

2010

Hardwick Master Plan

2010 Update

The Hardwick Master Plan was created by Town volunteers in 2001. What follows is a review of progress toward the efforts and actions outlined in that plan and an update of the current state of the town and its goals. An Action Plan to achieve the vision of the People of Hardwick, Massachusetts.

Master Plan Implementation Committee
with Assistance from
Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission
January 2010

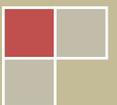


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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY [TO BE DRAFTED AFTER REST OF DOCUMENT IS COMPLETE]

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2 VISION

2.1 PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

In 1976, the Town of Hardwick issued a Growth Policy Statement¹. In addition to regional and state growth policy concern, five (5) town policies were described in that document.

1. To create employment
2. To maintain a rural residential atmosphere
3. To encourage the continued operation of existing farms
4. To encourage rehabilitation of existing housing
5. To protect natural resources of Hardwick.

In January 2001, the first Hardwick Master Plan was released. “The plan, required by state law, is non-binding upgradeable and serves as a guide to assist the town in shaping its future.”²

The elements of that plan included

- Circulation
- Economic Development
- Services and Facilities
- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Housing
- Land Use
- Natural Resources
- Open Space and Recreation
- Goals and Policies

Additionally, with the assistance of Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), the Community Development Plan for the Town of Hardwick, Massachusetts was released in June 2004. This project was in response to Executive Order 418 (EO418).³ Other Hardwick planning efforts including the Quabbin Sub-Regional Housing Plan (2002), Central Ware River Valley Rail Trail Planning and Research Project (2000), and the 1996 Hardwick Open Space and Recreation Plan satisfied many of the EO418 requirements. As such the Community Development Plan was only required to incorporate Visioning and Economic Development to reach compliance.

¹ Hardwick Growth Policy Committee. 1976. Growth Policy Report. Hardwick, Massachusetts, Town of Hardwick.

² Hardwick Master Plan Committee. 2001. 2001 Hardwick Master Plan. Hardwick, Massachusetts. Town of Hardwick.

³ Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission. 2004. Community Development Plan for the Town of Hardwick, Massachusetts. Worcester, MA. Town of Hardwick.

2.2 2001 OVERALL VISION

The Plan included the following principal goals and policies:

- Retain the existing physical character of the town into the future - both in the villages and in the outlying rural areas.
- Seek to focus future development into the village areas in such a way that the villages and village life are enhanced and not degraded. This means that their historical qualities should be retained while at the same time they would provide contemporary venues for locally grown economic development and business enhancement and for cultural activities. Village area amenities such as small parks and public buildings must be included.
- Seek to preserve and enhance the rural outlying areas of the town. Alternative agriculture should be encouraged. Open space protection through state tax incentives, transfer of development rights, purchase of development rights programs and the active participation of the land Trust in land protection deals will be very important for a proactive program.
- Nurture cultural activities, an appreciation of heritage, and the arts because these activities are core building blocks for creating and maintaining a sense of community. All of the various organizations which feed this activity should be given support in some form by the town.
- Manage the coming growth in a way that does not undermine or erode the local tax base but enhances it.

2.3 2010 STATE OF HARDWICK

2.3.1 FACTORS OF CONCERN

The economy is hard to predict.

2.3.2 ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Assets include a talented and enduring population. Though considered a liability by some, Hardwick's perceived isolated location, is seen by many as an asset.

2.3.3 REGIONAL, STATE WIDE, AND NATIONAL INFLUENCES

2.3.4 SUMMARY

The State of Hardwick is positive and promising.

3 LAND USE (AND ZONING)

From 2001 MP

The Goal for the Land Use Element is as follows:

- Encourage growth and development that takes into consideration the natural resources and unique character of the town and is in step with the ability of the Town to provide essential community services.

This goal includes the following primary objectives:

- A major review of the zoning and land development bylaws should be undertaken as soon as possible to determine how and where within the regulations changes should be made to preserve and protect the character of the town and still allow for constructive and productive growth consistent with the Master Plan.
- Agricultural zoning, flexible zoning, and village zoning options should be primary implementation tools.
- A critical reevaluation of the industrial zoning and commercial zoning should be part of the picture as well.
- Commercial zoning along the highways and roads that link the villages together should not be extended further than that which currently exists. This type of zoning, known as strip commercial zoning, will lead to sprawl and a suburban identity for the town. Once the town begins to feel suburban in nature (even though it may not be), it is very hard to maintain a rural character. Encourage mixed use in commercial zones.

Action items from 2001 included the following:

2001 Action Item	Accomplished?	Action Taken	New Action Item/Next Step
Develop a growth management/monitoring strategy based upon build-out analyses of current zoning. This will enable on-going visualization and analysis of the impact of current zoning bylaws. Establish a growth rate threshold beyond which the Town will be unable to provide services and			

facilities.			
Develop zoning bylaws for future large-scale subdivision projects incorporating open space, agricultural, area character, and recreational needs.			
Consider a zoning variance to allow for "cluster zoning" and creative development means of protecting the rural and historic character of Hardwick Center.			
Identify Priorities for Protection - Watersheds, Wildlife corridors, Unique Historic/Cultural sites, Outstanding Views.			
Designate Area(s) for Controlled Growth where infrastructure exists already (roadways, electrical service, and town water/sewer).			
For the purpose of preserving the feel of distinct villages, keep the village residential zoning as it is with small lots but include large open space lots in between the village and the next built up area in order to define and emphasize the village edge.			
In the regulations for subdivision of more than two lots, require plan review to maintain farmland, good woodlot conditions, and scenic views as much as possible.			
Include more commercial zoning along major roadways with restrictions perhaps on square foot area with the intent of attracting small business to residential areas (i.e., mixed use zoning). (NOTE: The Center for Community Character does not agree with this action item-it will lead to sprawl development along the roadway and it will eventually destroy			

the rural feel of the town in these areas.)			
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Trish's recommendation --- Unless you have a good reason to change these, stick with these and add others as needed.

3.1 OVERVIEW OF LAND USE

3.2 LAND USE PATTERN CHANGES

The table that follows demonstrates the changes in land use patterns in the Town of Hardwick

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Hardwick Land Use Change -- 2005 to 1999 to 1985						
Land Use Code	Land Use Description	Total Acres - 2005	2005 Change	Total Acres - 1999	1999 Change	Total Acres - 1985
1	Cropland	1,704.16	-149.50	1,853.66	-177.70	2,031.36
2	Pasture	688.26	-245.83	934.09	-628.96	1,563.04
3	Forest	18,209.38	-952.89	19,162.27	116.21	19,046.06
4	Non-Forested Wetland	1,110.21	449.83	660.38	56.95	603.43
5**	Mining	0.00	-31.18	31.18	8.50	22.68
6	Open Land	264.42	-386.96	651.38	138.26	513.12
7	Participation Recreation	58.24	24.82	33.42	5.25	28.18
9	Water-Based Recreation	7.27	5.57	1.71	0.00	1.71
10	Multi-Family Residential	82.22	58.48	23.74	0.00	23.74
11	High Density Residential	7.19	-18.74	25.92	0.00	25.92
12	Medium Density Residential	14.13	-107.22	121.35	0.00	121.35
13	Low Density Residential	336.29	-499.50	835.80	376.08	459.71
15	Commercial	61.67	51.31	10.36	2.46	7.90
16	Industrial	27.53	-39.10	66.64	10.81	55.82
17	Transitional	67.65	24.81	42.84	39.97	2.88
18	Transportation	44.38	44.38	0.00	0.00	0.00
19	Waste Disposal	47.48	-20.33	67.80	47.66	20.14
20	Water	1,415.49	-54.43	1,469.92	0.00	1,469.92
26	Golf Course	66.74	-15.05	81.79	0.00	81.79
31	Urban Public/Institutional	54.41	18.92	35.49	13.75	21.74
34	Cemetery	14.47	-0.74	15.21	0.00	15.21
35	Orchard	1.33	-1.15	2.48	-5.66	8.14
37	Forested Wetland	1,142.40	1,128.76	13.64	-3.58	17.22
38*	Very Low Density Residential	679.28	679.28	0.00	0.00	0.00
39*	Junkyard	2.79	2.79	0.00	0.00	0.00
40*	Brushland/Successional	40.54	40.54	0.00	0.00	0.00
	TOTAL	24,443.77		24,287.41		24,109.71

* Category New to 2005 Land Use Data

** Category Not Used in 2005 Land Use Data

<http://www.mass.gov/mgis/lus2005.htm>

<http://www.mass.gov/mgis/lus.htm>

- 2005 Land Use Descriptions

- 1999 & 1985 Land Use Descriptions

3.3 ZONING CHANGES

3.4 SUMMARY

3.5 GOALS

3.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

4 (POPULATION AND) HOUSING

4.1 POPULATION

4.1.1 HISTORICAL POPULATION PATTERN

Population Growth:	1980-1990	1990-1996
	5% 1990 Census	7.3% DHCD 1996
	2000-2008 shows an increase of 27 persons or approximately 1 %.	

4.1.2 GROUP QUARTER POPULATION

4.1.3 AGE

4.1.4 RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN

4.1.5 POPULATION PROJECTIONS

4.2 HOUSING

4.2.1 2001 GOALS OBJECTIVES AND ACTION ITEMS

The Master Plan Survey for the Town provides insight into the public perception of housing choices in Hardwick. The results were interesting and conflicting. Townspeople's concerns and wishes are decidedly in favor of affordable housing and retirement communities, decidedly against multi-family homes, condominiums, cluster development and mobile homes. Rental housing was thought to be in good to fair condition. Housing costs were thought to be fair. A large majority thought elderly and handicapped housing was extremely important, or important. A substantial majority also agreed that Town officials should be able to limit the number of building permits each year in order to plan for new growth and development.

The 2001 goal for the Housing Element was as follows:

- Maintain and enhance the mix of housing opportunities in Hardwick to provide accommodation for a mix of income groups and family sizes into the future.

This goal includes the following primary objectives

- An affordable housing land bank should be investigated as a proactive vehicle to acquire land for housing rehab or new construction within the village areas and also within the outlying rural areas. One option under the program would be to acquire historic properties in need of rehabilitation and resell the buildings (after rehab) with preservation covenants. The land bank would hold onto the land, thus reducing the overall purchase price to the buyer. An easement would ensure resale at an affordable level into the future. Such programs have been very successful elsewhere. This program may be useful in accomplishing several interrelated goals

such as providing affordable housing options in good buildings, bringing revitalization to the villages that will spur other economic development, protecting rural character-defining farmsteads, and furthering better housing opportunities for Hardwick's village and rural families in need.

- Transfer of development rights could be used to save rural open space and the active farms/forests while providing housing and other opportunities in Gilbertville and Wheelwright in particular.

Action items from 2001 included the following:

2001 Action Item	Accomplished?	Action Taken	New Action Item/Next Step
<p>Housing Zoning Component-Create a Land Bank Tax on property transfers which would go to preserving open space, agricultural land, historic preservation, and in addition creating affordable housing. Alternatively, consider adopting a property tax surcharge (the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act, if implemented, will permit this).</p>			
<p>Limit building permits for new construction so that growth is controlled. New Braintree has had a 20 permit limit over a two year period in place since 1978.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on a first come first serve basis • with limits that continue current ratios of demography 			
<p>Distribute a rural design manual with building permit applications to explain and promote preferred development scenarios in keeping with the goals of the Town's master plan to developers.</p>			
<p>Housing for the Elderly is prohibited in all areas except R-20 where it is allowed by special permit (Zoning Bylaws under Section 3. Use Regulations, page 6, #3c). This should be changed to require a special permit in all village areas for elderly housing projects.</p>			

<p>Commercial, retail business, light manufacturing and moderate density residential purposes are allowed by special permit in all areas (Zoning Bylaws under Section 3, Use Regulations, page 7, # 10). This should be changed to prohibit such uses in all R-40 and R-60 zones (or add special considerations for these areas which will mitigate harmful environmental impacts.</p>			
<p>After reviewing the New Braintree and West Brookfield zoning requirements, Randall Arendt's Rural by Design, other design guides, and discussions with community members, The following changes to the current zoning requirements are recommended:</p>			
<p>Explore increasing the R-60 zone to 5 acre minimum based on the overwhelming community response from the plan survey to the importance of preserving working farms and open space within Hardwick. Within R-225 the Town could encourage "Area Based Allocation Zoning" (ABAZ) especially in areas of town with the most productive soil and desirable open space. Five acres is a minimum area considered to be farmable.</p>			
<p>Under Section 5, Special Regulations, page 10, 5.2 Cluster Development it is stated that "The land remaining in the subdivision as a result of the lot size and frontage reduction shall be deeded to the Town of Hardwick with adequate provision for public access." The Town should consider modifying this zone to allow farmers to easily utilize the land. Also it might be wise to add maintenance of a wildlife corridor and affordable housing to the justification for issuing a special permit.</p>			
<p>Housing and development in Hardwick should be planned so that the town maintains the same ratio of social and economic diversity that it has today. This goal requires controlled diversity in both the villages and rural areas of</p>			

<p>town. Many other communities in New England and the country have addressed this goal-Hardwick is not without models and assistance.</p>			
<p>The Town should consider forming an Affordable Housing Study Group to explore opportunities for planning and action.</p>			
<p>The Town should consider adopting flexible design standards and guidelines for forms of rural development where houses are in closer proximity on irregularly shaped lots with surrounding land being preserved. These land "conservation" projects can accommodate a variety of building types that reflect diversity in cost and size.</p>			
<p>Within the villages of Gilbertville, Wheelwright and Hardwick, The Town should promote housing with a range in affordability and layout. For instance, in Gilbertville, some multifamily dwellings could be rental units, others condominiums owned by each apartments' occupants, other buildings could be owned co-operatively by their residents and others could be owned by a Housing Trust. This would create a diversity of housing and residential patterns in this beautiful village while maintain the village center's architectural integrity.</p>			
<p>The Town should support accessory dwellings like apartments or the conversion of outbuildings on farms can create opportunities for varied housing.</p>			
<p>The Town should support through local educational initiatives the development of local appreciation for the remarkable beauty and historical interest of each village and the surrounding countryside. Old Furnace, Hardwick Center, Gilbertville, Wheelwright and the farms and rural houses that surround them trace the history of New England back hundreds of years, to long before the colonial</p>			

<p>era in America. Local housing reflects the history and also the individual families who, generation-after-generation or as new residents, give the town the complicated and endearing character it has today. The young people of every part of town should be able to cherish where they live. An appreciation of the architectural integrity of the village centers will guide the individuals who build houses here just as sensitivity to the character of a piece of land in the broader landscape will hopefully guide new building or renovations in rural housing.</p>			
<p>The Town should consider valuable and attractive experiments in co-housing, shared houses and other kinds of building that might require re-figuring of current housing with special zoning permits and perhaps with help from the Historical Commission.</p>			
<p>The Town should support the creative re-design of spaces that might once have been commercial or even manufacturing into mixed use and residential areas.</p>			
<p>Village housing needs to be supported by social and commercial services that meet the needs unique to patterns of village life; e.g., recreational areas, sidewalks, gathering places like restaurants and park areas, youth centers, transportation, and places for young children to play</p>			
<p>Although grants and financing for these kinds of services are complicated and not always easy to come by in rural towns such as Hardwick, there are real and creative ways that other rural towns like the hill towns on Route 9 west of the Connecticut River have gotten funding for child care, local vans for transportation, funds for parks and sidewalk repair, etc. The Town should take advantage of these opportunities, several of which are listed below.</p>			

<p>Establish a Community Housing Trust (a non-municipal organization trust that retains control of the land on which local needs housing (non-speculative housing, housing that meets current needs) exists or is constructed. A Community Housing Trust can buy land and build new units or buy and rehabilitate existing housing with the assistance of a state housing program and other donations and grants. Possible sources of funding for Community Trusts include land donations, property transfer fees, state trusts for land preservation and offices like the Institute for Community Economics in Springfield.</p>			
<p>Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development: From 1995 to 1997 the Town of Hardwick received \$1,798,349.00 from the MDHCD to rehabilitate housing, to help with social service programs like Fuel Assistance, to support planning projects, make infrastructure improvements to water supply systems, and for the removal of architectural barriers in the Hardwick Municipal Office Building. The board of selectmen and a public meeting review potential grants for projects like these and can release funds that are granted by the state. The housing rehabilitation projects in this period met building and repair needs in fourteen multi-family housing units.</p>			
<p>The Town should explore appropriate tax exemptions and tax freezes which help members of the community afford housing. Although Hardwick doesn't have tax freezes for qualified people over 65 years of age, some towns do. Hardwick does have tax exemptions for residents who are 70 years and over who qualify under special income guidelines (the exemption is for \$500) and there are also smaller exemptions for qualified widows and widowers, minors who are without parents, and others. Veterans and</p>			

<p>their widows can be eligible for exemptions. And in time of crisis, individuals and families can apply for tax abatements.</p>			
<p>The Town should continue to tap funding from Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development: From 1995 to 1997 the Town of Hardwick received \$1,798,349.00 from this department to rehabilitate housing, help with social service programs like Fuel Assistance, support planning projects, infrastructure improvements to water supply systems, and for the removal of architectural barriers in the Hardwick Municipal Office Building. The board of selectmen and a public meeting review potential grants for projects like these and can release finds that are granted by the state. The housing rehabilitation projects that took place in this period addressed situations in fourteen family housing units.</p>			
<p>The Town should create an Affordable Housing Task Force: This study group could be made up of local citizens and elected officials, regional planners and grant-writers.</p>			
<p>The Town should consider design standards that protect rural affordable housing. At the same time that village housing and the broad issues of affordable housing programs are addressed, new housing in rural parts of town needs to be sited so as to emphasize and value the rural landscape and support rural ways of life on these homesteads. Many landowners feel very strongly that they should be able to get as much profit for their land as possible when they sell it. The Town should explore alternative ways that make rural lands affordable to people who are not particularly wealthy. If this is not successful the nature of the town and its villages will surely change in ways that cannot be undone easily. It is not only the farmland that needs to be preserved but a way of life that sustains</p>			

ordinary people on the land as well. Various measures have been used in other communities to marry affordability with acreage that will maintain the small town rural character of an area. Land banks, land trusts and other programs deal with these issues.			
At the Land Use Study Committee's public meeting, people suggested a town meeting that could, on at least an annual basis, be a forum for discussion and education about these kinds of dynamics (i.e.,the relationship between development and taxes etc.) This kind of regular discussion could help the community stay aware of the broader implications of changes that are found to be positive and negative. The Town should consider having such forums on a regular basis.			
The Planning Board, a Housing Task Force, along with the Conservation Commission and other town organizations should meet together to stay abreast of local changes and opportunities and discuss affordable housing initiatives.			

4.2.2 HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

4.2.2.1 INVENTORY AND PROFILE

The following is an overview of the current housing stock in the town of Hardwick as listed by the assessor's from 07-01-2007 through 06-30-2009.

Unit Capacity	1996 UNIT TOTAL	2007 - 2009 UNIT TOTAL
Single Family	661	684
Two Family	84	80
Three Family	18	14
Four To Eight Family	43	44
Mobile Homes	19	10
Rooming Houses	1	1
Condos	0	8

The age and condition of each housing category was obtained from the Assessors office.

