

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Implementation Plan

The Master Plan recommendations outlined in Chapter 4 are presented here in the form of an action plan: a detailed road map for implementation. It consists of two sections, including a description and priority ranking for each proposal, roles and responsibilities, estimated costs, approximate timeline, and implementation resources that are or may be available, and a 10-year time chart that summarizes the estimated amount of time required to complete each task. The first section is divided into two parts in order to separate actions with community-wide significance from those tailored to particular sections of Harvard. The 10-year chart appears at the end of the chapter.

Community-Wide Initiatives

1. Policy & Administrative Framework: Master Plan Coordinating Committee

<u>Timeline:</u>	2003-2012	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	None
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	BOS, PB ¹

Summary

The Board of Selectmen and Planning Board should jointly establish a standing Master Plan Coordinating Committee (MPCC) of 7-9 members. As envisioned by the Master Plan, the MPCC is an inter-departmental “work group” to coordinate the efforts of town boards. It should be charged with these four tasks:

- Steer the Master Plan implementation process
- Provide support to other boards and town officials with a role in the implementation plan
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken
- Prepare the scope of work for a 10-year master plan update.

The committee is not a substitute for boards with primary responsibility for and jurisdiction over Master Plan recommendations, e.g., the Planning Board’s role with respect to zoning. MPCC members should be appointed no later than October 2002, or as soon as practical following the Planning Board’s adoption of the Master Plan. Ideally, the MPCC will include representation from

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1. Acronyms used throughout this chapter refer to the following town boards and committees: BOS, Board of Selectmen; PB, Planning Board; MPCC, Master Plan Coordinating Committee; HHC, Harvard Historical Commission; HHP, Harvard Housing Partnership; HLT, Harvard Library Trustees; TSAC, Traffic Safety Advisory Committee; CC, Conservation Commission; HCT, Harvard Conservation Trust; OSPC, Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee; TCPC, Town Center Planning Committee; BOA, Board of Assessors.

the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, Zoning Board of Appeals, School Committee, Harvard Housing Partnership and Harvard Historical Commission. It should be expanded on an as-needed basis for particular projects, through such means as appointing neighborhood advisory or “sounding board” groups.

Resources

Community volunteers.

Integration

Integrates all elements of the Master Plan.

2. Conservation Cluster (Open Space Zoning) Bylaw

<u>Timeline:</u>	2003-2004	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$ 15,000-\$20,000
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	MPCC, PB

Summary

The town needs to retain a qualified consultant to develop the proposed Conservation-Cluster Bylaw. The consultant’s responsibilities should include (a) facilitating community to agree on goals and acceptable parameters for development under the bylaw, (b) preparing draft and final text amendments to the Zoning Bylaw, (c) preparing or arranging for graphic aids to illustrate examples of cluster development that would be appropriate for Harvard (d) attending the Planning Board’s public hearing on the bylaw prior to the 2004 Annual Town Meeting, and (e) preparing any revisions required as a result of public hearing comments. The MPCC should direct the consultant’s work, review and comment on draft zoning amendments and provide policy guidance to the consultant as needed throughout the engagement.

The Master Plan recommends that the Planning Board act as the special permit granting authority and site plan review authority for Harvard’s Conservation Cluster Bylaw.

Resources

Town of Harvard, Executive Order 418 Community Development Plan (CDP) funds.¹

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1. Non-local resources identified in the implementation plan refer to grants, technical assistance and low-interest loan programs that are currently available to Massachusetts cities and towns. Some of these programs offer assistance annually, others occasionally, and still others are unpredictable because their funding depends on bonds authorized but not issued. In addition, it is a fact of life for local governments that federal and state grant programs change – sometimes significantly – with each new administration. As Harvard proceeds with master plan implementation, it will be important for the town to verify the continued availability of grant funds and seek assistance from the regional planning agency to identify new grant opportunities.

Integration

Integrates Land Use, Open Space, Natural & Cultural Resources and Housing elements and *Planning for Harvard's Rural Landscape*.

3. Back Lot Development Bylaw

<u>Timeline:</u>	2003-2004	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$3,500
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	MPCC, PB

Summary

Given that most of Harvard's residential development occurs on Approval Not Required (ANR) lots, the town needs special regulatory incentives to protect roadside open space and reduce the fragmentation of wildlife habitat that results from an uncontrolled succession of homes and driveways. Backlot development bylaws are designed to accomplish these ends. These bylaws vary in design, but generally they combine front yard setback regulations that push buildings back from the street with flexible side yard setbacks that encourage clustering, and common driveways to reduce the number of curb cuts – in effect, a mini-cluster superimposed on the ANR process.

Resources

Back Lot development bylaws used by towns of Granby, Amherst and Carlisle have been supplied to the Master Plan Steering Committee. The Harvard Planning Board should commission a back lot development bylaw in conjunction with the Conservation-Cluster Bylaw.

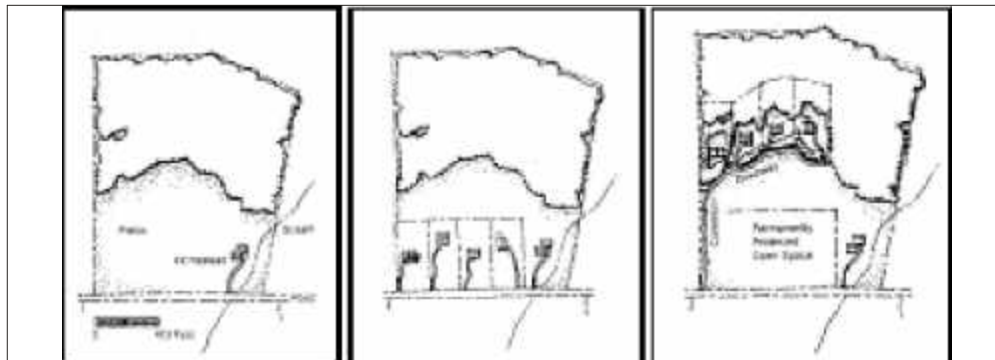


Illustration of Back Lot Development, prepared by Franklin Regional Council of Governments. From left to right: land parcel prior to development, the same parcel divided into conventional Approval Not Required (ANR) lots, and the same parcel divided under Back Lot Development regulations. This tool may be used effectively with two or more ANR lots.

Integration

Integrates Land Use, Open Space, Natural & Cultural Resources and Housing elements and *Planning for Harvard’s Rural Landscape*.

4. Historic Preservation

Strengthening Harvard’s ability to protect historic structures is a central objective of the Master Plan. Recommended actions include two zoning bylaw amendments, additional historic property surveys, National Register nominations and an increase in the number of local historic districts under M.G.L. c.40C.¹ For purposes of presenting these actions in a format suitable for the implementation plan, they are classified below as zoning, planning and policy tools, and non-zoning regulation. However, it is vitally important to understand that the Master Plan proposals are designed to work *together*, not on a stand-alone basis. Though implementing them in part will achieve some degree of protection for Harvard’s inventory of historic properties, the experience of communities with successful preservation programs shows that historic preservation requires several, adequately coordinated techniques and a shared commitment from town officials with related or overlapping jurisdiction.

4-A. Zoning

<u>Timeline:</u>	2003-2004	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	Appendix H
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	MPCC, PB, HHC

Summary

Harvard should amend the Zoning Bylaw by adding the following new provisions:

- Demolition delay bylaw
- Special development regulations for historic preservation

Demolition delay is a device that many Massachusetts communities use to postpone whole or partial demolition of a historically significant building so that town officials and property owners can work together to find a feasible alternative. Most demolition delay bylaws impose a six-month (or longer) stay on the issuance of a demolition permit for buildings defined as “historically significant.” Some bylaws define “historically significant” by age, e.g., all buildings over 50 years old, others use a year-of-construction threshold, such as all structures built before 1930, and a few bylaws apply only to buildings on a local historic property inventory maintained by the Historical Commission.² Demolition delay bylaws usually involve the following type of review and permitting process:

The resource – a historic building, as defined by the bylaw – is presumed significant unless the review body, usually the Historical Commission, determines otherwise. The Commission’s review is triggered by a referral from the building inspector, who must refer demolition permit applications for buildings covered by the bylaw.

1. Historic preservation measures tailored to the needs of specific areas in Harvard are addressed in Section 2 of this chapter.
2. At least one demolition delay bylaw in Massachusetts extends to all buildings regardless of age, but its purposes reach beyond historic preservation.

The Commission conducts an initial review to determine whether a building meets the intent of the bylaw. When the Commission decides that a building is eligible for demolition delay, a public hearing is scheduled – at which time the permit applicant and interested parties may comment on the proposed demolition. If the Commission determines that a historic building qualifies as “preferably preserved,” it may stay the issuance of a demolition permit for the period provided for in the bylaw. When no feasible alternative has been identified by the end of the demolition delay period, the building inspector may issue a demolition permit. However, if the Commission determines that a building does *not* qualify as preferably preserved even though the building’s age triggered a review under the bylaw, the building inspector may issue a demolition permit.

Demolition delay does not prevent an emergency demolition ordered by the building inspector for public safety reasons.

Preservation incentives may be regulatory or financial. The Master Plan focuses on regulatory incentives because they are more likely to succeed in a small town like Harvard. Through zoning, communities may offer a variety of preservation incentives, including but not limited to special permits for:

- Greater intensity of use, e.g., single-family conversions to three- or four-family residences in a district that otherwise limits residential development to single-family detached homes.
- Mix of uses, e.g., the flexibility to convert a historic building to a mix of offices, specialty retail or a small restaurant combined with residential units in a district that otherwise limits land use to a single class (residential or commercial).
- The “last resort” relocation of a building slated for demolition to another lot with an existing residence, or to a non-conforming lot, for use and occupancy as a residential or non-residential unit.

Like demolition delay, special historic preservation incentives apply to an exclusive group of properties defined in the zoning bylaw. The purpose of both bylaws is to save a community’s historic built assets. Demolition delay works best when the delay period is long enough to make preservation more attractive than demolition, which explains the present trend toward 12-month delays. However, unless the post-restoration value of the property offsets the cost of preservation, demolition delay alone will not be very effective. Both techniques – demolition delay and incentives that make preservation feasible – should be adopted in Harvard. They work *together* to address a critical community preservation need. As proposed, the bylaws are designed for ease of administration because Harvard has only a part-time building inspector and no professional planning or community development staff.

Resources

Appendix H contains a draft of the proposed bylaws. In addition, the Massachusetts Historical Commission maintains a library of local plans and regulations that Harvard may wish to explore.

4-B. Policy and Planning Tools

<u>Timeline:</u>	2004-2009	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$15,000-\$20,000 per year
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	HCC

Summary

The Master Plan advocates for several planning and policy actions to complement existing efforts of the Harvard Historical Commission. They include:

- Pursuing nominations for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, focusing first on properties already identified as eligible but for which nominations have not yet been made (see Appendix C).
- Preparing additional historic property inventories in order to qualify more buildings or districts for National Register listing and also to pave the way for establishing additional local historic districts. Where possible, future inventories should focus on multiple-residence parcels that have not already been surveyed, income-producing properties or those with strong potential to be used as income-producing properties in the future, and small homes, accessory structures or outbuildings.
- Obtaining preservation restrictions from property owners who want to protect their historic homes or outbuildings.³

The Harvard Historical Commission has made commendable use of the Massachusetts Historical Commission's Survey and Planning Grant Program to pay for various preservation studies. Many communities use Survey and Planning Grants to prepare historic property surveys, National Register nominations, local historic district plans and maps, and historic district design guidelines. As a Certified Local Government (CLG), Harvard is eligible to apply for Survey & Planning Grants each year. Since the program requires a matching-fund commitment from the town, the Harvard Historical Commission needs the community's support for an effective preservation agenda. In turn, the Commission must continue to provide persuasive leadership.

Listing on the National Register does not protect buildings from inappropriate alteration or demolition. However, it is a threshold for eligibility to use special tax incentives (investment tax credits) to finance the cost of historic preservation. It also triggers a heightened review process for properties affected by a federally or state-assisted project.⁴ In addition, listing on the National Register automatically qualifies properties for listing on the State Register of Historic Places. Listing on the State Register enables owners of historically significant properties to qualify for phased increases in the assessed value of their homes when they invest in a significant restoration project – if Harvard adopts the enabling legislation for this purpose (Chapter 191, Acts of 1996). When paired with demolition delay and zoning incentives to preserve buildings that are ineligible for investment tax credits, National Register status is a very important preservation tool.

Harvard needs to make an annual commitment of funds to carry out the historic preservation recommendations of the Master Plan. Toward that end, there should be a standing article on each Annual Town Meeting warrant to appropriate funds that the Historical Commission may use to leverage Survey and Planning Grants or to purchase preservation planning services even in the absence of Survey and Planning Grants.

