



# HARVARD'S AGRICULTURAL

## Climate Action Plan POST-REVIEW ADDENDUM

2020



A PROJECT OF HARVARD'S CLIMATE INITIATIVE

This addendum document provides a formal set of responses to both EEA and MDAR reviewers and a resource extension to the document entitled “*Harvard’s Agricultural Climate Action Plan*”, which hereafter shall include the subtitle, “*A Roadmap for the Town of Harvard’s Agricultural Sector to Be Resilient and Thrive in the Face of Climate Change*”

### **Summary of Comments on Harvard Agricultural Climate Action Plan**

Hillary King from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) noted (p. 1), “Suggestion for cover to say ‘Town of Harvard’ to avoid confusion w university name.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** *This is a challenge because the formal name of the project as agreed to by Committee and Consultant was the actual title. The Committee will add a clarification within a subtitle as has been done on this addendum.*

Hillary King from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) asked, (p. 3) “...are there resources or priority actions from that plan being utilized or underway since it was completed?”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** *Each of the three priority actions from the 2019 prioritization plan are fairly bold and broad, but #3 related to education programs is connected to the current Apple Country Nature-Based Solutions project being conducted by the BSC group.*

Hillary King (EEA) asked, (p. 3) “...who is on the working group? who do they represent?” and “...who is the audience of this plan? how do you hope they use this document?”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** *The Working Group is currently a Planning Board subcommittee serving as the MVP Committee. It is called the Community Resiliency Working Group or CRWG. It has members from Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, Energy Advisory Committee, Agricultural Advisory Committee, Select Board, and citizen members. There has been some discussion to petition the Select Board or Town Meeting to elevate the CRWG to a standing committee. The audience of the plan are the policymakers in Harvard and the broader public as well as the agricultural community. It is hoped that it will be used to further effective policies related to agriculture and move the agricultural sector to a more sustainable place both economically and environmentally.*

Hillary King (EEA) asked a question that was followed up by Davies and Viale below prior to Town response, (p. 5) “...how can climate adaptation and economic viability merge?”

Ashley Davies from the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture (MDAR) asked, “Giving farmers the means to transition their operations to regenerative agricultural practices, especially those that will make them more resilient to the effects of climate change and increase carbon sequestration, will also save them money in the long term - avoided cost savings during weather events, but also general cost savings. This is mentioned in the following paragraph in so many words. Without knowing the current practices of local farmers, it is hard to say whether or not they are already employing such practices on their farms.”

Ashley Davies (MDAR) asked, “Paying farmers for conservation restrictions or Agricultural Preservation Restrictions can give them money up front right now as well - most have already

considered this and/or have already placed restrictions on their land, but there are still a number of key farm parcels in town that could be protected.”

Dave Viale (EEA) asked, “Are the existing financial pressures outlined anywhere? It’d be helpful to understand what they identified as existing pressures so that recommendations to address those issues could be made. As Ashley mentioned, one tool is to sell, donate, or some combo of the two a conservation restriction/APR - it allows farmers to access equity in their land while retaining ownership. Tax incentives are significant for donations or partial donations as well. Farmers can deduct up to 100% of adjusted gross income for up to 16 years via the federal incentive. MA also has a cash payment tax credit program that pays up to \$75,000 for donations.

Adding to Ashley’s comment - in addition to cost savings, being climate adapted and resilient will aid in viability/stability/resiliency of the farm business. (Being able to head off/avoid/minimize climate related stressors to their business by pro-actively adopting practices will help them stay economically afloat. When farms are economically viable that contributes to the economic stability of the community and commonwealth.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** *This is a much larger narrative discussion that needs some collaborative work locally. Specifying the economic pressures would be a valuable means to target any public sector response, as may be desired, but also for sector-based action. To address AR/CR we may be able to pull data from GIS that provides a total of lands already in APR or CR within the town. It is believed that Harvard has a very impressive APR/CR inventory but this needs to be itemized.*

***Agricultural Advisory Commission Response:*** *All the outlined measures especially from Viale, apply mostly to large farms. The three largest farms in Harvard: Westward, Carlson and Doe, work not even one-third of Harvard’s agricultural land (combined less than 500 acres [while] 1000 acres are worked on by mostly small farms). More focus on these small farms [is] needed and that is what we try to accomplish with tool exchanges, suggestions [on] how to change tax assessment for small farms, etc. APRs and CRs are not a viable option for smaller operators, and if one did opt to do such a thing it would only be a band-aid monetarily speaking. Economic pressures have been openly discussed in formulation of the MVP and ACAP. Operational costs that cannot be mitigated through adoption of climate resilience means [but are still important to address.]*

