

Residential Development Survey

This survey, intended for all Harvard residents, is designed to gather information on what is desirable or undesirable related to residential development, including senior housing, in Harvard. The data from this short survey will be used by the Planning Board to inform the senior housing work, other housing-related projects and future bylaw development. This is the second of three surveys intended to help the Planning Board shape future land use policy in Harvard related to residential development. Thank you for your participation.

If you want to learn more about housing types being considered for Harvard, please consider going to this web page: <https://www.harvard.ma.us/planning-board/pages/summary-housing-types>

Opening Statements

We thought it would be helpful before you begin to have some data and other information in mind related to population and housing in Harvard. Please consider reviewing this information and if you have the time, please check out the links below too.

1. According to the 2020 Harvard Town Census, 29.4% of residents are 60 years of age or older.

2. The Harvard Council on Aging (COA) has confirmed, through surveys conducted in 2016 and 2006 and through numerous conversations with local and formerly local seniors, that the phenomenon known as "senior flight" continues to be a reality for Harvard seniors. This means that some Harvard residents do leave town as they age in order to find desirable and affordable housing and to avoid having to pay high taxes on the large homes and large lots that make up the vast majority of Harvard's housing stock. Also, the recently completed Senior Housing Survey conducted by the Harvard Planning Board in November supports the notion that the lack of housing diversity causes Harvard's seniors to plan on or consider leaving town. Respondents' top three (3) reasons for considering a move from their current home were the high property taxes on their current large homes and the fact that their current home is larger than what they need or want and requires too much maintenance.

3. Both the 2016 Master Plan and the 2017 Housing Production Plan are key policy documents developed by Harvard citizens in regard to the future. These plans identify a range of housing needs in Harvard that are not being met and goals and action statements for addressing them. While we will not go into detail about that here, a few points deserve summarizing.

First, both plans note the need for diversification of the existing housing stock beyond the market-rate, single-family homes situated on large lots. Both documents call for affordable, smaller-scale housing targeted for the population of seniors wishing to downsize, but also to remain in town.

The Master Plan also calls for more family housing options. Other parts of the Master Plan speak of other options so please consider viewing these in the Population & Housing, Issues & Opportunities, and Action Plan sections of the Plan which is linked below.

LINK: <https://www.harvard.ma.us/master-plan/pages/2016-master-plan>

4. The 2017 Housing Production Plan identifies three (3) key areas of need including senior, family, and affordable sectors. Strategies recommended by the Plan include amending the Open Space bylaw, mapping and adding provisions for the Multifamily Residential zoning district and consider adding other districts, mixed-use guidelines, village center zoning, increased densities, and more. While these are the specific terms used in the plan, the concept of density in the case of Harvard does not mean a mechanism to shoehorn more development in town, but rather a tool to create clusters of proximate housing so that those who would like to live closer to neighbors and to be able to walk to friends, shopping, and services can do so in a traditional New England village-like setting. It is also not intended to spread these types of developments, say for example a cluster of 12 small cottages, throughout Harvard. Instead, they would be permitted in locations that would fit seamlessly into Harvard's existing character and only in numbers that can be easily absorbed.

LINK: https://www.harvard.ma.us/sites/g/files/vyhlif676/f/uploads/harvard_housing_production_plan_june_2017.pdf

5. The Planning Board's website...

<https://www.harvard.ma.us/planning-board>

...has a number of useful resources related to projects such as senior housing, the open space bylaw, the Ayer Road commercial corridor planning, and more so we encourage you to visit and check them out.

General
Observations
and
Thoughts

We'd like you to describe what you like about Harvard and also what you think Harvard should do better. It does not have to be limited to land use or residential development but certainly think about that too.