3. As provided under M.G.L. c.184, Sections 31-33.

4. The federal review process is known as Section 106; the state review, Chapter 254.

Resources

Town of Harvard, MHC Survey & Planning Grants, Community Preservation Act (CPA) Revenue. Harvard should build on its existing *Comprehensive Inventory* (1992) which is on file at the Harvard Public Library.

4-C. Non-Zoning Regulatory Actions

<u>Timeline:</u>	2006-2011	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	BOS, HCC

Summary

The Master Plan urges Harvard to establish additional local historic districts. Under M.G.L. c.40C, a local historic district consists of *one or more* properties. This feature of the enabling legislation means that communities may place an isolated, historically significant property under the protective umbrella of a local historic district. Since Harvard has developed as a very-low-density town, it has many old, architecturally and culturally significant buildings scattered across the rural landscape. It is more efficient to create multiple-property districts and whenever possible, Harvard should strive to do so. However, a local historic district is the most powerful historic preservation tool in Massachusetts. Harvard should use the statutory flexibility to create single-property districts where multiple-property districts are impractical for geographic or political reasons.

Under M.G.L. c.40C, the Board of Selectmen has the authority to initiate the local historic district process by appointing a study committee. In communities with existing local historic districts, however, the local historic district commission doubles as the study committee. Harvard’s Historical Commission acts as the local historic district commission, which makes it the logical candidate to carry out new local historic district studies. The Commission should determine whether Harvard’s existing surveys forms need to be updated, and use local/state resources to bring obsolete forms up to current standards. An accurate, complete inventory is essential to the study process and to the endorsement required from MHC for a local historic district to be adopted by town meeting. Harvard appears to need updated inventories as well as new inventories for properties and areas not yet surveyed. Accordingly, the Master Plan does not anticipate the creation of new local historic districts until the second half of the ten-year implementation cycle. However, the town should *not* postpone action on other preservation measures recommended by the Master Plan.

Resources

Town of Harvard, MHC Survey and Planning Grants.

Integration

Integrates Land Use, Natural & Cultural Resources, Housing and Economic Development elements and *Planning for Harvard’s Rural Landscape*.

5. Agricultural-Retail Business

<u>Timeline:</u>	2003	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	None
<u>Priority Level:</u>	2	<u>Responsibility:</u>	MPCC, PB

Summary

The Zoning Bylaw should be amended to include a definition of “Agricultural-Retail Business” (or another phrase chosen by the Planning Board), along with corresponding regulations that allow farm stands to diversify their product lines so they may extend their operating season and increase profitability. Under current law, farm stands are exempt from zoning as an agricultural use when a substantial majority of their sales come from farm products grown or raised on the owner’s property. As a result, farm stands must comply with local zoning bylaws if they sell non-local products or try to diversify by expanding to include a food service operation – i.e., a small restaurant.

To preserve farming as part of Harvard’s economic base, the town should remove regulatory barriers to farm stand operations and simultaneously protect surrounding residential areas from negative impacts of commercial activity. Providing for “agricultural-retail business” as an allowed use by special permit in the Agricultural-Residential District would be consistent with the Zoning Bylaw’s stated purposes for this district and create incentives to retain the town’s working farms.

Though the town may need to retain a planning consultant for this purpose, the Master Plan Coordinating Committee should research actions taken by other towns to provide flexibility for farm stand operations. Harvard is not the first town in Massachusetts to address this issue. Several communities in Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden Counties have worked aggressively to protect their farmland and promote local agriculture. Through the state’s regional planning agency network, Montachusett Regional Planning Commission may be able to assist Harvard in locating appropriate zoning models for agricultural business and provide technical assistance in drafting a proposed bylaw.

Resources

Massachusetts Department of Food & Agriculture, American Farmlands Trust, Montachusett Regional Planning Commission.

Integration

Integrates Land Use, Natural & Cultural Resources, Economic Development elements.

6. Open Space & Recreation Plan

<u>Timeline:</u>	2003, 2008	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$6,000-\$7,500 per update
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	CC, OSPC

Summary

Like many small communities with no professional planning or conservation staff, Harvard has found it difficult to maintain timely updates of its *Open Space and Recreation Plan*. Eligibility to apply for Self-Help grants from the Division of Conservation Services (DCS) depends on an approved open space plan that is updated every five years. Regardless of Self-Help grants, however, a community’s

open space plan should guide key open space protection choices: the criteria used to distinguish critical sites, appropriate strategies for different resource areas, acquisition priorities or linkages to achieve a continuous greenbelt.

Assuming the availability of volunteers for tasks they can reasonably be asked to perform, Harvard should anticipate spending \$6,500-\$7,500 for consulting services to update the open space plan. This estimate is based on a scope of planning services to address the following DCS requirements:

- Resource Maps
- Develop a survey for the town to distribute or facilitate one or two citizen discussion meetings to meet the DCS requirement for public participation
- Update population, growth and development sections of “Community Setting” chapter
- Update “Environmental Inventory and Analysis” chapter as applicable
- Update “Inventory of Lands of Conservation Interest” chapter to reflect additions to or losses from the town’s open space inventory
- Revise the Goals and Objectives and Five-Year Action Plan, in consultation with Harvard’s Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee, Conservation Commission, Harvard Conservation Trust, and the Park and Recreation Commission. This process should include a site search and selection process to identify areas appropriate for a community-wide pre-school play lot and a neighborhood playground to serve residents living in the southeastern section of Harvard.

To implement this recommendation, the Conservation Commission should obtain an appropriation to cover the cost of consulting services and procure professional services in accordance with M.G.L. c.30B. The Commission is responsible for reviewing and accepting the open space plan, requesting comments from the regional planning agency and submitting the final report to DCS for approval. The Master Plan implementation schedule calls for two updates: first, to update the existing plan (1995) and second, to prepare another five-year update in FY08. When the MPCC writes a scope of services to update the Master Plan again in 2012, an open space plan update should be included automatically as part of the master plan process.

Since town meeting had already approved the FY03 budget by the time the Master Plan was completed, the Conservation Commission may need to request a reserve fund transfer from the Finance Committee in order to complete an open space plan update during the current fiscal year. Alternatively, funds could be requested at a special town meeting.

Resources

Town of Harvard, CPA revenue. At present, there are no state grant programs that cover the cost of preparing an open space and recreation plan.

Integration

Integrates Land Use, Natural and Cultural Resources, Open Space and Recreation, Community Facilities and Services elements and *Planning for Harvard’s Rural Landscape*.

7. Conservation Fund & Land Acquisition Policy

<u>Timeline:</u>	Annual	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$100,000/FY
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	CC

Summary

Harvard’s most potent resource protection tool is fee ownership of open space. To implement the Master Plan and the town’s open space plan, Harvard needs to make a consistent investment in purchasing and managing conservation land. While central to managing overall growth and encouraging development that protects natural resources, zoning bylaws alone cannot safeguard the environmental and scenic assets that Harvard residents value so highly.

Harvard was among the first communities in Massachusetts to adopt the Community Preservation Act. As a result, the town has begun to receive annual revenue from the property tax surcharge authorized by CPA. It will be difficult for the town’s CPA Committee to meet all of the compelling needs that exist in open space protection, historic preservation and affordable housing. In addition, though open space acquisition is an eligible use of both CPA revenue and traditional sources of general fund revenue, Harvard does not have other resources to finance affordable housing development, and only limited resources to invest in historic preservation. The CPA fund can thus be expected to absorb increasing demands to address these two aspects of community preservation.

The Master Plan implementation schedule calls for an annual Conservation Fund appropriation beginning in FY 2004. The Conservation Commission cannot perform the vital function of acquiring conservation land without adequate, predictable resources. The implementation schedule also calls for an open space bond authorization in FY 2008, coinciding with a recommended update of Harvard’s Open Space and Recreation Plan. However, bond issues should be considered a “tier 2” implementation strategy and they should not be used as a substitute for annual outlays for the Conservation Fund.

Resources

Town of Harvard, Division of Conservation Services Self-Help Fund

Integration

Integrates Land Use, Natural & Cultural Resources, Open Space & Recreation elements and *Planning for Harvard’s Rural Landscape*

8. Housing Choice

The Master Plan promotes several actions to diversify Harvard’s housing stock and increase the supply of homes affordable to lower- and middle-income households. These actions address Harvard’s goals for retaining young and senior citizens and for being a socially inclusive community. The proposals outlined below are considered community-wide initiatives because the first applies to development regulations in the Agricultural-Residential District and the second is a strategic plan for housing opportunities throughout Harvard.⁵

5. Additional proposals to increase housing choice are described in Section 2 of this chapter.

8-A. Agricultural-Residential District Zoning Amendments

<u>Timeline:</u>	2003-2004	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	Appendix H
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	MPCC, PB

Summary

The Master Plan recommendations include two Zoning Bylaw amendments that will apply throughout the Agricultural-Residential District. They include:

- Clear, fair and predictable special permit regulations for converting existing residences to multiple-residence buildings, subject to design review and site plan approval by the Planning Board. Under this provision, multiple-residence use would be capped at three units, but a conversion resulting in more than two units may be required to place the third unit under an affordable housing deed restriction such as that used by the state’s “Local Initiative Program.”
- Clear, fair and predictable regulations for creating one accessory apartment in a single-family home by special permit from the Planning Board.

Both proposals will help Harvard offer alternatives to single-family homes and simultaneously create opportunities for the town to increase its inventory of Chapter 40B units. Since the proposals apply uniformly to all land in the Agricultural District, they promote a policy of achieving broadly distributed, basic housing choice throughout Harvard. Through the crucial tool of design review, the Planning Board will be able to guide changes in residential use type so they complement the town’s tradition of single-family homes.

Development under these bylaws is also subject to Title V and other local requirements. As a result, conversions and accessory apartments may not be feasible in all locations. However, if the total number of bedrooms does not increase and the existing septic system either complies with Title V or may be brought into compliance at a reasonable cost, Harvard’s other development controls will not act as a barrier to bylaw implementation. Finally, it should be underscored that the proposed zoning amendments are an inherent part of the Master Plan’s strategy to protect historic buildings in Harvard. Along with National Register status to leverage investment tax credit eligibility, flexible residential conversion regulations are an important tool for the economics of preservation.

To implement this recommendation, the Planning Board needs to review the draft zoning amendments (Appendix H), request that they be placed on the 2004 Annual Town Meeting warrant, conduct a public hearing, make any modifications deemed necessary to address citizen comments, and present arguments favoring each amendment on town meeting floor.

Resources

Appendix H contains a draft of the proposed zoning amendments.

Integration

Integrates Land Use, Housing, and Natural & Cultural Resource elements.

8-B. Affordable Housing Strategy

<u>Timeline:</u>	2004-2005	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$20,000-\$25,000
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	BOS, HHP, PB

Summary

The Harvard Housing Partnership’s recently completed affordable housing needs assessment calls for a town-wide affordable housing strategy. The needs assessment report identifies several possible components of a strategy that may work in Harvard, including but not limited to the use and disposition of surplus town-owned land that may be suitable for development. The Master Plan reinforces Harvard’s need for a coherent, feasible strategy to increase the supply of housing affordable to lower-income persons. Much like historic preservation, affordable housing plans require several techniques because they are so difficult to implement.

Since Harvard lacks in-house planning staff and relies on volunteers, the town should obtain professional consulting services to help the Housing Partnership prepare an Affordable Housing Strategy. The consultant’s work might logically include:

- Identification and field review of town-owned, unrestricted land that may be used for affordable housing development.
- Identification and field review of a targeted list of lower-value, substandard or small residences with redevelopment potential for affordable homeownership or rental units.
- Review of the town’s open space plan to identify future conservation sites that present opportunities for a mix of open space-residential uses, akin to the Hayes Property acquisition (1985).
- Analysis of infill development possibilities in or adjacent to the Town Center, Ayer Road, Still River Village – that is, areas with existing development. (In Harvard, infill development will likely require zoning changes to capitalize on small, currently non-conforming lots or surplus land on existing developed parcels.)
- Assistance with updating and modifying (as appropriate) the Harvard Housing Partnership’s guidelines and the Appeals Board’s comprehensive permit guidelines.
- Assistance with refining the conclusions of the needs assessment in order to set clear housing priorities, e.g., various types of elderly housing, one-bedroom units attractive to young citizens, or family housing.
- Assistance with designing a set-aside fund and related administrative mechanisms so the town can acquire homes and restrict them as permanently affordable rental or homeownership units.
- Map out clear development strategies to connect identified housing resources (land or buildings) with priority needs. This should include recommended zoning amendments, if any.
- If a town-owned site is selected for affordable housing use, the consultant may also be asked to prepare proposal and disposition documents to procure for a developer.

Resources

Town of Harvard, CPA revenue, Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). Resources appropriate for implementing the Affordable Housing Strategy will depend on the approaches it recommends. Appendix G contains two inventories that may be useful for developing the Affordable Housing Strategy: all town-owned, unrestricted land of record in Harvard, and all parcels in the Town Center, Ayer Road and Still River planning areas, by size, use, ownership, existing zoning and relationship to the build-out study.

