

The background of the slide features a vintage-style map with a compass rose in the upper left corner. The map is aged and yellowed, with various geographical features and labels. The compass rose shows cardinal and intercardinal directions (N, NE, E, SE, S, SW, W, NW) and degree markings. The text "CAPE SABLE" is visible on the left side of the map.

HARVARD 2016 MASTER PLAN PUBLIC HEARING

MARCH 24, 2016

Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC) Credits

Master Plan Steering Committee	Master Plan Liaisons
Kara McGuire Minar, Planning Board, Co-Chair	Joe Theriault, Historical Commission
Lucy Wallace, Board of Selectmen, Co-Chair	Jaye Waldron, Conservation Commission
SusanMary Redinger, School Committee	Don Ludwig, Finance Committee
Victor Normand, Devens Economic Analysis Team	Elaine Lazarus, Economic Development Committee
Didi Chadran, Community Preservation Committee	
Joe Hutchinson, Past Chair	

Other Phase 1 MPSC Members	
Jim Breslauer	Michelle Catalina
Tim Clark	Rick Maiore
Rich Marcello	Ron Ostberg

*Harvard Planning Board**

Kara McGuire Minar, Chair

Michelle Catalina

Erin McBee

Don Graham

Fran Nickerson

Bill Scanlan, Town Planner

* By state law, the Master Plan gains official status when adopted by the Planning Board.

Meeting Purpose

- Present preliminary recommendations for managing Harvard's growth and preservation for the next 10 years.
- Seek public comment before finalizing the report.
- Build a commitment among residents to make Harvard an even better place than it already is.

Overview of a Master Plan

- Legal Citation: Chapter 41, Section 81-D of the Massachusetts General Laws.

“Such a plan shall be a statement ... that is designed to provide a basis for decision making regarding the long-term physical development of the municipality.”

A Community Master Plan..... What needs to be in it?

The law states that the following elements shall be included in a Community Master Plan:

- A Goals and Policies Statement
- Chapters on Land Use, Housing, Transportation, Economic Development, Natural Resources & Open Space, Cultural Resources, and Community Services and Facilities
- An Implementation Plan

Public Process To-Date

- Phase 1 “Vision and Goals” report completed by MPSC and Brown Walker Planners, Inc., April 2012
- Phase II:
 - Solicited public opinion via a web-based survey (not a random sample)
 - Conducted numerous interviews with boards and local officials
 - Held 4 Round Table discussions, spring 2014
 - Held two Community Forums on Devens, 12/2014 & 11/2015
 - Completed with Assistance of RKG Associates and the Town Planner
 - Burns & McDonnell prepared a Devens Evaluation
 - Discussed in many MPSC meetings

Remaining Schedule

- ▶ Receive comments this evening
- ▶ Revise plan based on public input and post on the web
- ▶ Planning Board votes to adopt Master Plan on 3/31/2016
- ▶ Begin Implementation!

Vision Statement

- ▶ 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

Goals

► 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:

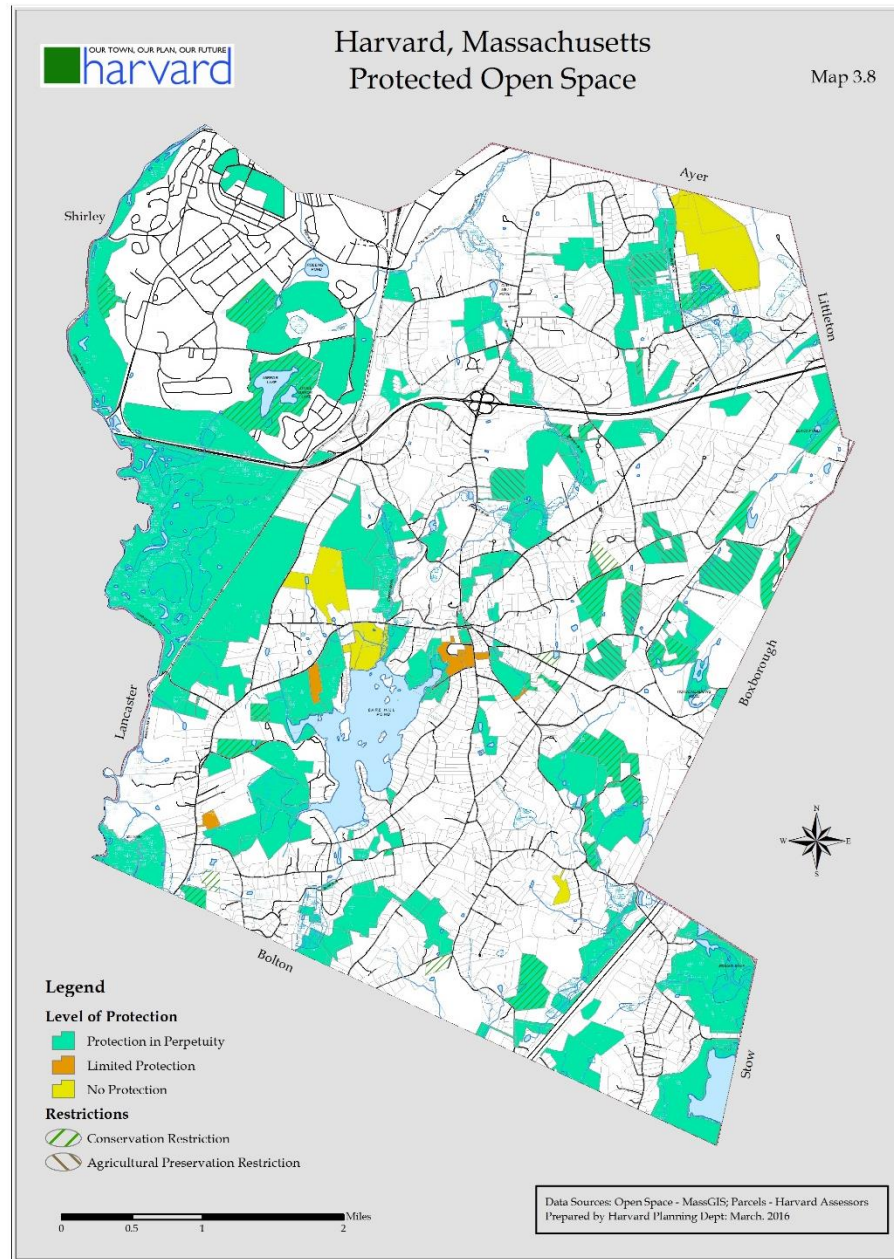
- Preserve and enhance historic buildings and cultural resources
- Identify and protect critical natural resource areas
- Restore and/or maintain key viewsheds
- Support agricultural heritage and farms
- Preserve stone walls and shade trees along rural roads
- Adopt best management practices on public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

Open Space and Natural Resources

- Harvard has over 7,000 acres of prime farmland soils or soils of statewide importance for agriculture.
- Nearly all of Harvard is comprised of soils rated “very limited” for construction of single-family homes.
- The Town’s most important body of water, Bare Hill Pond, is threatened with pollution and requires careful management to prevent water quality degradation.
- Harvard lacks an aquifer capable of providing a reliable water supply. A large aquifer at Devens could meet long-term needs.
- Harvard has over 5,700 acres of land of ecological significance, including an Area of Critical Environmental Concern and Priority Habitats of Rare Species.
- Over 25% of the Town, excluding Devens, is protected open space, including over 1,770 acres owned by the Town, over 800 acres in the Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge, about 500 acres owned by the state, and over 650 acres in agricultural or conservation restrictions.

