



APPENDIX C

STEERING GROUP MEETINGS

TOWN OF LEVERETT

APRIL 2023 - JUNE 2024

STEERING GROUP MEETING #1

TOWN OF LEVERETT

APRIL 17, 2023



**Town of Leverett
Master Plan Steering Group
Meeting #1
Zoom (see details below)
April 17, 2023
7-8:30 pm**

Zoom Link

<https://leverett.ma.us/d/32024/Leverett-Comprehensive-Plan-Steering-Group-Meeting-1>

Doodle Poll for Next Three Meetings

<https://doodle.com/meeting/participate/id/engY885a>

Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions.
2. Review scope and timeline.
3. Discuss format of Community Visioning Groups and identify volunteers.
4. Discuss message to Town Meeting (April 29).
5. Next steps:
 - a. May: Existing conditions and scenarios
 - b. June: Continued scenarios (may need second meeting)
 - c. June/July/August: Community Visioning Groups

Attendees

Committee members

- Matt Boucher
- Silas Ball
- Jenny Daniell
- Arlyn Diamond
- Jim Field
- Gary Gruber
- David Henion
- Isaiah Robison
- Kim Van Wagner
- Steve Weiss

Consultant

- Emily Innes, Innes Associates

Timeline for Phase 2

Task	Meetings	Deliverables	Timeline
1	Project kick-off and site walk.	Updated work plan with timeline. Assistance with recruitment process for Steering Group.	February 2023
2	Orientation meeting for Steering Group.	Updated Outreach and Engagement Strategy.	April 2023
3		Completed evaluation of existing conditions. Slide deck of existing conditions.	April 2023
4	Steering Committee (up to 3 meetings). Town officials and staff (up to 5 meetings). Community Visioning Groups (10-15, but not all will require consultant presence). Community event if timing is appropriate.	Draft and final scenarios for discussion. Materials for Community Visioning Groups. Facilitation instructions and training for volunteer facilitators. Community-wide surveys (2).	Completed by August 2023
5	Steering Committee (up to 2 meetings). Town officials and staff (one meeting).	Draft plan, zoning recommendations, and septic regulation changes. Second draft. Appendix of public comments during review process.	Completed by September 2023
6	Steering Committee (one meeting). Planning Board (one meeting). Community meeting (one meeting).	Slide deck for presentation to Planning Board. Final plan.	Completed by October 2023

Project to be completed by the end of November 2023.

Resources

- <https://leverett.ma.us/g/95/Comprehensive-Planning>
- <https://leverett.ma.us/p/2105/Leverett-Comprehensive-Plan-project-timeline>

Work Plan through September

- April Steering Committee meeting
 - Introduce planning process, timeline, expectations.
 - Discuss format for Community Visioning Groups and identify volunteers. Establish timeline.
- May Steering Committee meeting.
 - Present existing conditions.
 - Discuss economic development scenarios with analysis of fiscal impacts and tradeoffs.
- June Steering Committee meeting(s)
 - Discuss and refine scenarios for Community Visioning Groups.
 - Facilitation training for volunteers.
 - Discuss first community-wide questionnaire.
- July/August/September
 - Community Visioning Groups

Community Visioning Groups: Background for Discussion at Meeting

From the RFP: Scope of Work

FACILITATE COMMUNITY VISIONING. Community Visioning will occur in meetings with groups of Leverett residents, to include a sufficient number and diversity of Town residents and points of view. Each Community Visioning group may need more than 1 meeting to cover all activities necessary to support each group's level of participation and decision-making process. The consultant may choose to train members of the Steering Committee or other volunteers to help with the outreach and facilitation process for this effort. Each facilitated Community Visioning group should strive to accomplish five goals in a facilitated meeting format like the following example:

- Idea generation and innovation roundtable discussion of the future vision of Leverett, to elicit values and priorities that are important to the Leverett community according to the participants in that group;
- Problem-solving activities to help participants resolve disagreements and make respectful space for differences;
- Issue analysis activities to help group participants understand, compare, and internalize the complexity of existing conditions, economic development scenarios, fiscal impacts, and trade-offs;
- Design-thinking activities to synthesize the group's preferred future vision, values, priorities, conditions, scenarios, impacts, and tradeoffs.
- Collective decision-making process to conclude with the group's recommendation for the Plan.

Additional Information from the Consultant Team's Proposal

The process for the Community Visioning Groups establishes common expectations for the groups. We anticipate that team members will be involved in this process in four ways:

- Providing materials to support the groups meetings that include the scenarios and supporting existing conditions.
- Training Steering Committee members as facilitators to conduct some of the meetings.
- Being present at the first meeting of each group to help set the stage for the process.
- Analyzing the input collected by facilitators and documenting that input for inclusion in the draft plan and subsequent presentations.

One possibility might be to establish the groups based on specific topics identified in the planning process and tied to the master plan elements from Section 81D. Such organization would allow in-depth discussion of the scenario plans from a specific focus point for each group while allowing the conversation to also consider the high-level topics from other groups. For example, one group might focus on housing needs in more detail, while recognizing the work of other groups on recreation and economic development, two topics with close relationships to housing.

Given the Historical Commission's experience with small group facilitation and oral history gathering, we would value their input into developing the visioning process and the training materials for interested Steering Committee members.



Comprehensive Plan: Phase 2

Town of Leverett
Public Meeting
April 17, 2023





AGENDA

1. Welcome and introductions.
2. Review scope and timeline.
3. Discuss format of Community Visioning Groups and identify volunteers.
4. Discuss message to Town Meeting (April 29).
5. Next steps:
 - a. May: Existing conditions and scenarios
 - b. June: Continued scenarios (may need second meeting)
 - c. June/July/August: Community Visioning Groups



STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Roles

- Review draft reports and materials.
- Provide feedback on public outreach and input.
- Circulate flyers, social media tags, and emails about workshops and meetings.
- Encourage people to attend meetings and answer surveys.
- Staff public meetings and events.

Responsibilities

- Be open to many and different ideas.
- Respect the thoughts and opinions of others.
- Be ready to participate fully – in and out of the meeting.
- Remember we are talking about the needs of the whole town.

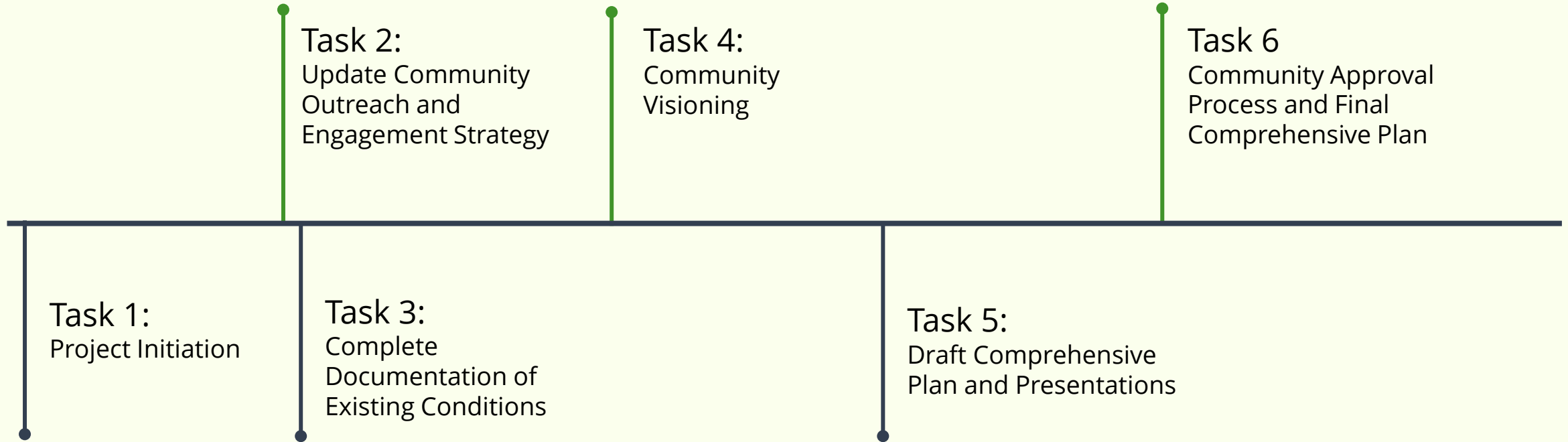
TIMELINE



Accelerated timeline to complete project by November 30, 2023.



SCOPE





COMMUNITY VISIONING PROCESS

Suggested Engagement Process

- Small-group discussions based on growth scenarios.
- Group discussions are community-facilitated, based on materials from the consultant team.
- Results are sent back to the consultant team who work with the Steering Group to incorporate them into the draft plan.
- Two questionnaires will capture input at the beginning and part-way through the process.

“Typical” Engagement Process

- Community Meeting #1
 - Introduction to the process; vision
- Community Meeting #2
 - Options and goals
- Community Meeting #3
 - Recommendations and actions
- Surveys/ Questionnaires/ Interviews as needed by the process.



COMMUNITY VISIONING PROCESS

Option 1

- Initial community-wide meeting with consultant team to introduce process.
- People sign up at that meeting for small groups discussions (1-2 meetings per group? – let’s discuss!)
- Members of the Steering Group (and other volunteers) facilitate the meetings with materials/instructions from the consultant team and report back.
- Second community-wide meeting to present aggregate results of small group meetings.



Late June or mid-July
Could be repeated as a virtual meeting.



Mid-July through mid-August



Late August or post-Labor Day
Could be repeated as a virtual meeting.



COMMUNITY VISIONING PROCESS

Option 1

- Needs:
 - Steering Group will take the lead on outreach to the public to encourage them to come to the meetings.
 - Sufficient volunteers (two volunteers per community group would be ideal – facilitator and notetaker).
 - Some small groups could be town committees.
 - Materials (provided by the consultant team).
 - Locations (could be “house party,” Town Hall, other location, or on-line for those who find physical attendance difficult).
 - Completed materials (sent by volunteers to consultant team).

Option 1

- Pros/Cons:
 - Likely to have the most in-depth conversations.
 - Relies on volunteers to step up!
 - Go through the training on the materials.
 - Organize the meeting location.
 - Follow-up with people who signed up.
 - Take good notes!
 - Return the materials quickly.
 - Discussion/results may vary by facilitation team.



COMMUNITY VISIONING PROCESS

Option 2

- Community-wide meeting with consultant team to introduce process (including existing conditions) and begin visioning.
- Second community-wide meeting to discuss evolving vision and goals.
- Third community-wide meeting to present recommendations and receive feedback.



Late June or mid-July
Could be repeated as a virtual meeting.



Mid-July/early August
Could be repeated as a virtual meeting.



Late August or post-Labor Day
Could be repeated as a virtual meeting.



COMMUNITY VISIONING PROCESS

Option 2

- Needs:
 - Steering Group will take the lead on outreach to the public to encourage them to come to the meetings.
 - Consultant team will provide all materials and run all meetings.
 - Volunteers will be needed for individual table exercises.
 - Consultant team will aggregate the data and discuss with the Steering Group.

Option 2

- Pros/Cons
 - Opportunity for group conversations is limited to the event.
 - Experience may be more consistent for all participants.
 - Less effort required of Steering Group members – facilitation is only required at three events.



COMMUNITY VISIONING PROCESS

Option 1

- Survey 1
 - After the initial meeting to test responses to the visioning exercises.
- Survey 2
 - After the small group meetings; initial responses reported at the second community-wide meeting.

Option 2

- Survey 1
 - After the initial meeting to test responses to the visioning exercises.
- Survey 2
 - After the second community-wide meeting; initial responses reported at the third community-wide meeting.



COMMUNITY VISIONING PROCESS: SCENARIO PLANNING

Plan Focus

- Balance of needs and resources.
- Section 81D (MGL Chapter 41)
 - Goals and Policies Statement
 - Circulation
 - Economic Development
 - Housing
 - Natural and Cultural Resources
 - Open Space and Recreation
 - Services and Facilities
 - Land Use Plan
 - Implementation Plan

Leverett Planning Board

- Affordability
- Climate adaptation and sustainability
- Regionalization of Town services
- Social and economic equity

COMMUNITY VISIONING PROCESS: MEETING MATERIALS

Egremont Vision 2035 Initiative

B Economic Development

Tighe&Bond Sheet 3

ECO-TOURISM AND RECREATIONAL TOURISM

- Tourism involving travel to areas of natural or ecological interest, typically under the guidance of a naturalist, for the purpose of observing wildlife and learning about the environment.
- Responsible travel to natural areas supporting the fauna, flora, and local economy. (American Heritage Dictionary, 5th edition)

Recreational

- Traveling for outdoor recreation

ARTS-AND-CULTURE BASED TOURISM

- Traveling to meet artists and to make art
- Traveling to learn about history and culture and to do research

SAMPLE ZONING DEFINITIONS

Artistic/Creative Production: Creation, production, manufacture, distribution, publishing, rehearsal, performance, broadcast, selling, or teaching of the visual arts, performing arts, applied arts, literature, heritage, media, music, information technology, communications media, or digital content and applications; or the invention, design, prototyping, or fabrication, assembly, and packaging of parts for further assembly or consumer goods for sale.

Artists' Mixed-use: The use of all or a portion of a building for both habitation and Artistic/Creative Production use, or a combination thereof.

Co-working Space: A building or portion thereof consisting of a shared office environment, which contains desks or other workspaces and facilities, including but not limited to, dedicated workstations, office suites, meeting rooms, event space, resource libraries, and business or administrative support services, and is used by a recognized membership who share the site to interact and collaborate with each other. Refer to Section 5.6.4.

Maker Space: A building or portion thereof used for the on-site production of parts or finished products by individual or shared use of hand-tools, mechanical tools, and electronic tools. Maker Spaces may include space for design and prototyping of new materials, fabrication methodologies, and products, as well as space for packaging, incidental storage, sales, and distribution of such projects. Typical uses include but are not limited to: electronic goods; printmaking; leather products; jewelry and clothing/apparel; metal work; furniture; woodworking and cabinet shops; glass or ceramic production; and paper design and production.

Work Only Artist Studio: A space used by an artist for the creation of any visual art or craft, including but not limited to, painting, drawing, photography, sculpture, and pottery; of written works of fiction or nonfiction; or any performing art, whether for live or recorded performance, including music, dance, and theater. Retail sales of art produced on-site and arts instruction by the artist are allowable accessory uses.

Sample Zoning Definitions courtesy of the Town of Arlington, MA

SMALL-SCALE ARTISANAL/BOUOTIQUE MANUFACTURING

- Fewer than 50 people
- Less than 5,000 SF of space
- Food and drink processing
- Creating objects (ex. leather working, woodworking, metalworking, furniture, jewelry, textile production, ceramics, 3-D printing)
- Maker spaces or commercial kitchens that support multiple small businesses

WHY IS THIS OF INTEREST TO EGREMONT?

- Small-scale manufacturing uses can support entrepreneurs and pay good wages for local people.
- Businesses can be flexible about their use of space, allowing for potential adaptive reuse (and thus preservation) of older buildings.

WHY IS THIS OF INTEREST TO EGREMONT?

- Jug End State Reservation
- Appalachian Trail
- Karner Brook Wildlife Management Area
- North Egremont Wildlife Management Area

Recreational

- The dog park at French's Park draws people for out of town. How could the Town capitalize on this?
- Catamount Mountain Resort

WHY IS THIS OF INTEREST TO EGREMONT?

- Significant historic resources, including the North Egremont Historic District, the South Egremont Historic Village District, and many historic buildings
- Historic archives
- Presence of artists and musicians in the area

RELATED USES

- Stores that sell clothing, equipment, and supplies (for example, Kenver)
- Restaurants, cafés (Old Mill, Mom's Country Cafe)
- Inns (for example, Inn at Sweetwater, the Egremont Village Inn)
- Guides

SAMPLE ZONING DEFINITION

Artisanal Fabrication: Production of goods using hand tools or small-scale, light mechanical equipment occurring solely within an enclosed building where such production requires no outdoor operations or storage. Typical uses have minimal negative impact on surrounding properties and include, but are not limited to, woodworking and cabinet shops, ceramic studios, jewelry manufacturing and similar types of arts and crafts, production of alcohol, or food processing.

Egremont Vision 2035 Initiative



Economic Development: Draft Goals

B

The consultant team has identified the following draft goals for this topic based on previous planning efforts, input from the public workshop on January 14, 2023, and input from the public survey that closed on February 3, 2023.

Revise Egremont's zoning bylaw to allow more as-of-right uses in specific areas with appropriate development controls. Support existing clusters of economic activity and consider how to leverage those clusters to support complimentary uses. Reinforce the roles of North and South Egremont Villages as community centers for a wide range of activities and coordinate municipal investments and regulations to support the villages.

	#	Do you have additional or alternative goals to suggest?	CHECK ONE	
			ADDITIONAL?	ALTERNATIVE?
Group 1	1			
	2			
	3			
Group 2	4			
	5			
	6			
Group 3	7			
	8			
	9			

Questions for Discussion!

- Farming is an important component of the Egremont community. How can Egremont continue to support farming? Can Egremont leverage farm products by allowing for small-scale food production, agri-tourism, or other compatible activities?
- South Egremont is the restaurant/retail center of the town and also has important community draws, such as the library and South Egremont School. North Egremont is smaller, but the boundaries of the village could be expanded to include two important municipal areas: French Park and the municipal complex at Town Hall. How can the community leverage this combination of economic activity and municipal draws to create vibrant community-based areas? Are there missing uses or activities that could be added to either?
- Home-based businesses can be an important component of economic development in small towns. Egremont's home occupation bylaw is flexible but does not allow retail. Should this change? Are there other home-based occupations that should be more clearly called out?



Egremont: Graphics credit: Innes Associates

COMMUNITY VISIONING PROCESS: MEETING MATERIALS

DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY CONSIDERATIONS

There are benefits and drawbacks to allowing different intensities of development....

	LOW INTENSITY	MID INTENSITY	HIGHER INTENSITY
Creates more housing, more affordable housing.		X	X
Opportunities for first floor commercial along Main St.	X	X	X
Incentivize redevelopment of challenged properties.	X	X	X
Increased property taxes to the City.	X	X	X
Opportunity to support job growth.	X	X	X
More opportunity to negotiate public benefits.	X	X	X
Retaining existing character of the area.	X	X	

Brockton – Campello Neighborhood: Graphics credit: RKG Associates

COMMUNITY VISIONING PROCESS: MEETING MATERIALS

North Andover
Downtown Zoning Study

Proposed Center Subdistrict Dimensional Standards

PUBLIC MEETING #3
APRIL 12, 2023



	Current Downtown Overlay	Center Subdistrict
LOT AREA Minimum	Per underlying	No minimum
LOT COVERAGE Minimum	Per underlying	80%
HEIGHT Maximum, New construction	3 stories/45 feet	3 stories/45 feet
STREET FRONTAGE Minimum	Underlying	50 feet
SETBACKS Minimum	Underlying	0' (Front), 10' (Side), 10' (Rear)
Floor Area Ratio Maximum		1.0

Proposed Parking Changes

Multifamily: 1.75 spaces per unit
Restaurant: 1 space for every three seats.

Existing Conditions



Possible Future Condition
For illustrative purposes only; not a proposed project.

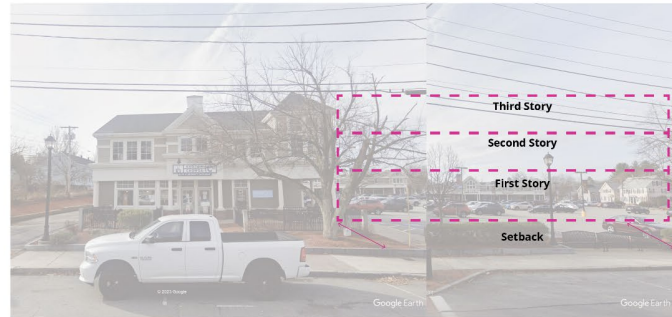


Photo Credit: Google Earth Pro

Questions for You

Are these the right dimensional standards for this district?

Comments/Questions

North Andover: Graphics credit: Innes Associates

COMMUNITY VISIONING PROCESS: MEETING MATERIALS



Littleton, MA: Graphics credit: RKG Associates and Innes Associates

DRAFT MESSAGE TO TOWN MEETING



Town of Leverett Comprehensive Plan Phase 2

Members of the Leverett Community:

The Leverett Planning Board is pleased to announce that the Town is starting **Phase 2** of the planning process for the Town's comprehensive plan.

The Steering Group met for the first time on April 17, 2023. The Town has engaged Innes Associates, along with RKG Associates and Tighe & Bond, to assist the community with the preparation of the complete plan.

The Planning Board and the Steering Group invite you to be a part of this process! The Planning Board will sponsor an initial meeting on **XYZ, XYZ, 2023 from 7-8:30 pm at XYZ**. At that meeting, you will learn more about the planning process, and how and when you can contribute. Please turn this page over for the topics for discussion during this planning process and an initial timeline.

Your voices are important to us and we hope to see you at the first meeting and to hear from you throughout this process.

Members of the Planning Board and the Steering Group

Leverett Planning Board

Ken Kahn
Tom Ewing
Van Stoddard
Steve Freedman
Richard Nathhorst
Tim Shores
Swan Keyes

Comprehensive Plan Steering Group

Matt Boucher
Silas Ball
Jenny Daniell
Arlyn Diamond
Jim Field
Gary Gruber
David Henion
Isaiah Robison
Kim Van Wagner
Steve Weiss
Bob Weitzman

Use your phone to scan the QR code below for the results of Phase 1.



or type in the short link below:

<https://qrco.de/bdtLaC>



Comprehensive Plan 101

A Comprehensive Plan is a plan for the whole community. The planning process relies on input from community members to develop the vision for the community and set priorities for goals that will support that vision. Your voice is an important part of the process!

A Comprehensive Plan will have a vision statement, supported by goals. Town government, either staff or elected officials, generally implement the policies and actions defined in the plan, but members of the community continue to have an important voice over the ten-year life of the plan.

The plan will seek to define where the Town should invest its resources (time and money) to address the vision, goals, and priorities identified by the community. As directed by the Planning Board, for this planning process, the consultant team and volunteers will help facilitate discussions around options to enhance livability and affordability and the implications of those goals on the municipal budget (both revenue and expenses).

Plan Topics

Economic Development
Housing
Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources
Open Space and Recreation
Town Services and Facilities
Transportation
Affordability
Climate adaptation and sustainability
Regionalization of Town services
Social and economic equity

TIMELINE

Tasks 1 and 2	Tasks 3 and 5	Tasks 5 and 6
Developing Scenarios	Discussing Options	Preparing the Plan
April - June	June - August	September - November



NEXT STEPS

1. **May 10:** Existing conditions and scenarios
 - a. Meet other consultant team members.
 - b. Appoint chair and vice-chair of Steering Group.
 - c. Discuss outreach for visioning process.
2. **June 13:** Continued scenarios (may need second meeting on **June 27**)
 - a. Continued outreach for visioning process.
 - b. Set schedule for facilitation training.
2. June/July/August: Community Visioning Groups

**Town of Leverett
Comprehensive Plan Steering Group
Meeting #1: Meeting Minutes
April 17, 2023
7 pm to 8:45 pm**

Attendees

Consultants in attendance: Emily Innes

Steering Group members in attendance: Silas Ball, Matt Boucher, Jenny Daniell, Arlyn Diamond, Jim Field, Gary Gruber, David Henion, Isaiah Robison, Kim Van Wagner, Steve Weiss, Bob Weitzman

Planning Board members in attendance: Tim Shores, Tom Ewing, Ken Kahn

Others in attendance: Andy Vlock

Minutes taken by Tim Shores.

Resources:

- Emily's presentation:
 - [https://leverett.ma.us/files/CP_Phase_2 -
Steering_Group_Meeting_1_Presentation.pdf](https://leverett.ma.us/files/CP_Phase_2_-_Steering_Group_Meeting_1_Presentation.pdf)
- 2020 Leverett Zoning Bylaws:
 - https://leverett.ma.us/files/2020_Leverett_Zoning_Bylaws.pdf
 - https://leverett.ma.us/files/2020_Leverett_Zoning_Bylaws_Index.pdf
- 2005 Leverett Subdivision Rules and Regulations:
 - https://leverett.ma.us/files/2005_revision_Subdivision_Rules_and_Regulations.pdf
- Other files are available on the Planning Board page:
 - <https://leverett.ma.us/g/58/Planning-Board>
- Comprehensive Planning pages:
 - <https://leverett.ma.us/g/95/Comprehensive-Planning>
 - <https://leverett.ma.us/p/2105/Leverett-Comprehensive-Plan-project-timeline>

Meeting began at 7pm.

Minutes

1. Opening remarks

Tom Ewing described the background and goals of this planning project, summarized as follows:

- The Planning Board has been interested in revising Leverett's zoning bylaw to better meet the current and future needs of Leverett and the people who live here. The zoning of a town has significant impacts on how that town changes over time, what it's like to live in that town, and who is able to live in that town. Leverett's current zoning bylaw was written according to ideas and planning efforts in the 1970s and 1980s when a top concern in Leverett was avoiding rapid over-development. Given the work and research required to revise zoning, the Planning Board decided to apply for state grants to fund a comprehensive plan, as defined by Massachusetts General Law.
- The job of the Steering Group will be to learn about the existing conditions of Leverett, the future of Leverett that residents would like to work towards, and to assist with reports written by consultants, including guidance on changes we could make to help us achieve that future -- such as changes to the zoning bylaw, if zoning bylaw changes would be appropriate to achieve that future.
- It will be a lot of work, but Tom believes everyone on Steering will come away with a stronger connection to each other and to the future of Leverett as envisioned by the community.

2. Welcome and Introductions.

Emily welcomed everyone and introduced her process. Everyone took turns introducing themselves. Shared themes of introduction were love for Leverett and personal commitment to working in the best interests of the town.

- Andy Vlock is considering joining the SG but is not yet decided.

3. Review scope and timeline

- Jenny Daniell asked about the language of 'growth' and 'development', and whether this word choice indicated an assumption being made before inviting the community to provide their vision of Leverett's future. Emily replied that there was no assumption on the consultants' part in terms of what actions that town would take or should take, but that part of the consultants' analysis would be to determine what actions the town could take, given the evidence of existing conditions, if the town chose to do so. That is, given the evidence of matters such as land usage history and patterns, water and soil resources, septic regulations, housing density, demographic change, and other items of interest to Leverett, what future scenarios of growth and development could conditions in Leverett support? What would

the tradeoffs be of each of those scenarios? The consultants present scenarios in terms of development and tradeoffs in order to provide accessible meeting materials for a Community Visioning process.

- Steve Weiss suggested that the timeline is very tight, and seems unrealistic. He asked if there's a reason to try to finish the Steering Group scope of work by October.
- Tim replied:
 - We can be flexible. The Phase 1 grant award had a grant end date that was less than one year after the grant start date. Planning Board applied for the Phase 2 grant assuming it would have a similar duration of less than a year. After winning the Phase 2 grant, we learned that the grant end date was more than a year away.
 - (Tim followed up with Margie after the meeting and learned that the Phase 2 grant end date is the end of June, 2024).
 - Tim also observed that the role of the Steering Group is meant to be independent from Planning Board oversight, and this is by design to ensure a fair process. The Planning Board's role has been to decide the overall goals of the planning project, win grants, define the RFP, select the consultant, appoint Steering Group members, and communicate progress to the town. The Planning Board will also have final approval over the contents of the Comprehensive Plan. But the Steering Group is free to decide its own process (within the constraints of planning defined by MGL Chapter 41 Section 81D, and the overall goals defined by the Planning Board's grant application and RFP).
 - Planning Board members will not attend future SG meetings, except as liaisons when it is supportive to do so. For example, Tim will help with Town Hall access, and will help with posting updates and meetings to the town website.
 - Emily confirmed that the consultants will be able to be flexible about this, as well.
 - Tom observed that an early goal of the Planning Board was to have zoning changes ready to propose by Town Meeting 2024. This is no longer realistic, even given an accelerated timeline, so we shouldn't consider this a need for the accelerated project timeline.
 - Nobody objected to lengthening the Steering Group timeline. The Group will pick this topic back up at future meetings.

4. Discuss format of Community Visioning Groups and identify volunteers.

Emily described two options for Community Visioning Group meetings:

- Option 1:
 - Initial community-wide meeting with consultant team to introduce process
 - People sign up at that meeting for small groups discussions
 - Members of the Steering Group (and other volunteers) facilitate the meetings with materials/instructions from the consultant team and report back
 - Second community-wide meeting to present aggregate results of small group meetings
 - Pros and Cons of Option 1
 - Likely to have the most in-depth conversations
 - Relies on volunteers to step up
 - Discussion/results may vary by facilitation team

- Option 2:
 - Community-wide meeting with consultant team to introduce process (including existing conditions) and begin visioning
 - Second community-wide meeting to discuss evolving vision and goals
 - Third community-wide meeting to present recommendations and receive feedback
 - Pros and Cons of Option 2
 - Opportunity for group conversations is limited to the event.
 - Experience may be more consistent for all participants.
 - Less effort required of Steering Group members – facilitation is only required at three events
 - Kim Van Wagner asked if we need to decide on an option at this meeting. Emily said no, but we should try to decide by the May meeting.
 - Discussion: Arlyn Diamond, Kim Van Wagner, Gary Gruber, and Isaiah Robison expressed a preference for Option 1.
 - David Henion and Arlyn suggested gathering input at Town Meeting, along with the printed message (see next agenda item). Tim said that he'd be tabling at Town Meeting with copies of the Phase 1 report and the Comp Plan Logic Model, and would add this to the table.
 - Jim Field suggested that we hold off on deciding between options before we need to. The decision between options remains on the table for meeting #2.