Integration

Integrates Land Use, Housing, Economic Development elements.

9. Wetlands and Water Resource Protection

The Master Plan proposes two zoning changes to support Harvard’s wetland and water resource protection goals. Both proposals require text amendments to the Zoning Bylaw and corresponding revisions to the Zoning Map.

9-A. Groundwater Protection Overlay District

<u>Timeline:</u>	2004-2005	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	Appendix H
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	PB

Summary

Harvard’s zoning bylaw currently has no regulations to protect groundwater recharge areas surrounding public or private commercial water supplies regulated by DEP. Though Harvard is not required to have groundwater protection zoning in place unless it plans to develop a water supply with a yield in excess of 100,000 gallons per day, the town’s stated concern about protecting aquifers is not reflected in its land use policies.

Except for the deep, plentiful aquifers at Devens, which *are* subject to groundwater protection rules under the Devens Zoning Bylaw, there do not appear to be any DEP-approved “Zone II” areas in Harvard.⁶ Rather, all of Harvard’s DEP-regulated water supplies have what are known as “Interim Zone II” areas, or a prescribed radius around each well based on its class (see Fig. 5-A). Near the Town Center, the Zone II locations for Harvard’s small public water supplies partially overlap the Bare Hill Pond Watershed. Typically, groundwater protection bylaws establish an overlay district that coincides with the boundaries of DEP-approved and interim Zone II areas. The bylaws do not prohibit development, but in general they accomplish the following:

- Prohibitions against land uses that present known risks of groundwater contamination, e.g., dry cleaning establishments and photo-processing laboratories.
- Performance standards for most other land uses.

6. A DEP-approved Zone II is established by conducting draw down studies to determine the geographic area from which an operating well draws water.

- An increase in minimum lot size when warranted, e.g., when the underlying district’s minimum lot size is smaller than 1.5 to 2 acres.

Harvard should adopt a groundwater protection bylaw and apply it to all Interim Zone II areas depicted on Fig. 5-A.

Resources

Appendix H contains DEP’s model Groundwater Protection Bylaw. DEP’s model is the standard used by nearly all Massachusetts communities, so Harvard does not need to purchase consulting services to prepare a groundwater protection bylaw. However, the town does need to amend the Zoning Map in order to implement this recommendation. Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) has GIS mapping capability that should be explored as a resource for producing a Zoning Map that identifies public water supply “Zone II” areas in Harvard. The cost to prepare an amended Zoning Map should be very low because the required GIS data sets are already available from the state.

9-B. Wetlands Protection and Flood Plain Overlay Districts

<u>Timeline:</u>	2004-2005	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$2,500-\$3,500
<u>Priority Level:</u>	2	<u>Responsibility:</u>	MPCC, CC, BOH

Summary

For planning, public education and bylaw administration, Harvard needs maps that clearly depict the wetland, watershed and floodplain areas regulated by the Zoning Bylaw. The existing resource area definitions and district regulations also should be reviewed, clarified, updated and strengthened. Given the recent availability of new, higher-resolution wetland GIS data sets from the state, it will be fairly simple for Harvard to delineate the Wetland and Watershed-Floodplain Overlay Districts on the Zoning Map and other resource maps used for town planning. There are several examples of wetland, watershed and flood plain zoning bylaws in use elsewhere in Massachusetts, by communities that share Harvard’s commitment to natural resource protection. These bylaws may serve as replicable models for Harvard.

To implement this recommendation, the town should retain an environmental planner to review, revise and update the existing W and WFH District regulations and prepare an amended Zoning Map. Alternatively, the town could purchase mapping services from MRPC as recommended for rezoning proposals described elsewhere in this chapter. If MRPC prepares the map, Harvard will need to coordinate the work of its consultant and the regional planning agency so that both products are finished in advance of closing the town meeting warrant.

Resources

Town of Harvard (funds); MassGIS state data library

Integration

Integrates Land Use, Natural and Cultural Resources elements.

10. Community-Based Transportation Program

<u>Timeline:</u>	2004-2005	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$6,000 (planning)
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	BOS, TSSC

Summary

The implementation plan consolidates several Master Plan recommendations into a single planning and policy development effort, the Community-Based Transportation Program. It includes these steps:

- Designating a coordinating group, such as the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee, to spearhead and guide a town-wide traffic planning and implementation process.
- Establishing a street classification system to set priorities, facilitate a consistent, coherent system of roadway treatments, e.g., signage, pavement striping, and pavement maintenance policies. “Street classification” often refers to conventional vocabulary about the vehicular capacity and function of roads – arterial, collector, local or neighborhood – but a more meaningful way to think about streets is to classify them as spaces for neighborhood building, for compatible use by multiple users, and for use primarily by cars. Harvard residents must agree on a hierarchy of travel needs because they will have to make trade-offs to accomplish their public safety goals.
- Identifying and classifying traffic safety problems that exist on Harvard’s roadways, and exploring the causes. This requires not only traffic data, but also field evaluations – ideally on foot – of roadway design and traffic activity under different conditions. People who live on streets with obvious traffic safety problems must be part of the evaluation and problem-solving process, and their streets should be taken up first.
- Exploring traffic management and traffic calming measures that may be effective to reduce traffic speeds on Harvard roads. It is important for residents to understand that traffic calming devices affect local *and* through traffic. Introducing a traffic calming program in Harvard will be a challenging task because most of the town’s roads serve two purposes: they carry through traffic and supply access to neighborhood residents. Owing to the limited repertoire of studies on traffic calming projects in rural areas, Harvard must be willing to experiment. Strategies to consider include:
 - Narrowing the perceived width of travel lines with edge striping.
 - Raised intersections, textured pavement and “nature strips” at critical traffic locations.
 - Mobile “Speed Alerts” placed near gateway locations and along streets with a high incidence of speeding violations.
 - Gateway welcome/speed warning signage.
 - Consistent, sustained public education.
 - Consistent, strong enforcement by the police department, using police personnel, radar, and neighborhood monitors.

- Reaching consensus about the ingredients of a traffic calming program in Harvard and, given the town’s limited resources, how the program should be implemented.

Through the same community-based transportation planning process, Harvard also needs to identify and prioritize character-defining road features that residents want to protect, *by street*. The effectiveness of a scenic roads bylaw depends on the quality and accuracy of the inventory on which it is based. The information compiled through this effort should be translated into an updated, stronger Scenic Roads Bylaw administered by the Planning Board, and written pavement management policies adopted by the Board of Selectmen.

The implementation plan provides for the use of a facilitator to guide a series of four or five public workshops for the purpose of brainstorming and reaching agreement about a classification system for Harvard’s roadways and a “phase one” traffic calming program. The facilitator should be asked to translate the results of these meetings into a “checklist” guidebook for the town’s use in carrying out actions agreed to by participants at the workshop. It will be critical, however, for an existing town organization – most likely the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee – to coordinate this effort and conduct resident outreach.

Resources

Town of Harvard, Governor’s Highway Safety Bureau

Integration

All elements.

II. Town Buildings Maintenance, Accessibility & Capital Improvements Plan

<u>Timeline:</u>	2005	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$40,000-\$50,000
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	MPCC, BOS

Summary

Harvard has a number of existing and incipient public facility needs that should be addressed very soon. Information that is typically available for use in a master plan does not exist in Harvard and as a result, the Master Plan implementation schedule omits a detailed forecast of facility improvements. However, inquiries with town departments, a review of available records and a field inspection of each major public building reinforce Harvard’s need for a comprehensive municipal buildings study. The reasons include:

- Harvard’s public buildings are old and architecturally significant, and they have a character-defining impact on the Town Center. Though generally in good condition, these buildings must be maintained, repaired and preserved in order to protect them from deterioration and to avoid unplanned, needlessly large capital outlays.
- Though Harvard has invested in maintaining and expanding its school facilities, relatively little has been spent in the past decade on improvements to town buildings. Town Hall was partially renovated after the *Harvard Town Plan* was completed (1988), but several issues raised in the last master plan remain true today. Moreover, the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) brought new mandates that did not exist when the *Harvard Town Plan* was written. It is very clear that

Harvard's public buildings, parking areas, pedestrian walkways and recreation facilities do not, when viewed in their entirety, comply with ADA.

- Space allocated to various town departments is not always adequate for the functions they serve. This applies to town hall, the public works garage and the Hildreth House.
- The town should appoint a standing Town Buildings Committee and commission a municipal buildings study that addresses the following scope of work:
 - Compilation of data, including data obtained from a field inspection of each municipal facility, to prepare a comprehensive inventory of general conditions, space utilization, and accessory or site features.
 - A code analysis and evaluation of building systems (mechanical, electrical, structural).
 - An analysis of architectural barriers including, at minimum, parking, walkways, building entrance, path of travel, public offices and restrooms, communication systems and alarms.
 - An analysis of existing space shortages and future space needs for each town department.
 - A schedule of routine maintenance, extraordinary maintenance and repairs, and a capital plan for barrier removal and any major modifications needed in each of Harvard's municipal facilities.

The study should result in a plan accepted by the Board of Selectmen on the advice of the Town Buildings Committee. Thereafter, the study's recommendations should be incorporated into Harvard's five-year capital improvements plan (CIP).

It is important to point out that for nearly a decade, the Massachusetts Office of Disability (MOD) has followed a policy that requires municipalities to conduct all public meetings in fully accessible buildings. According to MOD's policy, meetings held in inaccessible buildings must be limited to a maximum of two hours. MOD enforces the policy upon receipt of complaints from citizens. Since the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal civil rights law, it is also enforceable by the U.S. Department of Justice. Harvard needs to assure that its public buildings are made accessible in a manner that protects their historic architectural integrity. The town should make sure that the architect retained for this study is experienced in preservation and architectural barrier removal in Massachusetts public facilities.

Resources

Town of Harvard, and Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for costs associated with accessibility planning and architectural barrier removal. MOD also provides technical assistance upon request.

Integration

Integrates Community Facilities and Services, Natural & Cultural Resources elements.

12. Information and Administration Resources

The implementation plan includes three proposals to increase Harvard’s capacity to manage and administer conservation, development and public policy. These proposals include hiring a town planner, investing in Geographic Information System (GIS) technology across town departments, and evaluating the fit between Harvard’s form of government and the unique demands placed on this small town.

Town Planner

<u>Timeline:</u>	2005	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$49,000-\$54,000/yr
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	PB

Summary

Harvard is fortunate to have capable administrative staff serving the planning, conservation and health departments. However, it is clear that the boards responsible for setting development policy and reviewing permit applications also need in-house professional support. It is a fact of small-town life that coordinating the review process, assuring regulatory and policy consistency, and analyzing the amount of information required for volunteers to make quality decisions are all very challenging tasks, and Harvard is no exception. The town needs to remain current with planning practice and case law, and without professional representation, Harvard cannot participate in a number of statewide planning initiatives that require daytime personnel. Moreover, many of the concerns that Harvard residents express about development at Devens call for intervention, representation and advocacy by a professional planner. Instead, Harvard has relied on citizens and volunteer town officials to conduct research, attend meetings, write letters and mobilize opposition whenever the Devens Enterprise Commission (DEC) was considering a development project that either conflicted with the *Devens Reuse Plan* or presented serious risks to environmental resources on Harvard’s land.

Harvard should hire a full-time town planner or enter into a contract for consulting town planner services as soon as possible. Owing to the state’s fragile fiscal condition when this master plan update was completed, it is probably not an opportune time for Harvard to increase the Planning Board’s salary budget. The implementation plan anticipates that by FY06, Harvard will be in a position to fund and maintain this position.

It is very important that Harvard *not* expect to fund a town planner’s salary through grants. Except for cities, large suburbs and communities less affluent than Harvard, the general experience among Massachusetts towns is that grants are an unpredictable source of revenue and cannot be depended upon to finance local government salaries. In addition, the time required to develop worthy projects, write competitive grant applications and administer grant funds should be devoted to *planning*.

Resources

Town of Harvard

Integration

All elements.

13. Geographic Information System

<u>Timeline:</u>	2010-2012	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	
<u>Priority Level:</u>	2	<u>Responsibility:</u>	MPCC, PB, BOS, BOA

Summary

It was evident during the development of this Master Plan Update that Harvard does not have adequate planning information resources. The town cannot expect its volunteer officials or staff to make high-quality decisions without access to the best available information and the tools with which to evaluate it. Though it appears that at least one municipal department has a licensed copy of ArcView™, it is not used consistently. Harvard also does not have an organized GIS library with information that town boards need to make decisions, including digitized assessor’s maps compatible with data sets available from the state.

A complete GIS installation is very expensive and most communities that decide to build GIS capacity do so over a two- or three-year period. Harvard may find that it is more economical to establish an inter-departmental GIS system, train staff and enter into a system maintenance and update contract with a qualified GIS vendor by purchasing services regionally, e.g., with Ayer and Shirley. Among other advantages, a three-town initiative could result in improved access to and interpretation of land use and environmental monitoring data for Devens.