Open Space and Natural Resources

- Open Space at Devens would add to the Town's open space inventory but would also entail stewardship responsibilities.
- Recreational fields at Devens would help alleviate over-use of Harvard's sports fields.
- Mirror Lake is a regional recreation resource. MassDevelopment contracts for management of programs with a private vendor. Such a practice could continue if the Town resumes jurisdiction of Devens.



Open Space and Natural Resources

■ **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.

Open Space and Natural Resources

► Recommendations

- Continue education on measures of preventing phosphorus runoff into Bare Hill Pond; construct stormwater management controls, similar to those installed in the Town Center to minimize pollutant loading in the Pond.
- Actively eradicate invasive species on town-owned land. Provide information and technical assistance to landowners to help remove invasive species on private property.
- Develop a long-term strategy and plan for continued protection of open space.
- Adopt an erosion control bylaw.
- Work with MRPC, Nashoba Boards of Health, and surrounding towns to develop a comprehensive deer management strategy to address Lyme disease.
- Enact restrictions on Town-owned land within the Bare Hill Pond watershed to achieve permanent protection status.
- Develop a Forestry Management Plan for Town conservation land.

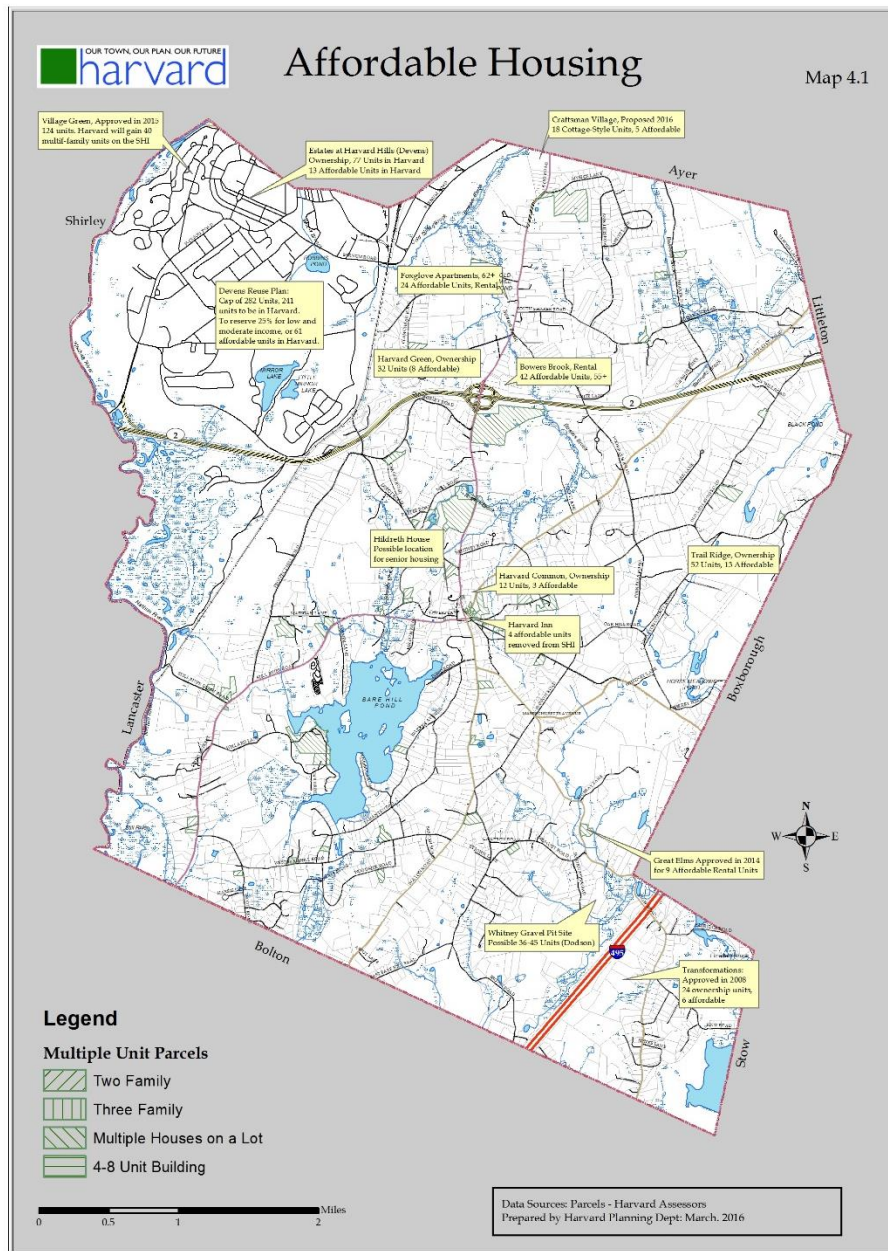
Population and Housing

- From 2000 to 2010, Harvard's population (without Devens) declined by 3%, while Worcester County as a whole grew by over 6%.
- Residential Harvard's population density is 206 people per sq. mi., which is the lowest among neighboring towns.
- Harvard's senior population is growing at a faster pace than the state average.
- Harvard has a very high percentage of family households (71%).
- Excluding Devens, single family homes make up 96% of the housing stock.
- 57% of Harvard homes have 4+ bedrooms compared to 20% in the County.
- Harvard has a very high rate of owner occupancy (92%) and as a result has few rental units.
- Harvard's zoning restricts multi-family housing. Most multi-family housing is a result of comprehensive permits that over-ride local zoning.
- 5.6% of the Town's housing stock is on the Subsidized Housing Inventory. About 58 affordable units are in the pipeline, which will boost the Town's percentage considerably.

Population and Housing

- Devens has a mix of affordable and market rate housing units and a mix of single and multi-family units. Devens adds to the diversity of Harvard's housing stock.
- The Village Green development at Devens is under construction, and will contain 120 units. The MAHT is providing \$140,000 to the developer in order to earn 40 units for Harvard on the Subsidized Housing Inventory.
- Only 18 units will remain to reach the 282-unit housing cap under the Devens Reuse Plan.