Hillary King (EEA) asked, (p. 8) “Is there a way to make this more accessible and present the impacts of climate change as local stories that you heard through the process? These listed impacts have larger implications to food [and] water security, public health, poverty, and loss of farmland in the community.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** *The resources and time are not available to make such a substantial change to the CAP. But it is a very good idea to add testimonials and lived experiences related to climate change impacts, perhaps on the new CRWG website. These testimonials may already exist from the prior MVP agricultural plans including the surveys conducted by KLA.*

Hillary King (EEA) noted, (p. 9) “Recommendation to remove the drought map as the levels are changing week by week, plus, if this is a plan for the long-term, it’s irrelevant to have a map from such a specific time in there.”

Ashley Davies (MDAR) asked, “Agree. SouthCoast had a particularly difficult year with the drought, but are shown as None on this particular map/snapshot in time. The table is helpful though, so finding a way to include that would be good.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** Will remove map and reference if feasible. Currently the plan document is in a format inaccessible to staff, Committee members, and others locally. Keynote is a Mac-based presentation software and is difficult to reformat as a report-type document.

Ashley Davies (MDAR) asked, (p. 10) “I thought that this was discussing how improved management techniques on farms could improve carbon sequestration. Shouldn’t this sentence then talk about future fields studies on farmland not forests?”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** Agree. Future fields studies should focus on farmland.

Ashley Davies (MDAR) asked, (p. 11) “Again talking about tree cover but then include soils in the next sentence. Be sure to include soils along with the discussion of forests all along this section.”

Dave Viale (EEA) asked, “I agree with Ashley - does this plan consider any findings in the Healthy Soil Action Plan? I believe there is good data in that report.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** Town does not have an answer to this question. It is uncertain as to whether such findings were considered. However, the current BSC Group project may be addressing this.

Ashley Davies (MDAR) stated, (p. 11) “It would be good to get just another sentence on this limitation. I’m unclear as a reader as to why this is a limitation.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** Town does not have an answer to this question and cannot address.

Hillary King (EEA) stated, (p. 12) “it would be helpful to know more about the goals, successes of your engagement process, and also where you feel it may fall short. From your application: The public participation and outreach proposed for this plan will be innovative and unique so that we can not only reach these critical stakeholders but also find creative ways in which they can participate.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** Clearly COVID had a profound impact on engagement and the project was not able to hold in-person public meetings and workshops. However, the consulting team worked closely with the Working Group and agricultural community to garner input on plan development and review. The combination of COVID, delayed project implementation, and the emerging planting season combined to uniquely pose challenges to participation. The consultant and Committee adapted to the extent possible, learning and employing new and unfamiliar technology, and also relying on traditional methods of mailings and telephone calls.

Hillary King (EEA) asked, (p. 13) “how did you define an agricultural stakeholder? is it just land owners? Does it include seasonal workers? how many large farms vs smaller farms? Etc.?”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** The Agricultural Advisory Commission worked with the Consultant to establish the domain of stakeholders and providing contact information of key agricultural operators in town, MVP attendee lists, the list of gathering attendees from [the November] 2019 meeting, and they also had the list for the WPI research project that surveyed and interviewed operators. The Agricultural Advisory Commission advised that all outreach be via non-electronic methods.

Hillary King (EEA) asked, (p. 13) “...how were these public input opportunities advertised? This is something that is included in other planning documents to be clear how people were given the opportunity to participate.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** The community survey was distributed to all Town Boards and Committees, it was posted on both the Town and Planning Board websites, emailed to the business community lists, and Working Group members distributed it through their volunteer and community networks.

***Agricultural Advisory Commission Response:*** Ag Comm members did the best they could to encourage participation through personal connections with various stakeholders in town. Because this was targeted to a specific sector there wasn't a broad campaign through boards, commissions, next-door like the community one. I personally feel KLA dropped the ball on the outreach to stakeholders; it is clear from those that did participate that their efforts to engage 61A weren't sufficient.

Hillary King (EEA) asked, (p. 13) “Is this a useful amount of feedback and a valuable cross section of people typically left out of these conversations (BIPOC farmers/landowners, seasonal workers) to support a Climate Action Plan that identifies and supports community needs?”

