Devens' disposition (to become a new town or have the underlying towns resume municipal jurisdiction over Devens) has become more pressing. For practical reasons, preceding Master Plans did not address the impact of growth of industry and housing at Devens. State-controlled governance and development of Devens was anticipated by legislation to take forty years (until 2033), however:

- Redevelopment at Devens has progressed more quickly than anticipated, to 90% buildout of infrastructure.
- Most significant commercial and industrial parcels have been sold and there is over 50% occupancy.
- Devens residents have expressed a strong desire to resolve jurisdiction.

- Attempted modifications of the Devens Reuse Plan initiated by Massdevelopment failed in part because of uncertainty about the impact on towns.

The relatively low level of community engagement and knowledge about Devens and Harvard's potential role and responsibility for Devens places the town at a disadvantage in planning for its own future.

There is also a growing awareness within Harvard that further development at Devens, in particular residential development, will have substantial impact on the Harvard community. Phase II of the master plan process will focus on the impact of Devens on Harvard's fiscal health, economic development, housing, open space, and traffic and circulation.

Figure 2: Devens

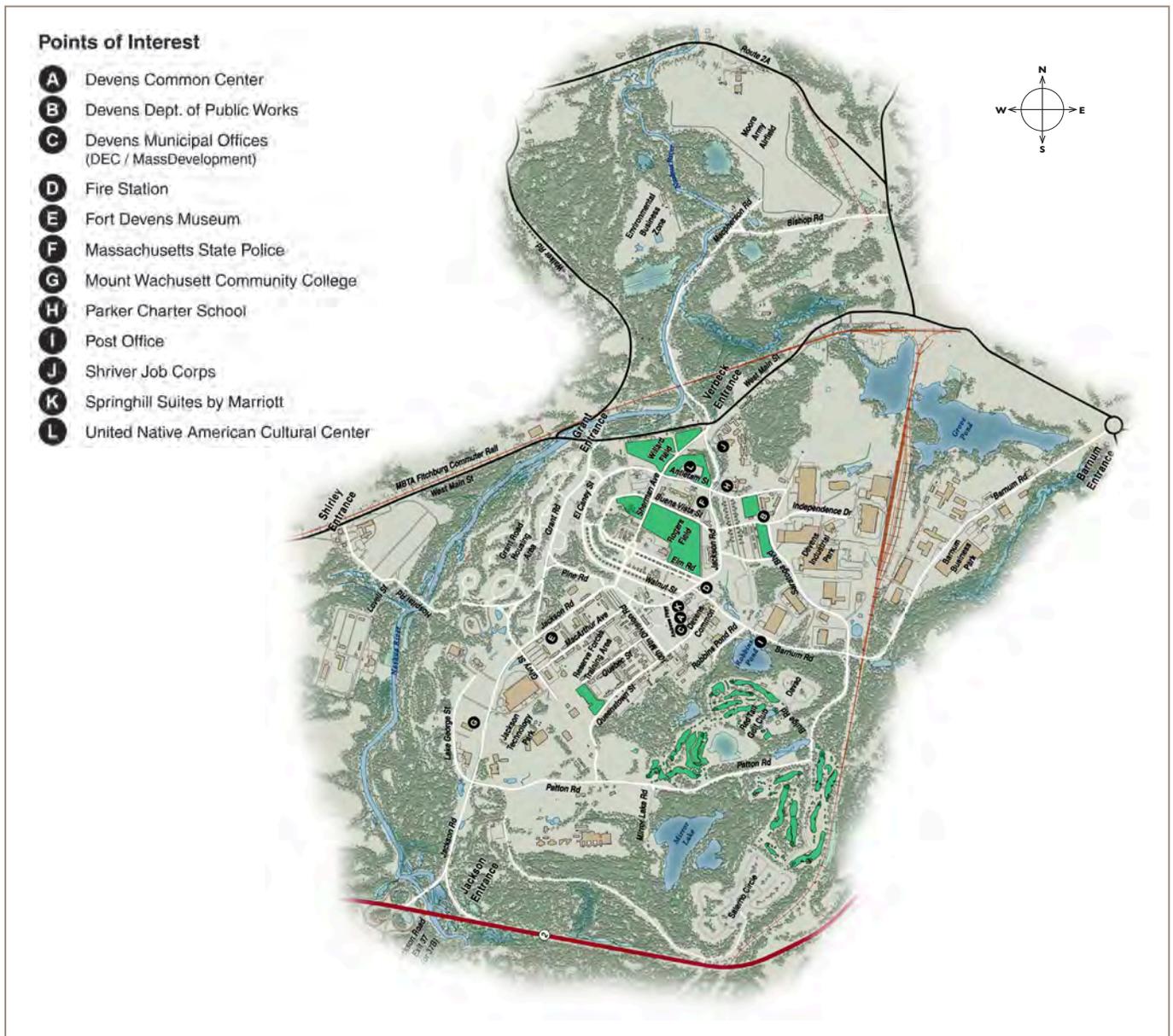
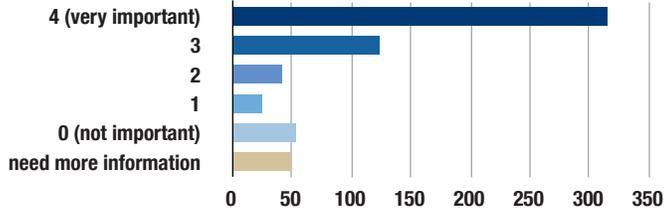


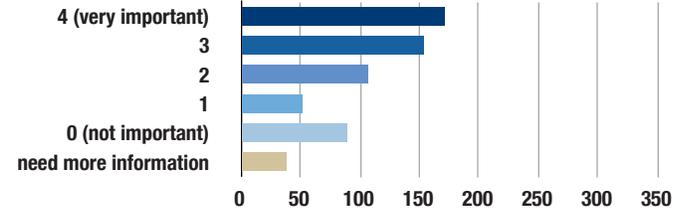
Figure 3: Responses to Survey Question 18

*What do you consider to be the most important factors for consideration related to Devens?
Please rate each of the following by level of importance (4 indicates very important, 0 indicates not important).*

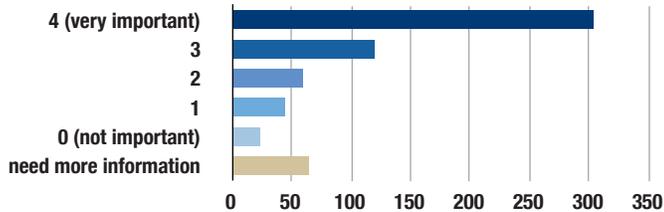
Potential economic benefit for Harvard by providing additional commercial and industrial land to Harvard's tax base



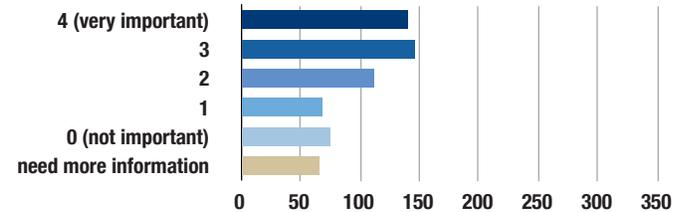
Potential to expand Harvard's open spaces, conservation lands, water resources, recreation lands that are currently part of Devens



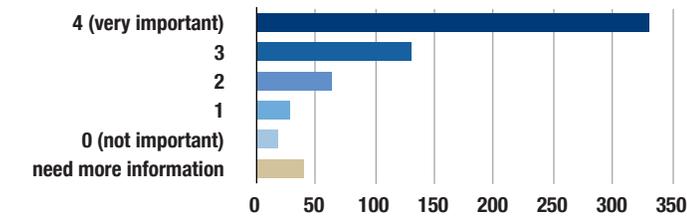
Potential fiscal liabilities for maintaining infrastructure and providing governance and services for Devens



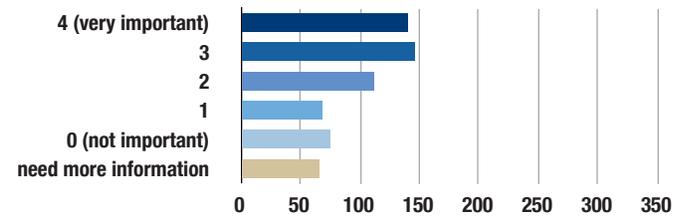
Potential impacts on residents of the neighborhoods of Devens



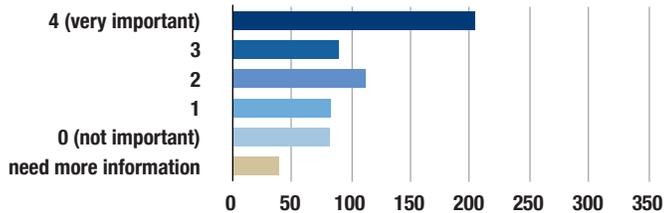
Potential impact on Harvard schools budget and facilities



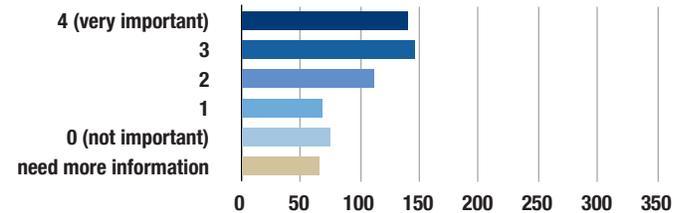
Potential to provide more housing options for Harvard residents



Potential for Harvard's town character to be altered by acquisition of additional commercial and industrial land



Potential impact on the size and type of town government



Bars represent the number of survey participants choosing each option among the 617 respondents to Question 18.

Community Input

In forums, stakeholder conversations, and in the survey, residents’ sense of urgency regarding decision-making on Devens is accompanied by the community’s desire for a transparent impact analysis, an unbiased education and outreach program, and an inclusive planning process.

Eighty-nine percent of community survey respondents strongly or mostly agree that in order to plan effectively, it is critical that the Town of Harvard decide on a direction to take with respect to the disposition of Devens. Seventy-five percent of respondents strongly or mostly disagree that the town should defer any decisions about Devens until the planning deadline of 2031.

Also, there is general agreement on principles such as the desire to keep the existing Devens community intact as a “vibrant neighborhood,” to maximize the economic development potential of the commercial areas, and to advance development according to a broadly vetted and accepted plan.

Strategies/Next Steps

- Building on Harvard’s Devens Economic Analysis Team’s (DEAT) work and findings, conduct a comprehensive analysis of Devens to determine the potential benefits and liabilities that could result from likely governance options: resume jurisdiction of lands within historic (and current) town boundaries; assume jurisdiction of a portion of lands within town boundaries; or forego jurisdiction of any of Devens lands within Harvard. Analysis should include local governance and staffing needs, and the impact on schools, housing, and economic development.
- Engage in public outreach to clarify governance options.
- Adjust vision and goals for Harvard based on Harvard’s preferred governance option.
- Work with MassDevelopment, state legislators, Ayer and Shirley to advance Harvard’s vision and goals.
- Work with town committees and boards to create a framework, process and timeframe for a decision within two years.

Figure 4: Potential Benefits and Risks by Governance Structure

	State Governance (existing)	Harvard Governance (future option)	Governance by others (future option)
Education	Harvard provides education services for fee (paid by MassDevelopment, contract can terminate)	Harvard responsible for providing educational services (no fee)	Harvard has no responsibility for or revenue from educational services for Devens
Public Services	Harvard provides public services for fees (e.g. licenses)	Harvard provides public services for fees	Harvard has no responsibility for or revenue from public services for Devens
Housing	Harvard may receive Affordable Housing Credits	Harvard receives Affordable Housing Credits	Harvard receives no Affordable Housing Credits
Tax Revenue	No local tax revenues due Harvard	Local tax revenues due Harvard	No local tax revenues due Harvard
Roads and Municipal Facilities	Harvard has no responsibility for public roads and municipal facilities	Harvard is responsible for public roads and municipal facilities	Harvard has no responsibility for public roads and municipal facilities
Utilities	Harvard has no responsibility for or revenue from utilities (water, sewer, electricity, gas)	Harvard has access to, is responsible for, and receives potential revenue from utilities (water, sewer, electricity, gas)	Harvard has no responsibility for or revenue from utilities (water, sewer, electricity, gas)
Development Control	Harvard has minimal control over amount, type, size and character of development (change to Reuse Plan requires towns’ votes)	Harvard has control over amount, type, size and character of development	Harvard has no control over amount, type, size and character of development

AYER ROAD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

Goals

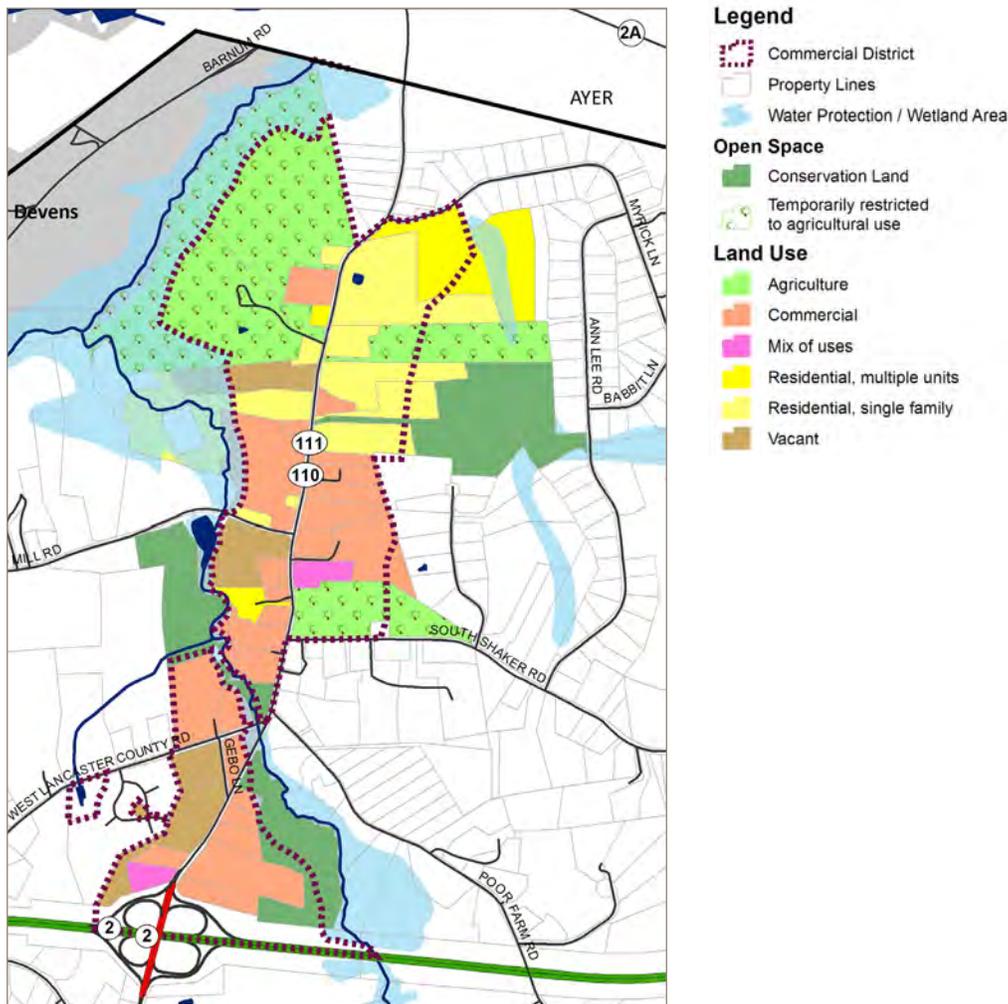
- Diversify Harvard’s economy and tax base with an appropriate mix of residential and commercial development in the Commercial District.
- Work with existing and new businesses to attract commercial services that fit the town.
- Decrease barriers and increase incentives for attracting new business.
- Work with adjacent neighborhoods, town residents, and other stakeholders to facilitate planning and coordination prior to any permitting processes.
- Understand the relationship between economic development of the C-District and Devens, in terms of various factors such as transportation and circulation, conservation, and housing.

The Ayer Road Commercial District (C-District) is a zoning district that stretches along Route 110/111 from the Route 2 interchange north to Myrick Lane. It acts as a spine between neighborhoods and serves as the town’s commercial corridor supporting a significant portion of Harvard’s commercial activity.

The town is under increasing pressure to increase revenues to support its expanding residential population and has studied the C-District, through various committees, to determine if the district presents opportunities for significantly expanding the town’s revenues.

Total acreage of the C-District is 440 acres, about 70% of the district is either undeveloped or devoted to residential, agricultural, or open space uses, more than 72 acres are permanently protected conservation land, and 26 acres fall within the water supply protection area.

Figure 5: Existing Land Uses



Development along Ayer Road is limited by lack of water and wastewater infrastructure, market potential, and size of existing lots – 16 of which are either undersized (less than 1.5 acres) or don't have required street frontage.

Development may also be hindered by the community's lack of consensus on what is appropriate or what may be supported by the community.

Community Input

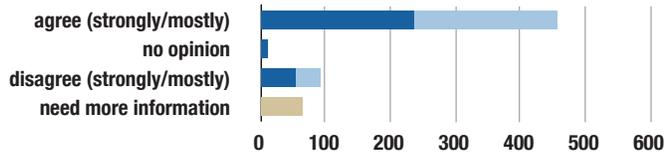
This visioning process for the Master Plan has indicated that the majority of Harvard residents support some development along Ayer Road. In addition there is near consensus that whatever development occurs should reflect the town's rural and historic character and should promote connectivity between parcels on Ayer Road by connecting them with both sidewalks and bike paths.

While the majority of Harvard residents support some commercial development if it increases tax revenue, it is clear that residents in close proximity to the district are strongly opposed to or are concerned about further development near their neighborhood. Only 56.8% of neighbors to the C-District supported development if it increased tax revenue compared to 77% of residents further from this district. Additionally, only 30% of neighbors thought the C-District was the only place in town for commercial development, compared to 66% of residents living further from the district. While the entire town supported a mix of uses in the C-District (neighbors adjacent to the district 68.8%, and residents further away 76.7%), and expressed concern over the protection of natural resources and watershed (77.3% of neighbors adjacent to the district compared to 63.2% of residents further from the district), there was a significant difference in the concern over traffic. Eighty-two percent of neighbors to the district are concerned about the impacts of traffic from new development, while only 47.8% of the rest of the townspeople viewed this as a concern.

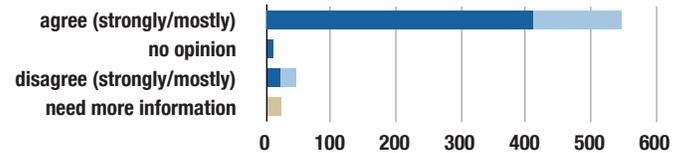
Figure 6: Responses to Survey Question 14

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

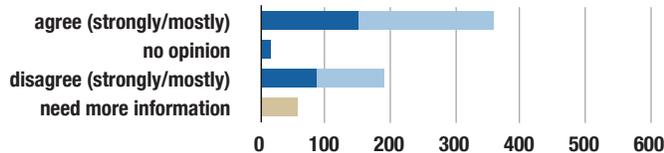
"I support commercial development if it increases tax revenue."



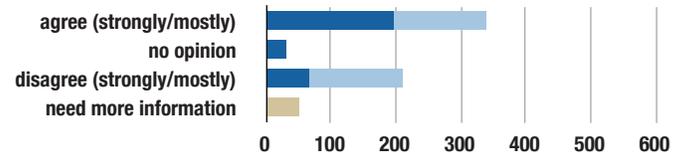
"Commercial development in all parts of Town should reflect the Town's rural and historic character."



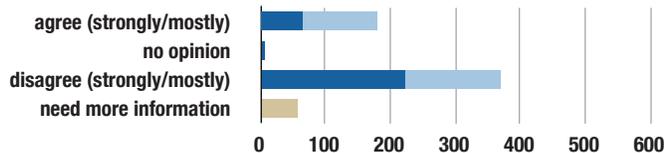
"I support increasing commercial development in the C-District only."



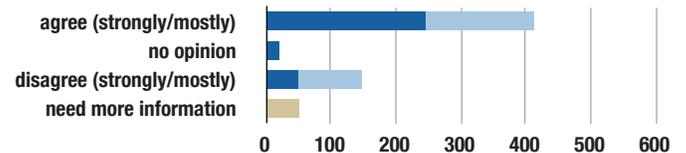
"I am concerned about traffic impacts of new development in the C-District."



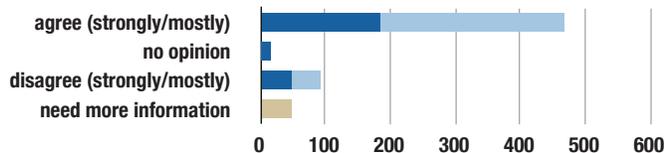
"I support commercial development Town-wide."



"I am concerned about protection of natural resources, the watershed, and green spaces in the C-District."



"I support a mix of uses (both residential and commercial) in the C-District."



Bars represent the number of survey participants choosing each option among the 637 respondents to Question 14.

In bars that have two differently-shaded portions, the darker portion represents respondents who "strongly" agree or disagree, and the lighter portion represents respondents who "mostly" agree or disagree.

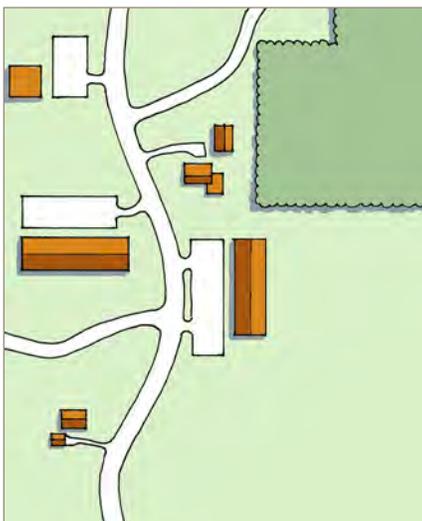
During the meetings and forums, neighbors to the C-District voiced concerns about increased traffic, negative impacts to water and wetland resources, loss of open spaces that contribute to the rural image and buffer residents from businesses, and potential change in the scale of buildings and thereby the character of the town.

Focus Group meeting participants however, highlighted the community’s willingness to work together to create a shared vision for this important area. To begin that visioning process, citizens must first understand the potential impacts development may have on the town: fiscally, physically, and socially.

Strategies/Next Steps

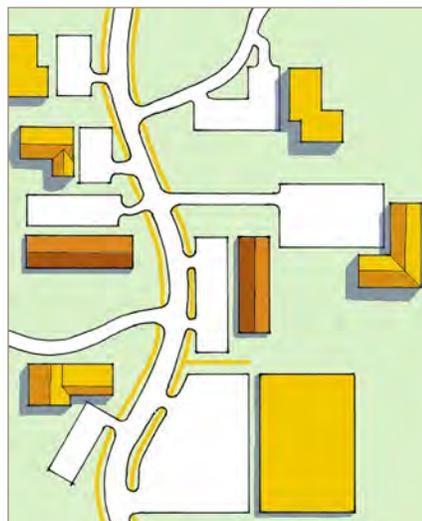
- Conduct a comprehensive analysis of the commercial district to determine the potential benefits and liabilities that could result from various levels of development. The analysis should consider impacts to tax revenues, housing, open space, service, community character and quality of life.
- Continue to attract commercial development on a property-by-property basis under existing zoning – modify zoning to include design standards that address community character, public realm, and connectivity.
- Promote village style cluster development that includes a mix of uses – focus on working collectively with property owners in strategic areas.
- Consider opportunities for infill development – working with existing commercial property owners to expand or modify development.

Figure 7: Development Alternatives



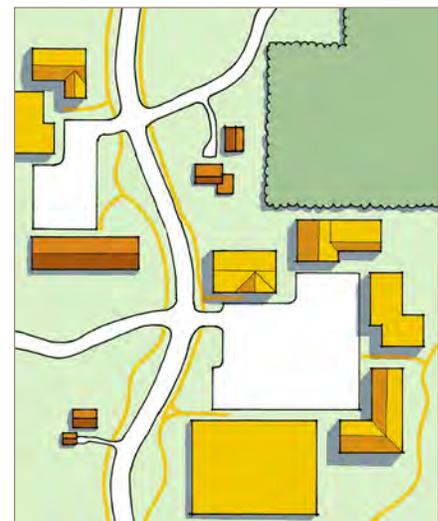
Typical existing conditions

The existing development pattern along Ayer Road in the commercial district includes scattered one- to three-story single-use buildings with separate driveways and parking areas. Parking is typically a prominent land use in front or along the side of the building. There are no pedestrian and bicycle accommodations along Ayer Road or between businesses.



Conventional development

Conventional development would perpetuate existing patterns while increasing density, curb cuts and parking areas. If pedestrian and bicycle accommodations were created, those sidewalks and trails would be interrupted by curb cuts. Land uses would remain separate, providing little incentive for unified design or coordinated development of public infrastructure.



Clustered development

Clustered development encourages a mix of uses, shared access and parking, and coordinated site and building design. The resulting development creates a density of uses that encourages non-vehicular circulation between uses, allows for shared infrastructure, and provides opportunities for the creation of public spaces for circulation and gathering. By reducing the number of curb cuts, it reduces interruptions to the movement of vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.

HOUSING

Goals

- Increase the diversity of housing types in Harvard to meet the needs of a greater variety of households.
- Ensure that new housing is harmonious with the character of the community.
- Provide a greater variety of housing throughout Harvard.
- Be proactive in meeting the state’s affordable housing goals.

Housing is the largest land use in Harvard, yet there are segments of Harvard’s population that lack appropriate choices.

Of Harvard’s 2,047 existing housing units:

- 95% are single family
- 91% are three or more bedrooms
- 9% are one and two bedroom
- Only 9% are rental, the balance are owner occupied

Given the following, it is apparent that housing size exceeds the needs of many households:

- Average household size 2.76
- 41% of households have children under 18 years of age
- 16% of households have a single occupant
- 24.2% of household include occupants 65 or older

Housing costs have a significant impact on who lives in Harvard. In 2010 the median sale price (based on actual sales) for a single family home was \$499,000. Housing costs may be a barrier to entry for some new residents and may be a prohibiting factor for existing households that want to downsize or otherwise move within Harvard.

Community Input

The most obvious need, identified by the town’s housing plan and through other sources is for smaller houses. One- to two-bedroom houses would provide singles, couples, and small families an alternative to the typical three- to four-bedroom home that is both large and expensive. The most vocal

support for smaller homes comes from Harvard residents looking for options for reducing house size, and from those seeking more affordable options.

Without viable options for downsizing, Harvard residents (typically seniors) are forced to look to other communities for appropriate housing. The loss of long-time residents has a direct impact on towns. Households without children (non-family households) are often active in volunteer activities including town boards and committees on which the town depends for effective governance, provision of services, and for sustaining community events and celebrations.

Residential development that attracts non-family households is also important to the town’s generational diversity and to its long-term fiscal stability, since non-family households require far fewer public services (primarily education, the most significant component of the town’s fiscal profile).

Participants in the public forums indicated that more information is needed to explain the potential impact on the town of various housing types. Residents agreed that with good architecture and appropriate landscaping, increased housing density might be acceptable. They also noted that it was important to maintain the historic character of Harvard, while balancing the need for affordable units.

Residents suggested that a regional housing strategy might be effective and should be investigated. They thought it also might make sense to survey other similarly situated communities to see what has worked and what has not worked. Finally residents thought it important that Devens not be seen as a place just for elders and the less wealthy. If Harvard is to resume governance of some portion of Devens, that portion needs to be fully integrated into the community. Residents also noted that we cannot count on Devens to be the solution for affordable housing in Harvard. While Devens may very well play a part in Harvard’s housing planning, we must begin now to diversify the housing options within Harvard.

Affordable housing

Affordable housing is a term that is often misunderstood because it is a proscribed legal usage for various state and federal programs, while to the average citizen it might suggest the relative value of the cost of a home compared to

Figure 8: Harvard Household Income Limits for Low Income (80% AMI)

Household Size	1 Person	2 person	3 person	4 person	5 person	6 person	7 person	8 person
Income Limit	\$45,100	\$51,550	\$58,000	\$64,400	\$69,600	\$74,750	\$79,900	\$85,050

Source: HUD website, <http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il/il2010/2010summary.odn>

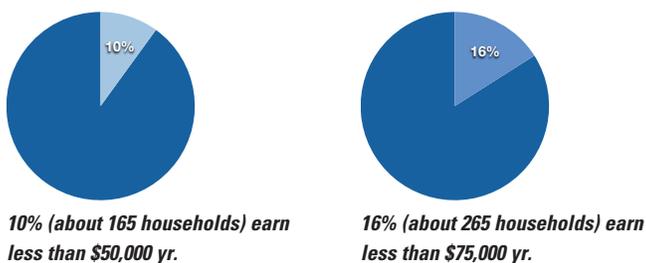
a potential buyers ability to purchase that home. To the Commonwealth, “affordable housing” is any housing for which total costs (rent or mortgage plus utilities) are no more than 30% of a household’s annual income. Costs for housing in excess of 30% of a household’s annual income are thought to represent a burden that impacts that household’s capacity to pay for other living expenses. Banks and other lenders, therefore use the 30% rule to determine a borrower’s capacity to repay a loan.

For many state and federal housing programs, the phrase “affordable housing” means total housing costs that are affordable (costing no more than 30% of income) for a family earning at or below 80% of the area median income (AMI). Figure 8 shows the 2010 80% AMI income limits for households with one to eight persons.

The 80% AMI limit for a four person household is \$64,400. Between 10% and 16% of households in Harvard have an annual income of \$64,000 or less, which would make them eligible for affordable housing under the Commonwealth’s Chapter 40B statute if they were a household of four persons¹. In comparison the state only recognizes 108 (5.4% of its 1,982 year-round housing units.) housing units in Harvard as affordable, 90 units short of the state’s 10% mandate.

Housing discussions throughout the planning process included debate about how the town should address the challenges of meeting the 10% affordable housing goal established by MGL 40B. Participants in the process had a diversity of opinions on the need and desirability of providing state recognized “affordable housing”. Many agree that providing affordable housing to low- and moderate-income households within Harvard is a priority that has been identified by multiple plans. They also see it as an action that benefits the community by fostering diversity of age, income and household make-up. While some do not see affordable housing as the most pressing need within the community, they recognize that making substantial progress toward the 10% goal will give them greater protection against undesirable 40B projects

Figure 9: Harvard Household Income



Sources: 2010 Census, 2005-2009 ACS, Warren Group, HUD

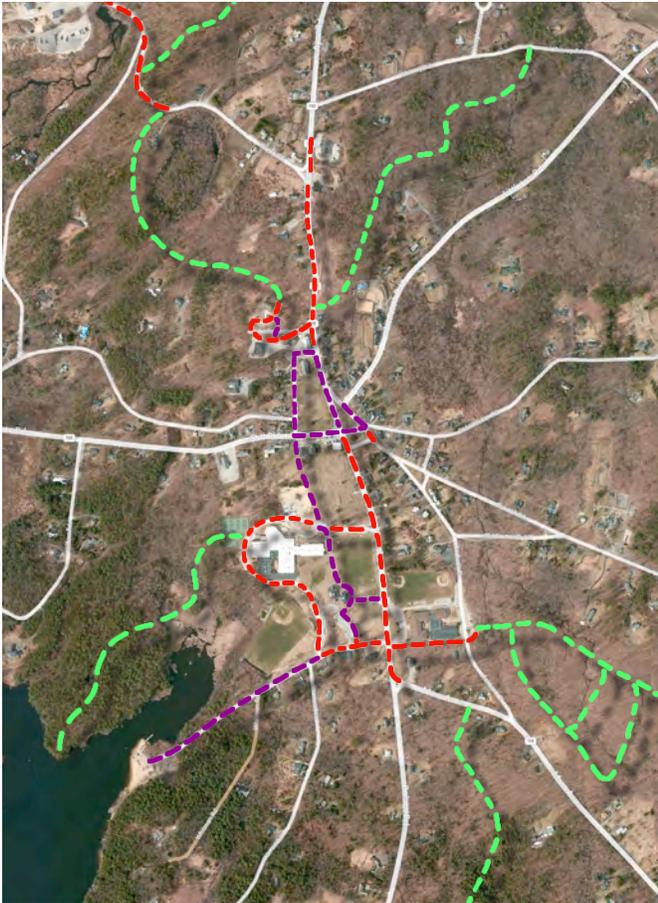
that may be proposed. Most agree that a proactive approach is needed to meet the varied housing needs of current and future residents.