Single Family Homes—have an age range from the 1700’s to the present with a continuous line of construction dates. Their conditions are as follows:

Table: E-Excellent, VG-=Very Good, A= Average, F= Fair, P= Poor, U= Unsatisfactory

	E	EV	V	VG	G	GA	A	FA	F	FP	P	U
1996	130	16	80	87	165	62	80	18	12	2	9	0
2009	0	0	8	16	268	135	199	35	11	3	7	2

1996 540 units - 81.7 % are rated as above average in overall condition
 80 units - 12.1 % are rated average
 41 units - 6.2 % are rated below average

2009 684 units – 62.4 % are rated as above average in overall condition
 199 units – 29 % are rated average
 58 units – 8 % are rated below average

Two Family Homes- 1996 data shows that present units had an older age average with 68% being built prior to 1920, 11% built between 1920-1969, 6% built between 1961-1979 and 15% built from 1980-1997. It is interesting that almost as many units were built from 1980-1997 as from 1920-1979. Their conditions were as follows:

	E	EV	V	VG	G	GA	A	FA	F	FP	P	U
1996	6	0	2	3	20	7	27	7	8	2	2	0
2009	0	0	1	0	12	17	31	10	7	1	1	0

1996 38 units - 45.2% are rated above average in overall condition
 27 units - 32.2% are rated average
 9 units - 22.6% are rated below average

2009 30 units - 37.5 % are rated above average in overall condition
 31 units - 38.7 % are rated average
 19 units - 23.7 % are rated below average

Two Family Homes 2009- Although 3 new two family units were constructed in 2003, data reveals an overall reduction in the number of two family units.

Three Family Homes-Present data shows all units were built prior to 1905 with one exception built in 1958. Their conditions are as follows:

	E	EV	V	VG	G	GA	A	FA	F	FP	P	U
1996	0	0	0	1	3	2	8	1	1	1	1	0
2009	0	0	0	0	4	2	3	2	3	0	0	0

1996 6 units - 33.3% are rated above average in overall condition
 8 units - 44.4% are rated average
 4 units - 22.3% are rated below average

2009 6 units – 42 % are rated above average in overall condition
 3 units – 21 % are rated average
 5 units – 35 % are rated below average

Data shows a loss of 4 units, and an overall decline in the condition of existing units.

Four to Eight Family Homes-were all built prior to 1925 with the exception of 6 units built in 1982. Their conditions are as follows:

	E	EV	V	VG	G	GA	A	FA	F	FP	P	U
1996	0	0	6	0	2	1	19	7	5	1	2	0
2009	0	0	0	0	3	13	15	8	3	0	2	0

1996 9 units - 20.9% are rated above average in overall condition
 19 units - 44.2% are rated average
 15 units - 34.90/e are rated below average

2009 16 units – 36 % are rated above average in overall condition
 15 units – 34 % are rated average
 13 units – 29 % are rated below average

Mobile Homes-17 built between 1950-1970, 2 built in 1980, and 1 built in 2001. Their conditions are as follows:

	E	EV	V	VG	G	GA	A	FA	F	FP	P	U
1996	0	0	0	1	4	1	6	2	4	0	1	0
2009	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	0	0	0	2	0

(2009 reflect 9 less units overall)

1996 6 units - 31.6% are rated above average in overall condition
6 units - 31.6% are rated average
7 units - 36.8% are rated below average

2009 1 unit – 10 % are rated above average in overall condition
7 units – 70 % are rated above average
2 units – 20 % are rated below average

Condominiums – Data reflects that registered units were all constructed after 1900. The number of condominiums may be a reflection of conversions. (i.e. apartments or multi families to condominiums.) All units are listed in good condition.

4.2.2.2 ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Based upon this information it can be concluded that single-family homes make up the bulk of the present housing stock in Hardwick. These homes are in general in good condition. Multiple family units are more uniformly older and in less good condition, particularly 4-8 family units. There is clearly an aging rental housing stock centered primarily in Gilbertville that is need of updating and repair at present, however, data shows a slight improvement overall in the condition of 4-8 family units. This housing stock will be even more in need of updating and repair in the near future. Much of it is of historic significance. Currently much of this housing is owner-occupied or locally-owned.

Present data shows a slow decline in the condition of all categories in housing stock within the community.

As ownership ages more of these units will go on the market. This could be a significant problem if absentee ownership becomes a trend. Present absentee ownership in town provides a snapshot of a grim future if this trend develops. Later in this report possible ways the town can encourage both local ownership and upgraded housing conditions in Gilbertville will be addressed.

4.2.3 HOUSING SALES

Median Home Sale Price		
1990	\$55,000	Banker & Tradesman
1991	\$94,000	
1992	\$77,209	
1993	\$70,000	
1994	\$100,000	

1995	\$76,200	From Town Assessors Office
1996	\$81,666	
1997	\$94,500	

Tax Assessment Year / # of parcels		Average Single Family Assessment
2005	635	163,092
2006	662	226,426
2007	673	247,350
2008	677	256,277
2009	678	259,123

State average single-family tax bill from 2007 through 2009 vs. Hardwick average single-family tax bill.

Year	State	Hardwick
2007	3,962	2,469
2008	4,100	2,522
2009	4,250	2,462

4.2.4 SUPPLY OF SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

The following table demonstrates the supply of subsidized housing in Hardwick and surrounding communities. Department of Housing and Community Development Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) as of September 9, 2008*

Community	2000 Census Year Round Housing Units	Total Development Units	Total SHI Units	Percent SHI Units
Belchertown	5,002	232	206	4.1%
Brimfield	1,287	90	90	7.0%
Brookfield	1,259	47	41	3.3%
East Brookfield	797	0	0	0.0%
Hardwick	1,054	35	35	3.3%

Holland	947	31	31	3.3%
Monson	3,184	171	171	5.4%
New Braintree	325	0	0	0.0%
North Brookfield	1,889	142	142	7.5%
Palmer	5,371	464	406	7.6%
Spencer	4,816	276	275	5.7%
Wales	690	57	57	8.3%

Data provided by Pioneer Valley Regional Housing Plan

Subsidized Housing Units			
Program	Year	Units	Name
DHCD	2008	48	Quabbin Estates
40b	????	17	Other

4.2.5 ZONING

Currently there are 5 zones, but as of this publication the following 6 zones will be proposed in a bylaw update.

Zoning District	Min. lot size	Min. Frontage	Min.	Yard	Depth	Max Ht
			Frt	Rear	Side	
R-60 Rural Residential	60,000 Sq. Ft.	200'	35'	40'	20'	35'
R-40 Neighborhood Residential	40,000 Sq. Ft.	150'	35'	40'	20'	35'
V-Village Residential	20,000 Sq. Ft.	100'	25'	30'	20'	35'
GV- Gilbertville Village	20,000 Sq. Ft.	100'	25'	15'	10'	35'
1-40 Industrial	40,000 Sq. Ft.	200'	60'	50'	50'	35'
C-40 Commercial	40,000 Sq. Ft.	150'	35'	40'	20'	35'

4.2.6 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Housing, like every single element in the town's Master Plan is part of the whole fabric of life in Hardwick, its villages and countryside, if we don't pay attention to it, the entire fabric will unravel. Housing is tied into land use, economic development, cultural life and history, infrastructure issues,

recreation and conservation. It affects such seemingly disparate issues as the quality of education, the well being of youth, family unity and the lives of elders. At the center of Housing as a topic for study is the issue of affordability and around that issue revolve elements of zoning, the cost of land and construction, demographic change, the conditions of existing structures, and needs for supporting services.

In planning for change, whether gradual or abrupt, planning for housing means much more than thinking about new construction as the only important and affecting manner of town growth and change. What will happen when large multifamily, historically significant buildings in Gilbertville come up for sale in the not-so-distant future? Will they start, or in some cases, continue to decay, owned by absentee landlords. Will they afford poor conditions to their inhabitants? Or will they provide new opportunities to restore unique and beautiful old buildings, providing a diversity of housing opportunities from rental housing, to cooperatives to condominiums at affordable prices. What will happen as current farmlands and open spaces, are sold off and old farmhouses and outbuildings go up for sale. Will we be ready for development pressures that push for subdivisions, will old houses be torn down, and will rural life be available only to the wealthiest people in town? Or will we rehabilitate and improve current buildings, act creatively in developing rural land, and make sure that ordinary people can live spaciouly in the countryside of this town? These are exciting questions and exciting times. They require us to bridge the issues that link the necessity of looking at current and future housing needs realistically and imagining the best possible future.

4.2.6.1 ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Hardwick is not a wealthy town or a wealthy part of the state. In rural areas of town, the high price of land and the availability of flat open land encourages both land sales and development at the same time that it tends to encourage the placement of more houses on small lots and to discourage most people from farming or using their land. In the villages of Gilbertville, Wheelwright, and Hardwick Center, land for new houses is scarce. The town is unequal in the prosperity and comfort of different villages and in the opportunities and situations they offer for housing, while the rural parcels of land are volatile depending on location, pressure for development, quality of soil, topography, and cost. Given the spread of the town, the rich diversity of lifestyles and the good fortune of many people of high and moderate incomes, it is difficult for many people in town to truly see that the Ware River Valley Region of the state (which includes Hardwick and Ware together with West Warren) are the poorest parts of the entire Pioneer Valley Region. Many residents were below the poverty level in the 1990.

While many of the people in town are fortunate, very difficult lives are being led behind the white clapboard walls of rural houses and within the apartments of historic mill housing. We still recognize that, as a town, have the opportunity to raise the level of housing and community life for all of Hardwick's residents and to benefit everyone in the process; we can do this by taking advantage of grants, developing volunteer programs and other community projects, and by planning. The fact that we are a small community makes it more rather than less possible to plan about and address these issues. And the raising the quality of life for people of moderate and low incomes in town benefits the whole

town because it betters the atmosphere and levels of its schools, its community life and its economic well-being.

The vast majority of people who answered the town Master Plan Survey listed affordable housing as a major concern and goal. People in Hardwick appear to want a variety of housing options; they want housing that is accessible and affordable to everyone (including the elderly and handicapped); and they want social services to support village life.

At the very same time townspeople are more uncertain about specific elements that mesh the needs and realities of affordable housing. Even today (2008) of the 471 surveys, 56 % are of the opinion are in favor of affordable housing or have no opinion. Data from the survey revealed 30 % of 471 felt that there should be multi-family housing available in Hardwick. Of the 471 answered surveys, 44 % were in favor of housing development that maximizes open space, 17 % were opposed and they expressed concern over new residential development, and 37 % had no opinion. These answers were directed to the definition and applicability of "cluster housing," as it differs from other forms of subdivision, and they want to assure that municipal taxes are moderate in the face of certain growth and change.

Above all, it seems to us on the Housing Committee, that their answers and comments declare that townspeople want the town to stay much as it is today:

- People value Hardwick's social and economic diversity. They want to preserve the architectural integrity and beauty of Gilbertville, Wheelwright and Hardwick Center, the nature and rhythms of small-town life, and the rural landscape that is the broader fabric of the town. They want to be able to afford to live here and to remain here in their old age and infirmity and for their children to be able to stay in town when they are grown and starting families of their own.
- People know that the passage of time brings change, and they are eager for more local jobs, recreation and services. They are also concerned about the future of youth, the quality of education, and the condition of housing. They want the future to bring improvements. They want growth and change to happen by increasing, not diminishing, the quality and nature of life that is here today. They clearly argue in the 1997 and 2008 questionnaire for the elements of town activity that support and sustain family life (including education for our children, recreation for our youth, jobs for adults and services for our elders) over generations and varied economic circumstances.
- The 2008 survey data does not include the impact of the completion of the Cultural Center at Eagle Hill.
- The 2008 survey reflects a commonality in core values for members of our community.

Our committee believes that it is absolutely possible to meet these aims. We find exciting opportunities to make the town even better than it is today, to enhance the special beauty and the quality of life in Gilbertville, Wheelwright and Hardwick Center and to maintain the rural landscape and nature of the

town. We have used the responses of 1997 and 2008 Questionnaire, the work of other ongoing Town Plan Committees in Hardwick, the plans developed by other communities, and information about interesting projects nationwide to help shape the following list of concerns and issues relating to housing in this town.

4.2.7 TENURE

4.2.8 NEW HOUSING

4.2.9 TYPES OF STRUCTURES

4.2.10 AGE OF STRUCTURES

4.2.11 HOUSEHOLD INCOME

4.2.12 HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

4.3 2010 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Housing and development in Hardwick should be planned so that the town supports social and economic diversity. This goal encourages diversity in all the villages and rural areas of the town. Many other communities in New England and the country have addressed this goal, so we are not without models and assistance.
- We propose that the town form an Affordable Housing Study Group with a Landlords Association, to explore opportunities for planning and action, and reintroduction of the Hardwick Housing Authority (MGL 121b §3), with a local housing website.
- Create a property owner enhancement incentive program. (Local recognition for routine enhancement and improvement for 3-5 consecutive tax cycles)
- “Open Space” housing: a form of rural development where houses are in closer proximity on irregularly shaped lots with surrounding land being preserved, can accommodate a variety of kinds of building that reflect diversity in cost and size.
- Distribute a design manual with building permit applications to give direction on appropriate design for new housing to fit into the character of Hardwick and foster sensitivity toward protecting existing housing of historic significance.
- Within the villages of Gilbertville, Wheelwright and Hardwick, housing should range in affordability and layout. For instance, in Gilbertville, some multi-family dwellings could be rental units, others condominiums, owned by each units occupants. In addition, other buildings could be owned cooperatively by their residents, and others could be owned by a Community Housing Bank. This would create a diversity of housing and

residential patterns in each beautiful village while maintaining the village center's architectural integrity.

- Conversion of Mill Prosperities to multi-use, including affordable housing, condominiums, assisted living, rental units, which could include public office space, and business use.
- Conversion of present public office space to affordable housing, or Community Housing Bank.
- Accessory dwellings like apartments or the conversion of out buildings on farms can create opportunities for varied housing.
- We are strongly in favor of developing local appreciation for the remarkable beauty and historical interest of each village and the surrounding countryside. Old Furnace, Hardwick Center, Gilbertville, Wheelwright and the farms and rural houses that surround them trace the history of New England back hundreds of years, to long before the colonial era in America. Local housing reflects the history and also the individual families who, generation after generation, or as new residents give the town the complicated and endearing character it has today. The young people of every part of town should be able to cherish where they live. We hope that an appreciation of the architectural integrity of the village centers will guide the individuals who build houses here just as sensitivity to the character of a piece of land in the broader landscape will hopefully guide new building or renovations in rural housing. But this said, we want to note that we believe that few of us would be happy in a town that never celebrated the passage of time or individual style and taste of its architecture. Happiness at home comes partly from the way each individual feels that his or her dwelling reflects their tastes and values. Thus we hope that the community will trust its inhabitants and its neighbors to find their own blends of community consciousness, historical appreciation and individual taste and pleasure. This enriches the feeling of character and variety in town.
- Search for implementation funds. Although grants and financing for these kinds of services are complicated and not always easy to come by in rural towns such as Hardwick, there are real and creative ways that other rural towns like the hill towns on Route 9 west of the Connecticut River have received funding for child care, local vans for transportation, monies for park and sidewalk repair, etc.

- Activate the volunteer community. There are also creative ways that volunteer community action can gather to build and enhance housing inventories.
- Create a Memorandum of Understanding between agencies. Have the Town of Hardwick, (through the Housing Authority), create an active and legal Memorandum of Understanding, which would outline and articulate the working agreements and responsibilities between organizations such as:
 - PVPC- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
 - CMRPC- Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission
 - QVDC- Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation and the Town of Hardwick
- Use grants from Central Mass Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation (QVDC), along with other service providers, as well as our efforts with the town of Ware can help us provide services.
 - ✓ Old buildings that provide multi-family residences for many people should be repaired and renovated to support more and better use. There are funds that can help low-income residents with this process and ways that other agencies can be involved. Valuing these buildings and assuring that when they are sold they are maintained, takes advantage of what we already have, of good construction, and of the historical value of the buildings to the town. There are funds and programs that can and already do help us toward these goals. These buildings are also central to treasuring the town's historical roots. One of the best ways to support affordable housing is to support the maintenance and improvement of currently available housing and buildings that could become housing through renovation.
 - ✓ Farmers Home Administration Programs:
 - ✓ Section 502 Rural Housing Loans: Very low interest loans (as little as 1%) are available to assist low and very low-income families in the purchase and/or rehabilitation of new or existing homes in rural areas.

- ✓ Farm Ownership Loans: these loans are available for buying; improving enlarging farms and constructing, improving and repairing farm and repayment schedules vary.

- Support a community housing land bank. A community housing land bank is a non-profit organization that retains control of the land on which local need housing (non-speculative housing, housing that meets current needs) exists or is constructed. A Community Land Trust can buy land and build new units or buy and rehabilitate existing housing with the assistance of a state housing program and other donations and grants. Possible sources of funding for community land trusts include land donations, property transfer fees and state trusts for land preservation. With the support of a community land bank or trust, people living locally in villages and in the countryside could improve their living situations in spite of incomes that might often keep them in a cycle of housing that would let them save little money and have little equity.

- Tap into Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development funding for housing rehabilitation: The Town of Hardwick has received funds in the past from the MDHCD to rehabilitate housing, to help with social service programs like Fuel Assistance, to support planning projects, make infrastructure improvements to water supply systems. The board of selectmen and a public meeting review potential grants for projects like these and can release funds that are granted by the state.

- Provide tax exemptions. Support affordable housing: Hardwick does have tax exemptions for residents who are 70 years and over who qualify under special income guidelines (the exemption is for \$500) and there are also smaller exemptions for qualified widows and widowers, minors who are without parents, and others. Veterans and their widows can be eligible for exemptions. And in time of crisis, individuals and families can apply for tax abatements.

- At the same time that we address village housing and the broad issues of affordable housing programs, new housing in rural parts of town needs to be situated so as to emphasize and value the rural landscape and support rural ways of life on these homesteads. Many landowners feel very strongly that they should be able to get as much profit for their land as possible when they sell it. We emphasize the need to figure out ways that make rural lands affordable to people who are not particularly wealthy. If we don't succeed at doing this, the nature of the town and its villages will surely change in ways that we cannot undo. It is not only our farmland that we need to preserve but a way of life that sustains ordinary people on the land as well. Various measures have been used in other communities to marry affordability with acreage that will maintain

the small town rural character of an area. Land banks, land trusts and other programs deal with these issues.

DRAFT

5 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

5.1 2001 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Existing businesses in town will be supported and encouraged to grow, including the full range of existing economic development opportunities such as cottage industries, hospitality, service and restaurants, forestry and forest products, and conventional and innovative agriculture.
- Within the zoning and land development regulations, the regulation of "cottage industries" should be updated to encourage rather than discourage this form of development. However, appropriate site review and development standards must be included.
- The Town should organize and fund an Economic Development Committee to promote the economic development opportunities and direction given in this Plan. This committee would work with the Ware River Valley Economic Development Target Area on programs advantageous to Hardwick.
- The Town should develop and implement an appropriate small business model which would be aimed at sustaining existing businesses including agriculture and forestry.
- The Town should encourage the designation of economic opportunity areas such as the Gilbertville mills and the development or repair of infrastructure within the town's villages to support economic development initiatives. These infrastructure facilities - sewer, water, etc. can be funded in part with community development block grant funds.