Population and Housing



Population and 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 in design with the character of the community.
- Provide a greater variety of housing throughout Harvard.
- Be proactive in meeting the state's affordable housing goals.

Population and Housing

Recommendations

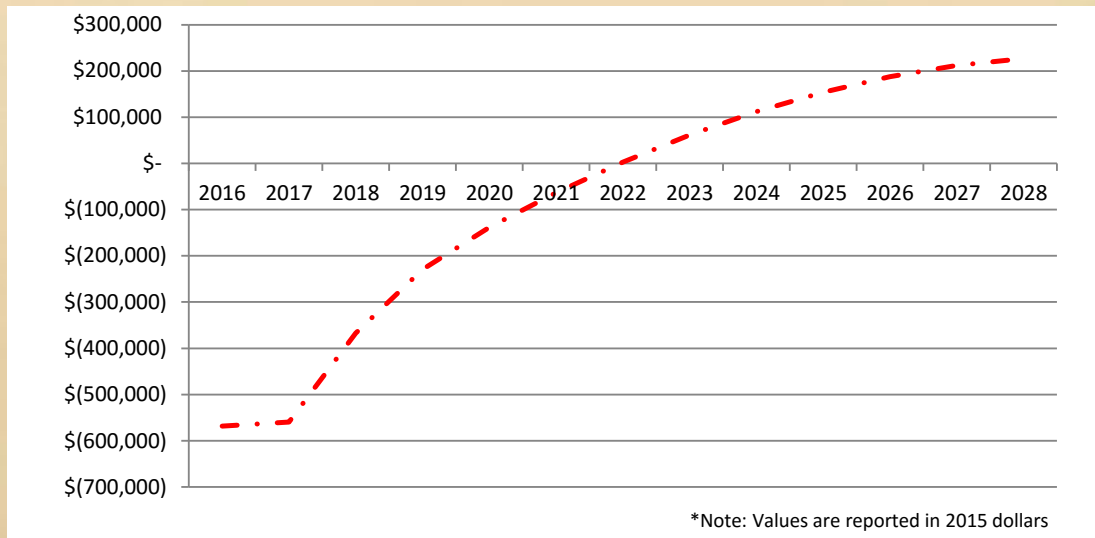
- Amend the Zoning Bylaw to allow housing alternatives for seniors, e.g. assisted living facilities or smaller units.
- Develop housing for seniors adjacent to the Hildreth House, including affordable units, to address the need for down-sized units.
- Identify potential development partners for “friendly” comprehensive permits.
- Establish a multifamily district on the Zoning Map and add district regulations to the Zoning Bylaw.

Economic Development

- ▶ 95 percent of Harvard's tax base is residential. This places the burden of funding municipal services squarely on homeowners.
- ▶ Harvard has a highly educated labor force. Over 70% of the population 25+ has a college degree, and 43% have graduate or professional degrees.
- ▶ The majority of Harvard's employment is in professional or technical services, education and health care, and personal services.
- ▶ Compared to the regional economy, Harvard's employment strengths are in agriculture, real estate, information, the arts, and professional/technical services.
- ▶ 111 businesses operate in the C District; 59% are personal or business services, 14% are in the financial, insurance, and real estate sector, and retail stores make up only 9 percent of the C District's businesses.

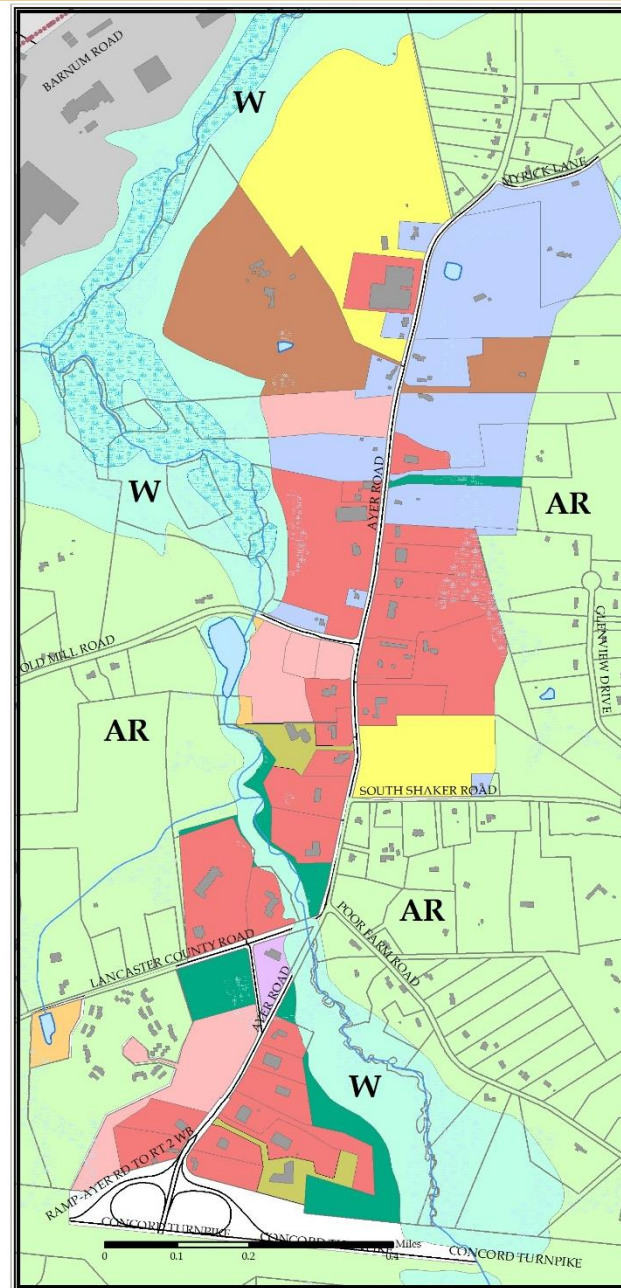
Economic Development

- ▶ Devens has the potential to accommodate about 8 million square feet of floor space at buildout.
- ▶ Economically, Devens has been a great success for the State and currently provides about 4,000 jobs.
- ▶ As tax agreements run their course, tax revenues will exceed the cost of running Devens by 2022 should Harvard resume jurisdiction.



Source: Burns & McDonnell, “Economic and Financial Findings”, 2015

Use Category	Acres	% of District
Conservation	13.1	3.8%
Agriculture	92.7	26.9%
Recreation	4.8	1.4%
Residential	75.9	22.0%
Commercial	101.5	29.5%
Vacant	23.4	6.8%
Right-of-Way	33.2	9.6%
Total	344.5	100%



Economic Development

■ **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.