5. Discuss message to Town Meeting (April 29).

- Emily presented her draft letter and invited feedback.
- Arlyn suggested that the first paragraph of the letter should express a strong statement of our commitment to this project. Jenny Daniell agreed. Emily asked for volunteers to write this paragraph -- Jenny and Arlyn volunteered, with no objections from the rest of the Group.

6. Next steps:

- May: Existing conditions and scenarios
 - Per Doodle poll, May 10 at 7pm will likely be the second meeting. Emily will keep the poll open until this Friday, April 21.
 - When the meeting day and time is decided, Tim will send to Town Clerk to reserve Town Hall. There are currently no schedule conflicts on Leverett website calendar.
- June: Continued scenarios (may need second meeting)
 - Per Doodle poll, June 13 (and possible second meeting on June 27) will likely be the third (and fourth) meeting.
 - When decided, Tim will send to Town Clerk to reserve Town Hall. There are currently no schedule conflicts on Leverett website calendar.
- June/July/August: Community Visioning Groups. May extend into September, depending on Steering Group input.

Meeting ended at 8:45 pm.

STEERING GROUP MEETING #2

TOWN OF LEVERETT

MAY 10, 2023



**Town of Leverett
Comprehensive Plan Steering Group
Meeting #2
In-person at Town Hall and via Zoom (see details below)
May 10, 2023
7-8:30 pm**

Zoom Link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83957683443?pwd=MUWzMmxmOWtKTy9tQjl4cTlhd2pudz09>

Agenda - REVISED

1. Welcome and introductions. (10 minutes)
2. Approval of Minutes from April 17, 2023.

Discussion 1: Elections!

1. Elect Chair and Vice-chair.
 - a. Role: Keep order in meetings.
 - b. Communicate with consultant team on logistics in-between meetings.
 - c. Work with members to check schedules for meetings.
 - d. Distribute minutes and agendas to members.
2. Establish rotation for taking minutes.

Discussion 2: Community Engagement and Outreach (40 minutes)

3. Discuss format of Community Visioning Groups.
 - a. Two big meetings, smaller meetings in-between?
 - b. Three big meetings?
 - c. Other?
4. Identify volunteers from committee and potential volunteers from outside committee.
5. Identify locations and establish outreach to people in charge.
6. Develop schedule for meetings.
7. Discuss outreach options.

Discussion 3: Format and Content (40 minutes)

8. Discuss meeting format.
 - a. Existing conditions, options, recommendations?
 - b. Pre-meeting readings, guided group conversation, reaching consensus?
 - c. Scenario building and evaluation?
 - d. Other?
 - e. Length and number of meetings per group?
9. Discuss meeting content.
 - a. What information should be provided **before** the meeting?
 - b. What information should be provided **during** the meeting?
 - c. What does the Steering Group need from meeting participants?
 - d. What are the requirements for a comprehensive plan in Massachusetts and how does this engagement process we establish help us meet those requirements?
 - e. How do we follow up with participants after the meeting? After the meeting process is complete?

Attendees

Committee members

- Matt Boucher
- Silas Ball
- Jenny Daniell
- Arlyn Diamond
- Jim Field
- Gary Gruber
- David Henion
- Isaiah Robison
- Kim Van Wagner
- Andy Vlock
- Steve Weiss
- Bob Weitzman

Consultant Team

- Emily Innes, Innes Associates
- Chris Herlich, RKG Associates
- Tracy Adamski, Tighe & Bond

**Town of Leverett
Comprehensive Plan Steering Group
Meeting #2: May 10, 2023
Summary of Supplemental Materials**

Comprehensive Planning 101

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a document that provides guidance to a municipality for its policies, actions, and investments over a defined period, often ten years. In Massachusetts, comprehensive plans are enabled by Section 81D.

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter41/Section81D>

81D requires nine elements. Of these, the Goals and Policies Statement (this is often called Vision and Goals) and the Implementation Plan are the most critical components in terms of defining the future policies, actions, and investments of the Town. These elements provide the why (Goals and Policies) and the what, who, where, when, and how (Implementation Plan) of the comprehensive plan.

Comprehensive planning grew out of land use planning, and the other seven elements reflect this. Those elements are as follows:

- Circulation (which originally referred to the roadways in a town and now includes transportation, transit, and mobility)
- Economic development
- Housing
- Natural and cultural resources (which include historic resources)
- Open Space and Recreation
- Services and facilities (which refer to Town services and facilities and include water, wastewater, and stormwater management)
- Land use plan (which brings together the land use recommendations of the plan)

A major action of the Town may be zoning changes that address preferences for land use within the town. (Note that “Town” refers to the government, while “town” refers to the geographic area.)

For planning resources, please see the full supplemental materials document.

Schedule

Based on the discussions at the first Steering Group meeting, we will need to refine the schedule to address concerns about community engagement over the summer. I have modified the draft schedule to address those concerns. Part of the task on May

10 will be to confirm the schedule for the next few months. Task 6 should be completed in Spring 2024.

For additional notes on the schedule and the draft schedule, please see the full supplemental materials document.

Flow of the Planning Process and Roles and Responsibilities of the Parties

The Planning Board developed a Scope of Work based on the draft provided in the Phase 1 report. The consultant team responded to the RFP that contained the scope of work. This flow summarizes the scope of work and identifies the roles of the Consultant team and the Steering Group for the relevant tasks.

The consultant team's main task is to help the Town of Leverett prepare a comprehensive plan that the Planning Board can adopt. The Steering Group's main task is to assist the Planning Board and the consultant team with the planning process required to develop the plan. The goal of the planning process is to gather community input that will inform the vision, goals, and actions of the plan.

The tasks below are the remaining tasks in the planning process. **For a full description of each task and the role of the consultant team, please see the full supplemental materials document.**

Task 2: Updated Community Outreach and Engagement Strategy

Role of the Steering Group in Task 2:

- Assist the consultant team with the refinement of the outreach and engagement process, including meeting formats, content, places, and scheduling.

Task 3: Complete Documentation of Existing Conditions

Role of the Steering Group in Task 3:

- Review consultant team's data on existing conditions, which will follow the elements in Section 81D.
- Help consultant team fact check (especially with mapping).
- Provide feedback on the presentation of data – is the presentation clear? Is there anything the community is likely to need more information about or be surprised by?
- For Leverett: Can this data be developed into scenarios, or does the Steering Group need to hear from the community first?

Task 4: Community Visioning

Role of the Steering Group in Task 4:

- Spread the word about the meetings.

- Facilitate meetings.
- Provide additional feedback about input. Who was in the room(s)? Will past community discussions affect the input received? Who was missing from the conversations?
- Work with the consultant team to develop the questionnaires.
- Work with the consultant team to develop and refine the vision and goals based on public input.
- Work with the consultant team to develop the implementation plan, including identifying appropriate actions, partners, and suggested timeline.

Task 5: Draft Comprehensive Plan and Presentations

Role of the Steering Group in Task 5:

- Review and comment on the draft plan in a timely manner.
- Continue to promote the planning process, especially once the draft is available for review.

Task 6: Community Approval Process and Final Comprehensive Plan

Role of the Steering Group in Task 6:

- Attend the Planning Board-sponsored public meeting.
- Publicize the meeting and encourage community members to attend.

**Town of Leverett
Comprehensive Plan Steering Group
Meeting #2: May 10, 2023
Supplemental Materials**

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- Land use plan (which brings together the land use recommendations of the plan)

A major action of the Town may be zoning changes that address preferences for land use within the town. (Note that “Town” refers to the government, while “town” refers to the geographic area.)

Examples of Recent Comprehensive Plans from the consultant team

- Town of South Hadley: https://www.southhadley.org/1277/2020-Master-Plan#liveEditTab_widgets
- Town of Scituate: https://www.scituatema.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3781/f/pages/20210625_scituate2040_master_plan_final.pdf

Examples of Local Comprehensive Plans

- Town of Amherst: <https://www.amherstma.gov/526/Master-Plan>
- Town of Montague: https://www.montague-ma.gov/files/1999_Montague_Comprehensive_Plan_Part_1.pdf
- and https://www.montague-ma.gov/files/1999_Montague_Comprehensive_Plan_Part_2.pdf
- Town of Northfield: <https://www.northfieldma.gov/master-plan-roundtable/pages/final-master-plan-documents>
- Town of Shutesbury:
https://www.shutesbury.org/sites/default/files/offices_committees/planning_board/MasterPlan.pdf and website for their Working Group:
https://www.shutesbury.org/master_plan_working_group
- Town of Sunderland: <https://www.townofsunderland.us/planning-board/links/master-plan>
- Town of Wendell: Interesting discussion of community meeting in 2021:
<https://www.wendellmass.us/home/calendar/subscribe-export/icalrepeat.detail/2021/11/09/50176/-/what-kind-of-wendell-do-we-want-planning-board-public-forum-november-9-on-zoom.html>

Resources

As many of the committee members are new to planning, these resources may also be of interest:

- American Planning Association (APA)
 - <https://planning.org/aboutplanning/>
 - <https://planning.org/educators/whatisplanning/>
- Franklin Regional Council of Governments (this is also your regional planning agency)
 - <https://frcog.org/>
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts
 - Rural Policy Plan: <https://frcog.org/publications/ma-rural-policy-plan/>)
 - Discussion of rural rescue plan: <https://www.mass.gov/massachusetts-needs-a-rural-rescue-plan>
 - Public infrastructure report: <https://www.mass.gov/report/public-infrastructure-in-western-massachusetts-a-critical-need-for-regional-investment-and-revitalization>
- Federal resources
 - USDA Rural Development: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/>

- Center for Rural Pennsylvania:
 - Planning for the Future: a Handbook on Community Visioning: <http://www.rural.palegislature.us/visioning3.pdf>
- State of Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning
 - Comprehensive Planning Guidance Handbook (especially the first chapter: <https://planning.ri.gov/documents/comp/2021/Comp-plan-Guidance-Handbook-Revised-Abridged-Approved-8-12-21.pdf>)

Topic-based resources

These websites address some of the topics that have been part of general planning discussions and you may find them of interest.

<https://missingmiddlehousing.com/>

<https://www.strongtowns.org/>

<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/>

Schedule

Based on the discussions at the first Steering Group meeting, we will need to refine the schedule to address concerns about community engagement over the summer. I have modified the draft schedule below to address those concerns. Part of the task on May 10 will be to confirm the schedule for the next few months.

The scope of work (see below) assumes attendance from Innes Associates at five to six total meetings with the Steering Group, four to six total meetings with Town officials and staff, one meeting with the Planning Board for plan approval and one community meeting prior to plan approval. One or more other members of the consultant team will attend as appropriate.

The estimate of 10-15 community meetings noted in the scope assumes that most will not require attendance by the consultant. However, the consultant will support those meetings with materials and documentation.

The list of tasks, meetings, and deliverables from the contracted Scope of Work is below:

Task		Meetings	Deliverables
1	Project Initiation	Planning Board #1: February 8, 2023 Steering Group #1: April 17, 2023	Orientation Updated work plan
2	Updated Community Outreach and Engagement Strategy	Steering Group #2: May 10, 2023	Updated Outreach and Engagement Strategy.
3	Complete Documentation of Existing Conditions	None	Completed evaluation of existing conditions. Slide deck of existing conditions.
4	Community Visioning	Town officials meeting(s): TBD Steering Group #3: June 27, 2023 Steering Group #4: TBD Community meetings: (TBD) Steering Group #5: TBD	Draft and final scenarios for discussion. Materials for Community Visioning Groups. Facilitation instructions and training for volunteer facilitators. Community-wide surveys (2).
5	Draft Comprehensive Plan and Presentations	Town officials meeting: TBD Steering Group #6: TBD	Draft plan, zoning recommendations, and septic regulation changes. Second draft. Appendix of public comments during review process.
6	Community Approval Process and Final Comprehensive Plan	Planning Board-sponsored Community meeting: TBD	Slide deck for presentation to Planning Board. Final plan.

Task 6 should be completed in Spring 2024.

Flow of the Planning Process and Roles and Responsibilities of the Parties

The Planning Board developed a Scope of Work based on the draft provided in the Phase 1 report. The consultant team responded to the RFP that contained the scope of work. This flow summarizes the scope of work and identifies the roles of the Consultant team and the Steering Group for the relevant tasks.

The consultant team's main task is to help the Town of Leverett prepare a comprehensive plan that the Planning Board can adopt. The Steering Group's main task is to assist the Planning Board and the consultant team with the planning process required to develop the plan. The goal of the planning process is to gather community input that will inform the vision, goals, and actions of the plan.

The tasks below are the remaining tasks in the planning process.

Task 2: Updated Community Outreach and Engagement Strategy

The Phase 1 report proposed a strategy for outreach and public engagement. Our first task is to refine that strategy. We began that work on April 17; we need to complete those discussion on May 10. Please see the agenda for some options.

Role of the Consultant Team (from the Scope of Work) in Task 2:

- Review the Engagement Strategy (from the Phase 1 report).
- Review existing surveys (from the Phase 1 report).
- Update the Phase 1 Outreach and Engagement Plan, with input from the Planning Board and the Steering Group.
 - Refine the approach.
 - Assign dates to meetings and deliverables.
 - Set deadlines for the delivery of engagement materials.
 - Organize outreach and engagement assets (such as a website).

Role of the Steering Group in Task 2:

- Assist the consultant team with the refinement of the outreach and engagement process, including meeting formats, content, places, and scheduling.

Task 3: Complete Documentation of Existing Conditions

This task is for the consultant team and will result in a deliverable – a presentation – for the Steering Group to review at the June 27 meeting.

- Existing conditions refer to what is here now (physical conditions, demographics, trends, past or current planning efforts).
 - Focus on the elements defined in Section 81D.
 - Remember that some of this work was already completed in Phase 1.

- Phase 1 also helped define some community-specific topics.
- A SWOT analysis can be a useful exercise. Here is one viewpoint on this method:
<https://www.useful-community-development.org/SWOT-analysis.html>

Role of the Consultant Team (from the Scope of Work) in Task 3:

- Review the Phase 1 Report.
- Complete the evaluation of existing conditions.
 - Planning topics from Section 81D.
 - Leverett-specific topics identified by the Phase 1 survey.
- Prepare a presentation for use in Tasks 4 and 5.

Role of the Steering Group in Task 3:

- Review consultant team’s data on existing conditions, which will follow the elements in Section 81D.
- Help consultant team fact check (especially with mapping).
- Provide feedback on the presentation of data – is the presentation clear? Is there anything the community is likely to need more information about or be surprised by?
- For Leverett: Can this data be developed into scenarios, or does the Steering Group need to hear from the community first?

Task 4: Community Visioning

This is the task that could contain the small group meetings we discussed in April. It is also the most critical component of the planning process – the vision, goals, actions, and priorities are a result of the input gained during this task. At the end of this task, we should have the following information:

- Sufficient community feedback to develop a draft vision and supporting goals.
- If scenario planning is used, as requested in the scope of work, sufficient input on the scenarios to develop a final scenario that is consistent with the draft vision (and may assist with developing both vision and goals).
- Priorities for the goals and actions defined during this task.

Stage 1: Community visioning

Community input can be divided into stages, depending on the needs of the process. This stage can include one or more of the following: visioning exercises, reactions to presentation of existing conditions (which could be presented as information only or as components of scenarios), area- and topic-based discussions, and goal-oriented discussions. The goal of this first stage is to define where areas of consensus about the future already exist and where further discussions are needed.

Stage 2: Developing draft vision, goals, and actions.

- Develop a draft vision based on community input. (Visioning should be a component of Step 3, but will likely need refinement, especially if there are many visions.) Visions are future-based: what is Leverett like in 2033? The vision is the first part of the “why” of the Implementation Plan.
- Develop draft goals based on the draft vision and community input. How does Leverett achieve the stated vision? Each goal should cover one or more of the planning elements from 81D and may include others identified by the Steering Group or the community engagement process. The goals are the second part of the “Why” for the Implementation Plan.
- Goals are “buckets” for actions. Actions are specific steps that the Town, or the Town with partners, should take to achieve the goals of the plan. Actions are the “what” of the Implementation Plan.
- Actions are accompanied by the following:
 - Who – usually a Town board, committee, or department is the lead. Partners may include other Town boards, committees, or departments; FRCOG, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and local institutions.
 - When – usually represented in terms of time (short-, med-, or long-term) and priority (high, medium, or low).
 - Where – some of the actions will be specific to a geographic location. These actions are usually related to a zoning change or an investment in infrastructure. Actions related to where can be mapped.
 - How – often falls into three buckets: policy change, zoning change, or funding source.

Stage 3: Prioritization.

- A critical component of the draft plan is the prioritization of actions. The final component of the public engagement should include a prioritization exercise.

Role of the Consultant Team (from the Scope of Work) in Task 4:

- Work with the Steering Group to develop several economic development scenarios, with an analysis of fiscal impacts and tradeoffs.
- Work with the Steering Group to refine the scenarios for discussion by the community.
- Meet with Town staff and officials to discuss the initial scenarios.
- Work with Steering Group members to facilitate community meetings. Provide relevant materials and develop a presentation of the results.
- Develop two questionnaires to reach people who are not able to attend meetings and to allow follow-up from participants in the visioning process.

- Work with the Steering Group to leverage community events during the planning process.

Role of the Steering Group in Task 4:

- Spread the word about the meetings.
- Facilitate meetings.
- Provide additional feedback about input. Who was in the room(s)? Will past community discussions affect the input received? Who was missing from the conversations?
- Work with the consultant team to develop the questionnaires.
- Work with the consultant team to develop and refine the vision and goals based on public input.
- Work with the consultant team to develop the implementation plan, including identifying appropriate actions, partners, and suggested timeline.

Task 5: Draft Comprehensive Plan and Presentations

The purpose of this task is to develop a complete draft of the written plan. This will include the elements as required by Section 81D, including the draft Implementation Plan.

This task will include two levels of review:

- The first iteration will be reviewed by the Planning Board, the Steering Group and Town staff.
- The second iteration (after comments are addressed by the consultant team) will be reviewed by the public.

Role of the Consultant Team (from the Scope of Work) in Task 5:

- Prepare the draft plan that includes the following content:
 - Executive Summary.
 - Vision and goals statement.
 - Discussion of the existing conditions of the planning topics in Section 81D
 - Discussion of Leverett-specific themes that address multiple planning topics.
 - Recommendations for future actions.
 - Implementation plan.
 - Discussion of benchmarks to track to measure progress in implementation.
 - Recommend zoning and subdivision changes.
 - Recommend septic regulation changes.

Role of the Steering Group in Task 5:

- Review and comment on the draft plan in a timely manner.
- Continue to promote the planning process, especially once the draft is available for review.

Task 6: Community Approval Process and Final Comprehensive Plan

Under Section 81D, the Planning Board adopts the plan on behalf of the community. There are some options around this process; it makes sense to discuss them as the draft plan is being finalized.

Role of the Consultant Team (from the Scope of Work) in Task 6:

- Prepare the presentation (s) for the public meeting and the Planning Board.
- Prepare the appendix of comments from the public review period.
- Present at Planning Board-sponsored public meeting.
- Prepare the final plan after Planning Board approval.

Role of the Steering Group in Task 6:

- Attend the Planning Board-sponsored public meeting.
- Publicize the meeting and encourage community members to attend.

Minutes: Steering Group meeting #2, May 10, 2023

7pm to 8:30pm

11 out of 14 in attendance (quorum is 8)

Steering Group members in attendance: Silas Ball, Matt Boucher, Jenny Daniell, Arlyn Diamond, Jim Field, Gary Gruber, David Henion, Kim Van Wagner, Andrew Vlock, Steve Weiss, Bob Weitzman

Steering Group members not in attendance: Isaiah Robison, Sarah Dolven, Nicole Vadja

Consultants in attendance: Emily Innes (Innes Associates), Tracy Adamski (Tighe & Bond, Inc.), Juliane Ding (RKG Associates), Chris Herlich (RKG Associates)

Planning Board members in attendance: Tim Shores

Minutes taken by Tim Shores

Resources:

- 2020 Leverett Zoning Bylaws:
 - https://leverett.ma.us/files/2020_Leverett_Zoning_Bylaws.pdf
 - https://leverett.ma.us/files/2020_Leverett_Zoning_Bylaws_Index.pdf
- 2005 Leverett Subdivision Rules and Regulations:
 - https://leverett.ma.us/files/2005_revision_Subdivision_Rules_and_Regulations.pdf
- Other files are available on the Planning Board page:
 - <https://leverett.ma.us/g/58/Planning-Board>
- Comprehensive Planning pages:
 - <https://leverett.ma.us/g/95/Comprehensive-Planning>
 - <https://leverett.ma.us/p/2105/Leverett-Comprehensive-Plan-project-timeline>

- 1) Meeting began at 7pm
- 2) **Welcome and Introductions:** Since this is the first meeting for consultants from T&B and RKG, everyone took turns introducing themselves.
- 3) **Minutes:** No changes proposed to minutes of April 17 meeting, submitted by Tim Shores. Silas observed that he had not seen the minutes. Gary moved to accept the minutes, Arlyn seconded, the vote to accept the motion was unanimous. Kim said she would help Silas get a printed copy of future minutes.
- 4) **Organizing:**
 - a. **Chairs:** Andrew proposed that the Group vote on two co-chairs, and volunteered to be one of them. Jenny volunteered to be the other. Matt moved, Gary seconded, unanimous vote to accept the motion to appoint Andrew and Jenny as Steering Group co-chairs.

- b. **Clerk:** The group discussed options for taking minutes. Gay asked if Tim would consider acting as SG clerk, taking minutes. Tim said he was willing if nobody objected to having a Planning Board flunkie hanging around. Tim also made several very funny jokes. Everyone approved of the plan with absolute enthusiasm.

5) **Community engagement and outreach plan (CE+O)**

- a. Emily led discussion of the task to review and update CE+O developed by last year's Working Group.
- b. **Community Visioning Meeting format:** Emily framed the primary SG decision as the choice about Community Visioning Meeting format. Based on her experience in other towns and her understanding of what works well in Leverett, she recommends the following three options:
 - i. **Two big community vision meetings** bookending **a series of small meetings** in between; or
 - ii. **Three big meetings** and no others; or
 - iii. **All small meetings.**
- c. **Order of meeting presentation:** A secondary SG decision about CE+O meetings is the order the two meeting topics --
 - i. **First, listening and facilitating discussion of hopes, dreams, and concerns; Second, presenting materials about existing conditions.** Drawback to this order is hoping and dreaming about the unicorn farm and having difficulty letting that dream go.
 - ii. **First, presenting materials about existing conditions; Second, listening and facilitating discussion of hopes, dreams, and concerns.** Drawback to this order is that people become intimidated by the factual details and self-censor.
- d. Lively SG discussion about CE+O:
 - i. Steve: What number of people should we set as CE+O targets?
 - 1. Jenny: +1, and we should also think about setting diversity targets by reaching people from different income brackets, people with children actively in school and those not in that group, those who own and those who rent, and other criteria.
 - ii. Arlyn:
 - 1. People who find it convenient to attend a small gathering will be more likely to attend bigger gatherings, or other small gatherings.
 - 2. If I host a meeting, would the goal be to identify issues of concern? Or to identify ideas for solutions?
 - a. Emily: Yes, and. An advantage of small groups is having the flexibility to tune into the group participants – some will want to focus more on problems, some more on solutions. This flexibility helps people feel more engaged, more included, and that their points of view will be well-represented at the larger meetings and in the plan.

3. Feels disturbed by low response to last year's Working Group survey for Phase 1. We can overcome that with networking among established groups.
 - a. Tim observed that the big problem with Phase 1 survey is that we didn't give people enough time to respond – only 3 weeks. Leverett generally shows up with high response rate to surveys. Recent examples include the Revenue Committee survey, the LifePath Age-Friendly Communities survey.
 - b. Emily: 100 to 200 people would be a good response for Leverett. Consultants will get latest demographic data so we can monitor survey performance by demographic segments and promote diversity. Also, many people who don't want to attend meetings will respond to survey.
 - c. Kim: Reminded about Steve's question about number of people to target. She advocates for a month-long kickoff at the transfer station and other sites to raise awareness and enthusiasm.
- iii. David: Not everyone goes to the transfer station, but a lot of people do. However, some go on Wednesday, some Saturday, some Sunday. A CE+O program sustained for a few weeks would net a lot of residents.
- iv. Gary:
 1. +1 to David's sustained transfer station presence idea.
 2. We want to reach every pocket of Leverett. We should each spend time on CE+O in our own neighborhoods. Silas could focus on Hemenway Road, for example. Andrew can focus on Teawaddle Hill, etc.
- v. Kim:
 1. Advocates for creating a brief form with information and questions that SG members can use for small meetings, helping to standardize the qualitative data we collect. This can also help us avoid the temptation of bringing personal agendas by guiding consistent messaging.
 2. Rattlesnake Gutter Trust plan giveaway is happening soon and would be a great CE+O buzz opportunity.
 3. Based on her union organizing experience, she recommends that everyone on the SG adopt individual performance goals, for example: "I will talk to 145 people by a certain date." They could organize territories to avoid overlap.
- vi. Andrew: Important to think about how we frame and communicate, our word choice, will determine CE+O effectiveness. Being willing to hold casual conversations with people will be just as effective as a mailer.
- vii. Steve:

1. People are less available for this kind of work in summertime.
 2. Important to talk to people about tangible terms and decisions – specific options for infrastructure, commercial zoning, cell phone towers – these are what will attract people to discussions, where they may then contribute to less tangible discussion of vision.
 - a. Emily: +1 and scenario forecasting by consultants will provide a lot of content for this approach. Consultants will need community vision meeting results as part of the data for forecasting.
- viii. Jenny: Expressed concern that some details of existing conditions are beyond the scope of the Comprehensive Plan, but still necessary to obtain before the town can make decisions with lasting impact (such as zoning changes, housing density, number of size of buildable lots). An example is hydrological study to learn the capacity for development that would impact drinking water demand and septic use, as well as update flood zone mapping, and the impacts of Leverett water use for the purposes of climate change preparedness. Would issues where further research is needed become a blocker for the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan?
1. Emily:
 - a. Yes, the SG and consultants could identify important blockers in the final Plan. Since the work is grant-funded and time-bound, it's inevitable to find topics that we can't address because they lack sufficient on-the-ground study. These can become further-research-is-needed (FRIN) items identified in the final plan.
 - b. But there's a caveat: by state law, the Comprehensive Plan must converge on a set of recommendations that the town government will be able to implement with available resources and without reliance on additional 3rd parties (such as environmental engineers to conduct further hydrological study). Part of the plan, by design, will be to produce a realistic implementation plan that can be executed within the constraints of existing conditions and community vision.
 - c. It will also still be Leverett's plan, and its use will be up to Leverett, according to the town's established democratic processes of decision-making.
 - d. Even without data that reaches 100% confidence, a town can still strike a balance by identifying topics of

concern in which we have *enough* data to make policy changes that help achieve a community vision.

2. Matt and Jim: Leverett does now have a climate preparedness plan, finalized in 2022. Jim will send it to Emily for inclusion in existing conditions data.
- e. Guidance from Emily in response to SG questions and concerns:
 - i. It will help if SG members become familiar with the maps that consultants have developed and will develop in existing conditions analysis. These maps will be a useful tool for communicating effectively with people.
 - ii. The SG can use a variety of small meeting formats: small subgroups of SG members -- as few as 2, and as many as quorum minus 1 (which is 7 people, quorum is 8 now that SG has grown to 14 people) – such as household parties, neighborhood group meetings, transfer station tabling and polling (aka “at the dump” – with appreciations to Jim Field), meeting with affiliation groups (churches, civic organizations, gardening clubs, pickleball players, etc.)
 - iii. Reminder that consultants will provide materials for SG to distribute and use at meetings. Materials will include documents about existing conditions, polling and survey items. Consultants will provide design, digital access, and estimates of printing and mailing costs.
 - iv. An effective way to prepare for a variety of meetings and people is to prepare some material that’s general (about the whole project) and some that is specific to that group (their geography, their identity, their specific concerns or values, etc.).
 - v. Begin by listening to people in the group, supporting their discussion with one another about needs, hopes, and concerns. Then show them materials about existing conditions, and pay attention to how they receive that information, and how it changes the discussion.
 - vi. SG members can recruit planning ambassadors and volunteer meeting facilitators who would like to contribute to making great meetings.
- 6) **Subcommittee formation:**
- a. Arlyn, Kim, and Steve formed a publicity plan subcommittee.
 - b. Jenny and Andrew formed a survey subcommittee.
- 7) **Deliverables:**
- a. **By June 27 meeting:**
 - i. Subcommittees will prepare materials for discussion.
 - ii. SG members should think of survey questions.
 - iii. Consultants will provide sample materials based on Leverett existing conditions analysis for SG to consider using at community vision meetings.

- b. **Longer term CE+O outcome:** SG will work with Emily to develop a consensus statement of community characteristics, vision, and goals, learned by SG members from community vision meetings. This statement is necessary before SG and consultants can begin to address solutions in the form of scenario forecasts.
- 8) Next steps**
- a. Next meeting will be June 27, 7pm at Town Hall. This meeting has already been posted.

Meeting ended at 8:30 pm.

**STEERING GROUP
MEETING #3**

TOWN OF LEVERETT

JUNE 27, 2023



**Town of Leverett
Comprehensive Plan Steering Group
Meeting #3
In-person at Town Hall and via Zoom (see details below)
June 27, 2023
7-8:30 pm**

Zoom Link

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87283141406>
Meeting ID: 872 8314 1406
One tap mobile: +16465588656,,87283141406# US (New York)

Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions.
2. Approval of Minutes from May 10, 2023.