5.2 ECONOMIC PROFILE - INTRODUCTION

It is always interesting to have "informal" economic development discussions with town's people. There are diverse interests, historical memories, and ideas, which arise in every discussion. Of note is the passionate way in which individuals and small groups of townspeople respond to local environmental, political, zoning, and economic development issues. This liveliness is in keeping with the choice to live in Hardwick and speaks to the immense pride we have towards our home.

5.3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMPARISON—HARDWICK AND ITS NEIGHBORS

Hardwick is a member of the Ware River Valley Economic Target Area (ETA) established in 1996. This ETA covers eight municipalities including Hardwick, Ware, Belchertown, Monson, North Brookfield, West Brookfield, Palmer and Warren. Based on research through the internet, the number of households slightly decreased in our Economic Target Area. The average of the median incomes of households in the Ware River Valley Regional ETA in this census data is 66.96% of the state median household number. This is illustrated in the following table:

Household Income

Town	Households	Median Household Income
Hardwick	999	\$45,742
Palmer	5,078	\$49,358
Ware	4,020	\$45,505
Warren	1,889	\$34,583
ETA	11,986	
Avg. ETA		\$43,797
Massachusetts		\$65,401
(U.S. Census Data 2000)		

Commercial Vacancy Rate 2000

The commercial vacancy rate within the Ware River Valley Regional ETA is 20.53%. The commercial vacancy rate for each community within the ETA is illustrated in the following:

Town	Total Commercial Space	Vacant Commercial Space	Percentage Vacant Commercial Space
Hardwick	431,434	254,168	58.91%
Palmer	3,238,796	626,021	19.32%
Ware	1,669,947	61,446	21.64%
Warren	1,023,942	65,314	6.03%
ETA	6,364,119	1,306,949	20.53%

(Local Boards of Assessors)

Part C: ETA Implementation Plan

Since the first writing of the MPIC economic report, the Hardwick Knitters buildings in Warren and Hardwick have been vacated. The Warren facility, consisting of over 600,000 square feet failed to receive a single bid at the October 23, 2009 auction. The Hardwick building is approximately 100,000 square feet. Both sites remain for sale.

5.4 EXISTING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Originally settled as agricultural communities, the four towns experienced considerable economic development and growth during the 19th century. The combination of abundant water power and expanding railways brought the region headlong into the industrial era. Imposing mill structures were

built. These mills were served by the railroads, which brought raw materials to the mills for manufacture and delivered finished goods and agricultural products to urban markets. Palmer came to be known as the city of seven railroads. Hardwick and Ware were each served by two different lines: the Massachusetts Central and the Boston and Albany, while Warren is transversed by the main branch of Conrail's Boston to Albany line.

The rails also brought the people required to work in the mills. For this new immigrant population the mill owners built multi-unit housing in close proximity to the workplace. The mills also supported the construction of extensive infrastructure systems, building water and sewer lines prior to the start of the 20th century. Regional centers of trade sprang up in shadows of the mill buildings, and the daily life of the communities came to be centered "downtown". Here the residents lived and worked, built schools and churches, found opportunities for recreation and spent their wages in the shops and stores which flourished along Main Street.

By the middle of the 20th century the mill economy was in a state of steady decline. Highways soon surpassed the railroads as a means of transporting raw materials and finished goods. Manufacturers left for other regions where labor was cheap and newer facilities operated more efficiently. In the proposed Ware River Valley Regional ETA unemployment reached thirty percent, and many residents were forced to look for work beyond the borders of the traditional labor market. This new commuter population soon worked and shopped outside of town, causing additional stress on the remaining commercial ventures. In the four towns the booming Main Streets of the industrial era are now left with vacant mills and storefronts, deteriorating structures, and declining property values.

In contrast to the Ware River Valley Region's proud past, the present day economy lags behind the average in the Commonwealth in most if not all statistical category. Chronic unemployment, low median wages, low per capita and household incomes, and high poverty and commercial vacancy rates reflect the economic distress that is now endemic to the region.

These statistics also reveal a disturbing trend. The rate of unemployment had shown improvement, until the 2008-2009 national economic down-turn. However, it must be noted that the total labor force has steadily declined. Regional demographics illustrate the impact of this trend. Though it is true that there are fewer unemployed, there are also fewer jobs and fewer workers. It is of primary importance that the region takes effective measures to reverse this trend. The Ware River Valley Regional ETA must hold on to the remaining employment opportunities which exist within the region. The ETA also needs to be able to effectively compete with other areas to attract new business development and new jobs to the region. A very recent ominous sign of concern should be the failure of a single bidder to show any interest in the October, 2009 auction of the Wright mill complex in Warren.

Water

Of the ETA's four member communities, Hardwick has the least capacity to provide water to serve the needs of additional commercial development. Hardwick Center has the only town-owned water distribution system with a yield limited to 21,600 gallons per day (GPD). This service is limited to

eighteen residential connections. The availability of water for fire suppression is limited to two small ponds that have been equipped with dry hydrant connections. Please note that commercial development of the Hardwick Center area is not envisioned due to the historic and rural nature of the village. The village of Wheelwright is served by the Wheelwright Water District, which is a private entity. The system's capacity is rated at 93,600 GPD. The village of Old Furnace is entirely served by private wells. Gilbertville village has the most developed water distribution systems, which are also in the private ownership of the Gilbertville Water District. The system's capacity is rated at 165,600 GPD. Distribution of water for fire suppression in Gilbertville is entirely separate from the domestic water supply and is further divided into two separate systems to serve the two sides of the Ware River.

Water Waste Treatment

In Hardwick, only the villages of Gilbertville and Wheelwright are served by wastewater collection and treatment systems. The two wastewater treatment plants have the capacity to treat 230,000 and 43,000 GPD, respectively. Neither plant is designed to accept industrial discharge and pretreatment would be required for certain new industrial uses.

Transportation

Hardwick is located on state Route 32 approximately 13 miles from the Massachusetts Turnpike interchange at Palmer. Route 32 serves both local and long-distance users simultaneously and does not function as a high-speed corridor. In fact, traffic from Hardwick must travel through Main Street in Ware to access the interstate highway system. Rail service is provided over the Massachusetts Central Railroad. Hardwick has no active local airport.

Public Safety

Hardwick has limited full time public safety capabilities. There are three full time police officers that generally work first and second shifts. There are 11 intermittent and 21 special officers, with three police matrons. The police department also has a part-time clerk. The town has no lockup facilities and utilizes Ware's local lockup when prisoners are taken into custody. Four cruisers, one ATV and one four wheel drive vehicle, and a bicycle are maintained by the local police department. Hardwick is served by a volunteer call fire fighting force which is equipped with a tanker, two pump trucks, and a forestry truck.

Permit and Approval Process

A comparison of the growth management permit and approval processes existing in the four communities, which make up the Ware River Valley Economic Target Area is provided in the following table. Please note that to assist in the economic development of the ETA, the four towns have committed to developing a consistent and streamlined permit process.

	Hardwick	Palmer	Ware	Warren
Growth Management Comprehensive Plans	No	Yes	Yes	No
Rent Control	No	No	No	Yes
Condominium Controls	No	Yes	No	No
Groundwater Protection	No	Yes	Yes	No

Subdivision Control	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Requires Site Plan Approval	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other Growth Limitations	No	No	Yes (Wetlands Protection)	No

5.5 ECONOMIC TARGET AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Recognition of these needs resulted in the adoption of the first of the ETA's broad goals for development:

ETA Goal 1: Seek to create an environment that is conducive to economic development by supporting the retention and modernization of existing manufacturers and by streamlining the development permit process for new business investment.

The lack of jobs has also caused the younger, more educated and more mobile members of the communities to move on in search of better employment opportunities in other areas. As a result the population of the Ware River Valley Regional ETA is aging significantly faster than it is growing.

In the communities of Ware and Hardwick, for example, US Census statistics illustrated in the time period 1980 to 1990 shows that the elderly population is growing at a significantly higher rate than the total population. (see prior master plan). That trend seems to be changing as evidenced by the more current census data.

Population Growth

Town	Res. Pop.	1980	1990	2000	Increase/ decrease
Hardwick	Total	2,272	2,385	2,891	+506
	Elderly	279	279	376	+97
Ware	Total	8,953	9,752	9,707	-45
	Elderly	1,256	1,581	1,465	-116

(U.S. Census 1980-1990-2000)

This aging population also tends to be strongly established in the older downtown areas of the Ware River Valley communities. These elderly owner occupants, living on fixed incomes, are often unable to afford routine improvements to maintain the appearance and structural integrity of their buildings. This results in further deterioration of the downtown environment. A younger, more affluent commuter work force that works and shops outside of town populates newer housing in the outlying areas. Revitalization of local commerce will require the reintroduction of significant employment opportunities

that will reestablish the working population in the downtown areas of the communities. Attracting new industry that will utilize the existing vacant structures in these areas poses one of the most significant challenges to the ETA. In response to this challenge the ETA's steering committee established the second broad goal to govern the economic development efforts within the region.

ETA Goal 2: Seek to revitalize the downtown business areas through the creation of jobs within the ETA's member communities, emphasizing the utilization of vacant and underutilized commercial spaces and existing "brownfields".

One of the region's economic development assets is the existing infrastructure capacity to support new commercial growth. Generally speaking, the capacity to support development is already in place throughout the region. Municipal services and infrastructure systems are highly developed and able to accommodate immediate expansion. The area also supports local hospitals, district courts, sound educational systems, as well as the necessary public safety agencies. The ETA's member towns are actively established in the region:

ETA Goal 3: Seek to provide adequate public facilities, infrastructure, and services to accommodate planned economic growth and development.

The Ware River Valley Regional ETA further recognizes that the unique rural environmental character of the region must not be sacrificed to the economic development process. The area is rich in open lands that should be preserved for the enjoyment of future generations. The region should also be encouraged to continue to support some level of agricultural activities.

Protecting the abundant water resources of the region is also a significant concern. The water quality and scenic beauty of the Ware and Quaboag Rivers have been identified as potential attractions for tourism activities and must be protected. The Quabbin Reservoir and its watershed occupy significant land in the towns of Ware and Hardwick, and safeguards must be in place to prevent any possibility of contamination of this irreplaceable drinking water supply.

The Ware River Valley Regional ETA's steering committee has established the following strategies for the implementation of this economic development initiative:

- The regional economic development committee will seek to expand access to debt financing for businesses wishing to locate or expand within the region. Particular emphasis will be placed on funding for utilization and modernization of existing commercial structures. It should be noted here that in addition to the region's conventional sources of financing, a peer lending program for micro enterprise borrowers is about to be established in the region. The Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation has established the Quaboag Valley Business Assistance Corporation, which offers a revolving loan program to area businesses unable to secure conventional bank financing. The Ware Community Development Corporation manages a similar program serving small businesses in the towns of Ware and Hardwick.

- Criteria for the Designation of Economic Opportunity Area. These may potentially include the former sites of Romar Tissue, Raitto Engineering, Gage Loom Works, and Hardwick Knitters in the Town of Hardwick, as Hardwick seeks to attract new occupants to these vacant and blighted structures. Please note that Hardwick's commercial vacancy rate was the highest in the Ware River Valley Regional ETA, until 600,000 sq. ft. went unsold in a recent Warren auction.

Other Local, State and Federal Resources

- Hardwick joined with Ware in the submission of many successful applications for CDBG grant funds through the Executive Office of Communities and Development. The grants will provide much needed help in funding for strategic planning and engineering studies for the modernization of the Gilbertville Village fire protection water distribution system. This system originated with the former mill industry of Gilbertville and has been severely neglected with little or no periodic maintenance since the decline of the mills' activity.

5.6 ISSUES AND CONCERNS

The prospect of marketing our town to outside businesses seems to be an overwhelming task. There are hundreds of other communities that have advantages, which Hardwick does not. Also, the monies to attach to such a recruiting effort are large and difficult to find. Hardwick does not have the roads, water capacity, and other infra-structure developed to support new medium to large businesses in town. Even in our industrial zoned properties, new business would encounter personnel and transportation obstacles.

Granted, we are on the rail line, and we have some available commercial/industrial space where business could be located. However, other communities have better roads, enhanced telecommunications, and a larger pool of potential employees to develop a new business. There is more lenient legislation recently passed to help redevelop potential "Brownfields" parcels in our town. This is complicated, risky and expensive business nonetheless.

Though we have a history of periodic industrial success in our villages, this type of ED is better located along the main line. We do have, however, a thriving inventory of current enterprises, which need our attention and support. The decline in traditional dairy farming has hurt us all. We are concerned for the families and traditions that dairy farming brings to our community. We feel concern for the open space that remains attached and worked by these farmers. And finally, we need to foresee the disposition of these spaces and transition to new ED ideas.

Our "heavy" industrial land in Gilbertville and Wheelwright in part is being utilized and in part is a real potential hazard. The corridors of current commercial development continue to blend well with our environment. We see that the strength of our business community is the small business. These businesses are in a multitude of shapes and sizes, work in a diverse number of areas and need our

attention. Our local artists continue to look for ways to expand their trades. Local garages are busy with local repair. Home construction and renovation continues to be strong, as the economy moves forward. One former economic opportunity area (Gage Loom Works) has been filled with a specialty manufacturer of custom display booths, and recently a specialty woodworking shop has expanded into a vacant building with a retail shop for custom wood trim. We continue to flirt with tourism through our artists, bait shops, proximity to Quabbin Reservoir, and recently along the Ware River. Several years ago, Dr. John Mullin, Dean of the UMASS graduate school, felt the Route 32/32A corridor would be the next “beltway” from Route 2 to the Massachusetts Turnpike. Because the land trust organizations have been very active in the area, Dr. Mullin has changed his thinking to the Route 32/32A corridor being a greenway, which would be very positive to tourism. Our local veterinarian, farmers co-op, rod and gun clubs, golf course, two environmentally focused businesses and a lumber kiln continue to plan for future business. A committee of local people has put together a thriving farmers market that gathers on Sundays on the Hardwick Common. The success of a local couple with their baked goods at the farmers market has lead them to rehab a “blighted” building in Gilbertville into a bakery and coffee shop.

Eagle Hill School

Eagle Hill School (EHS) seeks to continue its role as an essential partner in the financial, economic, cultural, and social fabric of the Town of Hardwick. As the town’s single largest employer, EHS’ fiscal discipline and viability continues to be a steadying factor for the Town during periods of national economic booms and busts. More directly, EHS intends to continue its financial contributions to the Town’s public safety services as well as numerous other worthy organizations that make Hardwick the wonderful and caring community in which to live. Additionally, EHS’ landmark commitment to making an annual donation in lieu of taxes remains a long-term priority for the school.

The 2009 opening of the EHS Cultural Center was a monumental step toward forever linking and strengthening the cultural and social bond between the town and the school. In addition to making Hardwick a more vibrant and attractive place to live through its first-rate cultural offerings, their hope is that the Cultural Center will inspire and produce context-appropriate ancillary business opportunities for local residents in the arts and hospitality fields—opportunities that complement Hardwick’s rural character. In addition, EHS’ decision to open up their ball fields for town use, and commitment to providing free outreach courses to Hardwick residents are but two examples of the many ways that, together, we can create and sustain a rich, thriving community. The EHS Cultural Center, although a topic of its own, most certainly can contribute to tourism.

Long-term, the synchronization of the Town’s and EHS’ strategic plans will undoubtedly offer the greatest potential for economic value and prosperity. Potential partnerships in the areas of renewable energy, septic solutions, water treatment facilities, teacher training, and redundant personnel are but a few of the opportunities to reduce the duplication of services/resources and generate significant mutual benefit – financial and otherwise.

5.7 APPROACH

We look to improve the commercial climate in town while keeping in tune with the overwhelming sentiment of our citizens for stability and protection of our natural resources and open space.

As we cite ideas and individual efforts, we hope we do not offend nor to be meddling. Using real life examples helps to look for solutions to expanding yet controlling our Economic Development efforts.

Recommendations

- The Town should support existing businesses: Continue to improve/update town services (water, sewer, internet services) to enable businesses to compete. Streamline permitting processes for expansion or improvements. Offer Tax Incentive Program to encourage growth. Because our citizens surveyed feel strongly about not inviting “big business” into town, small business development is a natural next step. The implications of this ED will spill over into many of the other areas already presented in the Master Plan exercise. Housing, Open Space, Zoning, Natural Resources all will be affected by the direction of Hardwick’s ED efforts. By supporting our existing agricultural enterprises and our “cottage industries”, they will continue to offer local employment. Commuting individuals will continue to travel to the greater Worcester, Springfield, Leominster/Fitchburg, and Greenfield areas for their livelihoods. The march of population will affect Hardwick as it has Oakham, Hubbardston and the west part of Hardwick. Some of this population could spark potential for economic development and some of this growth could erode what our townspeople have come to cherish.
Responsible Municipal Entity: BOS, PB, BOH, ZBA
- Convert underutilized or vacant commercial/industrial buildings by allowing such buildings to be converted into residences (e.g., senior housing, affordable housing, etc.) or allow for a mixture of commercial and residential uses (commercial uses on the ground floor, apartments of the upper floors). Revitalize village centers (Hardwick Center, Wheelwright and Gilbertville), and along route 32 by upgrading Town services and allowing mixed uses.
Responsible Municipal Entities: PB, local water districts, ZBA
- The Town should undertake economic development as a long-term project. We see it as a work in progress, as is the Open Space Committee’s planning. Economic Development cooperation with Ware, our distinction as an Economic Target Area and the formation of a Small Business Development Model are the cornerstones of this continued effort. Investigate Tax Incentive Program as an attraction for new businesses. Promotion of eco-tourism, hunting/fishing opportunities or similar activities that may also support B&B, bait shops, etc.
Responsible Municipal Entity: new entity? BOS, Finance Committee
- Promote woodlot management as a business model. As our town changes, growth can be absorbed and economic stability can be nurtured through planning and careful consideration of our resources. To maintain a balance, diverse land use could be a tool. Historically, ours has been a land based economy. Dept of Fisheries and Wildlife and the Forest Industry are about equal in their ownership of woodland across the state. A majority of forestland, 85%, is in private ownership. The number of owners has doubled since 1972 and the average size is only

30 acres. Woodlot management could be viable alternative to growing houses for financial return. Using the Massachusetts Forestry Best Practices, MGL Chapter 132 the Forest Cutting Practices Act insures environmental protection of all forests during harvest. The state's Forestland Tax Laws (Ch 61, Ch 61A, Ch61B) offer tax savings may make it easier for a landowner to keep the land in the family into the future. The Massachusetts Forest Stewardship Program run by Dept of Environmental Management-Div of Forestry and Parks encourages landowners to balance ecological, economic and social values of their forests and to apply long-term thinking to their ownership goals. The Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP) is the cost-share arm of the Forest Stewardship Program, providing financial assistance for a variety of woodland projects. Responsible Municipal Entity: Conservation Commission, PB

Opportunities

As with the vast majority of small rural communities in Massachusetts, Hardwick has a long list of capital equipment needs that will need to be addressed during the next decade. If Hardwick's commercial and industrial sectors do not grow to increase their contribution to the local tax base, then it will be up to the homeowners to cover an ever-larger percentage of the Town's annual budget. Simply put, placing a greater emphasis on creating opportunities for economic development will help ease the tax burden on local homeowners. With the issue of infrastructure aside, Hardwick has more than enough vacant industrially zoned land to accommodate a number of new industrial operations. Hardwick's upcoming municipal needs are going to be there even if the Town's vacant industrial land lies dormant. The following are resources that could be investigated as potential economic development opportunities:

1. *Massachusetts Central Railroad – Ware River secondary line*: The Mass Central RR Corporation operates a 26 mile freight service from Palmer to South Barre. The Ware River line provides daily freight service with ten stops along the way, two being in Hardwick. As Hardwick's commercial and industrial zoning districts have extensive frontage along the railroad, it makes sense for the zoning scheme to cultivate those businesses and industries that would utilize freight rail service.
2. *Massachusetts Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP)*: As a member of the Ware River Valley Economic Target Area, certain benefits for costs associated with renovations of abandoned buildings are available when Economic Opportunity Areas are identified.
3. *The Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation (QV CDC)*: The Quaboag Valley CDC is a private non-profit corporation that promotes economic developments and workforce training within its 15-community service area. Their objectives include:
 - Redevelopment of blighted commercial areas
 - Coordination of public & private resources on regional economic development projects and
 - Job creation for unemployed/underemployed persons through specialized training programs.