Economic Development

Recommendations

- Create a Dept. of Community & Economic Development overseen by the Town Planner.
- Create a comprehensive Economic Development Plan for the Town that includes viable strategies for facilitating acceptable growth.
- Create a vision for the C District that encourages village or “Main Street” style development and establish Design Guidelines to achieve it.
- Amend the Zoning Bylaw to provide for agriculture-related businesses.
- Amend the Zoning Bylaw to allow tourist oriented business in the AR district, such as antique shops, B&B’s, recreation businesses, tea rooms, etc.
- Study opportunities for developing new wastewater treatment systems in the C district.

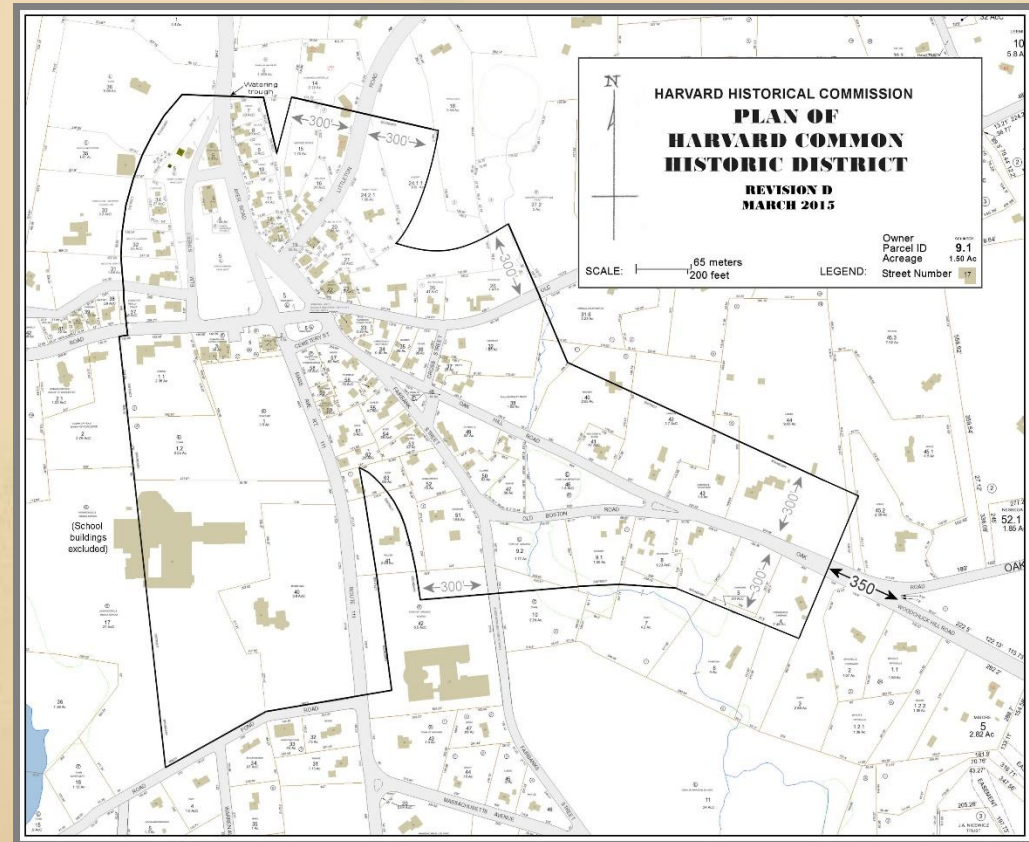
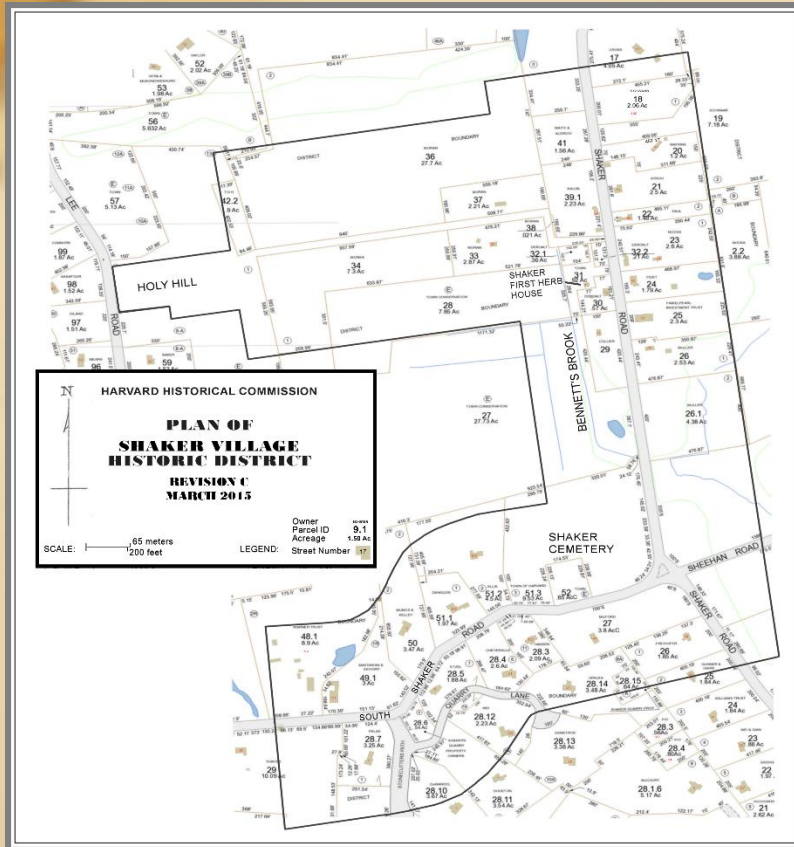
Historic and Cultural Resources

- Harvard has many historic and cultural resources
 - ➔ National Register Districts: Shaker Village, Harvard Center, Fruitlands
 - ➔ Fort Devens Historic District, including Vicksburg Sq. and Rogers Field
 - ➔ Local Historic Districts: Harvard Common, Shaker Village
 - ➔ Potential District: Still River
- Harvard has outstanding historic and agricultural landscapes
 - ➔ Fruitlands, Prospect Hill, Bare Hill Pond, Holy Hill
 - ➔ Agricultural landscapes include Westward Orchard, Willard Farm, Doe Orchard, Carlson's Orchard
- The Town itself owns important historic resources:
 - ➔ Town Hall, Hildreth House, Old Library, Bromfield Academy, Bromfield House, the Powder House, three cemeteries
- Religious and Institutional Organizations maintain historic sites and landscapes
 - ➔ St. Benedict's, the Harvard Historical Society, Churches on the Town Common

Historic and Cultural Resources

- ▶ Resuming jurisdiction of Devens will add numerous historic resources to the responsibilities of the Harvard Historical Commission.
- ▶ An inventory of historic resources at Devens will be necessary to inform the HHC of existing conditions and potential threats.
- ▶ The future of Vicksburg Square remains uncertain. Buildings are vacant, future use is unknown, and restoration will require significant resources.