From your application:

Harvard intends to employ a creative, multi-faceted, equitable community engagement process for the development of the Climate Action & Land Stewardship Plan. The equitable engagement process will engage all members of our community, with a particular focus on those community members that may be more vulnerable to the risk of climate change and to those that have not been part of discussions to date. Specifically, Harvard seeks to implement a process that focuses on collaboration and empowerment. It is important to drive as much as possible toward that end goal to create the highest opportunity for public impact.”

Dave Viale (EEA) asked, “Good question. I found myself wanting to know the list of stakeholders and #'s attending the workshop, commission meetings, working group etc. If a robust attendance and demographic can be shown to have participated it will help a reader buy into the process and plan as a community plan.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** This will be a difficult challenge to address. First, due to COVID-related delays in implementing this project and emergency orders to not hold in-person meetings, project managers had to try to pivot and use unfamiliar tools for virtual participation. The combination of this delay and the platform resulted in far lower participation than initially anticipated. The agricultural community was fully engaged in farm activities and had far less availability than if we had started as originally expected in

*January. We can provide a list of stakeholders, workshop attendees, and meeting attendees in an appendix or addendum if seen as necessary or useful.*

Hillary King (EEA) asked, (p. 13) “...it took me a minute to realize these the results of the survey. is there a better way to indicate which have been prioritized and included in this plan?”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** *The agricultural community is very small in Harvard and the full domain of potential respondents is in the tens. Therefore, our response rate can be estimated at around 20% and this subset is well represented by the most active farm operations.*

Hillary King (EEA) asked, (p. 14) “...what are the underlying issues? Are there case studies from across the country or in the northeast that can help address both climate adaptation and economic viability?”

Dave Viale (EEA) asked, “Do these views consider the cost share grants and Technical assistance available through NRCS, MDAR, and perhaps others? It'd be good to discuss why those grants aren't enough (if that is the case) and potentially cite them as resources. Is part of the action needed education and training on resources available?”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** *This is not a question that the community can answer. The Working Group requested best practices and programs from nationwide sources and the recollection is that the revised scope did not allow for this.*

***Agricultural Advisory Commission Response:*** *[A] common complaint of MA farmers: The MDAR grant[s] only address bigger farms of which we have very few in Harvard. Small farms are not getting any help by the State (Gross income minimum \$25,000 for most grants). A farm with less than 20 acres needs years to make that and by then, they have the infrastructure set up. Small farms need help to grow, so financial aid when starting up and gross income is still low.*

*Grants are great if you meet the thresholds required, and can match 25% of the project monetarily. Or cover the expense upfront prior to reimbursement. Grants are announced when they open. Perhaps the NRCS [and] the state could do some better promotion announcing in advance when these grants will be opening to allow more time for farmers to prepare. Whether it is through vetting cost of the project, or explore options on how they can fund the monetary match in the event they do not have that capital accessible.*

Ashley Davies (MDAR) asked, (p. 15) “It would be good to know what accounts for the increase in cost to get a better understanding of how to address it. Are taxes included in this cost?”

***Agricultural Advisory Commission Response:*** *Yes, tax[es], but also [the] cost of operating a farm [has] gone up. [For example,] wildlife is now more of an issue [than] before and one can't grow berries or fruit trees without expensive fencing and netting. More regulations make it more difficult, (e.g. residential kitchens and other regulations) that hold farmers back from turning their crops into “value added” products. You can make more money when selling ice cream with raspberry sauce than selling fresh raspberries.*

Dave Viale (EEA) asked, (p. 15) “I understand there are estimated to be 100+ farms (from beginning of report). The chart shows approx. 50% meet the acreage minimum and have enrolled, but does not discuss if any have not enrolled - perhaps a summary/inventory of the # and size of farms can help demonstrate the # of farms not eligible due to acreage. Further, the annual gross sales benchmark for Chapter 61A (and APR program) is relatively low - \$500 minimum with extra fee per acre above 5 acres. For example, a 100-acre property would be at most, a little less than \$1,000. Are they saying many farms do not meet the gross sales minimum? If so, it might be helpful to demonstrate the # of farms which do not - and perhaps why (is it the non-commercial/homestead farms?). Understanding that data may help explain the issue.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** *A farm inventory was provided in the prioritization plan report and we can make a reference to this. Collecting additional data is not going to be possible but much of this information is already in the MVP prioritization plan and the WPI report conducted in 2020 and available on the CRWG website.*