5.7.1 EMPLOYMENT

5.7.2 UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

5.7.3 TOTAL EMPLOYMENT AND ANNUAL WAGES

5.7.4 EDUCATION

- 5.7.5 BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENTS IN HARDWICK
- 5.7.6 COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION
- 5.7.7 COMPARISON OF ASSESSED VALUES WITH NEIGHBORING TOWNS

5.8 SUMMARY

5.9 GOALS

5.10 RECOMMENDATIONS

DRAFT

6 TRANSPORTATION (FORMERLY CIRCULATION AND RECREATION)

6.1 2001 GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTION ITEMS

The Town should consider the protections offered by officially designating selected roadways as Scenic, under the Provisions of Mass. Chapter 40. This valuable tool (currently adopted by many towns in the Commonwealth) provides for a simple review process (generally by the planning board of a town) prior to the "cutting or removal of trees, or the tearing down or destruction of stone walls, or portions thereof" caused by roadway "repair, maintenance, reconstruction, or paving work, on such specifically designated roadways."

The Town should consider requiring a similar "scenic" review prior to any improvement projects that would significantly alter the design or character of any roadway within the town, including the paving of gravel roads.

Proposed new road construction or changes in any existing road or bridge design should be evaluated in light of resulting changes in traffic patterns. Through traffic should be channeled around residential areas whenever possible.

The Town should consider legal means by which it can protect itself against the substantial costs resulting from having to open currently closed, but not abandoned, roads. Consideration should be given to requiring developers to provide some or all of the cost of roadway construction.

The Town should encourage consideration of burying overhead electric, phone and cable lines around the Hardwick Common, and the removal of service poles. There may be grant monies available to assist with such a project. It could be coordinated with the proposed replacement of concrete curbing with granite.

The current schedule of daily MART shuttles should be publicized by the Town to encourage use and improve efficiency, with vehicles running nearer to capacity. The Selectmen should authorize the dispatcher to extend hours when there is a Town Meeting held after regular MART service hours.

The Town should consider offering bus service (McCarthy Bus Service) for after school activities (such as Ware has done). This can be accomplished with little additional cost for such service as demonstrated in Ware.

The Town should review PVRTA's current schedule and Hardwick's needs for transportation in their service area to provide appropriate information for a request for service.

The Town should research available funding to support passenger service. A possible business opportunity identified in town is a taxi service.

The Town should consider establishing a Hardwick Internet web site, detailing transportation and other matters.

The Town should continue to support efforts to provide unproved means of alternative travel.

A network of multi-use trails (ideally connecting the villages of Hardwick) for bikes, horses, and walking would be welcomed by many. Safe access to the Elementary School by foot or bike would likely be well-utilized as well.

6.2 TRANSPORTATION – ROADWAY SYSTEM

- 6.2.1 ROADWAY NETWORK
- 6.2.2 STATE ROADS/BRIDGES - PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENTS
- 6.2.3 NEW I-190 INTERCHANGE
- 6.2.4 BRIDGES
- 6.2.5 TRAFFIC VOLUMES
- 6.2.6 PROJECTED TRAFFIC VOLUMES
- 6.2.7 TRANSPORTATION CONDITIONS ALONG ROUTE
- 6.2.8 TRAFFIC SAFETY AND HIGH CRASH LOCATIONS
- 6.2.9 NEW SUBDIVISION ROADS
- 6.2.10 STREET CONNECTIVITY

6.3 TRANSPORTATION – OTHER TRANSPORTATION MODES

- 6.3.1 MASS TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES
- 6.3.2 TRAIN SERVICE
- 6.3.3 SIDEWALKS AND PEDESTRIAN USE
- 6.3.4 OFF-ROAD TRAIL DEVELOPMENT
- 6.3.5 AIR TRAVEL
- 6.3.6 SUMMARY
- 6.3.7 GOALS
- 6.3.8 RECOMMENDATION

6.4 RECREATION

6.5 SUMMARY

6.6 GOALS

6.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7 NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

7.1 2001 GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTION ITEMS

Support proactive Land Trust acquisition of open space - develop a priority list of properties to acquire, include important farmland forest land, areas of historical significance. Protect areas of visual or scenic value.

Work with land owners continuously to save and protect open space lands. Create within the zoning and land development bylaws more detailed standards for creative Agriculture/ flexible development on the lines of Randall Arendt's Rural By Design.⁴

Implement a greenbelt plan designating areas for open space protection and areas with development potential. The greenbelt plan should designate the villages as the primary locations for additional in-fill development and other small village open space/recreational enhancements, while designating the surrounding areas for open space protection. The greenbelts will help define the character of the town as it grows and help preserve the character that exists today.

Protection of important natural features, including wetlands, the Quabbin watershed, other watersheds/aquifer areas, floodplains, rivers, streams, ponds, and other important environmental features should be fully programmed in the zoning and land development bylaws. Environmental and natural feature protection should be a major component of Land Trust acquisition activity. The zoning and land development by-laws should be reviewed and rewritten (where appropriate) as soon as possible to reflect these priorities.

The Ware River should be made more accessible and should become a focal point for recreational use in town, particularly within the villages that flank the river (Wheelwright and Gilbertville).

Agriculture should be promoted by all of the Town's policies - especially within the zoning and land development bylaws. Agricultural zoning which favors agriculture and the primary zoning use should be promoted and adopted. There are many incentive programs that have been outlined in the element that support this, including tax incentives, promoting alternative agriculture, protecting large tracts of agricultural land. Agricultural protection and promotion will result from a mix of zoning, land development regulations, tax programs, Land Trust activity and activity of a future economic development committee (as proposed within the economic development chapter).

From 2001 Summary Natural Resources

⁴ Arendt, Randall. Rural By Design

The key natural resources of the town (described in the [1996] Open Space and Recreation Plan) should be protected within the zoning and land development bylaws. Such protection could be in the form of design and performance standards for site planning and development.

The town should explore overlay zoning for key environmentally sensitive areas, such as the Quabbin watershed, other ground-water aquifer areas.

Regulation of graveling and mining activities should be increased through improved and enforceable permitting and performance standards.

Forest cutting should be addressed through an enforceable permitting process.

Forest management educational programs should be implemented on topics such as the nature of Diameter Limit Cutting.

Promote design guidelines and regulations with respect toward maintaining scenic qualities in the landscape.

7.2 NATURAL RESOURCES

7.2.1 AGRICULTURE

Active agriculture has always been a key aspect of Hardwick's economy, culture and identity. Current residents of Hardwick will likely associate this agrarian aspect with dairy farming, as Hardwick was known for its regionally important and vibrant dairy community. Unfortunately, in keeping with trends across the northeast, Hardwick's dairy economy has been in sharp decline since the 1980s. Currently, Hardwick supports just three active dairy farms: a significant decline from the approximately 25 dairy farms in town as recently as the 1970s.

On the other hand, the town of Hardwick and its residents have been very fortunate that the land base has generally remained open despite the sharp decline of farming through the 1980s and 1990s. Unlike what is observed in many other towns as farming declines, the land base in Hardwick, for the most part, has not succumbed to conversion to residential building and other permanent alterations. Because of this, Hardwick is seeing somewhat of an agricultural renaissance beginning post-1990s as new and diverse forms of niche farming have begun to resurrect abandoned farmlands in town. Alongside our three remaining dairy farms and former dairy farms that converted to hay farming, a suite of agrarian pursuits have emerged, including two grass fed beef operations, fruit and produce growers, apiaries, maple sugaring and wool producers, to name a few. To this end, in 2008 Hardwick developed a very successful Farmers Market that has been populated by a diverse group of local producers and supported by a strong number of patrons. This modern agricultural resurgence is in no small part a direct result of Hardwick's available open lands.

This new wave of farming in Hardwick is complimentary to the attitude of Hardwick residents, according to surveys done in preparation for this Master Plan update. When polled about attitudes toward the

importance of preserving working farms in Hardwick, residents responded an overwhelming 332 (very important/important) to 17 (not important) in favor of maintaining working farms. Further, 396 to 75 residents indicated that they made an effort to buy locally raised or grown produce or manufactured goods, and 347 to 94 residents stated that they have attended the Hardwick Farmer's Market in 2008. These last two responses indicate that Hardwick's future as an agrarian town is more than just an aesthetic vision, but something that the residence are willing to actively support in a direct financial sense.

It is interesting to compare the current attitude toward farming in Hardwick to that during the last writing of the Master Plan in 1999. Though results were similar in the 1999 survey to the 2009 survey (438 residents felt that farming was important to 31 who did not in 1999), the outlook in that 1999 climate seemed far bleaker. "While most residents would like to see farming continue in Hardwick, the realities of this are quite different. As the costs of milk production continue to rise, greater efficiencies must be developed to remain profitable..." Though, unfortunately, this bleak outlook continues for our local dairy farmers into the present, the agricultural landscape has changed in Hardwick significantly since 1999 due to the diversified nature of Hardwick's current situation.

Issues and Concerns

Dairy Farmers: Hardwick needs to find ways to support its local dairy farmers on both the local and regional levels.

Farmland: Hardwick needs to continue supporting and promoting conservation efforts of farmland (APR, Chapter 61).

Agricultural Commission: Hardwick should continue an active and vigorous Agricultural Commission.

New Agriculture: Hardwick should continue to encourage new/diversified farming enterprises, support young local farmers, and/or promote Hardwick's agricultural opportunities to farmers currently outside of Hardwick.

Venues: Hardwick should continue to support financial outlets to farmers, such as the Hardwick Farmers Co-op and the Hardwick Farmer's Market.

Land Trust: Hardwick should continue to support the East Quabbin Land Trust, an organization whose mission revolves around the support and conservation of local agriculture.

7.2.2 TIMBER RESOURCES

The majority of Hardwick's lands are currently forested after being in the range of 80% open during the agricultural peak of the mid-nineteenth century. Hardwick's forests are an integral part of the town's economy, culture and identity, providing lumber, firewood, wildlife habitat, scenic beauty and watershed protection. All of these values are complimentary when forests are managed properly.

Issues and Concerns

High Grading: Incentives and outreach should be employed to steer forest owners toward sustainable harvesting.

Conservation: Landowners should be encouraged toward such as programs Chapter 61 and Conservation Restrictions.

Invasive species: Landowners should be educated and encouraged to address invasive species on their timberlands.

Earth Resources:

Earth Resources in Hardwick can generally be categorized as Topsoil, Rock, Sod, Loam, Peat, Sand and Gravel.

Hardwick has a surprising wealth of sand and gravel associated with its small river valleys, primarily in the form of outwash plains, deltas and eskers. The Ware River, Moose Brook and Muddy Brook are key glacially influenced landscapes. There are currently three major sand and gravel pits in operation in Hardwick (Patrill Hollow Road and Lower Road [2]), though many other deposits are currently left untapped and unprotected. Otherwise, Hardwick has a number of very small borrow pits, primarily associated with agriculture. Hardwick's first sod farm is also being developed on the Dunroman Golf course in Gilbertville.

Issues and Concerns

Groundwater Quality: Ensure that gravel operations are compatible with long-term groundwater quality

7.2.3 WATER RESOURCES

Hardwick has a wealth of water resources. Ground water resources are chief, as town residents obtain their water either through private wells or municipal systems based either on the Ware River aquifer or a smaller aquifer in Hardwick Center. Further, the large Muddy Brook aquifer in Hardwick provides the town of Ware a majority of its municipal water supply. It should also be noted that much of far western Hardwick is in the watershed of the Quabbin Reservoir, and the town's western hillsides and tributaries provide a significant amount of surface water to the Reservoir that eventually service the water needs of metropolitan eastern Massachusetts. Most of this watershed land in Hardwick is wooded and protected by DCR Watershed.

The protection of these resources is a prime value for the residents of Hardwick according to the town-wide survey distributed for this 2009 Master Plan update. 434 Residents responded that the protection of water supplies was either important or very important while only 10 responded that protecting water supplies was not important. This is nearly identical to the response to the 1999 Master Plan survey where 467 residents responded that protections were either important or very important compared to just 5 that did not think it important.

Beyond drinking water, Hardwick's streams and ponds are important resources for wildlife habitat, recreation and aesthetics. Hardwick Pond and the Ware River are both important recreational areas, while the Muddy Brook, Danforth Brook and Moose Brook are critical water features in supporting local biodiversity. Hardwick residents understand the importance of Hardwick's waterways: when polled in 2009 about protecting environmental quality (air, streams and ponds), 431 residents responded that was either important or very important while just 7 stated that this was not important. Again, this was nearly identical to 1999's results (455 to 13).

Issues and concerns



7.2.4 WILDLIFE HABITAT

Hardwick has an impressive amount and diversity of wildlife habitats and natural communities. The relatively undeveloped nature of the town and a combination of landscape attributes are key reasons for Hardwick's wealth of biodiversity. These features come together to create a mosaic of interwoven habitat types that support both common and rare species to our region.

Major landscape features important to wildlife include:

- Ware River
- Muddy Brook
- Moose Brook
- Danforth Brook
- The Dougal Range
- Moose Brook Valley
- Muddy Brook Valley
- Ridge Hill Area
- Goat Hill
- Hardwick Center
- Quabbin Reservoir

There are four coarse habitat-types found in Hardwick: forest, farmland, wetland and waterways.

Forest: Forests cover approximately 75% of Hardwick. The majority of these forests are deciduous, though pockets of eastern hemlock are scattered about and extensive white pine stands have reclaimed much abandoned farmland. The forests of Hardwick are recognized as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by an international panel of organizations. This designation is based upon Hardwick's large, contiguous, closed canopied, climax-type forests that have been demonstrated to support a wide range of interior-nesting Neo-tropical birds.

Farmland: Hardwick's farmlands are quite diverse, including regularly tilled cropland, hayfields and shrubby pastures. With the resurgence of grazing, many of the town's previously mechanically harvested hayfields are now becoming conducive to supporting breeding grassland birds. Grazing is also helping to maintain the early successional habitat of pastureland.

Wetlands: Hardwick has a variety of wetland types, both riparian and palustrine. These can be further classified into a number of specific natural communities, each supporting a very distinct and important suite of plants and wildlife.

Waterways: As a hill town, Hardwick does not boast a great amount of large open waterways. Two exceptions to this are the Ware River and Hardwick Pond.

The Ware River is a moderate-sized river that alternated between slow meanders and fast riffles. The River itself supports an impressive suite of both rare and common species, including a long list of Odonates, an important group of freshwater mussels, and an interesting fishery.

Hardwick Pond is a shallow 68-acre body of naturally impounded water on Muddy Brook. It supports extensive wetlands and some very interesting natural communities, which in turn, support a suite of rare and imperiled species.

Three other waterways are especially important wildlife habitat in Hardwick: Muddy Brook, Moose Brook and Danforth Brook. Muddy Brook is a slow, meandering brook with a naturally acidic composition and is especially important to rare invertebrates and herptofauna. Moose Brook is a gravelly high-energy stream that also supports a wealth of rare invertebrates and herptofauna. Danforth Brook alternates between high-energy and slow meander, with its associated wetlands supporting a wealth of avifauna. All three waterways feature native brook trout populations.

Other, smaller waterways of note in Hardwick include Fish Brook, Newton Brook, Broadmeadow Brook and the head of Flat Brook.

A number of small beaver ponds provide key habitat for a wealth of wildlife, especially waterfowl and nesting great blue herons.

The Quabbin Reservoir, one of the most important landscapes for wildlife in Massachusetts, comprises the entire western border of Hardwick. The great surface area of the water body and the expansive, mostly forested uplands surrounding the reservoir support an impressive array of wildlife resources. All reservoir lands are controlled by DCR Watershed, but not watershed lands on this western border of Hardwick should be targeted to maintain a seamless wild flow from the reservoir to other protected wild open space in town.

Natural Communities

Natural Communities are the vegetative expression of important landscape features such as hydrology, substrate composition, mineral makeup, land use history and microclimate. Other than for the most generalist of species, natural community type is the key governor of wildlife composition of an area. Below are descriptions of key natural communities in Hardwick – each can be found within one of the four coarse habitat types (forest, farmland, wetland, waterway).

Important Forest Natural Communities

Hardwick's forest natural communities are almost always embedded within the greater matrix of Hardwick's forested lands. Hardwick supports a very healthy population of forest dependant wildlife, primarily due to the large, unfragmented nature of these forests. Conversely, forest biodiversity suffers in forest systems that are fragmented, and zoning and openspace protection should reflect this fact. One major metric of the health of Hardwick's forests are their inclusion in the Important Bird Area (IBA) program: a global effort to identify and conserve areas critical to birds and general biodiversity. The Hardwick area, including the Quabbin Reservoir, was identified as an IBA for its demonstrated importance to interior nesting bird species. Additionally, the forests of Hardwick are also home to strong populations of other species that require large, unfragmented forested blocks, such as bobcat, fisher and black bear.

Rich Mesic Forest: Rich Mesic Forests are woodlands growing upon mineral rich, circumneutral soils. They are typically found on steep hillsides with a dominant canopy of sugar maple, white ash and American basswood. Their chief contribution to biodiversity is their support of a wide variety of specialized herbaceous species, especially spring ephemerals and several species of state-conservation interest. These forests are prime habitat for forest interior songbirds. Key examples of Rich Mesic Forest are found on the slopes of the Moose Brook Valley, Muddy Brook Valley, Broadmeadow Brook Valley and the Dougal Range.