Resources

Town of Harvard. At present, there are no grants available to finance the cost of GIS installations in Massachusetts communities.

Integration

All elements

14. Town Government Study

<u>Timeline:</u>	2010	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$10,000
<u>Priority Level:</u>	2	<u>Responsibility:</u>	BOS

Summary

The Master Plan recommendations call for a town government study toward the end of the 10-year implementation cycle. All communities should periodically evaluate their form of government, but Harvard has existing and foreseeable challenges caused by a combination of growth, resource protection needs, Devens, and the increasing difficulty of finding residents who are qualified, available and interested in community service. Harvard may find that an expanded review is necessary by 2009-2010, but at minimum, the town should study and consider:

- A formal consolidation of all traditional public works functions – highway, parks, cemeteries, water, solid waste disposal, engineering, and management of wastewater treatment facilities if they are developed in Harvard – under a single Department of Public Works that would report to the Board of Selectmen.

- The creation of a Bare Hill Pond Watershed Commission with broad policy, regulatory and permitting jurisdiction over Bare Hill Pond and watershed land located in Harvard.
- A consolidation of public safety functions – police, ambulance and fire – which may become advisable if Harvard finds that it can no longer manage medical emergency and fire protection services with a predominantly volunteer or on-call workforce.
- Board of Selectmen/Town Manager form of government that retains open town meeting as the local legislative body while centralizing management and budgetary functions with a town manager appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

It is recommended that Harvard appoint a Town Government Study Committee and retain a consultant for a limited scope of services to assist this endeavor.

Resources

Town of Harvard. In the past, state grants have been available to help communities review their form of government and study a specific reorganization or consolidation proposal, e.g., public works consolidation. The program that funded these projects (Municipal Incentive Grants) has not received a renewal authorization from the legislature for at least two years. Harvard should consult with its state representative to determine whether funds will be available in the future.

Integration

All elements.

Special District Initiatives

The Implementation Plan recognizes several areas of Harvard that require special attention and strategies tailored to unique local conditions. These areas include North Ayer Road, Harvard Center, Still River Village, Bare Hill Pond Watershed, the view corridors of Prospect Hill-Still River and Oak Hill, and Devens. The community-wide measures described in the previous section apply equally to most of these locations, though Devens is an obvious exception.

15. Ayer Road -- North of Route 2

The Ayer Road Planning Area is illustrated in Fig. 5-B.

15-A. Community Commercial Overlay District

<u>Timeline:</u>	2003-2004	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$25,000
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	MPCC, PB

Summary

The town needs to retain a qualified consultant to develop zoning regulations for the proposed Community Commercial Overlay District on Ayer Road. The consultant’s responsibilities should include (a) facilitating community and neighborhood meetings to refine the concepts for this district, (b) preparing draft and final text amendments to the Zoning Bylaw, (c) preparing or arranging for

graphic aids to illustrate plausible examples of development under the proposed regulations, (d) attending the Planning Board’s public hearing on the bylaw amendments prior to the 2004 Annual Town Meeting, and (e) preparing any revisions required as a result of public hearing comments. As project manager for the town, the MPCC should direct the consultant’s work, review and comment on draft zoning amendments, and provide policy guidance to the consultant as needed throughout the engagement. In addition, the MPCC will need to work closely with residents of surrounding neighborhoods and C District property owners to address their concerns and strive for consensus about the proposed rezoning. Possibly, the MPCC should sponsor an ad hoc “Ayer Road Task Force” or a “sounding-board” committee as a vehicle to organize neighborhood participation.

Resources

Town of Harvard, Executive Order 418 CDP Grant Program.

15-B. “C” District

<u>Timeline:</u>	2005-2006	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$10,000
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	MPCC, PB

Summary

The use, dimensional and site plan regulations for the remainder of the C District on North Ayer Road must be reevaluated and amended. Proposals to address a variety of issues in the C District, especially site plan standards, appeared in one form or another in both the 1969 and 1988 master plans. To accommodate commercial land uses that are not appropriate for a village center area, including many that already exist on Ayer Road, Harvard needs to revisit the Zoning Bylaw’s provisions for development in the C District. This endeavor should concentrate on permitted uses, dimensional regulations, architectural design and site standards, notably access and parking.

Much like the Community Commercial District, any efforts to change the zoning on North Ayer Road require active participation from North Ayer Road’s residents and commercial property owners. A task force such as that recommended above would be an appropriate way to retain neighborhood participation through the difficult job of reorganizing the C District and would also pave the way engaging residents to serve on the citizen advisory committee for the corridor study proposed below.

Resources

Town of Harvard

15-C. Residential Compatibility Overlay District

<u>Timeline:</u>	2006	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	Appendix H
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	MPCC, PB

Summary

The purposes of the Residential Compatibility Overlay (RCO) District are to direct certain types of higher-density residential uses to areas near goods and services in the community, and to provide for architectural and site design standards that achieve harmony between new development and surrounding residential, agricultural and institutional uses. The residential uses that should be promoted in the RCO District include:

- Elderly housing – age-restricted townhouses, congregate units, and assisted living facilities.
- Planned residential development – a mix of residential uses, such as townhouses, multi-family units and detached single-family homes, clustered to support the village development objectives of the Community Commercial District.
- RCO development regulations need to address such considerations as:
 - Mandatory inclusion of affordable units, e.g., 10% affordable to lower- and middle-income homebuyers or tenants.
 - A flexible public benefits system that allows Harvard, landowners and developers to match benefits with the capacity and features of a given site. For example, dedicated open space is an appropriate public benefit for an undeveloped tract of land but it may be irrelevant to a property with existing developed uses that are to be renovated, expanded and converted for an assisted living facility. In that case, a higher percentage of affordable units or a preservation restriction to protect historic resources would be more appropriate and attainable public benefits.
 - Adequacy of parking, landscaping, buffers, and pedestrian connections to adjoining neighborhoods and commercial areas.

The RCO should be applied as an overlay district along portions of North Ayer Road, shown in Fig. 5-B as approximate locational boundaries.

Resources

Appendix H contains a draft of the proposed Residential Compatibility Overlay District bylaw. The MPCC and Planning Board should review it and use it as a discussion document to bring the RCO to fruition at the appropriate time. Harvard will likely have to absorb the cost of consulting services to refine the draft bylaw. At present, there are no grant sources available to pay for this work. For budgetary purposes, the town should expect to spend \$2,500-\$4,000 to advance the bylaw from draft to final version.

15-D. Non-Profit Development Corporation

<u>Timeline:</u>	2006	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	Appendix H
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	MPCC

Summary

For capacity to plan, finance and carry out desired development and redevelopment activity on North Ayer Road, Harvard should establish a non-profit development corporation with “quasi-public” powers. Doing so requires a special act of the legislature. It is very important for Harvard to understand that realizing its goals for Ayer Road will take a long time – largely because the area has no “construction-ready” land, but also because of market conditions. Many communities have used infrastructure improvements and tax incentives to attract business growth, which means that commercial, industrial, and research-development firms in an expansion mode have *many* choices in the I-495 region. Harvard does not want large-scale development on Ayer Road. Rather, it wants small businesses that cater primarily to local people, arranged in village-style clusters with pedestrian amenities. However attractive and appropriate Harvard’s vision of Ayer Road may be, the reality is

that the vision comes with major costs that small-scale development cannot absorb. This means that public resources must be incorporated into the larger strategy for this area.

Harvard should take advantage of a device used by other Massachusetts communities and establish its own “partner” development corporation to focus on two aspects of the Master Plan: first, Ayer Road north of Route 2 and second, mixed-income and elderly housing development to supplement existing efforts of the Harvard Conservation Trust. As proposed, the corporation would essentially be run by the town, though it would also have the independent rights and fiduciary responsibilities of a private, non-profit organization. Harvard needs an agent to help finance aspects of the Master Plan for which private resources are unlikely to be adequate.

Resources

Appendix H contains a draft of the proposed home rule petition.

15-E. Ayer Road Corridor Study

<u>Timeline:</u>	2008	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$50,000-\$60,000
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	MPCC, BOS. TSAC

Summary

As residents, business owners and the Harvard Police Department know well, there are a number of traffic safety problems on Ayer Road north of Route 2. These problems include traffic volumes and speed, truck traffic generated by Devens industrial establishments, and conflicts between through traffic, neighborhood traffic and drivers entering or exiting business establishments in the C District. Ayer Road is the most accident-prone roadway in Harvard and it will remain so until a comprehensive program of transportation improvements is planned and implemented. Toward that end, Harvard needs to initiate a corridor study for the entire length of Ayer Road from the Harvard/Ayer town line to the Route 2 interchange. The study should consider a number of roadway design strategies to slow and control traffic movement, separate pedestrian and bicycle users from vehicles, and “choke” traffic in at least two locations, preferably near the Ayer Road intersections with Myrick Lane (northern end of the district) and Lancaster County Road (southern end).

Harvard will need to work closely with Montachusett Regional Planning Commission’s transportation staff and MassHighway (which has jurisdiction over North Ayer Road) to assure that projects recommended by the corridor study are eligible and competitive for inclusion in the region’s Transportation Improvements Plan (TIP). The regional planning agency may be able to help Harvard prepare a scope of services to use when procuring a qualified transportation planning firm to develop the corridor study. Possibly, MRPC can also provide planning and technical assistance services while the study is underway.

Resources

Harvard Highway Department, Police Department and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee; Montachusett Regional Planning Commission. Depending on recommendations contained in the corridor study, resources may include the Town, the regional TIP, the Community Development Action Grant (CDAG) or Public Works for Economic Development (PWED) programs, and developers investing in C District projects. PWED is an unlikely source unless the plan includes improvements that are essential to an economic development project.

Integration

Land Use, Circulation & Traffic, Economic Development elements.

16. Harvard Center

The Harvard Center planning area is shown in Fig. 5-C.

16-A. Town Center Public Realm Plan

<u>Timeline:</u>	2005-2006	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$20,000
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	MPCC, TCPC

Summary

Harvard’s desire for a vibrant, walkable Town Center with a balanced mix of land uses calls for several well- coordinated strategies. To achieve these outcomes, Harvard needs to begin by concentrating resources on a concept plan for parking, pedestrian walkways, public amenities and open space: a Town Center public realm plan. It is very important for the town to reach agreement about issues such as the amount, location and design of parking areas and how to facilitate pedestrian movement throughout the district in conjunction with undertaking a comprehensive rezoning of the Town Center.



Residential development in the Town Center.

The concept plan for parking and open space that was prepared for the eventual relocation of Harvard Library to the Bromfield School exemplifies the approach that Harvard should take for the larger Town Center area, i.e., the area represented as the approximate boundaries of the Town Center Overlay District in Fig. 5-C. Through the public realm planning process, Harvard will be able to identify realistic ways for the private sector to participate in developing public improvements in the Town Center, a task that is critical to writing fair development regulations for the overlay district.

The Town Center’s capacity to support additional parking *will* have an impact on how the town regulates land use in this area. Moreover, choices made about parking and pedestrian access must be translated into actions that Harvard is willing to take, including a sustained commitment of public funds. The division of responsibility between developers and local taxpayers for public improvements in the Town Center cannot reasonably be established until Harvard translates its Town Center goals into a tangible improvements plan, including cost estimates.

16-B. Town Center Overlay District

<u>Timeline:</u>	2005-2006	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$6,500
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	MPCC, PB, TCPC

Summary

The Town Center Overlay District will be Harvard’s key regulatory device for assuring a balanced mix of land uses and keeping the overall amount of development in the Town Center to a level that the area can sustain. Harvard should pair the rezoning study with preparing the public realm plan (above) so that land use, access, circulation and parking issues can be resolved coherently.

Resources

Town of Harvard

16-C. Wastewater Feasibility Study

<u>Timeline:</u>	2007-2009	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$25,000-\$30,000
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	BOS, TCPC

Summary

Harvard needs to explore a range of options to provide adequate wastewater disposal capacity in the Town Center. The options may include connecting to the school department’s treatment plant, designing and constructing a treatment plant to serve the area designated for inclusion in the Town Center Overlay District, special regulations and financing incentives to encourage shared septic systems, or some combination of these strategies. Harvard has been trying to address problems associated with on-site septic system capacity in the Town Center for many years, largely through the efforts of citizen volunteers. The town clearly needs assistance from a professional engineer to provide the following services:

- An organized, methodical review of existing wastewater disposal conditions in the Town Center.
- An analysis of realistic solutions given the Harvard’s goals for the Town Center, including opportunities and constraints for creating a district wastewater collection, treatment and disposal system, ownership and management responsibilities, the advantages and drawbacks of each solution considered, preliminary cost ranges, and possible methods of financing.
- Recommendations for a preferred solution and its associated implementation plan.

Resources

Town of Harvard; DEP funds or a low-interest loan from the federal Rural Development Administration may also be available for construction, including final engineering design and project management services.