Strategies/Next Steps

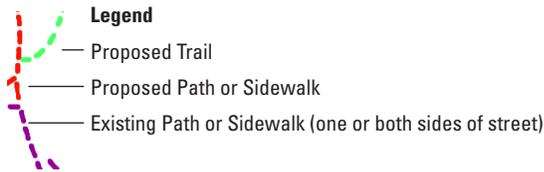
- Amend bylaws as appropriate to allow a greater diversity of housing – possible options:
 - Allow conversions on a greater number of parcels (e.g. convert single family into two units).
 - Allow greater diversity in Planned Residential Developments, including single family attached, two-family and multi-family.
 - Relax the current minimum lot size (1.5 acres plus .5 acre for each accessory unit) for additional accessory units.
 - Allow development of nonconforming lots by special permit.
 - Develop incentives to encourage limited development on current open space/forested lands (clustered residential or multi-family).
 - Rezone lands in Town Center and Still River (other areas as appropriate) to allow multi-family units (smaller lots, reduced setbacks and frontages) consistent with historic village settlement patterns.
 - Develop guidelines for buildings that may result in less demand for septic (low-flow faucets, composting toilets).
- Create design guidelines and site standards for multi-family housing.
- Create zoning and design standards that ensure new housing is indistinguishable from established housing.
- Identify sites appropriate for multi-family housing and for mixed use development that includes housing.
- Create policies, regulations and guidelines that encourage non-vehicular connectivity between housing units and between neighborhoods.
- Develop plans (be proactive) to deal with land coming out of Chapter 61.
- Obtain information from similar communities to inform Harvard about affordable housing successes and failures.
- Consider opportunities for housing created in Devens.
- Consider guidelines that would encourage zero net energy buildings (zero net energy consumption and zero carbon emissions annually).

¹MGL Chapter 40B “The Comprehensive Permit Act” is a state statute, which enables local Zoning Boards of Appeals to approve affordable housing developments under flexible rules (overriding certain aspects of municipal zoning bylaws and other requirements) if at least 20-25% of the units have long-term affordability restrictions. The intent of the statute is to increase housing with affordability restrictions to meet the needs of low and moderate-income households.

Figure 10: Town Center Walkability



Expansion of Pedestrian Network Recommended by 2005 Action Plan



TOWN CENTER

Goals

- Emphasize Town Center’s role as the central community gathering place.
- Accommodate land uses that meet different needs of the community across different time scales.
- Integrate the natural landscape with the historic beauty and viewsheds of the Town Center.
- Provide safe, convenient and attractive circulation choices for pedestrians that reduce parking demands.
- Maintain and enhance public buildings for cultural and community uses.
- Protect and optimize multi-family and rental properties to provide diverse housing options.

Town Center is the heart of the Harvard community, hosting a historic residential neighborhood, municipal buildings, schools, fields and playgrounds, churches, cemeteries, the Town Common, and the town’s single general store. Residents agree it is highly valued and they are committed to sustaining both its functionality and its physical beauty.

Many changes have occurred in Town Center since the town’s last master plan was developed.

- Installation of Town Center sewer and water infrastructure
- Relocation of the Post Office to Ayer Road
- New Library built at Old Bromfield
- Old library currently hosting Veterans Affairs and Harvard Community Television, meeting space and the Pilot Project, a local grass root assemblage of artists, performers and service providers that program available space
- Church expansions to accommodate growth and enhance civic and community gatherings
- Active management of Bare Hill Pond
- Revitalization of General Store

In 2005 the town developed the Harvard Town Center Action Plan to address issues of concern regarding the potential loss of character and vitality of Town Center. The Plan has successfully guided several key recommended initiatives including the installation of sewer and water infrastructure (2011) and the study of municipal buildings and program needs (2011). Renovation plans are proceeding for Hildreth House Senior Center and Town Hall.

Continued focus is needed to address the goals for Town Center.

Community Input

A significant majority (91%) of residents responding to the community survey support the use of public buildings for cultural activities.

Fifty-five percent of survey respondents agree Town Center is fine as it is, however of these, about half also showed support for some changes confirming recognition that continued actions are necessary to maintain the Center they enjoy. Without continued attention and actions changes will occur. For example the landscape will mature and ultimately decline from storm damage, aging and general use, unpaved pedestrian ways will erode soils, infrastructure and park elements will deteriorate and negative trends such as excessive on-street parking and speeding, will continue. Active management of the landscape and infrastructure that makes the Town Center a valued place is necessary.

Allowing public buildings to be used for cultural activities was the idea most strongly supported (91%) by survey respondents. Town Center has seen recent changes in the

use of the Old Library that currently hosts the Veterans Affairs Office, Harvard Community Television, meeting spaces for Town committees, and The Pilot Project a consortium of volunteers, artists, performers and others who are testing the viability of maintaining a self-sustaining cultural center in Harvard. The mix of uses has allowed the Library to contribute to the activity level in the Center, a goal shared by an overwhelming majority of residents.

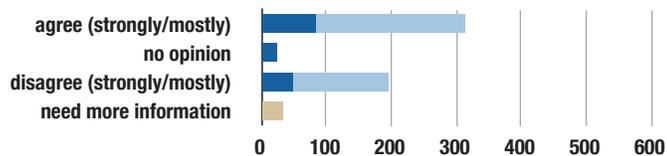
Allowing more types of businesses was supported by 73% of respondents. Responses to the survey's open ended question, and public input from all outreach activities confirms that residents prefer tight control however on the amount and type of businesses that should be allowed. Village scale businesses to serve local needs are generally the only type of businesses residents support, and of these a café or other small eatery or pub was most identified as desirable.

Residents engaged through a variety of planning venues show a mix of opinions regarding increasing residential density. There is concern that increasing the density in Town Center will change the character and sense of place particu-

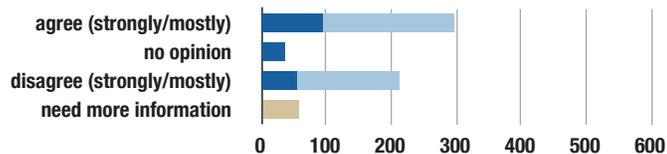
Figure 11: Responses to Survey Question 16

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

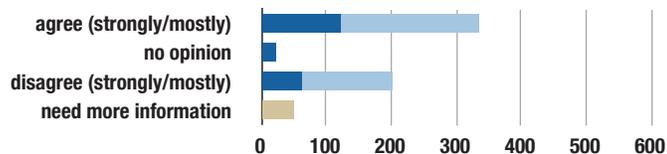
“Town Center is fine as it is, there is nothing the Town needs to change.”



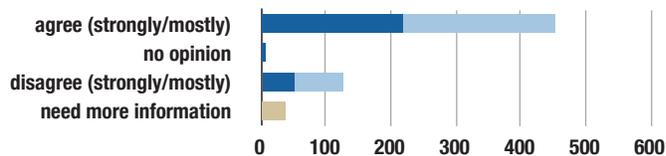
“The Town should invest in improvements to the landscape and outdoor areas of the Town Center.”



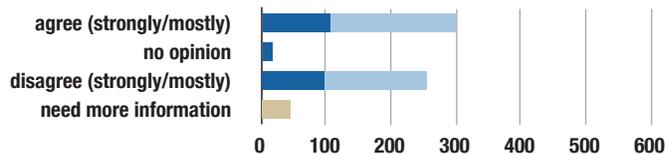
“I support improvements to circulation (and parking) for pedestrians and vehicles in Town Center.”



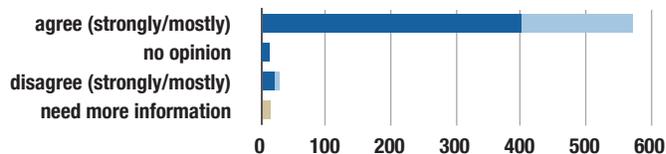
“I support allowing more types of businesses in Town Center as long as the architectural and historic character is preserved.”



“I support allowing for an increase of residential density in Town Center as long as the architectural and historic character is preserved.”



“I support allowing public buildings to be used for cultural activities.”



Bars represent the number of survey participants choosing each option among the 636 respondents to Question 16.

In bars that have two differently-shaded portions, the darker portion represents respondents who “strongly” agree or disagree, and the lighter portion represents respondents who “mostly” agree or disagree.

larly if the density were increased through the development of multi-family housing or housing essentially different than what currently exists. There is also, however, substantial support for creating opportunities in Harvard for people to live where cars are not required for daily social interactions. To many, Town Center represents an opportunity for managed residential growth that is in harmony with the Center's historic development pattern and that will contribute to the Center's vitality and sustainability.

Getting around within Town Center without having to drive has been highlighted as critical to controlling traffic and limiting parking and also to keeping the Center intimate and friendly for all ages. Identifying strategies to increase the safety, convenience and pleasure of walking and bicycling to and between activities and facilities in Town Center will be a cornerstone for enhancing opportunities for regular chance encounters that contribute so heavily to a community's social capital.

Support for cultural activities in public buildings reinforces the desire of the community to emphasize Town Center's role as the central community gathering place. Projects like the Hildreth House expansion, restoration of the second floor of Town Hall as a public assembly space and the conversion of the Old Library as a community cultural center are tangible improvements towards this goal.

Of equal importance as community buildings is the connection between them. Town Center's unique landscape and proximity of community resources (schools, businesses, recreation facilities and municipal buildings) encourages the creation of pathways and sidewalks for non-vehicular access between gathering places. Safe, convenient and attractive circulation choices for pedestrians that reduce parking demands are a high priority for the community.

Strong opinions surround the establishment of appropriate zoning that adequately protects the unique development pattern of closely clustered homes interspersed with small-scale commercial business within Town Center. With the establishment of a limited sewer system in Town Center, it may be the appropriated time to recognize these unique characteristics and formalize them through targeted zoning regulations of a Town Center Village District to ensure that the balance of diversity is not lost over time.

Strategies/Next Steps

- Develop a comprehensive landscape and circulation plan to guide decision making related to infrastructure and public facility improvements.
- Create paths along road shoulders and the Common to link adjacent neighborhoods to the Town Center and provide pedestrian access to and from the several parking areas throughout the Town Center.
- Consider the benefits and limitations of establishing a mixed use village overlay district that will allow the continuation of small village-scale businesses.
- Design zoning that is compatible with the existing compact village settlement pattern that supports a variety of housing types and the creation of accessory apartments.

CONSERVATION

Goals

- Conserve natural, historic and cultural resources.
- Preserve the town’s defining landscapes that are valued by Harvard’s residents and reflective of the rural heritage.
- Protect local watersheds.
- Protect Harvard’s agricultural base.
- Preserve historic structures and locations.

Land Protection

Harvard is blessed with a diversity of scenic, historic, and cultural landscapes, and a richness of natural resources some of which are protected due to the town’s past preservation efforts. However, many other significant landscapes and resources remain unprotected, and some even undocumented as to the role they play in defining Harvard’s rural and historic character.

- More than 25% of Harvard’s land is protected (temporarily or permanently) from development; more than 20% is in permanent conservation.
- 1,737 acres are town-owned public conservation land (10.5% of the total land area).
- 583 acres (28 parcels) are land with conservation or agricultural preservation restrictions.

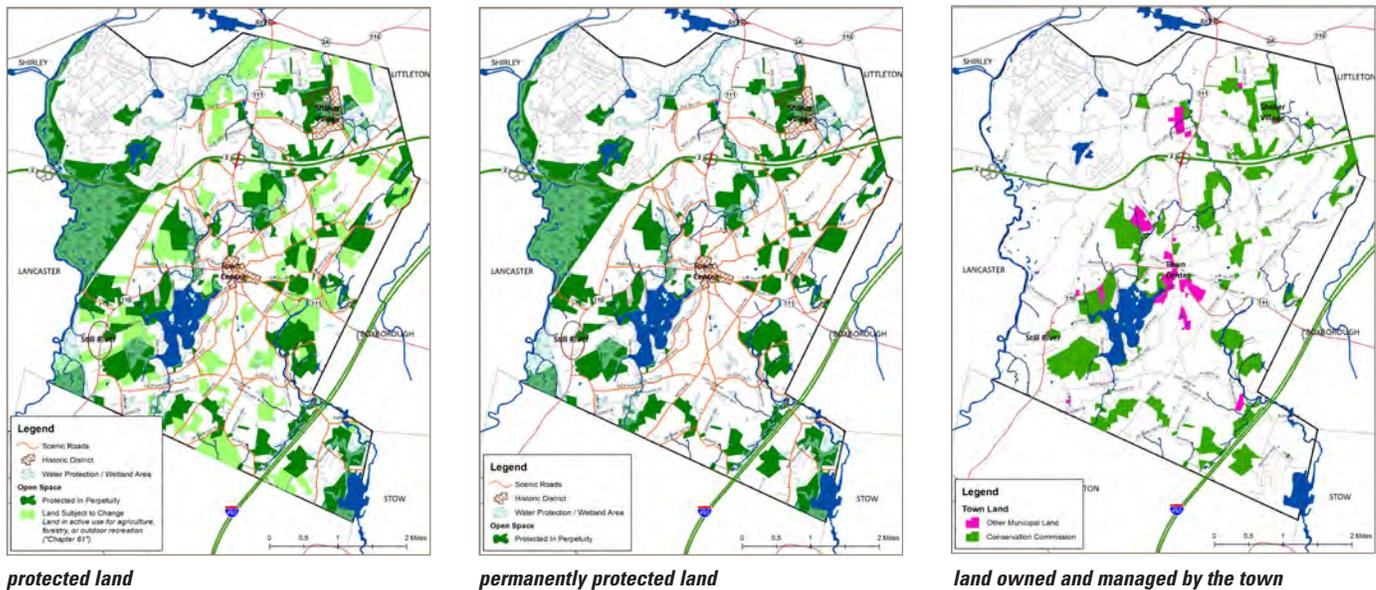
- 1,138 acres (8 parcels, 6.9% of the town) are under the management and control of the Commonwealth or the federal government (Delaney Wildlife Management Area, Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge, Bolton Flats Wildlife Management Area).
- In 1969 (when Harvard’s first Master Plan was written), fewer than 300 acres were town-owned and less than 2% of the land was preserved as open space.
- Lands in current active use as agricultural, forestry, and outdoor recreation have temporary protection under the state’s Chapter 61 program. 2008 assessor records show a total of 2,713 acres have Chapter 61 status (16.4% of the town).
- Since 1985, 1,300 acres of land has been removed from Chapter 61 protection.

Sources for above – Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2010

Cultural Landscapes / Town Character

Harvard residents value its “rural character”. However that “character” changes over time. Years ago Harvard’s rural character was defined by the herds of sheep grazing on cleared forest land. Today forest has reclaimed much of that land. “Rural character” is an elusive quality influenced by a diverse set of factors. Several of these factors are subject to constantly evolving cultural forces. Responsibility for those factors that are controllable is dispersed among several groups whose activities are often uncoordinated. For further discussion of this issue see Conservation Working Group summary in the Appendix.

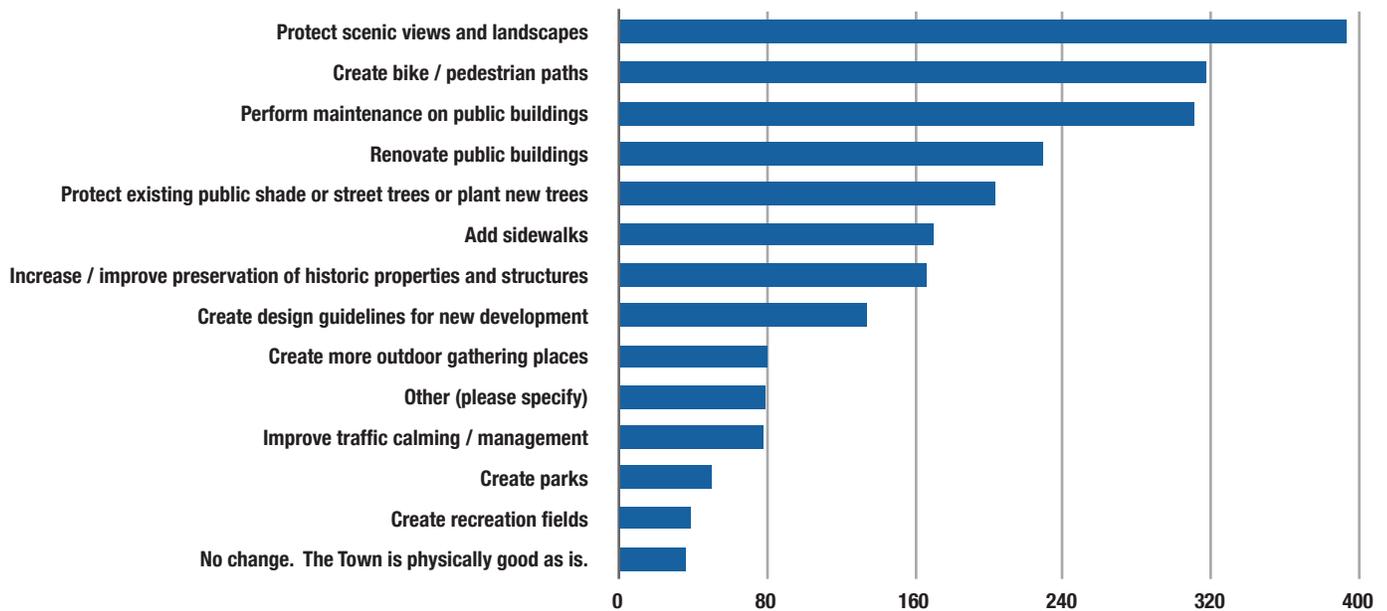
Figure 12: Land Protection



More than 20% of the town’s land area is permanently protected land (town, state, or federal). More than 16% of the town’s land area is temporarily protected farmland (Chapter 61).

Figure 13: Responses to Survey Question 7

Please select up to five improvements you would like to make to the Town's physical assets..



Bars represent the number of survey participants choosing each option among the 633 respondents to Question 7.

- Agricultural landscapes have been identified as one of the most valued and vulnerable open space resources.
- Harvard residents place high value on their scenic roads as a critical part of the rural character of the community. The town has completed a scenic road inventory and developed policies for road maintenance and reconstruction that was subsequently adopted by Town Meeting.
- Other important natural and scenic features identified as critical to the town's character include:
 - Trees—those in high visibility locations or of historic importance
 - Views—those of local scenic importance and those that are connected to regional heritage
 - Village Centers
 - Waterways

Sources for above – Freedom's Way Landscape Inventory and Harvard Roads Report.

Community Input

Clearly Harvard residents value the setting in which they live. Throughout the process it has been heralded as a defining quality of the town and a priority for protection. Open spaces and scenic views received the highest value ranking (97%) from respondents when asked to rate the different physical elements of Harvard.

Protecting scenic views and open viewsheds was the action identified by the most survey respondents (56%) for improving the town's physical assets.

Conservation is tightly connected to the town's "historic and rural character" which many agree is the town's most defining and important characteristic. What is more clearly coming to light as a result of the many conversations throughout this process is the degree to which this historic and rural character is threatened. Obvious threats come primarily from residential development, less obvious threats include the natural aging of forests and public trees, natural reforestation of unmanaged farm land, invasive species, storm damage, and pollution of our water resources. Without intervention landscapes will continue to undergo incremental changes that in time will dramatically change the look and feel of Harvard.

Many discussions on the issue of conservation have focused on the difficulty the town faces in identifying all the elements that make up the “character” of Harvard. Residents also recognize that developing strategies to protect the many varied elements, that are both public and private assets, is equally challenging. Residents agree that the foundation of action is education and there is an urgency to address both in a comprehensive and concerted way.

This planning process has identified several reasons why implementation of proactive strategies has been impeded and why all the critical tasks have not been identified.

- The characterization of “rural character” is insufficient; it is not comprehensive; critical contributing factors are not well-understood.
- The coordination of public bodies sharing responsibility for key elements of the town’s rural character could be improved.
- Public funding and volunteer efforts to ensure preservation and enhancement of Harvard’s rural character could be improved.
- Many private landowners are unaware of the role their property plays in creating rural character and lack knowledge of important land management techniques.

Phase II of the Master Planning effort needs to address these issues. A recommendation coming from public input during Phase I is to convene a working group made up of representatives of all public and private bodies responsible for aspects of Harvard’s rural character. This working group would be an extension of the one created in Phase I. Its product would be a comprehensive characterization of Harvard’s ‘rural character’ and a list of tasks meant to ensure its maintenance and enhancement.

Strategies/Next Steps

- Identify components of rural character.
- Improve coordination of boards and committees responsible for land management.
- Educate landowners on sound stewardship practices, for example:
 - Control invasive species.
 - Control tree diseases and plan for new trees to replace aging and unhealthy trees.
 - Adopt low impact development management strategies.
- Inventory cultural and historical landscapes.
- Develop tools and programs to support continuing local agriculture.

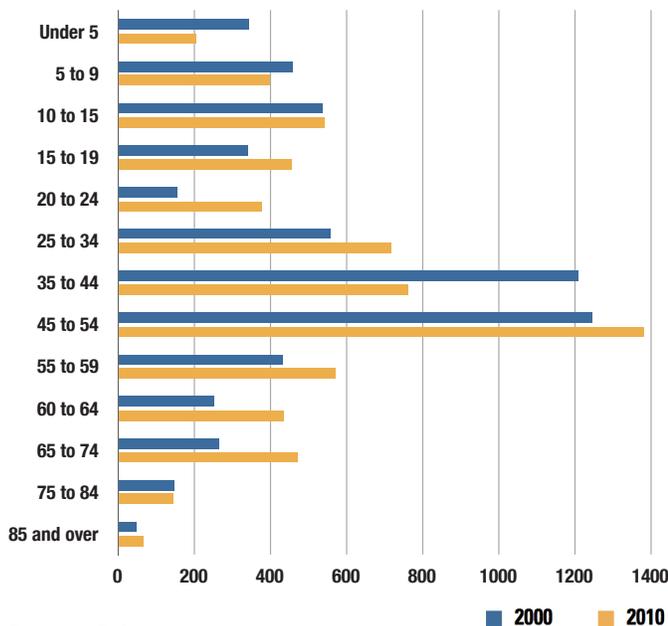


Demographics, Energy, Shared Services

The topics of demographics, energy and shared services were identified early in the process by the Master Plan Steering Committee as important to study within this planning process. Trends in the town's demographics, particularly changes to the number and age of Harvard's residence, have a direct impact on the provision of public services including education and senior services. Energy and shared services represent relatively new areas of interest and investigation in the community. As Phase II of the master plan process progresses, further investigation of these topics will inform the development of priority tasks for implementation.

While these topics were explored with stakeholders and then the community at large in the first public forum, they do not represent issues that require the level of community inquiry and decision making to guide change as the previously identified key topics (Town Center, Devens, Ayer Road Commercial District, Housing and Conservation).

Figure 14: Changes in Population



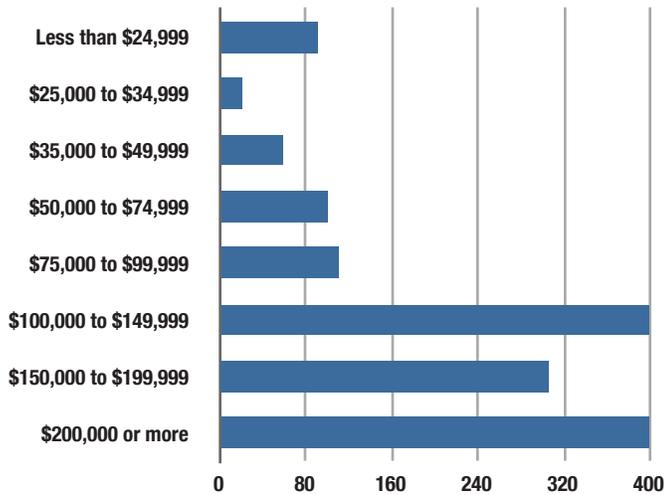
Source: U.S. Census

DEMOGRAPHICS

Understanding the demographic trends within Harvard and how they both impact and can be impacted by the town's policies and regulations is critical to effective planning.

- 2010 Census figures show Harvard's current population is 6,520 (a portion of Devens is included in this total -- 1,194 of whom are inmates and 263 of whom are residents).
- Town records indicate a population of 5,492 as of January 1, 2011 (197 of these are residents of Devens).
- Population of Harvard has increased by 539 (9.0%) since the 2000 Census, but, excluding the Devens inmates, Harvard's population has actually increased by 92 (1.8%).
- Population projections indicate a 2020 population of between 6,286 and 6,873.
- The 65 to 74 age group represented the largest population increase of (73%, 185).
- The largest decreases in population occurred in the 9 years and younger age cohort (31%, 248), the 35 to 44 group (44%, 418), and the 25 to 34 (40%, 121) which is the age group that has the greatest impact on future births.
- Harvard's population is aging, with an average median age of 47 where it was 41 in 2000. This is higher than the statewide average of 39.
- Harvard's population trends reflect national trends towards diminishing numbers in the 0 to 19 age cohort and increasing numbers in the over 55 age group (particularly as the "baby boomer" generation reaches 65 over the next 19 years).
- The gender distribution is fairly evenly split (50/50), a slight shift from 2000 (49 male /51 female).
- Harvard is a fairly homogeneous community, family-based and family oriented.
- 93.5% of the population is white, 3.5% is Asian.
- 49.3% of families have children 18 years or younger, 11% of families are headed by single parents (with or without children under 18 years of age).

Figure 15: Household Income Distribution



Source: American Community Survey

Schools

- From 2000 to 2010, the Harvard Public School enrollments increased by 22 students (without the Devens students, there would have been a decrease).
- Fifty-six Devens residents are enrolled in the Harvard Public Schools.
- Assuming a continuation of recent residential housing trends in Harvard, public school enrollment K-12 is projected to decline by 344 students over the next decade.

Source: NESDEC January 2011 report

Future Growth Potential

Despite existing trends, there are some factors that could impact the population and residential growth in Harvard:

- As “baby boom” generation looks to downsize, the turnover of three and four bedroom homes could introduce more families with school age children.
- Plans for new residential units at Devens could result in 100 to 125 more children over the next ten years.
- There is potential for significant new residential development on available undeveloped lands, especially if Title V allows newer technologies.
- Future housing stock will determine if seniors who want to downsize can stay in Harvard, and will have a significant impact on the generational diversity of the town and nature of the community.

Harvard is dependent on a volunteer fire dept and ambulance service, as well as extensive volunteer government supported by minimal staff. Changing demographics could change that culture.

ENERGY

In 2008 Harvard appointed an Energy Advisory Committee (EAC) to study energy use in schools and other municipal buildings. Its role has expanded to include responsibility for developing and implementing an energy policy and plan, working to reduce municipal energy and infrastructure costs, and increasing public awareness of energy issues, initiatives and opportunities.

An energy audit of all municipal and school buildings was the EAC's first broad initiative. The first round of audits looked at energy systems, and resulted in recommendations for upgrades and replacement of existing systems. A combination of grants and town funding has been used. The second round of audits now under way are looking at the building or thermal envelopes and will result in recommendations for reducing energy loss. Another recommendation may be to identify or hire a facilities manager for each municipal building.

In support of the EAC the town has asked that each town department show a line item for energy as part of its budgeting process.

Public Initiatives the EAC has undertaken include:

- Solarize Harvard: 75 Harvard Residents signed up to install solar electric systems to make their own clean electricity as part of the Solarize Mass program.
- Community Solar Garden is a cooperative initiative that allows Harvard residents to share in the costs and benefits of a collaborative solar electric system

On June 26, 2008 the Massachusetts Senate passed An Act Relative to Green Communities (Massachusetts Green Communities Act: S.B. 2768) that seeks to expand investment in energy efficiency measures that will reduce electricity demand and deliver energy savings to residents and businesses. The Act creates the Green Communities Program to provide up to \$10 million/year (statewide) to help municipalities promote energy efficiency and produce renewable and alternative energy facilities. Harvard met the requirements and was designated a Green Community in 2010.

Qualifying Communities must adopt:

- As-of-right siting for renewable or alternative energy generating, manufacturing or R&D facilities in designated locations
 - Zoning District and Regulations for Solar Photovoltaic Facilities (10 acres Harvard Depot Road)
- Expedited permitting process for approving such facilities within one year of the filing of an application;
- Energy use baseline and a program to reduce energy use by 20% within 5 years;
- Policy to purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles; and
- Policy to minimize lifecycle energy and water costs for all new commercial, industrial and large-residential construction.
 - Stretch Energy Code

SHARED SERVICES

Harvard's needs for services are not always in balance with funds available to provide them. Sharing municipal services or service providers is a strategy to improve the delivery of services by centralizing processes and sharing resources between two or more municipal agencies. Cost savings is considered a benefit but is not generally the primary purpose of sharing services. Objections to sharing services include the real or perceived loss of local control and identity and start-up or transition costs.

Harvard currently shares services under several shared service models:

- Assessor
- Health - Nashoba Boards of Health
- Household Hazardous Waste
- Municipal Health Insurance
- Fuel/Heating Oil/Energy purchasing
- Education
- Fire - Mutual Aid Agreement

The most recent shared services initiative is emergency police dispatch with services shared between Lancaster, Lunenburg, Harvard and Devens. Sharing services will allow Harvard to increase capacity from one dispatcher (24 hours a day) to two to three. An inter-municipal management agreement has just been signed that sets out the terms of the collaboration. The new dispatch facility is being developed in Devens with funds received from state grants. An emergency back-up facility will be developed in one of the other towns. The new facility is anticipated to be in full operation in 2013. There is a potential for up to ten communities to share these services in the future.

Currently Harvard's School Committee is evaluating administrative models seeking to reduce education costs. The Committee will report its findings early next year on options. There are also a number of additional opportunities to consider in regards to sharing educational services including:

- Facilities management
- Special education director
- Community education
- Director of technical services
- Food services
- Director of reading
- Transportation coordinator

Additional shared service opportunities for Harvard to consider include:

- Geographic Information Systems
- Road paving and maintenance
- Planning/Engineering services
- Service Contracts (Equipment, HVAC, etc.)
- Procurement of expendable goods (School and Town)
- Community Education
- Public Safety (Police) - administration and communications
- Affordable Housing inventory management
- DPW services and equipment
- Solid waste - disposal and hauling
- Economic Development
- Municipal Financial Services
- Recreation Administration
- Elder Services
- Veterans Services
- Animal Control
- Inspectional Services



Governance

Harvard values its volunteer government, which has evolved over the years with minimal professional staff. The challenges facing the town, especially with respect to Devens and economic sustainability, have recently highlighted tensions that can arise in the absence of clear direction from residents to boards, committees, and administrators.

At various venues through this planning process questions have surfaced about whether Harvard's government is functioning as well as it ought to or is capable of. Difficult choices face us. There are widely divergent views of how Harvard should proceed, in particular with respect to Devens. Regardless of the final outcome of our decision on jurisdiction of Devens, however, Harvard will retain its form of local government: the open town meeting and volunteer boards and committees. The change, if any, will come from the town determining if in order to address 21st century challenges, it needs additional professional support to augment our current professional staff.

The survey included the question "Please select up to five ways we can improve the management and governance of our town," and statistical responses (i.e. those that are numerically measurable) showed that:

- 396 residents (63% of respondents) believe there should be more collaboration between all town boards / committees
- 341 residents (54% of respondents) believe there should be an increase in transparency in town governance
- 336 residents (54% of respondents) believe that governance would be improved by seeking ways to mediate opposing viewpoints.

These statistics are further illuminated in resident-written statements recorded in response to the question "Are there other ways you think we can improve management and governance of the town?" One hundred ninety-two residents responded to this question. The MPSC advises residents to read these responses by their neighbors (available on the town website¹) and continue your own inquiry into the effectiveness of the town's government. Phase II of the Master Plan must address ways our government can be improved and, with the buy-in and cooperation of all concerned, suggest concrete steps that can be taken to move in that direction.

¹ http://www.harvard.ma.us/Pages/HarvardMA_BComm/Planning/SurveyOpenEndedQuestions2012mar01.pdf



A Path Forward: *The Comprehensive Master Plan*

With a shared community vision and goals in place, the town is ready to move forward by preparing a comprehensive Master Plan that will study the various town elements required by state statute (noted below). For each element the Master Plan will identify existing conditions, assess needs, project potential for change, evaluate existing policies, initiatives and regulations and make recommendations to support the town's vision and goals.