Circumneutral Talus Woodlands: Circumneutral Talus Woodlands are open woodlands growing on talus and boulder fields, generally embedded within Rich Mesic Forests. Their mineral and vegetative compositions are generally very similar that of the surrounding Rich Mesic Forests, but their extremely rocky and more open nature enable these communities to support additional plant species of state conservation interest. . Key examples of Rich Mesic Forest are found on the slopes of the Moose Brook Valley, Muddy Brook Valley, Broadmeadow Brook Valley and the Dougal Range.

Oak-Hickory Forest: Oak-Hickory forest is a somewhat broad classification that includes forest sub-types that range from the common to the regionally unusual. The prime components of these forests are an oak-hickory canopy growing on thin, dry, somewhat acidic soils, typically on hilltops. When these forests occur on mineral rich soils they can also include a wide array of specialized, and sometimes rare, herbaceous plants. These forests are fire dependant, and in the absence of fire will revert to a more generalist (and less biologically interesting) composition of white pine and red maple. These forests are important to forest interior nesting birds, as well as mast consumers such as wild turkey, black bear and white-tailed deer. Key examples of Oak-Hickory Forests can be found on Goat Hill, Mandell Hill, Charity Hill, Muddy Brook Valley, the Dougal Range and the hills along the Quabbin boundary.

Pitch Pine-Scrub Oak Woodland: Pitch Pine-Scrub Oak Woodlands are communities typically based upon the sandy soil of glacial outwash. These communities are highly fire dependant and thrive on regular fire events. Conversely, in the absence of fire, these communities quickly decline due to competition, especially by white pine. The structure of most Pitch Pine-Scrub Oak Woodlands is an open canopy of pitch pine and tree oaks above a dense understory of scrub oak. When functioning correctly (with regular fire events), these communities support a very high concentration of early successional birds,

including whip-poor-will, as well an impressive variety of invertebrates. Hardwick supports a surprising amount of this habitat along two of its most glacially influenced waterways, the Ware River and Muddy Brook. Unfortunately, most of these habitats have not seen a fire event in decades due to fire suppression and have shifted toward a more white pine dominated composition. This shift coincides with the disappearance with whip-poor-will as a regular breeding bird in Hardwick. Prescribed fire and targeted timber harvest that mimics the effects of wildfire are critical in maintaining these important habitats. The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife is undertaking a major restoration effort of Pitch pine-Scrub Oak Woodland on their property on Patrill Hollow Road.

Wetland Natural Communities:

Hardwick supports an impressive diversity of wetland natural communities that in turn support an impressive level of biodiversity. Many of these wetlands have been found to harbor rare and state-listed species, and some of these community-types are quite rare themselves within Massachusetts.

Spruce-Tamarack Bog: Spruce Tamarack Bogs are unusual communities anywhere in the state, and Hardwick supports several small examples of these communities. Floating peat mats in naturally acidic waterways represents these communities in Hardwick. Black spruce and tamarack are the primary tree species associated with these bogs, with an understory of such species as leatherleaf, swamp azalea, wild cranberry, pitcher plant and spatulate sundew. One occurrence also supports other, much more rare state-listed plant species. Hardwick's examples of this community can be found along Muddy Brook.

Red Spruce-Tamarack Bog: Red Spruce Tamarack Bogs are not well-understood communities in Massachusetts and have not yet been thoroughly described. Generally the structure of these communities is a high, often closed canopy of red spruce above a sparse, wet floor of sphagnum moss, with interstitial open areas that support tamarack and dense understory shrubs such as highbush blueberry. These are critical areas that harbor a suite of breeding birds that are typically associated with more boreal climates. Hardwick supports nearly two hundred acres of this habitat at the headwaters of Muddy Brook.

Red Maple Swamp: Red Maple Swamps are wetlands dominated by a red maple canopy and a dense understory of wetland shrubs and ferns. These areas are important for nesting songbirds and herptofauna. Hardwick supports a variety of red maple swamps in terms of both size and composition. Good examples of these can be found at Pine Island (Hardwick Center) and along the wooded floodplains of the Ware River.

Shrub Swamp: Shrub Swamps are basin wetlands that lack a treed canopy, but instead consist of a low, dense layer of wetland shrubs such as alders, willows, dogwoods, viburnums and highbush blueberry. These communities are vital habitat to a long list of breeding birds and herptofauna. Many of Hardwick's Shrub Swamps have a naturally acidic quality, resulting in particularly interesting vegetative expressions. Muddy Brook and has many key examples of the Shrub Swamp community.

Emergent Marsh: Emergent Marshes are basin wetlands that support little woody vegetation, and instead are dominated by herbaceous cover; typically tussock sedge or cattails. Some of these communities are permanent, and others are more ephemeral, such as those found behind beaver dams. These are biological hotspots that are rich in breeding birds, herptofauna and mammal life. Of particular interests is the suite of *secretive marshbirds* (rails, bitterns, etc) that inhabit these areas, as many of this suite are quite rare in Massachusetts. Examples of these communities can be found at Pine Island (Hardwick Center), the Muddy Brook Headwaters and associated with many of Hardwick's beaver dams.

Vernal Pools: Vernal Pools are temporary bodies of water that support the breeding activities of a suite of specialized amphibians and invertebrates. Vernal Pools have been described as the community that supports the higher amount biodiversity in Massachusetts and are critical to the survival of many species who have adapted their breeding strategy to the ephemeral nature of these pools. Most amphibians that use Vernal Pools only use them during their short breeding cycle and spend the remainder of the year in the uplands surrounding the pool; often traveling quite far. Hardwick currently has 71 certified Vernal Pools, representing an estimated 75% of Vernal Pool communities in Hardwick.

Rare Species

Hardwick has a number of rare and state-listed species documented within its boundaries. Most of these species are highly specialized and associated with specific natural communities.

State-listed Species:

- Twelve-spotted Tiger Beetle (*Cicindela duodecimguttata*)
- American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*)
- Common Loon (*Gavia immer*)
- Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*)
- Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*)
- King Rail (*Rallus elegans*)
- Spine-crowned Clubtail (*Gomphus abbreviatus*)
- Bridle Shiner (*Notropis bifrenatus*)
- Triangle Floater (*Alasmidonta undulata*)
- Wood Turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*)
- Climbing Fumitory (*Adlumia fungosa*)
- Purple Clematis (*Clematis occidentalis*)
- Arethusa (*Arethusa bulbosa*)

Watchlist Species:

- Maine Snake tail (*Ophiogomphus mainensis*)
- American Rubyspot (*Hetaerina americana*)
- Superb Jewelwing (*Calopteryx amata*)
- Two-striped Cord Grass Moth (*Macrochilo bivittata*)
- Spotted Turtle (*Clemmys guttata*)

- Eastern Hognose Snake (*Heterodon platirhinos*)
- Four-toed Salamander (*Hemidactylium scutatum*)
- Sora (*Porzana carolina*)
- Whip-poor-Will (*Caprimulgus vociferus*)
- American Butternut (*Juglans cinerea*)
- Maple-leaved Goosefoot (*Chenopodium simplex*)

Issues and Concerns

Fragmentation: Zoning and Open space Protection can be used to decrease the impacts of habitat fragmentation

Vernal Pools: A Vernal Pool bylaw can be adopted to protect critical associated upland vernal pool habitat

Grasslands: Farmers can be encouraged to adapt grass harvesting to accommodate grassland bird breeding

Invasive Species: Landowners can be encouraged to address the impacts of invasive species

7.3 OPEN SPACE

Hardwick has recently completed a ten-year update of its comprehensive Open Space and Recreation Plan (2009) which spells out an extensive list of goals and policies over a range of focus areas including historic preservation, growth management, water resources, fisheries and wildlife, forest and vegetation, agriculture, soils, scenic qualities, recreational activities and general environmental protection. This updated plan is incorporated within the Master Plan within the Goals and Objectives Element.

Open Space is a vital element in defining the culture, economy and identity of Hardwick. Hardwick boasts a storied agricultural tradition, and active natural resources economy and wealth of natural landscapes that supports rich biodiversity and outdoor recreation. Hardwick residents value these assets, according to the 2009 Master Plan Survey. In response to open space related questions, residents responded in the following ways.

293 residents responded that it was either important or very important to preserve historic properties to 47 who responded that it was not important.

332 residents responded that it was either important or very important to preserve working farms to 17 who responded that it was not important.

414 residents responded that it was either important or very important to preserve open space to 35 who responded that it was not important.

374 residents responded that it was either important or very important to maintain an active Land Trust to 32 who responded that it was not important.

431 residents responded that it was either important or very important to protect environmental quality to 7 who responded that it was not important.

These survey results closely reflect the attitudes of residents during the 1999 Master Plan Survey.

7.4 SUMMARY

7.5 GOALS

7.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

DRAFT

8 HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

8.1 2001 GOALS, OBJECTIVE, AND ACTION ITEMS

Incentive programs to help homeowners preserve historic property, including property tax incentives, sensitive application of building code requirements, and creation of a housing land bank (as described in the Housing chapter) should be adopted by the town.

Educational programs aimed at helping and encouraging preservation efforts should be developed and encouraged by the Town through the school system and other venues.

Additional mapping, listing and writing about the resources should be undertaken by the Planning Board and Historical Commission to further document the resources and generate greater public appreciation for historic preservation activities. This will also be of benefit in larger public awareness.

Gilbertville's mill area should be reclassified from an industrial zoning category to one that allows adaptive mixed use for housing, offices, regional or neighborhood services and/or retail enterprises.

There should be development standards within the zoning and land development bylaws concerning the location of new homes or other buildings within the historic and scenic landscapes of the town. These site planning standards could be similar to those in Randall Arendt's *Rural By Design* and other design manuals.

Cultural activities within the town need continuous nurturing. The town fair, other cultural events, local artists, local arts and civic organizations, and school education programs need to be supported on a continuous basis.

8.2 INTRODUCTION

The town of Hardwick, officially incorporated in 1739, is located in central Massachusetts and is comprised of four distinct villages, portions of which hold an official place in the National Register of Historic Places. Hardwick was once primarily based both on its agricultural and mill industries, these two industries shaped the character of the town and continue to influence its culture to this day.

Historic Resources reflect the story of Hardwick and its development. They are the signs of community and personal identity and, thus, take many forms: public buildings and workplaces, rural landscapes and village centers, cemeteries, housing, churches and schools, the goods people used, and the people themselves. Consciously and unconsciously, we depend on these “resources” to understand how the town has evolved socially, ethnically, and in terms of landscape, religion, and economics. We also depend upon these resources to understand how we have changed as individuals over time.

Unlike many similar towns in the region, Hardwick was fortunate enough to retain its agricultural roots to the point where to this day, a significant portion of original farm land remains in tact and unspoiled despite years of pressure from development. Also, some of Hardwick's mill buildings still continue to stand and remain structurally sound despite years of degradation from non-use. All of this, in part, makes Hardwick truly unique and the people who are lucky enough to live here seem to have a deep appreciation for the town and a strong sense of community.

Cultural resources reflect Hardwick's active and participatory identity. They are the Town's many public and private organizations who play an invaluable role in identifying who we are as a community. It's the many veterans groups, artists and craftsmen, sports leagues, scouts, hunting and fishing clubs, the historians, and the many private groups that form the backbone of Hardwick's character as a town whose citizens take initiative and responsibility for a certain quality of life. Historic and Cultural Resources are always evolving. We need to appreciate and honor practices and places that might hold significance in the future.

8.3 SURVEY RESULTS

In December 2008, the Master Plan Implementation Committee sent out a town wide survey asking residents, among other things, how important it is for the town of Hardwick to focus on each of the following goals in the next 5-10 years: "To preserve historic properties", of which 89% of participants who responded answered either "Extremely Important", or "Important" and only 11% of people answered "Not Important". When the survey asked how important it is "to preserve working farms", of those who responded, 96% answered either "Extremely Important" or "Important" and only 4% answered "Not Important". When asked how important it is "to preserve and protect open space", of those who responded, 92% answered either "Extremely Important" or "Important" and only 8% answered "Not Important". When making decisions that could have an impact on the towns historical and cultural resources, town officials should take into consideration that a vast majority of residents who completed this survey overwhelmingly support the idea of preserving and protecting Hardwick's many historic and cultural resources and the outcome of their decisions should reflect that.

8.4 RESOURCE INVENTORY

The following lists specific historic and cultural resources that have been identified within the town, separated by each Town Village.

8.4.1 HISTORIC RESOURCES

West Hardwick:

- Hell Huddle, near Gate 43
- Foundations and Raceways of Spooner's Mills, on Muddy Brook on Greenwich Road
- Barnes House, on Thayer Road
- Site of schoolhouse, intersection of Greenwich Road and Patrill Hollow Road
- Janeczek Farm, on Greenwich Road

- Baptist Cemetery, on Collins Road
- Wright's Home, Old Greenwich Plains Road
- Camp Shari, built 1920, on Hardwick Pond on Turkey Hill Road
- Large Oak Trees on Turkey Hill Road

Hardwick Center:

- Ten Acre Preserve
- Site of the first common and meeting house prior to 1741 on Greenwich Road
- Deer Park Site of Timothy Ruggles Home on Upper Church Street
- Oldest Home, originally a parsonage on Sessions Road
- Mystery Numbered Stones on Thresher Road
- Stone Walls
- Old Ruggles' Homes on Ridge Road
- Stone Pillars behind Warburton's home on North Road
- Newton-Lincoln-Robinson House on Corner of Jackson Road and North Road

Gilbertville:

- Hardwick Knitters Mill Buildings
- The Whistle Stop
- The Covered Bridge
- Trillium Bank, on New Braintree Road
- Rock walls, on New Braintree Road
- Rock slopes and the caves of the Mount Dougal range
- Site of Gilbertville Bandstand near Main Street bridge
- Site of Howard's Mills, on Danforth Brook near intersection of Gilbertville Road and Dow Road
- Aiken-Allen House, North side of Lucas Road

Wheelwright:

- Wheelwright School, built in 1912 on Route 32
- War Memorial at Wheelwright School
- Gablefront single-family houses
- Single and two-family Gambrel houses
- Men's Club on corner of Maple Street and Pine Street
- Boardinghouse on Maple Street
- Site of Wheelwright Company Paper Mill
- St. Augustine's Roman Catholic Church on Church Street
- Superintendent's House on Church Street
- Scoop's Gas Station on Route 32

Old Furnace:

- Hamlet of Old Furnace
- Red Prouty's Place
- Site of Taylors Mill/Slab City near junction of Mosse Brook and Taylor Hill Road

8.4.2 CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY:

- Hardwick/New Braintree Cultural Council
- The East Quabbin Land Trust
- The East Quabbin Bird Club
- The Hardwick Farmers' Market
- The Cultural Center at Eagle Hill School
- The Hardwick Community Learning Center
- Youth Sports Leagues
- Friends of the Gilbertville Organ
- Hardwick 4-H Horse Club
- Hardwick 4-H Busy Bee Sewing Club
- Gilbertville Golden Age Club
- Hardwick Historical Commission
- Hardwick Historical Society
- Hardwick Meditation Group
- Quabbin Studies Program
- Memorial Handbell Choir
- Gilbertville Public Library and Paige Memorial Library
- John J. Weir Post #246 American Legion
- Veterans of Foreign Wars Post
- Hardwick Community Fair Committee
- Hardwick's First Friday Group
- Calvin Paige Agricultural Fund, Calvin Paige Agricultural Fund Trustees
- Joseph Pilsudski Association
- Hardwick Area Rod and Gun Club
- Hardwick Artists Guild
- Hardwick Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts

8.5 A RENEWED INTEREST

Despite the onslaught of developmental pressure followed by difficult economic times in recent years, there has been an ever-increasing shift towards preserving Hardwick's historical and cultural integrity.

The Hardwick Fair continues to be the biggest summer event in town and despite the fact that it draws thousands of people each year; it remains for the most part, exactly the same as it was when officially incorporated in 1762. Unlike many town fairs, the Hardwick fair has resisted the urge to deviate from its

main agricultural theme, and therefore continues to keep our agricultural heritage thriving in a modern era.

The East Quabbin Land Trust is a community based non-profit organization whose members work to permanently protect open space, including farms, fields, woodlands and riverways. The East Quabbin Land Trust (EQLT) began in 1994 because of concern for the loss of farmland and wildlife habitat to unplanned sprawl in and around Hardwick. Since 1998, EQLT has expanded its protection efforts to Barre, Petersham, New Braintree and other nearby towns. By working cooperatively with property owners, government agencies, conservation groups and other land trust organizations, the Land Trust has been able to protect over 2,500 acres in and around Hardwick and continues to increase its membership. The EQLT is an integral part of preserving and protecting Hardwick's historic resources and town officials should publicly embrace and promote its efforts.

The Hardwick Farmers Market emerged as a non-profit organization in 2007. A few proactive citizens concerned with the preservation of small-scale, local farms, as well as with food quality, are responsible for its overwhelming success. The Farmers' Market is held every Sunday during the summer and fall season on the Hardwick Common. Not only is this a place where people can purchase high-quality food products from local farms, it has become a place where the townsfolk gather to enjoy a Sunday afternoon with friends. Every Sunday people gather at the market to catch up while the kids play on the common and local musicians sing songs and play music. The Farmers' Market has become an important cultural resource that will hopefully continue in its success and become as much of a Hardwick tradition as our annual town fair. The town should be supportive of the market in every way that it can.

Also new to Hardwick is the Cultural Center on the campus of Eagle Hill School. The Center provides a new venue for learning, creating, exhibiting, performing, and enjoying art. It's a world-class venue- a 15 million dollar facility with two theaters, art galleries, visual art and graphics classrooms and studios, music classroom and recording studio, woodshop, and function hall. But more than all that it's a place to connect—a meeting place between young people and adults, performers and audiences, artists and budding artists. The Center is a cultural resource opportunity that Hardwick residents should embrace and support.

In 2009, the town of Hardwick came very close to passing a Community Preservation Act. The Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a local option state law. When a town adopts the CPA, the state matches funds raised locally. The funds can be used to preserve historic properties and locations, develop new outdoor recreational facilities, protect open space (including working farms and forests), and create and renovate affordable housing. The CPA is a means for town residents to work together to celebrate our history, protect our working farms and forests, and maintain our strong community for generations to come. Although the CPA didn't quite generate enough votes to pass this year, all things considered, it did pretty well in terms of the actual number of people who supported it. We are hopeful that with better public education and outreach, this important program will pass next year.

8.6 GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.6.1 PRESERVING THE LANDSCAPE

From the Ware River at 600 feet above mean sea level, which forms the southeast boundary of the town, the land rises and becomes rugged as it extends to the northwest. Elevations reach 1000 to 1100 feet above mean sea level. The soil is mostly either moist, somewhat stony, or rough and stony.

In spite of the changes that recent decades have wrought on this landscape, Hardwick retains the clear imprint of the historical process that shaped it. The Town abounds with houses that embody the popular image of New England's agricultural past. Working farms are fewer now but the Town's best fields remain in cultivation. The machines may be gone from the mills in Gilbertville and Wheelwright, but the vast majority of the buildings in these villages survive, and new generations living in the apartments and houses have recreated thriving communities.