16-D. Residential Compatibility Overlay District

<u>Timeline:</u>	2006	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	MPCC, PB

Summary

See discussion under Ayer Road, #1. Adoption of this zoning proposal should occur at the same town meeting that acts on the Town Center Overlay District.

Resources

See Appendix H and discussion under Ayer Road, #1.

16-E. Harvard Library Reuse Plan

<u>Timeline:</u>	2007	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	
<u>Priority Level:</u>	2	<u>Responsibility:</u>	MPCC, HLT, HHC, PB

Summary

Though Harvard was awarded a state library construction grant to renovate and expand “Old Bromfield” for use as a new library, the town’s waiting list rank is fairly low. It seems unlikely that Harvard will receive funds from the Board of Library Commissioners in the next four to five years due to the length of the program’s waiting list and the limited amount of money that the state can release each year. As a result, a reuse and feasibility study for the existing Harvard Public Library building is not an immediate priority, but it will have to be done within the timeline of this master plan update. Since there are other historic buildings in Harvard Center that will also become available for new uses in the future, e.g., the Hildreth House, the town may find it most economical to commission a study of two or three facilities rather than limit this project to the Harvard Public Library.



Harvard Public Library.

The board of library trustees, the Harvard Historical Commission, the MPCC and the Planning Board, should undertake this project jointly.

Resources

Town of Harvard, CPA revenue, MHC Survey & Planning Grant. Depending on the types of use that Harvard wants to explore, pre-development funds from Massachusetts Housing Partnership or MassDevelopment may also be available.

17. Still River Village

The Still River Village Planning Area is shown in Fig. 5-D.

17-A. Still River Village Overlay District

<u>Timeline:</u>	2008-2009	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$5,000
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	MPCC, PB

Summary

The Master Plan calls for a special overlay zoning district that can direct new development and changes to existing development toward respect for the unique form of Still River Village. Since Still River’s development history, village form and architectural heritage differ from the Town Center, this area needs contextually relevant zoning regulations and other preservation strategies that work together.



Still River area, Harvard.

Harvard’s past attempts to implement a preservation plan for Still River did not achieve the intended results. According to town officials, residents of the Still River area objected to a proposed local historic district in the early 1970s. Today, the village lacks a local historic district and except for one building, this critically important section of Harvard is not listed on the National Register because the town did not proceed with a nomination. In light of past conflicts between the town and residents of Still River, it would behoove the Master Plan Coordinating Committee to sponsor a village area task force or sounding board group to work as a team on zoning measures to guide development in Still River Village. The same neighborhood group should be mobilized to work on a more complete set of regulations and policies, such as those described below.

Resources

Town of Harvard, MHC Survey and Planning Grants.

17-B. Historic Preservation

<u>Timeline:</u>	2005-2006	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$15,000
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	MPCC, HHC

Summary

The Master Plan urges Harvard to re-explore establishing a Still River Village local historic district under M.G.L. c.40C or a neighborhood conservation district by home rule petition (special act of the legislature). The steps required to provide suitable historic preservation controls in the Still River

Village area are the same as those described under “Historic Preservation” in Section 1 of this chapter:

- Update historic property surveys
- Prepare nominations for listing on the National Register of Historic Places
- Prepare bylaw and maps to establish Still River Village local historic district, and present the historic district proposal to town meeting

The process for preparing to establish a local historic district may also be used to create a neighborhood conservation district. If Still River residents remain opposed to a local historic district, they may find a neighborhood conservation district more palatable. Though not as restrictive, neighborhood conservation districts provide a mechanism for design review, qualitative controls over the arrangement and location of open space in new development, and measures to protect the unique character-defining features of a particular site. The extent of review over alterations to existing development depends on how the town chooses to address this issue in the home rule petition.

Given the time and human resources required to carry out a neighborhood-based village planning effort, the implementation plan provides for a four-year policy process for Still River. The process begins with updating the area’s historic property inventories and culminates in town meeting’s adoption of newly conceived regulations for land use, preservation and design review. The same town meeting may be asked to approve a home rule petition to establish a neighborhood conservation district at Still River in lieu of a local historic district. These decisions need to be made with neighborhood involvement – residents, landowners, and those in control of village institutions.

Resources

Town of Harvard, MHC Survey & Planning Grants.

Integration

Integrates Land Use, Natural & Cultural Resources, Housing elements, and *Planning for Harvard’s Rural Landscape*.

18. Bare Hill Pond Watershed

The Bare Hill Pond Watershed Planning Area is shown in Fig. 5-E.

<u>Timeline:</u>	2004-2005	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$4,500
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	PB, HCC, BOH, BHPC

Summary

Harvard’s goals for the protection of Bare Hill Pond are not reflected in the town’s land use regulations. The Master Plan recommends that Harvard create a Bare Hill Pond Watershed Overlay Protection District in the Zoning Bylaw. Special regulations for development in this district should consider and address:

- A lower threshold for uses requiring a special permit and an explicit list of prohibited activities
- Minimum lot size

- Drainage design
- Erosion and sedimentation controls
- Impervious coverage
- Special site plan standards for large-scale, exempt land uses, e.g., institutional, municipal and school uses.



Bare Hill Pond.

To implement this recommendation, Harvard needs to retain a qualified environmental planner to review the town’s existing zoning and write regulations for the new district. The Zoning Map must also be amended to identify the boundaries of the overlay zone. This task could be done by the consulting planner or by Montachusett Regional Planning Commission.

Resources

Town of Harvard

Integration

Integrates Land Use, Natural & Cultural Resource, Open Space & Recreation elements.

19. Agricultural & Historic Landscapes

The Agricultural & Historic Landscape Planning Areas are shown in Fig. 5-F and F-G. Fig. 5-F incorporates an area defined generally as Prospect Hill-Still River, and Fig. 5-G applies to Oak Hill.

Agricultural & Historic Landscapes District

<u>Timeline:</u>	2005-2008	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$12,000
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1	<u>Responsibility:</u>	MPCC, PB, CC

Summary

The proposed Agricultural & Historic Landscape Districts are the centerpiece of the Master Plan’s strategy to save special places in Harvard that are defined by their open, rural landscapes, scenic view corridors, institutional and farming land uses, and historic roadways. The strategy includes:

- Establishing an Agricultural & Historic Landscapes Overlay District, as outlined in Chapter 4. Regulations for this district should (a) provide incentives to use the town’s Conservation Cluster and Backlot Development bylaws while also providing added protection to farms adjacent to new homes, (b) incorporate site plan review into the subdivision approval process and encourage a modified form of Harvard’s existing “mini-subdivision” bylaw, (c) recognize planned residential development as a special permitted use in order to set special open space zoning rules for

development of larger parcels, and (d) provide incentives to preserve accessory and agricultural outbuildings, including non-residential uses.

- Designating Prospect Hill Road, Still River Road, Massachusetts Avenue, Littleton County Road, Oak Hill Road and Pinnacle Road as high-priority scenic ways and adopting higher performance standards for clearing, grading, protection of trees and stone walls, and construction activity that alters views from the road. These designations need to be made as part of a larger process of updating and rewriting Harvard's Scenic Roads Bylaw – a task that relates directly to the Community-Based Transportation Plan discussed in Section 1 of this chapter.
- Targeting open space and historic preservation resources in these two planning areas.
- Marshaling Harvard's available development resources – including the Harvard Conservation Trust and the proposed non-profit development corporation – to acquire, as appropriate, preservation restrictions and development rights.
- Establishing an Agricultural Incentives Committee to research the merits of forming Agricultural Incentive Districts, thereby increasing the amount of Chapter 61-61A land in Harvard and institutionalizing a local government liaison with the town's farm and orchard owners.

Resources

Town of Harvard, EAP Challenge Grant for Sustainable Development (subject to availability)

Integration

All elements, and *Planning for Harvard's Rural Landscape*.

20. Devens

The Devens Planning Area is shown on Fig. 5-H.

The implementation plan for the Master Plan Update incorporates two activities related to Devens. Given that a final report on the five-year review of the *Devens Reuse Plan* was recently released, it is premature for town planning efforts in Harvard to forecast appropriate proposals for Devens because the land's ultimate governance has not been decided. In addition, the information required to address many of Harvard's concerns about Devens is either unavailable or incomplete.

A five-year review process overseen by the Joint Boards of Selectmen began prior to the Master Plan update and its purpose, among others, was to address concerns voiced by Harvard, Ayer and Shirley about the implementation status of the *Devens Reuse Plan*. The results of that effort are published in a report entitled, *Tri-Town Five-Year Review of the Devens Reuse Plan*, which lays out a number of thoughtfully conceived recommendations for all three communities. Through its participation on the Joint Boards of Selectmen, Harvard has already begun to act on some of these recommendations.

Harvard has a number of interests at stake in the development, operation and management of Devens, including interests that Harvard often struggles to recognize. The town needs to respond to these interests constructively. They include:

- **Aquifers.** The deep, medium- to high-yield aquifers that lie along the eastern edge of Devens ought to be one of Harvard's highest resource protection priorities. The town should support the DEC in its efforts to enforce the Devens Zoning Bylaw, but more importantly, Harvard *must* hold the DEC and MassDevelopment accountable for protecting groundwater quality in these sensitive aquifer areas.



Hell Pond (Mirror Lake), Devens.

- **Land Use.** The implementation of the *Devens Reuse Plan* is a critical issue for Harvard regardless of how the property is governed in the future. The composition and durability of the economic base, the character of development and the overall quality of the built environment at Devens all affect Harvard directly. Town officials and citizen activists will have to continue monitoring development at Devens. In addition, Harvard should work to implement the *Tri-Town Five-Year Review* recommendations to strengthen the relationship between the JBOS and the DEC.
- **Open Space and Recreational Access.** Harvard has a compelling interest in access to and protection of open space and recreational resources at Devens, including but not limited to Hell Pond (Mirror Lake) and the areas designated as "open space" in the *Devens Reuse Plan*. Many Harvard residents seem to be unaware that the Devens compound is richly endowed with natural and archaeological resources and they are an integral part of Harvard's heritage. Harvard should remain active on the Devens Open Space Committee and strengthen its advocacy for resource protection. In addition, a *Tri-Town Five-Year Review* recommendation seems particularly germane: a Devens road race, sponsored by Harvard, Shirley and Ayer and the Devens Recreation Department. What Harvard residents see while driving through portions of Devens is not representative of the area as a whole.
- **Traffic.** The negative impacts of Devens-generated traffic, mainly trucks, on residents of Ayer Road and adjacent neighborhoods are a serious concern for Harvard. Harvard must take an active role in the Devens Transportation Committee and advocate for transportation management improvements that will reduce the amount of Devens traffic to and from the Ayer Road-Route 2 interchange. It is important to point out that one purpose of the Master Plan's recommendation for a corridor study on North Ayer Road is to identify and plan strategies to mitigate the impacts of this traffic.
- **Salerno Circle.** The disposition of land in the former Salerno Circle housing area is vitally important to Harvard. The site's visibility, beauty and immediate proximity to the border between Harvard and Devens argue for taking an active role in planning appropriate uses for this site.
- **Harvard citizenship.** The new residents of homes at Devens are Harvard citizens, eligible to vote in Harvard elections and at town meetings, and quite possibly they will gain legal standing to send their children to the Harvard Public Schools. Until such time as the long-term disposition of Devens is resolved, Harvard must find ways to include the entire community in decisions that affect all residents. This applies not only to civic, social and cultural activities but also to planning

for the types of housing built at Devens in the future. Harvard should take a strong advocacy role in assuring that new neighborhoods at Devens do not absorb a disproportionate share of Chapter 40B units.

The implementation plan includes two steps that Harvard should take to advance some of these interests, above and beyond the obvious recommendation that Harvard continue to participate in regional planning for the disposition of Devens.

20-A. Salerno Circle Review

<u>Timeline:</u>	2004-2005	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$45,000-\$55,000
<u>Priority Level:</u>	2		

Summary

Harvard needs to work jointly with MassDevelopment on a visioning process and technical review of opportunities and constraints for the use and development of land at Salerno Circle. In meetings with local officials, MassDevelopment has indicated its willingness to fund a preliminary study of this area. However, the scope, general direction and oversight arrangements for the study have not been determined and MassDevelopment has not indicated the amount of funding it will commit to the planning process.

Harvard should take a pro-active role in pursuing MassDevelopment’s offer and propose an open, inclusive planning process that encourages residents to shape decisions about this important location. Accordingly, Harvard needs to negotiate a scope of services that is within MassDevelopment’s budget for a Salerno Circle planning study and request that the town oversee the project. A steering committee should be formed to act as the town’s oversight group.

Resources

Town of Harvard, MassDevelopment

20-B. Open Space, Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

<u>Timelines:</u>	2005-2006 2009-2011	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$6,500
<u>Priority Level:</u>	1		

Summary

Access to Devens creates considerable anxiety for Harvard residents, especially those living along the two routes that are closed to vehicular traffic: Old Mill Road and Harvard Depot Road. There are physical, political and financial barriers to reopening both roadways, and a transportation study focused on these locations may well find that neither is suitable for through traffic. However, a formal system of open space linkages, pedestrian pathways and a bicycle path between Harvard and Devens would be appropriate and consistent with Harvard’s sustainable development goals. Toward that end, the implementation plan calls for planning and design of a bicycle path to connect Harvard Center, Ayer Road and Devens, in 2009-2011. A bicycle path plan should be initiated when the North Ayer Road corridor study nears completion.