The Master Plan will be a guide that the planning board, town administrator, and other town departments, boards and committees will use to direct future growth and preserve and manage the town's resources in support of its community vision.



DEVENS FIRST

Phase II of the Master Plan will begin with a detailed analysis of Devens directed toward understanding the impact of Devens on Harvard, particularly with respect to commercial development on Ayer Road, housing, town revenues and expenses, schools, town character, and community identity. The question of Harvard resuming or forgoing local municipal jurisdiction of its historic lands within Devens will be analyzed based on these factors.

Based on the results of this analysis, the town will recommend a preferred direction, a simple yes or no to resuming jurisdiction, which will then inform the balance of the master planning effort and development of the state-defined land use elements of the master plan: housing, economic development, natural and cultural resources, open space and recreation, services and facilities, and circulation. In addition the Master Plan will address energy and most significantly, Devens and the Ayer Road commercial district.

The decision the town makes on its preferred direction on Devens will not change the process established by Chapter 498, which requires the concurrence of the Devens towns (Ayer, Harvard and Shirley), MassDevelopment and the legislature. Rather, the decision will be the town's declaration of its intent to pursue a specific direction on the extent of its local jurisdiction over Devens, which will, in turn, be reflected in the Master Plan.

EXISTING TOOLS

During Phase I of the master planning process the town put in place a number of valuable tools that will continue to be of value during Phase II.

Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC)

The Master Plan Steering Committee will continue to guide the work of the selected consultant team. Regularly scheduled meetings will assure coordination of efforts and timely review of deliverables.

The MPSC should establish or continue to coordinate Working Groups (see below).

Master Plan Website

The Master Plan website www.harvardmasterplan.org should continue to be updated to reflect the current status of the project and to give site visitors access to the Phase I report and various support documents that the MPSC and consultant team referenced to understand the issues involved in preparation of the plan. It should also provide an anticipated project work plan and schedule.

The site should be updated as often as is feasible to keep the community interested and engaged in the process in the interim between phases and throughout Phase II.

Working Groups

The MPSC should establish or continue to coordinate Working Groups to maintain interest and momentum. Working Groups should be considered an extension of the MPSC and can be looked to provide technical expertise throughout Phase II.

The Devens Economic Analysis Team (DEAT) will participate in a Working Group for Phase II of the Master Plan. They will help MPSC to investigate the impact of Devens expenses/revenues and their impact on Harvard's municipal budget, schools, economic development options, housing, town culture, and government.



Appendix

CONVERSATION BOARDS

PUBLIC FORUM NOTES

SURVEY SUMMARY

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

WORKING GROUP SUMMARIES

ALTERNATIVES BOARDS

CONVERSATION BOARDS, PUBLIC FORUM NOVEMBER 19 2011

ENERGY

Harvard is a Green Community

On June 26, 2008 the Massachusetts Senate passed An Act Relative to Green Communities (Massachusetts Green Communities Act: S.B. 2768) that seeks to expand investment in energy efficiency measures that will reduce electricity demand and deliver energy savings to residents and businesses.

The Act creates the Green Communities Program to provide up to \$10 million/year (statewide) to help municipalities promote energy efficiency and produce renewable and alternative energy facilities.

Qualifying Communities must adopt:

- As-of-right siting for renewable or alternative energy generating, manufacturing, or R&D facilities in designated locations
 - Town created a Zoning District and adopted regulations for Solar Photovoltaic Facilities (10 acres Harvard Depot Road)
- Expedited permitting process for approving such facilities within one year of the filing of an application
- Energy use baseline and a program to reduce energy use by 20% within 5 years
- Policy to purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles
- Policy to minimize life cycle energy and water costs for all new commercial, industrial and large-residential construction
 - Adoption of the "Stretch Energy Code" -- the Stretch Code is an optional building energy code that can be voluntarily adopted by cities and towns in place of the base building code, IECC 2009. The Stretch Code is an amended version of this base code, with "approximately 20% greater building efficiency requirements, and a move towards 3rd party testing and rating of building energy performance."

Harvard Energy Advisory Committee

Areas of responsibility:

- Developing and implementing an energy policy and plan
- Working to reduce municipal energy and infrastructure costs
- Increasing public awareness about energy

Town Energy Initiatives:

- Solarize Harvard: 75 Harvard residents signed up to install solar electric systems to make their own clean electricity as part of the Solarize Mass program
- Community Solar Garden

CONVERSATION BOARDS, PUBLIC FORUM NOVEMBER 19 2011

SHARED SERVICES

Shared Services: A strategy to improve the delivery of services by centralizing processes and sharing resources between two or more municipal agencies.

Anticipated Benefits

- Improved level of service
- Reduced costs
- Expanded access to basic, professionalized and specialty services
- Increased efficiency of delivery
- Reduced redundancy of physical plants, equipment, and supplies

Potential Risks

- Reduced local control
- Transition costs
- Reduced identity

Existing Shared Services in Harvard

- Fire - Mutual Aid Agreements
- Health - Nashoba Boards of Health
- Municipal Health Insurance
- Household Hazardous Waste
- Assessor
- Education
- Fuel/Heating Oil/Energy purchasing

Potential Opportunities for Shared Services

- Emergency Dispatch (in process)
- Geographic Information Systems
- Road paving and maintenance
- Planning/Engineering services
- Service Contracts (Equipment, HVAC , Cleaning, etc.)
- Procurement of expendable goods (by School and Town)
- Community Education
- Public Safety (Police) - Administration & Communications
- Police Lock-up
- Affordable Housing inventory management
- DPW Services & Equipment sharing
- Solid Waste - Disposal and hauling
- Economic Development
- Municipal Financial Services
- Recreation Administration
- Elder Services
- Veterans Services
- Animal Control
- Inspectional Services

CONVERSATION BOARDS, PUBLIC FORUM NOVEMBER 19 2011

DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics & Population Diversity

2010 Census figures show Harvard's current population is 6,520 (a portion of Devens is included in this total— 1,194 of whom are inmates and 263 of whom are residents).

Town records indicate a population of 5,492 as of January 1, 2011 (197 of these are residents of Devens).

Population of Harvard has increased by 539 (9.0%) since the 2000 Census, but, excluding the Devens inmates, Harvard's population has actually increased by 92 (1.8%).

Population projections indicate a 2020 population of between 6,286 and 6,873.

The 65 to 74 age group represented the largest population increase (73%, 185).

The largest decreases in population occurred in the 9 years and younger age cohort (31%, 248), the 35 to 44 group (44%, 418), and the 25 to 34 (40%, 121), which is the age group that has the greatest impact on future births.

Harvard's population is aging, with an average median age of 47 where it was 41 in 2000. This is higher than the statewide average of 39.

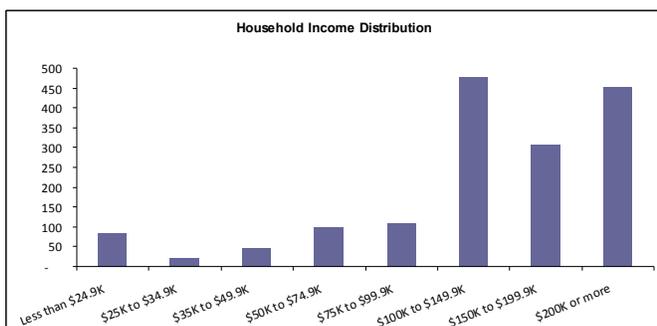
Harvard's population trends reflect national trends that show diminishing numbers in the 0 to 19 age cohort and increasing numbers in the over 55 age group (particularly as the "baby boomer" generation reaches 65 over the next 19 years).

The gender distribution is fairly evenly split (50/50), a slight shift from 2000 (49 male /51 female).

Harvard is a fairly homogeneous community, family-based and family oriented.

93.5% of the population is white, 3.5% is Asian

49.3% of families have children 18 years or younger, 11% of families are headed by single parents (with or without children under 18 years of age)



Schools

From 2000-2010, the Harvard Public School enrollments increased by 22 students (without the Devens students, there would have been a decrease).

56 Devens residents are enrolled in the Harvard Public Schools

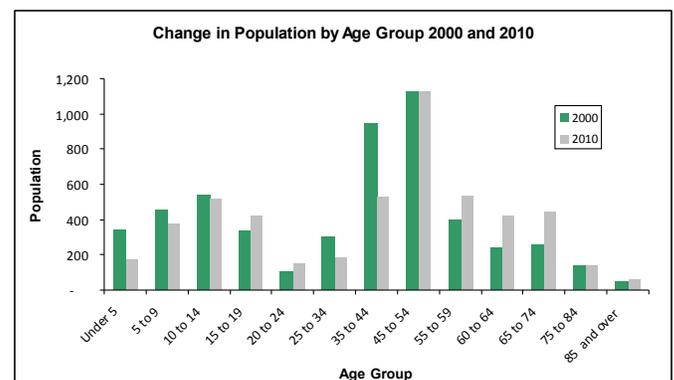
Assuming a continuation of recent residential housing trends in Harvard, public school enrollment K-12 is projected to decline by 344 students of the next decade.

Source: NESDEC January 2011 report

Future Growth Potential

Despite existing trends, there are some factors that could impact the population and residential growth in Harvard:

- As the "baby boom" generation looks to downsize, the turnover of three and four bedroom homes could introduce more families with school age children.
- Plans for new residential units at Devens could result in 100 to 125 more children over the next ten years.
- Potential for significant new residential development on available undeveloped lands, especially if Title V allows newer technologies.
- Future housing stock will determine if seniors who want to downsize can stay in Harvard, which will have a significant impact on the generational diversity of the town and nature of the community.
- Harvard is dependent on a volunteer fire department and ambulance service, as well as extensive volunteer government supported by minimal staff. Changing demographics could change that culture.



CONVERSATION BOARDS, PUBLIC FORUM NOVEMBER 19 2011

C-DISTRICT

Land Use and Tax Base

Housing is the Town's predominant land use – with over 95% of the property tax yield from the residential tax base. Statewide the average commercial tax base is about 14%.

All three of Harvard's previous master plans have recommended increasing the commercial tax base.

C-District Overview

Total acreage of the C-District is 440 acres

- About 70% of the district is either undeveloped or devoted to residential, agricultural, or open space uses
- More than 72 acres are permanently protected conservation land
- 26 acres fall within water supply protection area

The 1988 master plan recommended a reduced scale of development in the C-District and Town Meeting ultimately voted to place a limit on total development to 1.4 million square feet (40% of projected capacity).

The 2002 master plan included a Cost of Community Services Study that concluded:

- Commercial development is a low cost generator
- Harvard's commercial development is currently a low revenue generator
- Residential uses cost more in services than they generate in revenue

Annual Town Meeting in 2004 voted to add the Ayer Road Village Special Permit as an alternative development option for commercial properties in the C-District

- The purpose was to create and maintain a village type of development as an alternative to linear, uncoordinated development

FIAT: 2009 Report of the Fiscal Impact Analysis Team

FIAT was appointed by the Selectmen in 2008 to investigate Harvard's cost and revenue structure and determine opportunities for fixing ongoing Town budget shortfalls

FIAT found that a primary challenge to fiscal sustainability was the Town's reliance on residential property taxes

One of FIAT report's recommendations was to modify the C-District regulations to encourage provision of services for residents and increased commercial development in a manner that preserves and enhances town character.

FIAT recommended formation of an Economic Development Analysis Team, which was appointed by the Selectmen in 2009.

EDAT: 2010 Report of the Economic Development Analysis Team

Beyond currently approved projects, the EDAT identified 4 areas that offer high potential for commercial development or redevelopment in the near future (see map).

Three town resident surveys conducted by EDAT indicated:

- Support for development based around retail uses such as a grocery store, pharmacy, restaurants, and small shops as well as office buildings
- Also received positive support for an assisted living center

EDAT investigated three different scenarios that varied the size of each of these elements and suggested a potential increase of 40% to 76% over existing C-District property tax revenue.

EDAT recommended that any new development in the C-District would need to resolve existing and potential traffic management issues (traffic speed, traffic flow, and pedestrian safety).

Limited sewage capacity was identified as a potential limitation to development – small and highly localized sewer districts were proposed for future consideration.

EDAT report recommended pursuing potential designation as a Economic Target Area (ETA) and the formation of a permanent Economic Development Committee.

EDC: Economic Development Committee

The EDC was formed by the Selectmen in 2010 to:

- Increase the economic value of, and the associated tax revenue from, Harvard's commercial C District by attracting desired community services that are consistent with the current character of the Town.

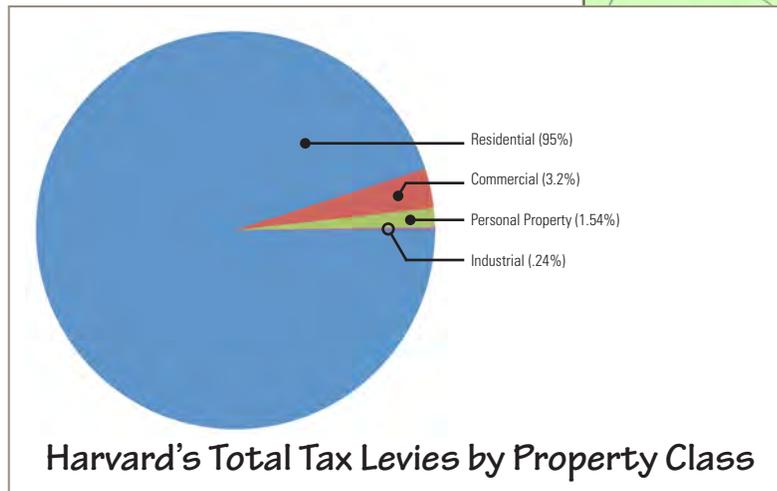
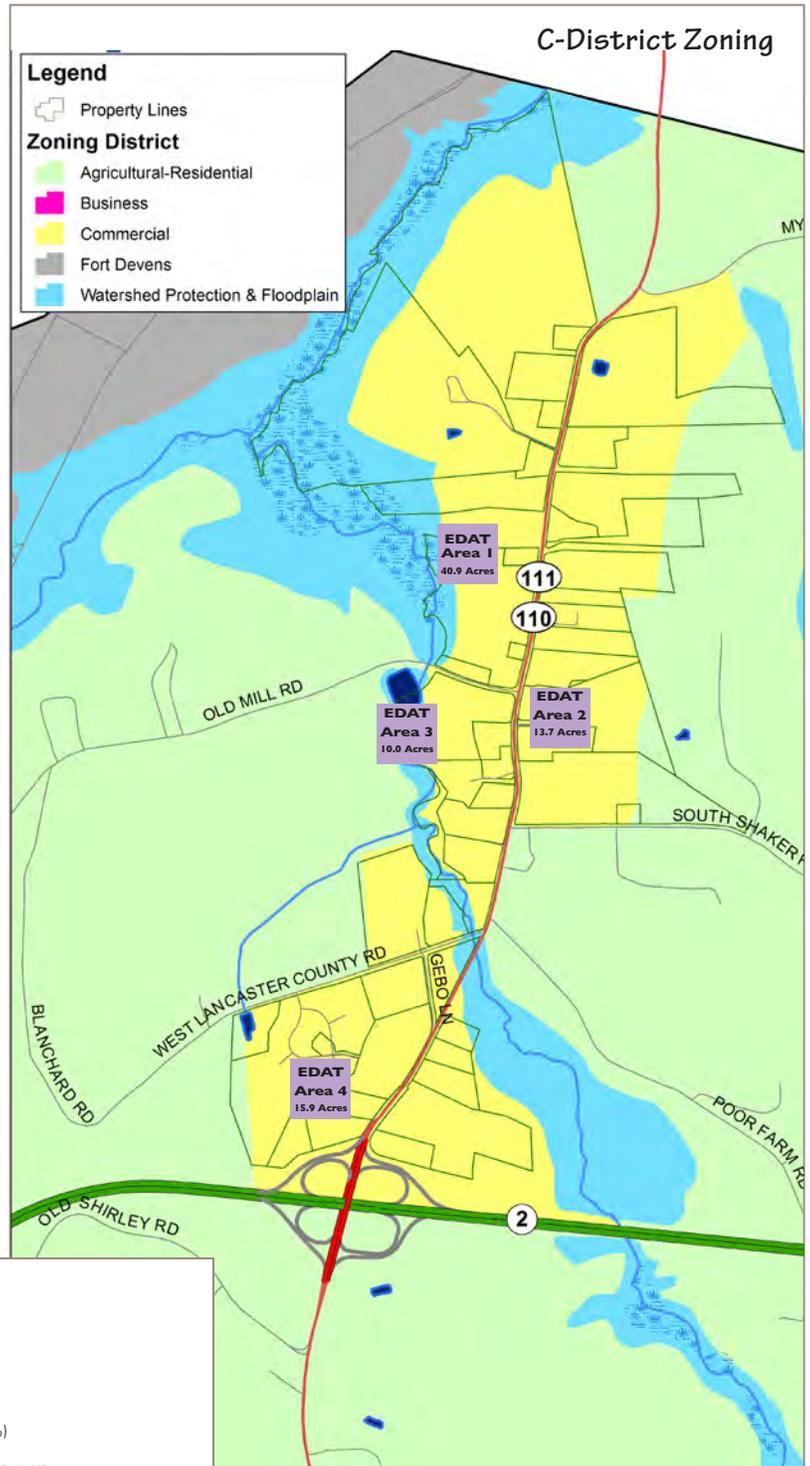
Specific responsibilities include:

- Actively pursuing designation as an Economic Target Area (ETA)
- Work with existing and new businesses to attract commercial services that fit the Town
- Identify barriers and incentives for attracting new business
- Work with adjacent neighborhoods, Town residents, and other stakeholders to facilitate planning and coordination prior to any permitting processes

ETA designation gives developers access to state tax credits, grants the Town the legal right to negotiate tax incentives, and enables priority access to state-administered funds for infrastructure development.

**CONVERSATION BOARDS,
PUBLIC FORUM NOVEMBER 19 2011**

C-DISTRICT



CONVERSATION BOARDS, PUBLIC FORUM NOVEMBER 19 2011

TOWN CENTER

2002 Master Plan

“Ensure a vibrant town center by maintaining a balance of residential, commercial, municipal and institutional uses.”

Related 2002 Master Plan Strategies

- Encourage housing choice, the provision of goods and services, and safe, convenient access to community institutions
- Tailor land use regulations to respect the elements of the place
- Respect the Town Center’s finite capacity
- Continue civic use of municipal buildings
- Build, maintain, and promote a reasonable system of pedestrian facilities within village center and to connect village center

2005 Harvard Town Center Action Plan Goals

Preserve and strengthen gathering places

- Maintain town character and compact village form
- Increase the Center’s wastewater and septic capacity
- Provide for greater housing choice
- Provide supporting public realm elements (parking spaces, pedestrian improvements, traffic calming measures, and landscape beautification)

Municipal Buildings

HILDRETH HOUSE

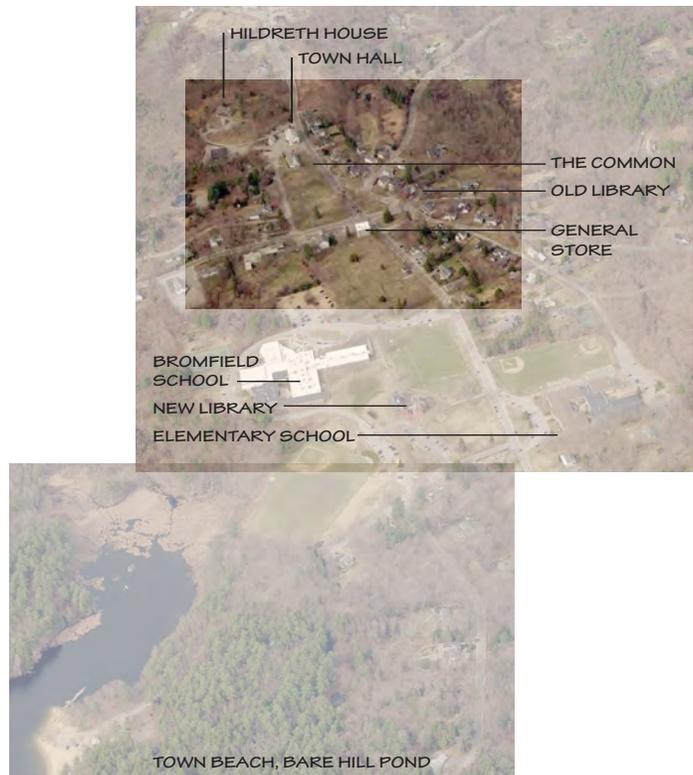
- Use: Senior Center
- Action: Identify changes required to meet COA criteria; Price and phase design modifications; Compare with potential for using the Catholic Church to meet some of the facility needs.
- Use: Revenue Generator
- Action: Evaluate feasibility of for-profit development to benefit town

TOWN HALL

- Use: Town Government
- Action: Renovate to accommodate governing needs

OLD LIBRARY

- Use: Community Center (currently includes Office of Veteran Affairs, Cable Committee, meeting space for town boards and committees, mix of public and private classes and events)
- Action: Evaluate and assess current uses over time to test sustainability
- Use: Revenue Generator
- Action: Evaluate feasibility of for-profit development to benefit town



CONVERSATION BOARDS, PUBLIC FORUM NOVEMBER 19 2011

DEVENS

Legal Framework

January 1994 Legislation passed Chapter 498 – established legal parameters for governance.

- Created Devens Regional Enterprise Zone (Devens)
- Established Devens Enterprise Commission (DEC) as public agency responsible for reviewing and approving land uses
- Designated Massachusetts Government Land Bank (now MassDevelopment) as public agency responsible for development of Devens
- Provided for \$200 million bonding capacity to fund redevelopment
- Allowed for 40 years of state jurisdiction (final disposition on or before 2033)

Devens Reuse Plan & Zoning 1994

Reuse Plan Goals

- Focus as a commercial engine for the region and the state
- Focus on sustainable development
- Provide a diversity of uses and employment opportunities
- Demonstrate the interdependence of economic development and environmental protection and the symbiosis of public and private uses
- Balance local, regional, and state interests

Land Use Regulations

- Capped commercial and industrial development at 8.5 million square feet
- Capped residential development at 282 residential units, with a balance of 25% affordable and 75% market rate
- Preserved 1,300 acres of permanently protected open space
- Required recognition of historic districts or buildings on the federal and state registers of historic buildings

Harvard's Decisions

Active/provides for voice in decision-making process

- Pursue governance of all of Devens
- Pursue governance to historic boundaries

Passive/defers voice to MassDevelopment

- Defer decision until 2031 planning deadline

Decision Factors / What Does Harvard Want?

Harvard town character

Revenue variables (revenue potential vs. cost to govern/service)

MassDevelopment policy and funding commitment

Village of Devens (based on Harvard schools and Devens community)

Town of Harvard governance capacity

CONVERSATION BOARDS, PUBLIC FORUM NOVEMBER 19 2011

DEVENS



Timeline

- 1993 ● Fort Devens's closing recommended, Joint Board of Selectmen (JBOS) created, public planning process
- 1994 ● Chapter 49B Legislation passed, Reuse Plan and land use regulations adopted
- 1996 ● MassDevelopment takes title of Devens, represents loss of 7,000 residents and loss of ~ 3,000 civilian jobs (8,000 total jobs)
- 2001 ● 5.4 Million sq ft development completed or committed to, ~10 % of development is reused military buildings the balance is new construction, ~2,600 jobs created
- 2006 ● 2B disposition / revised Reuse Plan and land use regulations proposed by MassDevelopment: Included new town at core, remaining land to towns; failed at Super Town Meeting
- 2009 ● MassDevelopment Vicksburg Square Proposal included 350 housing units (25% affordable), would have required change to Reuse Plan and land use regulations by raising housing cap to 632, plan; failed at Super Town Meeting
- 2010 ● Trinity Financial Vicksburg Square Proposal includes 246 housing units (80% affordable), requires change to Reuse Plan and land use regulations
- 2011 ● ~5.7 million sq ft development completed or committed to, ~1.5 million sq ft of new buildings that are vacant, ~3,500 jobs created, ~\$8.9 million of bonding capacity remains
- 2012 ● Towns may or may not vote on Trinity Financial Vicksburg Square Proposal
- 2030 ● DEC and JBOS shall initiate a study to determine disposition and a permanent government structure for ongoing operation and administration of Devens
- 2033 ● DEC and JBOS shall submit study to the Governor, the Secretary of EOAF and the Clerks of the House and Senate.

CONVERSATION BOARDS, PUBLIC FORUM NOVEMBER 19 2011

HOUSING

Households

Average household size 2.76

41% of households have children under 18 years of age

16% of households have a single occupant

24.2% of household include occupants 65 or older

Housing Types

Existing Housing Units: 2,047

91% are owner-occupied; 9% are rental

95% are single family

91% have three or more bedrooms; 9% have one or two bedrooms

Affordable Housing

Affordable Housing Units in Harvard on Subsidized Housing Inventory – 108 (5.4% of Harvard’s 1,982 year-round housing units).

Generally, affordable housing is any housing for which total costs (rent or mortgage plus utilities) are no more than 30% of a household’s annual income.

For many state and federal housing programs, the phrase “affordable housing” means total housing costs that are affordable (costing no more than 30% of income) for a family earning at or below 80% of the area median income (AMI).

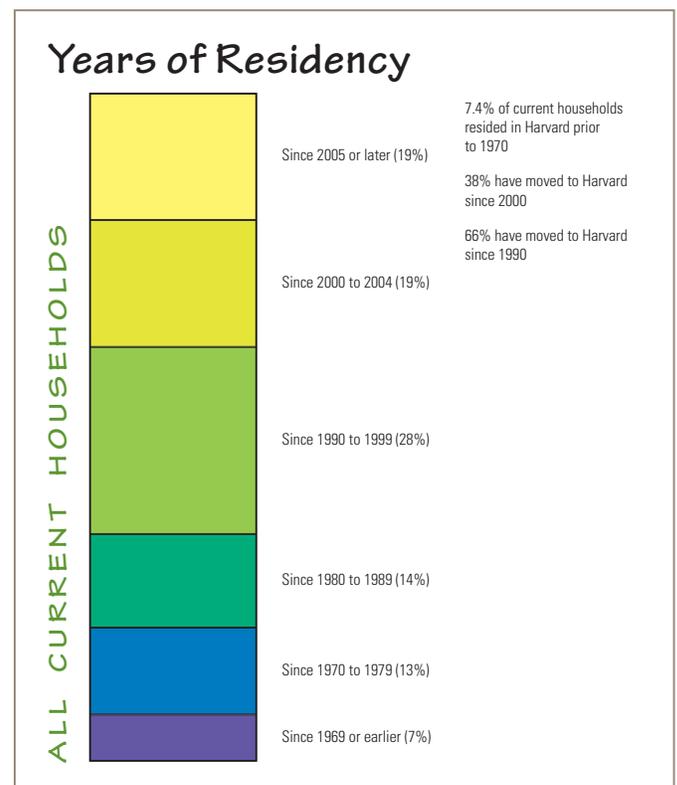
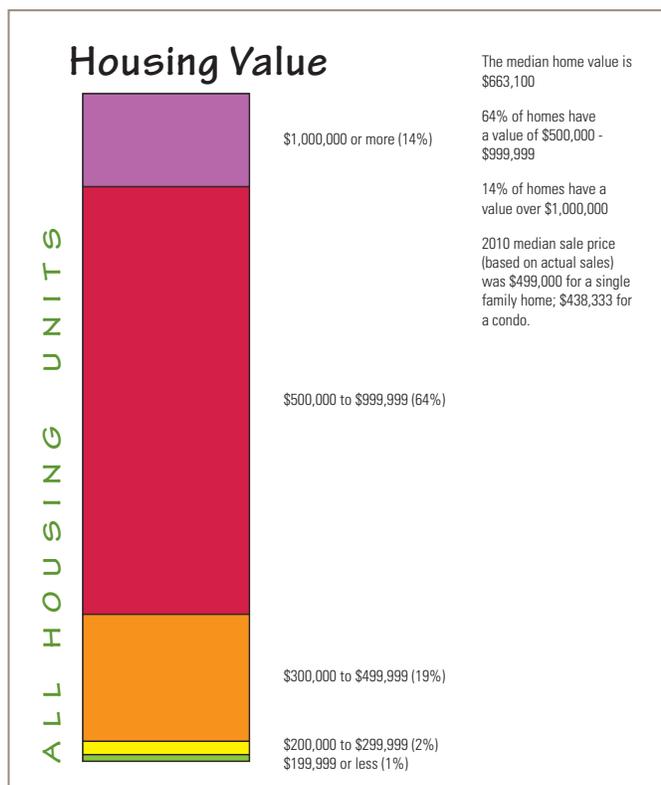
The area median income for Eastern Worcester County is \$107,700.

Between 10% and 16% of households in Harvard have an annual income of \$64,000 or less, which would make them eligible for affordable housing under the Commonwealth’s Chapter 40B statute.

10% (about 165 households) earn less than \$50,000 yr.

16% (about 265 households) earn less than \$75,000 yr.

Sources: 2010 Census, 2005-2009 ACS, Warren Group, HUD



CONVERSATION BOARDS, PUBLIC FORUM NOVEMBER 19 2011

CONSERVATION

Land Protection

More than 25% of Harvard's land is protected (temporarily or permanently) from development, more than 20% is in permanent conservation.

1,737 acres are town-owned public conservation land (10.5% of the total land area).

583 acres (28 parcels) are land with conservation or agricultural preservation restrictions.

1,138 acres (8 parcels, 6.9% of the Town) are under the management and control of the Commonwealth or the federal government (Delaney Wildlife Management Area, Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge, Bolton Flats Wildlife Management Area).

In 1969 (when Harvard's first Master Plan was written), fewer than 300 acres were town-owned and less than 2% of the land was preserved as open space.

Lands in current active use as agricultural, forestry, and outdoor recreation have temporary protection under the state's Chapter 61 program. 2008 assessor records show a total of 2,713 acres have Chapter 61 status (16.4% of the Town).

Since 1985, 1,300 acres of land has been removed from Chapter 61 protection.

Sources for above – Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2010

Cultural Landscapes / Town Character

Agricultural landscapes have been identified as one of the most valued and vulnerable open space resources.

Harvard residents place high value on their scenic roads as a critical part of the rural character of the community. The Town has completed a scenic road inventory and developed policies for road maintenance and reconstruction that was subsequently adopted by Town Meeting.

Other important natural and scenic features identified as critical to the Town's character include:

- Trees—those in high visibility locations or of historic importance
- Views—those of local scenic importance and those that are connected to regional heritage
- Village Centers
- Waterways

Sources for above – Freedom's Way Landscape Inventory and Harvard Roads Report.