Discussion 1: Existing Conditions (40 minutes)

1. Presentation from Consultant Team on Existing Conditions
2. Q&A

Discussion 2: Community Engagement and Outreach (40 minutes)

1. Continued discussion of outreach process.
2. Create schedule of outreach and engagement.

Next steps: Meeting dates and task assignments

Attendees

Committee members

- Matt Boucher
- Silas Ball
- Jenny Daniell, Co-chair
- Arlyn Diamond
- Jim Field
- Gary Gruber
- David Henion
- Isaiah Robison
- Kim Van Wagner
- Andy Vlock, Co-chair
- Steve Weiss
- Bob Weitzman

Consultant Team

- Emily Innes, Innes Associates
- Chris Herlich, RKG Associates
- Tracy Adamski, Tighe & Bond

MONTH	OPTION 1	OPTION 2
June	Complete Task 3: Existing Conditions	
July	Complete Task 2: Updated Community Outreach and Engagement Strategy Consultant team completes interviews	
August	Task 4 begins.	
	Consultant team prepares materials for community meeting #1.	Consultant team prepares materials for small group meetings.
	Steering Committee meeting #4 – review materials and facilitation training. Steering Committee members begin outreach.	
September	Community-wide meeting #1, led by consultant team. Consultant team prepares materials for community meeting #2.	Small group meetings, led by Steering Group facilitators or other volunteers.
	First questionnaire launched.	
October	Community-wide meeting #2.	Small group meetings continue.
	Steering Committee meeting #5 – discuss engagement and input to date.	
November	Consultant team works on draft plan.	Small group meetings (if needed). Consultant team works on draft plan.
	Second questionnaire launched.	
December	Task 5 begins. Consultant team works on draft plan	
January	Initial Plan due for committee, staff, and Planning Board comment. Steering Committee #6	
February	Consultant team addresses comments.	
March	Revised Draft Due; Team presents revised draft at Community-wide meeting.	
April	Annual Town Meeting; Public comment period	
May	Task 6 begins. Planning Board Review and Adoption	
June	Team prepares final plan. June 20, 2024 – Grant Ends	



Comprehensive Plan: Phase 2

Town of Leverett
Committee Meeting #3
June 27, 2023





AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions.
2. Approval of Minutes from May 10, 2023

Discussion 1: Existing Conditions (40 minutes)

1. Presentation from Consultant Team on Existing Conditions
2. Q&A

Discussion 2: Community Engagement and Outreach (40 minutes)

1. Continued discussion of outreach process.
2. Create schedule of outreach and engagement.

Next steps: Meeting dates and task assignments.



STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Roles

- Review draft reports and materials.
- Provide feedback on public outreach and input.
- Circulate flyers, social media tags, and emails about workshops and meetings.
- Encourage people to attend meetings and answer surveys.
- Staff public meetings and events.

Responsibilities

- Be open to many and different ideas.
- Respect the thoughts and opinions of others.
- Be ready to participate fully – in and out of the meeting.
- Remember we are talking about the needs of the whole town.



EXISTING CONDITIONS: Phase 1 Report

- Focus data collection in Phase 2 on updates and missing information, such as market data for economic development and housing, infrastructure and mobility, and town services/ facilities. Understand who in Leverett is working where and what that means for the Town's future.
 - RKG Associates: Housing and Economic Development
 - Tighe & Bond: Infrastructure
 - Interview Town staff (space and maintenance needs) and major landowners
 - Focus on Areas of Concern Map (page 24) identified in Phase 1
 - Open space/recreation areas
 - Town Center
 - North Leverett
 - Moore's Corner
 - Route 63
 - East Leverett
- Recent planning efforts focused on climate, open space (including natural resources) and recreation, and historic resources (including cultural resources).
 - **Gaps in planning will be addressed by this process:**
 - Economic Development
 - Housing
 - Town Services and Facilities
 - Infrastructure, including roads, water, sewer, and energy.

Demographics, Housing and Economic Development

Chris Herlich, AICP

Juliane Ding

RKG Associates

Demographics & Housing

Introduction

This section provides a detailed look at the existing demographic and housing characteristics influencing Leverett's housing market today and into the future. We will review demographic trends, households, housing units, pricing, and housing affordability. A town's demographic and housing characteristics are deeply intertwined. The housing stock can determine who is able to, or interested in living in a town, and the existing demographics and demographic trends influence housing demand and the market response. This information is key to identifying issues and opportunities within Leverett's housing market, and how to steer strategies and resources to address issues and capitalize on opportunities.

The following analysis also provides an overview and insights comparing Leverett to surrounding towns. This includes Amherst, Montague, Shutesbury, Sunderland, and Wendell. Throughout the analysis, Leverett is also compared to the surrounding "Region" which comprises of the five surrounding towns plus Leverett.



[292 Shutesbury Rd](#)
Source: Realtor.com

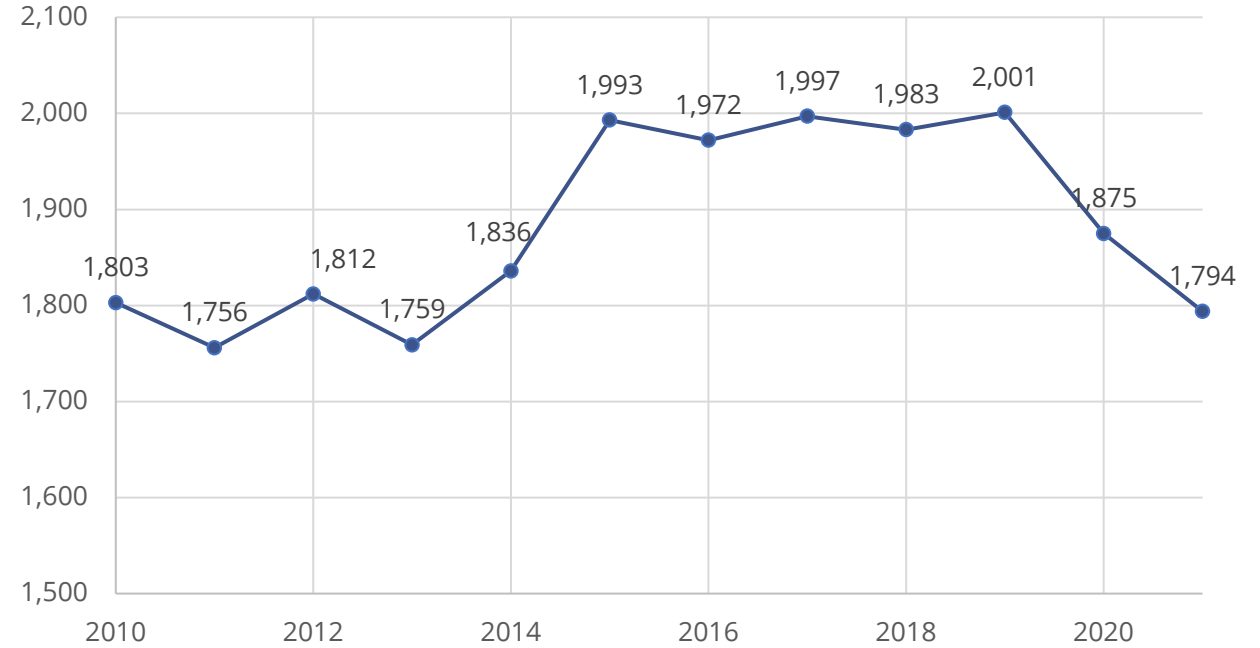
Total Population

Leverett's population is decreasing from historic highs of the mid-2010s.

The Census estimates indicate that over the last decade the total population of Leverett has fluctuated, with a decrease of 9% over the last five years. The encompassing region has decreased by 0.3% over the last five years, while the state of Massachusetts population has increased by 3.7%.

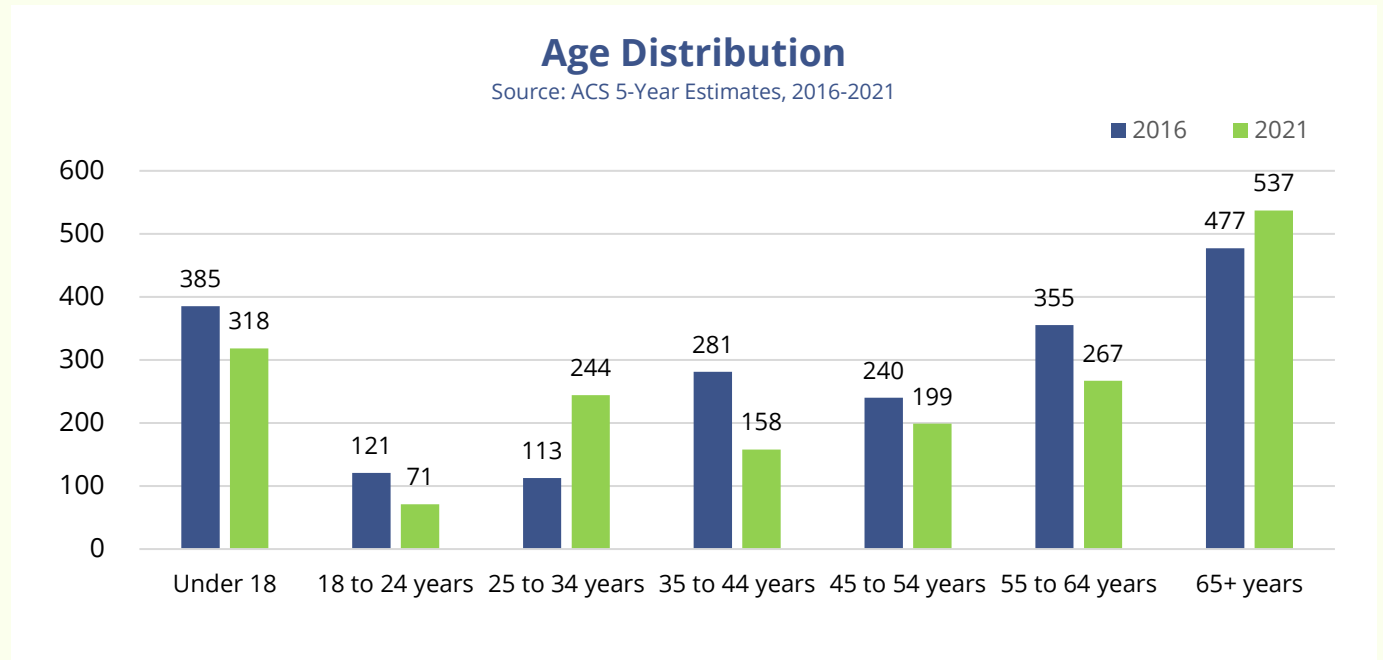
Leverett Total Population

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2010-2021



Age Distribution

Median Age	
Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2021	
Town	Age
Leverett	50.1
Amherst	21.3
Montague	44.6
Shutesbury	51.2
Sunderland	34.5
Wendell	50.6



Like many communities across the country, Leverett’s older adult population continues to grow.

Leverett’s median age of 50.1 is similar to some nearby communities, though much older than others. Residents ages 65+ make up about 30% of Leverett’s population, a 6% increase from 2016. Residents ages 25-34 increased by 131 residents, going from 6% of the population to about 14%. Attracting younger residents to Leverett will be important for the workforce, household spending, and continuing to replenish an aging population.

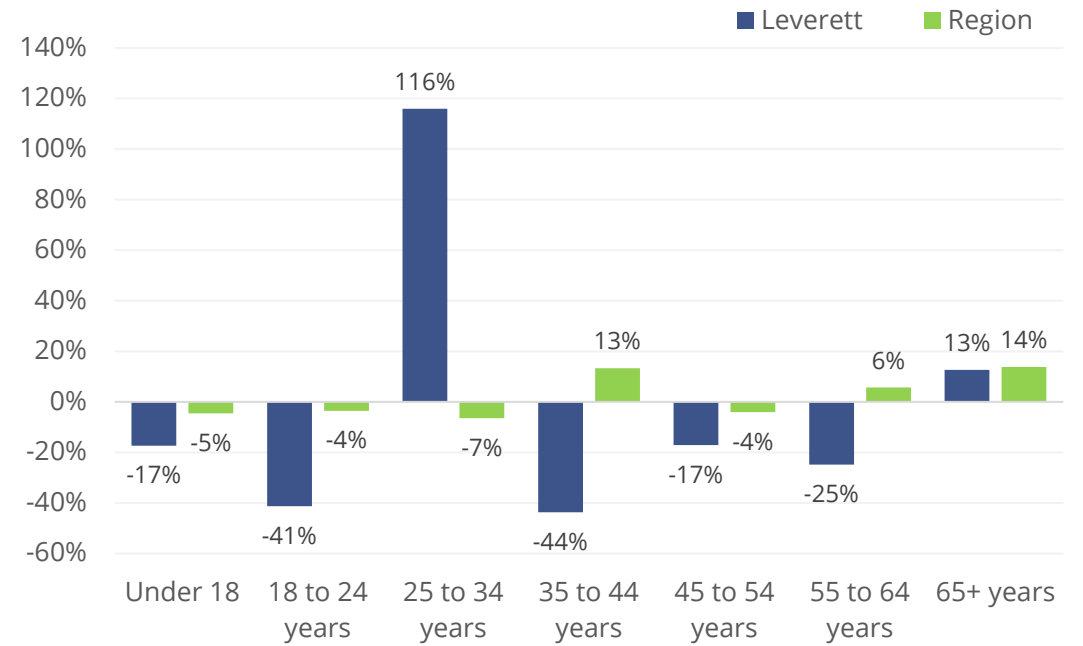
Change in Population by Age

Leverett's population skews older but has a growing Millennial population.

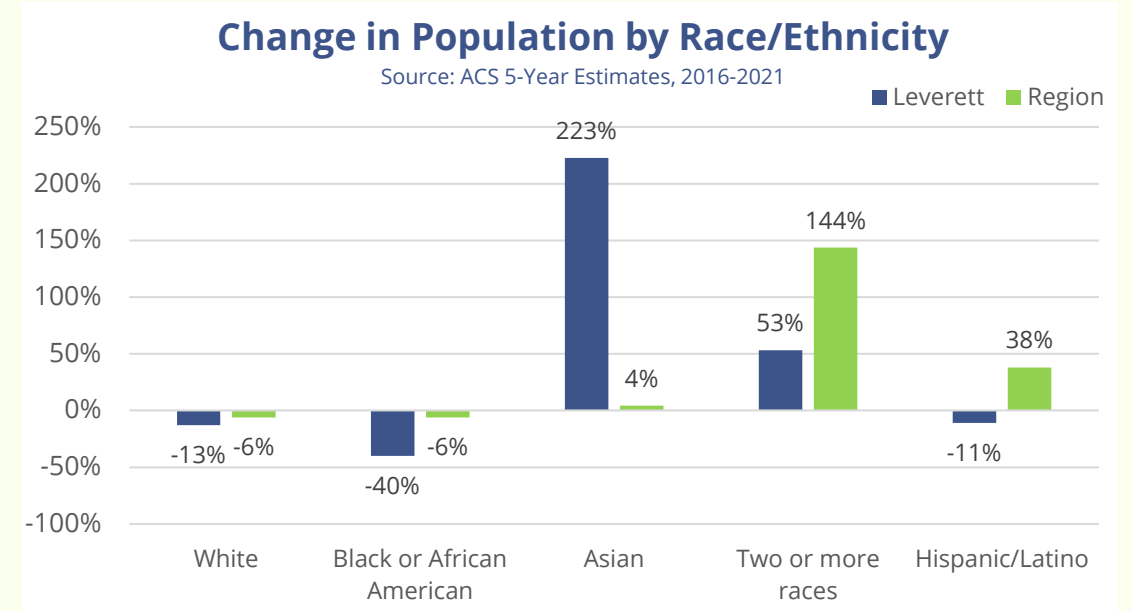
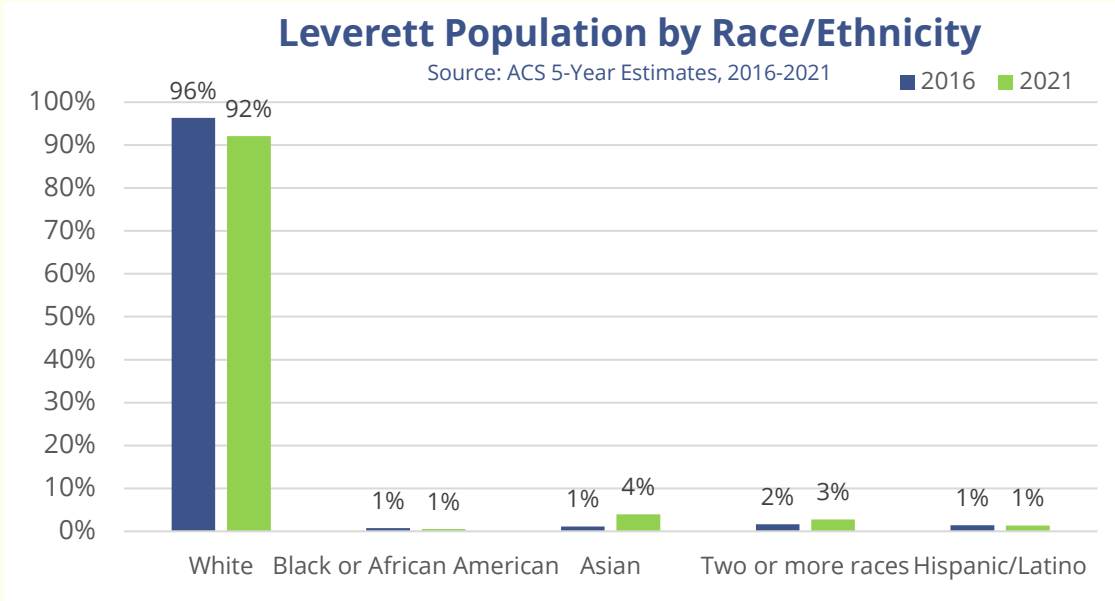
The largest percentage growth was in residents 25-34 by 131 residents, while the largest percentage decrease in residents 35 to 44 was by 123 residents. Keeping these younger residents in Leverett will be important for the workforce, household spending, and continuing to replenish an aging population.

Change in Population by Age, 2016-2021

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2016-2021



Race & Ethnicity



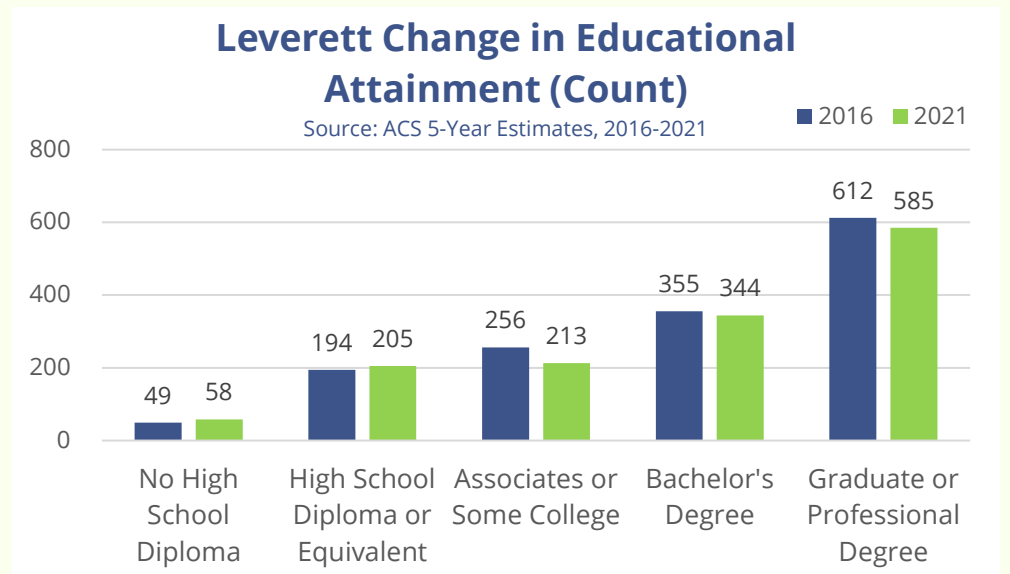
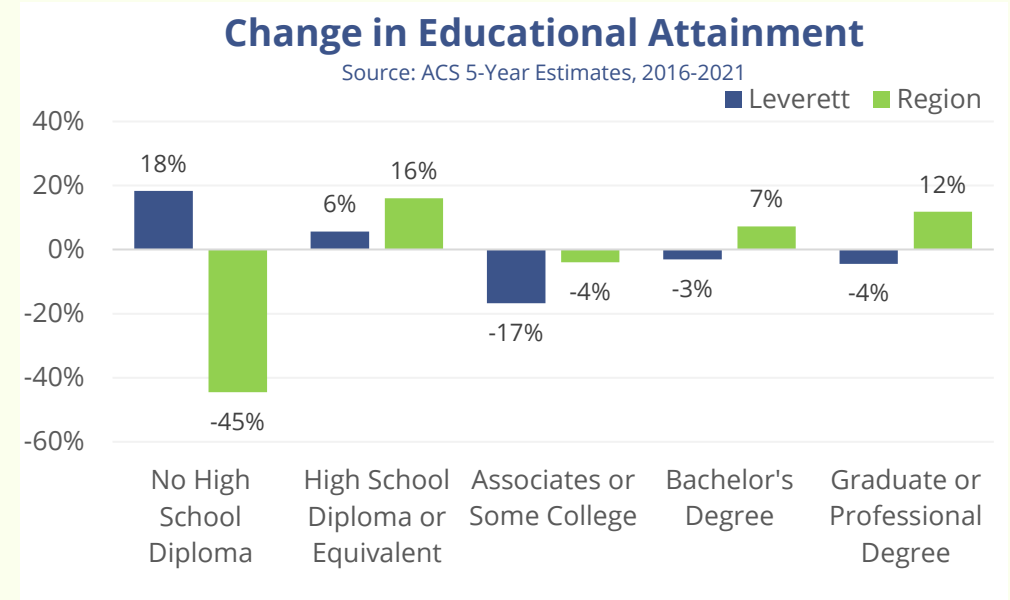
Leverett's population has become slightly more diverse.

- Over the past five years, the share of residents that identify as White decreased by about 4% (247 residents).
- The largest percentage increase was from Asian identifying residents, with an increase of about 3% (49 residents). In comparison, the region had significant proportional increases in Hispanic/Latino residents with a 38% increase (1,114 residents) and residents who identify as two or more races with an 144% increase (2,397 residents).

Education

The number of Leverett residents who attended college or hold a bachelor's degree or higher has decreased.

Over the last decade, the number of residents with a bachelor's degree decreased by about 3% (27 residents) and while residents with no high school diploma increased by about 18% (9 residents). This varies greatly from the region, where more highly educated people are increasing in proportion and residents with no high school diploma are decreasing in proportion.

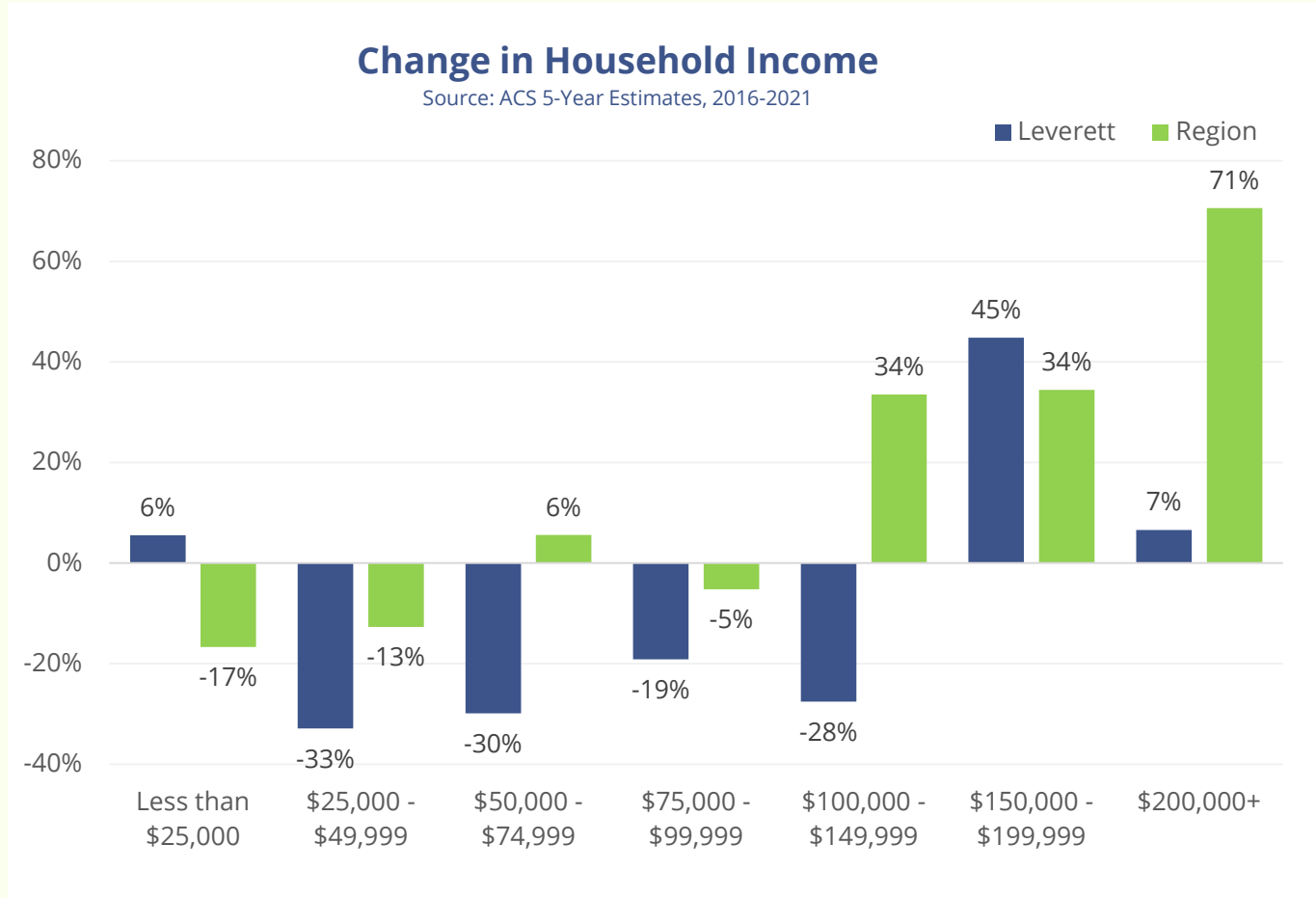


Income

Household incomes are increasing in Leverett.

Over the past five years, Leverett saw a 45% increase in households earning between \$150,000 - \$199,999 and a 7% increase in residents earning over \$200,000. The median household income in Leverett increased from \$86,771 to \$97,188.

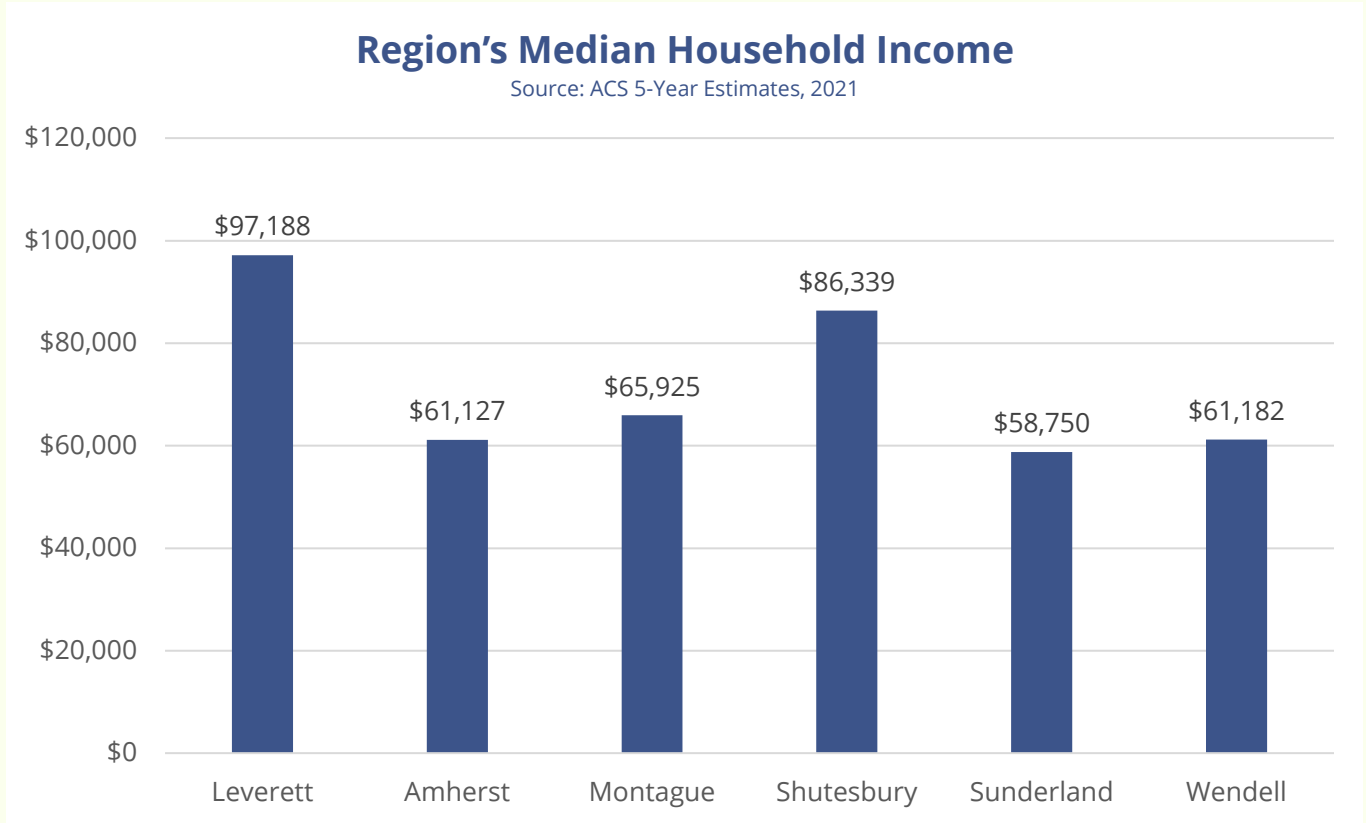
These increases in higher income households mean high household purchasing power and spending in local businesses as a key economic driver. This may also mean households have more income to spend on housing as home prices and rents continue to rise.