***Agricultural Advisory Commission Response:*** *[Not certain] where KLA got the number 100+. [Harvard has] less than 60 [farms] in 61A and my understanding is that most of the others don't meet the acreage requirement set by the state, particularly as Harvard's requirements are to have 6.5 acres instead of the states' 5 acres (as 1.5 acres are always deducted for residential purposes regardless whether your office, storage facility, or sales room are in the residence and the driveway is needed for the tractor even more than for private purpose.) This means, a five-acre farm in Harvard [is] only a 3.5 acres farm and doesn't qualify.*

Hillary King (EEA) asked, (p. 16) “...is it a specific land trust with its mission strictly farming? Or maybe the action item should be to speak to the Harvard Conservation Trust about working more specifically with farms and farmers?”

Ashley Davies (MDAR) asked, “In recent years the HCT has gone toward a much stronger farm focus, I think this really speaks to creating an entity, perhaps an arm of the HCT, that would buy, protect, and then sell at a reduced rate or lease the protected farmland to farmers. This is the Maine Farmland Trust model.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** *Good ideas. We can reflect these comments as an extension of the recommendation in addendum.*

***Agricultural Advisory Commission Response:*** *Ag Com discussed this recently. Trust land/ Conservation land managed by town is already leased out (e.g., Carlson Orchard) but there is no list or identified eligibility or application criteria. [Those who ask] for land to lease may get lucky (or not).*

Ashley Davies (MDAR) noted, (p. 16) “There are groups that do this - the Carrot Project for instance and Equity Trust. Perhaps it is merely having the Harvard Conservation Trust focus on an effort to support the agricultural economy in Town - or a group could be formed to implement that goals of this plan using existing resources such as AFT, MDAR, the Carrot Project, Equity Trust, etc.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** *Again, we'll add this with prior as extension of recommendation.*

Ashley Davies (MDAR) pointed out, (p. 16) "...a word is missing here."

***Town of Harvard Response:*** *When the primary report document is edited, the word "managed" will be added.*

Dave Viale (EEA) asked, (p. 16) "Related to these statements (about being unable to afford land or the property taxes), consider the below...perhaps best suited for the action table and steps on the next pages.

Educate stakeholders on tools available:

Savvy farm seekers can sometimes work with a land trust or others to sell a restriction as part of their purchase of the land, particularly under the new USDA NRCS FARM Bill which allows a "buy, protect, sell method" in the ACEP-ALE program. This is a tool/method to help make farmland affordable.

***Agricultural Advisory Commission Question:*** *What would be the financial impact for 10 acres farm?*

In addition, I think it is worth calling out (like the plan does with opportunities for reducing property taxes) that since the 90's the APR program has used a tool call Option to Purchase at Agricultural Value (OPAV) to keep farmland affordable. It'd be interesting to understand how many APR's within Harvard have that tool in place - and perhaps make sure the farm seekers are aware.

Also, the OPAV is a tool that landowners can voluntarily place on their land- so perhaps something to consider. They could also seek payment to place an OPAV on their land - this would generate some income and also protect affordability in the future. Land Trusts, conservation commissions etc. can all consider partnering with landowners to place OPAV's on farmland. Another program to consider - MDAR's land licensing program. Work with the town to identify surplus municipal land and create license agreements for agriculture. Consider connecting non-farmer landowners to farm seekers for long term leases.

Regarding the taxes- I suspect the future property tax issue mentioned here is specific to small parcels that wouldn't qualify for 61a or APR program (otherwise they could reduce their taxes). It'd be helpful to understand the scale of the issue - whether just 1 farmer or many - and support it with data (or suggest looking into it as a recommendation of the plan). Understanding that data will help understand the issue deeper and therefore potential solutions. In addition, perhaps include education and workshops for the land seekers to understand their options."