High Priority Conservation Goals from the 2008 Open Space and Recreation Plan

Protection of Local Watershed

- Educate community about best management practices
- Protect the open space resources around Bare Hill Pond

Protect Harvard's Agricultural Base

- Set aside lands for agricultural use
- Allow farming on existing open spaces

Preservation of Historic Locations

- Historic buildings and their associated landscapes
- Preserve historic views

Community Education about the Value of Open Spaces

Improved Coordination between Town Organizations and Other Agencies

Threats to Conservation Resources and Town Character

Some are ecological:

- invasive species
- tree diseases – threats to long-term tree health
- cyclical forestry issues
- unresolved drainage issues and unprotected water sheds and view sheds
- deer ticks and mosquitoes

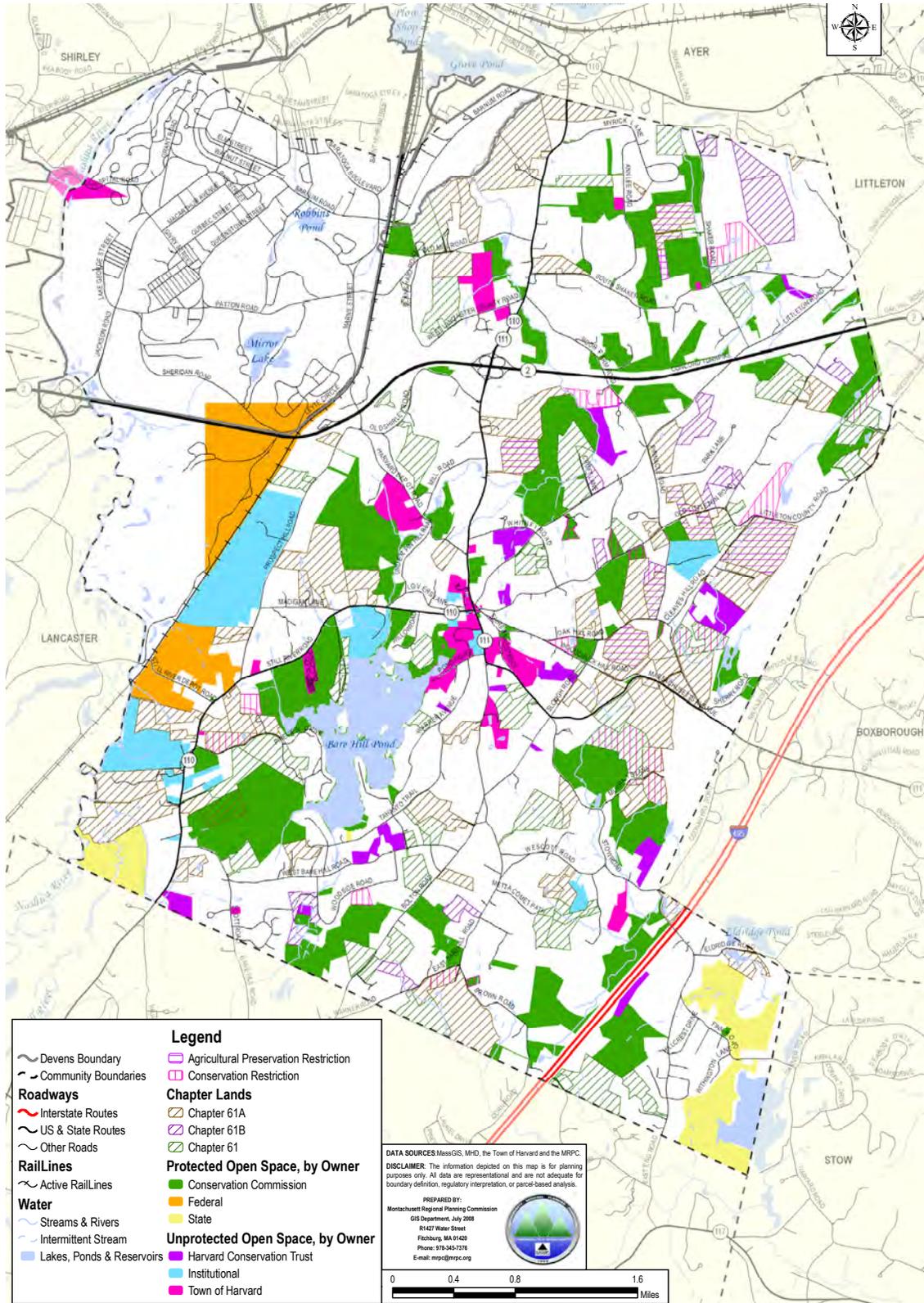
Some are social:

- increased density and corresponding traffic
- identification and awareness of cultural landscapes
- historic structures / villages outside of historic districts
- lack of integration / collaboration on comprehensive resource management between different town boards / committees

CONVERSATION BOARDS, PUBLIC FORUM NOVEMBER 19 2011

CONSERVATION

Open Space in Harvard



conservation sense
resources balance General Pond town
places democracy Farmer's
viewsheds diversity especially active
Flea's Meeting farms
place Farm trails Bare
Fair landscape decision
direct station land
Fair landscape decision
habitats 4th good oral individuality involvement nice
solar rural dump Family Town character
environmental preservation people River Market Hill England
transfer residential etc life Apple
open size Pilot caring school family Old
Land Willard retake feeling Association usually New natural diverse
Paul usually New natural diverse
personality talent small renewed energy inclusive garden aspects
feel personality talent small renewed energy inclusive garden aspects
Still district connections traditional Festival intimate welcoming
historical connections traditional Festival intimate welcoming
population Abbey July Senior Space take
privacy care

Public Forum 1

The Harvard Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC) hosted a public forum on Saturday, November 19th, 2011 from 8:30 AM to 1 PM at the Old Library in Town Center.

The purpose of the forum was to provide an opportunity for community members to come together to consider what they like about the Town and want to preserve in the future, what they would like to change in the future, and to identify challenges and opportunities for the community. This meeting is part of a process that will help create a vision for the future.

The more than seventy-five participants representing neighborhoods throughout Harvard attended the Forum.

Open House

8:30am to 9:20am

Participants were welcomed into an open house format with time to circulate around the main room to view material presented on informational posters prepared by the MPSC and the consulting team. The boards included baseline information about the community, a status update of recommendations from the 2002 Master Plan, and the results of a 2nd grade mapping project developed and facilitated by members of the MPSC. MPSC members and consultant team members circulated explaining the origin and intent of information. Beverages and refreshments were available. Participants were invited to write on post-it notes to provide any thoughts, ideas, or questions about the information presented.

Presentation

9:30am to 9:50am

The Master Plan Steering Committee chair welcomed forum participants with a powerpoint presentation that outlined the master planning process, explained why it is important to undertake this planning now, and introduced some of the key issues that will be focus of community discussions. The consultant team outlined the goals of the forum, defining what a community vision and goals are, why they are important and how they are developed. Presentations are appended to this summary.

Facilitated Group Activities

10:00am to 11:00am

Participants were asked to move into one of six groups for small facilitated discussions. The purpose of these discussions were to 1) share ideas about shared values to assist participants in articulating a Town Vision and 2) discuss the challenges and opportunities associated with key issues to increase participant knowledge and assess community interest.

MPSC members, as facilitators, asked participants to imagine their desired future for Harvard in 2030, share what they value about Harvard, and what they would like to see change. Participants were then asked what they think the primary challenges and opportunities are for Harvard to achieve its community vision. As a final exercise participants were asked to indicate their top three things to preserve or change, and the three most important challenges or opportunities the town should address.

A scribe from each group took notes to document the discussion. Notes are appended.

Community Presentation

11:10 am to 11:40am

Participants came back together in a large group to share information. A volunteer from each group summarized the outcome of their group activity. Group flip charts were posted around the room.

Forum Wrap Up

11:40am to 12

The consultant team closed the meeting by announcing how participants could offer further input at this meeting including written comments on space provided on agendas, notes on post-its attached to the informational boards, and by speaking directly with MPSC or consultant team members. Participants were also asked to consider further involvement by serving on working groups, following information on the projects web site, and attending future meetings.

The MPSC thanked participants and asked them to stay for informal conversations over lunch.

Lunch

12:00am to 1:00

Lunch was provided by Chef Paul.



Master Plan Steering Committee

Welcome

Master Plan Phase I Forum I: Vision and Goals

Nothing happens without first a dream ...
Carl Sandburg

Why We're Here This Morning...



To Develop a Vision and Goals for the Town

- It should describe what we, the residents, want the town to look like in 10 years
- It should reflect the values of the community rather than bottom line measures.
- It should inspire, energize, and guide us.

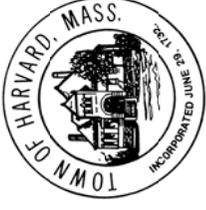


What is a Master Plan?

A plan to guide a community's physical evolution.

A Master Plan Provides :

- Set of baseline principles for decisions that follow an optimistic and hopeful long-term vision.
- Process that increases civic awareness, raises aspirations, and contributes to the sense of community.
- Method for Harvard to chart growth so that dollars spent improving the town support goals and vision of residents.

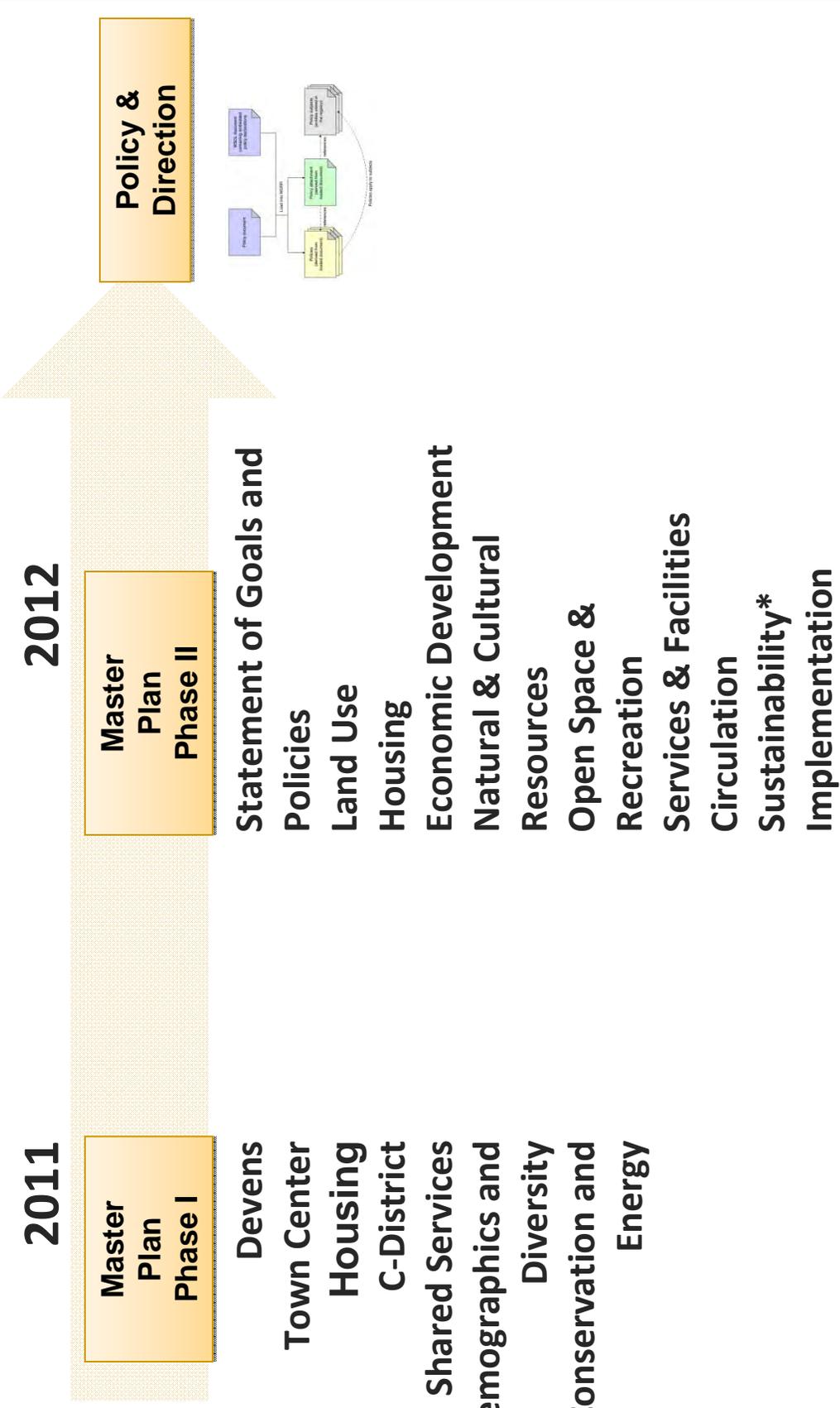


Master Plan: Why Now?

- State law says towns must update plans every 10 years.
- Reality check - we have a confluence of town issues that will effect our town, our neighbors, and our families:
 - **Devens**
 - **C-District and Revenues**
 - **Town Center**
 - **Regionalization and Shared Services**
 - **Demographics and Population Diversity**
 - **Housing**
 - **Conservation and Energy**

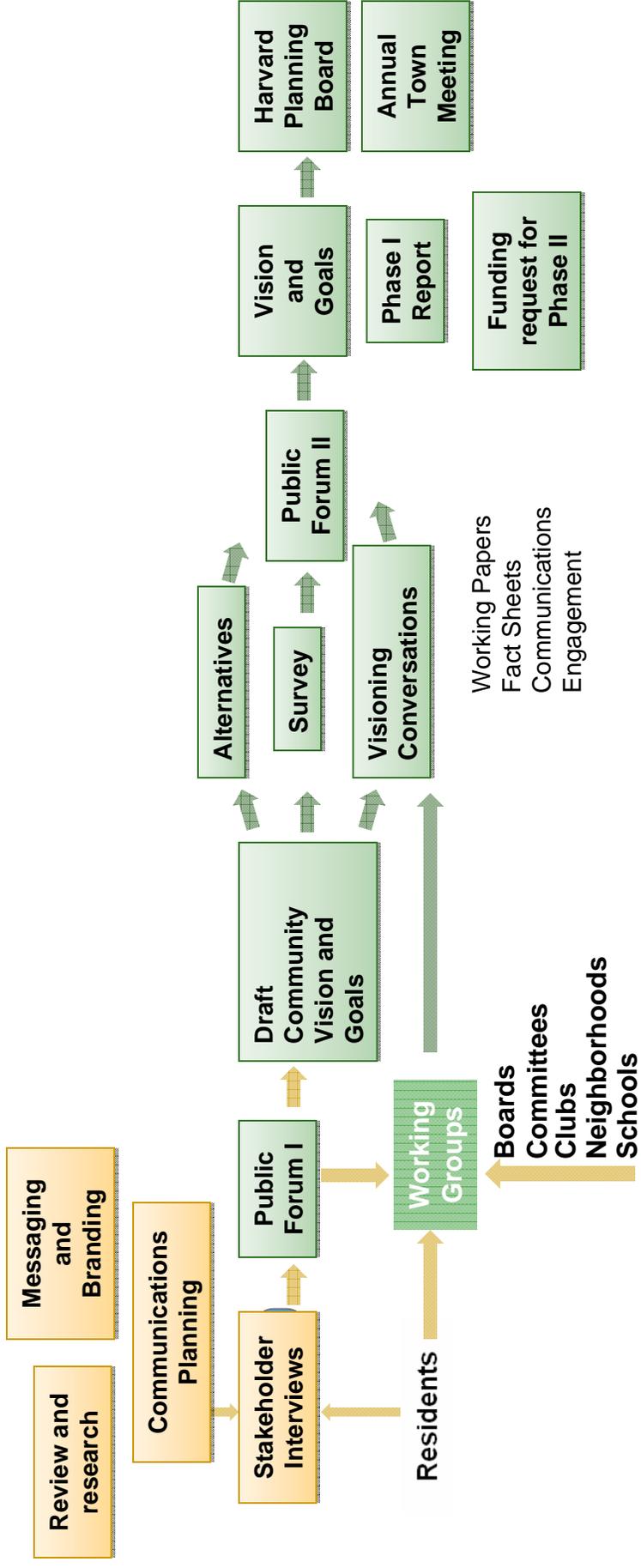


Master Plan Phases

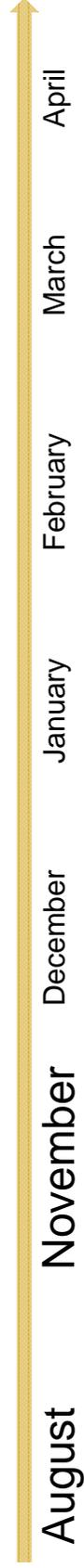




Master Plan Phase I: Defining a Vision for Harvard



MPSC **Residents**
Brown Walker Planners
Wolf Landscape Architects

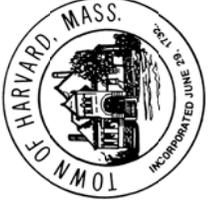


Master Plan Steering Committee



■ Subcommittee of Harvard Planning Board

Michelle Catalina	Planning Board
	Community Preservation Committee
Tim Clark	Board of Selectmen
Lucy Wallace	Council on Aging
Jim Breslauer	Conservation Commission
Ron Ostberg	Citizen at Large
Al Combs, Vice Chair	Agricultural Advisory Committee
	Economic Development Committee
Joe Hutchinson, Chair	Citizen at Large



Helping Us Develop a Vision for Harvard

■ *Brown Walker Planners*

- Sue Brown
- Juliet Walker

■ *Wolf Landscape Architecture*

- Tobias Wolf

Planning

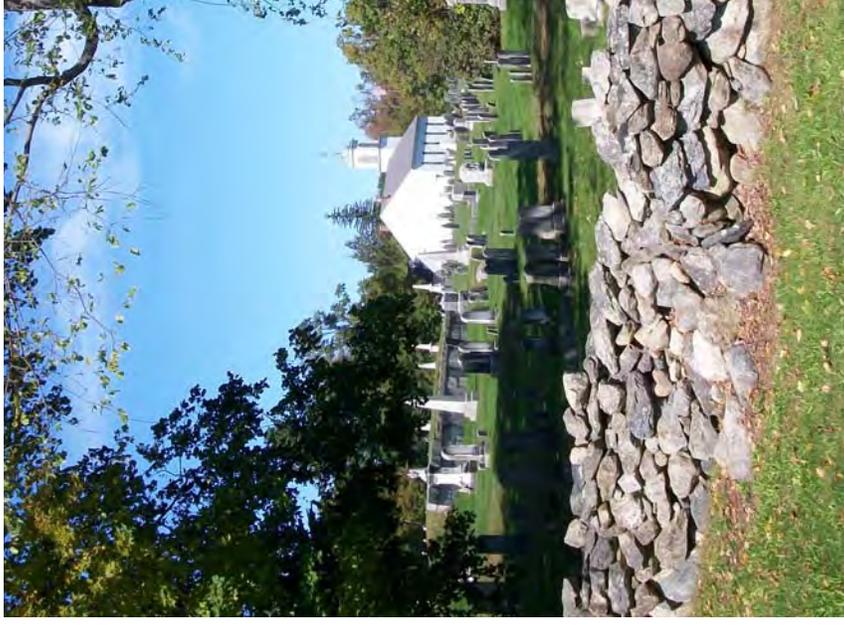
“Planning is a participatory act of community membership and an expression of belief about the future of one’s community.”

William R. Morrish and Catherine Brown
“Planning to Stay”



Community Vision and Goals - What

- ❖ collectively determine a desired future state
- ❖ identify a plan of action

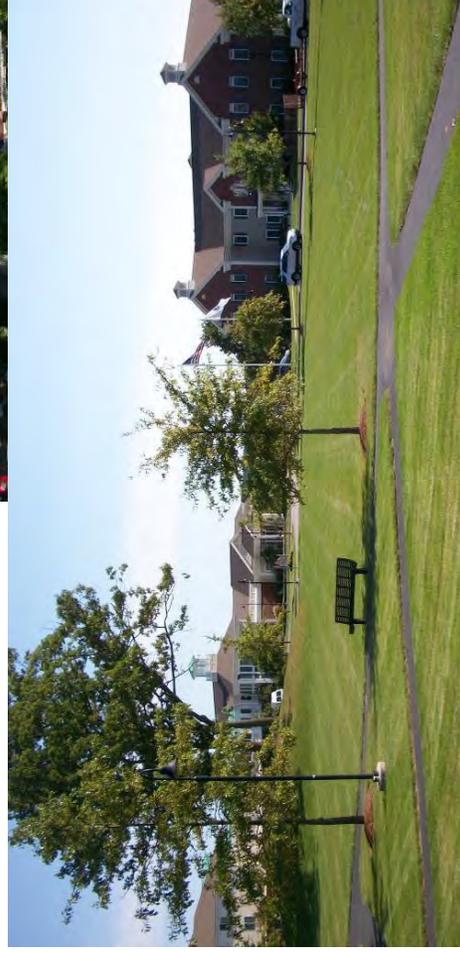
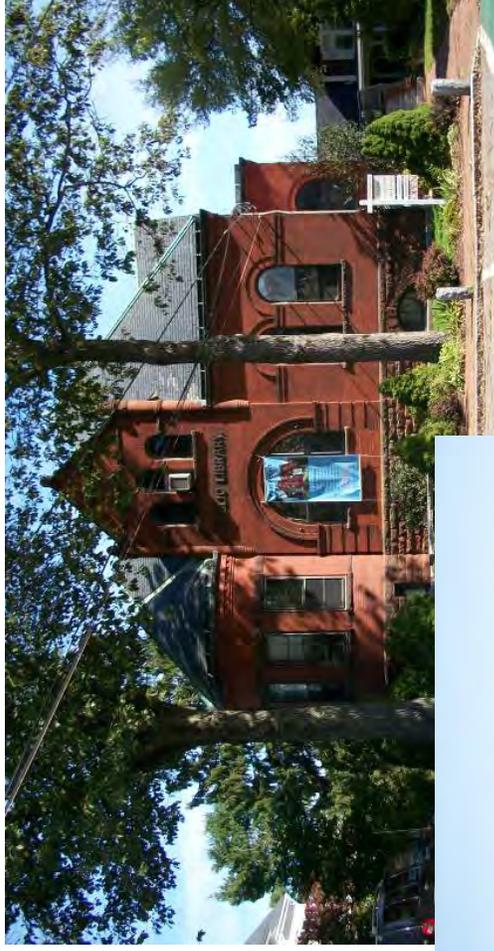


Community Vision and Goals - Why

Excite

Motivate

Inspire



Direct

Monitor

Focus

Community Vision and Goals - How

Interviews

Student Projects

www.harvardplan2012.org

Working Groups

Survey

Visioning Discussions

Public Forums

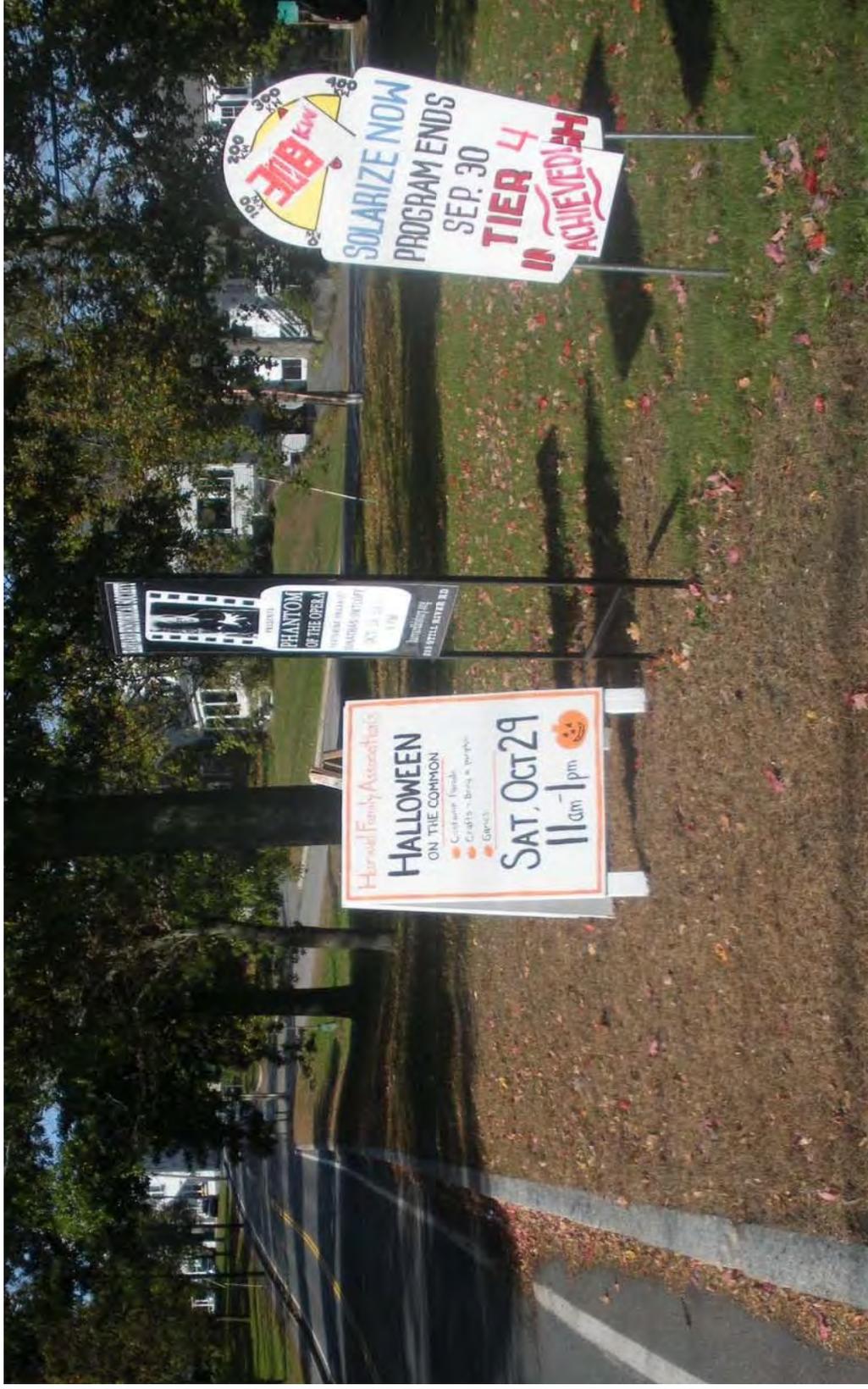


Areas of Interest

- Town Center
- Devens
- Commercial District
- Housing
- Conservation
- Shared Services
- Energy
- Changing Demographics



Let the Conversations Begin!



Developing a Vision for Harvard

Saturday, November 19, 2011
9am to 12pm

Agenda

8:30 Open House

Please grab a bite to eat and take some time to review the exhibits around the room on some key community topics.

Share your ideas / comments on the post-its provided.

9:15 Master Plan Presentation

9:45 Small Group Discussions

11:15 Report Back and Final Thoughts

12 Lunch

Join us for lunch provided by Chef Paul and take some time to review the exhibits around the room.

Additional thoughts to share? Please use the bottom of this page and the back of the agenda to add any additional comments / ideas / suggestions that you'd like to share with the Master Planning team.

(additional space provided on reverse)

Public Forum 1

The following pages are notes from the six small group discussions, as recorded by the group scribe and submitted by the Master Plan Steering Committee facilitator.

Harvard Master Plan Public Forum 1
Gray small group notes
Jim Breslauer – bres@debres.org

Favorite things about Harvard
(In order of support)

1. Open space/ viewsheds
2. Local talent and energy in population
3. Town Center
4. The library/Campus environment/Inclusive welcoming culture/Active agriculture
5. Harvard Family Association/Senior Center/Town Dump (meeting place)/Fruitlands/Harvard Friends of the Arts/The Old Library Pilot Project/Can usually find a place to park/Town celebrations (4th of July, Apple Festival, Flea Market, etc.)/Schools – quality, Harvard’s own school district/Town Meeting/ Chef Paul

Least Favorite things about Harvard
(In order of agreement)

1. Imbalance of Commercial and Residential property – primarily related to tax burdens
2. Lack of a Town Center Restaurant – gathering place/ Town not taking care of facilities i.e. Town Hall, Hildreth House.
3. Distance to a grocery store and pharmacy/High property taxes (see 1, above)/Traffic- drivers using Poor Farm Road as shortcut and trucks using Ayer Road/ Form of Government (maybe switch to Town Manager and Town Planner)
4. Lack of Housing choice (empty nesters wanting to downsize but nothing available if don’t qualify for ‘affordable housing’/Lack of sidewalks near Town Center (difficult for kids to walk to school)/lack of bike paths/No gathering place (see 2, above)/above-ground power wires (repeated power outages)/Lack of choice in cable companies/Ticks/Property values v. value of services (if don’t have kids in school paying a lot for few services)/senior center facility insufficient/Dump hours/ formal parking area in town center (but see favorite things #5)/Not enough collaboration between town boards – not working towards shared goals.

Challenges

Note – many listed were considered both Challenges and Opportunities and are so noted

1. Change to a Town Manager form of Government (Also Opportunity)
2. Need for Town Planner (Also Opportunity)/ Use of lands and land resources specifically solar gardens, community gardens/
3. Support for energy alternatives (natural gas lines expanded, solar, wind)
4. Devens – might change our ‘small town feel’, impact on schools, physical connection to Harvard (no direct, short road between them)/ economics (structural deficit)/ obtaining a variety of housing/ unfriendly 40B’s/Keeping our excellent school system e.g. keeping it excellent/remaining a ‘small town’.

Opportunities

1. Increase tax revenues by increasing commercial tax revenues (by far #1)

2. Work with friendly 40B's
3. Regionalization of town services
4. Devels commercial opportunities/ schools/Master Plan

Feedback I received was uniformly positive. Participants in the small group were all engaged and enthusiastic- those with appointment who had to leave early apologized and indicated regret at having to leave. All were very appreciative of opportunity to participate and very much liked the organization.

	Favorite		Least
	Devens (retake)		Lack of infrastructure, i.e. town sewer process
	Schools		Devens process
	Conservation land		Access to commercial, e.g. groceries
	Rural character		Lack of local markets
	Family atmosphere		Loss of farm land
	Local farms		Lack of senior programs
	Town center		Hard to get anything done /
	Library and programs		lack of civility in government
	Safety and security		Lack of sustainability strategy
	Pilot Project		Lack of steady infusion of new people in schools
	Bare Hill Pond		Taxes high (property)
	Sports Program		Lack of green businesses
			Lack of diversity
			Affordable housing
			40B threat
			Water quality
			Lack of renovation in town hall
	Challenges/Opportunities		
	National grid		
	Local infrastructure restaurant		
	Sewers to develop infrastructure		
	Affordable housing / 40B		
	Retaining seniors / taxes		
	Better use of MART van; transportation, volunteer drivers		
	COA – education and communication		
	More green energy		

	Small business opportunities; loans, info/support, location		
	Tourism / biking		
	Sustainable commercial demand		

Public Forum November 19, 2011
“Pink Group” Break-out Session Notes

(Comments/Answers are listed by number of times mentioned by group)

Question #1:

Favorite Things About Harvard *Today*:

- Open space/beauty of landscape and town center/rural quality
- Pond
- Small schools
- Sense of community
- Energy sustainability/efforts to promote solar
- Preservation ethic (especially for open space and natural resources)
- Volunteerism

Favorite Things to Have in Harvard *in the Future*:

- More pathways and bikeways; trails to encourage/facilitate getting around town besides in car (very car-dependent community)
- Encourage/facilitate ride sharing to train stations
- Be a sustainable community- i.e. protect water resources; have our own municipal light and electric company
- Encourage agriculture (more than just orchards)
- Continued open space protection
- Underground utilities
- Continue/encourage pattern of villages and low density housing/open space through greater diversity in zoning for lot sizes , density, and housing size restriction (for smaller houses – 2 bedroom – for downsizing or young adults); cluster zoning that works and is used
- Community-based funding as opposed to fee-based funding of services (school activities, transfer station, etc)
- Maintain volunteer government/greater volunteer participation
- Willingness to change infrastructure (particularly septic disposal) to meet desired housing density or commercial development
- Affinity with Devens; reopen closed (internal) roads into Devens (Old Mill Rd and Depot Rd); investigate using “tank road” in Oxbow NWR as public road to connect Still River Village area with Devens
- Preserve Devens open space and historic properties
- Mixed use commercial district
- Use town center sewer to develop more gathering places in center

Question #2:

Least Favorite Things About Harvard *Today*:

- Lack of gathering places
- Lack of retail of basic necessities (i.e. small grocery, small restaurant) in C District
- Loss of small businesses (gas station, Carlson's Farm Stand, etc)
- Lack of diversity of housing/affordable housing/housing to downsize into – minimum lot size discourages building smaller houses; cluster zoning bylaw isn't used; no allowance for higher density housing unless 40B.
- 40B developments (lack of control over size/location)
- Lack of population diversity
- Dependency on National Grid (instead of own municipal light and electric company)
- User fees (for school activities and school bus; transfer station; beach)
- Time commitment for volunteer town boards/committees which limits volunteers to retired or financially independent people
- Families move here only for the schools and leave once children are grown; not vested in community
- Car dependent

Least Favorite Things to Have in (Concerns about) Harvard *in the Future*:

- Potential overdevelopment of C District; lack of integration into surrounding residential neighborhoods
- Traffic, especially if C District is developed/expanded
- Failure to have balanced population – too family oriented; families come only for school and leave after children are grown
- Lack of diversity in tax base
- Obsolescence of current solar installations as technology changes (i.e. fields of solar panels or roof-top solar that is no longer utilized)
- Continued dependence and failure to be a sustainable community (in terms of utilities, resources, providing basic needs through small shops)

Question #3: Primary Challenges or Opportunities for Harvard to Achieve Desired Future?