In the interim, the Board of Selectmen should work with residents of the two affected neighborhoods and MassDevelopment to explore removing the chain-link fencing and gates that presently exist.

They should be replaced with attractive wooden posts, signs and kiosks such as those found at the trail entrances to many conservation areas, thereby preventing vehicular traffic and at the same time, encouraging people to walk through and enjoy the hidden open space at Devens. This relatively simple step should not be deferred until the town begins to plan for the development of a bicycle path. The implementation plan anticipates establishing a public open space connection at the end of Harvard Depot Road and Old Mill Road between 2005-2006. Fig. 5-I, a composite recommendations map from the *Tri-Town Five-Year Review*, reinforces the need to establish open space linkages at Harvard's two entrances to Devens.

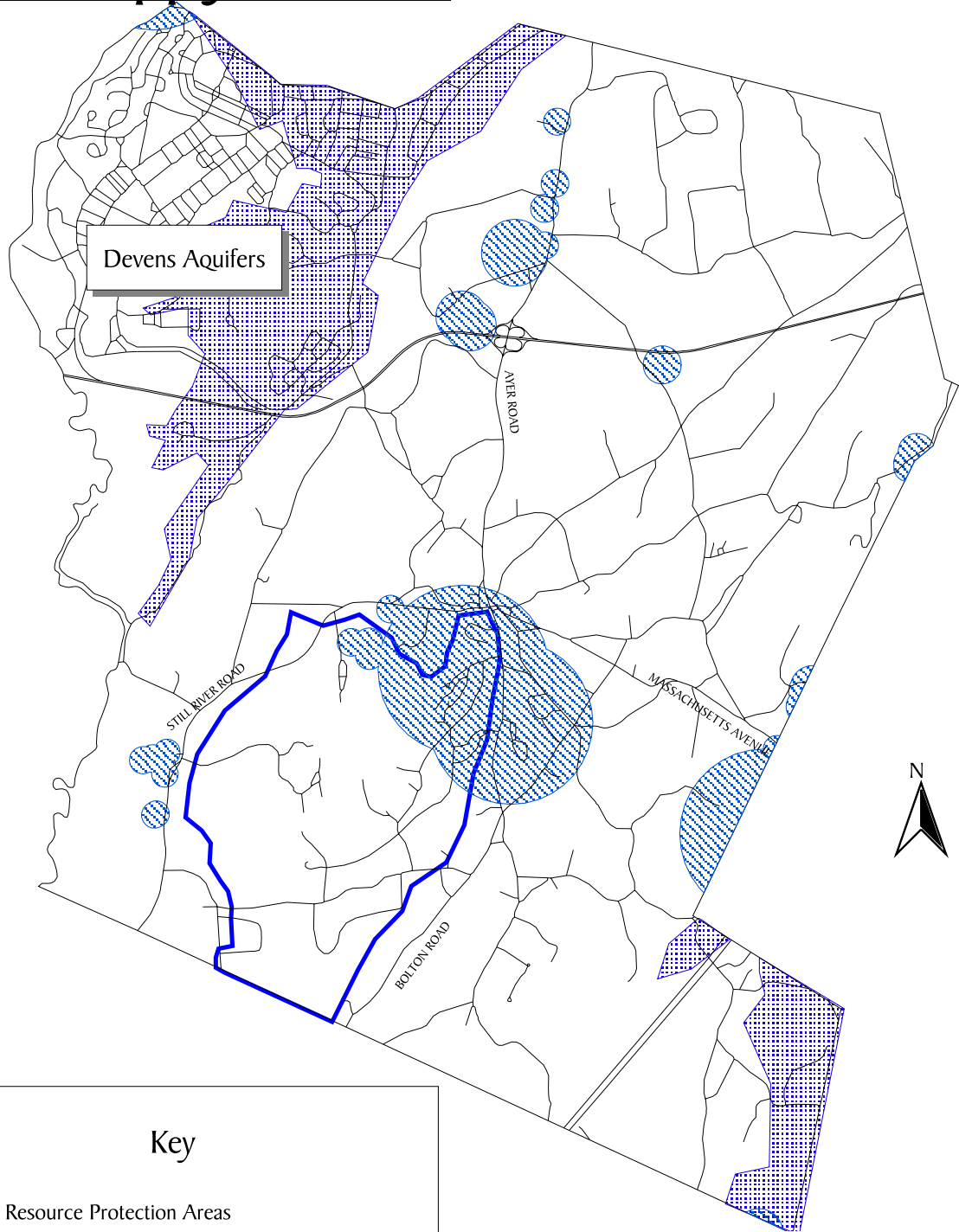
Resources

MassDevelopment

Integration




Integrates Land Use, Natural and Cultural Resources, Open Space and Recreation and Circulation and Traffic elements.

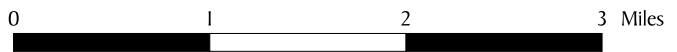
Fig. 5-A Water Supply Areas



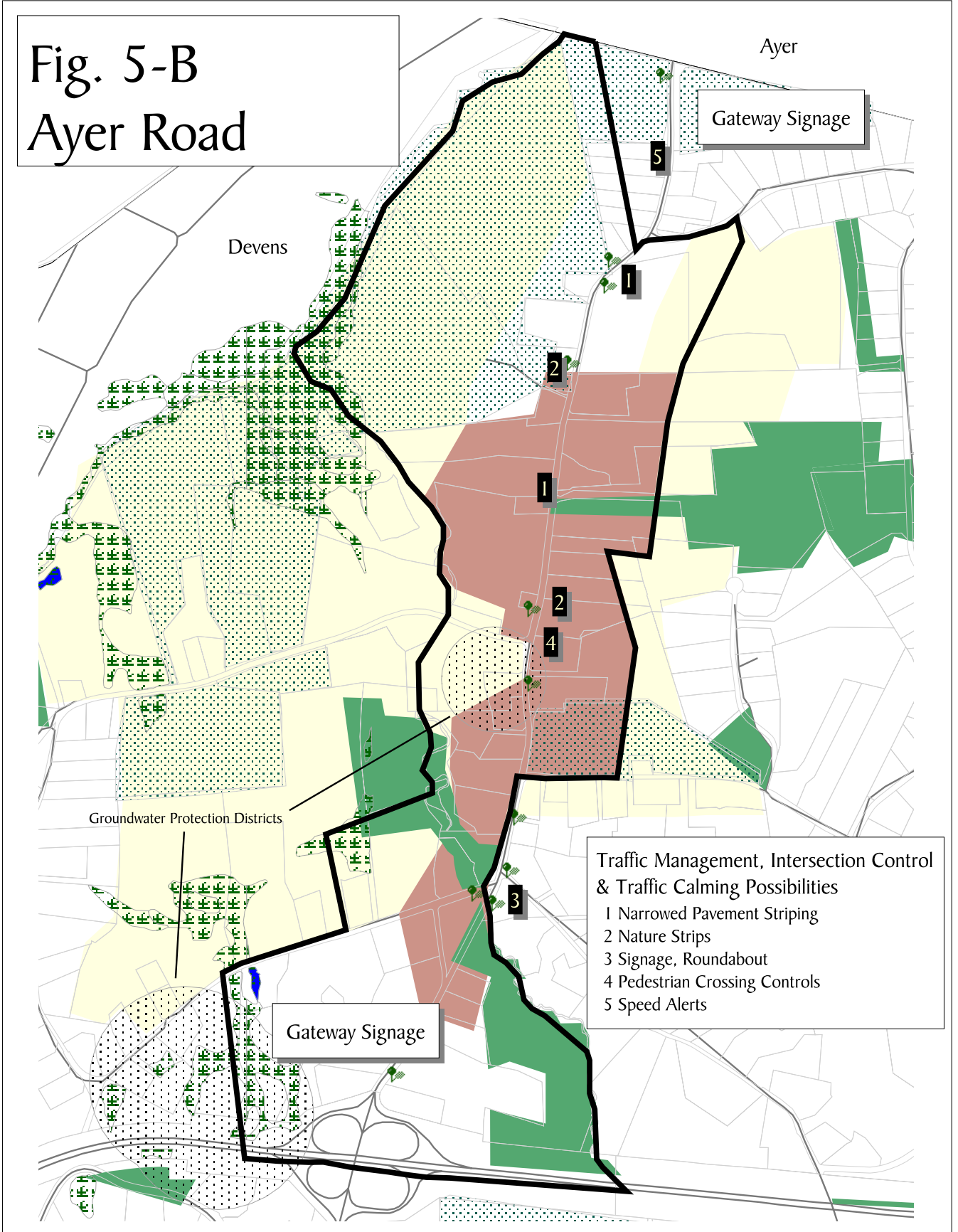
Key

Water Resource Protection Areas

-  Aquifers
-  Bare Hill Pond
-  Approved/Interim Water Supply Recharge Areas



**Fig. 5-B
Ayer Road**



0 1000 2000 Feet

Key







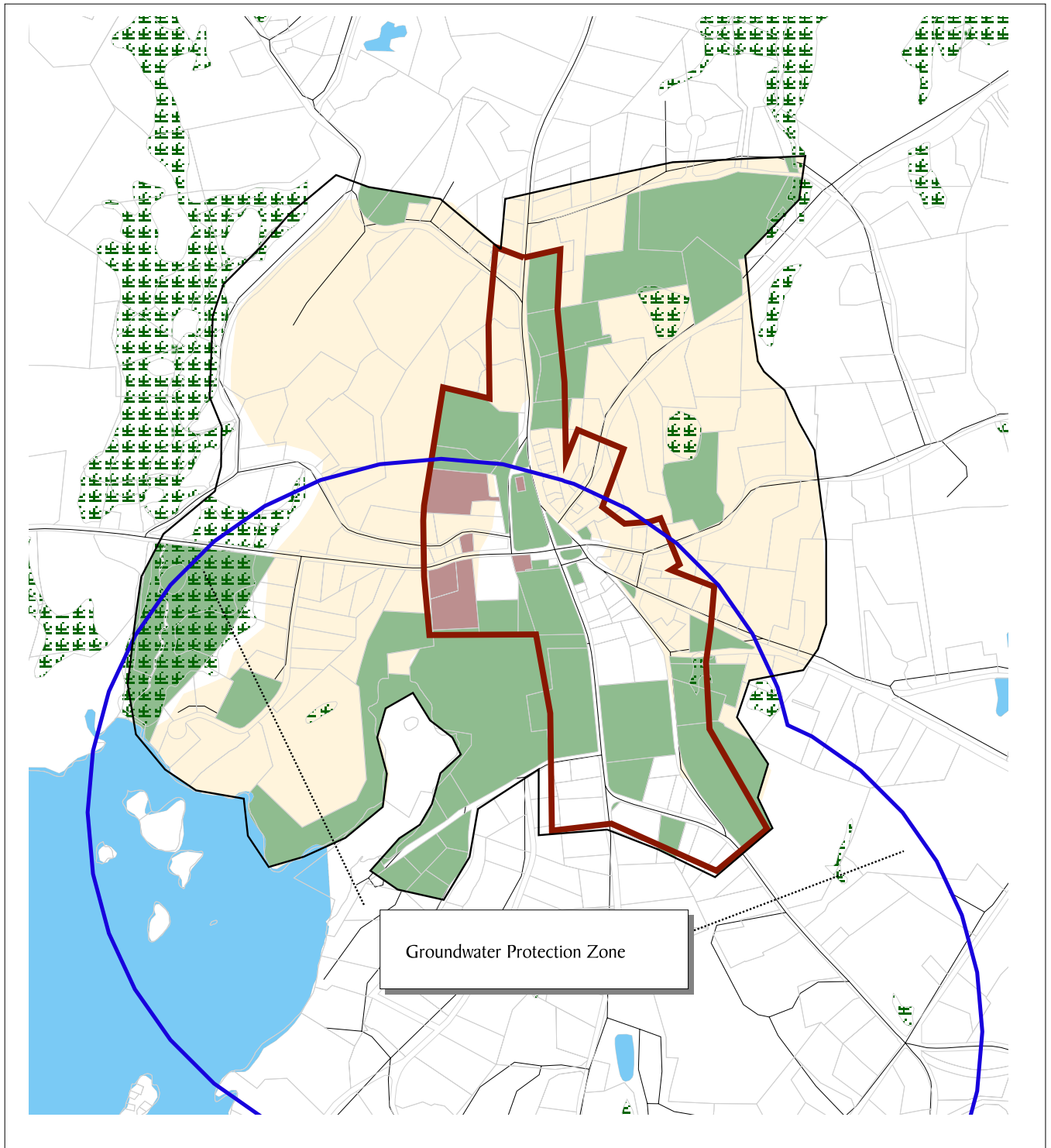
- | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|-------------------------------|
|  | Existing C District |  | Agricultural Incentive Area |  | Wetlands |
|  | Community Commercial Overlay District |  | Residential Compatibility Overlay District |  | Traffic Management Strategies |