Historic and Cultural Resources



The HHC helps to preserve the historic character of the Town's two local historic districts.

Historic and Cultural Resources

■ **Goals:**

- Integrate the natural landscape with the historic beauty and viewsheds of the Town Center.
- Maintain and enhance public buildings for cultural and community uses.
- Preserve the Town's defining landscapes that are valued by Harvard's residents and reflective of the rural heritage.
- Preserve historic structures and locations.

Historic and Cultural Resources

Recommendations

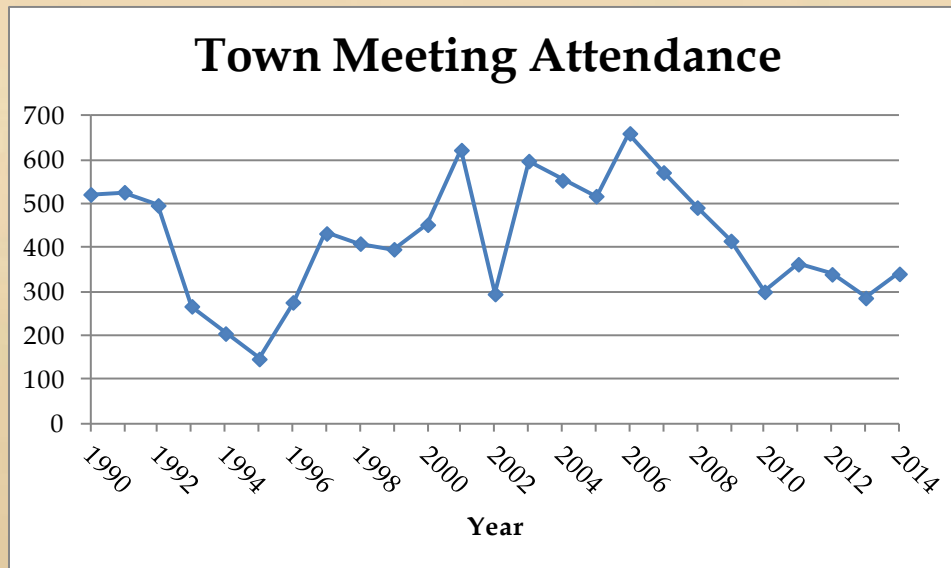
- Prepare a comprehensive community-wide historical and cultural resources survey.
- Adopt a demolition delay bylaw.
- Engage residents of Still River in discussions for preserving historic resources and seek consensus to nominate the village to the National Register of Historic Places.
- Evaluate the boundaries of the present Harvard Center Historic District and determine whether they should be modified.
- Provide staff support to the Harvard Historical Commission.

Community Services and Facilities

- ▶ Harvard is recognized as having one of the best school systems in the state. In FY 2015, the school department budget was \$12.1 million, the largest cost center in the Town (out of a \$22 million Town budget).
- ▶ Harvard has limited public infrastructure, with the exception of small water and sewer systems in the Town Center.
- ▶ With a growing senior population, additional space for COA activities is planned for with an addition to the Hildreth House.
- ▶ A beautiful addition to the Harvard Public Library (Old Bromfield) provides modern library services and meeting spaces for civic events.
- ▶ Harvard adopted the Community Preservation Act and a 1.1% surcharge, which has been spent on a variety of noteworthy community projects.
- ▶ School enrollment peaked in 2006 and declined until 2015; however, enrollment may begin to increase as families replace empty-nesters and new housing development occurs in Town and at Devens.

Community Services and Facilities

- Public involvement in Town affairs is essential to making proper decisions for preserving and managing the Town's resources and public assets.



Community Services and Facilities

- ▶ Children at Devens attend Harvard schools under a contract arrangement; the payments cover the costs.
- ▶ Resuming jurisdiction would have significant impacts on municipal services. However, projections of property tax revenue show the revenue would be sufficient to cover the added costs for new manpower and capital items.
- ▶ Regionalization of services or contractual arrangements are other options to minimize impacts on municipal operations.
- ▶ The Town could begin a transition process to assume certain services over time. For example, providing services to seniors at the Senior Center could occur under a contract arrangement similar to the school contract.

Community Services and Facilities

Capital Facility Projects

Facility	Relative Cost	Time Frame
Hildreth House: Senior Center, Phase 1	\$\$\$	2016
Hildreth House: Senior Center, Phase 2	\$\$\$	2-4 years
Hapgood Library Renovations	\$	1-3 years
Bromfield House renovation (unless sold)	\$\$	5-7 years
Hildreth Elementary School Study & Design	\$\$	1-2 years
Hildreth Elementary School Construction	\$\$\$	3-6 years
Develop New Water Source	\$\$\$	8 – 10 years
Develop Solar Farm at landfill in partnership with a private developer	\$	3-5 years
Prepare inventory of municipal infrastructure, including assessment of condition, life expectancy, and needed improvements	\$	2-3 years
Fire Station 1 expansion and upgrade	\$\$	5-7 years
DPW Yard renovations	\$\$\$	5-7 years
Key: \$: < \$250,000; \$\$: \$250,000 - \$1,000,000; \$\$\$:_> \$1,000,000		

Community Services and Facilities

■ **Goals:**

- Encourage a strong volunteer government and provide necessary staff support.
- 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

Community Services and Facilities

Recommendations:

- Dedicate additional resources to upgrade computer technology at the Town Hall and expand on-line services to enhance residents' interaction with town government.
- Identify, evaluate, and pursue opportunities for increasing regionalization of services.
- Assess the condition of all municipal buildings and develop a cost estimate/funding plan for upgrades or replacements.
- Conduct a governance study to evaluate Harvard's present form of government; identify changes needed (if any) and codify in a charter or similar document.
- Fund a full-time municipal facilities manager and Institute Planned Preventive Maintenance (PPM) for all municipal buildings.
- Prepare and implement an IT Disaster Recovery Plan to assure rapid restoration of town services in the event of a natural disaster or cyber-attack.
- Negotiate Harvard's use of Devens recreation facilities, especially playing fields, in order to meet local demand.

Community Services and Facilities

Recommendations, continued:

- Recommend sustainability policies for all municipal and school facility projects.
- Seek Town Meeting approval to increase the CPA surcharge to provide additional funds for community preservation projects.
- Determine the best use of the Hapgood Library, resolve handicapped accessibility concerns, and develop a plan for the long-term upkeep of the building.
- Complete the design study for the Hildreth Elementary School and construct recommended improvements.
- Renovate and expand the Hildreth House to make it suitable for the space needs of the Council on Aging and other town programs.
- Develop robust public education programs on sustainability and environmental concerns such as the impact of invasive species on biodiversity in Harvard, stormwater management, and energy conservation.
- Evaluate Town Center water supply and distribution system. Develop new water source to assure good water quality.