- Balancing desire for commercial growth with impact on open space, natural resources, traffic and surrounding neighborhoods
- Dependency on residential tax base
- Develop opportunities for ways to get around town without a car (bike, walk, etc), for commuting to work or public transportation
- Maintain/grow tax base when looking to encourage smaller homes
- Preserve quality of life and what we like about Harvard (rural character) while encouraging new retail to provide basic necessities

- Population diversity: keep older population/encourage people to stay after children have left; attract younger adults
- Financing our vision: controlling taxes; willingness to pay slightly higher prices for goods purchased locally to have these small businesses in town
- Transfer station: encourage recycling with community swap shed (not just day-only “take it or leave it” pile); community composting site; more hours; eliminate high user fee
- Create another commercial zone to accommodate additional commercial development (current CDistrict is long and narrow and boxed in by neighborhoods)
- Town government that is open to all (feels like some committees are clubs for certain members only)

Prepared by Lucy Wallace (lbwallace34@aol.com; 978-456-8180)

<i>Salmon Group</i>	Favorite		Least
		5	Polarized/Governance
	Schools	3	Intrusive government
4	Preservation work(Historical and Environmental)	2	Lack of inclusion in process
2	Rural character/Environmental aspects		Lack of connection to Devens residents
			Lack of sidewalks
4	Local farms/Agriculture Preservation		Lack of senior programs
1	Town center/Common	1	Same group of people participating/leading
PHYSICAL - 11		POLITICAL - 11	
8	Size & Scale (3) small town feel (3) sense of community (2)		Lack of convenience shopping
3	Volunteerism		Affordable housing/resolution of Harvard Inn
1	Town Meeting	1	Car dependency
1	Seniors Programs	3	Lack of down-sized housing for seniors
SOCIAL - 13		PHYSICAL - 4	
	Challenges & Opportunities		
4 in favor of resolution; 10 in favor of dropping it	Devens (14 votes)	38%	
5	Balanced and appropriate commercial	14%	
3	Conservation through cooperative management among Boards	8%	
3	On-going challenges facing Education	8%	
10	Retaining seniors / more opportunities for them/more housing options/alternative tax devices	27%	
2	Wholistic Planning model	5%	
37 total			

Here are the Catalina pink group's favorites, least favorites, opportunities and challenges. I have grouped similar things together and included the actual votes in parentheses. They are roughly in chronological order based on the number of dots.

Favorites

1. **Landscape.** Conservation Land (2), Open Space, Fruitlands, Orchards, Horse Farms, Trails, Abbey, balance between agricultural and residential (3), Bare Hill Pond, Still River, Common, Shaker Village.

2. **Small Town.** Willard Farm Stand, Transfer Station, Take it or leave it pile, schools, Farmer's market, General Store, community garden, population size, dependence on volunteers.

3. **Celebrations:** People liked the *small town community feeling* of our celebrations. 4th of July, Halloween, Flea Market, Apple Blossum Festival, Lions Club Fair.

Least Favorites

1. Lack of retail and restaurants. Lack of a grocery store (4). Lack of eating place (2). Lack of a cafe. No gas station.

2. Lack of gathering places. No venue for live music. No use of upper town hall. No community theater. Post office moved out of town center. Loss of vitality of town center (3).

3. Over-reliance on residential taxes (1). Community is not self-sustaining (3).

4. No sidewalks and bike paths (1). Traffic on Ayer Road and surrounding neighborhoods

5. Resistance to change (1), Dysfunctional polarization and lack of cooperation amongst volunteers. Limited success in engaging majority of citizens in planning. Desert Island mentality.

6. Uncertainty of Deven's future. Lack of a plan. (2)

7. Lack of housing choices.

Challenges and Opportunities

1. Create Housing for all stages of life (6). Housing should support interests of all ages and residents. Have zoning laws support affordable housing goals (1). Rewrite bylaws to be clear and functional. Keep our town affordable (2). Allow more seniors to stay in town. Have opportunities for people who grew up here to move back.

2. Communication. Engage with a broader spectrum of town residents (2). Need new perspectives. Make residents more town focused. Access for families with young children to come to town mtg. (1). Need better communication mechanism (1). Maybe use town website, electronic newsletters and surveys.

3. Implement the Master Plan (5). Amend zoning and bylaws to reflect master plan. Capital and expense plans must support the Master Plan (1).

4. Increase public transportation availability (2). Increase safe access to transportation without cars. More side walks and bike paths.

5. Professional versus Volunteer Government. Do we need to hire professionals for planning and park and recreation? Do we need a town manager? Remove the administration duties from volunteers and boards so more people have time to volunteer (2).

6. Don't make North Harvard a Dumping Ground for all commercial enterprise and affordable housing (1). Decentralize affordable housing and commercial (from the C district).

Master Plan Visioning - Public Forum #1

Blue Group - Tim Clark Facilitator

Summary of findings:

Community Values - Priorities

Many expressed the general consensus that there are many reasons to appreciate Harvard, its surroundings and the community. The “Small town” identity was a theme that was described in many different ways. Rooted in each person’s “sense of history” anecdotal experiences were often used to illustrate the point. “Connectedness” was also a thread that continued through the discussions (community caring, durable relationships that persisted even though people had relocated and sense of local democracy) Clearly appreciation of the green or open spaces was a priority as those related items generated the greatest number of votes.

Discontinue/Least Favorite

Traffic, in particular the Ayer Road Corridor was the leading negative of current conditions. Truck, touring bicycles (the hoards that sweep through town disregarding traffic signs and other laws). Related to community, nobody appreciates the divisive politics and nasty climate - some chalked it up to the “small town-ness” of Harvard. Nobody thought it was productive and a big negative impact on future volunteerism. A surprising consensus was reached on the perception that although Bromfield School (and schools in general) consumed the greatest amount of local revenue (taxes) the institution was very isolated and disconnected from the community. Almost everybody who didn’t have students at Broomfield had little or no idea on the goings on there, including cultural or theatrical events.

Challenges and Opportunities

Three priorities uncovered by the voting identified the equation relating to balancing our priorities and resources. Future Residential/Commercial development and Permanent protection of the farmstead landscape balance each other but are limited by the need to “keep taxes reasonable”. Secondary priorities (by votes) included managing changing demographics - this affects schools (their enrollment and quality), housing diversity, improving services and retail in proximity to residential areas. Traffic came up many times, however from a voting perspective other areas were identified as priorities - there was recognition that traffic is related to development and that careful planning was necessary to achieve a balance of our needs vs increased traffic. Of greater importance was the “walkability” to different areas/neighborhoods as well within each area.

Vote	Value/Favorite	Discontinue/Least Favorite	Vote
2	Green Space	Halloween - Loss of intimacy, increased volume, no more neighborhood trick-or-treating; traffic; chaos “Theme Park” atmosphere	
	Library	No Parking in Town Center	

Vote	Value/Favorite	Discontinue/Least Favorite	Vote
1	Community Involvement	Lack of Safe Walking Paths (for kids especially)	
	Renewed Town Center	Traffic - Increased Cut through type	1
	Sense of Family	Ayer Road - Entering/Exiting the roadway	
	Pond	Post Office Closes too early	
	Manageable sized community	Lack of Local Services - Commercial and retail	
1	Participatory Decision Making	Bike Traffic	
2	Schools	Speed limits too high	
3	Small Town Personality: Democracy (direct Connection); Community Caring; Life under the microscope	Lack of community cohesion on Ayer Rd	1
4	Open Space/Outdoor life	Over Head wires (lack of underground utilities	
2	Traditional New England Character-Timeless Center	Half days at School	
	Focus on Planning - Thoughtful	Uncontrollable Change - Development not keeping in character of town (40B)	
	Good Commute	Political Gridlock	1
	Nice Neighborhoods - with privacy	Criminalizing kids hijinks	
	Festivals	Volunteer pool not big enough	
	Respect for individuality	Divisive politics	4
2	Community Caring	Lack of unstructured recreation for kids	1
	Architectural Diversity	Bromfield School disconnected from Community	3
	Diverse Habitats (as home for various wildlife)	Lack of diversity of Housing stock - not sufficient to meet changing needs of all residents	
	Volunteerism		
2	Sense of History: Intimate history of people and places; Oral and visible history		
	St. Benedict's Abbey		

Vote	Value/Favorite	Discontinue/Least Favorite	Vote
	Farmer's Market		
	Pilot Project at Old Library		
	Horses		
	COA - Programming and Care options		
	Durability of Personal Connections		
	Harvard Press		
1	Agriculture		

Vote	Challenges/Opportunities
2	Prevent Route 2/Ayer Road from becoming a rest area as opposed to meeting the needs of residents "Shop locally"
7	Commercial Development should reflect community needs/village style
	North/South Harvard (divided by Rt 2) Division/distinction
4	Keep Taxes Reasonable
	Employment opportunities for all ages
3	Diversity of Housing Stock
5	Permanent protection of "Farmscapes"
	Farm Failures/Selloffs and conversions to other uses
3	Maintaining/Improving quality of Education
	Traffic
2	Walkability
3	Changing Demographics
1	Devens
2	Volunteerism

Public Forum 2

The MPSC hosted a second public forum on Saturday, March 3, 2012 from 8:30 AM to 1 PM at the Old Library in Town Center. The forum brought over forty participants together to provide feedback on the Community Vision and Goals and on potential strategies for each of the study focus areas: Town Center, Devens, Ayer Road Commercial District, Housing, and Conservation. Community input confirmed the validity of the vision and highlighted some additional goals and strategies for focus areas.

Open House

8:30am to 9:00am

Participants were welcomed into an open house format with time to circulate to view material presented on informational boards prepared by the MPSC and the consulting team. The boards included information about the five key topic areas (Town Center, Devens, Ayer Road Commercial District, Housing and Conservation) and the Community Vision and Goals. Beverages and refreshments were available. Participants were invited to write on flip charts to provide any thoughts, ideas, or questions about the information presented.

Presentation

9:00am to 9:30am

The Master Plan Steering Committee chair welcomed forum participants, briefly outlining the planning process to date. The consultant team then outlined the goals of the forum, and presented information received from the various community outreach activities: Forum 1, Focus and Working Groups, and the Community Survey. The presentation also introduced the Community Vision and Goals. Presentations are appended to this summary.

Facilitated Group Activities

9:40am to 11:00am

Participants were asked to attend two break out groups, (at 9:40 and 10:30) based on their interest level in the key topic to be discussed.

MPSC members, as facilitators, introduced information on prepared topic boards which included suggested goals and strategies, and additional information (text and graphics) that helped to illustrate the strategies. Facilitators then asked participants to evaluate potential goals and strategies and to offer suggestions for additional goals and strategies. As a final exercise participants were asked to indicate their top three choices for strategies.

Community Presentation

11:15 am to 11:40am

Participants came back together in a large group to share the highlights of their discussions. The facilitator from each group summarized the outcome of their groups' discussions. Goals and strategies posters were posted around the room.

Forum Wrap Up

11:40am to 12 noon

The consultant team outlined the final steps for the Vision and Goals Phase (Phase One) of the Master Plan and outlined the key components that would be completed in Phase Two. The MPSC closed the forum by sharing some key findings of the Community Survey that indicated a strong desire for information on, and Town decisions on Devens in the near future. The MPSC thanked participants and asked them to stay involved and to support Phase Two to complete the Master Plan.

Lunch

12:00am to 1:00

Lunch was provided by Chef Paul.

Break out session notes:

The following pages include notes from the small group discussions, as recorded and submitted by the Master Plan Steering Committee facilitator.

TOWN CENTER

MPSC Forum Saturday March 3
Break-out group notes
Notes recorded and submitted by Tim Clark

Group 1 (7 people) comments:

- “meeting people” aspect of town center is going away
- Be creative in rediscovering “old fashioned values”
 - reinvent them with modern efficiencies
 - how do we widen the discussion of community?
 - identify untapped resources/ideas
- How does meeting people in town center become more regular/more attractive
- How does sewer affect opportunities
- How does Hildreth House and Town Hall project affect Old library - Could relocation there kill the momentum of the pilot project?
- Gathering places need a purpose - reasons to go should be attractive to newcomers
- Is there a willingness to invest time in these efforts
- “get them to come first then we will build it”
- We are not making any more “old style neighborhoods” like town center
- Town Hall reinvented can become a great gathering place
- Senior housing should be located in/near town center
- Be mindful of the limitations of Development
- What about improving access to the center by seniors (circulating bus, ride sharing)

Group 2 (9 people) comments

- Identify “what is problematic in town center” then find solutions
- Pedestrian circulation in winter is horrible
- How do we change the center to make it better (if at all)
- How do we prevent the sapping of its businesses vs. growing them in the Ayer Rd C-district?
- Are there benchmarks for success?
- Can we imagine more commercial/retail. If yes, where would it go in TC.?
- Historic character is special and unique
 - Common surrounded by pretty homes and buildings
 - businesses should fit zoning
 - how much of TC should be allowed to transition?
 - Precious asset to be managed
 - Elastic parking is good
- Change is a Question of degrees
- Current mix of housing is adequate
- Fear of chopping up existing historic properties and diluting the character
- Expand town common up to Hildreth House

Strategies

The following shows what strategies were identified as most important (number in parenthesis represents votes from participants). Strategies with asterisk were added by participants.

Create pedestrian paths along road shoulders and the Common to link neighborhoods adjacent to the town center to the parking areas at the Bromfield School, library and town beach. (13)

Consider the benefits and limitations of establishing a mixed use commercial overlay district that will allow the continuation of small village-scale businesses. (9)

Note: mixed use commercial overlay changed to "historic town center district"

Design zoning that is compatible with the existing compact village settlement pattern that supports a variety of housing types and the creation of accessory apartments. (3)

Develop a comprehensive landscape and circulation plan to guide decision making related to infrastructure and public facility improvements. (11)

* Match infrastructure limitations (sewer) with development opportunities.

Facilitator Observations:

Town Center Goals and strategies were unchanged except for the revision of Commercial overlay district language to be replaced by Historic Village Center District zoning.

Most conversation centered on the unique nature of the center and how un-like the rest of the town it is, warranting surgical precision when it comes to re-zoning. Re-zoning is scary to many. Preserving small scale business was a priority, but replacing housing with more businesses led to the conversation "isn't Ayer road a more appropriate place for that kind of development?"

Also there didn't appear to be much support for introducing new housing, particularly multi-family. Also the fear of mansionization was a theme not to be forgotten.

DEVENS

Public Forum March 3, 2012 Notes on Devens Break-out Sessions

DEVENS GOALS:

- Be active and informed participants in planning for Devens development and governance.
- Understand the full scale of potential benefits and liabilities that come with the governance decisions.
- Ensure that decision on local governance results in a positive outcome for Harvard and Devens.

STRATEGIES:

- Conduct a comprehensive fiscal and social analysis of Devens to determine the potential benefits and liabilities that could result from likely governance options: resume jurisdiction of lands within historic (and current) town boundaries; assume jurisdiction of a portion of lands within town boundaries; forego jurisdiction of any of Devens lands within Harvard.
- Engage in public outreach to clarify governance options.
- Develop a vision and goals for Harvard based on the preferred governance option.
- Work with MassDevelopment, state legislators, Ayer and Shirley to advance Harvard's vision and goals.
- Work with town committees and boards to create a framework, process and timeline for a decision by Town Meeting vote on Devens' governance.

Question #1: Do you agree or disagree with any of the potential goals or strategies outlined for this topic?

- Both groups generally agreed with goals and strategies as presented.
- Both groups stressed that public education and outreach are critical to making an informed decision on Devens.

Question #2: Would you like to suggest any other goals or strategies?

Additional goals:

- Have a fixed timeline for determining town's preferred direction/governance for Devens.
- Ensure that decision on local governance has positive outcome for Ayer and Shirley as well.

- Ensure that decision on local governance does not undermine or lessen Harvard's current volunteer government (that town does not become run by large professional staff).
- Keep Devens residential neighborhoods intact under one local jurisdiction.

Additional strategies:

- Within 2 years have a town meeting vote to decide on Devens direction.
- Bring Devens community into the discussion re local governance.
- As part of public outreach and education, prepare a comprehensive inventory of commercial and residential development; what areas remain available for and type of development; inventory of natural resources and open space; map clearly delineating town line.
- Weekly or bi-weekly article in local press on Devens.
- Plan with the assumption that Harvard will resume jurisdiction of historic lands within Devens.
- Fiscal and social analysis should include local governance: change in staff, size of local government, level of volunteer involvement; impact on schools; and impact on housing.

Question #3: Select 3 most important strategies (listed in order of support).

- Setting a town meeting vote within 2 years received far and away the most votes. (39 dots)
- Comprehensive fiscal and social analysis. (23dots)
- Engage in public education and outreach. (10 dots)

General Comments:

- Avoid analysis paralysis.
- The question of Devens local governance is more a value and cultural judgment (qualitative) than revenues/expenses decision (quantitative).
- Devens is more than just a balance sheet.
- Devens Economic Analysis Team (DEAT) is close to completing report on financial status of Devens and will present it to the Annual Town Meeting. Devens currently appears to be running at a \$1million deficit.
- MassDevelopment thinks it will take another 5-10 years to complete build-out.
- Devens is a work in transition but will eventually be an asset to Harvard.
- Incredible lack of understanding of Devens: what it is; what is there; what it would mean to be part of Harvard. Outreach and education extremely important.
- Harvard has little experience in managing commercially and industrially zoned lands.
- There were 15 people in the first group; 8 in the second group.

My Observations:

- Due to the structure of the break-out sessions we never went back and actually tested the overall vision and goals statement. Participants only heard/saw it during the initial overview presentation.
- People were very positive about the forum.
- There was some confusion about the suggestion to vote on a Devens direction within 2 years as some thought that was the same as the tri-town super town meeting vote on Devens disposition.

Prepared by Lucy Wallace (lbwallace34@aol.com; 978-456-8180)

AYER ROAD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

Public Forum #2, Saturday, March 3, 2012

Break Out Group Notes

Recorded and Submitted by Michelle Catalina

Question 1: *Do you agree or disagree with any of the potential goals or strategies outlined for this topic?*

Both groups agreed with the potential goals and strategies outlined.

Question 2: *Would you like to suggest any other goals or strategies?*

- a. Add to goals as a separate goal: Connectivity between businesses throughout the C-district for walking and biking.
- b. Add into the second goal: "keeping in mind what is economically feasible" somewhere. it doesn't have to be worded as I did, but my second group thought it was important to moderate wants with realities.
- c. Add to strategies: Map out a specific course to achieve a restaurant and grocery store in the C-district, taking into account all zoning changes and whether or not these can be achieved with or without sewer and then "take the pulse" of the community for developing these specific services.

With Suggestions Goals would read:

- Diversify Harvard's economy and tax base with an appropriate mix of residential and commercial development in the Commercial district.
- Work with existing and new businesses to attract commercial services that are economically feasible and that fit the Town.
- Decrease barriers and increase incentives for attracting new business.
- Work with adjacent neighborhoods, Town residents, and other stakeholders to facilitate planning and coordination prior to any permitting processes.
- Create connectivity between businesses throughout the Commercial District for walking and Biking.

With Suggestions Strategies would read:

Continue to attract commercial development on a property by property basis under existing zoning – modify zoning to include design standards that address community character, public realm, and connectivity.

Promote village style cluster development that includes a mix of uses – focus on working collectively with property owners in strategic areas.

Consider opportunities for infill development – working with existing commercial property owners to expand or modify development.

Map out a specific course to achieve a restaurant and grocery store in the C-district, taking into account all zoning changes and whether or not these can be achieved with or without sewer and then "take the pulse" of the community for developing these specific services

Note: The Break-out groups did not prioritize strategies as they felt all were important to undertake.

HOUSING

NOTES FROM HOUSING BREAK-OUT GROUPS

HARVARD MASTER PLAN SECOND PUBLIC FORUM

MARCH 3, 2010

Facilitated by Jim Breslauer

First Group

Education needed to explain potential impacts on various housing types: news articles, web site – used modeling to show visual effects

With good architecture and landscape increased density could be acceptable

People are unsure about what type of zoning restrictions/guidelines are possible

More education on 61B options/possibilities.

Lack of clear understanding on what restrictions are allowed by land-use regulations

*Identify open-land options – where is potentially developable land located – what might it look like if developed. Visual aids are important

*What have other similarly situated towns done? What worked, what didn't. Survey them.

Be proactive to reach the 10% 40B requirement.

Concern that housing discussions focus on 40B leaving out other, important issues

Continual pressure to resolve 40B requirement

Devens

Concern that some look only to Devens to meet 40B requirement

Need to look within Harvard for diverse housing options/solutions. Devens may not become part of Harvard.

Concern that Devens not be seen as place just for elders and those less wealthy

Need to start planning to incorporate at least part of Devens

Need more diverse population, which will occur if there is a diversity of housing

Need smaller, more affordable housing

Think about young families, if all housing too expensive, they will be unable to locate/stay here resulting in lack of age diversity

Need to be inclusive in our thinking

Density of housing largely an issue if infrastructure (sewer) – should think about sewer district

*Need to amend by-laws to encourage diverse housing

Town might consider infrastructure incentives to developers to build diverse housing

Who will lead the discussion/effort for more diverse housing?

Second Group

Need to think about connectivity between neighborhoods. Walkable neighborhoods increase sense of community. Require walks/paths by developers.

Devens

- Should be integrated in thinking about housing

- Planning needs to be conditional as to Devens

Need to consider the economic impact of additional housing (schools?)

Need to understand the environmental impact of housing. Think about zero impact (environmentally neutral) housing requirements

Think local options

- Maintain historic Harvard – balance with affordability

- Zoning changes needed for affordable accessible units

- Rental housing serves young families and elders

- Shared septic as a strategy

- Small units are good whether or not counted as “affordable”

- Zoning and planning changes that force developers to address housing for all income groups.

- Local strategies for local needs (less outside pressure/requirements)

- Providing options for household’s changing needs provides stability within Harvard

- There are many issues involved in getting housing counted as affordable

- Need strategy to combat hostile 40Bs

Might a regional housing strategy be effective?

What has worked in other communities?

Need to be proactive – check feasibility at outset of planning

Desires not always economically feasible (e.g. assisted living)

Burden of supporting affordable housing must be broad

Not clear if the strategies are for new housing or for redevelopment

What statistics/information supports these goals and strategies

What are the needs based on? What are the population projections?

Concentrate on what we do well. Can’t be all things to all people. Should prioritize what is done.

Strategies

The following shows what strategies were identified as most important (number in parenthesis represents votes from participants). Strategies with asterisk were added by participants.

Amend bylaws as appropriate to allow a greater diversity of housing – possible options: (4)

- Allow conversions on a greater number of parcels (e.g. convert single family into two units) (1)

- Allow greater diversity in Planned Residential Developments, including single family attached, two-family and multi-family

- Relax the current minimum lot size (q.5 acres plus .5 acre for each accessory unit) for additional accessory units.

- Allow development of nonconforming lots by special permit.

- Develop incentives to encourage limited development on current open space/forested lands (clustered residential or multi-family)

- Rezone lands in Town Center and Still River (other areas?) to allow multi-family units (smaller lots, reduced setbacks and frontages) consistent with historic village settlement patterns.

- Develop guidelines for buildings that may result in less demand for septic (low-flow faucets, composting toilets) with resulting changes to septic capacity requirements.

Create design guidelines and site standards for multi-family housing. (1)

Create zoning and design standards that ensure new housing is indistinguishable from established housing. (3)

Identify sites appropriate for multi-family housing and for mixed use development that includes housing. (2)

Consider opportunities for housing creation at Devens. (3)

Develop plan (be proactive) to deal with land coming out of Chapter 61. (4)

- * Increase connectivity between homes and neighborhoods. (1)

- * Use case studies from similar communities to inform Harvard about successes/failures. (3)

- * Amend by law to allow shared septic. (1)

- * Encourage zero net energy buildings. (zero net energy consumption and zero carbon emissions annually) (2)

CONSERVATION

Notes from the Public Forum on March 3, 2012

Conservation break-out groups

Prepared and Submitted by Rich Marcello and Ron Ostberg

1. A desire was expressed to promote energy efficiency (not defined) without compromising Rural Character.
2. Corporate vs Town vs Individual in overall direction of Energy Strategy
3. A desire was expressed to support farming. Many feel that co-ops could help. There is a lot of work going on in New England on this subject. Phase II of the Master Plan could bring that information to the surface in an objective fashion.
4. A town's self reliance is enhanced by farming activities.
5. Farming fosters a rural frame of mind.
6. A desire was expressed (by this Town Center group as well) for a plan for the Town Center. This plan would address landscape and pedestrian/vehicular circulation. It was agreed that many groups have authority over the center of town and that actions are not coordinated, not because any antipathy, simply for want of will and resources. Currently many groups are working on ideas for the area. They include:
 - a. Area around Town Hall and Hildreth
 - b. Elimination of no-name road
 - c. Continued planting
 - d. Revisions and upgrades to the Reed land
 - e. Paving Pond Field parking lot
 - f. Library landscape revisions.

An idea floated for integration of efforts – a public-private partnership called the Town Center Conservancy.

7. While there are many contributing factors to the Rural Character of the town, the participants acknowledged that it was difficult to say which was more important. Consequently, the votes were scattered.
8. It was recognized that Harvard is not really a rural community; it is suburban with large lots. Enhanced farming would help a great deal to preserve open space and avoid a National Park Service view of preservation.
9. It was noted that Conservation is not an isolatable topic. The MPSC was urged to look for the connections with other aspects of the community. At the same time it was noted that Conservation, if characterized as Cultural Landscapes, is a very good lens through which to look at the various aspects of the community and to define ways of protecting and enhancing that community.
10. Stewardship is key to preservation of the Rural Character of Harvard. This must go beyond what the town can do and even what the private entities like the Conservation Trust can do. This means neighbors working together. The

Pond Committee cited the work they do with pond abutters – making best practices available – as a good example.

11. Don't forget the protection of water resources.

Strategies

The following shows what strategies were identified as most important (number in parenthesis represents votes from participants). Strategies with asterisk were added by participants.

Identify (types of) threats to Harvard's natural and cultural landscapes. (4)

Develop and implement resource management plans for public lands that include controlling invasive species and tree diseases, maintaining ecosystems and harvesting and planting trees. (3)

Adopt low impact development strategies to reduce environmental impacts. (3)

Work proactively with farmers to protect and sustain local farms. (5)

Inventory cultural landscapes / scenic views and prioritize for town land protection efforts.

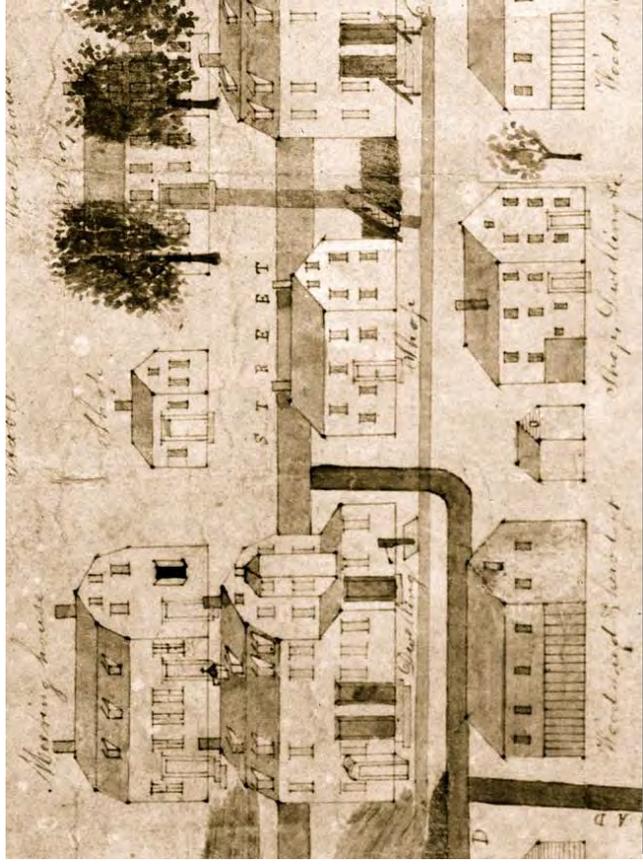
Inventory historic structures / villages and consider creation / expansion of historic districts.

Improve integration / collaboration on comprehensive resource management between different town boards / committees. (5)

* Energy generation/conservation that does not compromise Rural Character of the Town. (2)



Developing a Vision for Harvard



Master Plan Steering Committee

- Jim Breslauer – Conservation Committee
- Michelle Catalina – Planning Board
- Tim Clark – Board of Selectmen
- Joe Hutchinson – Citizen at Large, Chairman
- Rich Maiores – Economic Development Committee
- Rich Marcello – Planning Board
- Ron Ostberg – Citizen at Large
- Lucy Wallace – Council on Aging

Consultant Team

- Brown Walker Planners, Inc.
- Wolf Landscape Architecture

March 3, 2012

A Community Engaged

- Purpose of Today's forum
 - Share findings of Community Engagement efforts.
 - Forum #1
 - Focus & Working Groups
 - Survey Results
 - Community Vision and Goals
 - Potential Goals and Strategies for Key Topic Areas
-

Forum #1 – November 2011

- More than 75 attended
- Identified favorite and least favorite things about Harvard
- Identified challenges and opportunities for Harvard



Community Survey

- Covered
 - Community Character and Quality of Life
 - Challenges and Opportunities
 - Conservation
 - Housing
 - Commercial District
 - Town Center
 - Devens
- 684 responses



Survey Results

Top choices for meeting needs of residents

- Local eateries 54%
 - Local grocery store 49%
 - Safe walking/bike paths 44. %
 - Gathering/informal meeting places 34. %
 - Support for farmers 29%
-

Survey Results

Top choices for improving town management and governance

- Greater collaboration between boards and committees 63%
 - Greater transparency 55%
 - Mediate opposing viewpoints 54%
 - Increase efficiency 37%
 - Engage more citizens in planning 36%
-

Survey Results

Top reasons for changing the mix and types of commercial and residential land uses (increase all)

- Local eateries 56%
 - Local grocery store 49%
 - Range of housing 31%
 - Mix of uses around Town Center 30%
 - Conservation land 29%
 - Commercial uses 27%
-

Survey Results

Top improvements to Town's physical assets

- Protect scenic views and landscapes 62%
 - Create bike/pedestrian paths 50%
 - Perform maintenance on public buildings 49%
 - Renovate public buildings 36%
 - Protect push shade/street trees 32%
 - Add Sidewalks 27%
 - Preservation of historic properties and structures 26%
-

Focus and Working Groups

Devens

Town Center

Conservation

Housing

Ayer Road Commercial District



Community Vision

In 2020 Harvard will be a town that continues to foster a strong and vibrant sense of community and place, embraces careful stewardship and enhancement of its natural, historic and cultural resources, has a clear direction on its role in Devens' governance, and employs best practices for achieving long-term sustainability. An educated and involved community is critical to accomplishing this vision.

Sense of Community and Place

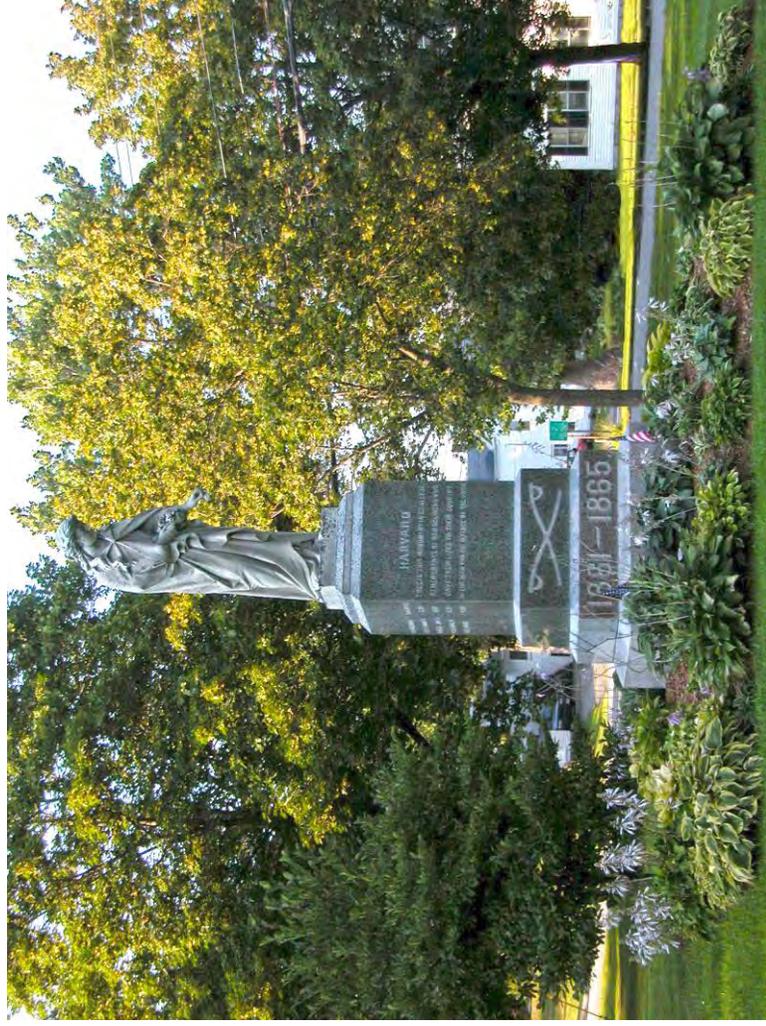
Harvard has a robust *Sense of Community and Place*.