***Town of Harvard Response:*** *This is dense and detailed...it has been provided in full above as a resource for readers as part of this addendum.*

***Agricultural Advisory Commission Response:*** *Tax reduction minimal in Harvard for small farms. Less than \$1000/year. Tax[es are] still in six figures as [the] residence [is the] greatest share of tax[es] due even if [a] residence is used partially as [a] commercial building as small farms cannot afford separate buildings. [This is] regarded as major issue in Harvard by many farmers holding financial sustainability at bay.*



*Property taxes don't just consist of land, it also includes residences and agricultural buildings. Massachusetts has a high median home value and a high real estate tax rate. Those two go hand in hand. And it is important to point out that Harvard holds some of the highest property values in the state. 61A may help lessen the burden in terms of land. But all buildings related to an agricultural business (residences for agricultural operators as well as seasonal workers, agricultural buildings (barns, storages, farm stores) are not included in that reduced rate. The average property tax bill on just a single-family residence alone is \$11,905.21 - that's just a home. Add any taxable structures related to your agricultural operation and your 61A land and you've just put a huge dent in your profit margin. The state needs to look at this really closely. For the past 3 years there have been bills presented to include agricultural buildings and even provides some language to cover dwellings in certain circumstances. (Current SENATE DOCKET, NO. 1843 past filings NO. 1792 OF 2019-2020 & NO. 850 of 2017-2018.) MDAR & EEA need to be advocates of this otherwise you will see more farms decide to fold. New York state and Vermont have adopted this exemption. If it is a matter of creating stronger qualifying thresholds to ensure there isn't there is no taking advantage then that should be considered. But doing nothing is not going to have a favorable outcome. Freeing up substantial revenue from property tax would allow farms to invest in resiliency.*

Ashley Davies (MDAR) noted a missing word, "County" on p. 18.

***Town of Harvard Response:*** *When the primary report document is edited, the word "County" will be added.*

Dave Viale (EEA) noted, (p. 19) "Recognizing not all solutions/actions may exist/be illuminated at the time of creation of this plan, [and] recognizing resources to address climate change are rapidly and continuously evolving, consider including a broad action step such as "periodically research, develop and re-assess actions" This would create the space for an iterative and adaptive assessment that leaves the door open for actions beyond those identified in this list."

***Town of Harvard Response:*** *We can reflect these comments as an extension of the recommendation in addendum.*

Hillary King (EEA) asked, (p. 19) "There was a suggestion to use the category names instead of the icons as it was not easy to remember what the symbol stands for... alternatively, I wonder if you put your key at the top of the table?"

***Town of Harvard Response:*** *This is a good suggestion and can be addressed in next edit.*

Hillary King (EEA) asked, (p. 19) "...this may already exist?"

Dave Viale (EEA) asked, "In addition to peer to peer, include educational programs (from MDAR, others) to landowners and seekers on tools and options available to them.

One thing I'm not seeing is business training. MDAR for example has a farm viability program that may help farm seekers address issues on gross income production referenced (so they can meet 61a minimum) via TA and business planning - including grants up to \$150,000 to implement."

***Town of Harvard Response:*** We can reflect these comments as an extension of the recommendation in addendum.

***Agricultural Advisory Commission Comments:*** Farm viability program [is] useless for [the] typical Harvard small farm... It might be a good idea for the state to look at grant opportunities that might target smaller thresholds. It is a statistical fact (state and nationally) that many farmers have off farm income. Providing funding opportunities to help assist smaller or part-time initiatives looking to be more sustaining might be a good idea.

Ashley Davies (MDAR) stated, (p. 19) “Work with MDAR, HCT, and SVT on permanent protection. Work with MDAR to expand existing APRs.”

Dave Viale (EEA) asked, “Adding on (to Ashley’s comment) here, I think a key action step would be to host workshops and peer to peer events to introduce landowners and farm seekers to the idea and tools and benefits to permanent protection. In addition, in general I'd recommend education surrounding technical & financial assistance for all things agricultural (business planning, implementing practices, land access etc.) be included as an action step - it seems like this would be a short-medium term action that would help address several of the economic issues mentioned.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** We can reflect these comments as an extension of the recommendation in addendum.

***Agricultural Advisory Commission Response:*** CAP Action 11 says: “Create a community food/farm project that supports new farmers, hobby farmers, gardeners, provides trainings and resources, educational programs, business incubation support, etc. But who will organize this? Again, we (Ag Comm) are seven volunteers with day jobs.

*This should either be an action item of the state, or for them (the state) to fund a project manager to implement [this] within the town. No town employee support, and those who own and operate farms can’t oversee this. Pushing permanent protection opportunities within a town that has one of the highest of open space ratios is a waste of time and resources.*

Ashley Davies (MDAR) noted, (p. 19) “Melds nicely with the Commonwealth's Resilient Lands Initiative and its goal of No Net Loss of Farms or Forest.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** Good to hear. Would be nice to know if this type of policy exists somewhere else.