Community Services and Facilities

Recommendations, continued:

- Continue to lower energy use and greenhouse gas emissions by:
 - adopting a town-wide Energy Policy for all boards and depts.;
 - examining town energy use patterns in municipal operations, e.g. DPW fleet management, park use, transfer station, traffic flow, water & sewer systems, etc.;
 - incorporating life cycle costs in building projects to evaluate the merits of short-term construction savings v. long-term energy use.
 - instituting a shuttle service to a near-by commuter rail station using MBTA assessments

Circulation & Traffic

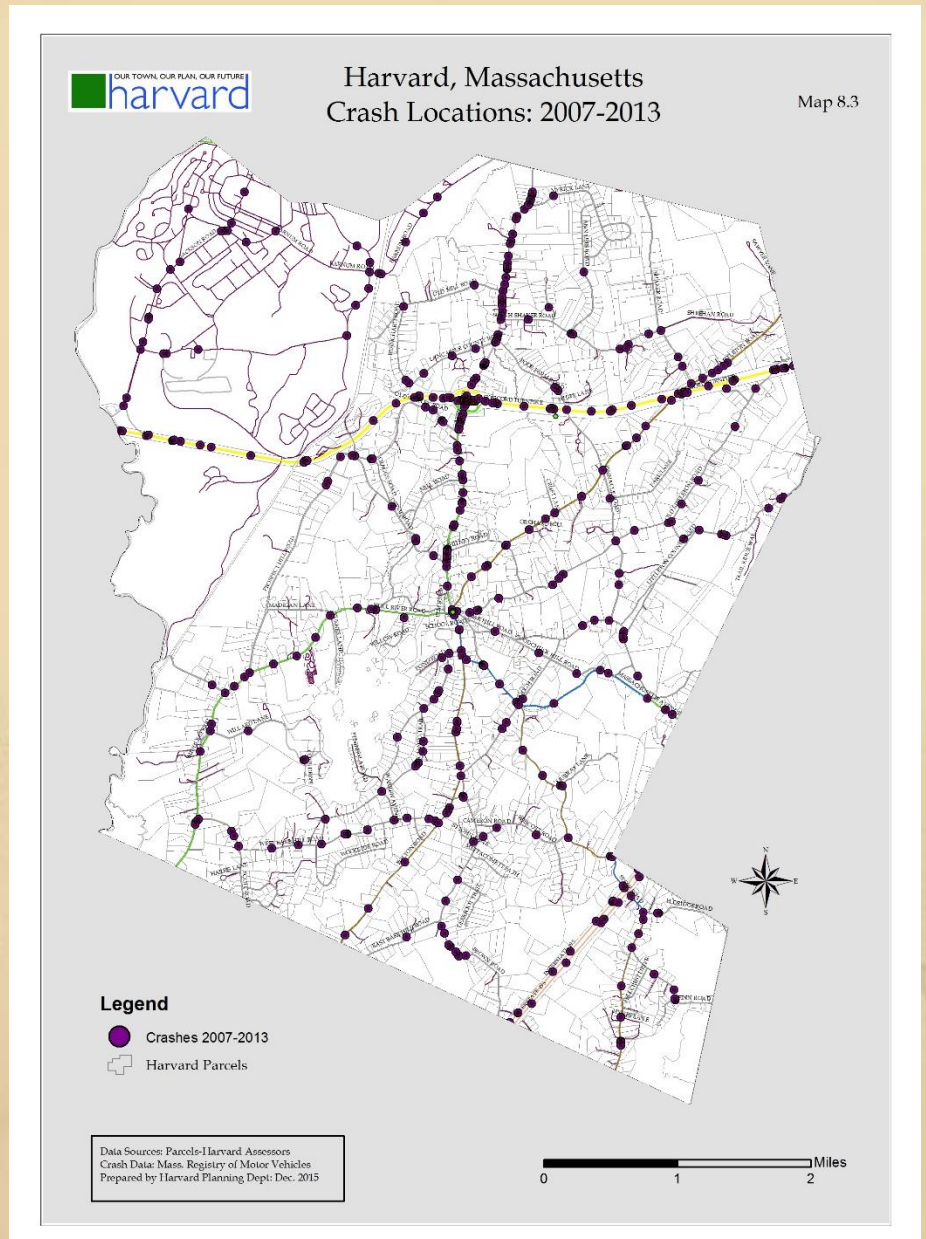
- ▶ Truck traffic, especially along Ayer Road north of Route 2, has become a concern for residents of North Harvard.
- ▶ Harvard is a haven for bicyclists. The heavy bike use on narrow local roads creates conflicts with motorists.
- ▶ Speeding, especially in village areas, has become a concern. Traffic calming may be an appropriate solution in more densely populated areas.
- ▶ Heavy traffic and poor access controls for businesses on Ayer Road in the C District make it difficult to enter traffic flow during peak periods.
- ▶ In recent years, accidents in Harvard have ranged from 104 – 178 per year. The Route 2 interchange has the second highest accident rate in the MRPC region.
- ▶ Harvard has about 70 miles of hiking trails.
- ▶ Sidewalk and crosswalk improvements are needed in the Town Center to safely accommodate pedestrians in this high traffic area.

Circulation & Traffic

- MassDevelopment has a policy to direct trucks to Jackson Gate, but Harvard residents have noticed an increase in truck traffic on Ayer Road.
- The lack of a direct connection between Harvard and Devens isolates Devens from Harvard life and causes longer trips, e.g. by school buses. Cost and effect on Harvard neighborhoods require careful study before re-opening a direct link.
- Establishing bicycle and pedestrian access is an easier task and would begin to re-unify the two jurisdictions.