- Support strong volunteer government with necessary staff support
- Encourage active civic life through public and private institutions and organizations



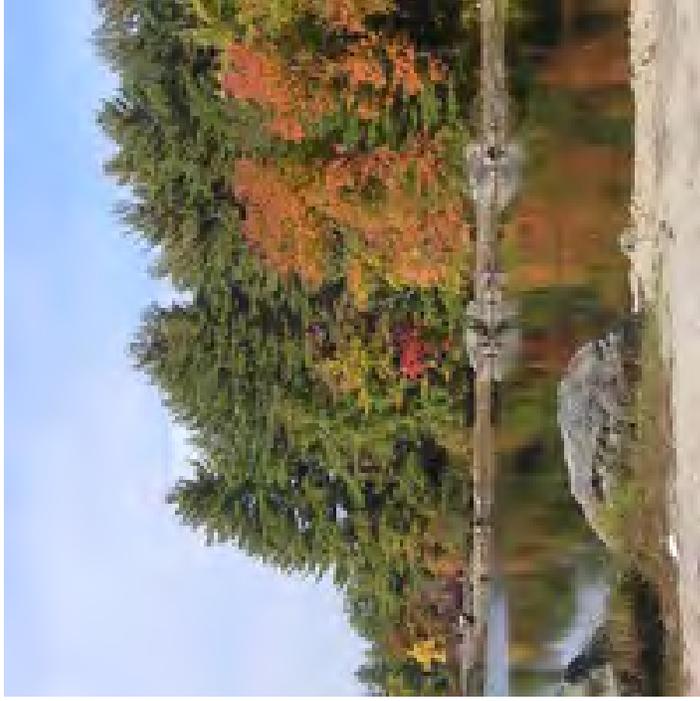
Sense of Community and Place

- Foster a variety of gathering places for all generations
- Develop housing to accommodate a diversity of needs and population
- Maintain the Town Center as the institutional, civic and cultural heart of the community, as envisioned in the 2005 Town Center Action Plan



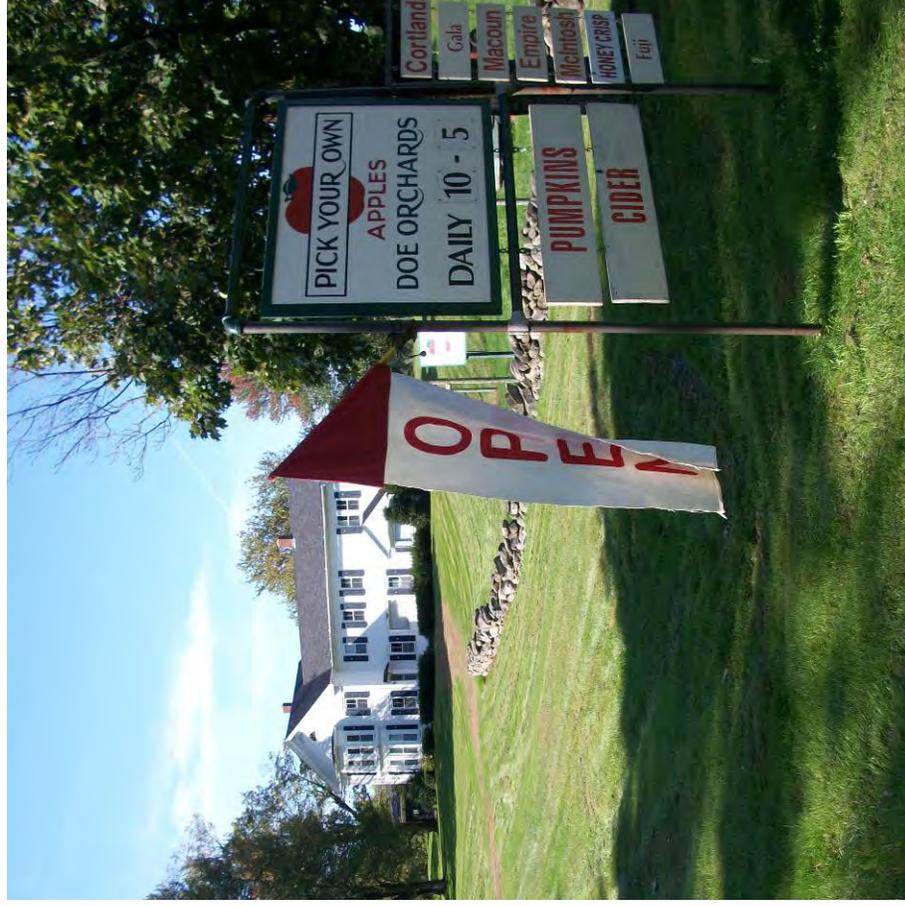
Natural, Historic & Cultural Resources

Harvard engages in judicious Stewardship of *Natural, Historic and Cultural Resources*.



- Preserve and enhance historic buildings and cultural resources
- Identify and protect critical natural resource areas
- Restore and/or maintain key viewsheds

Natural, Historic & Cultural Resources



- Support agricultural heritage and farms
- Preserve walls and shade trees along rural roads
- Adopt best management practices on public conservation lands and disseminate them to the public

Devens

Harvard has a defined *Role in Devens*.

- Analyze fiscal and community impact of Devens on Harvard and vice versa
- Use public outreach and education to ascertain preferred direction



Devens

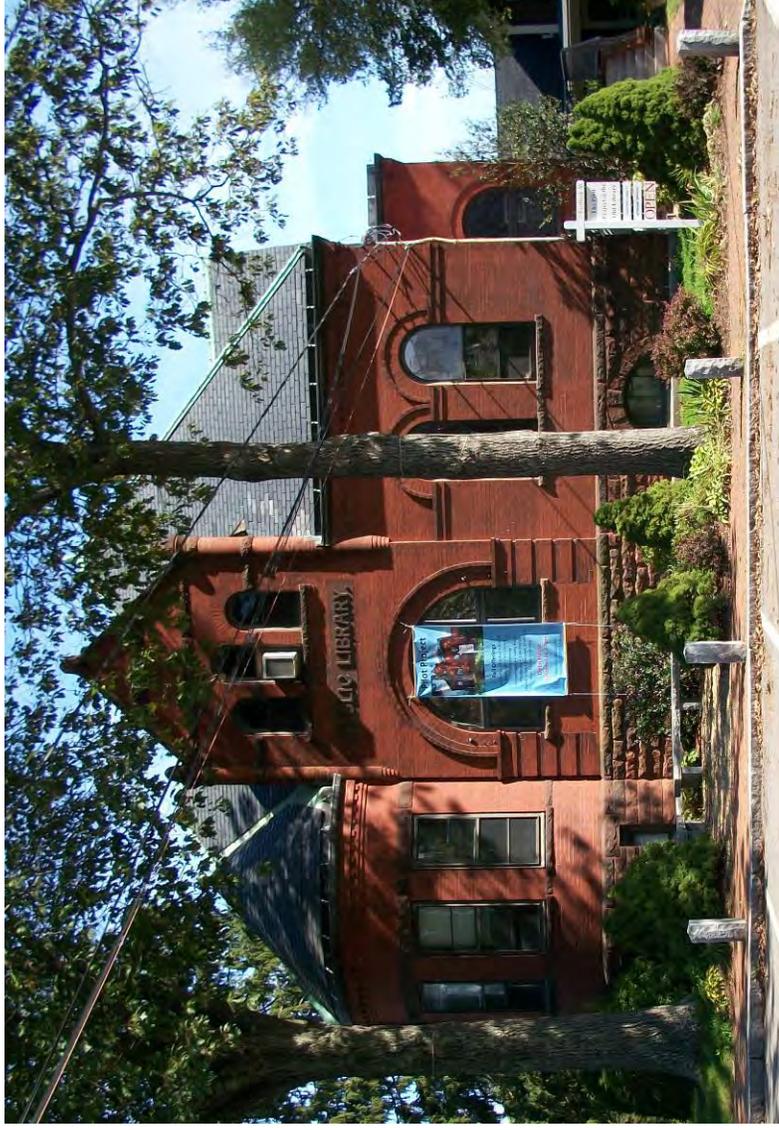
- Collaborate with Devens' stakeholders, including Ayer, Shirley and MassDevelopment
- Decide on local governance of Devens



Long-term Sustainability

Harvard is assured *Long-term Sustainability*.

- Develop plans for investment in public infrastructure, buildings and equipment
- Diversify and strengthen the town's revenue base



Long-term Sustainability

- Invest in near and long-term energy efficiencies
- Encourage retail and commercial activities of appropriate size and in appropriate locations as determined by residents and market



Take a moment.....



Key Focus Areas

- Town Center
- Devens
- Ayer Road Commercial District
- Housing
- Conservation
- Needs
 - more housing choice
 - diversified tax base
 - sustainable development
- Threats
 - community character
 - way of life
 - natural and cultural resources
 - ability to provide services

Key Focus Areas

- Opportunities
 - Preserve valued resources
 - Increase chance encounters and shared experiences (social interactions = sense of community)
 - Increase housing options
 - Exercise local control
 - Increase capacity for sustainable growth and provision of services
-

Town Center

- ❑ 55% agree it is fine as it is, however of these about half showed support for some changes
 - ❑ Allowing public buildings to be used for cultural activities was the idea most strongly supported (91%)
 - ❑ Allowing more types of businesses was supported by 73% of respondents
 - ❑ Non-vehicular connections within Town Center are vital
 - ❑ Residents were of mixed opinions on increasing residential density
-

Devens

- ❑ 89% say it is critical to decide on a direction to take with respect to disposition
 - ❑ Need to know the potential benefits and liabilities of action or inaction
 - ❑ Agreement on general issues; lack of agreement around details
 - ❑ Need for educational outreach, inclusive planning, and transparent and credible fiscal analysis
 - ❑ Devens as a regional “hub”
-

Ayer Road Commercial District

- 87% feel development should reflect the town's rural and historic character
- 73% support commercial development if it increases tax revenue
- 75% support a mix of residential and commercial development
- Good design, compatible development, walkability and connectivity are critical
- Need credible analysis of potential benefits and risks

Housing

- The housing type residents most supported more of included:
 - housing for persons over 55 (55%),
 - small 1-2 bedroom single family (47%),
 - affordable housing (45%), and
 - assisted living (44%)
- Large Single family and Multi-family housing were the least desirable housing types
- Downsizing to a smaller house was the most commonly sited reason for residents seeking housing in Harvard

Conservation

- ❑ Open spaces and scenic views received the highest value ranking (97%)
 - ❑ Protecting scenic views and open view sheds was the action identified by the most respondents (56%) for enhancing or protecting natural resources.
 - ❑ Only 5% of respondents felt the Town was doing enough to protect natural resources
 - ❑ Rural character is critical to Harvard's future and is clearly threatened
-

WHAT NOW?

- **Group Discussion**
 - Two 40-minute sessions
 - Select 2 of 5 to attend
 - No more than 20 per group
 - Will change groups after 40 minutes
 - 10 minute transition time
 - **Community Presentation**
 - Two report backs for each topic
 - **Wrap Up Report**
 - Short presentation regarding Phase II
-

Discussion Groups

Town Center

Ayer Road Commercial District

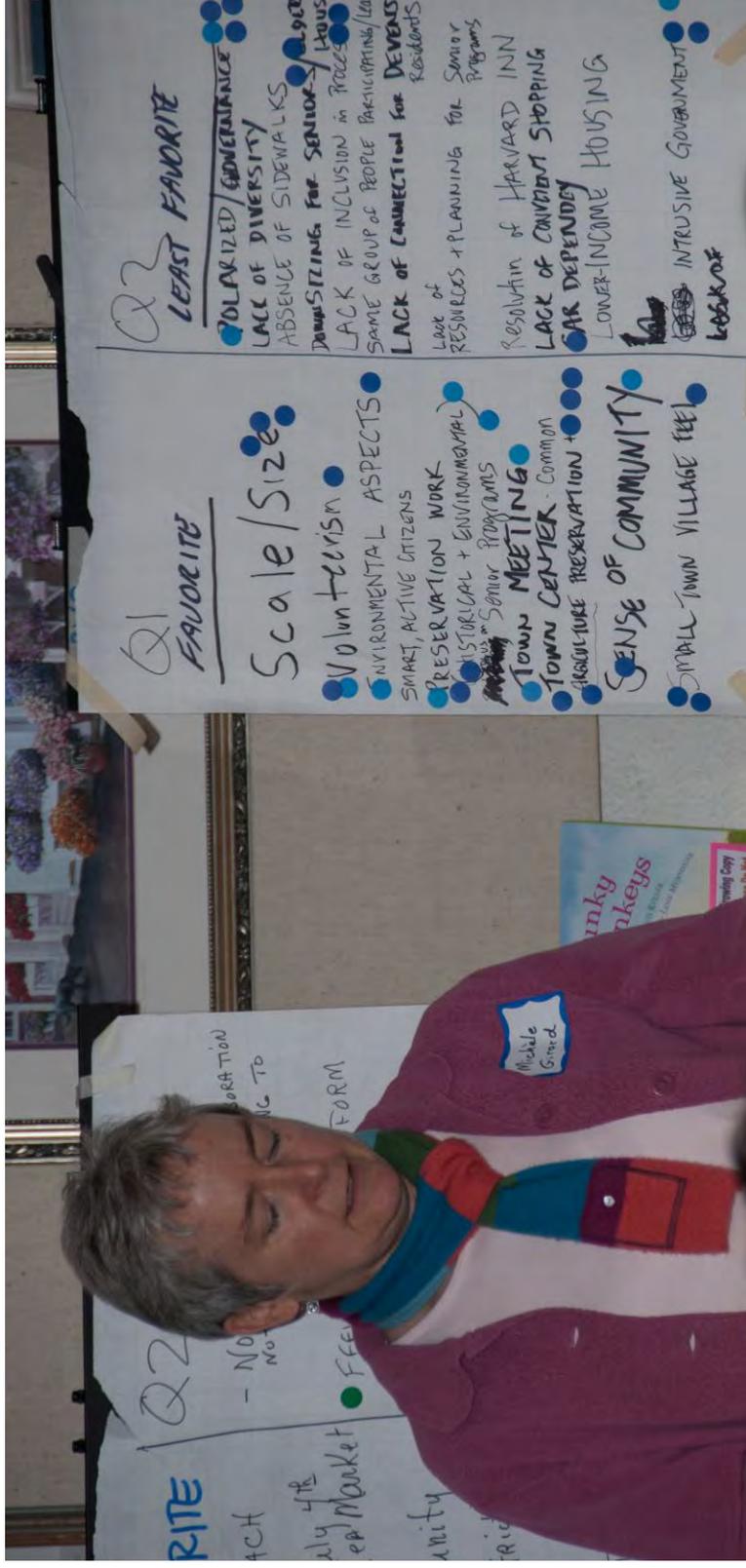
Housing

Conservation

Devens

Small Group Discussions

- In progress



What Next?

- Phase II – Developing the Master Plan
 - Vision and Goals as Base
 - Inventory and Assessment of
 - **Devens (fiscal and community impacts)**
 - Land Use
 - Housing
 - Economic Development
 - Natural and Cultural Resources
 - Open Space and Recreation
 - Services and Facilities
 - Circulation
 - Strategic Planning Areas
 - Town Center
 - Ayer Road Commercial District
 - Devens
 - Implementation – set of recommendations – how to meet your goals and realize your vision

Decide on Devens!

	Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Need more information	Response Count
In order to plan effectively, it is critical that the Town of Harvard decide on a direction to take with respect to the disposition of Devens.	405	139	16	12	30	612
The Town should make a decision about Devens in the next 5 years.	253	153	49	47	66	604
The Town should begin planning for Devens immediately.	218	149	57	55	89	597
The Town should defer any decisions about Devens until the planning deadline of 2031.	27	31	155	295	67	599

What Action to Take?

	Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Need more information	Response Count
The Town should resume governance of the portion of Devens that is within the Town's boundaries.	132	138	64	120	128	603
The Town should resume governance and adjust town boundaries so Devens's neighborhoods will remain intact.	82	134	66	97	192	606
The Town should not pursue governance of any portion of Devens.	127	54	122	142	121	598
The Town should pursue governance of all of Devens.	37	39	145	224	135	607

Devens Potential Impact: the Master Plan Process

What elements of
Devens have direct
impact on Harvard?

- Schools
- Housing
- Municipal services
- Utilities management
- Commercial and industrial management



- Goals and policy statement
- Land use plan element
- Housing element
- Economic development element
- Natural and cultural resources element
- Open space and recreation element
- Services and facilities element
- Circulation element
- Implementation program element

Overall Master Plan Process

Community Input

Discovery

Phase I

- **Visioning**
- **Emerging Goals and Objectives**

Scope

Phase II

- **Existing Conditions Inventory**
- **Devens Impact Analysis**
- **Prioritization and Analysis**
- **Comprehensive Community Plan (Master Plan)**

Action

Phase III

Implementation

Master Plan Phase II: Scope



Please support Master Plan Phase II at the Annual Town Meeting on April 28

Thank You!

- Participants:
 - Interviews
 - Forums
 - Survey
- Consultants
- MPSC

Harvard Master Plan

Phase 1

Community Survey

Summary and Analysis

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OPEN ENDED RESPONSES 22

Responses

Total Responses – 591 on-line, 93 written = **684**

This represents 36.1% of households, 16.9% of registered voters, and 10.5% of the total population. This is by far the largest number of responses for town-wide surveys in Harvard, and a strong showing for any community master plan.

Survey Respondent Demographics

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

(88.4% answered question)

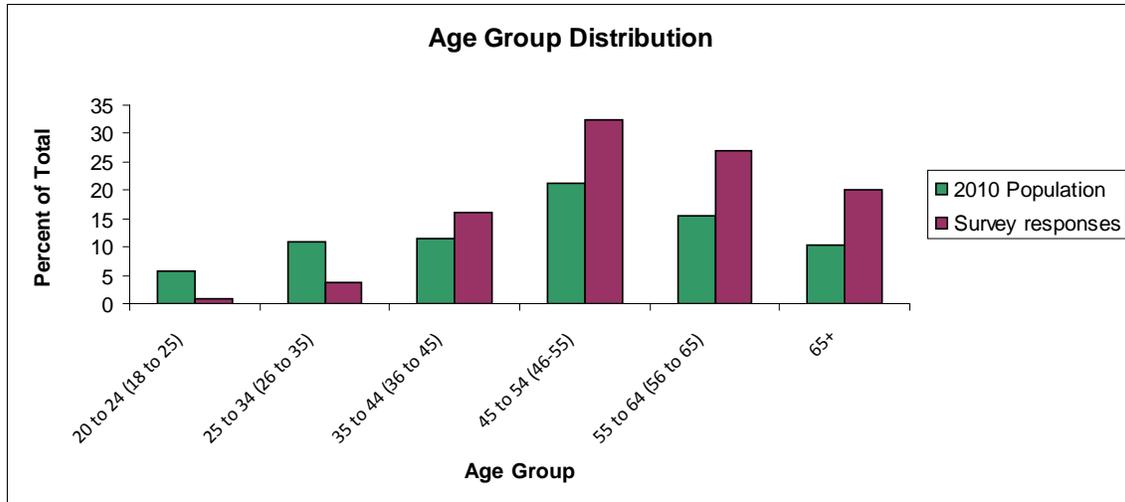
The geographic distribution of survey respondents reflects the population distribution Town-wide. (Based on 2010 Census block data, for the non-group quarters population.)

	Portion of Total Population	Portion of Survey Responses
Area 1	4.9%	4.2%
Area 2	21.4%	21.4%
Area 3	8%	5.4%
Area 4	16.5%	17.8%
Area 5	9.4%	13.2%
Area 6	18%	16.9%
Area 7	21.7%	21%

AGE DISTRIBUTION

(88.6% answered question)

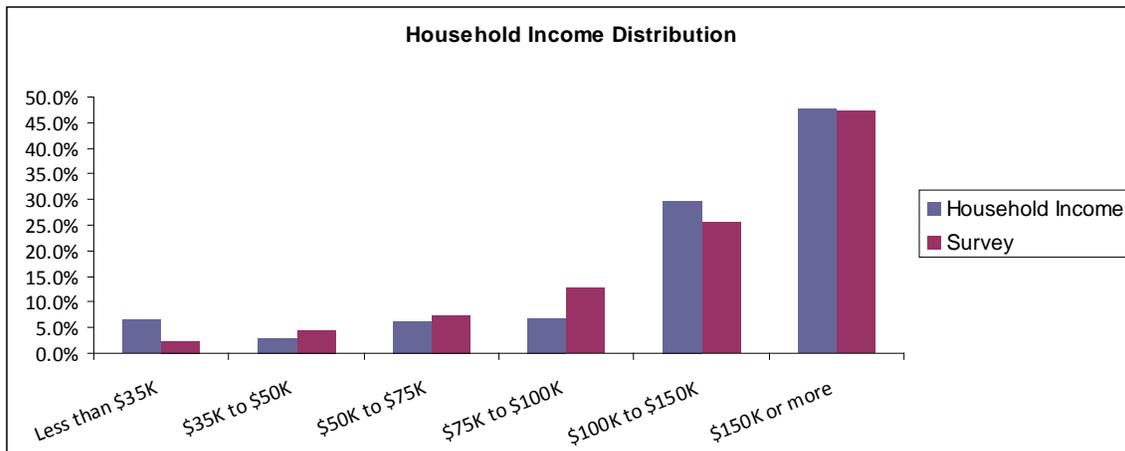
The responses by age group approximately reflect the age group distribution of the total population, with slightly higher responses from the 46 and over age groups than are represented in the population. The response rate from 18 to 35 age groups was under 5% (although these represent approximately 20% of the population. (Survey age groups shown in parentheses did not exactly match the Census age groups).



INCOME DISTRIBUTION

(80.7% answered question)

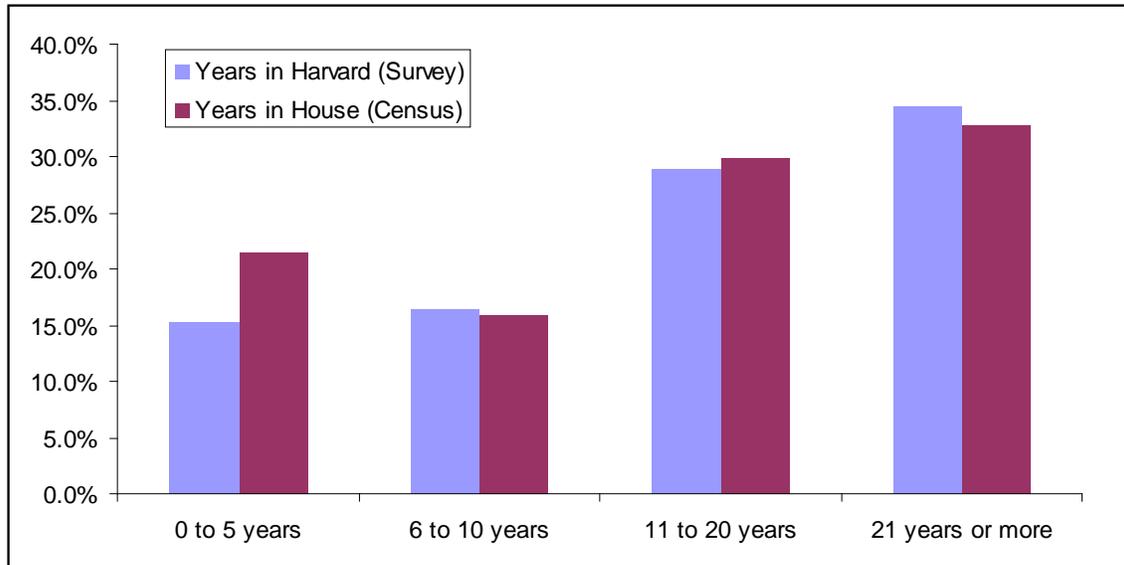
The portion of survey respondents in different household income ranges was close to the town-wide estimate of income distribution as reported by the American Community Survey (Census 5 year estimates) for 2010. Households earning less than \$35K and those earning between \$100 to \$150K were modestly under-represented in the survey responses (about 4 points lower than town-wide income distribution).



HOW LONG RESIDING IN HARVARD?

(90.2% answered question)

The greatest portion of respondents (32.8%) have lived in Harvard more than 20 years and 5% indicated that members of their family had lived in town through multiple generations. Compared to Census estimates on longevity in current residence, respondents were representative of the town at large. Those living in town less than 5 years were slightly under-represented (6 points less than Census estimates). Note this assumes that respondents have not moved to different houses within Harvard in a 20-year period.



HOW LONG EXPECT TO RESIDE IN HARVARD?

(90.4% answered question)

15 years or more	44.3%
Unknown	25.6%
Between 5 and 14 years	23.3%
Fewer than 5 years	6.8%

CHILDREN AT HOME

(88.7% answered question)

As reported by the 2010 Census, 41.1% of Harvard households have children under the age of 18 living in them. Forty-four (44%) of survey respondents reported that they have children under 18 years old living with them.

LOCATION OF WORK AND EMPLOYMENT

(87.7%, 87.1%, and 87.4% answered questions)

A little over 31% of respondents indicated they work from home, however only 11.2% indicated they are employed in Harvard. Less than 2% indicated they are employed in Devens.

Community Character and Quality of Life

QUESTION 1

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about Harvard today.

<i>(not all rows were completed by all respondents – ranged between 97.9% to 99.7% response rate)</i>	Strongly / Mostly Agree
I value the open spaces and scenic views.	97.2%
I value the small town rural character.	96.8%
I value the working farms and orchards.	96.6%
I value the historic villages and town center.	95.9%
I value the privacy and the safety.	95.0%
I value the local festivals.	93.1%
I value a sense of community and friendliness.	93.1%
I value the historical architecture of the Town.	92.3%
I value the schools.	91.0%
I value the history of the Town.	90.7%
I value the reliance on volunteerism to run the Town.	87.8%
I value Annual Town Meeting.	82.4%
I value the transfer station.	81.6%
I value the Town's governance structure.	76.9%

Percentage of respondents that mostly or strongly disagree with these statements ranged from less than 1% to just under 10%. The questions **about governance structure, transfer station, and annual town meeting** returned the highest portion of “no opinion” (8% to 10%).

No significant variation within demographic groups (age, income, households with kids, longevity).

QUESTION 2

Is anything missing that isn't covered by the above statements?
(44.6% answered question)

Open-ended responses (see appendix).

Challenges and Opportunities

QUESTION 3

What are the top 5 ways the Town can improve how it meets the needs of all residents?

(96.6% answered question)

Provide / allow local eateries	53.6%
Provide / allow local grocery store	48.7%
Create safe walking / bike paths	44.2%
Create gathering places / informal meeting places for people of all ages in all seasons	34.2%
Create a range of housing options	30.7%
Increase support for farmers	28.7%
Upgrade senior center facility	22.5%
Improve / expand conservation trails	21.8%
Other (please specify)	18.0%
Create formal and informal recreation opportunities for all ages	17.5%
Collaborate with neighboring communities	17.5%
Improve stewardship of conservation land	16.5%
Increase funding for school	15.1%
Create / allow local entertainment options	14.8%
Expand services / programs for seniors	13.8%
Create transportation options for seniors	11.5%
Improve the continuing education program	10.4%
Improve parking in Town Center	7.6%
No change. The town is currently meeting the needs of all of our residents.	3.6%

Providing local eateries and **local grocery store** were consistently in the top 5 for all age groups. The over 65 (21% of responses) priorities also included **upgrading senior center facility**. The 46 to 55 and 26 to 35 age groups (35.6%) also included **increasing support for farmers**. The 36 to 45 age group (15.5%) included **increase funding for school** in their top 5 priorities. The 26 to 35 age group (3.8%) also included **improve / expand conservation trails**.

Both providing local eateries and **local grocery store** were included in the top 5 for all income groups over \$50K (92.6%). *Either* of the two options were included in the income groups under \$50K. Within income groups, **expanding senior programs** and **upgrading the senior center facility** ranked in the top 5 for those with an annual income of \$75K and below (15.2%).

Increasing support for farmers ranked in the top 5 for income groups between \$100K and \$250K (54.9%). **Improving / expanding conservation trails** made it to the top 5 for those earning over \$250K (17.4%).

For households with children under 18 (44.0% of responses), **increase funding for schools** was included in the top 5 priorities.

For those who had lived here less than 5 years (15.2%), **increasing conservation trails** ranked in the top 5. **Increasing support for farmers** was one of the top 5 priorities for people living here 5 years or more or whose families have lived here for multiple generations (84.7%).

QUESTION 4

What are top 5 ways to improve management and governance of our Town?

(91.4% answered question)

More collaboration between all Town boards / committees	63.4%
Increase transparency	54.6%
Seek ways to mediate opposing viewpoints	53.8%
Increase efficiency	37.3%
Engage more citizens in planning processes	35.5%
Recruit more volunteers	25.3%
Decrease dependency on volunteers	14.1%
No change. No improvements are needed to the Town's management or governance.	9.4%
Increase Town staff	7.0%
Decrease government (please explain)	6.9%
Change form of government	6.7%

No significant variation between different age, income groups, how longed lived here, or households with kids other than placing slightly higher importance on **recruiting volunteers** than **engaging citizens in the planning process**.

Ways suggested for the **decrease government** option included reducing the number of elected officials (6 responses), reducing the size of the police force (5 responses), increasing efficiency and reducing unnecessary government regulation or oversight (7 responses), and decreasing the number of committees (4 responses). Other written suggestions referred to improvements to specific aspects of how the Town is run or changing the format of government, but didn't specifically address reductions.

QUESTION 5

Are there other ways you think we can improve management and governance of the town?

(28.1% answered question)

Open-ended responses (see appendix).

QUESTION 6

What are top 5 reasons for changing the mix and types of commercial and residential land uses in our community?

(94.7% answered question)

Increase / allow local eateries	56.3%
Provide / allow a local grocery store	49.4%
Increase the range of housing options	31.0%
Increase mix of uses around Town Center	30.2%
Increase conservation land	29.0%
Increase commercial uses	27.3%
Increase agriculture	21.3%
Increase commercial uses in other areas besides the Commercial District	16.2%
Increase convenience retail, for example a Honey Farms	15.9%
Increase recreation land	15.4%
Increase opportunities for employment	15.1%
Other (please specify)	14.5%
Increase / allow local entertainment options	13.9%
No change. The mix of land uses in our town is satisfactory.	8.0%

The top 5 reasons were similar in all age groups to the town-wide responses, with an **increase in commercial uses** ranking in the top 5 for those between 18 and 25, between 46 and 55, and those aged 65 and over. *Range of housing options* did not fall in the top 5 for those aged 26 to 55 and *increasing conservation land* was less important for those under 25 and over 65.

Increase commercial uses also ranked in the top 5 over *increase range of housing options* for households with kids.

Increase commercial uses ranked in the top 5 for those earning less than \$35K and those earning between \$75 and \$200K. *Increasing conservation land* was less important for those earning less than \$75K.

Increase recreational land replaced *range of housing options* in the top 5 for those living here less than 5 years and **increase commercial uses** was more important than *increasing conservation land* for those who've lived here longer than 10 years.

QUESTION 7

What are top 5 improvements to the Town’s physical assets?

(92.5% answered question)

Protect scenic views and landscapes	62.1%
Create bike / pedestrian paths	50.1%
Perform maintenance on public buildings	49.1%
Renovate public buildings	36.2%
Protect existing public shade or street trees or plant new trees	32.1%
Add sidewalks	26.9%
Increase / improve preservation of historic properties and structures	26.2%
Create design guidelines for new development	21.2%
Create more outdoor gathering places	12.6%
Other (please specify)	12.5%
Improve traffic calming / management	12.3%
Create parks	7.9%
Create recreation fields	6.2%
No change. The Town is physically good as is.	5.7%

Top 5 priorities for physical assets did not vary significantly between income groups, although **increase / improve preservation of historic properties and structures** ranked slightly higher than *protecting or planting trees* in three of the income groups and ranked just beneath the top 5 in others. This was also the case for those aged 65 and over.