Ashley Davies (MDAR) said, (p. 19) “Consider creation of an agricultural conservation fund that draws annually from CPA revenue - makes it available quickly if needed when a farm is at risk.”

Hillary King (EEA) asked, (p. 19) “...could this action potentially work in tandem with the mapping effort, and pull in the land trusts and also identify ways to create affordable housing for farm staff?”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** We can reflect these comments as an extension of the recommendation in addendum. All good ideas. We are currently considering a regional TDR program with Devens.

***Agricultural Advisory Commission Response:*** I don't feel there has been enough education or public input relating to TDR for it to be stated that the [T]own is considering it. Also farm staff often is H2A workers and there are strict requirements and inspections related to housing. And not for nothing all agricultural operators in Harvard own residences or they [are] agricultural corporations [that] already own residences.

Hillary King (EEA) asked, (p. 20) "...were all partners stakeholders in the project and aware of the role they are to play in the coming 1-5 years?"

***Town of Harvard Response:*** No and no. This will be addressed.

Ashley Davies (MDAR) said, (p. 20) "Land for Good can also help with outreach to landowners - in my experience."

***Town of Harvard Response:*** This is good to know.

Ashley Davies (MDAR) stated, (p. 21) "This is missing the Action title/header and description of the Action."

***Town of Harvard Response:*** Asked if this was necessary and seems redundant.

Dave Viale (EEA) stated, (p. 21) "Regarding reports: Not only for this action, but in general, reports to consider include: Audubon's losing ground, AFT's Farms under threat, the Healthy Soils Action Plan, the Resilient Lands Initiative, just to name a few. They may have recommendations that this plan may want to include."

***Town of Harvard Response:*** Add in addendum and for future inclusion in a revised report.

Hillary King (EEA) asked, (p. 21) "Were any organizations like this invited to speak at a meeting, or interviewed for additional perspective?"

***Town of Harvard Response:*** No.

Dave Viale (EEA) said, (p. 21) "Though perhaps indirect from the mapping, additional outcomes could be OPAV's placed, new APR's enrolled, new enrollments in 61a etc."

***Town of Harvard Response:*** We can reflect these comments as an extension of the recommendation in addendum.

Hillary King (EEA) asked, (p.21) "For all "measuring success" sections, is there a way to loop in outputs and outcomes that look at equity and engagement successes?"

***Town of Harvard Response:*** The Town cannot answer this question but surmise that while a valid concern, that there are no resources or time to add at this time.

Ashley Davies (MDAR) said, (p. 22) “Equity Trust - another great organization that works on economic support for farmers as well as farmland conservation.

***Town of Harvard Response:*** *So noted.*

Ashley Davies (MDAR) said, (p. 23) “This should not say GIS - this is a different action item.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** *We do not know what the appropriate replacement language should be but the Consultant may have this information.*

Ashley Davies (MDAR) stated, (p. 23) “Equity Trust could provide a model.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** *We can reflect these comments as an extension of the recommendation in addendum.*

Dave Viale (EEA) noted, (p. 25) “Reiterating a previous comment here: Recognizing not all solutions/actions may exist/be illuminated at the time of creation of this plan, & recognizing resources to address climate change are rapidly and continuously evolving, consider including a broad implementation step (for all actions) such as “periodically research/develop additional ideas” This would create the space for an iterative and adaptive assessment/leave the door open for beyond this short list. And NEW comment: Also, here is one idea I’ve recently encountered - Consider a PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) or similar approach - reduce taxes in exchange for adoption of climate practices. Could be for a specific period etc.”

***Town of Harvard Response*** *This is an interesting idea and may need a cost/benefit analysis but I’m sure it can be set up to be viable for farmer. What about Town tax receipts?*

***Agricultural Advisory Commission Response:*** *Will propose to Ag Comm to look into this idea.*

Dave Viale (EEA) stated, (p. 25) “And/or, consider advocating for payment to landowners for ecosystem services. This would create a revenue stream that could offset taxes or other economic pressures.”

***Town of Harvard Response*** *Yes like carbon capture. Good to include this idea.*

Ashley Davies (MDAR) stated, (p. 33) “Include mention of MDAR programs that can fund such on farm measures. CSAP program.”