Income

Leverett has the highest median household income in the surrounding region.

Leverett's median income of \$97,188 was the highest in the region, with Shutesbury having the second highest median income at \$86,339. All other communities range similarly from about \$58,000 to \$66,000.



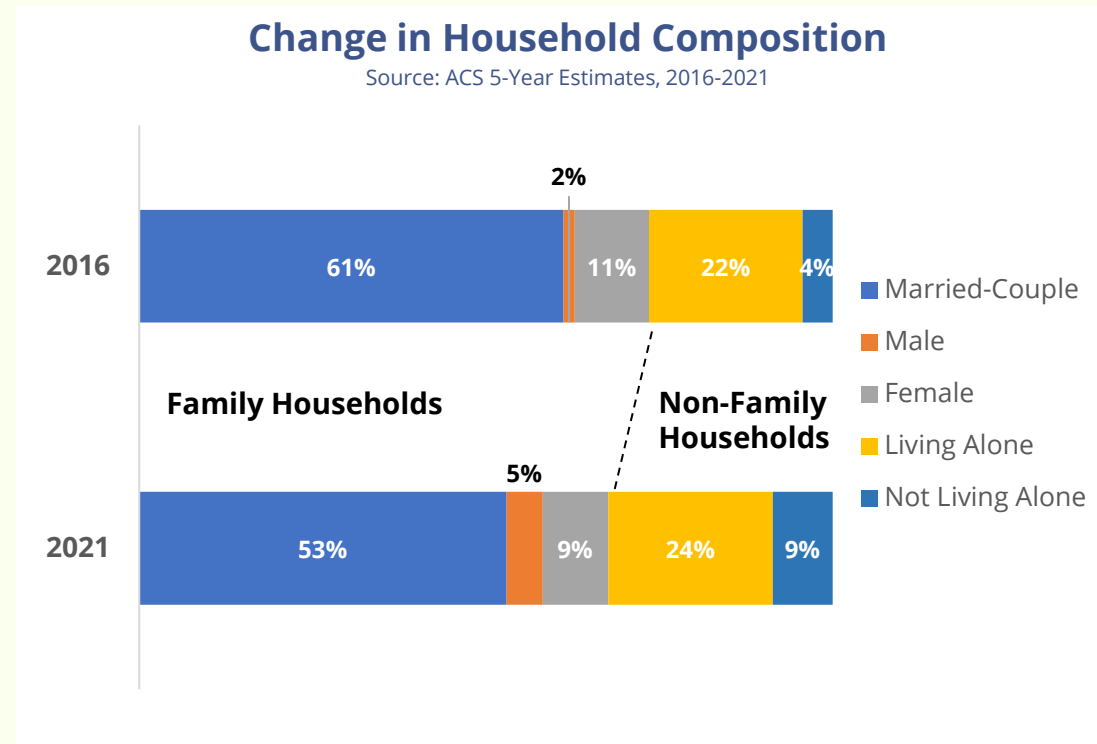
Household Composition

Household composition continues to shift as non-family households increase.

Following total population trends, the number of households decreased from 809 to 708 households.

Over the past five years, Leverett saw an increase in the number and percentage of non-family households, primarily driven by the increase in non-family households not living alone. The share of family households decreasing by 116 households. Non-family householders not living alone increased by 26 households.

For the region, the most significant proportional change was in householders living alone, with an increased of 637 residents.



Household Composition

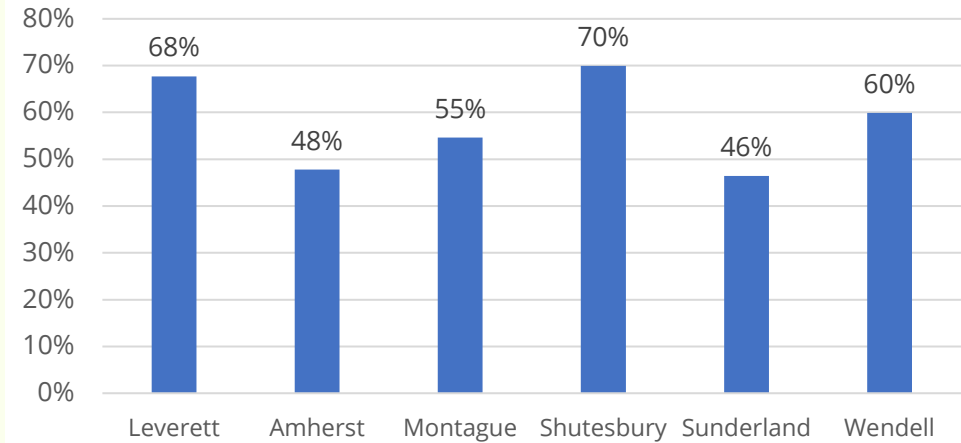
Leverett has a higher percentage of family households compared to surrounding towns/cities.

Leverett has 479 family households, which makes up about 68% of their total population.

However, Leverett is the only town that is decreasing in the proportion family households, while all other surrounding towns are increasing in family household proportions of total households. Shutesbury and Wendell have the most positive percentage change in family households.

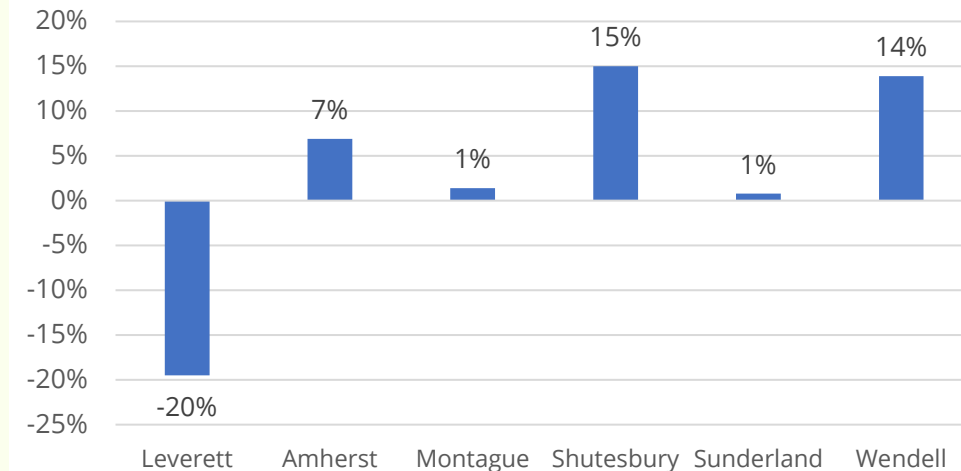
% of Total HHs that are Family HH

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2021



Family Households % Change

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2016-2021



Household Tenure

Leverett Housing Tenure

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2021

88% Owner Occupied

12% Renter Occupied

Housing Tenure Comparable Communities

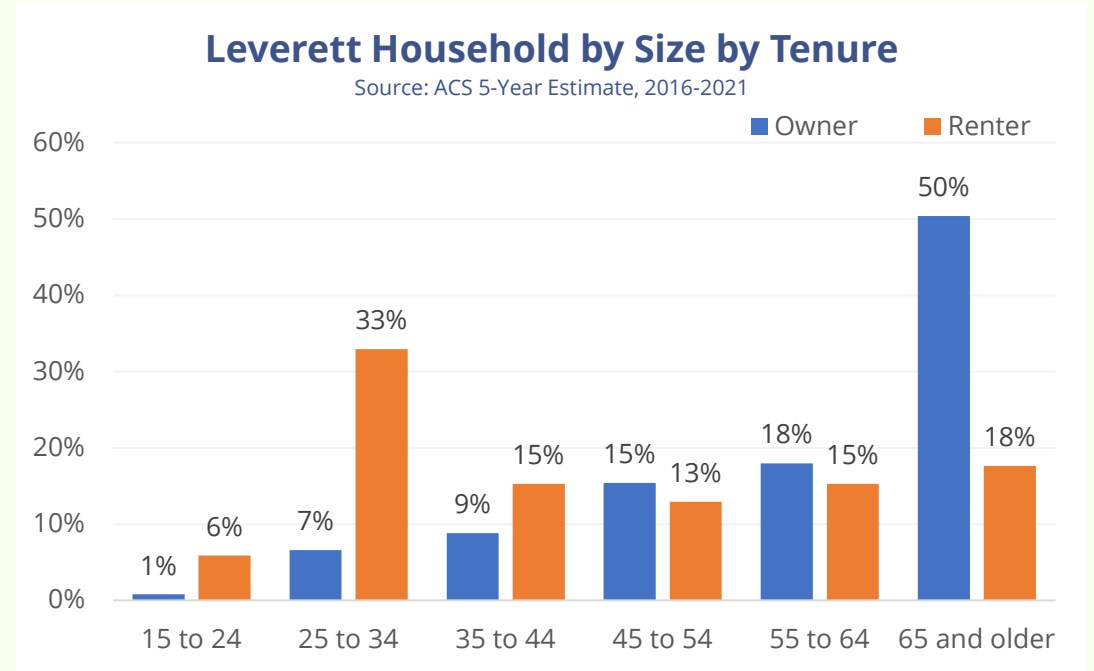
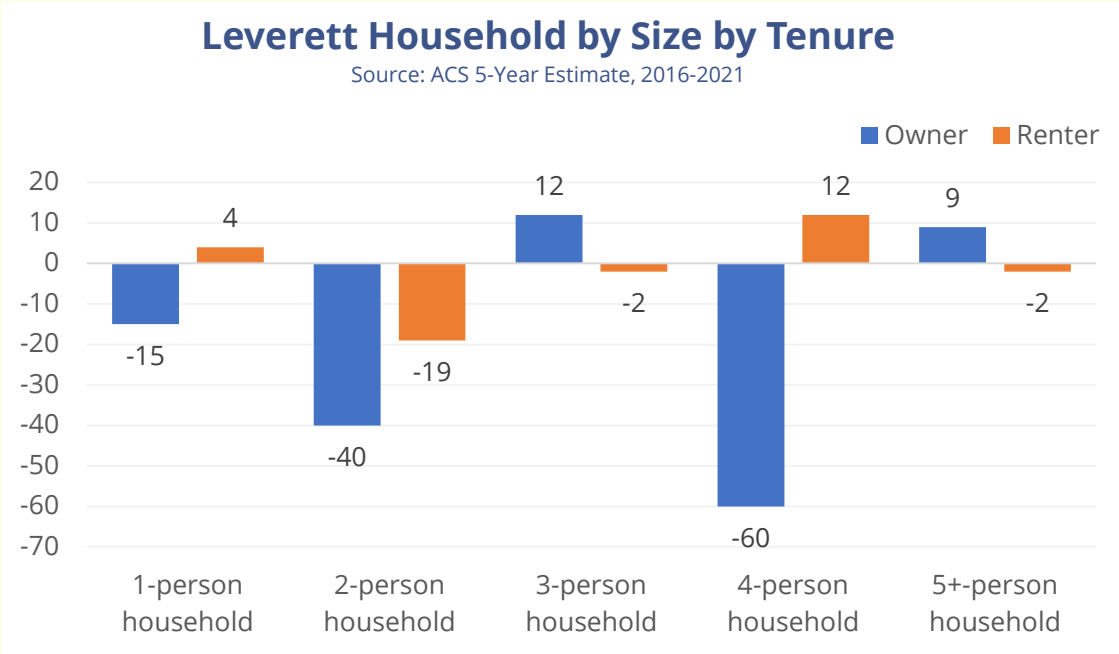
Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2016-2021

	2016		2021	
	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied
Leverett	89%	11%	88%	12%
Amherst	44%	56%	46%	55%
Montague	59%	41%	63%	37%
Shutesbury	89%	11%	91%	9%
Sunderland	43%	57%	44%	56%
Wendell	86%	14%	80%	20%

The ratio of renter occupied and owner occupied households has stayed consistent.

Leverett’s owner occupied tenure has decrease by only 1% over the past five years. However, following population trends, households have decreased overall, with owner-occupied households decreasing by 94 households and renter occupied households decreasing by 7 households. Across comparable communities, housing tenure has stayed relatively similar since 2016, with the percentage of renter occupied units decreasing slightly in Amherst, Montague, Shutesbury, and Sunderland. Wendell was the only town to have an increased ratio of renter occupied units.

Household Tenure



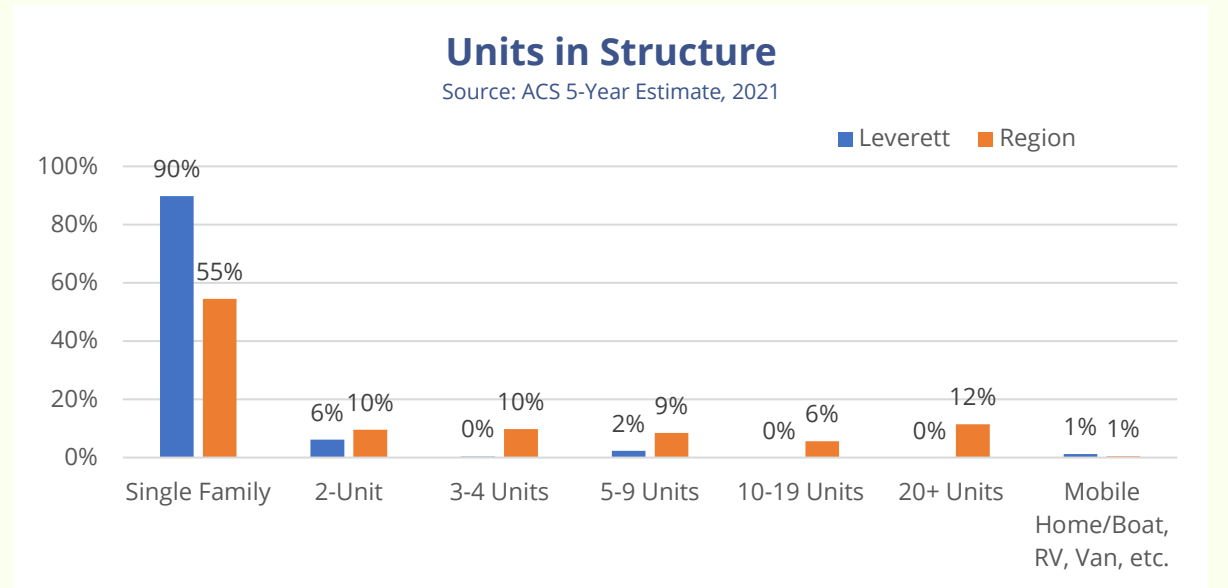
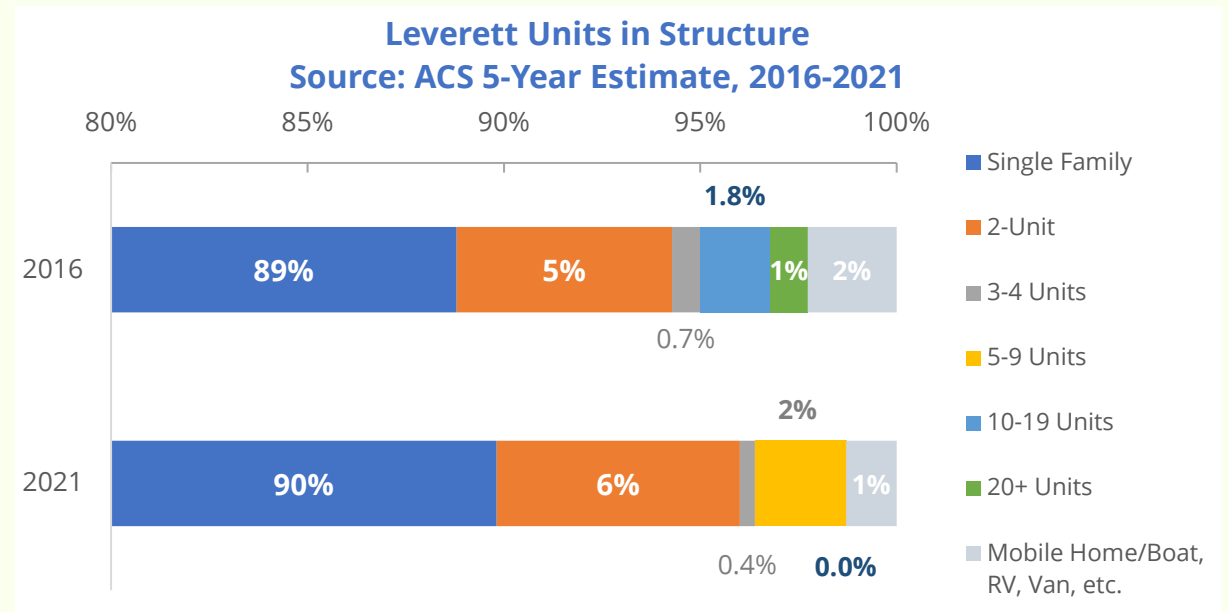
- Over the past five years, Leverett saw a total decrease of 7 renter households and a decrease of 94 owner households. There was a loss of approximately 60 4-person owner households.
- Leverett owner households skew older, with those 65 and older making up 50% of owner households in Leverett (314 households), while the largest cohort of renter households are aged 25-34 (28 households). This is similar to trends in other communities, but shows the affordability

Housing Stock

Leverett's share of single-family housing has decreased.

The number of total units in Leverett has decreased since 2016 from 839 units to 776 units (a decrease of 63 units). The number of housing units that are single-family detached decreased by 58 units. The most significant shift in housing unit composition was in the increase of 5 to 9 units (18 units).

Most of Leverett's housing stock is concentrated in single family units, while the region has a more diverse spread of structures.



Housing Stock

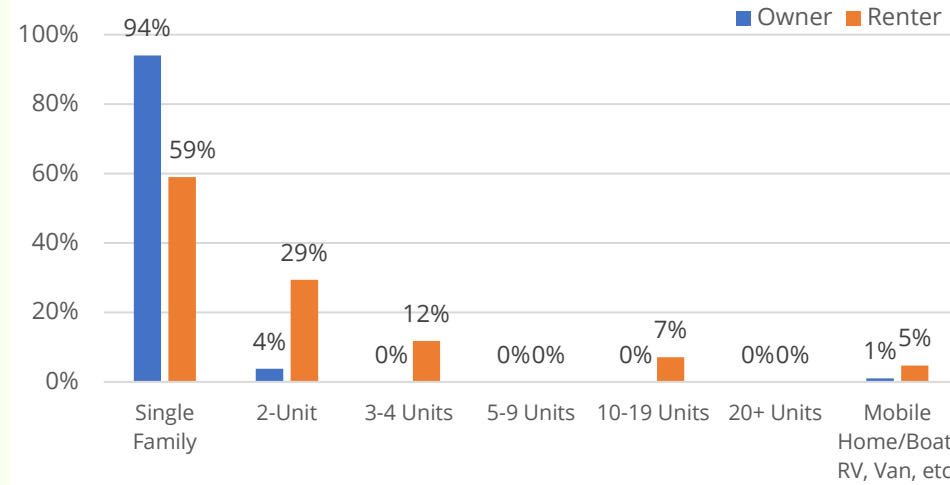
Ownership units are concentrated in single unit structures.

The majority (92%) of owner-occupied units are found in single unit structures, most of which are single family detached homes. The town has very few ownership units across all other building types. Renter-occupied units are more spread out, though almost half are single unit structures.

In the region, renter-occupied units have a much higher proportion in structures with more than three units.

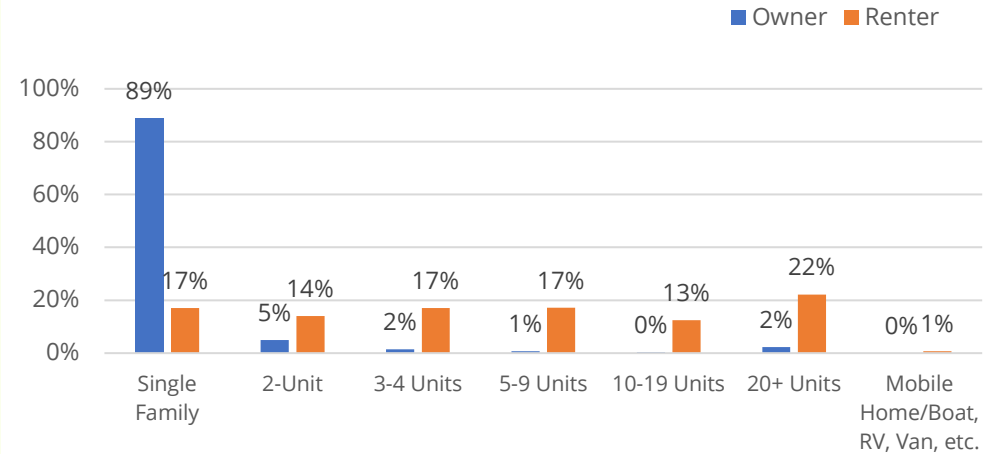
Leverett Units in Structure

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2021



Region Units in Structure

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2021



Housing Stock

Leverett Structures by Year Built

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2021

Owner	Count	Percentage
Built 2000 or later	55	9%
Built Between 1980 and 1999	189	30%
Built Between 1960 and 1979	169	27%
Built 1959 or earlier	210	34%
Renter		
Built 2000 or later	4	4.7%
Built Between 1980 and 1999	42	49.4%
Built Between 1960 and 1979	15	17.6%
Built 1959 or earlier	24	28.2%

Median Year Built

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2021

Leverett	1973
Amherst	1973
Montague	1953
Shutesbury	1978
Sunderland	1976
Wendell	1977

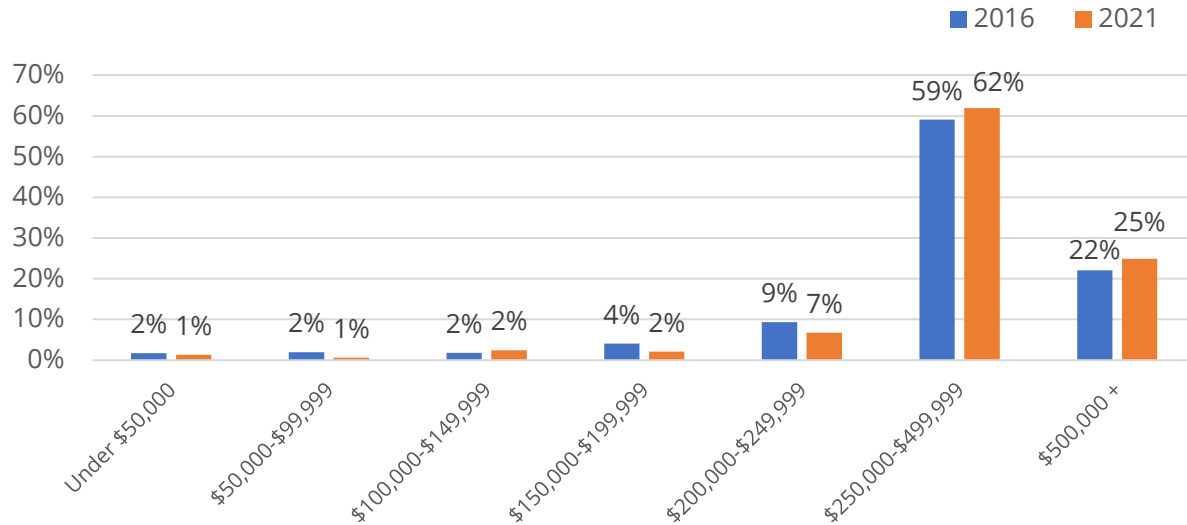
Ownership units in Leverett tend to be older than rental units. Leverett has a similar median year built for their housing stock to surrounding communities.

Almost 60% of ownership units were constructed over 40 years ago, while about 46% of rental units were constructed over 40 years ago. Between 1980 and 1999, about half of the rental stock was built. Since 2000, the number of structures built has decreased significantly. Older homes can have more maintenance issues and requirements compared to newer homes, something the Town may want to keep an eye on going forward.

Home Values

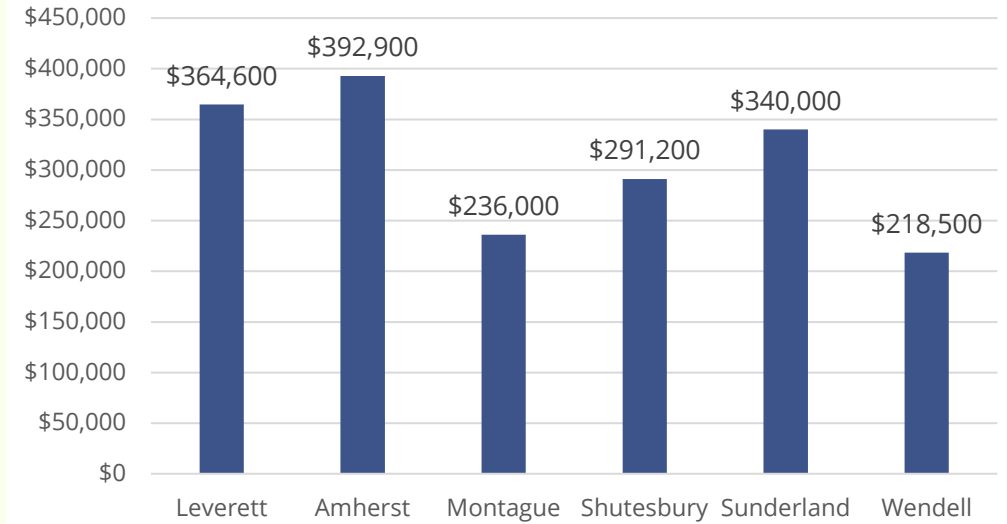
Change in Home Value Distribution

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2016-2021



Median Home Value

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2021

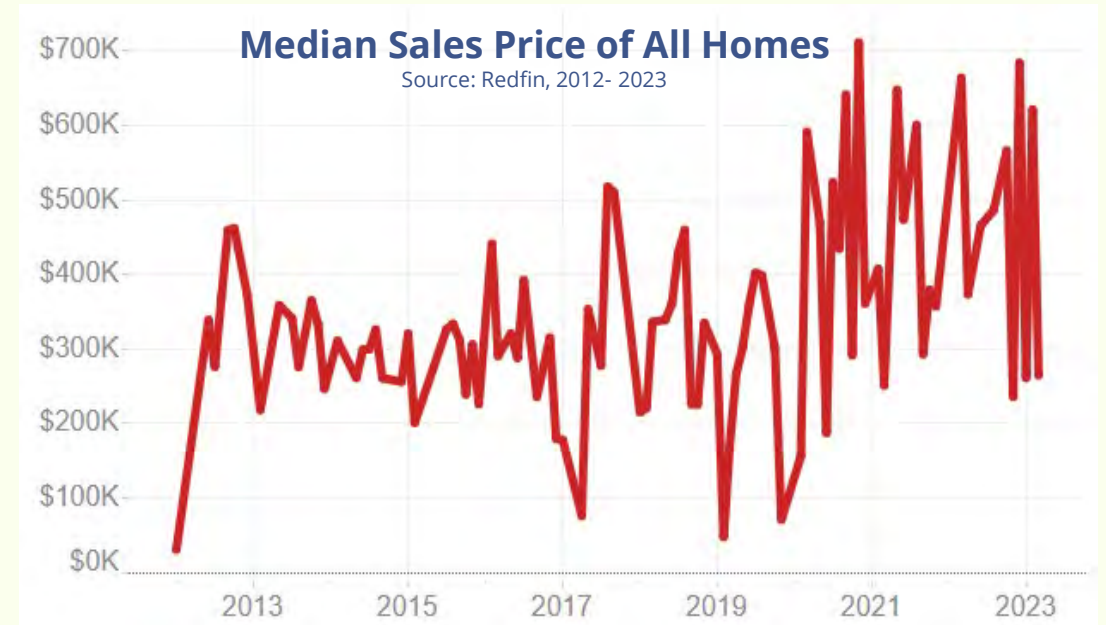
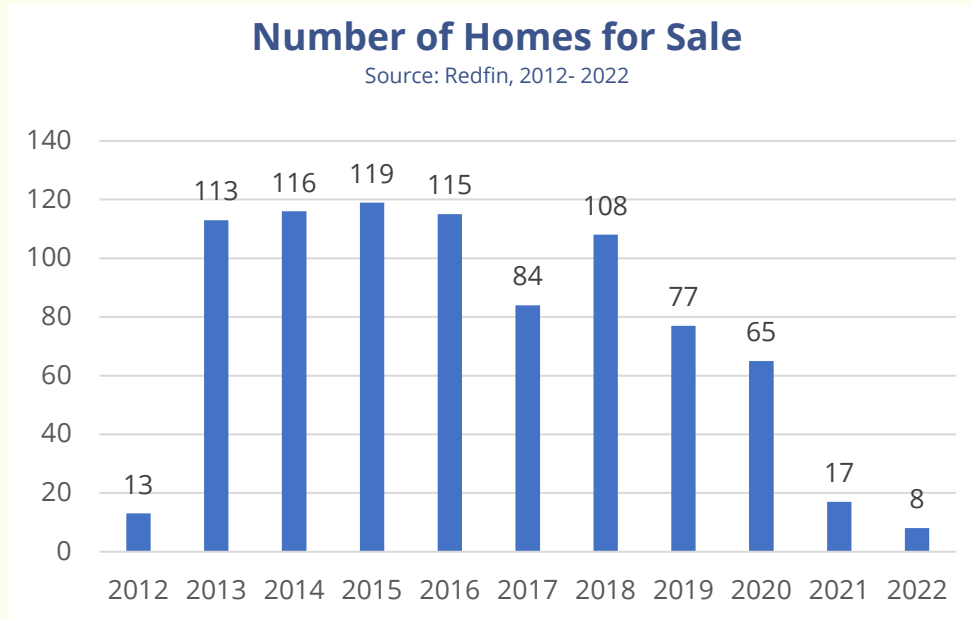


The median home value increased by \$20,400 over the past five years.

