

# Commercial District Citizen-Based Vision Plan

## *Sustainability and Smart Growth*

Harvard can and must make the kind of changes that will allow the community to become a model sustainable rural town, able to withstand the impacts from climate change, strong enough to weather economic downturns, and a welcoming place to visitors and new residents.



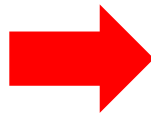
Our communities must adapt and change based on threats and other cultural or nature-based trends that we face. Sustainability relates to economic, ethical, and environmental resiliency that we develop to prepare for a changing climate, loss of biodiversity and open space, pollution of our water resources, and a loss of community and social capital and cohesiveness.

As the natural environment experiences more and more stressors, most prominently the threat posed by Climate Change, Harvard is in a relatively strong position to take advantage of the expanding knowledge base of nature-based solutions and engineer our opportunities for development using sustainability principles.



Using information developed by renowned organizations such as the Mass Smart Growth Alliance, Mass Audubon, the Mass Climate Action Network, and others, plus information specifically targeted to Harvard by recent MVP consultants, Harvard can create a blueprint for a model Ayer Road district that embodies these important principles such as [these established by the Commonwealth](#).

We can't continue to build like this...but our current bylaws require that we do



Instead, we can begin by identifying and protecting natural resources and open spaces in the corridor.



Next we site the amenities that our residents want and need for quality of life.



Finally, we situate small clusters of mixed-use development to establish village-like communities.



## Village-Scale Amenities Without the City Bustle



## A New and Better Path to Sustainability for Harvard

- ❖ Harvard should permanently protect open spaces in the corridor including wetlands, creeks and streams, fields and habitat, and forests.
- ❖ Harvard can site one or more athletic playing fields in the corridor providing opportunities for youth and adults.
- ❖ New development will be far less dependent on the private car and be more walkable and bikeable.
- ❖ Opportunities for social interaction will be far greater with a village-like and walkable pattern of development.
- ❖ Harvard residents needs goods and services that they currently have to procure from neighboring communities. More local goods provides reduced fuel costs and keeps dollars in the community.
- ❖ New local businesses provide job opportunities—especially for youth and seniors.
- ❖ Hospitality businesses can capture tourist and visitor dollars, adding to the tax base.
- ❖ As proposed, the built environment will be greener and will require zero carbon energy use, sustainable building methods, native plantings, and other light footprint criteria.
- ❖ Harvard would be positioned to attract sustainable and green businesses which would be given priority in the regulations.



**SUSTAINABLE HARVARD**

**FORGING A PATH TO A BRIGHT FUTURE**