The appearance of Hardwick outside its center villages comes from the way farms were scattered throughout the rural landscape of open fields and forests along roads that were situated according to why they were needed and to the lay of the land. A serious threat to this historic farm related identity is the pattern of development where lots are being created and built on along Hardwick's roads with houses at intervals similar to standard subdivision development.

The following recommendations should be taken into consideration with regard to preserving Hardwick's identifying land features:

- Preserve the integrity of the landscape. Hills, ridge lines, valleys, streams, wetlands, rock outcrops and formations, major tree cover, specimen trees, tree canopies, and the topography of the land, even minor topographical features such as drainage swales and gentle rises, need to "read" through all development. This can be accomplished through Zoning by-laws, subdivision and land development by-laws and design guidelines.
- Prohibit excessive earth cuts and fills. Where grading cannot be avoided, as in road construction, sculpt the rough so that it results in natural looking contours and plant native vegetation.
- Implement guidelines that minimize the visual impact of building houses on former farm property and retain rural features:
 1. Residences and structures should be located adjacent to tree lines and wooded field edges. This would avoid placing them in open fields.
 2. Buildings should be located not on ridge lines, but below them to preserve the natural form of the topography and the silhouette of the town's hills.
 3. Existing farm roads should be used in the subdivision design.
 4. Stonewalls and tree lines should be kept.
 5. Existing agricultural structures such as barns and silos should be preserved where feasible.
- Hardwick's zoning should be redrafted to not require, or even allow, continuous lots of equal road frontage that unravels the patterns of rural community. Allow irregular lots that keep contiguous areas of open land to be preserved.
- Gilbertville's mill area should be reclassified from an Industrial Zoning category to one that allows adaptive mixed use for housing, offices, regional or neighborhood services and/or retail enterprises.

8.6.2 PRESERVING HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

A way to promote preservation of Historic structures is to encourage a sense of stewardship. This philosophy means viewing property not as a commodity, but as a non-renewable resource which needs to be protected for future enjoyment. Historic buildings and locations are particularly appropriate for stewardship protection because they have existed for many years longer than their present owners and are physical records of the history of the town- a possession of not any one individual, but of the whole community and its residents. The following are recommendations should be taken into consideration:

- Incentive programs to help homeowners preserve historic property, including property tax incentives, sensitive application of building code requirements, and creation of a housing land bank should be adopted by the town.
- Owners of historic buildings should be encouraged to consult with the Historical Society and the Historical Commission for advice and guidance when considering exterior alterations to their buildings to evaluate the compatibility and affect of their projects.
- Encourage the reuse of older buildings within the villages as an alternative to new construction. The multi-family company-built housing of Gilbertville and Wheelwright are among our most visible Historic Resources. Sensitive maintenance of these old buildings is expensive and is a major contributor to their deterioration. Having information about financial assistance programs easily available, and considering tax options, would be helpful to landlords and owners.
- Financial incentives for the preserving, rehabilitation, and adapting of historic properties and locations can take many forms, some carried out completely at the local level, some featuring a partnership with State and Federal agencies. Examples include: tax incentives, such as federal investment tax credits and local exemptions from, or reduction of, property tax; grants from the State Historic Preservation Office, the National Park Service, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the National endowments for the Arts and Humanities, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and other public and private agencies; Federal, State and local subsidies to assist key businesses and to support low-income housing, helping to stabilize deteriorating commercial areas and neighborhood; the Department of Housing and Urban Development has published examples of such programs that are worth consideration (e.g. Leveraging Your Community Development Block Grant); the charitable contributions of partial interest in an historically important land area or certified historic structure that can be deducted from taxes; and the use of revolving funds and low interest loans to support such activities as sensitive rehabilitation and façade restoration. For more information, refer to the *“Community Development Plan for the Town of Hardwick, Massachusetts”* prepared in June 2004 by the Central MA Regional Planning Commission.
- An interesting idea that might be worth looking into is an alternate valuation of historic property. Where a property has substantial development potential, its fair market value is often much greater than the value of the property at its existing use. If a basis other than fair market value can be established for assessment, the pressure created by taxation to convert the property to its most profitable use would not be the owner’s only option. Essentially, this plan could be similar to some of the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Programs, but applied to historic property.

- Identify valued buildings and sites with historic markers that explain their significance. These resources should be mapped with other important features of the Town such as wetlands, streams and rivers, agricultural lands, and so forth to enable planners to plan for their preservation. This information should be used when deciding where development should occur that fits into the character of the town and its resources.
- The Town should lead by example and raise the funds necessary to restore some of the town-owned historical structures that are in need of repair. An example of this would be the old school house on Petersham Road.
- Another interesting idea would be to create a Committee in conjunction with the Hardwick Historical Society, called “The Welcome Wagon”. This Committee could welcome all new homeowners to town by having a small, select group of residents stop by the new person’s house to officially say hello, introduce themselves and answer any town questions they may have. This Committee of residents would also provide the newcomers with some historical facts regarding their newly acquired property, literature on the History of Hardwick, along with referrals to local businesses that these people might want to consider if they plan on doing any renovations, as well as information regarding the hours of the Town Hall. This ‘welcome basket’ would also contain some free local gifts (such as Hardwick maple syrup, Hardwick honey, a coupon to use at the Farmers’ Market, etc.) as a friendly gesture to make people feel welcome.

8.6.3 PUBLIC APPRECIATION AND EDUCATION

Preservation of historic resources, both natural and built, are a key aspect in retaining the unique and distinct character of Hardwick. A sense of community stewardship is an important element in terms of achieving this goal. Residents should continue to be encouraged to view property not as a commodity, but as a non-renewable resource which needs to be protected for future enjoyment. Historic buildings and locations are particularly appropriate for stewardship protection because they have existed for many years longer than their present owners and are physical records of the history of the town- a possession of not any one individual, but of the whole community and its residents. Historic Resources that are taken care of give residents a real sense of place and pride. Many of Hardwick’s buildings of historic value are in poor condition.

- The town should continue to identify properties and parcels of historic and cultural significance and work with landowners to encourage their preservation.
- The Town should place in each village a permanent sign that briefly recounts its history and the roots of its architecture.
- Educational programs aimed at helping and encouraging preservation efforts should be developed and encouraged by the Town through the school system and other venues.
- Additional mapping, listing and writing about the resources should be undertaken by the Planning Board and Historical Commission to further document the resources and generate greater public appreciation for historic preservation activities. This will also be of benefit in generating a larger public awareness.
- Cultural activities within the town need continuous nurturing. The town fair, the farmers’ market, other cultural events, local artists, local arts and civic organizations, and school education programs need to be supported on a continuous basis in a sustainable manner.

- Elementary school programs and high school projects having to do with local and regional history, and community character and appearance should be developed and promoted through a partnership of the schools, the Historical Society, and with the Town.
- The Hardwick Historical Society should continue to be supported and encouraged to host a variety of community based educational presentations based on Hardwick's history.

8.6.4 SCENIC RESOURCES

As one might imagine, Hardwick is filled with a variety of scenic resources, all of which contribute to the character of the town. It is important to not take this for granted and to remain vigilant when it comes to altering the landscape so that these stunning views can be preserved as best as possible. Below are suggestions that would contribute to that goal:

- Maintain a high visual quality of historic/cultural/scenic resources.
- Promote design guidelines and regulations that maintain scenic qualities
- Promote a widespread commitment to and tradition of stewardship with regard to maintaining scenic qualities in the landscape.
- Influence land use decisions with respect toward maintaining scenic qualities.
- Enforce gravel removal bylaws.
- Town officials should promote and assist with the official designation of scenic roads.

8.7 SUMMARY

Hardwick is a town rich in historic and cultural resources of both past and present. The people of Hardwick continue to evolve in the way we preserve and enhance these resources, which continue to shape the unique character of our town.

Historic Resources reflect the story of Hardwick and its development. They are the signs of community and personal identity and, thus, take many forms. Cultural resources reflect Hardwick's active and participatory identity. They are the Town's many public and private organizations that play an invaluable role in identifying who we are as a community. A renewed enthusiasm for preserving these resources should continue to be nurtured and embraced by the town and wherever possible, policies should be put in place that would permanently protect these valuable assets that continue to shape the unique and distinct character of our town.

9 MUNICIPAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

9.1 2001 GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTION ITEMS

Key elements of the proposed Capital Improvement Plan are:

Build a new fire station.

Build a new police station.

Develop a comprehensive road maintenance and improvement action plan.

Improve sewer lines within the wastewater district.

Upgrade the Gilbertville and Wheelwright water services and facilities.

Upgrade senior facilities and increase program services.

Upgrade town administrative services including the Planning Board, Building Inspector's Office, Tax Assessor's Office, and Town Clerk's Office with the appropriate equipment and accommodations for staff support.

Create additional town commissions and departments to implement and oversee Master Plan Elements that are not already applicable to existing services, (i.e. Housing, Land Bank Commission and Cultural Opportunity Commission).

9.2 PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES

9.2.1 FIRE DEPARTMENT

Organization

The Board of Selectmen appoints the Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief annually. The Chief appoints volunteer firefighters. Volunteers must have First Responder Certification, CPR Basic Firefighting Course, Mass Driver's license, Driver Training and Safety Program training and/or certification. The State Police Academy in New Braintree provides dispatch service for the department.

Staff

Volunteers make up the department. There are 25 paid on-call firefighters that serve as needed and are paid by the hour.

Budget

For the 2009 Fiscal Year, the Department had an operating budget of \$86,341.00, all of which came from the Town's General Fund. Grants from the federal government (Department of Homeland Security) and the State (Department of Fire Services) have funded some of the Department's recent equipment purchases.

Equipment

Facility

The fire station is located at 165 Petersham Road (Rt. 32A). The fire station was built in 1978. In terms of housing the Department's equipment, the station is at full capacity and has no additional room for new equipment. Recently, the department made repairs and improvements to the old highway barn, which is located off-site. The department stores various equipment at this location. In 2001, the Board of Selectmen appointed a Public Safety Building Committee to conduct a feasibility study for the renovation, rehabilitation, expansion and/or new construction of public facilities. In 2003, the Board of Selectmen issued an RFP for Consultant Services to conduct the feasibility study. Due to cost considerations and differences of opinion as to location of the complex the study was not conducted and the committee disbanded.

Through a combination of local and MSCP CDBG funds, a comprehensive plan for improving the Village of Wheelwright's fire protection system was developed. Improvements to the distribution and supply system were made over a five-year period from 1998-2002. The final remaining element critical for fire protection was the funding and construction of a 210,000 gallon water storage tank. The final phase was completed through the use of FY 04 MSCP CDBG and local funds. The storage system was placed into service in 2007.

Permits Issued

The Department issues permits for the installation of oil burners, the removal of underground storage tanks, blasting, brush burning, and smoke detector permits. The Department conducts inspections for fire alarms, and sprinkler systems for businesses, industries, residences, schools, etc.

Other Responsibilities

The Fire Department is the first line of response for hazardous waste spills. The Department will call in the State's regional hazardous materials response team if the spill is more than it can handle. The Department also provides rescue services for auto accidents, rapid intervention teams, as well as search and rescue operations. The Department provides annual training classes to each member.

Upcoming Capital Needs

Issues and Concerns

While the department is providing a vital community service, the department also acknowledges the need to improve and upgrade the existing services it provides. Meeting the Town's future needs will be contingent upon interdepartmental communication, local appropriation and most importantly, public support. A proposed decreased budget allowance will result in equipment shortages and maintenance problems. The condition of some bridges in town may cause delays in response time. The general time frame is 6 minutes from "out door" to scene, which is an acceptable level of service.

Future Plan

It is expected that State mandate will require, level 1 and 2 firefighters be EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) trained. The fire station is now the Emergency Management Center and is at capacity, with one engine being housed outside the building. The possibility of adding 2 additional “bays” is being discussed.

9.2.2 POLICE DEPARTMENT

Staff

The Hardwick Police Department has 3 full-time Police Officers including the Chief, nine part-time officers and one part-time clerk (administrative support). The Board of Selectmen appoints all annually. The Chief is contracted and is currently in the third year of a five-year contract. In 2009, the Police Department joined the New England Police Benevolent Association. Presently, the town has completed negotiations of its first Union Contract. Funding for this contract is scheduled for the October 2009 Special Town Meeting. The State Police Academy in New Braintree provides dispatch service for the Department. There were 4200 calls for the year 2008.

Budget

For the 2009 Fiscal Year, the Department had an operating budget of \$300,975.

Equipment

- 4 Cruisers
- 1 Mountain bike
- Communication system (14 portable, 3 mobile and 1 base)
- 2 Generators
- Computer System
- Records and Weapons

Facility

The Police Station is located in the basement (lower level) of the Municipal Office Building located at 307 Main Street. Space conditions are inadequate and need to be improved. Additionally, security conditions for Booking Room are inadequate, with other Town employees and the general public conducting business within the building.

Upcoming Capital Needs

Issues and Concerns

The Police Department in its present location cannot function in an emergency, as the present location is not equipped with working generators. The air quality in the basement department is not amenable to good health. Additionally, the stairs leading to the basement are a safety problem when handling unruly prisoners.

The U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Federal Investigations Standards, cites that for New England communities, an average of 2.9 patrolmen serve each one thousand residents. The town's present population of approximately 2800 already puts the Town far behind the federal standards.

Community Policing Grants of approximately \$12,000 annually have been eliminated by the Governor.

Future Plan

The Police Department does not forecast a move to an updated facility in the near future due to the uncertain financial situation in town.

9.2.3 RESCUE SQUAD

Overview

The Hardwick Rescue Squad is a private non-profit organization. Rescue Squad headquarters are located at 482 Lower Road.

9.2.4 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING COMMITTEE

Organization

The Hardwick Emergency Management Planning Committee consists of seven members. The Board of Selectmen appoints a Director and Deputy Director annually.

Staff

One part-time Director and Assistant Director. The Director receives a stipend of \$1,323.00

Budget

For the Fiscal Year 2009, Emergency Management had a budget of \$1,824.00

Facilities

The Emergency Operations Center is designated as the Fire Department where there is access to the radio net and independent electrical power. Storage of supplies, primarily for shelter operations is on the second floor of the Municipal Office Building. In the event of a disaster (natural or otherwise) residents are instructed to go to the Hardwick Elementary School to seek shelter.

The Emergency Management Department does not have a mobile command center, nor does it have any vehicles for its use. The Emergency Management Department coordinates its activities with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency through its regional office.

Responsibilities

The Emergency Management Department is responsible for handling the response logistics for large-scale emergencies such as natural disasters and civil emergencies.

Upcoming Capital Needs

Installation of a generator at the Municipal Office Building.

Issues and Concerns

Future Plan

Installation of a generator at the Municipal Office Building is our largest future expense. Procurement of additional shelter supplies (cots, bedding, medical support) is ongoing. Planning for shelter operations and cooperation with the local schools is also ongoing. Exercises of our public health disaster plans and training on all hazards mitigation and preparedness continue.

9.2.5 BOARD OF HEALTH

Organization

Hardwick has a three-member elected Board of Health. Each member is elected to a three-year term. The board meets bi-monthly (the 2nd & 4th Thursday of the month) at the Municipal Office Building. The Board of Health appoints the Health agent and clerk.

Staff

The Board has two part-time employees, a Health Agent and clerk. Members receive an annual stipend. Qualifications include knowledge of requirements and compliance to Department of Public Health and Department of Environmental Protection. The Board of Health is in charge of sanitation and is also responsible for legal citations in the housing court.

Budget

For the Fiscal Year 2009 the operating budget was \$28,881.00

Facilities

The Board of Health shares office space with the Conservation Commission and Finance Committee at the Municipal Office Building.

Equipment

Computer, printer, file cabinets

Upcoming Capital Needs

None

Issues and Concerns

Difficulty with part-time positions carrying full-time work loads due to budget constraints.

Because of shared office space, confidential information is stored only in locked files.

Future Plans

At this time the board feels it is acceptable to remain in the quarters it now uses. It may be possible at some point to consider regionalization. Communication is vital in the event of emergency. However, landline is all that is available to members of the board. If affordable, cell phones may be a consideration.

9.3 PUBLIC WORKS

9.3.1 RECYCLING COMMISSION

Organization

The Recycling Commission consists of seven members that are appointed to three-year terms by the Board of Selectmen. The Recycling Commission meets monthly.

Staff

Budget

For the 2009 Fiscal Year, the Recycling Commission had a budget of \$37,810.00 raised locally as part of the general fund.

Facilities

Equipment

Upcoming Capital Needs

Issues and Concerns

Future Plans

9.3.2 HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Organization

The Highway Surveyor is elected and serves a three-year term.

Staff

The Highway Department consists of five full-time employees including the Highway Surveyor and a part-time clerk who provides administrative/clerical support.

Budget

For the 2009 Fiscal Year, the Highway Department had an operating budget of \$464,447 raised locally as part of the general fund. Additionally, some Chapter 90 funds (state funds) were used for road maintenance and the purchase of equipment.

Facilities

The Highway Garage is located on 179 Petersham Road. The garage was built in 1958.

Equipment

- 1 Backhoe
- 1 Loader
- 1 Grader
- 4 Dump Trucks
- 2 Pick up Trucks
- 1 2 ½ Ton Truck
- 1 Street Sweeper
- 1 Sidewalk Tractor
- 1 Brush Mower Tractor
- Snow Plows

Upcoming Capital Needs

The Town will need to replace two dump trucks in the next three years.

Issues and Concerns

The Highway Garage does not meet environmental regulations. The garage needs a truck wash bay, welding bay, paint bay and floor drains with oil and water separators.

Need to hire a full-time Mechanic.

Employees need to be compensated fairly. Cost of living adjustments should be made annually.

Future Plans

New garage.

9.3.3 SEWER DEPARTMENT

Organization

A three member Board of Sewer Commissioners manages the Sewer Department. The Commissioners are elected to three-year terms. The Board meets on a bi-weekly schedule. The Superintendent is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Department and is appointed by the Sewer Commissioners.

Staff

The Department consists of the Superintendent, Operator and part-time administrative support.

Budget

For the 2009 Fiscal Year, the Department had an operating budget of \$360,926.00. The Sewer Department operates under an Enterprise System. Under an enterprise system, operating costs and capital costs are paid by the sewer users. The Sewer Department earns additional income to offset its operating costs by processing leachate, trucked in by private haulers. The Department estimates that leachate processing contributes approximately \$100,000 annually to its operating budget.

Facilities

The Town of Hardwick has two (2) water pollution control facilities. The village of Gilbertville is serviced by an extended aeration wastewater treatment plant commissioned in 1973 that is located off Rt. 32 on Mill Road. The treatment plant has had numerous minor upgrades through the years and continues to meet the requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Discharge Permit. In January 2009, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Town entered into an Administrative Consent Order (ACO) as a result of two sewage force main failures. The ACO required the town to develop maintenance procedures to prevent future main failures and complete a comprehensive sewer system evaluation survey (SSES). The SSES was completed in the fall of 2009 and outlines areas of concern within the collection system in Gilbertville. A preliminary engineering report and design to upgrade the pump station conveying all domestic sewage to the treatment plant has been completed and the Town is currently applying for a Federal low interest loan from the United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Agency.