Fig. 5-C Harvard Center

Concepts for Harvard Center

- Zoning emphasis on design, site plan review, mixed-use development
- Businesses that support local clientele
- Community services for all residents
- Retain institutional uses
- Encourage housing stock diversity
- Adequate wastewater disposal



0 1000 2000 Feet



Planning Area



Town Center Overlay District

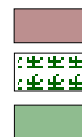


Residential Compatibility Overlay District



Groundwater Protection District

Key



Institutions



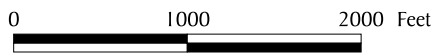
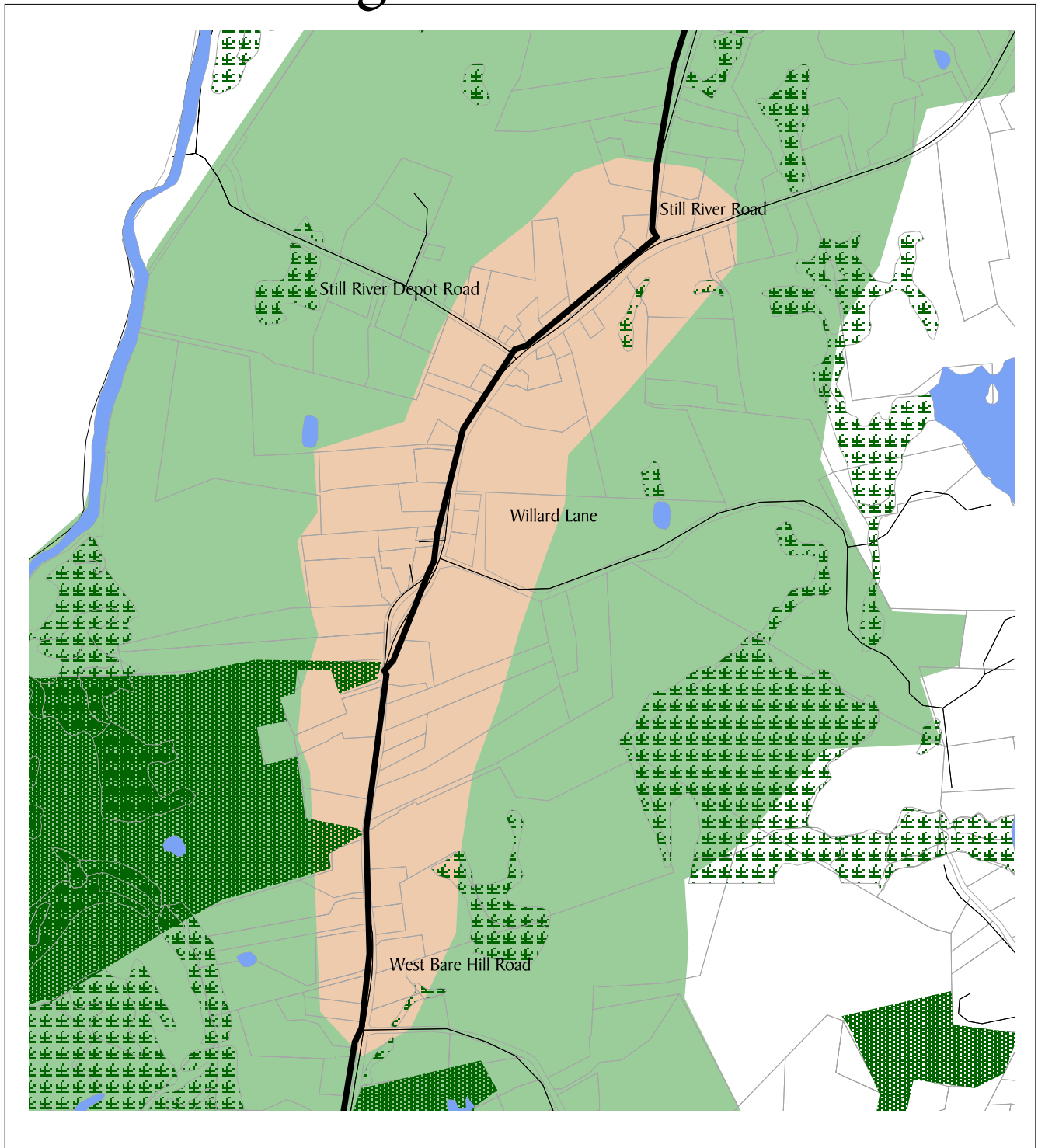
Wetlands



Open Space

Fig. 5-D Still River Village

Concepts for Still River Village
 Preserve historic village form
 Protect historic buildings
 Encourage limited mix of uses
 Preserve vistas



- Village Preservation Area
- Historic Landscape Area
- Nashua River ACEC

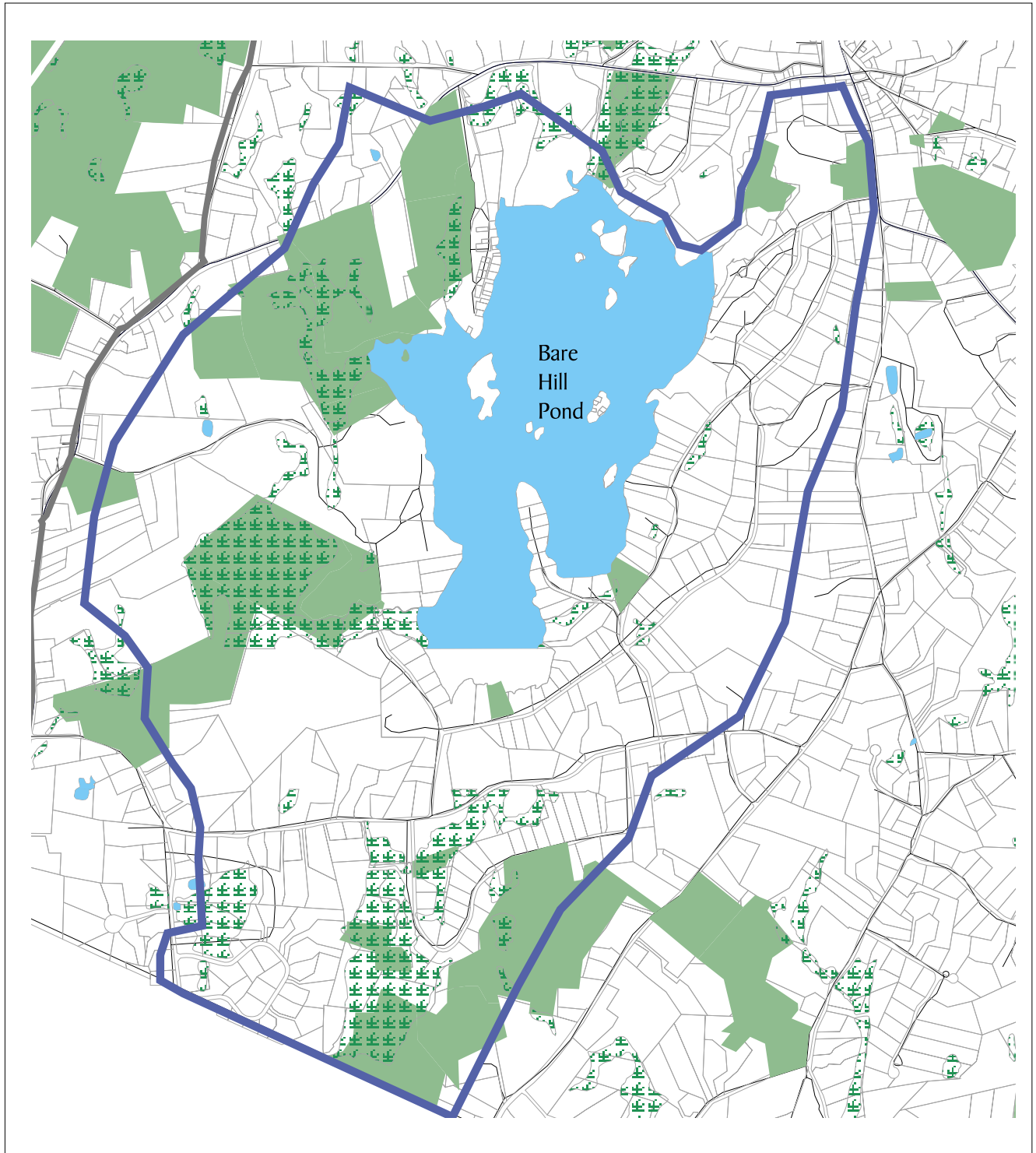
Key

- Agricultural Incentive Areas
- Wetlands

Note: See also, Fig. 5-F.

Fig. 5-E Bare Hill Pond Watershed

- Concepts for Watershed District
- Limit density of development
 - Limit use intensity of land
 - Prohibit high-risk activities
 - Require best management practices



0 3000 6000 Feet



Bare Hill Pond Watershed Key

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|---------------------|
|  | Bare Hill Pond Watershed |  | Existing Open Space |
|  | Wetlands |  | Open Water |
| | |  | Nashua River ACEC |