The share of housing units valued at or above \$250,000 increased from 81.2% of the total housing stock to 86.8%.

Since 2016, the median home value in Leverett increased by 5.9% with the median home value increasing from \$344,200 to \$364,600. This is above most of the median values in surrounding communities.

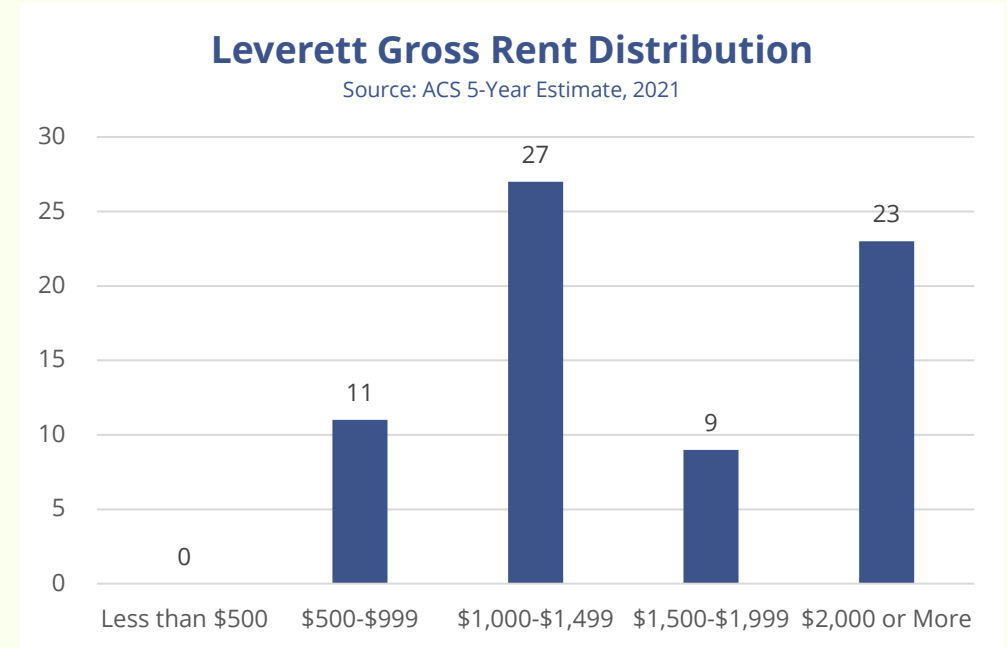
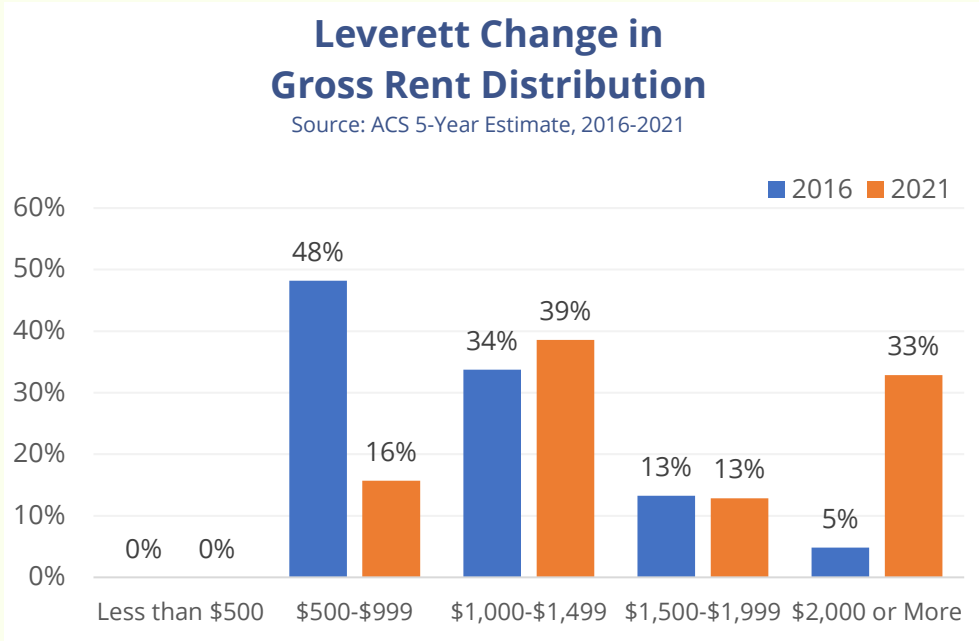
Housing Market | For Sale



Median home sale prices have fluctuated in the last decade but have reached their highest peak in the past two years.

- In November 2020, Leverett had the highest median sale price at \$710,000. Since then, there has been fluctuations of prices ranging from \$235,000 to \$646,000.
- The number of homes for sale has decreased drastically in the past two years, with 17 sold in 2021 and 8 sold in 2022.
- Between 2013 and 2016 had the most consistent number of homes sold, between 113 and 119 homes sold annually.

Housing Market | Rental

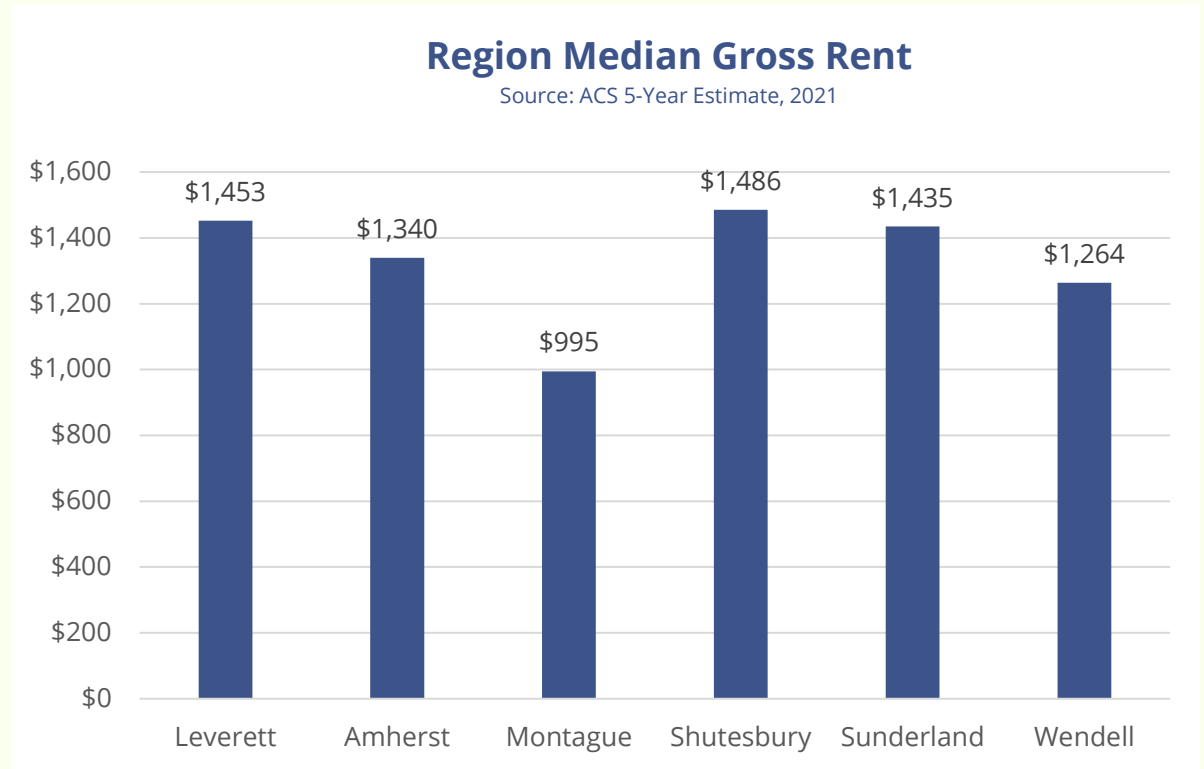


46% of Leverett’s rental units are priced at or above \$1,500 per month.

The share of rental units with rents of more than \$1,500 increased from 18.1% to 45.7% of the rental stock in the past five years (17 units). There were large decreases in units priced below \$1,000 with a loss of 29 units.

Housing Market | Rental

Leverett has a similarly high median gross rent in comparison to the region as the second highest. Increasing rents place a financial constraint on many low to moderate income households and make it harder to for businesses to attract and retain employees who may want or need to live in the community where they work.



Housing Affordability

Residential vacancy in Leverett is low for available units.

In 2021, Leverett's total vacancy was around 8.8%, with 68 vacant units out of 776 total units. The Census records vacant units a few different ways to comprise the total vacancy count for a particular geography. Housing vacancy is captured in four different categories by the Census, which includes: vacant available, vacant unavailable, seasonal, and vacant other.

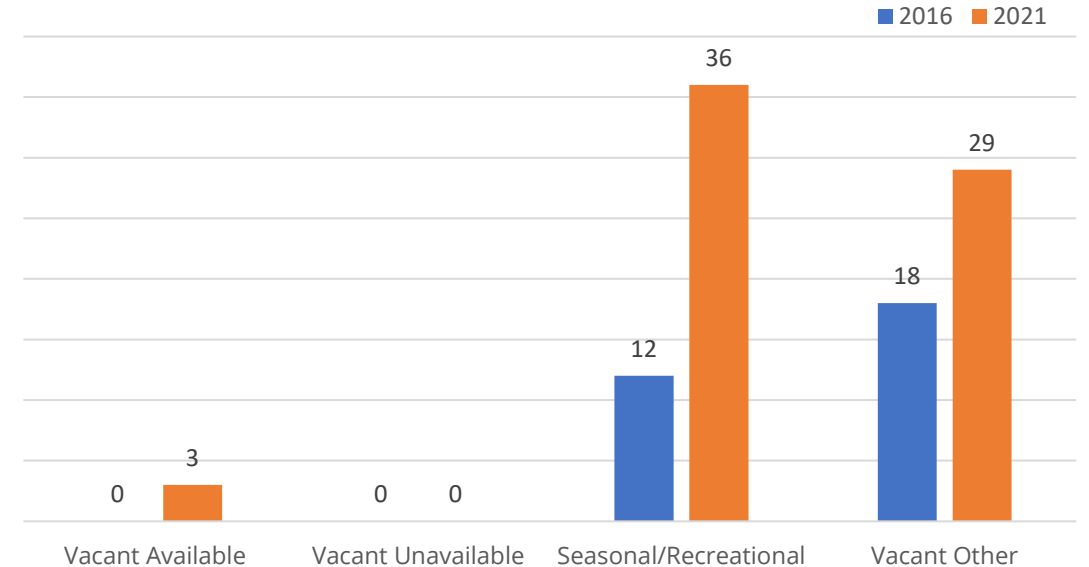
- Vacant available refers to unoccupied units that are currently for sale or for rent.
- Vacant unavailable refers to off market for sale and for rent units.
- Seasonal and recreation refer to housing units that are not occupied year-round such as second homes, beach houses etc.
- Vacant Other which refers to units that are not available for rent or sale and are off the market for different reasons. These include undergoing substantial rehab, uninhabitable units, foreclosure, among others.

In 2021, Leverett's vacancy rate for units actively listed as for sale or for rent was 0.4%.

A healthy vacancy rate for a community is typically between 4% to 6%. Maintaining a healthy vacancy level is important, because the available for sale and for rent units allow households to move in and out of the community and across housing types within the market. This dynamic typically offers some degree of insulation for owners and renters to fluctuations in regional prices because an available supply of units can help buffer against sharp rises in price that a tighter market could experience as has been the case in communities across the state.

Vacant Housing Units by Category

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2016-2021





Key Findings | Demographics & Housing

- Leverett's population has decreased over the past decade, and data suggest that that trend is likely to continue under current conditions.
- The older population in Leverett (those 65 years old and above) has become a larger share of the total population over time, and the number of people in that age group has increased. Leverett has a high median age at 50 years.
 - This mirrors trends seen across the region and indeed much of the state. However, there are nearby communities that are significantly younger.
- The number of households is also decreasing, by a total of roughly 100 between the 2016 and 2021 5-year ACS's.
- Ownership units dominate Leverett's housing space, with 1-unit detached structures representing the vast majority of housing for both owners and renters.
- Leverett's home sales have decreased, but prices have increased indicating more demand for less stock. Compared to surrounding towns, Leverett's home value and gross rent lies on the higher end.

Economic Development

Introduction

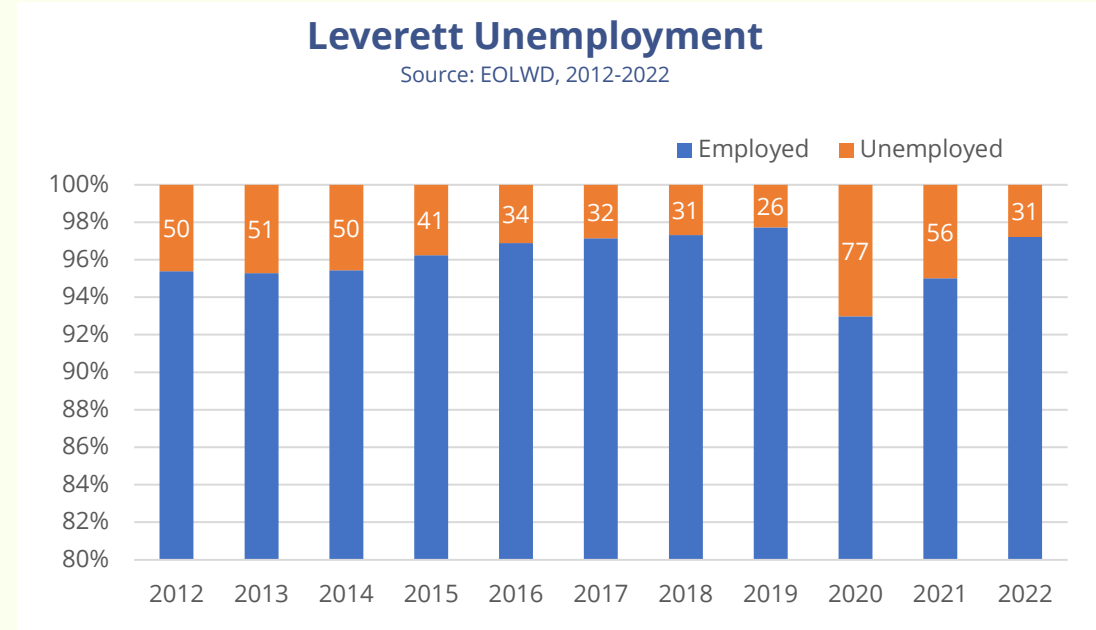
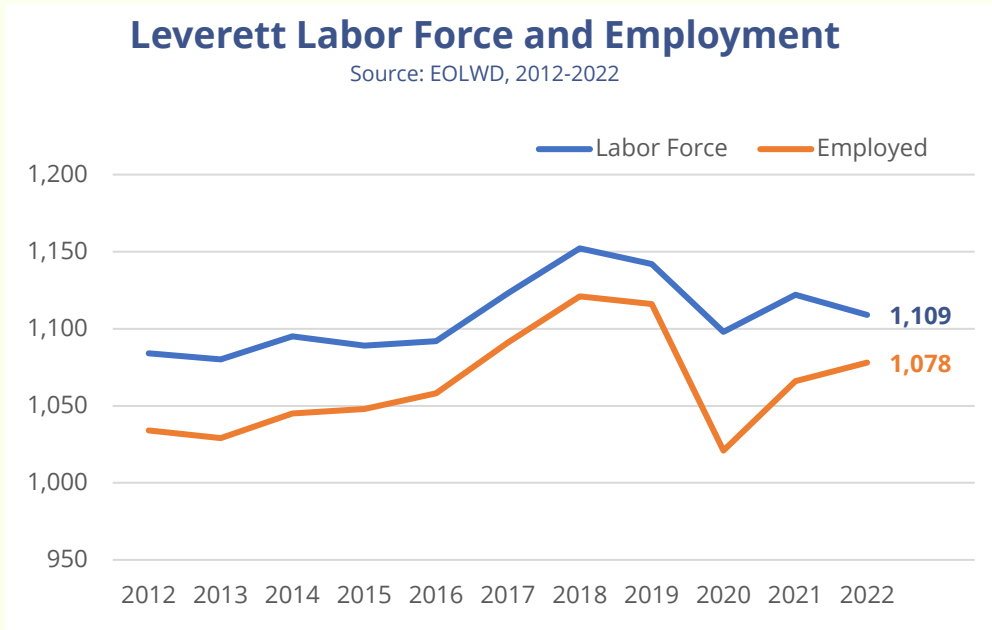
Various elements contribute to a town's economic well-being. Household incomes, educational attainment, labor force composition, commercial and industrial building stock, and zoning decisions all impact the economic output of a town.

The allocation of land for non-residential uses and the physical development of commercial and industrial space paired with economic development initiatives can help a town attract businesses. This creates an opportunity Leverett to increase employment opportunities and reduce the tax burden for residents by capturing a larger share of tax revenue from commercial and industrial operators



Source: New York Times

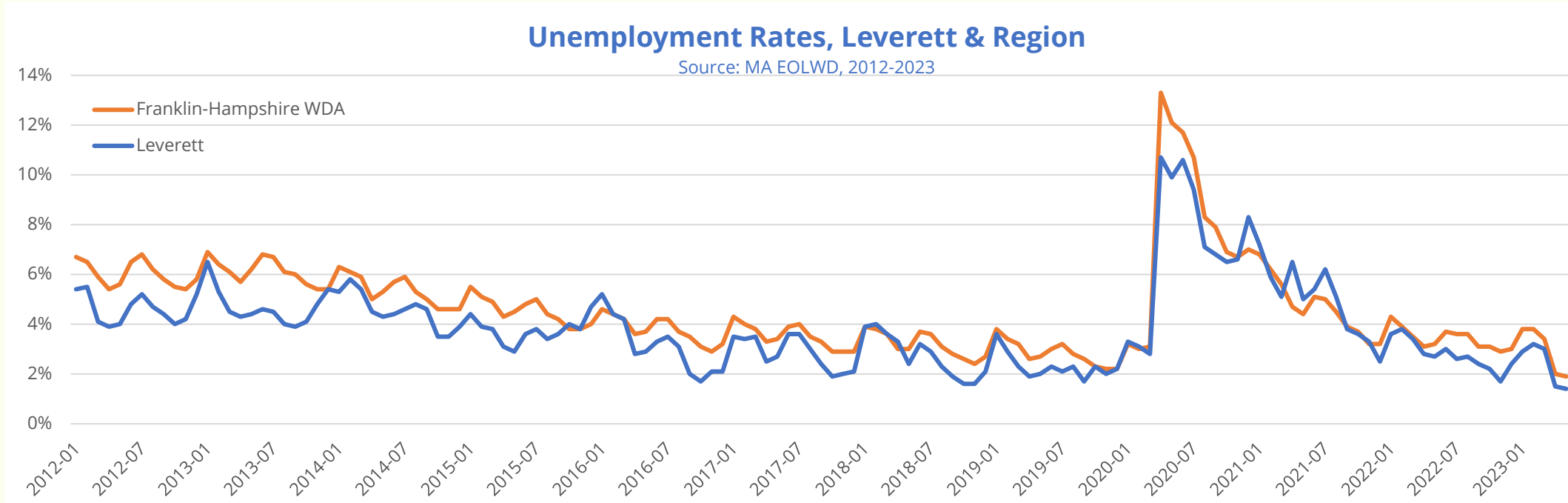
Employment Base | Labor Force Participation & Unemployment



Leverett’s labor force dropped during the start of the Covid-19 pandemic but has started to rebound.

According to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, **1,109** people make up Leverett’s labor force. This is an increase of **1,084 people** from 2012. In 2022, Leverett has an average unemployment rate of 2.8%, a return to pre-pandemic numbers.

Employment Base | Labor Force Participation & Unemployment



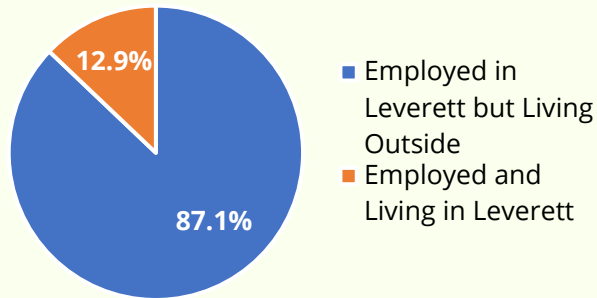
Leverett and its Workforce Development Area had similar trends in labor force, employment, and unemployment.

After notable disruption during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment levels have once again decreased to historic lows. With unemployment both locally and regionally hovering around the 2% mark, Leverett and its neighbors are at what economists call “full employment” – essentially, nearly everyone who wants a job has already found one.

Employment Base | Commuting Patterns

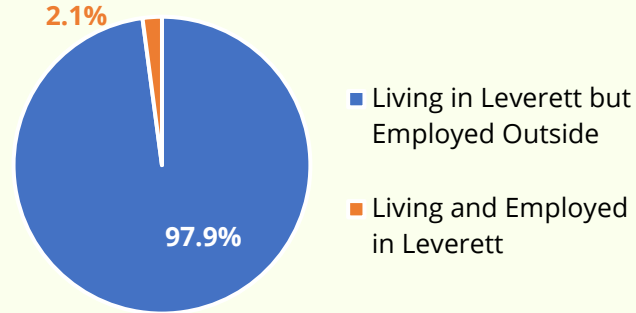
Employment Efficiency (All Jobs) Among People Employed in Leverett

Source: OnTheMap 2020



Labor Force Efficiency (All Jobs) Among People Living in Leverett

Source: OnTheMap 2020



Top Ten Work Destinations of Leverett Residents

Source: OnTheMap 2020

City	Job Count	Share
Amherst Town city, MA	152	16.7%
Northampton city, MA	61	6.7%
Springfield city, MA	48	5.3%
Greenfield city, MA	43	4.7%
Worcester city, MA	38	4.2%
Boston city, MA	21	2.3%
Easthampton Town city, MA	12	1.3%
Gardner city, MA	11	1.2%
Holyoke city, MA	11	1.2%
South Deerfield CDP, MA	11	1.2%

Leverett had a high volume of residents traveling outside of Leverett for work.

128 workers enter Leverett from other communities each day and about 893 residents leave Leverett each day for work. Only around 19 working Leverett residents remain in town for work. Commuting patterns suggest that Amherst is the most popular destination for residents who are leaving town for work (152 residents), and overall, most outbound commuters travel South for work. The number of residents leaving Leverett for work each day compared to the number of commuters coming into town for work suggests Leverett serves as more of a residential community than a job center for the region.

Employment Base | Employment by Industry

Leverett's Top Six Largest Employment Sectors

Source: Lightcast 2023

NAICS	Description	2012 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2012-2022 % Change	2022 Average Annual Earnings
23	Construction	30	41	36%	\$66,904
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	19	23	21%	\$56,005
90	Government	56	17	-70%	\$64,285
31	Manufacturing	25	17	-33%	\$72,611
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	25	16	-37%	\$16,694
44	Retail Trade	11	10	-5%	\$59,842

Leverett's Construction and Health Care industries show stability and some growth.

Leverett's employment base consists of just 142 jobs, a 24% decrease from 2012. The largest employment industry in Leverett is the Construction sector, which increased by 36%. Some industries saw declines, like Government and Manufacturing.

Region's Top Six Largest Employment Sectors

Source: Lightcast 2023

NAICS	Description	2012 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2012-2022 % Change	2022 Average Annual Earnings
90	Government	10,676	11,379	7%	\$86,407
61	Educational Services	3,897	4,077	5%	\$38,366
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	1,796	2,336	30%	\$56,121
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	2,020	1,325	-34%	\$46,437
72	Accommodation and Food Services	1,396	1,244	-11%	\$26,010
44	Retail Trade	1,074	1,079	0%	\$42,460

Across the region, government and educational services have seen the most growth and remain the top two sectors.

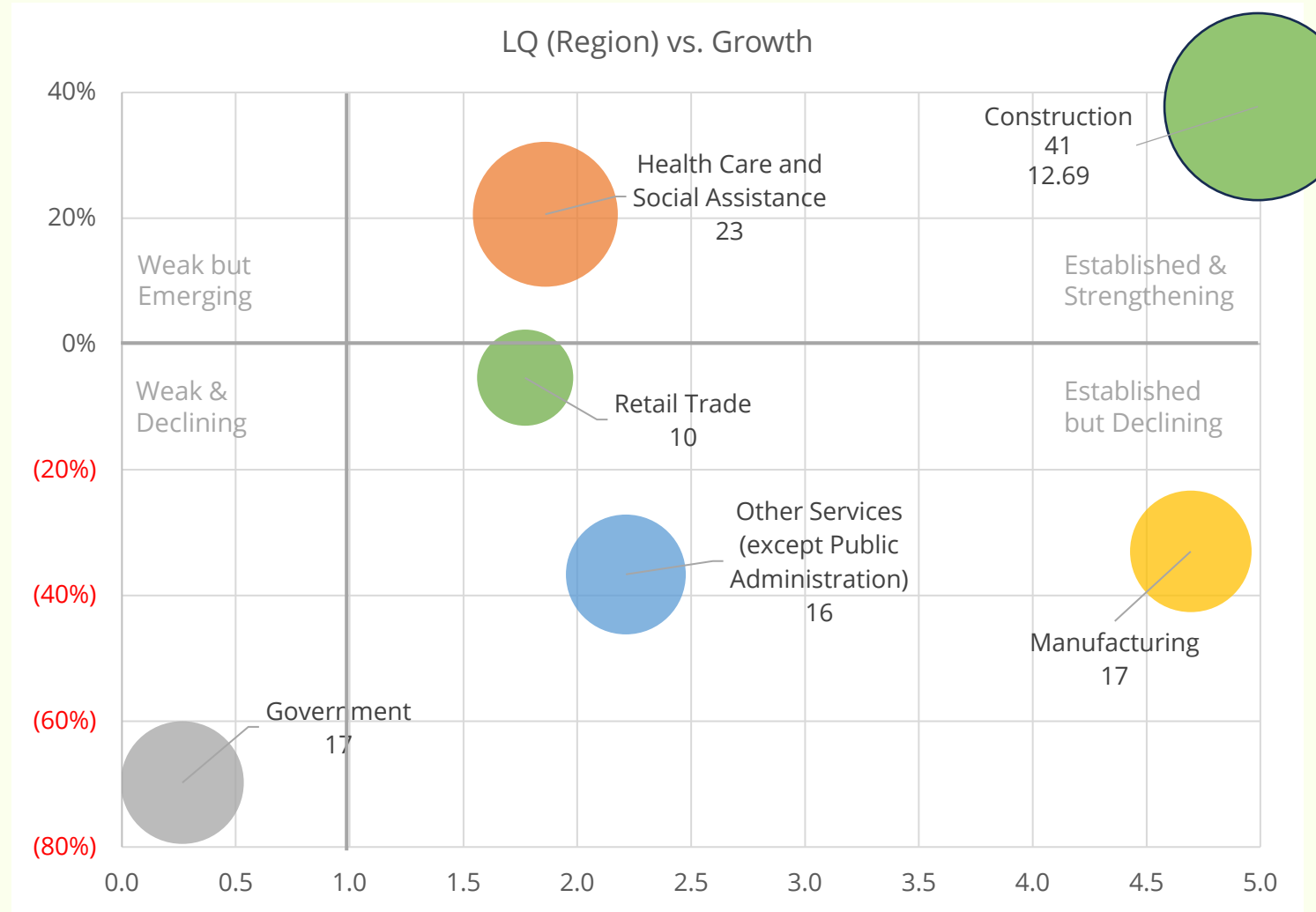
The Health Care sector has grown the most across the region, with a growth of 30%. Government remains the largest employment sector, with the highest average annual earnings. Other Services and Accommodation & Food Services have decreased over the past decade.

Employment Base | Location Quotients

Leverett's Construction industry is unusually prevalent when compared to the region.

Location quotients (LQs) compare employment by industry in two or more geographic areas. The location quotient is a ratio of the percentage of an industry's employment in one geography to that of a larger comparison geography. If the ratio is less than 0.80, then the identified industry sector is thought to be under-represented in the local economy. Conversely, a ratio greater than 1.20 can show a specialty within the local economy as compared to the larger geography. The location quotient can be useful in pointing out opportunities for certain industry sectors to gain a larger share of the employment base or a specialty area in the local economy. The comparison geography used for Leverett was the surrounding region.

The graph on the right shows the location quotients of the top six industries compared to the region. The industry sector with the highest location quotients is Construction, followed by Manufacturing, Other Services, and Health Care & Social Assistance.



Commercial & Industrial Landscape | Major Employers

The table on the right shows the top ten largest employers in Leverett

Leverett's largest employers fall within the educational services and public administration sector of the economy. Leverett Elementary School is the leading employer in Leverett, with an estimated 20-49 employees. Most employers are located along Montague Road or Long Plain Road.