The village of Wheelwright is serviced by a new Sequencing Batch Reactor wastewater treatment plant. Construction of the plant was completed in April of 2009. The plant is expected to meet the needs of the village for many years to come. The design of the treatment plant incorporates processes that are capable of meeting future anticipated limits of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit.

Issues and Concerns

Areas of concern are public sewer lines running through private property. The Town is responsible for the lines in the road but not in homeowner's back yards. As lines age, this "back yard/under cellar" distribution leading to the road lines is becoming a serious problem.

Upcoming Capital Needs

Improvements to infrastructure.

Future Plans

In March 2007 a comprehensive evaluation of the infrastructure within the Gilbertville Village was conducted by Stantec Consulting Services utilizing funds under CDBG program. The purpose of which, was to provide a plan for infrastructure improvements in the village of Gilbertville by mapping the existing systems; describing their type and condition; recommending and prioritizing specific improvements; developing a ten-year capital improvements plan; and setting out a funding strategy. Based on the recommendations put forth in the plan, the Town applied for and received a grant through the Community Development Block Grant Funds Program from the Executive Office Communities and Development (EOCD) for infrastructure improvements to the Railroad Lane, Grove and Bridge Street areas.

Recently, the Town issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Consulting Services to investigate partnering with Eagle Hill School for initiation of a Feasibility Study to extend sewer lines from Eagle Hill, located on Old Petersham Road, to Gilbertville. There are approximately 50 plus homes, two churches, a general store, a service station/garage, and seven municipally owned buildings located within the proposed sewer extension area. The municipal buildings include the library, fire station, highway garage, storage barn, and three structures that primarily serve as meeting places. Several homes in the area are believed to have failing septic systems, and some of the municipal buildings are not in compliance based on their current use. The lot sizes in the target area, combined with the soil conditions, make compliance with Title 5 regulations impossible to meet for the several homeowners whose systems are thought to be failing, as well as the Town in regards to its municipal buildings. The target area for this project is the Hardwick Village center and Eagle Hill School, which is located approximately one mile from the village center. The private school currently has a working package plant, but is concerned with long-term expansion projections.

9.3.4 WATER DEPARTMENT

Organization

The Board of Selectmen serves as Water Commissioners for the Hardwick Center Water District (HCWD). The Hardwick Center Water District is comprised of approximately twenty-five users of which six are town buildings.

There are also two private water districts in the villages of Gilbertville and Wheelwright.

Staff

Three part-time employees (Superintendent, Asst. Supt., and Billing Clerk). All appointed annually by the Board of Selectmen.

Budget

For Fiscal Year 2009, The Hardwick Center Water District had an operating budget of \$4,947.00

Facilities

The Town of Hardwick owns and operates the Hardwick Center public water supply well site, which supplies water to approximately 25 houses and Town buildings. The well site is located on Ruggles Hill Road. In 2006, the Town received a \$378,000 loan and \$172,000 grant from the USDA Rural Development Department for improvements to the Hardwick Center Water System. The project addressed system deficiencies as presented in the April 5, 2006 DEP Administrative Consent Order, including construction of a building to contain approximately 10,000 gallons of pressurized water storage, a corrosion control chemical treatment system and an electrical generator.

Upcoming Capital Needs

Replace old mains and Add blow off hydrants.

Issues and Concerns

Future Plans

9.3.5 GILBERTVILLE WATER DISTRICT

Overview

The Gilbertville Water District is a private entity. In response to a petition from selectmen, the Massachusetts Legislature provided enabling legislation for the establishment of the Gilbertville Water District under Chapter 414, Section 10 of the Acts of 1949. The Gilbertville Water District was established to operate and maintain the domestic water supply system and is a registered public water supplier under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Drinking Water Regulations and the Department of Environmental Protection. The District serves approximately 215 households and 40 commercial users whose services are metered. The District operations and maintenance are funded through the assessment of user fees.

9.3.6 WHEELWRIGHT WATER DISTRICT

9.4 DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

9.4.1 PLANNING BOARD

Overview

The Planning Board consists of seven members that are elected to five-year terms and two alternates that the Board of Selectmen appoints. The board has a part-time clerk for clerical support. For the Fiscal Year 2009, the Board has a budget of \$4,716.00. The Board reviews and endorses Approval Not Required (ANR) plans, subdivision plans and site plan review applications. Currently, the board is rewriting the Zoning Bylaws, and is involved with Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC) in updating the town's Master Plan. The MPIC consists of twelve members that are appointed annually by the Board of Selectmen. The Committee is responsible for the implementation of the Master Plan recommendations. The MPIC is responsible for the creation of a master list of recommendations, the identification of responsible boards and/or committees, establishment of priorities for action and the

tracking of progress related to the implementation of selected items. Other responsibilities include preparation and the engagement of the public in discussion about the implementation of the plan and the provision of assistance to boards and committees regarding advancement of the plan. The MPIC meets the first and third Monday of the month.

9.4.2 ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Overview

The Zoning Board of Appeals consists of five members and two alternates. The Board of Selectmen appoints the Zoning Board members to five-year terms. Alternates are appointed annually. The Town Clerk serves as a part-time secretary to assist with paperwork. The Board has a minimal budget and has not recently utilized any of its funding for training classes. The Board meets on an as needed basis. Its primary duties include hearing petitions for variances to the Zoning Bylaws, non-conforming uses, special permits, use permits and appeals of Planning Board and Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer decisions.

9.4.3 CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Overview

The Conservation Commission consists of five members that are appointed by the Board of Selectmen to three-year terms. The Commission has part-time clerical support. For the 2009 Fiscal Year, the Commission has an operating budget of approximately \$5,400. The Commission's primary responsibility is administration of the State's Wetland Protection and River's Protection Acts. The Commission does not have any professional staff and Commission members conduct their own inspections. Having Commission members serve as conservation agents could potentially create a conflict for the members, as they are being asked to gather data for decisions, render decisions on behalf of property owners and enforce their own decisions.

9.4.4 BUILDING INSPECTOR/ZONING ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

Overview

The Board of Selectmen annually appoints this position. The position is part-time. The Inspector/Officer conducts office hours on Monday evenings. Much of the Inspector/Officers time is spent doing fieldwork. For the 2009 Fiscal Year the Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer, has an operating budget of \$21,300. The Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer's primary responsibilities include enforcing the State Building Code and the Hardwick Zoning Bylaws. The Building Inspector does not have secretarial support. As a result, and due to limited hours, he does not have enough time available to search for code violations and can only address those that are brought to his attention. Additionally, there are sections of the Massachusetts Building Code that are not being enforced due to time constraints. For example, the State Building Code mandates that all multi-family units be inspected for code violations every five years. Currently, this is not being done in Hardwick.

9.5 SCHOOLS

9.5.1 QUABBIN REGIONAL

The Town of Hardwick is part of the Quabbin Regional School District. The School Committee is elected and each member serves a three-year term. For the Fiscal Year 2009, Hardwick's portion of the Quabbin Regional School District budget was \$1,876,718. Additionally, the town paid \$17,600 for the Educational Support Building and \$40,000 for the High School addition. The Hardwick Elementary School grades K-6 is located at 531 Lower Road. The Quabbin Regional High School grades 7-12 are located at 800 South Street, Barre.

9.5.2 PATHFINDER REGIONAL VOCATIONAL

The Town is a member of the Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical School District. The vocational school is administered by a regional school committee, of which Hardwick has one elected member. For the Fiscal Year 2009 Hardwick's portion of the Pathfinder Regional Vocational School budget was \$158,440. The Pathfinder Regional Vocational School grades 9-12 are located at 240 Sykes Street, Palmer.

9.5.3 EAGLE HILL SCHOOL

Eagle Hill School is a private non-profit co-educational college preparatory boarding school for students with learning disabilities, grades 8-12. In May 2003, the Town entered into an agreement with Eagle Hill to pass through its annual Commonwealth of Massachusetts bonding capacity for Eagle Hill to finance the costs to Eagle Hill School for improvements to its facilities within the Town at an interest rate significantly lower than the rate available to Eagle Hill through use of a conventional bond. Bonds proceeds in the amount \$8 million dollars were used to construct, equip, and furnish a dormitory, playing fields, and a classroom building and to refinance cafeteria renovations. The total savings to the school at the town's rate was \$225,442.56. As agreed, based upon the school sharing one-third (\$75,140.) of the total savings with the school the town will receive 28 annual payments of \$2,683.57. The first payment was received in May of 2004. For the past two years, Eagle Hill School has begun making an annual voluntary donation of \$25,000 to the town. Eagle Hill has also expressed an interest in partnering with the town to address septic issues at the school and in Hardwick Center.

9.6 LIBRARIES

9.6.1 PAIGE MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Organization

The Paige Library is a department of town government and is administered by an elected six- member board of Trustees that serve three-year terms. The Trustees meet monthly. The Trustees have delegated the responsibility for the library personnel management, collection development and provision of library services to the Library Director. The Library Director is appointed and directly responsible to the Library Trustees, and is an employee of the Town. The library is open 19 hours per week: from 3PM to 8PM on Tuesdays, 11AM to 4PM Wednesdays, 1PM to 7PM Thursdays and 9AM to 12PM on Saturdays.

Staff

The Library staff consists of three part-time employees: The Library Director works 19 hours a week and the assistants work 5 to 6 hours per week. The library has a number of volunteers and a Friends group that provide support for programming and with special projects.

Budget

The Library's funding derives principally from the municipal appropriations at Annual Town Meetings. For the Fiscal Year 2009, the Library has an operating budget of \$45,660.00. The Library holds several trust funds, that when combined, total the principal amount of approximately \$495,000. Only interest is expendable and is controlled by the Board of Trustees.

Facilities

The library was built in 1895 and originally used as the town high school. After a fire caused extensive damage in 1905, a new high school was built in the village of Gilbertville, and the building was rebuilt as the library. Measuring approximately 3,000 square feet of space, about half of the space, the main level, is used for daily library activities. Half the basement is unfinished, and is used for storage, the boiler room, and the water storage tanks for the central village. The other half of the basement is story hour space. Two bathrooms are also in the basement. A small lift built in 1998 provides handicapped access between the two levels. In 2006, the town contracted the services of Mary E. Braney, Library Consultant to write a building program to be used in configuring library service to the town. The Program was completed in April of 2007. In June 2009, the town contracted the services of the Office of Michael Rosenfeld Inc., Architects to prepare an expanded feasibility study with schematic design and design development for the library. The options being considered under this study are renovation and expansion of the existing building and/or construction of a new facility at a location to be determined. The Trustees will seek grant funding for construction/renovation from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners Public Library Construction Grant Program.

Equipment

The library has four public access computers and two staff computers, all purchased from funds raised by the Friends of the Library. Each of the computers has internet access. A server installed in 2008 connects all the computers to the library's catalog.

Upcoming Capital Needs

The library has a slate roof with a copper-gutter system that has been patched over the years. Leaks in the copper work and broken slates will lead to an extensive repair of the majority of the roof.

Circulation

Programs

Each Wednesday during the school year, the library holds a Preschool Story Hour, which is open to the public at no charge. Children hear a story, create a craft associated with the story and have a snack prepared by parent volunteers. Signup is required as it is a well attended program and space is limited. Seasonal events held for the Story Hour participants include a Halloween Party with Trick-or-Treating around the Town Common, a Christmas Party with Santa, and an Easter Egg Hunt. In addition, the library also offers a Summer Reading Program where school aged children are invited to attend workshops throughout the summer to earn prizes. These programs are funded by the Friends of Library. The Library also offers an outreach program to residents of Quabbin Estates. For over 10 years the library has been providing reading materials every other Wednesday, including large print books, books on cassette and CD and DVDs, to those at Quabbin Estates who might not otherwise have access to library materials.

Issues and Concerns

Physical space at the library, limited open hours, available parking, and budgetary constraints continue to hinder the library's ability to provide more to the community. Story hour participants number anywhere from 7 to 17 children per week. Summer reading programs must have limits placed on them as space is inadequate. For years patrons have complained about the limited number of hours that the library is open. With municipal funding continuing to decline and with library services from the Western Regional Library System being eliminated, the strains on what the library can provide to residents becomes harder to manage.

Future Plans

At the end of 2009, the library will complete the final stage of its Massachusetts Planning and Design Grant awarded to the town in 2005. The Office of Michael Rosenfeld, Inc., an architectural firm from West Acton, Massachusetts will provide the town with an expanded feasibility study, which is intended to show the needs of an improved library for Hardwick.

9.6.2 GILBERTVILLE LIBRARY

Organization

The Gilbertville Public Library is a public library that is subsidized by the town. The library has received funding from the town for over 65 years and maintains a separate endowment. The library is governed by a non-elected Board of Directors. The Board of Directors meets monthly. The Directors have delegated the responsibility for collection development and library services to the Library Director. The Director is appointed by the Board of Directors and is responsible to the Board of Directors. The Library is open 15 hours per week: Tuesday 2PM to 6PM, Wednesday 5PM to 8PM, Thursday 2PM to 6PM and Friday 2PM to 6PM.

Staff

The Library staff consists of one part-time Director. The Library Director works 15 hours a week. The library has a number of volunteers that provide support for programming and with special projects.

Budget

For FY09 the Gilbertville Public Library received an appropriation of \$18,117.50 from the town. For the Fiscal Year 2009, the Library has an operating budget of \$27,477.50.

Facilities

The Library building was built in 1912. The facility consists of approximately 2,414 square feet. The Children's room is large with a capacity to seat 18. The library seating capacity excluding the meeting room is 40. The building is in good shape and has a new furnace, front entrance, updated wiring, and the roof has been repaired. The Library has town water and sewage. Ample parking is available and there is room to expand the existing facility. The building is handicapped accessible.

Circulation

The Gilbertville Public Library has 615 patrons. The holdings are 12,005 and the circulation is 7,183.

Programs

The library offers wireless internet and has six public computers. The Library offers adult and children programs, educational classes, knitting group, book club, Polish club, and a meeting room, which is made available to the public.

Upcoming Capital Needs

Library Expansion and a New Circulation Desk

Issues and Concerns

Impact of financial constraints due to a failing economy are an issue. We are concerned about the differences of opinions on what library services should be for the town. Our concern is that a new library building would be too expensive for the townspeople and would cause an overwhelming tax burden. We believe the town would be well served by renovating the two existing libraries.

Future Plans

A tentative date of January 2010 may have the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners offering a grant construction round. Currently either library could apply for a construction grant when a new grant is announced. However, before either library can be eligible, the town must have a plan for library services, which includes both libraries and is adopted by both boards. The town will then be put on a waiting list and may stay on the waiting list for ten to twenty years depending on the availability of State Funds. After that the town will have to vote to raise matching funds before the grant will be funded. With continued support from the town, the town will have good library services until such time state and local funding is available to build a new library or renovate and expand the existing libraries.

9.7 GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

9.7.1 BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Organization

The Board of Selectmen is comprised of three elected members who are elected to three-year terms. The Board meets the second and fourth Monday of the month at the Municipal Office Building.

Staff

One full-time Town Administrator. The Board of Selectmen is the appointing authority. As the appointing authority the board appoints several volunteer committees/commissions and paid positions.

Budget

For the Fiscal Year 2009, the operating budget was \$56,875.00. As Chief Executive Officers of the Town, the board must develop consistent budget guidelines. The selectmen in cooperation with the Finance Committee strive to establish policy priorities and provide leadership during times of fiscal uncertainty. In order to improve interdepartmental communication, the board has begun to hold monthly meetings with department heads to discuss issues and concerns facing their departments. The board has also taken steps to develop a Capital Improvements Plan. However, capital improvements can only proceed as funds are available. The board continues to work with Pioneer Valley Planning Commission to secure Community Development Block (CDBG) funding for sewer and water infrastructure projects particularly in the Gilbertville section, which is the only village that meets the low/moderate income qualification. The board has recently submitted an application for funding under the Executive Office of Transportation's Small Town Road Assistance Program (STRAP) for replacement of the Patrill Hollow Road Bridge. Additionally, the board is working with the Planning Board to develop a guide for local permitting. This project is currently temporarily suspended while the Planning Board rewrites the Zoning Bylaws. The Town has obtained permit-tracking software developed by the Town of Grafton, which has been installed in the Building, Board of Health, Conservation and Assessors offices. In FY03 the Board of Selectmen established a property tax work-off program for taxpayers over 60 years old. Participants volunteer their services to the Town in exchange for a reduction on their tax bills. Although, the program has had minimal participation, it has provided some clerical relief for staff at the Municipal Offices.

Facilities

The Selectmen's Office is located at 307 Main Street. The board oversees the maintenance and operation of all town owned buildings. Several buildings are in need of costly repairs and/or renovations or do not meet building codes, ADA, or spatial needs of departments. In 2001, the board appointed a Public Safety Building Needs Committee to investigate the town's needs with regard to a Public Safety Complex. An RFP for consultant services to conduct a Feasibility Study was issued. However, due to a lack of funding the study was not conducted. A building and infrastructure assessment for the Senior Center has been completed. The study identified and prioritized improvements, along with cost estimates for the work. The Paige Library is currently conducting a feasibility study to investigate expansion/renovation or building a new library.

Upcoming Capital Needs

Explore development of a new Municipal Complex. Presently the board is working with the MPIC to explore purchasing or leasing the old Hardwick Knitters Mill for municipal and mixed use including retail space and housing. In May 2009, the MPIC hosted a Mill Redevelopment Charette. The workshop was facilitated by John Mullin of the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Approximately 60 people attended. Beforehand, the mill owner, David Persky, opened the building to the public for a brief tour. Participants at the charette were broken up into groups and asked to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats presented by the mill and its possible redevelopment. Concerns have been expressed regarding the ownership, public vs. private. There has also been discussion regarding the formation of a Community Development Corporation or to enlist with the Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation for purposes of redevelopment. Further in depth research in the feasibility of this project is needed.

Future Plans

9.7.2 BOARD OF ASSESSORS

Organization

The Board of Assessors is comprised of three elected members who are elected to three-year terms. Two are part-time and one is full-time. The board meets weekly.

Staff

One full-time Assessor.

Budget

For the Fiscal Year 2009, the operating budget was \$74,018.

Facilities

The Board of Assessors shares an office with the Town Collector at the Municipal Office Building.

Equipment

Computer equipment, map and plan storage, a safe, file cabinets, typewriter and workstation. Public access to property information is provided via the town's website www.townofhardwick.com.

Upcoming Capital Needs

None

Future Plans

At this time there are no plans to expand the department. However, a need has been identified for a part-time qualified individual to provide office (clerical) support to the board. Due to budget constrains this need has been filled by a Senior Tax Abatement Program participant. However, as a large amount of the Assessors' records are confidential, so the amount of involvement is limited.

Computer and technology equipment should be updated periodically and, ideally, the assessors should have GIS mapping capabilities.

The office furniture is in need of replacement, as the workstation is not configured for eight- hour computer use.

Assessors records are permanent and fire-safe organized storage space is necessary.

9.7.3 ACCOUNTANT

The Accountant is appointed annually by the Board of Selectmen. The Town's annual independent audit is contracted out. For Fiscal year 2009 the operating budget was \$36,873.00. In FY06 the municipal accounting software was upgraded to UniFund Budget Software. Previously, the town was using an antiquated DOS based program.