Add sidewalks ranked higher than *protecting trees* for households with kids, for those in the 36 to 45 age group, and for those who’d lived here between 5 and 9 years.

Conservation

QUESTION 8

What are top 5 actions to enhance and/or protect natural resources?

(93.6% answered question)

Protect scenic views and open viewsheds	56.3%
Control of invasive species	47.0%
Protect watersheds and resources	47.0%
Plan for replacement of aging and dying trees	44.8%
Control tree diseases – prevention of threats to long-term tree health	39.8%
Control mosquitoes	36.6%
Improve integration / collaboration on comprehensive resource management between different town boards / committees	35.8%
Resolve drainage issues	25.8%
Increase conservation land and restrictions	25.8%
Other (please specify)	12.5%
No change. The Town is doing a good job protecting our natural resources.	5.0%

Variations by where respondents lived in Harvard were not significant for this question. The first four in the list above were consistently in the top 5 for most of the geographic areas, **controlling mosquitoes** ranked in the top 5 for Areas 1, 2 and 6 and **improve integration / collaboration** ranked high for Areas 1, 5 and 7.

The first three listed above were consistently ranked in the top 5 for most demographic sub-groups. Those between 26 and 45 and households with kids also added **control mosquitoes**. Those between the ages of 46 and 55 and over 65 included **improved integration / collaboration** in their top 5.

Housing

QUESTION 9

What types of residential development would you like to see more or less of in Harvard?

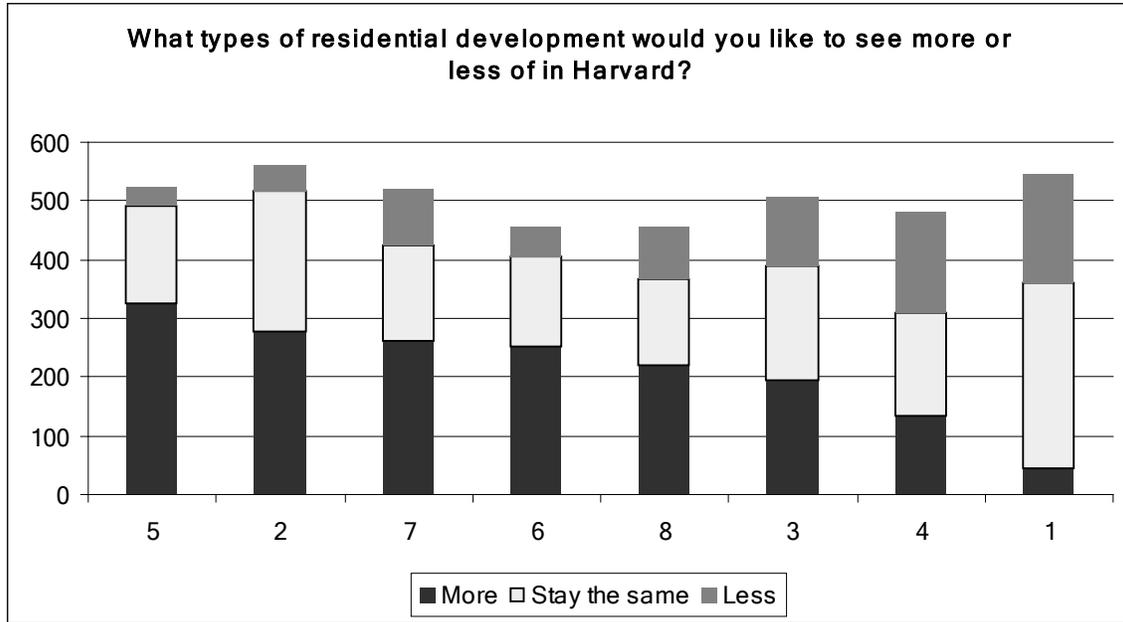
(92.8% answered question)

	Answer Option	More of	Less of
5	Housing for persons over 55	55.1%	5.7%
2	Small Single-family residential (1 to 2 bedroom)	46.6%	7.2%
7	Affordable housing	45.1%	16.9%
6	Assisted living	44.6%	9.3%
8	Accessory apartments	38.3%	15.1%
3	Rental units	33.4%	20.7%
4	Multi-Family dwellings	24.1%	30.9%
1	Large single-family residential (3+ bedrooms)	7.7%	32.2%

Providing more housing for persons over 55 and small single family homes was supported by the majority of respondents in the age 46 and up groups. Provision of affordable housing was more important to those over 55 and the least important to those between 26 and 45.

The majority of respondents in all income categories supported more housing for persons over 55. Adding affordable housing was supported by the majority of those in the 50K to 100K income categories and was least supported by those earning more than 150K.

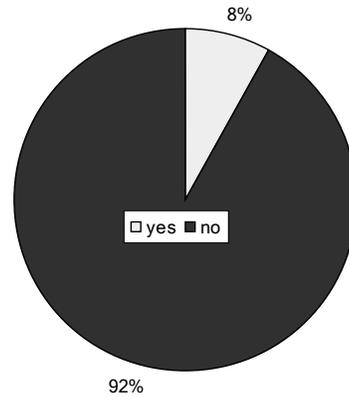
Those who indicated the Town needed more affordable housing were most favorable of housing for persons over 55 (71%) as well as for small single family homes (64%) and assisted living (63%). Those who supported creation of more large single-family homes did not generally support creation of more rental units, multi-family dwellings, or accessory apartments.



QUESTION 10

Anyone considering moving to Harvard in your immediate family?

(83.5% answered question)



QUESTION 11

(27.5% answered question)

Are you or anyone in your immediate family looking for housing for the following reasons?

Downsizing to a smaller house	53.7%
Need something more affordable	38.3%
Care for an aging or ailing relative	19.1%
Want less yard space / land	14.9%
Need to rent	14.4%
First home purchase	11.7%
Want more yard space / land	10.6%
Increasing to a larger house	9.6%

If it was available in Harvard would they/you consider moving here?

58 – yes, 47 – no, 16 – maybe

QUESTION 12

In the next ten years, are you or anyone in your immediate family looking for housing for the following reasons?

(56% answered question)

Downsizing to a smaller house	61.6%
Need something more affordable	32.6%
Care for an aging or ailing relative	29.0%
Want less yard space / land	16.4%
First home purchase	15.9%
Need to rent	8.9%
Increasing to a larger house	8.4%
Want more yard space / land	5.7%

If it was available in Harvard would they/you consider moving here?

124 – yes, 42 – no, 40 – maybe

QUESTION 13

Do you have any other thoughts regarding housing?
(30.5% answered)

Open-ended responses (see appendix).

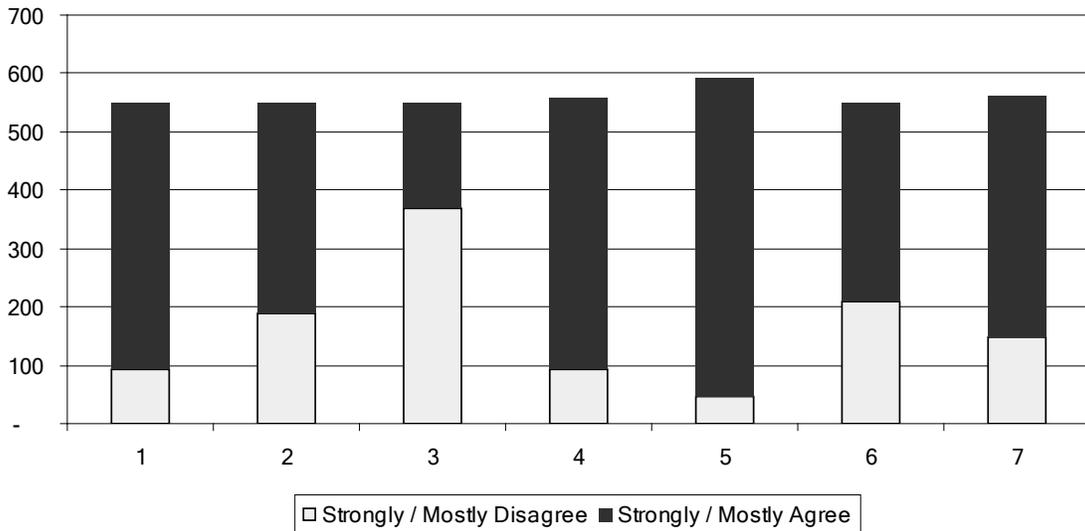
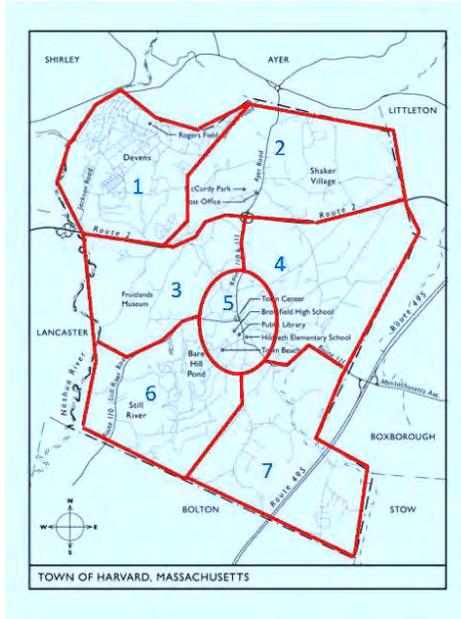
Commercial District

QUESTION 14

Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.
(93.1% answered question)

		Strongly / Mostly Agree	Strongly / Mostly Disagree	Need more Information
1	I support commercial development if it increases tax revenue.	73.0%	14.7%	10.4%
2	I support increasing commercial development in the C-District only.	57.8%	30.6%	9.2%
3	I support commercial development Town-wide.	29.3%	60.4%	9.3%
4	I support a mix of uses (both residential and commercial) in the C-District.	75.1%	14.8%	7.6%
5	Commercial development in all parts of Town should reflect the Town's rural and historic character.	87.4%	7.3%	3.7%
6	I am concerned about traffic impacts of new development in the C-District.	54.0%	33.3%	8.0%
7	I am concerned about protection of natural resources, the watershed, and green spaces in the C-District.	65.6%	23.3%	7.9%

Those indicating they lived in Area 2 (where the C-District is located) were least supportive of increasing commercial development in the C-District (with 60% indicating they strongly or mostly disagreed with the statement above). This group also had the highest number of those indicating concern (82%) about traffic impacts.



QUESTION 15

Do you have any other comments regarding the Commercial District?

(27.8% answered)

Open-ended responses (see appendix).

Town Center

QUESTION 16

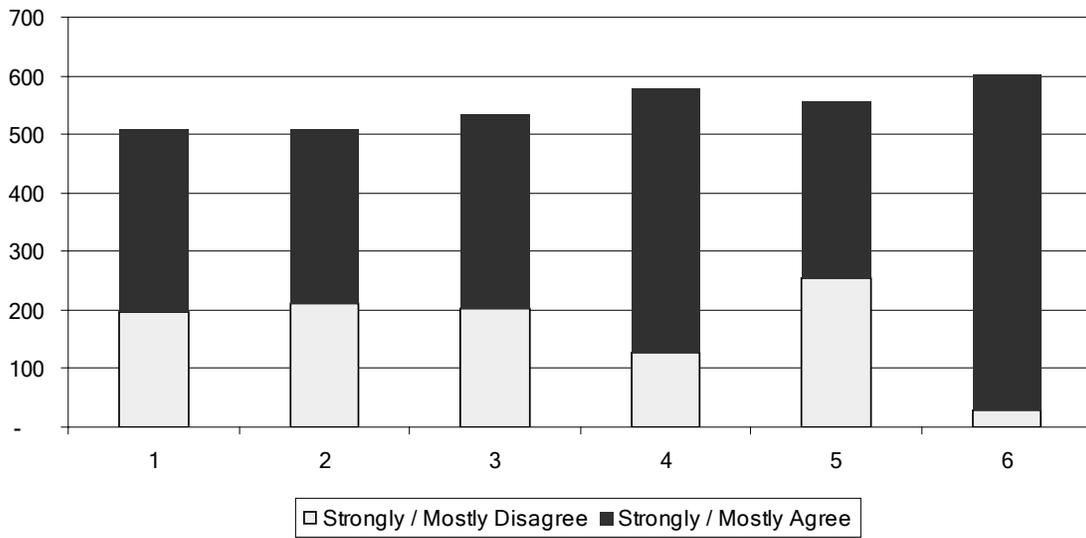
Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

(93% answered question)

		Strongly / Mostly Agree	Strongly / Mostly Disagree	Need more Information
1	Town Center is fine as it is, there is nothing the Town needs to change.	55.4%	34.6%	5.8%
2	The Town should invest in improvements to the landscape and outdoor areas of the Town Center.	49.3%	35.3%	9.5%
3	I support improvements to circulation (and parking) for pedestrians and vehicles in Town Center.	54.8%	33.2%	8.2%
4	I support allowing more types of businesses in Town Center as long as the architectural and historic character is preserved.	72.6%	20.2%	6.1%
5	I support allowing for an increase of residential density in Town Center as long as the architectural and historic character is preserved.	48.6%	41.3%	7.3%
6	I support allowing public buildings to be used for cultural activities.	91.1%	4.6%	2.2%

Proximity to the Town Center did not seem to influence responses about changes or improvements to Town Center, although those in Area 5 reflected the least support for allowing more types businesses with only 66% indicating they agreed with that statement.

Forty to 50% of those who indicated they strongly or mostly agreed with the statement indicating no change needed also supported some of the other changes or improvements listed.



QUESTION 17

What more (if anything) should be done to protect and enhance the Town Center’s character?
 (35.8% answered)

Open ended responses (see appendix).

Devens

QUESTION 18

**What do you consider to be the most important factors for consideration related to Devens?
(rating scale of 0 to 4, with 4 being highest importance)**

(90.1% of respondents)

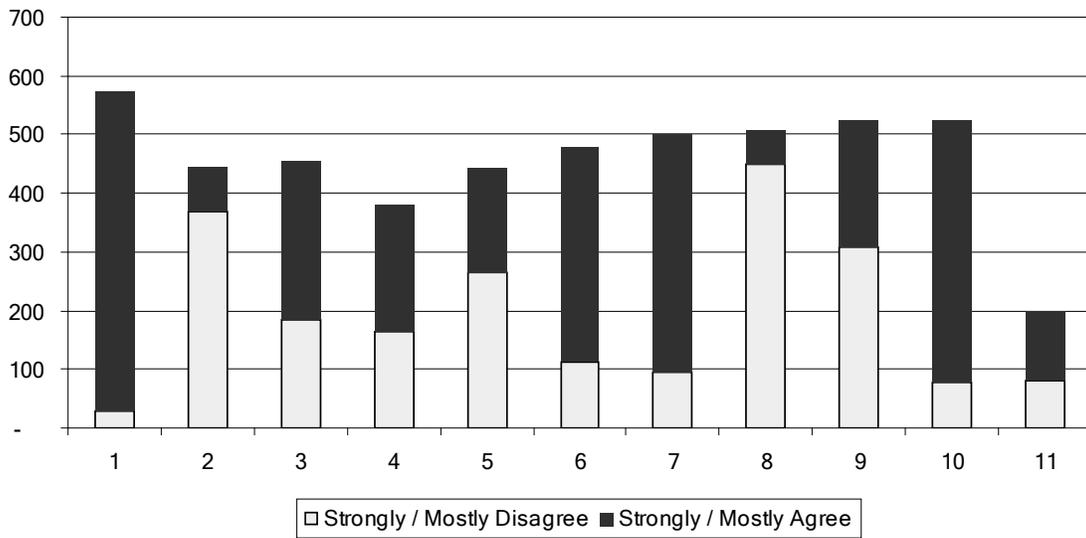
		4 or 3	Need more information
1	Potential economic benefit for Harvard by providing additional commercial and industrial land to Harvard's tax base.	72.2%	8.1%
2	Potential fiscal liabilities for maintaining infrastructure and providing governance and services for Devens.	69.0%	10.5%
3	Potential impact on Harvard schools budget and facilities.	75.5%	6.6%
4	Potential for Harvard's town character to be altered by acquisition of additional commercial and industrial land.	48.1%	6.4%
5	Potential to expand Harvard's open spaces, conservation lands, water resources, recreation lands that are currently part of Devens	53.2%	6.2%
6	Potential impacts on residents of the neighborhoods of Devens	47.1%	10.9%
7	Potential to provide more housing options for Harvard residents.	48.9%	7.2%
8	Potential impact on the size and type of town government.	60.2%	8.1%

QUESTION 19

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

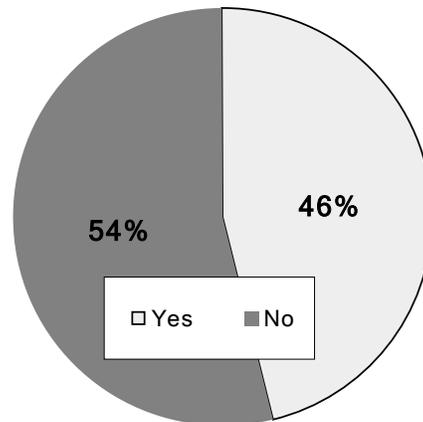
(90.5% percent of respondents)

		Strongly / Mostly Agree	Strongly / Mostly Disagree	Need more Information
1	In order to plan effectively, it is critical that the Town of Harvard decide on a direction to take with respect to the disposition of Devens.	88.9%	4.6%	4.9%
2	The Town should pursue governance of all of Devens.	12.5%	60.8%	22.2%
3	The Town should resume governance of the portion of Devens that is within the Town's boundaries.	44.8%	30.5%	21.2%
4	The Town should resume governance and adjust town boundaries so Deven's neighborhoods will remain intact.	35.6%	26.9%	31.7%
5	The Town should not pursue governance of any portion of Devens.	30.3%	44.1%	20.2%
6	The Town should begin planning for Devens immediately.	61.5%	18.8%	14.9%
7	The Town should make a decision about Devens in the next 5 years.	67.2%	15.9%	10.9%
8	The Town should defer any decisions about Devens until the planning deadline of 2031.	9.7%	75.1%	11.2%
9	The Town's residents are informed about what decisions need to be made about Devens.	36.1%	51.2%	8.2%
10	The Town can do a better job of communicating with residents about Devens.	74.0%	12.8%	5.1%
11	I believe Devens redevelopment is in keeping with the Reuse Plan and Bylaws adopted by Harvard Town Meeting in 1994.	19.8%	13.5%	53.1%



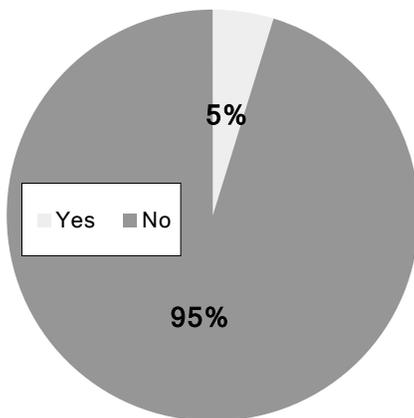
QUESTION 20

Do you live in Harvard and spend time in Devens? (86.4% answered)



QUESTION 21

Do you live in Devens and spend time in Harvard? (76.9% answered)



Open Ended Responses

Ayer Road Commercial District Focus Group

Attending

Kate Pullano	Neighbor (Old Mill Road)
Ceri Ruenheck	Neighbor (Glenview Drive)
Kathy Fricchione	Neighbor (Glenview Drive)
Jim Stevens	Neighbor(Ann Lee Road), EDC member
Jim Higgins	Neighbor (Myrick Lane), former EDC member
Elaine Lazarus	EDC member, Town Planner Town of Hopkinton
Sandy Chapman	New EDC member
Bill Johnson	Board of Selectmen
Harvey Buchanan	Business Owner
Michelle Catalina	Planning Board, MPSC
Joe Hutchinson	MPSC
Tim Clark	Board of Selectmen, MPSC

Facilitated by Juliet Walker and Sue Brown of Brown Walker Planners.

Objective

The focus group discussion will help participants:

- articulate preferred (individual) visions for Ayer Road Commercial District
- identify commonalities in visions
- identify differences in visions
- create an organizational and procedural framework for how future decisions can be made

Rules of engagement

- **Listen:** We are here to actively listen to each other.
- **Share:** We are here to share our ideas about the community's future and to share information with each other.
- **Learn:** This is an important opportunity to learn from each other. Even if it's to identify what we want to know more about.
- **Respect:** Our purpose is not to come to agreement on issues, there are many viewpoints represented, and everyone should have an opportunity to share their ideas in a safe and respectful environment. We are not here to argue or convince others. Please direct comments to the facilitator and not to each other.

Discussion Summary

Brown Walker Planners (BWP) welcomed participants and shared the objectives of the meeting. All participants introduced themselves by name and affiliation or stakeholder interest.

BWP asked each participant to share ideas about their desired future vision for Ayer Road Commercial District. Vision elements included:

- Existing properties should be cleaned up and there should be an overall improvement of appearance
- Provide small scale services if possible
- Town should have a clear understanding of pros and cons of development or redevelopment
- Residents should have ability to walk/run/bike along the Ayer Road corridor and from the corridor to the Town Center
- Views from abutting neighborhoods should be protected
- Avoid large developments
- Character of the District should be small scale, walkable and enjoyable
- Development should be economically sustainable
- There should be some limited development (such as an office park)
- Character of development should be concentrated together in “village-style” not spread out along the corridor
- A high aesthetic value should be supported
- There should be connectivity along Ayer Road and to the Town Center and to other destinations
- There should be a community based (family-oriented) restaurant
- There should be gathering spaces/places
- Development should bring new sources of revenue (to diversify the tax base)
- Existing and future traffic and circulation problems should addressed/fixed
- The impacts of development should be well-mitigated – to the extent that the impact (on abutters and the town as a whole) is acceptable
- The pedestrian/bicycle circulation system should extend to Lancaster Road path
- Types of new businesses should include hospital and healthcare services (e.g. spin offs from Nashoba Valley Health Care)
- Encourage low speeds all along Ayer Road
- There may be potential for a solar farm or other larger development on larger sites that extend away from the road in the C-District
- There should be good design – architecture and other design elements

- Development should be a village character of small scale that is sustainable on all levels
- There should be no strip malls with large parking lots out front
- Development should generate revenue in excess of costs to service
- The community should be actively involved in planning for the district
- The district should provide services to meet the needs of Harvard residents
- Services should exist within a village setting
- Areas with existing development should offer potential for re-development and infill
- Traffic should be controlled/ managed
- New development near interchange is a model for the type of character desired
- Buildings should be built sustainably – to support change in uses over time

BWP asked participants to describe what “desired character” meant to them. Answers included:

- Small buildings of intimate scale
- How development addresses the street and sits on the lot
- Development that is compatible along the corridor re: scale, continuity along the street
- New England character

BWP asked participants to identify commonalities in Visions offered. Those identified included:

- There is consensus that existing traffic, transportation and circulation issues should be addressed
- Character and quality of development are important
- Walkability and connectivity are important
- There is a need to understand the potential pros and cons of development to effectively plan (compare case studies, evaluate and analyze potential impacts – environment, fiscal, character, services, social, etc.)
- Clustered village type of development is desirable
- There is a need to clean-up and improve existing businesses now
- An acceptable level of development should be sought that balances neighborhood impacts with broader community needs

BWP asked participants to identify differences in Visions offered. Those identified included:

- There are difference of opinion in what types of land uses would be appropriate
- Not everyone agrees that revenue production is a priority for this district

- There are different opinions on the appropriate level/amount of housing
- There are different opinions on the amount of commercial development that should be encouraged/allowed
- There are varying levels of confidence in the town's ability to "control" development
- There are different opinions about what is an "acceptable" potential impact (personal, community)
- There are different opinions on whether Old Mill Road should be considered as a connection to Devens and whether other infrastructure connections should be pursued to Devens

BWP asked participants to share ideas about what is needed for the Town of Harvard to move forward with a decision making process. Recommendations included:

- Revisit zoning regulations to see if they allow/encourage the desired type of uses
- Collaborate with others to address infrastructure needs such as circulation and transportation, stormwater management, water and sewer (involve developers, state, other agencies and towns as appropriate)
- Acquire and provide more information on potential and or unintended consequences of providing public water and sewer
- Engage land owners within the C-District
- Ease the fears of abutters on issues such as noise, traffic, lights, neighborhood character, etc.
- Have conversations with the Town of Ayer to understand planning goals on the border and how they might align (or not) with Harvard's goals for the C-District
- Identify and work toward "small" wins/successes (including enforcement and improving what already exists)
- Determine the feasibility of uses the community desires (grocery store, family restaurant, pharmacy)
- Develop consensus on vision and goals for the Commercial District by building trust among participants (neighbors, EDC, boards, town leaders, business owners and developers)
- Develop and present models/concepts that the community can respond to
- Facilitate a planning process with residential abutters to identify a neighborhood vision, and identify issues / concerns
- Engage existing business owners to identify any issues / concerns
- Develop zoning bylaws that allow prompt and predictable review and permitting decisions
- Create the capacity and willingness within community to work with developers
- Hire a profession planner to assure on-going attention to challenges and opportunities, to be a consistent point of contact and source of information for all parties
- Enforce existing regulations

- Address existing conditions now such as lighting as a way to build trust between business owners and neighbors

BWP Observations

- There is consensus on the character and style of future development such as the desire to assure that the Commercial District has good design, that development is compatible in character and scale with development in Harvard overall, and that walkability and connectivity are top priorities.
- Among participants attending there was acknowledgement that some community members may be expressing fear of the unknown and that to ease fears there needs to be a credible analysis of potential benefits and risks associated with the various types of development previously identified as desirable and feasible.
- Participants also agreed that they believe there is a willingness to work together to create a vision for the district, to address existing concerns and challenges, and to build the capacity and will to make the desired changes.
- A key recommendation for the Master Plan was identifying some early action items (small and achievable first steps) that would begin to build trust and set the stage for success in the long-term. Some of the short-term strategies include – reaching out to the Town of Ayer, meeting with abutting neighborhoods to list issues of concern, and meeting with local businesses and property owners in the C-District.
- Planning for the C-District should be proactive -- consider what “tools” the Town needs in its toolbox should a potential developer approach the Town with a proposal.

Devens Focus Group

Attending

Ed Starzack	MassDevelopment
Peter Lowitt	Devens Enterprise Commission
Phil Crosby	Devens resident, Devens Advisory Committee
Heather Knowles	Devens resident
Victor Norman	Harvard resident, Devens Economic Analysis Team
Steve Finnegan	Harvard resident, Devens Economic Analysis Team
Sandy Chapman	Harvard resident and commercial real estate broker
Lucy Wallace	Master Plan Steering Committee
Jim Breslauer	Master Plan Steering Committee

Facilitated by Sue Brown and Juliet Walker of Brown Walker Planners.

Objective

The focus group discussion will help participants:

- articulate preferred (individual) visions for Devens
- identify commonalities in visions
- identify differences in visions
- create an organizational and procedural framework for how future decisions can be made

Discussion Summary

Brown Walker Planners (BWP) welcomed participants and shared the objectives of the meeting. All participants introduced themselves by name and affiliation or interest.

BWP asked each participant to share their 5-10 year or post-disposition vision for Devens.

Vision elements included:

- Residential component should remain intact as a village of Harvard – like Still River Village
- It's okay if Devens becomes its own Town, with the condition that it stays "like Harvard" in character
- Open space should be protected
- Community character should be preserved
- Devens students should remain in Harvard Schools
- Prefer for Devens to become a part of Harvard without losing ability to have direct input on how Devens is governed (example was given related to street lights)

- Retain character of a “master-planned” community
- Continue development based on “sustainable development” principles
- Remove housing cap (in Reuse Plan)
- Retain ability to do unified “fast track/expedited” permitting
- Reinforce Devens’s role as an economic engine for the region
- Maintain DEC for near future to ensure or support balanced economic growth/development
- Increase residential component to keep “eyes on the street”
- Increase workforce housing
- Provide unrestricted access for Harvard residents to Mirror Lake
- There should be better communication and marketing of Devens as a regional asset
- The benefits of development at Devens should be recognized as having economic impacts beyond the immediate area
- Development should be managed by a third party with input from the towns (see other industrial parks around state as model)
- Boundaries should be re-established along town’s historic boundaries
- Residential component of Devens (at a minimum) should remain within Harvard’s boundaries
- The economic potential of Devens should be maximized
- The Reuse Plan should be protected (including DEC)
- There is room for more housing...but only in areas identified as appropriate
- Increase transparency of finances of redevelopment (for example shifting capital needs should be made known)
- Future development should be guided by a new plan
- Distribution of land uses should be based on zoning that identifies appropriate areas
- Housing should modern and energy efficient
- Historic buildings should be preserved
- Devens should be a sustainable and vibrant community
- Schools should be of the highest quality through whatever means (via Harvard or other choices)
- Participatory planning should be strong and involve many in community

**BWP asked participants to identify areas of agreement within the various vision elements.
Answers included:**

- Devens should be developed according to a new Master Plan
- Protection of open space is critical
- Complete clean-up of superfund sites is needed
- The housing cap issue should be resolved (there may be varying views on how to do this, but all agree that the current cap is not viable)
- There is capacity for additional residences in Devens without interfering with commercial opportunities
- The community of Devens must stay intact with a balance of residential, commercial and industrial uses
- Central permitting authority is important to on-going development (through buildout) as long as proper checks and balances are in place and community representation is appropriate
- Availability of high quality education is an important consideration
- The community of Devens should be protected and enhanced with community services and facilities
- Commercial and industrial development should continue

BWP asked participants to identify areas of disagreement in their visions. Answers included:

- How to deal with utilities: Should they be kept as municipal or sold to another utility entity?
- What number of residential units is appropriate
- What types of housing are appropriate: how much should be affordable, how much should be rental vs owner
- Town boundaries – jurisdiction
- Timing for decision on disposition
- Vicksburg Square and required rezoning, scale, expense, affordable component

BWP asked participants to share ideas about what is needed for the Town of Harvard to move forward with a decision making process. Recommendations included:

- Involve Devens community members in the discussions and planning
- Identify a Vision and create a Plan to support this Vision
- Mass Development should help to fund a town planner position (for each community)
- Harvard needs a Town Planner
- Devens finances must be made transparent
- We must start the decision making process now

- We need to increase the understanding by community members on the sense of urgency on the part of Devens residents
- We need to develop a planning process for Devens that is accessible to all communities
- Towns should have input on Devens housing cap
- Consider Transfer of Development Rights as a strategy that allows Towns to transfer residential uses to Devens
- Address lack of clarity about how Devens has impact on other parts of Harvard
- Include contingencies for market changes in planning
- Decide timing on disposition decision (when should final disposition occur)
- Increase participation and communication
- Increase physical access between communities
 - Road connection – long term
 - Reinforce trail connections/pathways – short term
- Consider two tracts in Master Plan to account for two possibilities: preferred option – Devens as a part of Harvard, spend most time and effort on; second option – if Devens is its own entity
- Consider a regional community recreation facility at Devens
- Help address regional needs – consider Devens as a regional resource: “hub of a regional wheel”
- Think of Devens as a regional village

BWP Observations

- The sense of urgency regarding decision-making is also accompanied by community desires to know more about the potential benefits and liabilities of action or inaction.
- Among participants there seemed to be agreement on general issues such as the desire to keep the community intact as a “vibrant neighborhood,” to maximize the economic development potential of the commercial areas, and to advance development according to a broadly vetted and accepted plan.
- Disagreements arose primarily around details such as how much housing, how many affordable units, and what is the right make-up of a particular planning, review or authorizing board/agency.
- Participants also seem to agree that as the base for a decision making process there is a need for an unbiased educational outreach program, an inclusive planning process and a transparent and credible fiscal analysis.
- The final piece of the discussion raised some important ideas related to the Master Plan – 1) Visualizing Devens as a regional “hub” (for commerce, community services, recreation,

natural resources, and more). 2) While it is important for the Master Plan to address two potential future alternatives for Devens, the priority should be exploring the pros and cons of retaining Devens as a part of Harvard.

Master Plan Steering Committee / Conservation
Public Forum - 3 March 2012

“Preservation of Harvard’s Rural Character”

Earlier Master Plans established that Harvard’s identity was rooted in its Rural Character. For that reason, maintenance and enhancement of rural character has been a primary goal of the town’s land use policy and historic preservation activities.