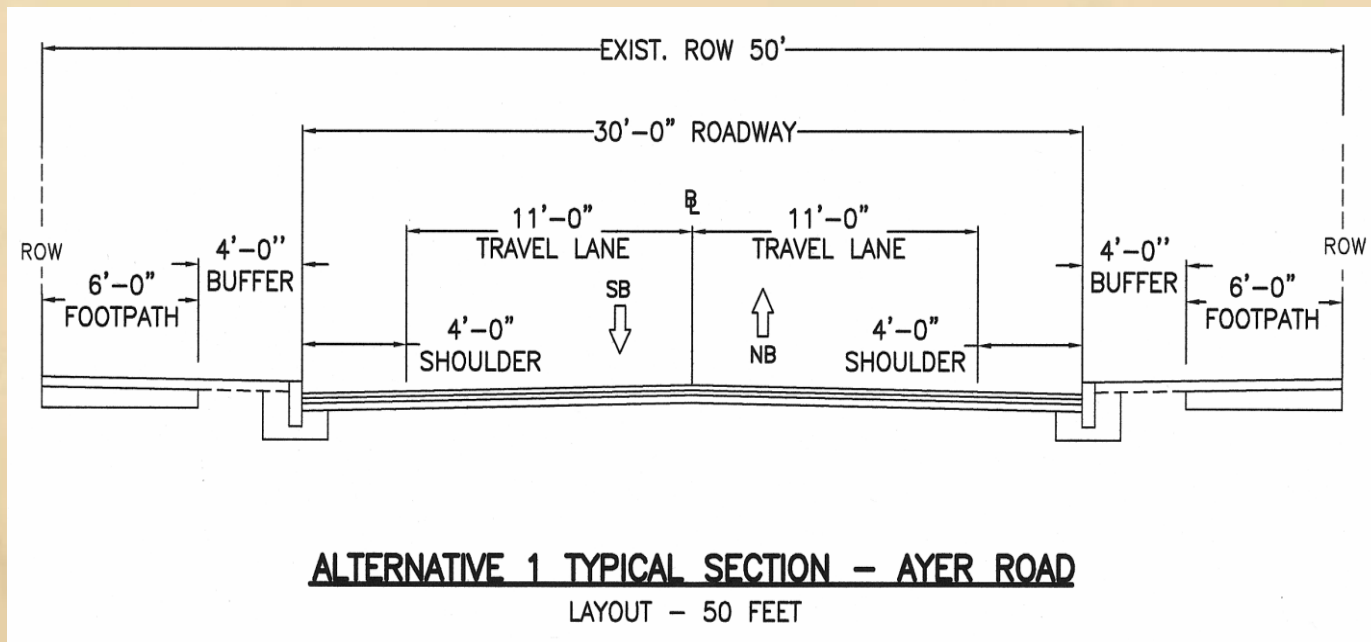
Circulation & Traffic

Road Classification	Miles
Interstate	2.9
Arterial	19.4
Collector	11.7
Local	63.8



Circulation & Traffic

Recommended Alternative for Ayer Road (CDM, 2008)



Circulation & Traffic

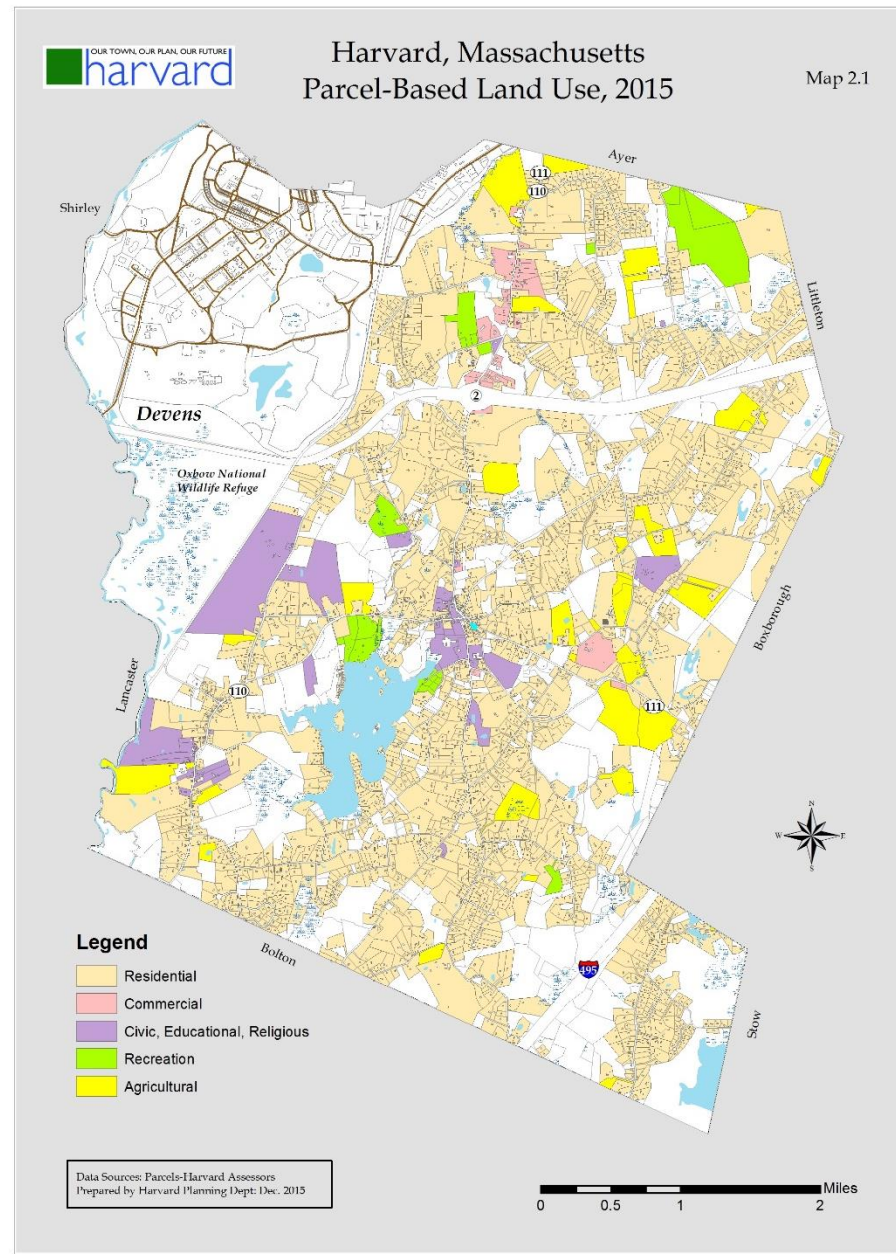
Recommendations:

- ▶ Continue to implement the Town Center Action Plan and the 2016 update prepared by MRPC.
- ▶ Continue systematic road maintenance and identify priority streets.
- ▶ Improve sidewalk connectivity in the Town Center.
- ▶ Work with MRPC to obtain funding for safety and aesthetic improvements to Ayer Road.
- ▶ Work with MRPC and MassDevelopment to explore the feasibility of a bikeway connecting Devens and Harvard.
- ▶ Work with neighbors along the Devens boundary and the residents of Devens to explore opportunities and challenges for restoring vehicular access between Devens and Harvard.