***Town of Harvard Response*** *We can reflect these comments as an extension of the recommendation in addendum.*

Dave Viale (EEA) said, (p. 36) “MDAR has grant programs that fund purchase of equipment. As does NRCS. I encourage an action be to research the available resources and educate people on them.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** *We can reflect these comments as an extension of the recommendation in addendum.*

**Agricultural Advisory Commission Response:** *We have only very few farms in Harvard that make the \$25 000 minimum to qualify for MDAR grants.*

Dave Viale (EEA) said, (p. 45) “And educate them on cost share/payment programs to do so.”

**Town of Harvard Response:** *We can reflect these comments as an extension of the recommendation in addendum.*

Ashley Davies (MDAR) said, (p. 45) “May want to include an action about providing information to farmers on available funding through the MDAR CSAP grant program for implementing these practices. Also, perhaps something about working with MDAR on creating additional incentives for implementation of these practices. This could also be rolled into the list of strategies for achieving Action 1, listed on the next page.  
...is there a link for this?”

**Town of Harvard Response:** *We can reflect these comments as an extension of the recommendation in addendum.*

**Agricultural Advisory Commission Response:** *MDAR must first create support system for small farms to be of interest for many Harvard farms that are currently in 61 A.*

Hillary King asked (p. 49) if there was a link to the USDA document entitled Adaptation Resources for Agriculture – Responding to Climate Variability and Change in the Midwest and Northeast (2016)?

**Town of Harvard Response:**

<https://www.climatehubs.usda.gov/hubs/northeast/topic/adaptation-resources-agriculture-responding-climate-variability-and-change>

Ashley Davies (MDAR) said, (p. 49) “Massachusetts Healthy Soils Action Plan - to be published soon.”

**Town of Harvard Response:** *We can reflect these comments as an extension of the recommendation in addendum.*

Ashley Davies (MDAR) noted, (p. 49) “MDAR CSAP grants” as a resource.

**Town of Harvard Response:** *So noted.*

**Agricultural Advisory Commission Response:** *[Copy from the eligibility criteria for CSAP grants: Produce operations applying for post-harvest infrastructure upgrades must have an average annual value of produce sold during the previous three-year period of \$25,000 or more.] [This] applies to [only] a handful of farms in Harvard.*

Hillary King (EEA) noted under Technical Resources (p. 51) that, “..seem to be missing links, or could use additional information for several of these Technical Resources sections?”

**Town of Harvard Response:** <https://resilientma.org/> and

<https://www.centralmastormwater.org/> are the appropriate links.

Ashley Davies (MDAR) said, (p. 51) “Again, MDAR’s CSAP program may be a resource as they provide funding for infrastructure to deal with increased precipitation.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** So noted.

Ashley Davies (MDAR) stated, (p. 55) “I’m not sure what is required, but perhaps exploring the creation of an agricultural high school for Worcester County? Alternatively, creating an agricultural vocational program at Montachusett Vocational Tech.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** We can reflect these comments as an extension of the recommendation in addendum.

Ashley Davies (MDAR) said, (p. 56) “Also look into the Beginning Farmer Network of MA <https://bfnmass.org/>, the Young Farmer Network <http://www.youngfarmernetwork.org/>, and New Entry Sustainable Farming Project <https://nesfp.org/#>.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** So noted.

Ashley Davies (MDAR) stated, (p. 59) “Again, the Beginning Farmer Network of MA and the Young Farmer Network and New Entry Sustainable Farming Project.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** So noted but needs to be tied in to economic development.

Ashley Davies (MDAR) noted, (p. 59) “An interesting case study out of Great Barrington - Greenager (a nonprofit group that engages youth in conservation) has gotten community involvement to help it purchase a farm for their home-base and training center. Could provide a framework for the creation of a local group to establish the next generation of farmers and involve the community in the effort.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** Seems to be a workforce development project or task.

Ashley Davies (MDAR) said, (p. 62) “Tie this effort into MassGrown. Contact the MDAR Ag Markets team to see if there are opportunities for enhancement of the Harvard Grown program through the MA Ag Markets work. <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-grownand-fresher>.”

***Town of Harvard Response:*** Not clear whether this refers to Mass Grown or Central Mass Grown, or both.

***Agricultural Advisory Commission Response:*** Central Mass Grown’s outreach, communication, and responsiveness has been very disappointing to some Harvard farms to the point that they did not renew membership. I think there needs to be an evaluation on the program/division administrators.

Harvard farms don’t exist on the MassGrown map,

<https://massnrc.org/farmlocator/map.aspx>

*Reality from farmer's viewpoint different than from MDAR.*