Top Employers in Leverett

Source: MA Department of Economic Research, 2023

Organization Name	Location	Number of Employees	2-Digit NAICS
Leverett Elementary School	Montague Rd	20-49	Educational Services
Leverett Fire Dept	Montague Rd	20-49	Public Administration
Leverett Village Co-Op	Rattlesnake Gutter Rd	20-49	Retail Trade
Mudpie Potters	Montague Rd	20-49	Educational Services
Bourke Builders	Long Hill Rd	5-9	Construction
Coolcap Fund Inc	Shutesbury Rd	5-9	Other Services
Hampshire Franklin Children's	Long Plain Rd	5-9	Health Care and Social Assistance
L & F Construction	Long Plain Rd	5-9	Construction
Leverett Police Dept	Montague Rd	5-9	Public Administration
Local Harmony Inc	Jackson Hill Rd	5-9	Other Services

Commercial & Industrial Landscape | Property Assessment Records

These tables show the existing land use composition of parcels in Leverett including acreage of land, building and land values, average building area, and average year built. Tables also break out residential uses.

Residential uses comprise the majority of land in Leverett, with a total of 4,471 acres. The average size of a residential unit in Leverett is 1,759 square feet, driven mostly by single family homes. The average year built for residential structures in town is 1975.

Of the non-residential uses, mixed use land has the highest total valuation at approximately \$13.5 million.

However, on a per-acre basis, Commercial land is nearly twice as valuable as Residential land, and within Residential uses multi-unit housing

General Land Use

Source: Town of Leverett Property Assessment Database, 2023

Land Use Type	# of Parcels	Total Parcel Area (Acres)	Total Assessed Value	Total AV per Acre	Avg Square Footage	Median Year Built
Commercial	5	11	\$1,203,000	\$109,763	3,856	1970
Industrial	2	3.1	\$110,400	\$35,613	-	1780
Mixed Use*	60	4,670	\$20,941,564	\$4,484	2,183	1952
Residential**	929	4,471	\$259,426,800	\$58,028	1,759	1975

Residential Breakdown

Source: Town of Leverett Property Assessment Database, 2023

Land Use Type	# of Parcels	Total Parcel Area (Acres)	Total Assessed Value	Total AV per Acre	Avg Living Area (SF)	Median Year Built
Single Family Residential	655	2,822	\$228,642,900	\$87,910	2,184	1975
Multi-Unit Housing	39	138	\$12,144,700	\$81,031	2,574	1983

*Nearly all of Leverett's "Mixed-Use" lands are residential and agricultural or residential and forest uses

**Includes single-family, multi-family, and other – mobile homes, multiple houses on one parcel, and vacant residential land.

Property Taxes

Leverett has a residential tax rate in the middle range compared to surrounding communities, but the second lowest commercial and industrial tax rate.

The only community with a split tax rate (residential property owners charged a different tax rate per \$1,000 value than non-residential owners) is the Town of Montague. The fiscal implications of property taxes are an important consideration that businesses, and even individuals, evaluate when making choices about where to locate.

While low property taxes can help attract businesses and residents, limited funding can result in insufficient provision of public services and amenities, inhibiting a town’s ability to remain competitive with its neighboring communities.

Fiscal Year 2023 Tax Classification

Source: Mass. Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, 2023

Tax Classification	Assessed Value	Tax Levy	Tax Rate
Residential	\$333,213,800	\$5,338,085	16.02
Commercial	\$3,584,768	\$57,428	16.02
Industrial	\$758,500	\$12,151	16.02
Personal Property	\$35,114,320	\$562,531	16.02
Total	\$372,671,388	\$5,970,195	

Fiscal Year 2023 Tax Rates by Class

Source: Mass. Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, 2023

Community	Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Personal Property
Amherst	\$20.10	\$20.10	\$20.10	\$20.10
Leverett	\$16.02	\$16.02	\$16.02	\$16.02
Montague	\$15.65	\$23.78	\$23.78	\$23.78
Shutesbury	\$18.44	\$18.44	\$18.44	\$18.44
Sunderland	\$12.80	\$12.80	\$12.80	\$12.80
Wendell	\$21.41	\$21.41	\$21.41	\$21.41



Key Findings | Economic Development

- The labor force has continued its recovery from the disruption of the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. While neither the total labor force nor the number of residents who are employed has fully returned to pre-pandemic levels, unemployment rates continue to be at historic lows.
 - Although low unemployment rates can help drive wage growth, Leverett's rate is so extraordinarily low that it make hiring extremely difficult for businesses.
- Nearly everyone who lives in Leverett commutes outside of town to go to work. More than 7 times as many people leave town as arrive every day to go to work. The decrease in daytime population can make it harder to sustain retail and personal services enterprises.
 - The five most common work destinations for Leverett residents are Amherst, Northampton, Springfield, Greenfield, and Worcester.
- This is consistent with the very low number of existing jobs in Leverett, with fewer than 150 people working in town.
 - The largest industries by employment include Construction, Health Care & Social Assistance, Government, Manufacturing, and Other Services (except Public Administration). Of these, only Construction and Health Care & Social Assistance have grown over the last decade.
- Leverett only has a small number of parcels and acreage dedicated to commercial and industrial uses, though these uses (along with multi-unity housing) also represent some of the properties with the highest assessed values on a per-acre basis.

Q&A

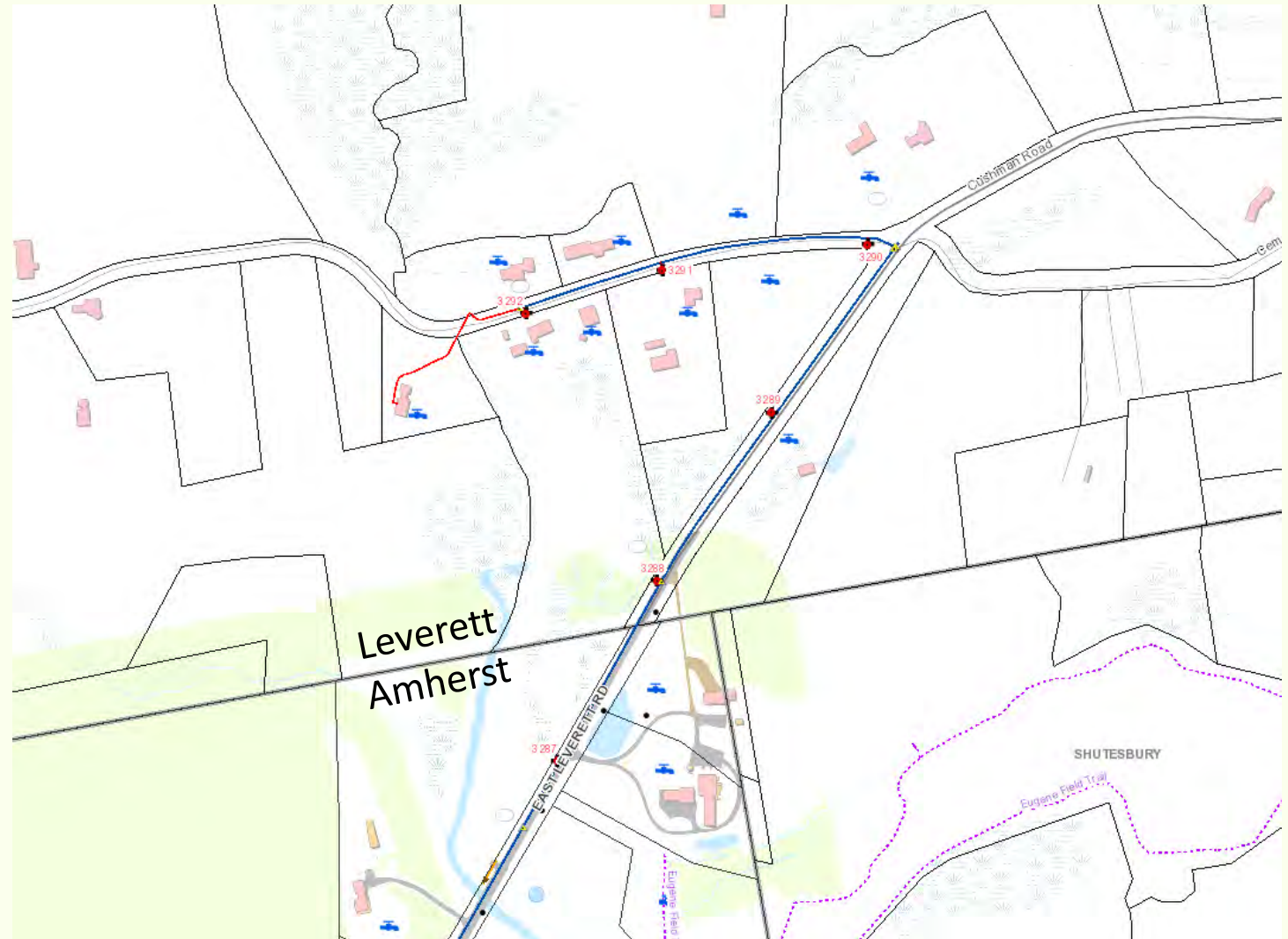
Infrastructure

Tracy Adamski, AICP

Tighe & Bond

Water Supply

- Public water supply system serves the Library, the Public Safety Complex, and the Elementary School
- Private wells / water supplies
- Non-Transient Public Water Supplies:
 - Willow Blossom Learning Center
 - Mt. Toby Meeting of Friends Church
 - Leverett Elementary School
 - Leverett Village Co-Op
- Service from Amherst to Cushman and Teawaddle Hill Roads to address contaminated wells
- Per the HMP, groundwater is susceptible to contamination due to flooding hazards due to widespread septic systems in Town

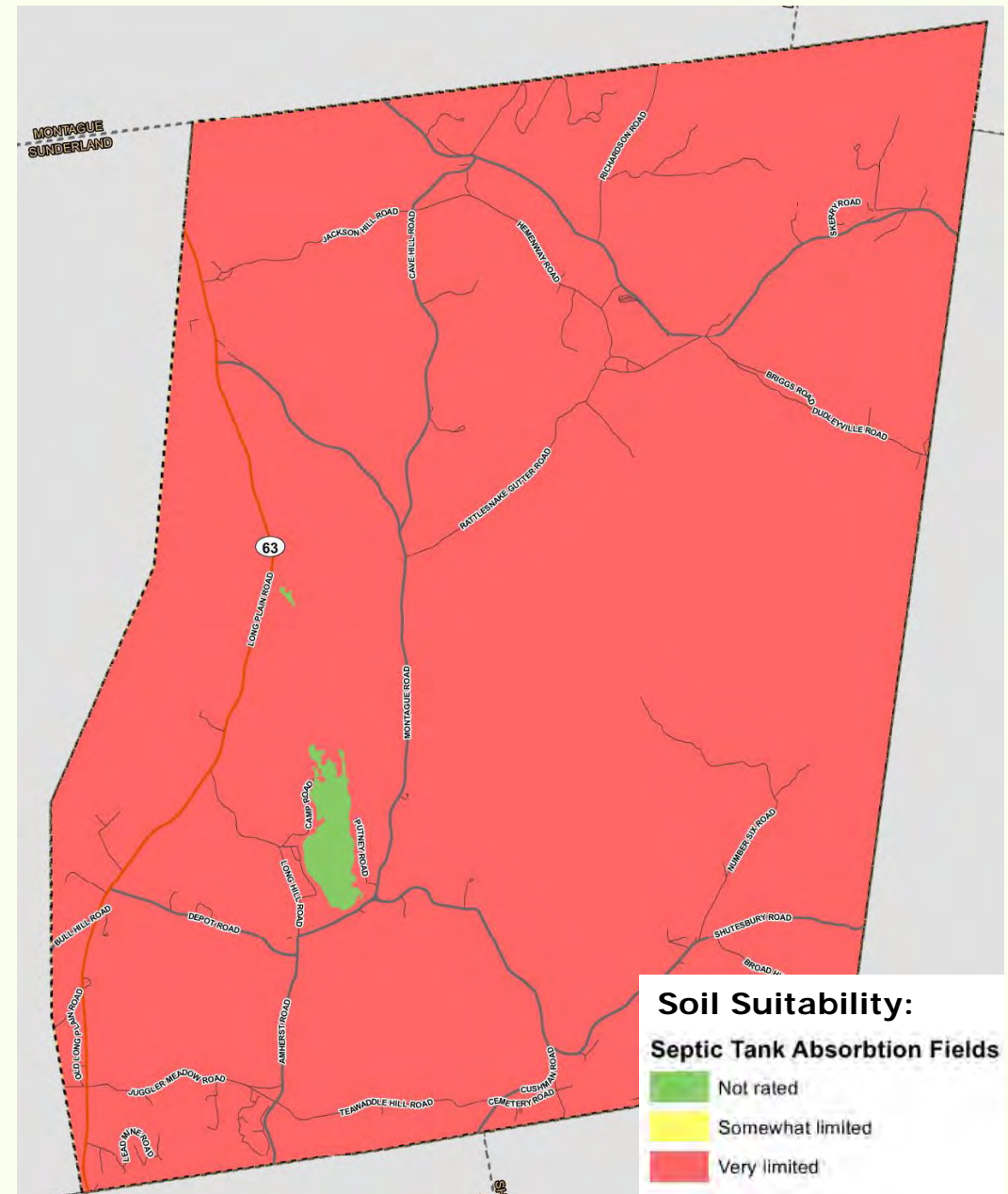


Septic

- On-site subsurface sewage disposal systems
- Poor soil conditions for on-site systems
- Wastewater is a development constraint

Constraints for Expanded Development

- Amherst is the closest municipal wastewater system
 - ~1 mile from the Leverett border
- Soil conditions are not favorable for groundwater discharge associated with wastewater treatment plant





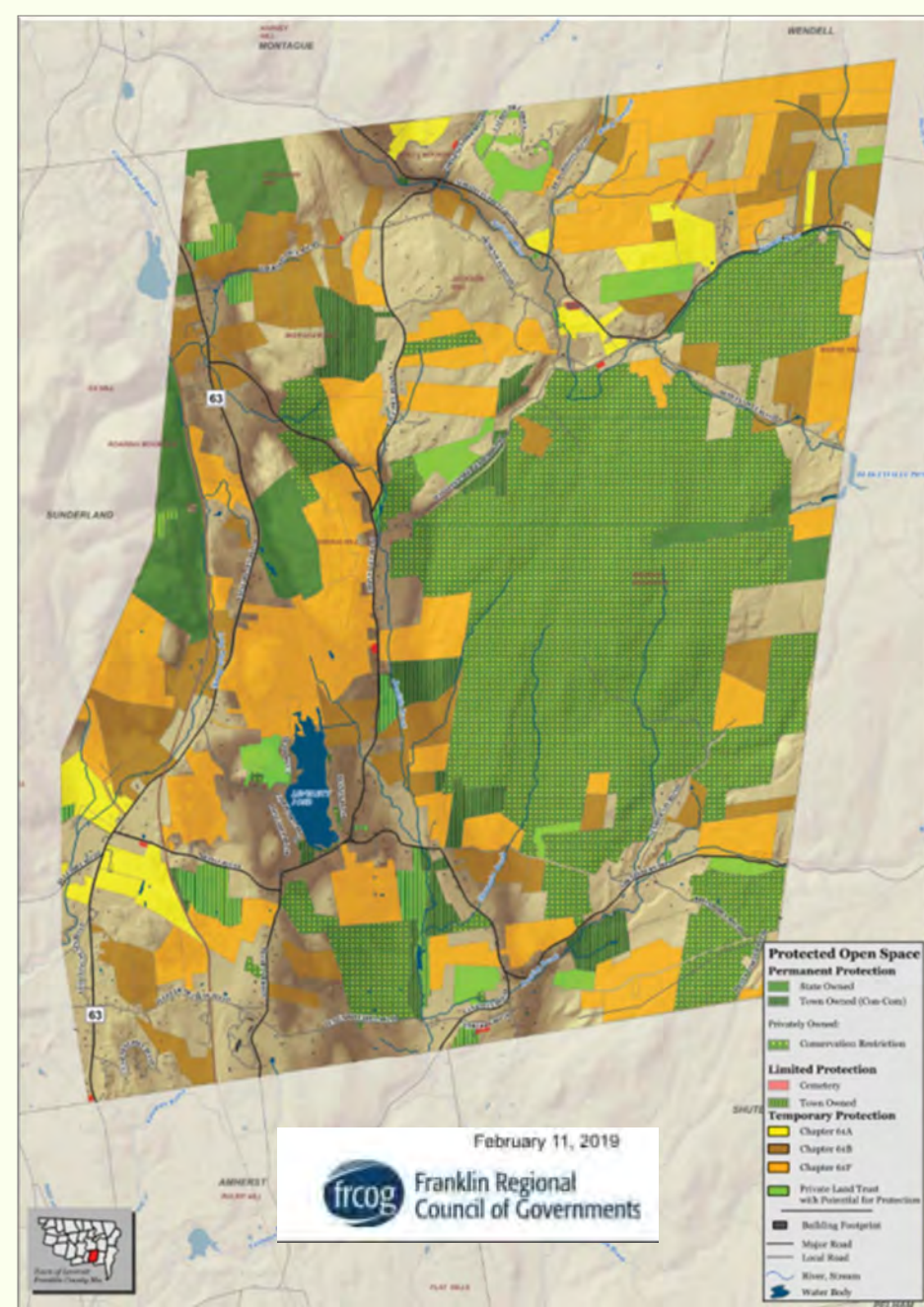
Roadways

- 43 miles of total roadways
 - 16 miles gravel
 - 27 miles paved
- Major north-south corridors
 - Route 63
 - Shutesbury Road / Montague Road / Cave Hill Road
 - Amherst Road / Cave Hill Road
- Major east-west corridors
 - Cushman Road / Shutesbury Road / Leverett Road
 - North Leverett Road
- Shutesbury Road culvert improvements are underway
- Funding received for Dudleyville Road restoration



Open Space

- 977.7 acres permanently protected by state agencies and Town
- 3,858.8 acres protected by Conservation Restrictions
- 179.6 acres limited protection (under authority of Board of Selectmen)
- 4,289.1 acres limited protection (Ch 61 programs)
- Key Parcels
 - East Leverett Meadows
 - Rattlesnake Gutter Conservation Area
 - Doolittle Brook Conservation Area
 - Beaver Pond Conservation Area
 - Ruth McIntire Conservation Area



Q&A

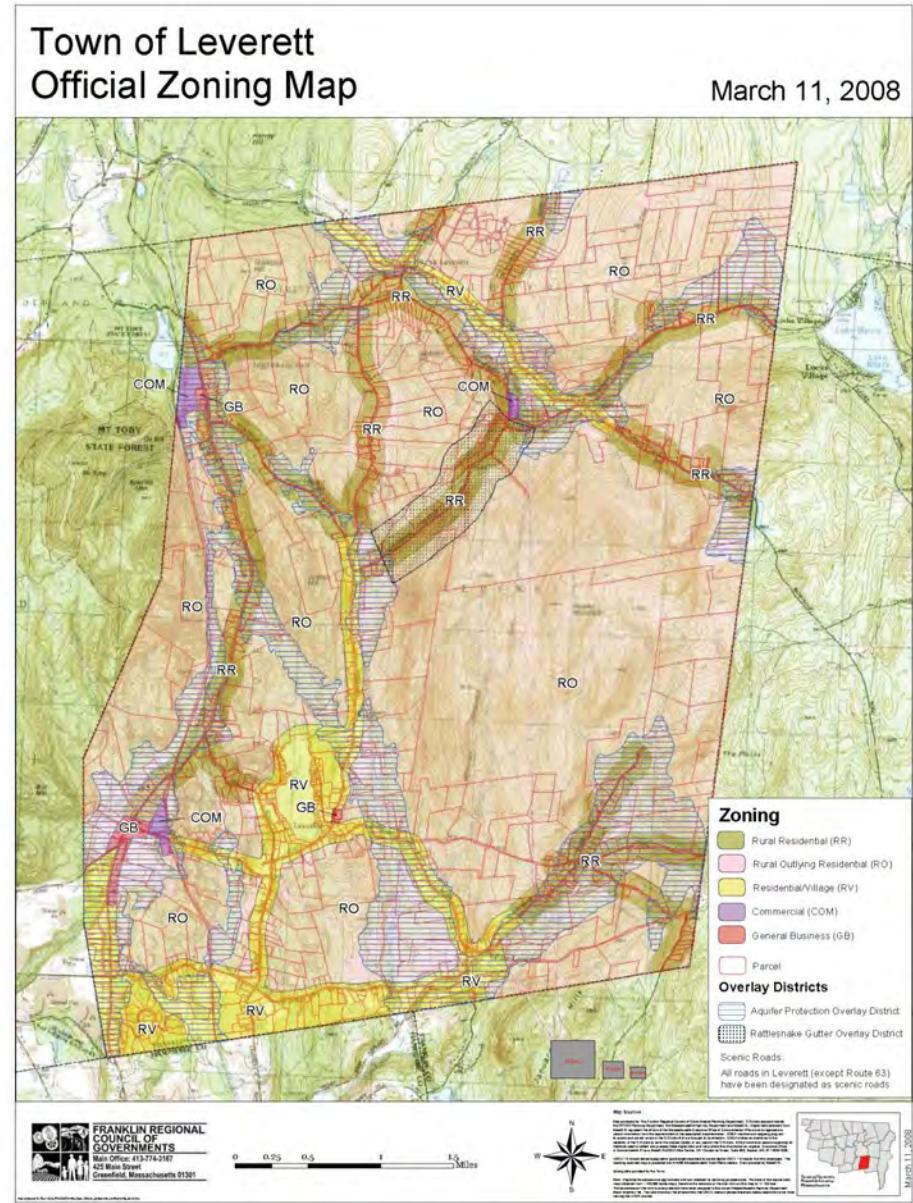
Zoning Analysis

Emily Innes, AICP, LEED AP ND

Innes Associates

EXISTING CONDITIONS: EXISTING ZONING

Zoning District	Minimum Lot Size	Yards	Coverage
Rural Residential (RR)	60,000 SF	F 40 ft S 25 ft R 30 ft	B 10% L 35% OS --
Residential/Village (RV)	40,000 SF	F 40 ft S 20 ft R 30 ft	B 15% L 35% OS --
Rural Outlying Residential (RO)	200,000 SF	F 40 ft S 25 ft R 30 ft	B 10% L 25% OS --
Commercial (COM)	40,000 SF	F 40 ft S 25 ft R 30 ft	B 20% L 50% OS 40%
General Business (GB)	40,000 SF	F 40 ft S 25 ft R 30 ft	B 20% L 50% OS 40%



EXISTING CONDITIONS: EXISTING ZONING

Selected Uses: All districts

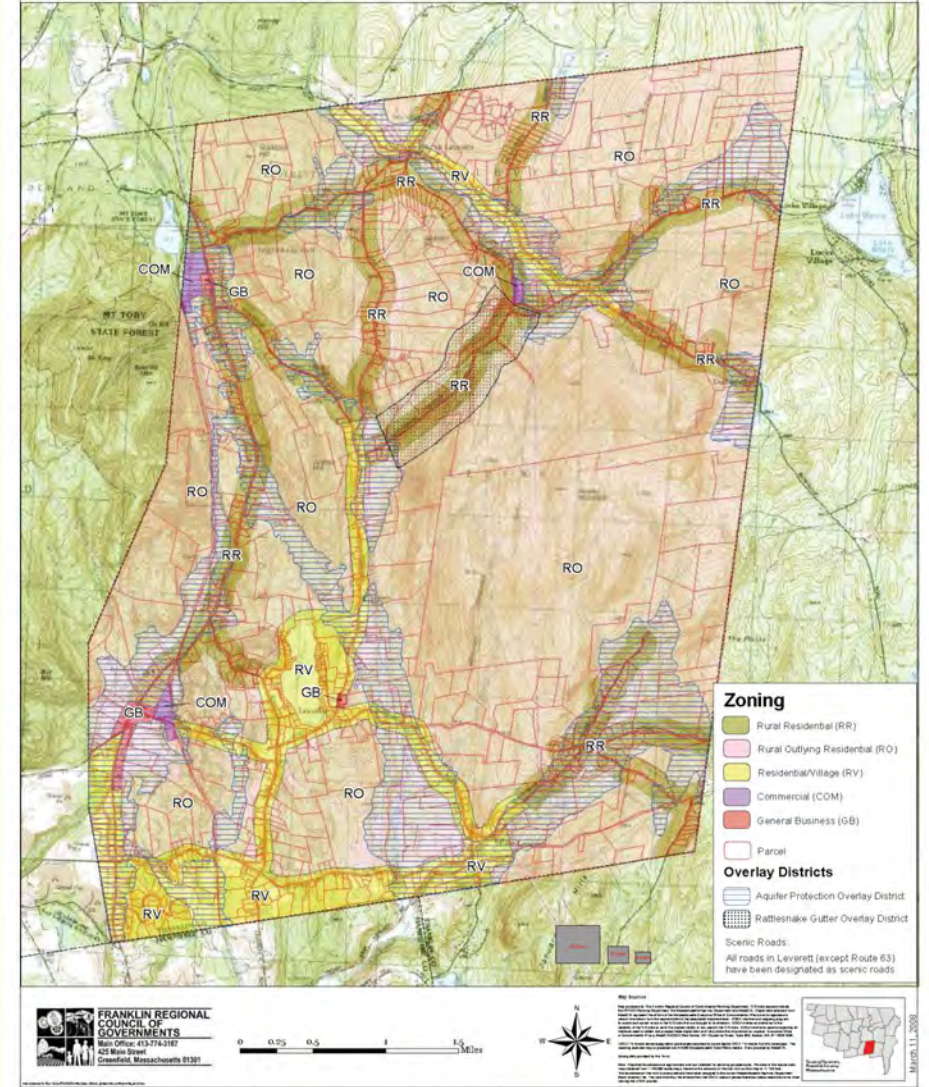
- Single and two-family allowed as-of-right.
- Small Home Occupations are allowed as of right.
- Home Occupations, Small-scale Craft Production, Bed & Breakfasts and Inns, Restaurants require a **special permit**.
- Multifamily (3+ units) is **not allowed** in any district.

Selected Uses: GB and CO Districts

- Retail grocery or general store up to 3,000 SF is allowed **as-of-right**; by special permit if larger.
- All other retail stores and services are by **special permit**.
- Banks and professional offices, Research facilities, Manufacturing/Production/Processing require a **special permit**.
- Conversion of non-residential historic buildings requires a **special permit** (short list of uses, including office, residential, microbrewery, restaurant, artisan studios, or sawmill).