1. What do you like best about living in Harvard?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ General rural character
- ☐ Agricultural landscapes, farms, and orchards
- ☐ Quiet and peaceful
- ☐ Sense of community and belonging
- ☐ Small town atmosphere
- ☐ Nature, open space, conservation areas, the pond
- ☐ Library
- ☐ Schools
- ☐ Public spaces
- ☐ The people, friendly, neighborly
- ☐ Community spirit and volunteerism
- ☐ Beauty, natural and historic
- ☐ Safe, secure, private
- ☐ Senior and other public services
- ☐ People that are "like me"
- ☐ Town services and good government
- ☐ Institutions such as clubs, churches, etc.
- ☐ Shopping and services

Other: ☐ _____

2. What do you dislike about living in Harvard?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ The rural character
- ☐ Agricultural landscapes, farms, and orchards
- ☐ Too quiet
- ☐ Sense of community and belonging
- ☐ The small town atmosphere
- ☐ Anti-growth attitudes
- ☐ Lack of housing options
- ☐ Lack of diversity
- ☐ Lack of public spaces for congregating
- ☐ Unfriendly and cliquish
- ☐ Lack of community spirit and volunteerism
- ☐ Isolated
- ☐ High taxes
- ☐ Lack of senior and other public services
- ☐ Changing demographics
- ☐ Town services and government
- ☐ Lack of institutions such as clubs, churches, etc. of interest to me
- ☐ Town interest in growth and development
- ☐ Everything I need like shopping, dining, and services is too far away
- ☐ Requires a car for trips to anything
- ☐ No transportation options
- ☐ Traffic
- ☐ Noise from Devens and/or other sources
- ☐ Few pedestrian connections and poor walkability
- ☐ Poor wireless connection

Other: ☐ _____

3. The 2016 Harvard Master Plan has identified specific housing needs in Harvard such as senior housing and affordable housing. Please note what you think about a range of potential housing market needs that Harvard could pursue.

Mark only one oval per row.

	Highly Desirable	Somewhat Desirable	No Opinion	Undesirable	Highly Undesirable
Workforce housing for people such as teachers, firefighters, public employees, and others with moderate incomes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
First-time homebuyers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People with physical disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People with emotional or mental disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People in recovery	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Active seniors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seniors with special needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People seeking affordable housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. What types of housing units should be developed in Harvard?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Highly Desirable	Desirable	No Opinion	Undesirable	Highly Undesirable
More large lot single family homes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Single family homes on smaller lots	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Townhouses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Low rise garden apartments - like Avalon in Acton or Paddock Estates in Boxborough	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Condominiums	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Two-family homes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3-4 family homes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mixed-use developments with housing - like a new small village center	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accessory or In-law apartments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cottages in a rural cluster	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Cottages near
an existing
village center

☐☐☐☐☐

Conversion of
large home
into multiple
units

☐☐☐☐☐

Planned Unit
Development -
a planned
community
with different
unit types,
amenities,
common
buildings, and
possibly other
uses

☐☐☐☐☐

5. Please describe any other type of housing that Harvard should consider if we did not capture it in the previous question.

6. For new housing development in Harvard, what features should be required?
(Select all that apply)

Mark only one oval per row.

	Highly Desirable	Desirable	No Opinion	Undesirable	Highly Undesirable
Significant open space	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High architectural design standards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High quality landscaping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Screening and buffering from the street and adjacent and nearby residents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Large lot area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Deep setbacks from the road	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sidewalks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Amenities such as recreation facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public rather than private streets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Private
streets and
shared
driveways

☐☐☐☐☐

7. For new housing development, please note your preference for siting of residential units.

Mark only one oval per row.

	Highly Desirable	Desirable	No Opinion	Undesirable	Highly Undesirable
Large lot conventional subdivisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Large lot open space subdivisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clustered conventional subdivisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clustered open space subdivisions - where homes are clustered on one part of a site while the remainder is left in natural open space	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Small village- like clustered developments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Large lot single family homes on individual parcels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mixed-use developments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Infill or conversions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

near or in
village center

8. Where do you think new housing should be located in Harvard? Select all that apply.

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Anywhere. New housing is not a threat or problem.
- ☐ Nowhere. We have enough housing already.
- ☐ Keep things the same. People can add new single-family homes on large lots but that's all.
- ☐ We should allow some apartments and/or townhouses in the Ayer Road commercial district
- ☐ We could allow a few subdivisions but they should be small and have plenty of open space.
- ☐ Allow some infill and conversions in Harvard Center.
- ☐ Let the market determine what is built and where.

