

Environmental Assessment

In December 2019, the Select Board approved the use of the Environmental Assessment Process and Form as part of Town of Harvard acquisitions, projects and policy decisions. The assessment is intended to have Town departments, boards and committees address the environmental impact of their decisions. The goal is to raise awareness of positive and negative environmental impacts and to look for ways to enhance environmental awareness in policy, project or acquisition planning.

As of December 15th, departments, boards, and committees are asked to voluntarily take the following actions or respond to requests by other committees or residents to use the process. (See exception below)

- **CPIC will incorporate the environmental assessment as part of their formal project review process.** Those town departments, boards or committees requesting capital funding through the CPIC should be prepared to answer environmental impact questions from the CPIC. How CPIC will score this information as part of their process will not occur until FY 2022 funding.
- **Assessment for select projects that do not qualify for the CPIC process.** Departments, boards or committees are requested to use the environmental assessment form for policy decisions, projects and acquisitions outside of CPIC and to post the completed form on the Town Website before any final decisions. This allows for public input before a final decision is made. Committees are encouraged to weigh the environmental impacts of their policies, projects and acquisitions and are encouraged to take actions that benefit, or at least do not harm, the environment and which may have upfront costs but long-term benefits. A focus should be on materials used and their longevity, the ability to recycle or repurpose, the impact on energy use and the overall environmental vulnerability. The form should be posted at least one week before a public meeting is held to decide on the policy, project or acquisition.
- **Completed forms will be posted on the Town website.** Forms will appear in the Documents and Forms section on the website with a new tab heading, Environmental Assessment. Forms should be emailed to Julie Doucet at jdoucet@harvard.ma.us at least one week before a public hearing on the policy, project or acquisition.
- **Trigger for use of form by resident request.** If a resident or another committee or board requests a committee to use the form for a particular decision, the committee should be receptive and accommodate the resident or committee before any major decision is made and follow the time line noted above.

Exception: Please note that the environmental assessment is not intended to apply to regulatory hearings before Town Boards or Commissions which are governed by separate regulatory requirements under Massachusetts General Law (e.g. Conservation Commission, Planning Board and ZBA hearings).