Town of Leverett Official Zoning Map

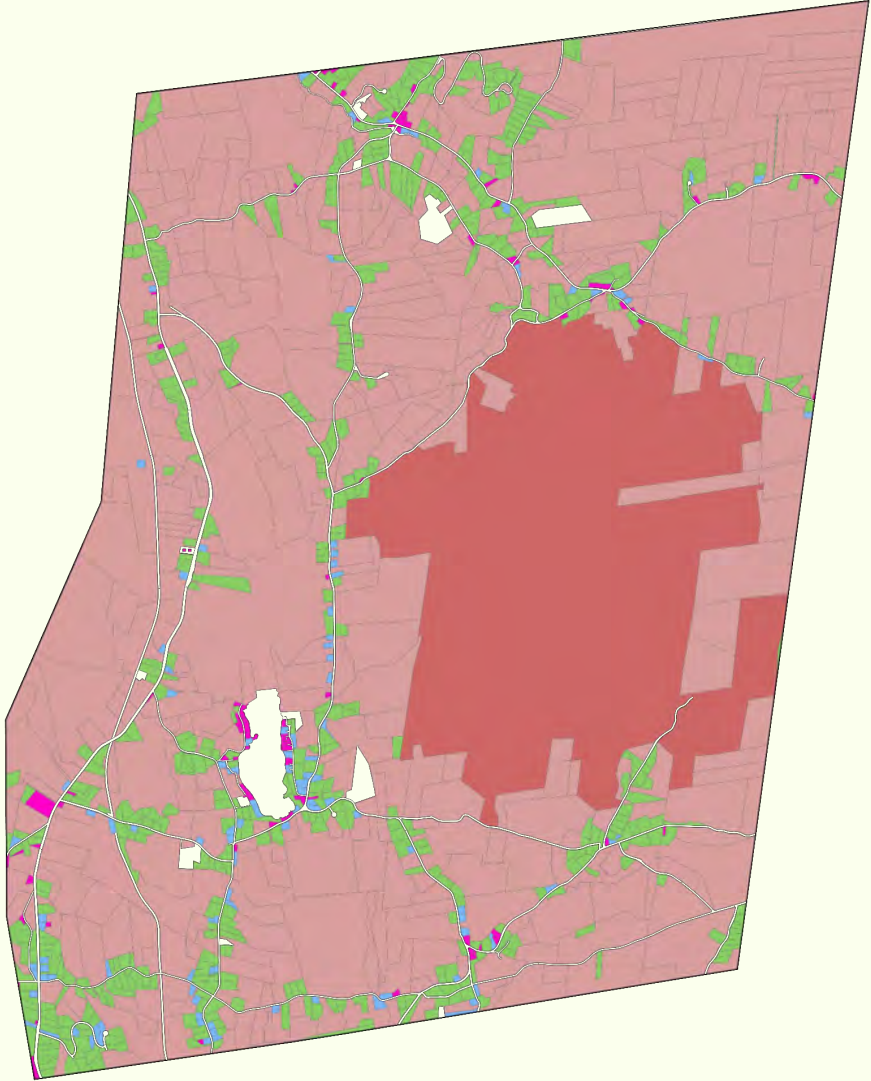
March 11, 2008



EXISTING CONDITIONS: PARCEL SIZES

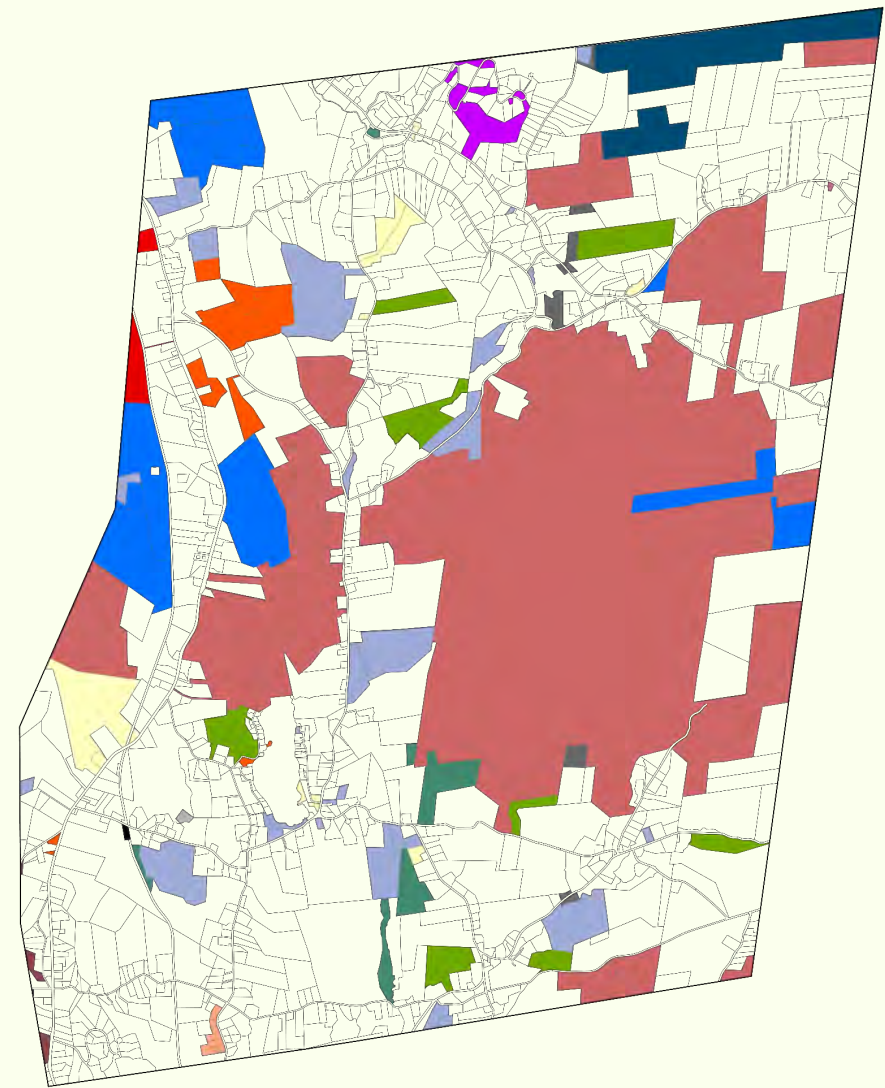
Zoning District	Minimum Lot Size
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Residential/Village (RV)	40,000 SF
Rural Outlying Residential (RO)	200,000 SF
Commercial (COM)	40,000 SF
General Business (GB)	40,000 SF

- Under 40,000 SF
- > 40k SF; < 60 K SF
- > 60K SF; < 200 K SF
- > 200 K SF
- 2,819 acres



EXISTING CONDITIONS: OWNERSHIP

- COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
- COWLS W D INC
- DELTA SAND AND GRAVEL INC
- LAUREL HILL/ RATTLESNAKE GUTTER
- LEVERETT CONSERVATION
- NEW ENGLAND CENTRAL RAILROAD
- NEW ENGLAND POWER CO
- POCOMO ROAD NOMINEE TRUST
- POINT GUARD MANAGEMENT INC
- RATTLESNAKE GUTTER TRUST
- REDBROOK FARM LLC
- TOWN OF LEVERETT
- UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
- WESTERN MASS ELECTRIC CO
- LEVERETT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH; BAPTIST CHURCH AT LEVERETT; BAPTIST CHURCH AT LEVERETT INC; CAMBODIAN BUDDHIST TEMPLE SOC; FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH; MT TOBY MEETING OF FRIENDS; VILLAGE OF LIGHT INC



Q&A

Existing Goals and Actions

Emily Innes, AICP, LEED AP ND

Innes Associates



EXISTING GOALS: Draft MVP Resiliency Plan (2020)

Leverett's Top 5 Hazards:

**Drought | Invasive Species |
Severe Storms | Extreme
Temperatures**

Leverett's Top 5 Strengths:

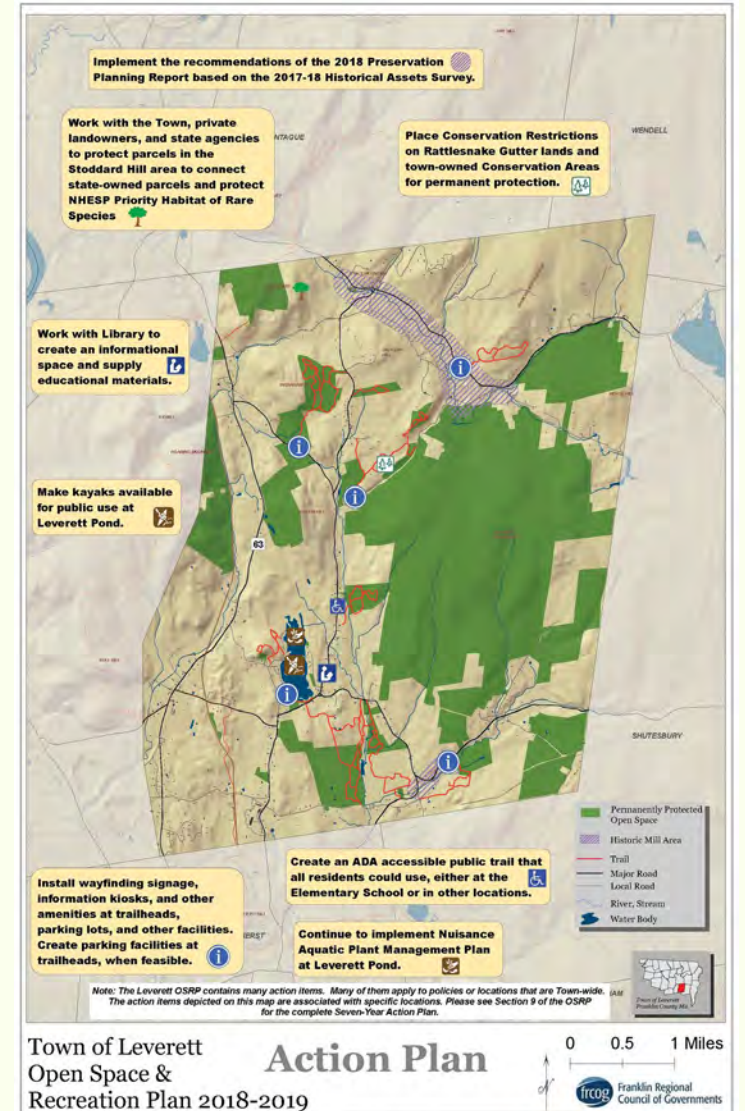
**Emergency Management Teams
| Dispersed Infrastructure |
Zoning Bylaws | Diverse Natural
Resources and Conservation
Groups**

Leverett's Top Priority
Recommendations:

- **Develop an energy resiliency plan.**
- **Improve gravel roads and drainage.**
- **Prioritize culvert repairs and replacements.**
- **Develop a communications plan.**
- **Develop a potable water resiliency plan.**

EXISTING GOALS: Open Space and Recreation Plan (2019)

- Goal 1: Preserve the rural character of the Town.
- Goal 2: Protect and preserve natural resources.
- Goal 3. Improve and maintain public engagement related to open space.
- Goal 4. Promote wide recreational use of Leverett's natural resources.





EXISTING GOALS: Open Space and Recreation Plan (2019)

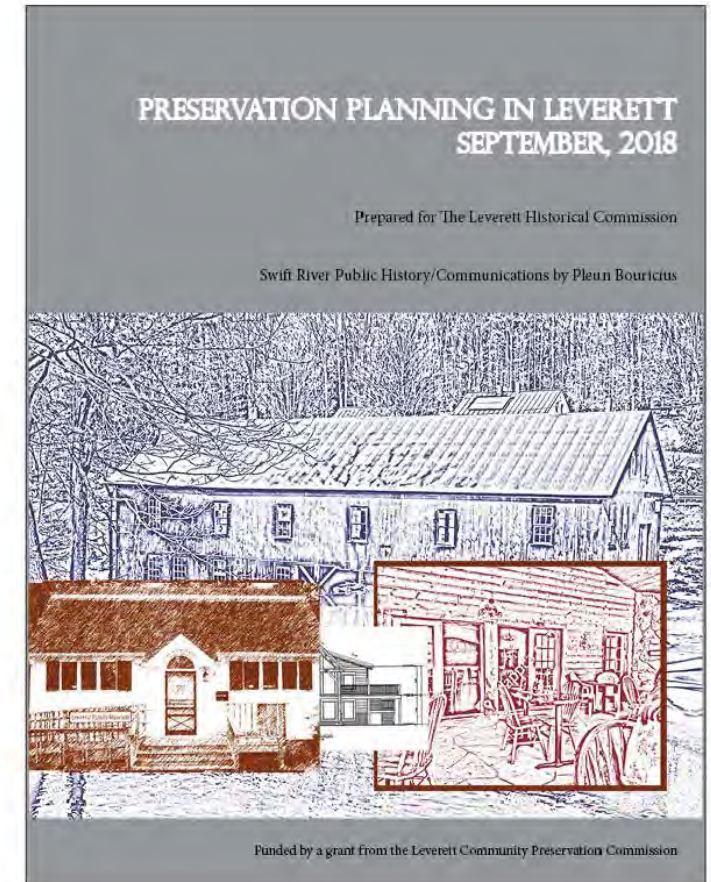
“People choose to live in Leverett because of its abundant natural resources, rural small town character, variety of outdoor recreation opportunities, and the community’s focus and awareness of climate change and sustainability. Residents value the town’s scenic beauty; the clean water of its Leverett Pond, streams, and wetlands; the large expanses of uninterrupted forest; diverse wildlife; and peace and quiet. The survey results also show that a majority of town residents feel that the history of Leverett is important and worth protecting.

A future ideal Leverett will have conserved the majority of its uninterrupted forest, the purity of its air and water, and the mosaic of its remaining farmland. In addition, the effects of climate change will inform open space and recreation decisions in town. To help create this vision, the town will increase its education and outreach efforts to better inform residents about land use practices and recreational opportunities in town, as well as apply the latest Massachusetts guidelines on climate change resiliency planning.

These achievements will enhance biodiversity and provide improved access to trails that connect both public and private open spaces. Leverett will also have protected its water resources and preserved and shared the stories and physical remains of its historic sites. Recreation pastimes will include both active and passive activities such as hiking, walking/running, nature/birdwatching, boating, and bicycling. These pastimes are made available by the conservation areas in town, extensive trail systems, safe roads for pedestrians and bicyclists, and other recreational amenities.”

EXISTING GOALS: Preservation Planning Report (2018)

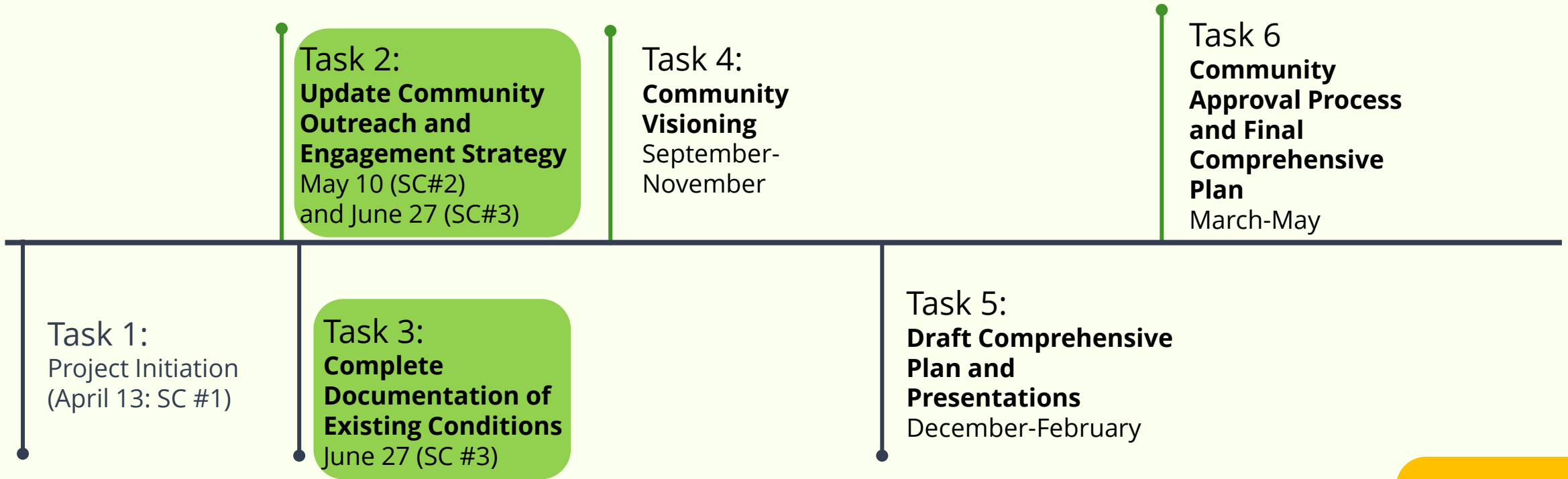
- Start a historic preservation planning process.
- Included educational planning that includes research and programming.
- The Town has a role in preservation, including limited financial commitment.
- Use CPA funds as seed money to fund enabling activities.
- Investigate how to preserve archaeological assets.



Q&A

Discussion

REVISED SCHEDULE



**Deadline:
June 30, 2024**

PROPOSED OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE

Month	Option 1	Option 2
June	Complete Task 3: Existing Conditions	
July	Complete Task 2: Updated Community Outreach and Engagement Strategy Consultant team completes interviews	
August	Task 4 begins.	
	Consultant team prepares materials for community meeting #1.	Consultant team prepares materials for small group meetings.
	Steering Committee meeting #4 – review materials and facilitation training. Steering Committee members begin outreach.	
September	Community-wide meeting #1, led by consultant team. Consultant team prepares materials for community meeting #2.	Small group meetings, led by Steering Group facilitators or other volunteers.
	First questionnaire launched.	
October	Community-wide meeting #2.	Small group meetings continue.
	Steering Committee meeting #5 – discuss engagement and input to date.	

PROPOSED OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE

Month	Option 1	Option 2
November	Consultant team works on draft plan.	Small group meetings (if needed). Consultant team works on draft plan.
	Second questionnaire launched.	
December	<p>Task 5 begins.</p> <p>Consultant team works on draft plan</p>	
January	<p>Initial Plan due for committee, staff, and Planning Board comment.</p> <p>Steering Committee #6</p>	
February	Consultant team addresses comments.	
March	Revised Draft Due; Team presents revised draft at Community-wide meeting.	
April	Annual Town Meeting; Public comment period	
May	<p>Task 6 begins.</p> <p>Planning Board Review and Adoption</p>	
June	<p>Team prepares final plan.</p> <p>June 20, 2024 – Grant Ends</p>	



TOPICS FOR COMMUNITY/SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

- Confirm community goals from *Sustainable Franklin County Franklin County's Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (2013)* and confirmed in the Town of Leverett's *Open Space and Recreation Plan (2019)*
- Confirm that goals, actions, and recommendations from *2019 Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2022 Community Preservation Report and Plan, and the 2020 MVP Plan* are still valid.
- Discuss Areas of Concern Map identified in Phase 1 report (page 24). What should/should not happen in each area? Where are there opportunities for preservation and where are opportunities for growth?
 - Open space/recreation areas
 - Town Center
 - North Leverett
 - Moore's Corner
 - Route 63
 - East Leverett



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Decide on Option 1 or 2.
- Decide on schedule. When do meetings start/end/how many per week?
- Use software to manage sign-ups? (especially for Option 2).
- Need:
 - Coordinators (3-4 people to manage logistics)
 - Facilitators (4-5 people who will facilitate meetings)
 - Outreach volunteers (4-5 people who will distribute flyers and encourage people to send notices (email and social media))



NEXT STEPS

- Next meeting dates: August and October
- Assignments – who is taking which role?

Minutes: Leverett Comprehensive Plan Steering Group meeting #3

June 27, 2023

Steering Group members in attendance (no members were absent)

- Silas Ball
- Matt Boucher
- Jenny Daniell
- Arlyn Diamond
- Sarah Dolven
- Jim Field
- Gary Gruber
- David Henion
- Isaiah Robison
- Kim Van Wagner
- Andy Vlock
- Nicole Vadja
- Steve Weiss
- Bob Weitzman

Others in attendance

- Emily Innes
- Chris Herlich, RKG
- Juliane Ding, RKG
- Traci Adamski, Tighe & Bond
- Tim Shores, clerk

Minutes taken by Tim Shores

Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Approval of minutes from May 10, 2023
3. Discussion 1: Existing Conditions (40 minutes)
 - a. Presentation from consultant team
 - b. Q&A
4. Discussion 2: Community engagement and outreach (40 minutes)
 - a. Continued discussion of outreach process
 - b. Create schedule of outreach and engagement
5. Next steps: Meeting dates and task assignments

The meeting began at 7:02pm

1. Welcome & Introductions: Jenny and Andy invited everyone to use 10 seconds to introduce themselves and share something that made them smile.
2. Approval of minutes from May 10, 2023 (agenda item unintentionally skipped)
3. Discussion 1: Existing conditions presentation (refer to PowerPoint file provided by Emily Innes for the content of the presentation). Highlights of the discussion:
 - a. During the demographics and housing presentation, several Group members discussed the impact of Leverett's aging population and increased proportion of retired residents.

- b. During the housing presentation, the Group asked for more information about the increase in vacant housing in the “seasonal/recreational” and “vacant other” categories. Juliane Ding will look into this.
 - c. During the employment base discussion, the Group asked whether Leverett Elementary School employment was accounted for in the 2022 Jobs numbers (slide 33). Chris Herlich will look into this.
 - d. Also during employment base discussion, the Group asked for more information about the growth in home-based businesses and people working from home. Chris will look into this.
 - e. When the ‘red map’ of Leverett was presented (slide 42, showing the very limited soil suitability for septic tank absorption fields), Isaiah observed that a closer inspection of parcels would reveal more variation in soil suitability, especially with the permeability of gravel fields along route 63.
 - f. The Group learned that Town Hall lacks potable water.
 - g. When the open space and zoning maps were presented (slides 44-50), Group members discussed the conservation status of property owned by Cowl’s, which is one of the largest landowners in Leverett, and the recent controversy in Shutesbury over Cowl’s forest-to-solar development plan.
 - h. Also during the zoning map discussion, Group members discussed the history of the impact of high value residential properties on town finances.
4. Discussion 2: Community Engagement and Outreach
- a. Kim and Arlyn presented their work on the media strategy, which prioritizes these activities:
 - i. Begin with a small survey on livability, based on the research done by the Sustainable Economy Committee last year.
 - ii. Hold small community visioning discussions as previously discussed.
 - iii. Schedule library info sessions on specific Comprehensive Planning topics.
 - iv. Organize discussion with affinity groups.
 - v. Organize a celebration to culminate all of the community vision work.
 - vi. Present the report at the next Town Meeting.
 - b. Andy discussed the idea of the Group coming up with a Town Motto that expresses the town’s ethos synthesized with community-driven values. The idea is to come up with a way to promote town unity around the Comprehensive Plan. He invites Steering Group members to think of motto ideas for the next meeting.
 - c. Matt asked for clarification on scheduling: can Steering Group members start having community vision meetings, or do we need to wait until everyone is ready. Andy clarified that Group members are welcome to start organizing community vision meetings immediately – he asked that people take notes of what they learned so they the Group collects data.

5. The Group agreed to hold the next meeting at the Safety Complex meeting room, July 25 from 7pm to 8:30pm.

STEERING GROUP MEETING #4

TOWN OF LEVERETT

JULY 25, 2023

**22111 – Town of Leverett
 Leverett Comprehensive Plan
 Notes for Discussion at 9/26 Steering Group meeting**

Options for Public Meeting #1

Option 1: Data Walk – good for communities where people can drop in for a short time and where people like to spend time considering data and their response.

- Goal: Participants should familiarize themselves with the data and provide input on specific scenarios for future changes, shown at the stations.
- Short presentation welcoming people to the meeting (client), describing the process (client/consultant), providing initial information (consultant), and explaining the structure of the open house (consultant).
- Short Q&A after the presentation.
- People self-direct around stations reading material and providing comments. Stations may be staffed by consultant team/Steering Group members.
- Second Q&A at the end to capture people’s thoughts about what they have read/reviewed.

Option 2: Table Discussions – good for communities where people can spend more time (90 minutes) and want to discuss options with other community members.

- Goal: Participants should familiarize themselves with the data and discuss specific scenarios for future changes, shown at the stations.
- Short presentation and Q&A as above; consultant explains the structure of the table exercises (consultant).
- People gather at tables to discuss topics. Tables may be facilitated by consultant team/Steering Group members.
- Second Q&A at the end to capture people’s thoughts about what they have read/reviewed.

Timing	Action	Timing	Action
Hour before start	Consultant team arrives. Volunteers helping with set-up and stations arrive.		
15 minutes before start	Meeting is open, people begin to arrive and register.		
20-30 minutes	Welcome presentation with short Q&A.	15-20 minutes	Welcome presentation with short Q&A.
45-55 minutes	People interact with the stations.	55-60 minutes	Table discussions – length depends on the number of topics. Topics or people could switch part-way through.
15 minutes	Follow-up Q&A		
90 minutes after start	Open House closes; volunteers assisting with break-down begin break-down.	90 minutes after start	Workshop closes; volunteers assisting with break-down begin break-down.
Half-hour after end	Break-down complete.	Half-hour after end	Break-down complete.

Possible Stations/Table Topics (Section 81D topics in parentheses)

Topics	Section 81D Elements and Other Topics	Data for Inclusion/Generation by Participants
Building Community	Services and Facilities, Housing, Economic Development, Recreation, Cultural Resources	Demographics Existing Groups Past Events Neighborhood Maps
Cost of Living/Attracting Younger Families	As above plus Energy and Education	Housing data – new starts, availability, affordability School population projections Resources for families What families want
Cost of Municipal Services/Tax Revenue	All 81D elements, plus Sustainability, Circulation, Infrastructure	Employment Base Housing Projections Infrastructure needs and costs Water supply map Roadway maps
Supporting Rural Activities	Land Use, Resiliency (including Climate), Housing, Economic Development, Open Space, Natural Resources	Open space maps Agriculture maps and activities Relationship of existing neighborhoods to open space/natural resources
Supporting Rural-Appropriate Development	Infrastructure, Housing, Economic Development	Historic development patterns and building types Missing housing types Missing business types Options for supporting infrastructure
Zoning changes and best practices	Land Use, Open Space, Natural Resources, Housing, Economic Development, Infrastructure	Areas to preserve/areas to develop – see map from Phase 1 Existing and potential development controls Initial build-out?
Developing Goals	Test existing goals from recent plans	MVP Resiliency 2020 Open Space and Rec 2019 Preservation Planning 2018
Developing Benchmarks	All	What represents success?

Small Group Discussions

- Depends on which option is chosen for the meeting.
- Will need to know how many meetings are likely to take place and who will be included. This will help tailor materials.

Suggested by the Steering Group	Standard IA Meeting-in-a-Box
Large, printed maps of the town mounted on foam board	What size will be most useful? We usually provide 11x17 for small meetings, but it will depend on the information we show and the number of maps.
Sign in sheets (blank) and clipboards	IA can provide our standard sign-in sheets.
QR code postcards/fliers about survey	IA can design the postcards/fliers and provide the QR code.
Printouts of brief questionnaire or some talking points that get conversations going	IA can provide a talking points sheet.
Notetaking form/guidelines	IA can provide a note-taking template. Also a way to capture: “Can you think of anyone else we should talk to?” and “Can you help us connect with them?”
Something brief to leave with people for them to take home and spread the word	Business cards with links to the Planning Board sites and dates of the next public meeting? Will the small groups start before the first public meeting.
Volunteer sign-up sheets	IA can provide volunteer sign-in sheets. We also recommend sign-in sheets for people who want to participate in the small group discussions at the first meeting.

Note: For expenses by Steering Group members – the Planning Board should confirm the dollar amount of funds remaining after the contract with Innes Associates to understand how much is available. Some was set aside for the postcard printing costs.

Standard Workshop Needs (to be revised by workshop type)

1. Registration table
 - a. Sign-in sheets (See PDF)
 - b. Easel with instructions
 - c. Pens
 - d. How-to for the event
 - e. Volunteers (1-2)
2. Food table
 - a. Food and drink from Planning Board
 - b. Volunteers (1-2)
3. For each station:
 - a. Volunteer/Staff
 - b. One-two boards and easels (10 total)
 - c. One table
 - d. 3x3 sticky notes
 - e. Number dots (see PDF)
 - f. Pens
 - g. Binder clips for maps
4. Childcare (Provided by Client) “Draw what you like best about Leverett?”
 - a. Roll of Kraft paper
 - b. Box of crayons
 - c. Reward stickers
5. Other needs:
 - a. Projector (Venue or IA)
 - b. Screen (Venue)
 - c. Microphone (IA)
 - d. Laptop (IA)
 - e. Camera/phone

Minutes: Leverett Comprehensive Plan Steering Group meeting #4

Tuesday, July 25, 2023

Steering Group members in attendance

- Silas Ball
- Jenny Daniell
- Jim Field
- Gary Gruber
- David Henion
- Kim Van Wagner
- Andy Vlock
- Bob Weitzman

Steering Group members absent

- Matt Boucher
- Arlyn Diamond
- Sarah Dolven
- Isaiah Robison
- Nicole Vadja

Note that Steve Weiss announced his resignation from the Steering Group earlier in July 2023. This reduced the number required for quorum from 8 to 7 members.

Others in attendance

- Tim Shores, clerk

Minutes taken by Tim Shores

Agenda

Tuesday the 25 th of July at 7 pm at the Safety Complex meeting room the Comprehensive Plan Committee will meet to discuss:

1. Current and Existing Conditions in Leverett;
2. Public Outreach;
3. Town Motto

The meeting began at 7:00 PM.

1. Andy explained that the consultants would not be at this meeting. The contract with Emily Innes includes a limited number of meetings with the consultants, and it's important to not use those up too quickly. Jenny explained that it's also important for the Steering Group to not let the project

become led by the consultants, as this can create a conflict with the goal of a community-driven project.

2. Jenny and Andy asked Silas to begin with a question that he wanted to ask the group to prompt discussion.

Silas asked, Why are we here? What is this group trying to achieve, what is its connection to past initiatives like the Revenue Committee and other initiatives currently happening in town? And, are we on track to achieve whatever it is?

The group went around the table to discuss.

- Bob: We're here out of concern about how to solve the town's big problems.
 - Gary: We're here as visionaries on what can be done to maintain the town in the future. After the vision is complete, it will be up to the town to figure out how to achieve that vision.
 - David: We're here to understand existing conditions, but also to explore different ways of interpreting information about existing conditions, and to use this understanding to develop proactive bylaws that prepare the town to contend with big interests, like big solar installations. Also, the current zoning bylaw has been developed primarily by one person, as a way to protect the town from overdevelopment.
 - This led to discussion: Bob asked about the zoning history. Gary explained that the town worked with a consultant in the 1980s to revise the zoning in such a way that it would slow the sudden growth of housing development that began early that decade or late in the 1970s. Maintenance of zoning bylaw since then has been a matter of tinkering in response to specific issues, but no overhaul of zoning since then, which brings the town to the question of how to adequately prepare zoning for future needs.
 - Jenny: We're here to learn the town's vision and values and treat them as guardrails and guides to what is important for the town to prioritize as we plan for the future.
 - Kim: Highlighted Silas's second question, which is: Are we on track? To her, this includes the question: Are we including enough people?
 - Jim: We're here to figure out how to stimulate a reasonable amount of growth. The town was fiscally conservative in the past. Families who lived here purchased land and held onto it. The zoning changes Gary referred to made it difficult for those families to build on their investments. He asked, how much more land can we afford to take from the tax roll through conservation?
3. Jenny and Andy asked everyone to break out into small groups to discuss topics from the existing conditions presented by the consultants at the previous meeting. After 15 minutes, everyone rejoined the larger group and presented what they discussed on the topics of housing, land use, employment, and demographics.
 4. Public outreach: Kim asked for clarification on what Steering Group members are allowed to do at this stage, and reminded everyone of discussion at a previous meeting that Steering Group members work together in pairs or small groups when conducting outreach and dialogue about community vision. Andy responded that Steering Group members should feel free to discuss the plan for community vision meetings, but hold off on collecting data or treating these discussions as

community vision meetings until the Steering Group is further along in the process and has received more supporting materials from the consultants.

5. Due to time constraints, the Town Motto topic was shelved until the next meeting. Jenny and Andy encouraged everyone to think more about the motto and come prepared with ideas.
6. The next meeting will be Tuesday, August 22, from 7pm to 8:30pm, at the Safety Complex meeting room.
7. The group reviewed a diagram that Tim drew on the whiteboard as an answer to Silas's question at the outset of the meeting.