9.7.4 TREASURER

The Treasurer is elected to a three-year term. For Fiscal Year 2009 the operating budget was \$26,862.00. The Town has recently initiated a more proactive municipal tax title recovery program. All costs associated with the program including attorney fees, tax taking recording fees, land court fees and advertising is deferred until the property taxes are paid or the property is auctioned. The Treasurer is currently using an antiquated DOS based program. An upgrade in software would provide a more efficient department.

9.7.5 TOWN COLLECTOR

The Town Collector is elected to a three-year term. In FY 09 the position of Tax Collector was changed to Town Collector. The Town Collector is responsible for the collection of real estate, excise, personal property and farm animal taxes. Additionally, the Town Collector is responsible for the collection of sewer fees and Hardwick Center Water fees. For Fiscal Year 2009, the operating budget was \$28,146.00. In FY 10, the Town began issuing preliminary tax bills. The issuance of preliminary tax bills has improved cash flow, thus alleviating the necessity to borrow and incurring additional borrowing costs. Preliminary tax bills are also a convenience to the taxpayer as they are able to make partial payments and interest is not added until 90 days after the issuance of the bill. The Town Collector has been accepting online payments via the town's website www.townofhardwick.com.

9.7.6 TOWN CLERK

The Town Clerk is elected to a three-year term. For the Fiscal Year 2009 the Town Clerk had an operating budget of \$50,010.00

9.7.7 FINANCE COMMITTEE

Organization

Six members appointed by the Moderator to three-year terms. Contact is Larry Jaquith, Chairman

9.8 SPECIAL POPULATIONS SERVICES

9.8.1 COUNCIL ON AGING (COA)

Organization

The Council on Aging consists of seven members. Each member is appointed by the Board of Selectmen and serves a three-year term.

Staff

The COA has four part-time employees. The Coordinator works 20 hours per week and is paid by the town. Three part-time MART Transportation drivers provide transportation services. The COA makes great use of volunteers, with volunteers contributing approximately ?? hours last year.

Budget

For the Fiscal Year 2009 the operating budget was \$95,890.00. Additionally, the town was assessed \$?? For the MART Transportation program. The COA also received a formula grant from the State, and these funds were used for???. The COA receives donations from the general public, which are deposited in the COA Gift Fund.

Facilities

The Senior Center is located on 179 Main Street (Rt. 32) in the former George H. Gilbert School. The facility contains approximately 9,112 square feet and houses the Youth Center on the second floor and provides space to the Food Pantry, which run by the local church organizations. In 2007 Clark and Green Architects conducted a comprehensive Building Infrastructure and Assessment Study of the facility. Costs for improvements to the building were estimated at approximately \$940,000.

Programs

The COA offers Outreach, transportation, health, nutritional services, education and recreation programs. These programs include home visits and phone checks for seniors living on their own, transportation to medical appointments, a nutrition program, and health clinics. The Nutrition Program is contracted through the Age Center of Worcester. The Age Center provides cater on site congregate meals at the Sr. Center and Meals-on-Wheels to eligible elderly residents.

Upcoming Capital Needs

New Senior Center

Issues and Concerns

Increasing costs of building maintenance at the Senior Center continues to be a concern. The Council on Aging is working with the Board of Selectmen to identify cost saving measures to help keep the center open during these hard economic times. The Council on Aging in cooperation with the Board of

Selectmen has looked at alternative sites including the former Veteran's Home, and VFW for relocation of its Senior Center.

Future Plans

9.8.2 YOUTH SERVICES

Organization

The Youth Commission consists of five members. Each member is appointed by the Board of Selectmen and serves a three-year term.

Staff

The Youth Commission has two part-time employees. The Coordinator works 18.25 hours per week and the administrative assistant works 5.5 hours per week. The Coordinator works in conjunction with the Commissioners to establish and implement programs and services for the town's youth participants.

Budget

For the Fiscal Year 2009 the Youth Commission had an operating budget of \$14,391.00

Facilities

The Youth Center is located on the second floor of the George H. Gilbert Building/Senior Center. Hours of operations are Monday, Wednesday and Friday 2:30 PM to 5:30 PM.

Programs

The Youth Center offers various recreational activities.

Upcoming Capital Needs

Building space

Issues and Concerns

Building space

Financial constraints

Future Plans

To continue to serve the Town of Hardwick by providing a safe environment for the youths of Hardwick.

9.8.3 VETERANS SERVICES

Overview

The Veterans' Agent is appointed annually by the Board of Selectmen. For the 2009 Fiscal Year, the Veterans Department had a budget of \$4,896.00. The Veterans' Agent shares an office space with the Building Inspector and Planning Board at the Municipal Office Building.

Veterans' Homestead personnel provide monthly medical programs including screening for blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood glucose. Staff also provides assistance regarding federal benefits programs that are available. Currently, the Veteran's Agent is working with the Korean/ Viet Nam War Memorial Committee to erect a monument honoring Hardwick Veterans who have served in the war.

9.9 SUMMARY

9.10 GOALS

9.11 RECOMMENDATIONS

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10 ENERGY

10.1 BACKGROUND

This is the first Energy Element report written for the Hardwick Master Plan. As such, given that a formal Energy Program / Initiative is currently being formed in Hardwick, it will serve as an Energy Plan for Hardwick. Future updates will include progress reports with data, metrics, statistics, and revised Energy Plans.

By nature, Hardwick residents (and consequently the municipality) have been in the innovative – proactive forefront in many ‘green – sustainable - local economies’ initiatives. The community at large has demonstrated by example, lifestyle, and practice, its energy source / use concern regarding the effects it has on our economy, environment, and foreign dependence. The spirit is evident in the results of the Master Plan Implementation Committee’s 2009 Census Survey pertaining to the Renewable Energy Topic follow:

‘Please indicate how important you think it is for the Town of Hardwick to focus on each of the following goals in the next 5-10 years’

	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important
To promote renewable energy (i.e. wind, solar & hydroelectric)	287	128	30

This has Hardwick well positioned for forward progress in Energy management, sustainability, use reduction, and conservation improvements.

10.2 CURRENT STATE

Hardwick has completed its initial Energy Assessment with Trane – it’s ESCO Performance Contractor, and has committed funding to complete the next step – a detailed Energy Audit.

Some municipal measures are already in place – such as heating the town barn with waste oil collected from the recycling center.

Hardwick has natural resources and landscape which will help ensure success in its renewal / sustainability Energy initiatives and objectives. Forests, waters, and terrain – are all allies and assets in a green energy movement. Tapping these resources appropriately are keys to success (energy parks – hydro – biomass).

10.2.1 HARDWICK ENERGY COMMITTEE

In support of the Green Communities Act, a formal Energy Committee was formed by the Hardwick Select Board on August 31, 2009. The initial Committee consists of 13 volunteers. The Committee conducted its inaugural meeting on November 5, 2009.

The Hardwick Select Board has listed the following as their objectives for the Committee:

- Study and recommend energy conservation policies and projects to the Board of Selectmen.
- Research grant opportunities for renewable and sustainable energy initiatives.
- Provide recommendations to the town on related energy issues
- Provide assistance/education to residents on how households can implement renewable energy and conservation/efficiency measures in their homes and daily lives.

The Committee consists of varying degrees of knowledge and experience in the Energy field. Short term committee / member needs include:

- Guest Speakers at meetings
- Committee Education and Training as appropriate for the members activities (both at meeting and off-site)

Subcommittee activities will work on parallel committee initiatives and objectives as identified by the committee. A preliminary list of committee work includes:

- Establish energy metrics / statistics / footprints for Hardwick energy use – sources – and assess current/existing/in-use renewable/sustainable/ conservation/reduction practices and technologies
- Include a comprehensive survey in the 2010 Census to gather data to support previous bullet for current state
- Conduct public education and awareness campaign
- Complete draft Project proposals for appropriate municipal projects to be positioned for grant/funding opportunities
- Establish Energy By-Law
- Promote appropriate energy technologies to Hardwick
- Research options for forming / joining energy cooperatives

10.3 HARDWICK ENERGY NEEDS

Once an initial assessment of the Current State of Affairs of Hardwick's Energy Needs (both public and residential/private) is complete, Hardwick needs Project Proposals drafted to be 'Shovel Ready' to benefit from the many grants which are available to municipalities like Hardwick, and its demographics.

Although the technologies that will be required are similar for success in both the public / municipal and private / residential sectors, the approaches (grants – funding assistance – application of technologies) to success will be quite different. Only through a successful public awareness and education campaign,

will the desired results in Energy sustainability, conservation, and reduction – be achieved. The solution processes will need to be aligned.

Sustainable – Renewable Energy, Conservation, and Use Reduction - must be front and center in alignment with Hardwick’s goals and policies. This must come from the appropriate mix of By-Laws, permitting, zoning, and other processes (procurement practices - financial capital expenditures – facilities management – transportation) that support those goals. One example is a Mill Revitalization Project which has enormous potential for a solar energy source.

Hardwick and its residents need to join other Massachusetts communities in the drive to be energy conscious / cost effective in energy matters – reducing its carbon footprint – supporting local economies – and reducing dependence on foreign energy sources.

10.4 GOALS SUMMARY – ACTION PLAN

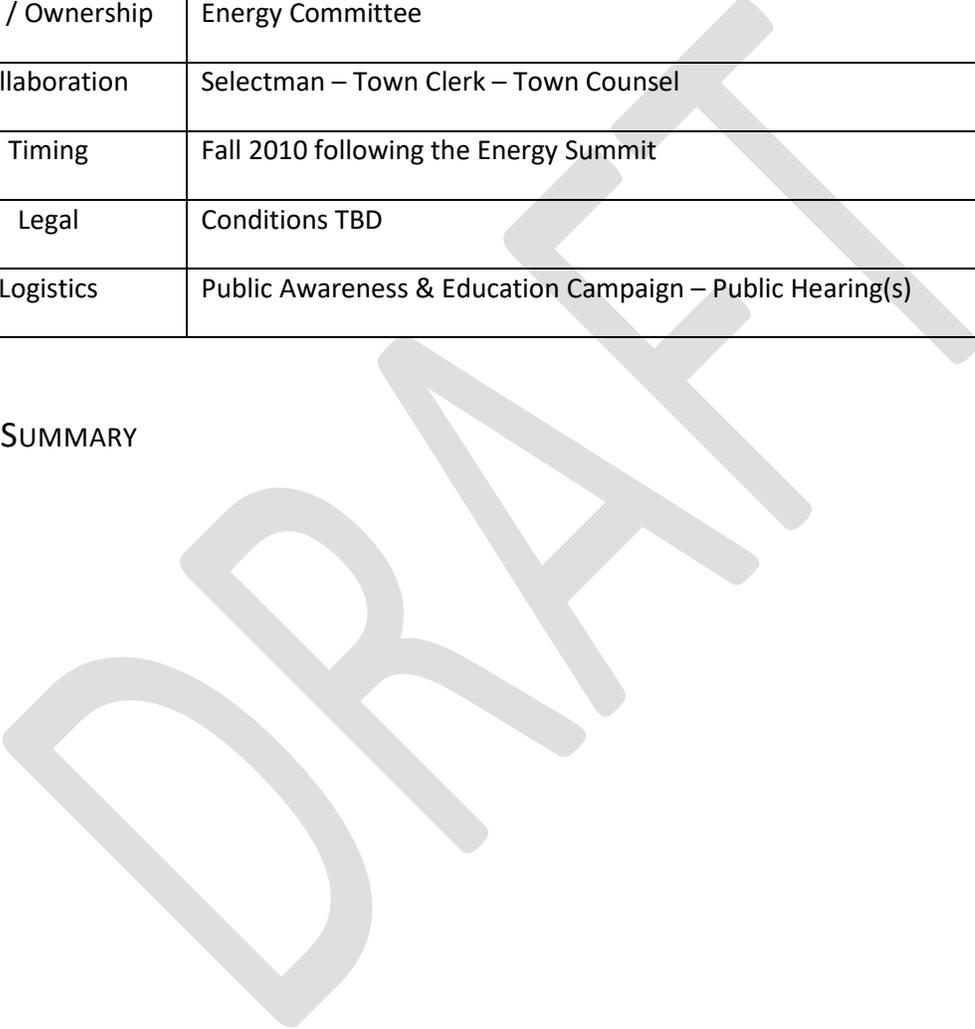
Item	Establish current energy metrics / statistics / carbon footprint for Hardwick energy use. Determine current renewable/sustainable energy practices. Determine participation rates for energy conservation & efficiency practices.
Activity	Public survey to be included in 2010 census.
Lead / Ownership	Energy Committee
Collaboration	Town Clerk
Timing	January 2010 Survey – Collate & summarize by April 15, 2010
Legal	n/a
Logistics	n/a

Item	Public awareness & education campaign
Activity	Energy Summit
Lead / Ownership	Energy Committee
Collaboration	East Quabbin Land Trust Members; Eagle Hill School; Possible Town Boards
Timing	Fall 2010
Legal	n/a

Logistics	Planning – Speakers - Costs. Application for Renewable Energy Trust Clean Energy Grant of \$3358.31 submitted 11/30/2009
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Item	Green Communities Act
Activity	Town to Adopt
Lead / Ownership	Energy Committee
Collaboration	Selectman – Town Clerk – Town Counsel
Timing	Fall 2010 following the Energy Summit
Legal	Conditions TBD
Logistics	Public Awareness & Education Campaign – Public Hearing(s)

10.5 SUMMARY



11 FINANCIAL STRATEGIES

Goal #1 - Budget Process

Goal #2 - Capital Improvement Plan and Process

Goal #3 - Improve Relations with State Agencies that Control Facilities Within Our Town

Goal #4 - The Mill

Goal #5 - Increase Economic Development

Goal #6 - Explore New Ways of Providing Town Services

Goal #7 - Complying with the Commonwealth's Rules and Regulations

Goal #8 - Changing State Laws and Regulations

Goal #9 - Regionalized Purchasing and Other Governmental Functions to Reduce Costs

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12 GOALS

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13 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the principal recommendations that have been developed during the course of the Town-Wide Planning process. Recommendations are presented under appropriate major planning themes, and may be listed under several subject areas if relevant to the discussions in different chapters of the Plan. The actions are numerous, but have been identified by the Master Plan Implementation Committee to be important components of achieving the long range Vision expressed at the very beginning of the Plan.

Table 11-1 contains a matrix of the specific recommendations and the boards or individuals who are designated as most responsible for advancing each item to implementation. Because of the diverse nature of the actions, it is important that the key implementer be identified to insure no item is forgotten and to avoid confusion as to who should take the lead. This format also helps each entity to easily identify those recommendations for which it has jurisdiction.

Table 11-1 also includes a timeframe to denote whether a short, medium or long-range effort will be required. Short-range strategies are changes to local policies that do not entail large expenditures of funds and can be accomplished within a one to two year horizon. For example, zoning by-laws amendments and administrative changes to the local government structure may take careful study and planning, but can be implemented by existing boards and town staff at little or no cost. Medium range strategies will require a concerted effort by the responsible parties and could take up to five years for implementation. These projects may also require modest funding to hire consultants, or are dependent upon actions only partially within the Town's control. Long-range projects are those for which detailed plans are necessary and require major expenditures of Town funds. These are typically capital projects that require long-term borrowing and/or grant funding to complete. On-going items are those that do not have specific timeframes but should be incorporated into the responsible party's customary practices.

Map 17, Action Plan Recommendations, attempts to display the location of those recommendations that have a specific geography that can be readily identified and mapped. Its purpose is to help the citizens of Hardwick who have not been involved in the planning process to readily understand the key concepts of the Plan, and how each component fits within a unified whole. In a sense, it seeks to summarize the many inter-related aspects of the Plan and to demonstrate a comprehensive approach to addressing the important needs facing the Town in the years ahead.

As the map and matrix suggest, upon adoption of this Plan by the Planning Board and Town Meeting, the comprehensive planning phase comes to an end, and the challenge of bringing about positive change begins. Many of these tasks will not be easy, and finding scarce resources among competing needs is an obstacle that requires constant attention. The Town Wide Planning Committee, as mandated by Town Meeting, must remain actively involved to shepherd the recommendations through to

completion. It is important that Town boards and committees not lose sight of their roles in this phase and devote their considerable talents to achieving as much as possible in the coming years. The Board of Selectmen must also provide Town staff and volunteers with the funding and assistance they need to insure that valid recommendations do not sit unattended for lack of adequate resources.

As with any Plan, it should be re-examined as the Town grows and conditions change. The Master Plan Implementation Committee is charged with this function, and it must maintain vigilance to insure its nature is not compromised by extraneous considerations. The Plan should serve as a guide to all departments and volunteer boards to work together as one community to achieve what is in the Town's best interests. Hardwick is blessed with outstanding natural beauty and a dedicated corps of volunteers committed to keeping the Town a wonderful place to live and work. This Plan can assist in that effort, but without active community involvement in its implementation, it will merely be a well-intended, but ultimately unsuccessful product of thousands of hours of volunteer and consultant labor.

Here's an idea for prioritizing actions. Take all of your actions and put them into various lists as a means of teasing out their key attributes.

1. Difficulty: Easy, Medium, Hard
2. Amount of time needed to do it: Less than a year to implement, 1 year, 2-3 years, longer term
3. Who will make it happen--Leader? Has someone already stepped-up and said they're ready to run with an action, are there people interested though no leaders have self-selected, or are both interest and leadership largely unknown?
4. Which group will make it happen? Actions to be accomplished by: a) individuals, b) standing commissions or boards, 3) ad hoc committee, or 4) new standing commission, board, or council?
5. Does the action require a Town Meeting vote? Yes or No?
6. Which Actions make future actions easier to accomplish?
7. How much will it cost to do it? Labor-intensive but otherwise free, Moderately expensive, or Expensive?
8. Amount of pizzazz (capacity to generate buzz and political good will for new town initiatives): Low, Moderate, or Great?

Consider prioritizing the set of actions that will give your town, volunteer boards, and community both early successes, as well as the experience to realize longer-term, more complex solutions.

14 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

	<u>Role</u>
Ross Condit	Land Use Element Author
Bob Bottomley	Economic Development Author
Harry Comerford, Ron Newton and Eric Vollheim,	Housing Element Author
Chris Buelow	Natural Resources & Open Space Element Author
Jenna Garvey and Eric Vollheim	Historic & Cultural Resources Element Author
Sherry Patch	Services & Facilities Element Author
Sherry Patch	Transportation Element Author
Rod and Linda Leehy	Energy Element Author
CMRPC & entire committee	Goals & Policies and Implementation Elements Author
Zoltan Szabo	Former chair of the Hardwick Growth Policy Committee
Members of the 2001 Master Plan Committee	
Eric Vollheim	
Erik Fleming	
Rick Romano	
John Samek	
Pat Bock	
Harry Webb	
Lucinda Childs	
Jon Ploof	
Bob Page	
Sherry Patch	
Ed Lubelczyk	
Bill Cole	
Members of the Community Development Plan Committee	
Eric Vollheim	
Erik Fleming	
Jeffrey Schaaf	
Donald Roberts	
Lucinda Childs	
Richard Jakshtis	

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