Sensing that Harvard’s Rural Character is under threat, the current Master Plan Steering Committee feels compelled to define, in detail, the factors contributing to this much admired quality and to examine the current condition of each of those factors.

This study will provide the basis for proposals and implementation strategies presented in the final Master Plan document.

In this first phase of the Master Plan Rural Character has been examined in Town-wide Survey and by a Working Group composed of representatives of various Harvard organizations, both public and private.

Our preliminary findings substantiate the importance of, and threat to Harvard’s Rural Character. They also reveal the complexity of the subject:

- Rural Character is a highly elusive quality influenced by a diverse set of factors;
- Several determining factors are subject to constantly evolving cultural forces;
- Responsibility for those factors that are controllable is dispersed among several groups whose activities are often uncoordinated.

Phase II of the Master Plan will examine these preliminary findings. The Conservation Working Group will be the investigating body and utilize the resources of the Master Planning Consultant.

The purpose of today’s Forum is to solicit public reaction to the preliminary findings described below:

A. Rural Character and Small Town Community are inseparable phenomena

1. The tap roots of Rural Character are Harvard’s social/economic heritage and its geography.
2. The social-economy of a traditional rural community is relatively self-contained and self-sustaining. The social profile and skill levels are complementary and relatively broad.
3. While American culture has moved away from this model, the following would strengthen the foundation on which the remnants of Harvard’s Rural Character now resides:
 - a. Increase the number of in-town jobs
 - b. Broaden the diversity of housing
 - c. Seek to increase self-containment/self-sufficiency in the following areas:
 - i. Energy (consider generating solar, wind and geo-thermal energy locally)
 - ii. Water (protect water resources at Devens)
 - iii. Food (increase farming, farmer’s market, CSA and other Coop structures)

B. Rural Character is inhabited by magnificent ghosts

1. The patrimony of the Harvard community lives in its Rural Character (and *rural characters!*). This patrimony is prized for what it reveals about the origins and values of our culture.
2. For those who love to chat with ghosts, preservation of Rural Character is obvious and essential.
3. In rendering and disseminating Harvard’s history, more citizens would come to enjoy such chats and, subsequently, strive to preserve ghostly habitat.

C. Rural Character thrives in certain development patterns, but withers in others

1. Harvard's traditional development patterns – farm, village, rural roads – were shaped by four natural features: rolling hills; field, forest and rock; ponds and streams; views east and west
2. Roads navigated the rolling hills; farms exploited fields, forest, pond and streams; Villages were constructed to serve civic, religious and commercial needs; Vistas were enjoyed.
3. These development patterns were quite resilient and remained largely intact through the 19th century despite the diminishment of farming and the arrival of the utopianists.
4. By contrast, 20th century forces - Fort Devens; dispersion of jobs and commerce; changes in modes of transportation – imposed disruptive development patterns: highways; suburban residential; commercial strip; large scale educational facilities.
5. Valiant attempts were made to mediate the impact of these new development patterns on Harvard's Rural Character. The following devices were employed:
 - a. Zoning regulations – land use; scenic roads;
 - b. Other Regulations – conservation; historic districts;
 - c. Protest (proposed location of Route 2)
 - d. Private action – Conservation Trust
6. Today we are somewhat reconciled to two of these new development patterns: highways and large scale educational facilities. They've been accepted out of necessity. At the same time suburban development has been deemed acceptable - lots are large and landscape forgiving. By contrast, the commercial strip development pattern (the C District) is clearly not consistent with Harvard's Rural Character. Careful planning is needed to make it so. Devens presents an even greater challenge.

D. Rural Character's physical attributes require constant renewal

1. The land – particularly vegetation and water resources – needs to be actively managed. The greater Man's presence, the greater the need for management.
2. Historic artifacts – buildings, monuments, archeological sites – need to be actively managed; constant vigilance in the face of normal deterioration and the superimposition of new demands.
3. The town's historical artifacts are better documented than its land. The ecology of the land is yet to be characterized in a manner that readily facilitates proper management.
4. In the case of both land and artifacts, existing human and financial resources are inadequate to the task of maintaining, much less enhancing them. The next phase of the master plan will define these tasks and propose the means of implementing them.

E. Rural Character is the product of Individual initiative and Collaboration action

1. The American Character is a function of our unique and somewhat delicate balance of Individual initiatives and Collaborative action. Harvard's Rural Character is a product of the same dynamic.
2. While we can neither predict nor control individual action, we can and should set the conditions for creative collaboration.
3. The following are examples of projects that would successfully enhance Harvard's Rural Character. They all require disciplined collaboration:
 - a. A landscape and circulation plan for the Town Center – There are several boards, commissions, trusts (library), departments (school, DPW) and private groups (Garden Club) with overlapping jurisdictional responsibilities.
 - b. A management plan to control invasive species – Untold numbers of private property owners, the Conservation Commission and private groups all have an interest in this.
 - c. An education program to raise awareness of Harvard's ghosts and ecology – Historical Commission, Historical Society, individual residents, the schools, Harvard Conservation Trust, League of Women Voters, etc all have resources to that would benefit this effort.
4. The Master Plan will define projects that necessitate collaboration, discuss them with stakeholders and propose implementation strategies.

ALTERNATIVES BOARDS, PUBLIC FORUM MARCH 3 2012

VISION AND GOALS

Vision

In 2020 Harvard will be a town that continues to foster a strong and vibrant sense of community and place, embraces careful stewardship and enhancement of its natural, historic and cultural resources, has a clear direction on its role in Devens' governance, and employs best practices for achieving long-term sustainability. An informed and involved community is critical to accomplishing this vision.

Goals

Harvard has a robust Sense of Community and Place:

- Support strong volunteer government with necessary staff support
- Encourage active civic life through public and private institutions and organizations
- Foster a variety of gathering places for all generations
- Develop housing to accommodate a diversity of needs and population
- Maintain the Town Center as the institutional, civic and cultural heart of the community, as envisioned in the 2005 Town Center Action Plan

Harvard engages in judicious Stewardship of Natural, Historic and Cultural Resources:

- Preserve and enhance historic buildings and cultural resources
- Identify and protect critical natural resource areas
- Restore and/or maintain key viewsheds
- Support agricultural heritage and farms
- Preserve walls and shade trees along rural roads
- Adopt best management practices on public conservation lands and disseminate them to the public

Harvard has a defined Role in Devens:

- Analyze fiscal and community impact of Devens on Harvard and vice versa
- Use public outreach and education to ascertain preferred direction
- Collaborate with Devens' stakeholders, including Ayer, Shirley and MassDevelopment
- Decide on local governance of Devens

Harvard is assured Long-term Sustainability:

- Develop plans for investment in public infrastructure, buildings and equipment
- Diversify and strengthen the town's revenue base
- Invest in near and long-term energy efficiencies
- Encourage retail and commercial activities of appropriate size and in appropriate locations as determined by residents and market

ALTERNATIVES BOARDS, PUBLIC FORUM MARCH 3 2012

AYER ROAD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

What actions can the town take to ensure the best outcome for Ayer Road, its neighbors, and all of Harvard?

What are the benefits and risks of further development on Ayer Road?

What kind of development would benefit Harvard the most?

What is the capacity for development on Ayer Road?

Facts

(from Report of Economic Development Analysis Team (EDAT) (May 2010) and Economic Development Committee database of existing properties in the C-District)

- Total acreage of the C-District is 440 acres. This includes all or portions of about 62 parcels totaling almost 500 acres.
- According to property information provided by the Town Assessors and collected by the EDC, about 21% of the properties in the district are occupied exclusively by residences, 31% are used for agriculture or forestry. About 12% of the properties are vacant and available for development.
 - 4 of the 62 properties in the C-District are part of Town Conservation land (approx 77 acres).
 - Approximately 26 acres fall within water supply protection area.
- Currently there is about 58 thousand sq. ft. of residential building gross floor area in the C-District and 271 thousand of building area in commercial or mixed use.

Challenges

- Development is limited by lack of infrastructure for water and wastewater, fluctuations in the market potential of commercial land.
- A property database compiled from assessors data by the EDC identifies 6 properties (a total of 6.9 acres) as being undersized based on the zoning requirements for the district (less than 1.5 acres) and 16 (200 acres) don't have the required street frontage.
- Lack of consensus on the most appropriate or desirable type of development along Ayer Road. Is the town looking to improve the availability of goods and services for residents AND/OR generate greater tax revenues through commercial development?

Potential Goals

- Determine appropriate balance between development for maximum revenue and development for maximum quality of community life. What do we want this piece of land to be?
- Diversify Harvard's economy and tax base with an appropriate mix of residential and commercial development in the Commercial district.
- Work with existing and new businesses to attract commercial services that fit the Town.
- Decrease barriers and increase incentives for attracting new business.
- Work with adjacent neighborhoods, Town residents, and other stakeholders to facilitate planning and coordination prior to any permitting processes.

Potential Strategies

- Continue to attract commercial development on a property by property basis under existing zoning – modify zoning to include design standards that address community character, public realm, and connectivity.
- Promote village style cluster development that includes a mix of uses – focus on working collectively with property owners in strategic areas.
- Consider opportunities for infill development – working with existing commercial property owners to expand or modify development.

Potential Benefits of Development

- Increase employment opportunities
- Develop community meeting places
- Create village center character (Clustered Development)
- Increase housing variety (Clustered Development)
- Increase availability of goods and services
- Diversify tax base by increasing commercial development
- Leverage private funds for public sidewalks and trails (Clustered Development)

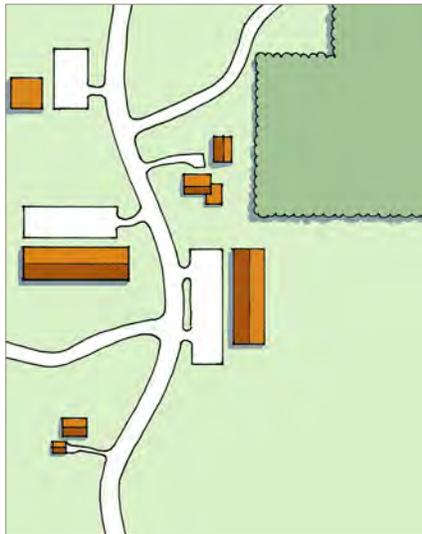
Potential Liabilities of Development:

- Increase demand on public services (inc. project review and permitting)
- Increase demand on public infrastructure
- Reduce natural buffer areas
- Change scale and character of area
- Increase traffic
- Impact neighborhood views

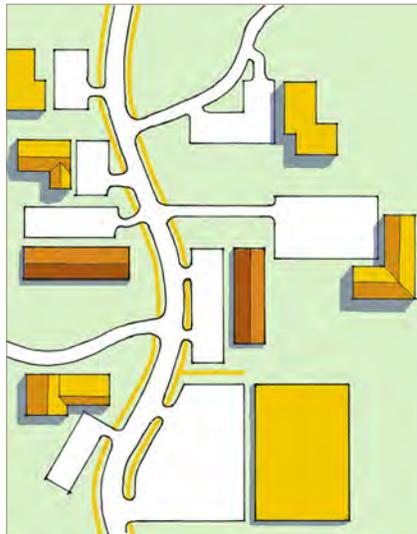
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AYER ROAD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

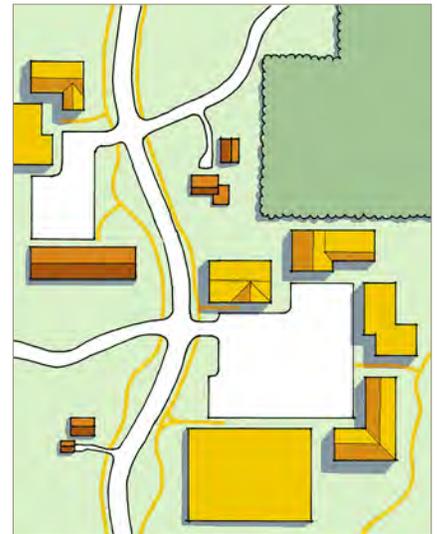
Development Alternatives



typical existing conditions

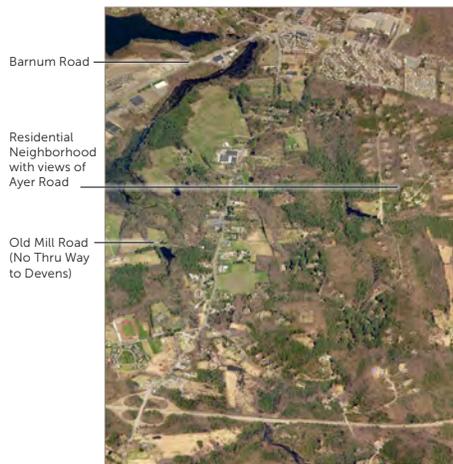


conventional development

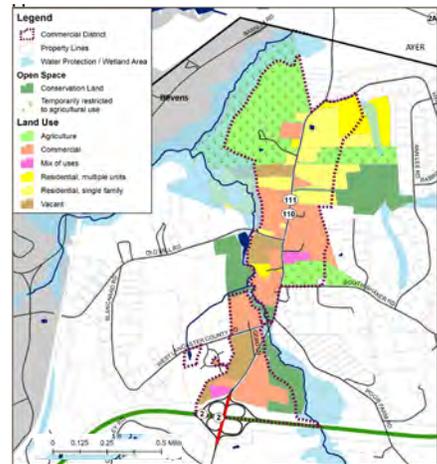


clustered development

Surroundings



Existing Land



Size Comparison with Town Center



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CONSERVATION

What actions can the town take to ensure that Harvard's natural and cultural landscapes are preserved for future generations?

What kinds of natural and cultural landscapes are most important to Harvard's identity, ecology, and quality of life?

What are the current and potential threats to Harvard's valued landscapes?

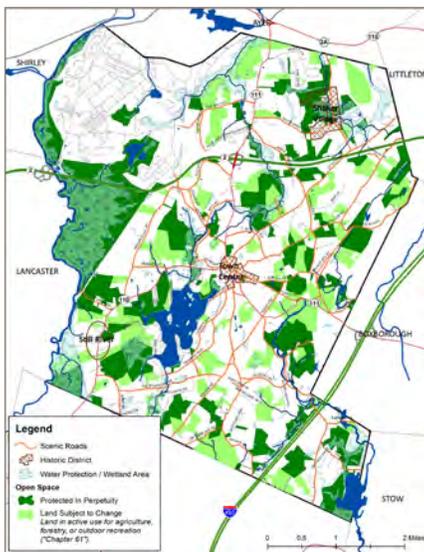
Goals

- Preserve the town's defining landscapes that are valued by Harvard's residents and reflective of the rural heritage.
- Protect local watersheds.
- Protect Harvard's agricultural lands.
- Preserve historic structures and locations.
- Provide active stewardship for public lands.

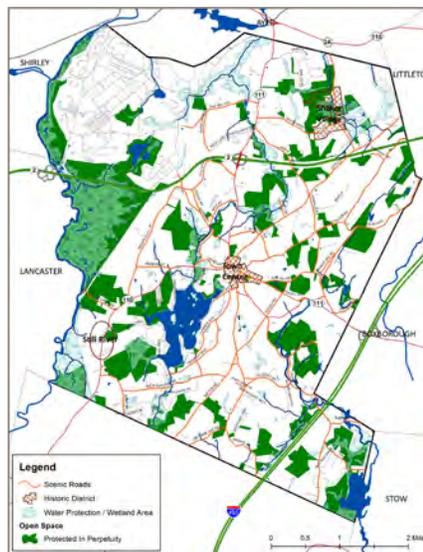
Strategies

- Identify (types of) threats to Harvard's natural and cultural landscapes.
- Develop and implement resource management plans for public lands that include controlling invasive species and tree diseases, maintaining ecosystems and harvesting and planting trees.
- Adopt low impact development strategies to reduce environmental impacts.
- Work proactively with farmers to protect and sustain local farms.
- Inventory cultural landscapes / scenic views and prioritize for town land protection efforts.
- Inventory historic structures / villages and consider creation / expansion of historic districts.
- Improve integration / collaboration on comprehensive resource management between different town boards / committees.

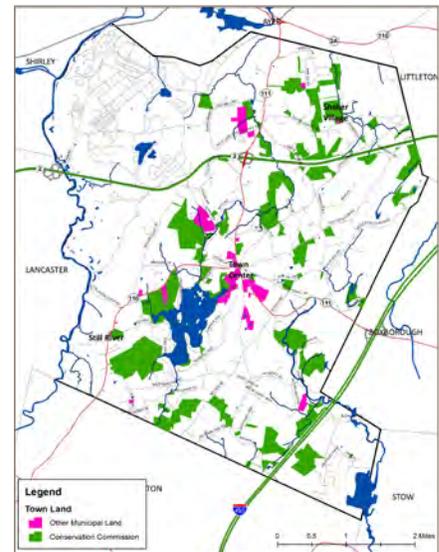
Valued Landscapes



protected land



permanently protected land



land owned and managed by the town

More than 20% of the town's land area is permanently protected land (town, state, or federal).
More than 16% of the town's land area is temporarily protected farmland (Chapter 61).

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CONSERVATION

Harvard's Landscapes



forests



water bodies



open views



roadsides



agricultural lands



cultural and historic landscapes

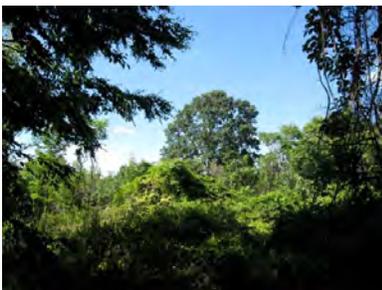


villages



civic spaces

Manage Fields and Forests



landscape dominated by invasive plant species



landscape following removal of invasive plant species

Preserve and Enhance Scenic Roads



existing conditions:
thick vegetation (including invasive plants) obscures stone walls, reduces views into woodlands and farms, reduces access for pedestrians



potential future:
vegetation management restores visibility of historic walls and woodland understory, and improves access for pedestrians

ALTERNATIVES BOARDS, PUBLIC FORUM MARCH 3 2012

DEVENS

What actions should be taken to ensure engagement in this process?

The recent survey and public outreach indicate that residents of Harvard and Devens want to begin a planning process to address Devens' governance and role in Harvard's future.

What are the potential benefits and risks of assuming governance of Devens?

What elements of Devens have a direct impact on Harvard?

Goals

- Be active and informed participants in planning for Devens' development and governance.
- Understand the full scale of potential benefits and liabilities that come with the governance decisions.
- Ensure decision on local governance results in a positive outcome for Harvard and Devens.

Strategies

- Conduct a comprehensive fiscal and social analysis of Devens to determine the potential benefits and liabilities that could result from likely governance options:
 - resume jurisdiction of lands within historic (and current) town boundaries;
 - assume jurisdiction of a portion of lands within town boundaries
 - forego jurisdiction of any of Devens lands within Harvard.
- Engage in public outreach to clarify governance options.
- Develop a vision and goals for Harvard based on the preferred governance option.
- Work with MassDevelopment, state legislators, Ayer and Shirley to advance Harvard's vision and goals.
- Work with town committees and boards to create a framework, process and timeframe for a decision by Town Meeting vote on Devens' governance.

Elements of Devens that Impact Harvard

- Land Use
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Transportation and Circulation
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Open Space and Recreation
- Public Services and Facilities

Potential Benefits and Risks by Governance Structure

	State Governance (existing)	Harvard Governance (future option)	Governance by others (future option)
Education	Harvard provides education services for fee (paid by MassDevelopment, contract can terminate)	Harvard responsible for providing educational services (no fee)	Harvard has no responsibility for or revenue from educational services for Devens
Public Services	Harvard provides public services for fees (e.g. licenses)	Harvard provides public services for fees	Harvard has no responsibility for or revenue from public services for Devens
Housing	Harvard may receive Affordable Housing Credits	Harvard receives Affordable Housing Credits	Harvard receives no Affordable Housing Credits
Tax Revenue	No local tax revenues due Harvard	Local tax revenues due Harvard	No local tax revenues due Harvard
Roads and Municipal Facilities	Harvard has no responsibility for public roads and municipal facilities	Harvard is responsible for public roads and municipal facilities	Harvard has no responsibility for public roads and municipal facilities
Utilities	Harvard has no responsibility for or revenue from utilities (water, sewer, electricity, gas)	Harvard has access to, is responsible for, and receives potential revenue from utilities (water, sewer, electricity, gas)	Harvard has no responsibility for or revenue from utilities (water, sewer, electricity, gas)
Development Control	Harvard has minimal control over amount, type, size and character of development (change to Reuse Plan requires towns' votes)	Harvard has control over amount, type, size and character of development	Harvard has no control over amount, type, size and character of development

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HOUSING

What actions can the town take to ensure that all residents of Harvard have viable housing options?

What housing types are most needed to serve the population of Harvard?

Where are the best opportunities to develop housing in Harvard?

What are the benefits and risks of advancing the development of affordable housing in Harvard?

Goals:

- Increase the diversity of housing types in Harvard to meet the needs of a greater variety of households.
- Ensure that new housing is harmonious with the character of the community.
- Provide a greater variety of housing throughout Harvard.
- Be proactive in meeting the state's affordable housing goals.

Strategies:

- Amend bylaws as appropriate to allow a greater diversity of housing – possible options:
 - Allow conversions on a greater number of parcels (e.g. convert single family into two units)
 - Allow greater diversity in Planned Residential Developments, including single family attached, two-family and multi-family
 - Relax the current minimum lot size (q.5 acres plus .5 acre for each accessory unit) for additional accessory units.
 - Allow development of nonconforming lots by special permit.
 - Develop incentives to encourage limited development on current open space/forested lands (clustered residential or multi-family)
 - Rezone lands in Town Center and Still River (other areas?) to allow multi-family units (smaller lots, reduced setbacks and frontages) consistent with historic village settlement patterns.
 - Develop guidelines for buildings that may result in less demand for septic (low-flow faucets, composting toilets) with resulting changes to septic capacity requirements.
- Create design guidelines and site standards for multi-family housing.
- Create zoning and design standards that ensure new housing is indistinguishable from established housing
- Identify sites appropriate for multi-family housing and for mixed use development that includes housing.
- Consider opportunities for housing creation at Devens.
- Develop plan (be proactive) to deal with land coming out of Chapter 61.

Mixed Use Development



3 Houses + Commercial Building



3 Housing Units above Commercial Space:

- increase housing diversity
- reduce environmental impact ("sprawl") per housing unit
- increase "eyes on the street"
- increase neighborhood vitality, day and evening

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HOUSING

Open Land - Development coupled with Preservation



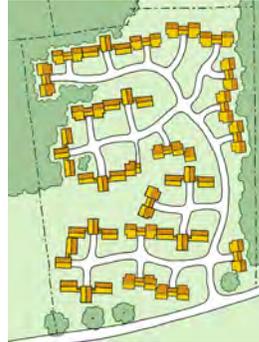
Existing Conditions

- Farmstead (12 acres)
- Single family home on farmland
- Chapter 61 provides temporary protection of land



No Action

- Farmstead vulnerable to development under current zoning
- 8 housing units shown (1 unit/1.5 acre)



No Action

- Farmstead vulnerable to "40B" development
- Density varies; 60 housing units shown (5 units/acre)



Initiate Limited Development

- Redevelops (or replaces) existing structures to increase number and variety of housing types without consuming additional land
- **Increase housing diversity**
- Preserve open space / farmland
- Generate income to offset purchase price
- Density varies; **6 to 9 housing units** shown (.5 to .75 units/acre)

Housing Variety



two family home on single lot



single family home on narrow or small lot



two family homes in cluster development

Infill Development in Villages



Undevelopable Small Lots in Established Neighborhood:

- limited tax revenue
- minimal service costs
- open space (potential amenity or nuisance)



Development of Small Lots:

- increased tax revenue
- increased housing diversity
- increased cost of services (varies with number of bedrooms)
- village scale character
- increased street vitality

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TOWN CENTER

What actions can the town take to ensure the best outcome for the Town Center and all of Harvard?

How can pedestrian and vehicular circulation be improved to support a vibrant and safe center?

What type of development, if any, should be encouraged in Town Center to maintain and enhance its role as the "heart" of Harvard?

Can the Town Center accommodate additional housing without changing its character?

Goals:

- Emphasize Town Center's role as the central community gathering place.
- Accommodate land uses that meet different needs of the community across different time scales.
- Integrate the natural landscape with the historic beauty and viewsheds of the Town Center.
- Provide safe, convenient and attractive circulation choices for pedestrians that reduce parking demands.
- Maintain and enhance public buildings for cultural and community uses.
- Protect and optimize multi-family and rental properties to provide diverse housing options.

Strategies:

- Create pedestrian paths along road shoulders and the Common to link neighborhoods adjacent to the Town Center to the parking areas at the Bromfield School, library and town beach.
- Consider the benefits and limitations of establishing a mixed use commercial overlay district that will allow the continuation of small village-scale businesses.
- Design zoning that is compatible with the existing compact village settlement pattern that supports a variety of housing types and the creation of accessory apartments.
- Develop a comprehensive landscape and circulation plan to guide decision making related to infrastructure and public facility improvements.

Gathering Places

- Hildreth House
- Town Hall
- Town Common
- Fellowship Hall
- Old Library
- Churches
- General Store
- Schools
- Playing Fields
- Playground
- Library
- Town Beach

The Common



Existing Conditions: Mature trees, little age or species diversity

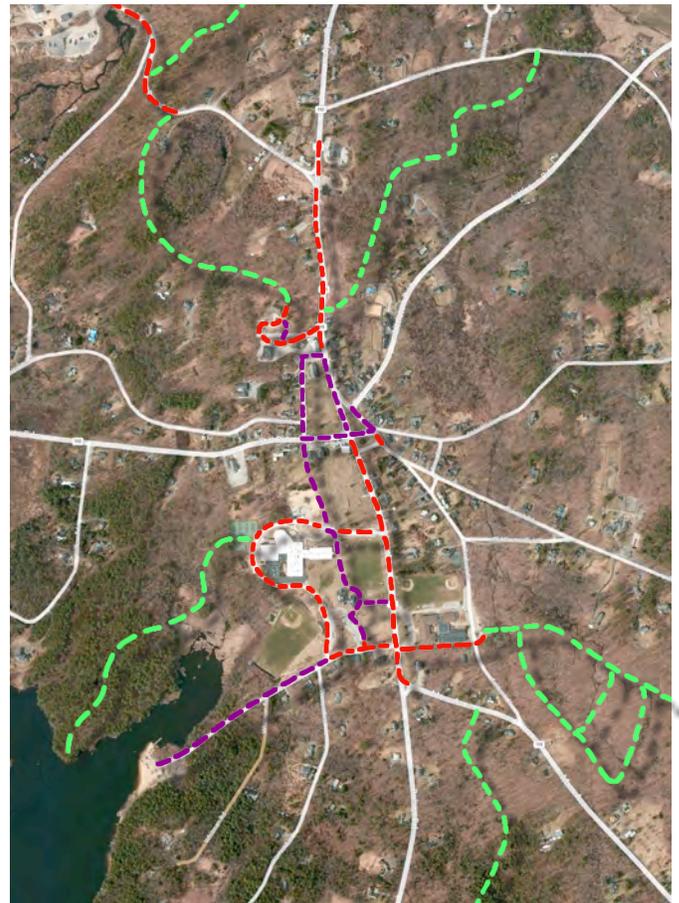


@ 20 years, with no action: Fewer trees; accumulated storm damage; general wear and tear



@ 20 years with tree care and new plantings: Resilient mix of trees with diversity of species and age, upgraded amenities

Walkability



Expansion of Pedestrian Network Recommended by 2005 Action Plan

- Legend**
- Proposed Trail
 - Proposed Path or Sidewalk
 - Existing Path or Sidewalk (one or both sides of street)

ALTERNATIVES BOARDS, PUBLIC FORUM MARCH 3 2012

TOWN CENTER

Parking & Pedestrian Realm



Existing Conditions



Limited parking at Hildreth House and Town Hall
Poorly defined landscape at Town Hall
Undefined parking and incomplete sidewalk along Elm Street

Lack of structured parking to serve Old Library and events on Town Common
Poorly defined parking and roadway at General Store
Poorly defined pedestrian system throughout the Town Center

Lack of parking to serve school activities and events



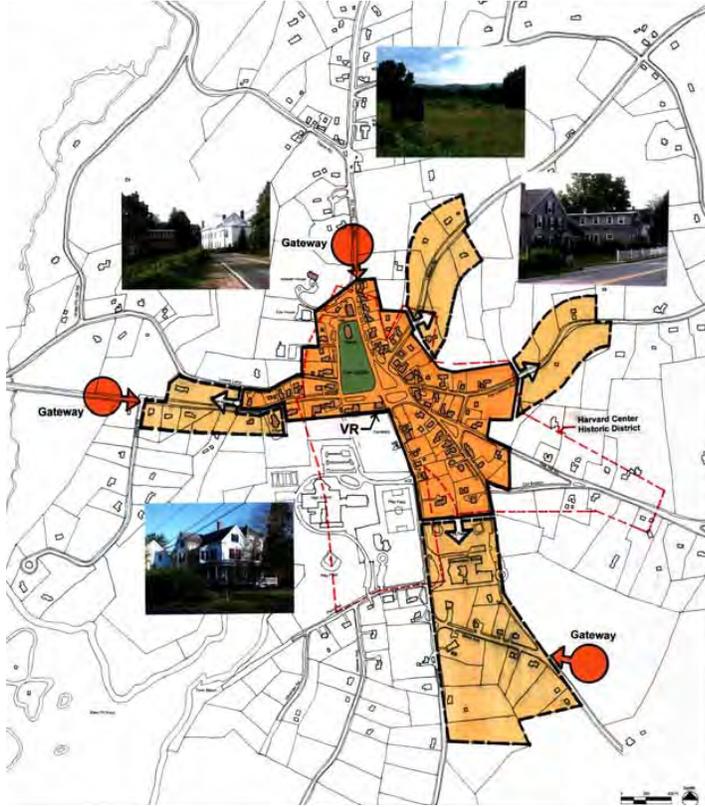
**Public Realm Improvements
Recommended by the 2005 Action Plan**

Expand parking at Hildreth House
Expand parking and improve landscape at Town Hall
Improve circulation and parking at Elm Street

Improve parking and landscape at Still River Road
Expand parking onto town-owned lot
Convert Common Street to parking
Improve path to North Parking Lot
Expand and publicize North Parking Lot

Formalize on-street parking at fields and schools; add street trees and paths.
Re-configure drop-off at Elementary School
Provide cross-walk at Pond Street intersection

Village Residential Zoning



**Change to Village Residential Zoning
Recommended by 2005 Action Plan**

The rezoning would:

- Allow smaller residential lots, smaller frontages and smaller side setbacks in keeping with historic village settlement patterns
- Allow single-family, two-family, and multi-family (3-4 units), and bed and breakfast residential uses
- Expand the geographic limits of the VR zone along certain approach roads to:
- Extend the compact village center to its natural gateways or boundaries
- Prevent large lot subdivisions adjacent to the historic compact village center

Legend

-  Village Residential (VR) Zoning District
-  Potential Extension of VR Zoning District
-  Historic District Boundary



References and Resources

Ayer Road Corridor Study Draft – June 2007

http://www.harvard.ma.us/Pages/HarvardMA_BComm/BOS/draft.pdf

Civil Engineering Report to the Harvard Building Committee – Feb 2011 http://www.harvard.ma.us/Pages/HarvardMA_BComm/Municipal/Append%20C%20-%20Civil%20Engineering%20Report%20-%20GPR.pdf

Commonwealth Capital Application - 2011

Not available on line

CPC – Town Hall Report

http://www.harvard.ma.us/Pages/HarvardMA_BComm/Preservation/MBC%20-%20FY2013.pdf

DEAT Report on Vicksburg Square Proposal, 2011

http://www.harvard.ma.us/pages/HarvardMA_Devens/success.pdf

Devens Economic Advisory Team (DEAT) report - October 2011

http://www.harvard.ma.us/Pages/HarvardMA_BComm/DEAT/DEAT%20Final%20Report%2009-20-2011.pdf

Devens Reuse Plan – 1994

http://www.harvard.ma.us/pages/HarvardMA_Devens/reuse.pdf

EDAT Final Report – May 2010

http://www.harvard.ma.us/Pages/HarvardMA_BComm/BOS/source.pdf

FIAT Report April 2009

http://www.harvard.ma.us/Pages/HarvardMA_BComm/BOS/flat.pdf

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