Land Use

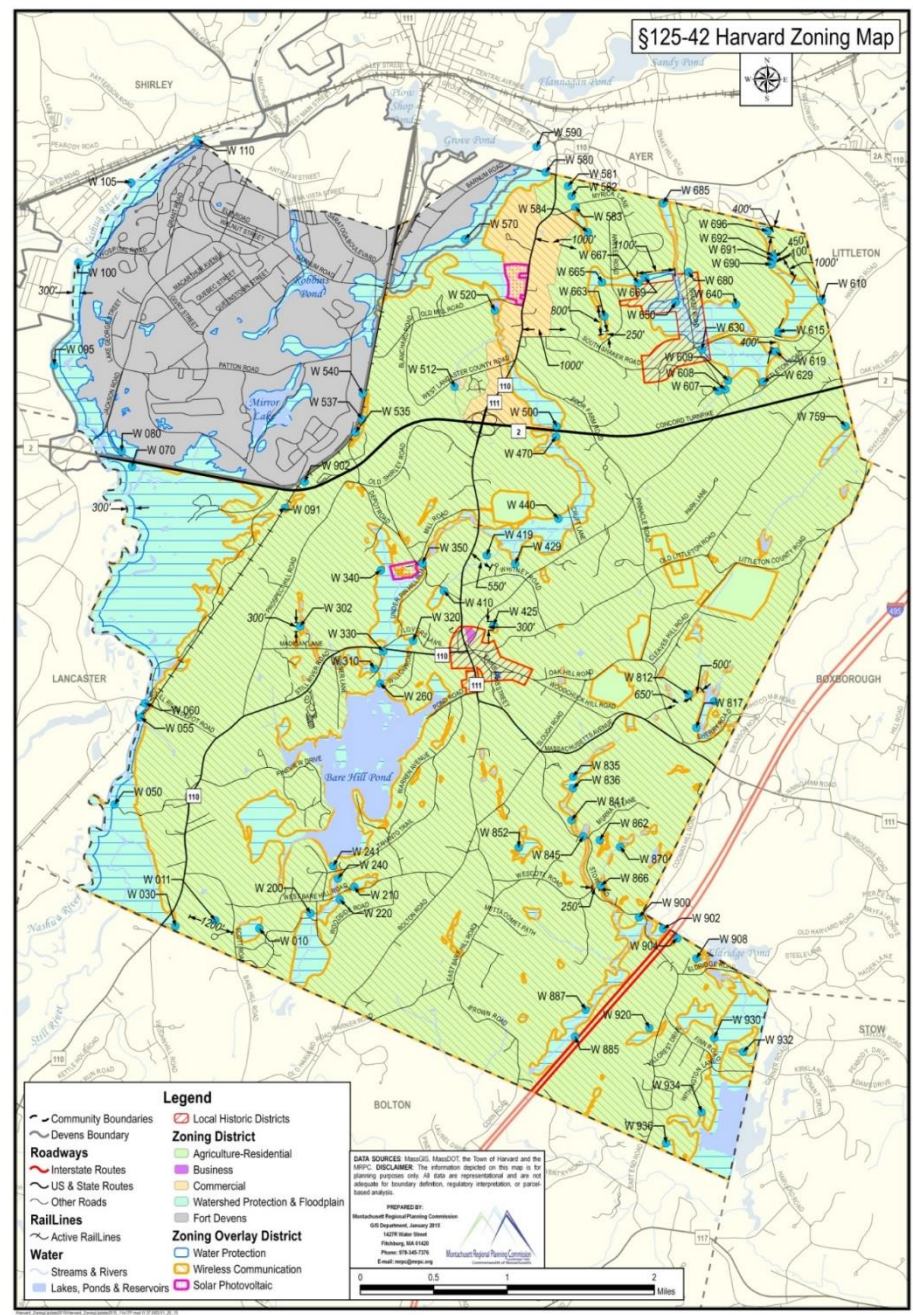
- ▶ Agriculture is a defining feature of the Town's landscape. A few large farms remain that contribute to the Town's visual form, e.g. Westward Orchards, Doe Orchards, Carlson Orchards, and Willard Farm.
- ▶ The Town's historic villages, the Town Center, Still River, and Shaker Village, have preserved their character through the decades despite growth pressures.
- ▶ Harvard's 1.5-acre minimum lot size throughout town is a result of limited public water and sewer systems, tight soils, and hilly terrain.
- ▶ The Zoning Bylaw offers options for hammerhead and backland lots and common driveways to avoid subdivision development and continue a low density land use pattern with private open space.
- ▶ Over the past 10 years, Harvard added 69 single family detached homes, 77 condos, and 42 senior apartments.
- ▶ A small amount of capacity in the Town Center sewer system may allow for moderate density housing development, for example, adjacent to the Hildreth House.
- ▶ Higher density housing built in recent years came about through the comprehensive permit process. This tool can help the town to diversify the housing stock and help to achieve some of its housing goals.

Land Use



Land Use

District	Acres	Percent
Agricultural Residential	11,753	81.7%
Business	3	.02%
Commercial	346	2.4%
Watershed Protection	2,275	15.8%
Harvard Zoning	14,378	100%
Harvard Portion of Devens	2,600	



Land Use

- ▶ Since Devens land use consists primarily of industrial and technology companies, a combined Harvard and Devens would provide a much more balanced tax base: about 70% residential, 18% open space, and 11% non-residential.
- ▶ Part of Devens economic success is due to the expedited “one-stop permitting” authorized by Chapter 498. If Harvard accepts jurisdiction of Devens, it would be important to retain this approval process in order to continue to attract high value companies.
- ▶ Working out the details of permitting and inspectional services will require the cooperation of MassDevelopment and the three communities.
- ▶ If the Town resumes jurisdiction, it would presumably assume zoning jurisdiction over the land within its historic boundaries. Town Meeting could then make zoning changes to modify the residential and non-residential zones, for example, to allow more residential units than under the Reuse Plan.

Land Use

Recommendations:

- Recodify the Zoning Bylaw.
- Amend the Accessory Apartment provision to remove barriers inhibiting its use.
- Provide for mixed-use buildings as of right in the C District.
- Modify the C District's dimensional regulations to achieve a more compact, pedestrian-scale and minimize the auto-dominated appearance of the district.
- Adopt land use controls to protect water supplies of town wells and recharge areas of adjacent towns' wells that extend into Harvard.
- Adopt a Bare Hill Pond Watershed Protection Overlay District to manage development and protect the environmental quality of the Pond.
- Make the Town Planner position a full-time employee of the Town.

Recommendations, continued:

- Replace or modify the existing OSC-PRD bylaw with the state's new Natural Resource Protection model to remove barriers that restrict its utility.
- Amend the Zoning Bylaw to provide authority for the Planning Board to adopt Town Center Design Guidelines.
- Adopt a zoning district for the Town Center which reflects the historic lot pattern and allows small businesses, second floor apartments, and moderate-density housing.
- Develop documentation for administering and enforcing the scenic roads bylaw.
- Form a Master Plan Implementation Committee.



Questions ? Comments !

Read the Plan at: www.harvardmasterplan.org

Submit ideas and suggestions to
Bill Scanlan: bscanlan@harvard.ma.us