Other: ☐ _____

9. If an existing Harvard farm property were to be sold, what would you like to see happen on the site? (select all that apply)

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Conventional subdivision for families
- ☐ Find a way to keep it as a farm
- ☐ A few large homes on large lots
- ☐ Nothing. It should be fallow.
- ☐ Open Space residential cluster development that preserves most of the site as open space
- ☐ Senior housing at low density

Other: ☐ _____

10. If Harvard pursues senior housing options, which options do you think best fit the community?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Repurposed/converted existing residences anywhere
- ☐ Repurposed/converted existing residences in village center(s)
- ☐ Smaller homes or cottages in small clusters of 15 or less
- ☐ Independent living apartments in commercial or multifamily district
- ☐ Accessory apartments on existing residential lots
- ☐ Assisted living development in commercial or in a new multifamily district
- ☐ Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) in commercial or a new multifamily district
- ☐ 2, 3, or 4 family senior housing near village center
- ☐ Senior apartments above storefronts or in mixed-use developments in commercial district

11. Regarding the senior housing options in the previous question, if you had to pick the top three (3) that Harvard should focus on, which should they be?

12. How important is it to you that Harvard offer a wide variety of housing options for people with different lifestyles and at different phases of life?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Not Important at All

13. How important is it to you that Harvard provide housing in various price ranges to people and families of differing incomes?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very Important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Not Important at All

14. This question relates to affordable housing, a key goal in both the 2016 Master Plan and the 2017 Housing Production Plan. We recommend that you please visit <https://www.harvard.ma.us/economic-development/pages/affordable-housing-primer> for a summary of issues related to affordable housing before completing this question. Related to affordable housing, would you prefer...?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Harvard takes a reactive stance and deals with 40B affordable apartment projects as they come.
- ☐ Uses a market-based approach and zones land for multi-family where townspeople think they should be located.
- ☐ Allows multifamily projects in the commercial district only.
- ☐ Proactively passes an inclusionary housing bylaw which reduces the likelihood of unfriendly 40B projects
- ☐ Takes an aggressive approach and goes all out to try to provide a variety of affordable housing products.
- ☐ Other: _____

15. Are there any other types of housing options that we did not discuss in this survey that you think we should consider?

16. How should Harvard balance the need for senior housing with the desire to preserve the town's rural New England character? (For example: Achieve balance by where we put it? By what types of buildings we allow? By how many buildings we allow?)

17. Please add any other comments that you feel we should consider in drafting bylaws intended to meet the needs of Harvard as a community.

A Little About You...

18. What is your age?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Under 20
- ☐ 21-30
- ☐ 31-40
- ☐ 41-50
- ☐ 51-60
- ☐ 61-70
- ☐ 71-80
- ☐ 81-90
- ☐ Over 90
- ☐ Prefer not to say

19. What is your gender?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other: _____

20. Are you a Harvard resident?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

21. What part of Harvard do you live in? Please select one geographic area of town that you live in. While there may be more than one choice that seems to apply, pick one that is the best fit in your view.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Harvard Center (generally the historic district Pond Road to Town Hall N/S and Oak Hill/Woodchuck Hill E and Still River just past Elm W)
- ☐ Still River area
- ☐ Shaker Village Area (generally historic district)
- ☐ North Harvard (generally north of Route 2)
- ☐ Devens
- ☐ East - (east of Ayer Road from Mass Ave S to Route 2 N)
- ☐ Southeast - (east of Mass Ave/Bolton Road from Mass Ave N to Bolton Line S)
- ☐ Southwest - (west of Mass Ave/Bolton Road from Still River N to Bolton Line S)
- ☐ West (west of Ayer Road from Still River S to Route 2 N)
- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Other: _____

22. How long have you lived in Harvard?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ 11-20 years
- ☐ Over 20 years
- ☐ My entire life
- ☐ Not applicable

23. Would you be interested in participating in a follow up focus group meeting to discuss your views in greater depth? If so, please make sure that you have provided your email address above and also please give us your name and, if you wish, your telephone number below in the text box.

Thank
You!

We appreciate your time in taking this survey. It will be an important contribution in helping the Planning Board develop plans and policies regarding housing in general and senior housing specifically. If you have any questions or comments about this survey or our work related to land use in Harvard, please contact Christopher Ryan at cryan@harvard.ma.us or 978-456-4100 x.323.

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