Fig. 5-F Prospect Hill-Still River Study Area

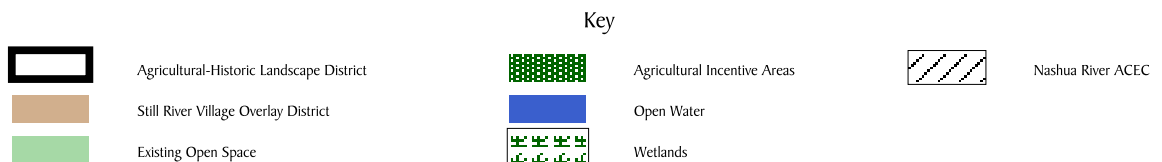
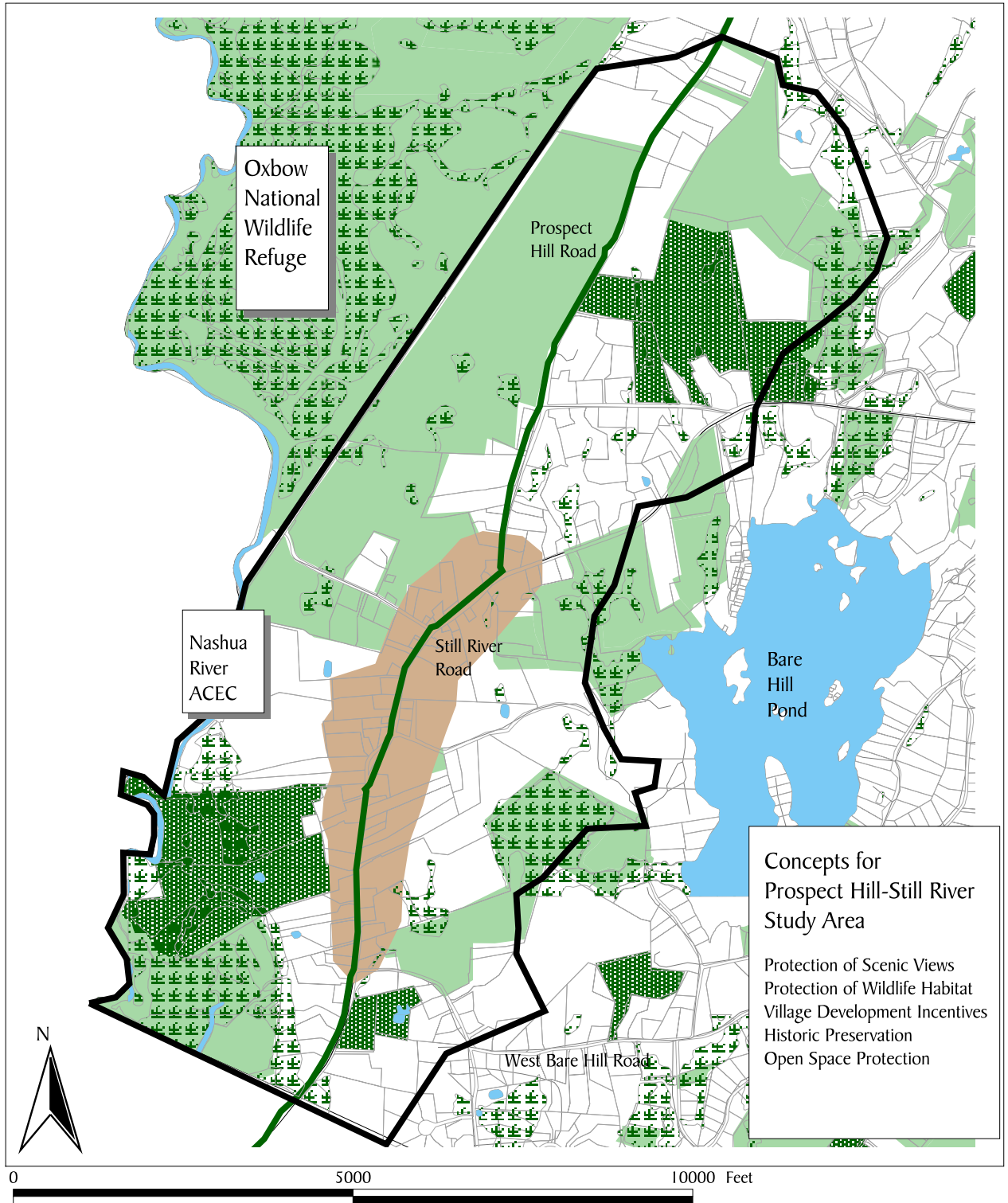
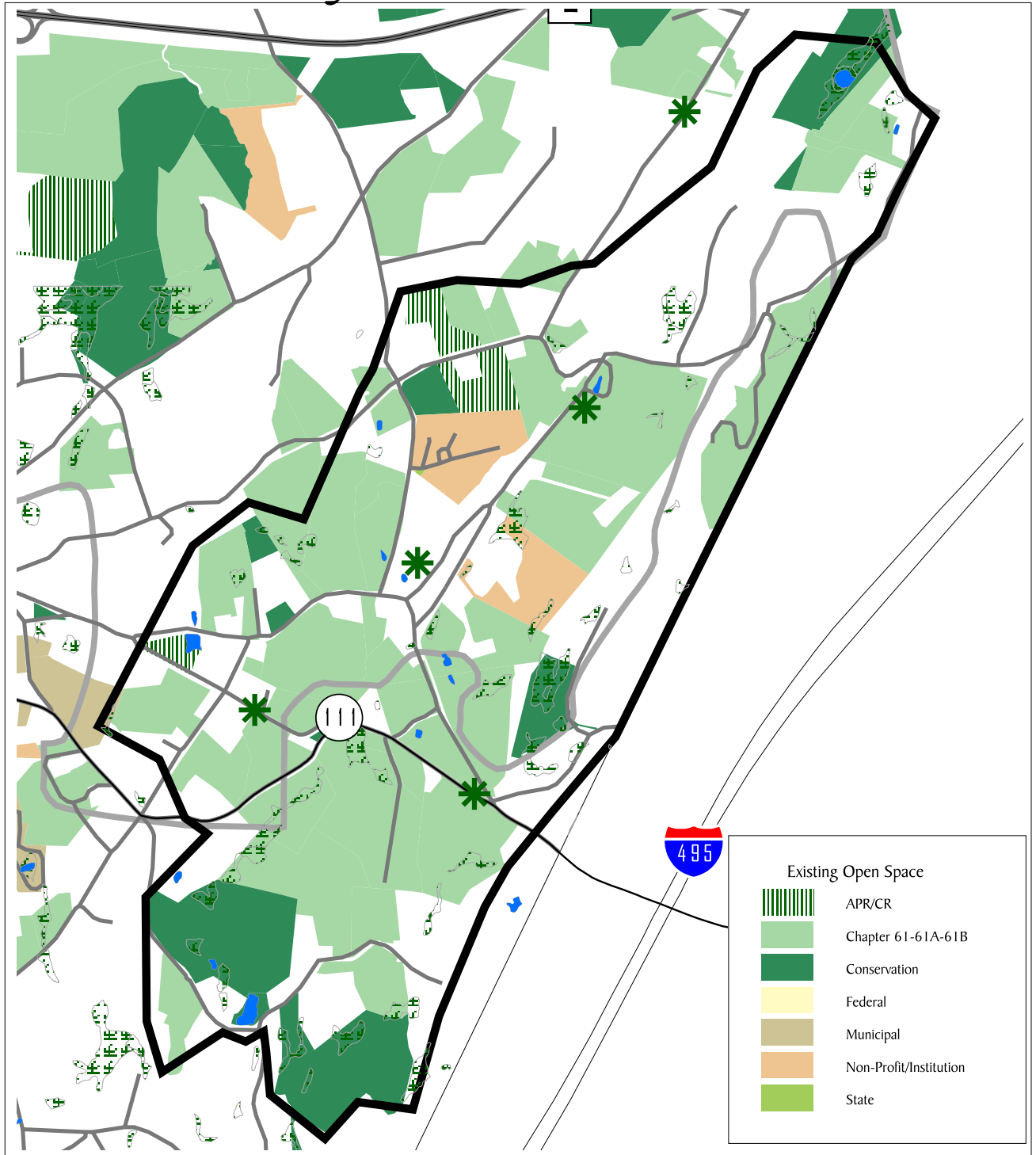


Fig. 5-G Oak Hill Study Area



0 4000 8000 Feet



Key






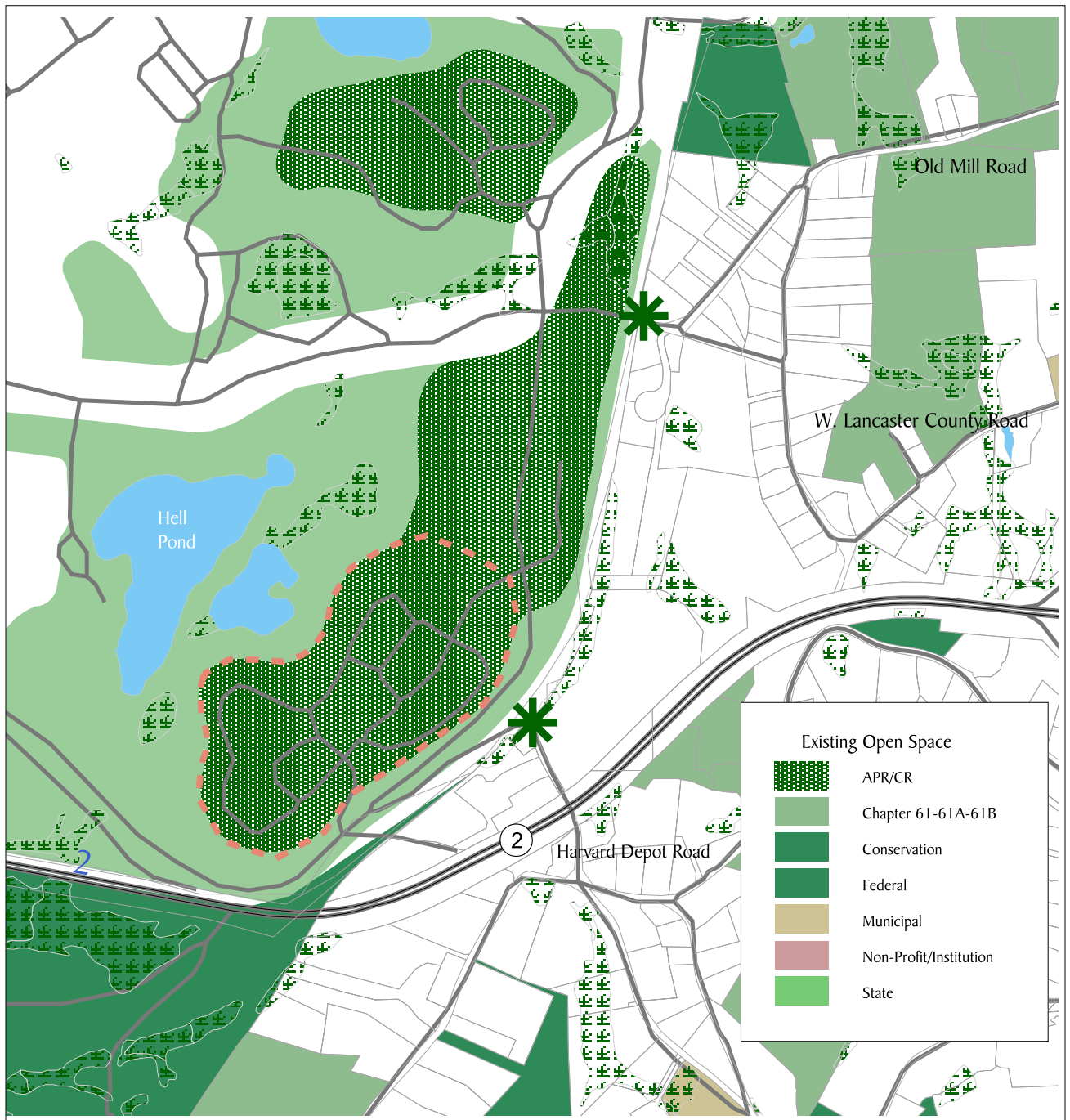
-  Agricultural-Historic Landscape District
-  Priority Scenic Roads
-  DEM Scenic Landscape Inventory
-  Open Water
-  Wetlands

Fig. 5-H Harvard-Devens Study Area



0 3000 Feet

Key



Open Space/Trails Connection



Open Water



Wetlands



Salerno Circle



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN SCHEDULE

ACTION	TYPE	ANTICIPATED TIMELINE									
		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Appoint Master Plan Coordinating Committee	C										
Rezone portion of C District: Community Commercial District	Z										
Adopt Conservation Cluster bylaw	Z										
Adopt Backlot Development bylaw	Z										
Adopt demolition delay, historic preservation regulations	Z										
Adopt "agricultural-retail business" regulations	Z										
Adopt Bare Hill Pond Overlay District	Z										
Update Open Space & Recreation Plan	P										
Prepare, adopt Affordable Housing Strategy	P										
Prepare, adopt Town Center Public Realm Plan	P										
Make annual commitment to Public Realm Plan implementation	I										
Adopt Town Center Overlay District	Z										
Adopt Groundwater Protection Overlay District	Z										
Develop, adopt community-based transportation management program	P										
Conduct visioning process and technical review of Salerno Circle	P										
Adopt Agricultural & Historic Landscapes Overlay District	Z										
Establish pedestrian-only open space access between Harvard and Devens	I										
Make annual commitment to Conservation Fund	I										
Authorize Open Space Bond Issue	I										
Prepare and adopt Town Buildings/ Access Plan	P										
Make annual commitment to Town Buildings/ Access Plan improvements	I										
Initiate/complete North Ayer Road Corridor Study	P										
Implement North Ayer Road Corridor Study, secure partial funding through TIP	I										
Amend W and WFH Zoning Districts (maps, text amendments)	Z										
Update Still River historic properties inventory	P										
Adopt Residential Compatibility Overlay District	Z										
Hire Town Planner	C										
Appoint Agricultural Incentive Committee	P										
Establish Agricultural Incentive Areas (assuming favorable committee recommendation)	R										
Develop Library Reuse Plan	P										
Amend BOH Regulations: mandatory septic system maintenance	R										

P = Planning

Z = Zoning

R = Other Regulatory

C=Capacity Building

I=Public Investment (Capital Outlay, Bond Issue)

ACTION	TYPE	ANTICIPATED TIMELINE											
		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012		
Develop and adopt Street Classification Plan	P			■									
Adopt new Scenic Roads Bylaw	P				■								
Prepare and adopt Pavement Management Plan	P							■					
Initiate and complete Town Center Wastewater Study	P					■	■	■	■				
Submit National Register nomination for Prospect Hill-Still River area	P					■	■	■	■				
Adopt home rule petition to create non-profit development corporation	C				■	■	■	■	■				
Conduct search and selection process for a future school site	P				■	■	■	■	■				
Update subdivision regulations	P					■	■	■	■				
Fund and complete design, renovations, code improvements at Hildreth House	I					■	■	■	■				
Conduct site selection process and design plans for pre-school play lot	P			■	■	■	■	■	■				
Master plan five-year review	P					■	■	■	■				
Build pre-school play lot	I					■	■	■	■				
Historic property surveys & National Register nominations	P		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Review development regulations, eliminate inconsistencies and conflicts	P	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Acquire/accept land for future school site	I					■	■	■	■				
Establish Prospect Hill-Still River local historic district	R					■	■	■	■				
Adopt Still River Village Overlay District	Z					■	■	■	■				
Update Open Space & Recreation Plan	P					■	■	■	■				
Reorganize and re-codify the Zoning Bylaw	Z								■	■	■	■	■
Implement Town Center Public Realm Plan	I				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Digitize assessors maps, complete GIS installation at town hall, train staff	C				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Site selection, neighborhood recreation area, southeastern corner	I								■	■	■	■	■
Acquire/accept gift of land for neighborhood recreation area (southeast area)	I									■	■	■	■
Appoint committee/conduct Town Government Study	P-C								■	■	■	■	■
Plan for bicycle access between Town Center, North Ayer Road, Devens	P								■	■	■	■	■
Update the Master Plan	P											■	■

P = Planning

Z = Zoning

R = Other Regulatory

C=Capacity Building

I=Public Investment (Capital Outlay, Bond Issue)