**STEERING GROUP
MEETING #5**

TOWN OF LEVERETT
SEPTEMBER 19, 2023

Leverett Comprehensive Plan Steering Group

Meeting #5: September 19 2023, 6pm to 8pm, Leverett Safety Complex training room

Steering Group members present in person (9): Arlyn Diamond, Jim Field, Gary Gruber, David Henion, Isaiah Robison, Bob Weitzman, Nicole Vajda, Kimberly Van Wagner, Andrew Vlock
Steering Group members absent (4): Silas Ball, Matt Boucher, Jenny Daniell, Sarah Dolven
Clerk present in person: Tim Shores
No attendants by Zoom
Meeting began at 6pm

Andy opened discussion by inviting everyone to take turns answering: What is something you would like to keep unchanged about Leverett, and what is something you would like to change about Leverett?

- **Isaiah, Rattlesnake Gutter Rd, lifelong Leverettian:** He has been working on how he can accept all that has changed in Leverett. Many challenges to town come from conditions that are external to Leverett, beyond our political or economic control. He would like to see the Harvest Festival come back at LES. The pop-up pub that happened before the pandemic was great. This committee and the planning process we support is an opportunity to reconnect with each other and create community events.
- **David, Montague Road:** He could see a lot of people supporting restart of the Harvest Fest. Sees this committee as an opportunity to strengthen the town and prepare the town to deal with and adapt to issues that are bigger than the town and beyond our control.
- **Jim:** His concern is the cost of living, the high taxes, our need to solve water issues, improve affordability, and respond as a town to what he sees as stagnancy. He sees that younger people can't afford to build homes here, and that's going to become harder on the town as time goes on. He wants to explore questions about how to reduce costs, and how to increase tax revenue, while keeping services sustainable. He wants to change zoning and Title V regulations in Leverett to support these goals. He wants to keep agriculture unchanged – rather than building on farm fields, let's look at how to build housing on Brushy Mountain. He wants to keep the serenity and quiet natural setting, where he's only kept awake by the frogs and herons on the pond. He believes the school is very expensive and underutilized---he wants to change how much we use the school, because it can support larger enrollment.

- **Nicole, resident for 1 year:** Moved here from Maynard, a more densely developed community on Route 2. They moved here to have more land and for the rural peacefulness. She would not want to lose that rural character---could see adding more housing, but not commercial development. She would like to increase the number of collective experiences, like community gardens and volunteer get-togethers.
- **Kim, Teawaddle Hill, resident for 3 years:** Would like Leverett to keep its love of nature, the trails and other outdoor recreation. She would like to change the town focus to be highly supportive of the school, and the town center could be more well-defined as a community center. She's found it difficult to connect with other school families. The school could do more to attract choice students from outside of Leverett. Also, she wants to see Leverett put more effort into regionalizing and banding together with other towns in the region.
- **Arlyn:** Values the town's ethos and commitment to the beautiful and accessible natural settings. She really wants to explore the question of how we can preserve that while also bringing in new families and supporting affordable housing solutions.
- **Gary, Cave Hill Rd, resident for 45 years:** He moved here for Leverett Elementary School, and believes that we should preserve about Leverett, because it's the power center of the town. He would change the 6 o'clock start time for this meeting, and he would change the composition of town population because we need more young people able to bring new ideas to town government. The proportions of town expenses haven't changed much: About 2/3 to education, and it used to be 1/3 to highway but now he believes it's less with our expanded police and fire departments, but crumbs go to the rest of our service needs. What changes is who lives here and what they can contribute to town government.
- **Bob, resident for 35 years:** Likes that we get together to meet and discuss the good and the bad in Leverett. "Keep the good, change the bad."
- **Andy, Teawaddle Hill, resident for 4 years:** Agrees about the value of attracting younger people. He knows young people who live in the region and there is zero probability that they'll be able to move to Leverett. A result of this is that we lack diversity---ethnically, socially, politically. He would keep the Teawaddle Hill community that he enjoys in his own neighborhood.

Review and vote to approve or amend all outstanding meeting minutes

- Bob moved to approve with no amendments, Arlyn seconded. Vote: Unanimously approved.

- This approves minutes from meeting #2 (May 10, 2023), #3 (June 27, 2023), and #4 (July 25, 2023). Tim will submit to Lisa Stratford for official filing and will post to the Comprehensive Plan page on the Town website.

Planning for Community Vision meetings from October through December

Kim presented the timeline revised and discussed prior to this meeting between herself and planning consultant Emily Innes, Andy, Jenny, and Tim.

The Steering Group now needs to make decisions to support the community vision timeline:

- Schedule two larger, open community vision events before the end of the calendar year.
- Responsibility for smaller community events conducted by Steering Group members between the two larger events.
- Final decisions on survey questions, and how to distribute the survey. (See next section)

Emily provided dates in October and December when she and other consultants can be available for the two larger format community vision meetings. Based on this availability, the Steering Group approved these dates:

- Tuesday, October 17, 3pm to 5pm and 6pm to 8pm.
- Wednesday, December 6, 3pm to 5pm and 6pm to 8pm.

The Steering Group agreed to plan for a 2-hour long meeting program that takes place twice on each date. This will create opportunities for more people to attend.

Emily and the consultants will prepare information and documents to support vision meeting discussion and data collection. She'll address this in more detail at next week's Steering Group meeting.

Large format event locations: "Town Hall has it all" – Gary Gruber

Discussion of how to organize small meetings:

- Each meeting will be organized by minimum 2, maximum 6, Steering Group members.
- Each meeting will be organized around a focal point: a location or neighborhood, an affinity group or organization, or a topic of special interest.
- Transfer Station tabling: Jim, Bob, Nicole, and Andy will join forces with a poster and handouts. Goal: Four sessions at Transfer Station.
- Leverett Coop Friday pizza night: Arlyn and Isaiah will partner on this location.

- The Group brainstormed locations for other vision meetings with the understanding that everyone in the Steering Group can reach out to prospective vision meeting participants: Library Community Room; N. Leverett Baptist Church and/or pavilion near sawmill; Leverett Crafts & Arts; LES.
- The Group brainstormed affinity groups to reach out to:
 - Leverett Coop members - Isaiah and Gary will reach out
 - the Leverett Alliance and Hands Across the Hills participants
 - North Leverett Baptist Church – Isaiah and Gary will reach out
 - Veterans – Isaiah and Gary will reach out, they meet at Coop each week
 - Hemenway Road: Jim, Isaiah, and Silas (volunteered in his absence) can work together to meet with neighbors on Hemenway Road.
 - The Group discussed whether another Steering Group member should join them, a Group member who doesn't already share social ties with the community of Leverett residents who are from multi-generational families, tend to be working class, and who tend to feel that the town has stopped listening to them and has left them behind---therefore, they may not be receptive to this process.
 - Isaiah shared a story about the insularity of certain social groups, and how it's important to take the right first step and meet people where they are. Kim agreed: our goal is to get as many voices as we can.
 - Volunteer fire department meets each Thursday night. Jim as former Fire Chief and FD volunteer has strong ties and will coordinate meeting with them. Group suggested expanding this to include all Safety Department members: Police, Highway, Fire.
 - Leverett Crafts & Arts members
 - First Congregational Church of Leverett
 - Leverett Community Chorus
 - Rattlesnake Gutter Trust and Friends of Leverett Pond
 - Newcomers to town who may have been less visible
 - Volunteers in Leverett government: members of boards and committees. Tim advised prioritizing the Board of Health and Conservation Committee, as these organs would be significantly affected by the changes to bylaw and regulations typical of Comprehensive Planning.
 - LES parents, PTO, LES staff: Kim and Nicole can organize playground get-togethers.
 - Mount Toby Friends Meeting
 - Monks of Nipponzan-Myōhōji-Daisanga and Wat Kiry Vongsa Bopharam (Swan Keyes from the Planning Board can help make a connection)
 - Council on Aging (Tim's partner Jya Plavin is on the COA and can help make a connection)

- Porcupine Ridge Runners
- Everyone is permitted---and encouraged!---to continue discussing and coordinating small meeting opportunities outside of the Steering Group's public meetings.

Tim advised: Emily and other consultants will provide materials, including a brief questionnaire to support qualitative data collection at these small format community vision meetings ... also, try to end every meeting with two snowball sampling questions:

- "Can you think of anyone else we should talk to?"
- "Can you help us connect with them?"

Expenses: The Community Compact grant that has funded consultant contracts in support of Phase 2 of the Comprehensive Plan is also meant to be used to cover event expenses, and any other expense that supports the grant deliverable (a completed Plan). Submit receipts to Tim and/or Margie at Town Hall.

Planning for distribution of the Comprehensive Plan town survey

Emily, Kim, and Tim have also prepared a draft of the survey, and Kim will send that draft to Steering Group members after this meeting. Kim acknowledged that she had received survey suggestions from Jim prior to this meeting, and she will reconcile his suggestions in the draft before sending it to the Steering Group for review and feedback.

The Group brainstormed distribution channels: Leverett Connects, mail to all resident addresses (expense to the grant), flyers, Transfer Station.

What are respondent goals? Tim advised that two larger surveys that he helped with previously came close to 300 respondents apiece. In his experience, Leverett residents like to take surveys. If we can keep the survey open until mid- to late-December, and promote it smartly, maybe we can exceed 300. Given the comprehensiveness of a Comprehensive Plan, maybe we can exceed 500 respondents.

The Group discussed whether non-residents with a stake in Leverett should be invited to take the survey. Examples include Cinda Jones of Cowl's, Inc., other business owners with assets in Leverett, and LES staff. The Group will table this for now and continue discussing this, and to consider inviting non-resident stakeholders to large format community meetings, and maybe a small vision meeting with a focus specific to this group.

Group dialogue about demographic questions on survey

Kim and Tim explained a question about demographic questions on the survey for the Group to discuss. Emily's version included a question about age, and a question about race/ethnicity. Her rationale is that these categories were prioritized by last year's Existing Conditions Working Group. Tim agreed that these questions are important, but it seems to risk seeming exclusionary to ask about these two categories without also asking about other categories.

Tim explained that in survey design, there is no universal standard for demographic questions, but there are two rules of thumb: ask in a way that doesn't make it harder to take the survey, and ask when it serves to answer research questions.

Following the first rule of thumb is easy: put the questions at the end of the survey, concisely explain their purpose, and make it clear that they are optional.

To follow the second rule of thumb, Tim cited the protected classes of the Federal Fair Housing Act, which prohibits discrimination in housing because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), familial status, and disability. Given that Leverett is a community almost exclusively of houses and this is a planning and development process, it seems reasonable to use this as a standard for demographic questions. The research questions that these questions would serve are about whether people from different classes have significant differences in their experience of Leverett and in their preferences and vision for Leverett's future. Asking these questions also communicates the intent of safety and inclusivity to people who belong to these classes. Some people may take offense at the presence of these questions, while other people may take offense at the absence of these questions – there's no way to please everyone with this choice.

The downside to Tim of including these questions is that we can't guarantee respondent privacy and confidentiality. Since it's a public survey, according to Emily, someone can use FOIA to request the full data set. This can mean people from some religious communities, or with some gender identities or sexual orientations, will feel at risk if exposed.

The Steering Group deliberated over this decision at length. Some members agreed that these kinds of questions are important, although it's not clear that this is the best way to ask. Some members felt the risk was too high of offending people who would feel these questions are intrusive, and some members did not agree that there was sufficient value to the research question to take that risk. Kim proposed not asking these specific questions, and instead asking one or two fully open form questions along these lines:

“What are barriers to helping you be your full self as a resident of Leverett?”

“What are barriers to helping you feel represented and able to participate in Leverett?”

The group in general agreed with this compromise. Kim will coordinate this change with Emily, and the discussion of the survey will continue at the next meeting.

Call-in business and housekeeping items

None.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.

**STEERING GROUP
MEETING #6**

TOWN OF LEVERETT
SEPTEMBER 26, 2023

Outreach Plan for Steering Group of Comprehensive Plan

Lead organizer	2nd organizer	Location	Date	Notes	Location's Contact Person	Contact phone/email
Jim	Bob	Transfer Station				
Jim	Andy	Transfer Station				
Jim	Nicole	Transfer Station				
Jim	Andy	Rattlesnake Gutter				
Gary	Isaiah	Village Co-op general				
Gary	Isaiah	Village Co-op veterans				
Gary	Isaiah	North Baptist Church				
		Pavillon at Sawmill/Friends of Sawmill				
Arlyn	Andy	Leverett Crafts & Arts				
Jim		Friends of Leverett Pond				
Bob		Leverett Community Chorus				
Jim		Safety Complex Personnel				
	Jya	Council on Aging				
		Town committee volunteers/staff/town hall staff			esp. BOH, conservation folks	
Tim	Swan Keyes	Peace Pagoda				

Tim		Mt Toby Friends Meetinghouse				
Kim	Nicole	LES PTO				
Kim	Nicole	LES parents playground group				
Kim		LES Employees				
Kim		LES Students?				
		Dudleyville				
		Brushy Mountain				
Silas		250th organizing group				
		Shutesbury Athletic Club				

Leverett Comprehensive Plan Steering Group

Meeting #6: September 26 2023, 6:30pm to 8pm
Leverett Safety Complex training room

Steering Group members present in person (9): Silas Ball, Arlyn Diamond, Gary Gruber, David Henion, Isaiah Robison, Bob Weitzman, Nicole Vajda, Kimberly Van Wagner, Andrew Vlock
Steering Group members absent (4): Matt Boucher, Jenny Daniell, Sarah Dolven, Jim Field
Clerk present in person: Tim Shores
Planning consultant Emily Innes attended by Zoom No other attendants by Zoom
Meeting began at 6:30pm

Gary moved to accept minutes of the September 19, 2023 meeting. Andy seconded. Vote for the motion passed unanimously.

General discussion and decision-making about Town-wide Survey

- Kimberly described the survey matters in need of decision before Emily can distribute it to the town.
 - Kimberly had circulated the most recent draft to the Steering Group (SG) by email.
 - She heard from one SG member with objections to the demographic questions in the survey's final section. ○ She met with a UMass professor of statistics who lives in her neighborhood to get insight about the privacy and ethics of the demographic questions proposed by Tim, and by Emily (reminder that there were two sets of demographic questions). The statistician advised Kimberly: Need to be able to provide a data security policy, and it's better to use the national census as a standard model for demographic questions, rather than the Fair Housing Act (which is what Tim proposed that we use as a standard).

- She then opened the discussion to general feedback about the survey, with a reminder that SG would focus on the matter of demographic questions later in this meeting.
 - Arlyn would like to see “N/A” options for more of the questions, including the Likert scale items.
 - David would like to see a values-oriented question about town autonomy, asked in a way that invites people to share their attitudes about control of town political matters by outside entities. Andy spoke up in favor of this idea.
 - Bob pointed out that the survey begins by setting the expectation that it will take 10 minutes to complete. It took him 25 minutes.
 - Silas and Isaiah requested paper copies of the survey that they could review after tonight’s meeting.
 - Silas explained that he began reviewing the survey. He didn’t like the questions he was seeing, so he stopped reviewing after the first section. He wondered if the questions were recycled from questions used for all towns, more reflective of Eastern Massachusetts priorities and values. He said that he was glad that he didn’t see the demographic questions. In light of tonight’s discussion, he requested more time to review the survey.
 - Tim raised the point that Kim sent the survey in advance to Maureen Ippolito’s email address, and the expectation was that Maureen would share these communications with Silas, so that Silas could review materials in advance of the SG meetings. If this email by proxy arrangement doesn’t work, Tim stated that Silas should meet the Steering Group halfway by reaching out to others between meetings to get documents and other information. He also stated that he feels it is important that Silas have a chance to fully review the survey, but also SG is working under the pressure of time limits.
 - Silas disagreed that he ever said that the Steering Group could communicate with him via Maureen’s email address. He reminded Tim that he said he did not use computers when he first joined this project’s Working Group in Phase 1. He explained that Emily has been good about reaching out to sharing relevant documents with him, but that the Steering Group has been inconsistent about it.
 - Tim echoed that it is not Silas’s preference to receive communication via Maureen’s email; and will work to remember that going forward.

- Kim proposed that we table the final survey decision to give Silas and Isaiah more time to review.
- Andy volunteered to follow-up with them to get their feedback.
- Tim suggested that the Steering Group make Silas, Isaiah, and Andy a subcommittee with authority to give a go/no-go decision about the survey outside of Steering Group quorum. This will let us hand off the final approved version to Emily without requiring another public meeting.
- SG members raised no objections to these plans.

Emily reviewed Community Vision (CV) meeting options and facilitated decisions

- See the appendix to these minutes for the document that Emily reviewed with SG.
- From the Steering Group point of view, the CV meetings are primarily focused on information-gathering. SG members are there to help meeting participants orient themselves to the data, answer questions, facilitate discussion, but most of all, to record responses. Emily did suggest that we could provide forms to let participants take their own notes that they would submit at the end of the meeting.
- Data to be presented will be the same as what the consultants presented to the SG at the June meeting. The grouping of topics (p. 2 of her document) came from previous SG meeting discussions and from the Phase 1 Working Group discussions and Existing Conditions report.
 - Tim asked if there will be more information about zoning, because at the June meeting, the zoning analysis was not complete.
- Emily responded that it depends on SG decisions and community support.
 - The group deliberated pros and cons of the meeting format options from Emily's document.
 - General agreement that **Option 1: Data Walk** format seems more possible than **Option 2: Table Discussions**.
 - SG considered a Data Walk without a general presentation by consultants, which may not engage people well in this meeting format.
 - Arlyn asked Emily to add arts and crafts as a topic, with nature and education programs that Leverett is known for, such as at the LCA. This contributes to the employment base.

- Emily agreed that this was an important detail, but that the topics are designed to not name specific businesses, organizations, or affinity groups.
 - The topic of arts and crafts as livelihood could be discussed at the Data Walk at the tables for:
 - **Building Community** (which includes Section 81D elements Services and Facilities, Housing, Economic Development, Recreation, and Cultural Resources)
 - **Cost of Municipal Services/Tax Revenue** (which includes all 81D elements, plus the Leverett-specific topics of Sustainability, Circulation (Transportation), and Infrastructure, and will include data on *Employment Base*)
 - **Zoning changes and best practices** (which includes 81D elements Land Use, Open space, Natural Resources, Economic Development, and Infrastructure)
 - SG members discussed how it could help to keep topics more general at the October CV meeting. Based on information gathered at big and small CV meetings, SG could decide to get more specific at the December CV meeting.
- David advised preparing poster-sized prints of maps that show existing conditions data presented in June, for both big and small CV meetings. Emily replied that she has a plotter and will include 24"x36" maps on posterboard as a part of her "meeting kit".
- Special Town Meeting scheduled November 4, 2023: All are in agreement that an announcement and materials at the STM will be important. David volunteered to take responsibility for this---he already took the initiative of reaching out to Town Clerk Lisa Stratford to begin preparing for this. All SG members agreed: good plan and thank you for taking the initiative.
- **Unanimously decided: Data Walk** is the preferred big CV meeting format for Leverett's Comprehensive Plan.
- In the interest of time, SG tabled decision-making about **Small Group Discussions**; Kimberly will follow up with Emily to coordinate that discussion.

Deliberation focused on survey draft demographic questions

- Tim explained that there were four groups of questions to consider.
 - Questions that were on the survey draft sent to SG members after the 9/19 meeting:

- Emily's original demographic questions, which were informed by her experience in municipal planning and by priorities agreed to by the Phase 1 Working Group. These questions included asking respondents to volunteer their age, race/ethnicity, and status of employment, business ownership, and level of education. (These questions were on the survey draft under review.)
 - Tim's proposed additional demographic questions, which were informed by the protected classes defined by the Federal Fair Housing Act. The purpose and value of these are to communicate the Town's intent to conduct an inclusive and equitable planning project, and to help the Town learn from residents who belonged to marginalized groups about how their experience in Leverett compares to residents who do not belong to their groups.
 - Questions that were not on the survey draft sent to SG members after the 9/19 meeting:
 - At the 9/19 SG meeting, after deliberation and disagreement about Tim's proposed questions, Kim had proposed a compromise: ask a single open question similar to the phrasing, "*What are barriers to living your best life as a resident of Leverett?*" At that meeting, there was general agreement that this was a good approach.
 - After the 9/19 meeting, Tim had followed up by email with Jim, Gary, and Kim with another proposed compromise: rather than asking survey respondents about their own identities, we could ask them a multiple choice (select all that apply) question about which groups they felt are important for the Town to consider in municipal planning.
- Kim and Tim invited feedback on all these questions. There were multiple lines of deliberation.
 - Gary felt the demographic questions were offensive, and advised the SG not to prioritize putting people into groups and classes.
 - David finds the questions intrusive, and unnecessary because we can refer to demographic information from the Federal census or other sources.
 - Arlyn believes it is important to make space for people who are likely to feel overlooked by official and public process.
 - Bob described how his position had changed the previous week, from thinking these questions unhelpful to seeing their potential to help more people feel included.

- Nicole expressed concern that these questions would be ineffective at achieving the goal of inclusion, and risks offending potential respondents.
- Silas pointed out that it is against State ethics law for a Town to make policies that favor specific groups.
- Tim said the Comp Plan is also about organizing more people together in the public deliberative process, not just about policy. ○ Andy gave the example of his wife, who is not a US citizen and who feels it's important to be able to participate in public process, such as voting. (Silas pointed out that as of the most recent Town Meeting, non-citizens can vote and belong to committees in Leverett.)
- After around 20 minutes of deliberation, and following what seemed to be an emerging consensus, Andy moved that we only include Kim's question, "*What are barriers to living your best life as a resident of Leverett?*" ○

There was agreement to this, however, Tim pointed out that some of Emily's original questions were not about personal factors, so we should consider those separately. ○ More deliberation ensued until Kim moved that the SG vote on Emily's questions line-by-line, seconded by several SG members:

- *Age/How old are you:* 5 in favor, 4 opposed. **Approved.**
- *How long have you lived here:* 5 in favor, 4 opposed. **Approved.**
- *How long have you owned a business in Leverett:* 0 in favor, 9 opposed. **Not Approved.**
- *How long have you been an employee in Leverett:* 0 in favor, 9 opposed. **Not Approved.**
- *Race/ethnicity:* 0 in favor, 8 opposed, 1 abstention. **Not Approved.** ○ Finally, Kim seconded Andy's motion that the SG vote on her question, "*What are barriers to living your best life as a resident of Leverett?*": 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention: **Approved.**
- Therefore, the final set of approved questions for the demographic section at the end of the survey is:
 - *Age/How old are you*
 - *How long have you lived here*
 - *What are barriers to living your best life as a resident of Leverett?*
- Additional discussion items about survey distribution:
 - David suggested that the demographic questions go at the beginning instead of the end. Tim replied that survey methods best practice is to put demographic questions at the end, because

survey response rate is higher when respondents can begin with substantive questions about the issues.

- A question was raised about allowing the survey to be anonymous. Tim pointed out that without requiring some kind of identification, we have no way to quality control duplicate responses or responses from people who don't live in Leverett. This matter was not clearly settled during the meeting.

Call-in business and housekeeping items Housekeeping:

- Silas, Isaiah, and Andy will meet as a subcommittee for final review of the survey, and Andy will follow up with Emily and the SG about the outcome of that meeting.
- Tim will email Lisa Stratford to reserve Town Hall first floor for the October CV meeting, October 17 from 3pm to 5pm, and 6pm to 8pm.
- SG agreed to schedule the next meeting for October 10, 2023, 6:30pm to 8pm. Andy will post official public notice at Town Hall and coordinate access to the Safety Complex (since he had to crawl through an unlocked Safety Complex meeting room window to coordinate access to this evening's meeting).

Meeting adjourned at 8:40pm.

Minutes taken by Tim Shores

Appendix: Emily's deliverable provided in advance of the 9/26 SG meeting



22111 – Town of Leverett
Leverett Comprehensive Plan
Notes for Discussion at 9/26 Steering Group meeting

Options for Public Meeting #1

Option 1: Data Walk – good for communities where people can drop in for a short time and where people like to spend time considering data and their response.

- Goal: Participants should familiarize themselves with the data and provide input on specific scenarios for future changes, shown at the stations.
- Short presentation welcoming people to the meeting (client), describing the process (client/consultant), providing initial information (consultant), and explaining the structure of the open house (consultant).
- Short Q&A after the presentation.
- People self-direct around stations reading material and providing comments. Stations may be staffed by consultant team/Steering Group members.

- Second Q&A at the end to capture people’s thoughts about what they have read/reviewed. **Option 2: Table Discussions – good for communities where people can spend more time (90 minutes) and want to discuss options with other community members.**
- Goal: Participants should familiarize themselves with the data and discuss specific scenarios for future changes, shown at the stations.
- Short presentation and Q&A as above; consultant explains the structure of the table exercises (consultant).
- People gather at tables to discuss topics. Tables may be facilitated by consultant team/Steering Group members.
- Second Q&A at the end to capture people’s thoughts about what they have read/reviewed.

Timing	Action	Timing	Action
Hour before start	Consultant team arrives. Volunteers helping with set-up and stations arrive.		
15 minutes before start	Meeting is open, people begin to arrive and register.		
20-30 minutes	Welcome presentation with short Q&A.	15-20 minutes	Welcome presentation with short Q&A.
45-55 minutes	People interact with the stations.	55-60 minutes	Table discussions – length depends on the number of topics. Topics or people could switch part-way through.
15 minutes	Follow-up Q&A		
90 minutes after start	Open House closes; volunteers assisting with break-down begin breakdown.	90 minutes after start	Workshop closes; volunteers assisting with break-down begin break-down.
Half-hour after end	Break-down complete.	Half-hour after end	Break-down complete.

Possible Stations/Table Topics (Section 81D topics in parentheses)

Topics	Section 81D Elements and Other Topics	Data for Inclusion/Generation by Participants
Building Community	Services and Facilities, Housing, Economic Development, Recreation, Cultural Resources	Demographics Existing Groups Past Events Neighborhood Maps

Cost of Living/Attracting Younger Families	As above plus Energy and Education	Housing data – new starts, availability, affordability School population projections Resources for families What families want
Cost of Municipal Services/Tax Revenue	All 81D elements, plus Sustainability, Circulation, Infrastructure	Employment Base Housing Projections Infrastructure needs and costs Water supply map Roadway maps
Supporting Rural Activities	Land Use, Resiliency (including Climate), Housing, Economic Development, Open Space, Natural Resources	Open space maps Agriculture maps and activities Relationship of existing neighborhoods to open space/natural resources
Supporting Rural-Appropriate Development	Infrastructure, Housing, Economic Development	Historic development patterns and building types Missing housing types Missing business types Options for supporting infrastructure
Zoning changes and best practices	Land Use, Open Space, Natural Resources, Housing, Economic Development, Infrastructure	Areas to preserve/areas to develop – see map from Phase 1 Existing and potential development controls Initial build-out?
Developing Goals	Test existing goals from recent plans	MVP Resiliency 2020 Open Space and Rec 2019 Preservation Planning 2018
Developing Benchmarks	All	What represents success?

Small Group Discussions

- Depends on which option is chosen for the meeting.

- Will need to know how many meetings are likely to take place and who will be included. This will help tailor materials.

Suggested by the Steering Group	Standard IA Meeting-in-a-Box
Large, printed maps of the town mounted on foam board	What size will be most useful? We usually provide 11x17 for small meetings, but it will depend on the information we show and the number of maps.
Sign in sheets (blank) and clipboards	IA can provide our standard sign-in sheets.
QR code postcards/fliers about survey	IA can design the postcards/fliers and provide the QR code.
Printouts of brief questionnaire or some talking points that get conversations going	IA can provide a talking points sheet.
Notetaking form/guidelines	IA can provide a note-taking template. Also a way to capture: "Can you think of anyone else we should talk to?" and "Can you help us connect with them?"
Something brief to leave with people for them to take home and spread the word	Business cards with links to the Planning Board sites and dates of the next public meeting? Will the small groups start before the first public meeting.
Volunteer sign-up sheets	IA can provide volunteer sign-in sheets. We also recommend sign-in sheets for people who want to participate in the small group discussions at the first meeting.

Note: For expenses by Steering Group members – the Planning Board should confirm the dollar amount of funds remaining after the contract with Innes Associates to understand how much is available. Some was set aside for the postcard printing costs.

Standard Workshop Needs (to be revised by workshop type)

1. Registration table
 - a. Sign-in sheets (See PDF)
 - b. Easel with instructions
 - c. Pens
 - d. How-to for the event
 - e. Volunteers (1-2)
2. Food table
 - a. Food and drink from Planning Board
 - b. Volunteers (1-2)
3. For each station:
 - a. Volunteer/Staff
 - b. One-two boards and easels (10 total)
 - c. One table
 - d. 3x3 sticky notes
 - e. Number dots (see PDF)
 - f. Pens
 - g. Binder clips for maps
4. Childcare (Provided by Client) "Draw what you like best about Leverett?"
 - a. Roll of Kraft paper
 - b. Box of crayons
 - c. Reward stickers
5. Other needs:
 - a. Projector (Venue or IA)
 - b. Screen (Venue)
 - c. Microphone (IA)
 - d. Laptop (IA)
 - e. Camera/phone

**STEERING GROUP
MEETING #7**

TOWN OF LEVERETT

OCTOBER 10, 2023

Leverett Comprehensive Plan Steering Group

Meeting #7: October 10, 2023, 6:30pm to 8pm
Leverett Safety Complex training room

Steering Group members present in person (12): Silas Ball, Matt Boucher, Jenny Daniell, Arlyn Diamond, Jim Field, Gary Gruber, David Henion, Isaiah Robison, Bob Weitzman, Nicole Vajda, Kimberly Van Wagner, Andrew Vlock
Steering Group members absent (1): Sarah Dolven
Clerk present in person: Tim Shores
No other attendants by Zoom
Meeting began at 6:30pm

Gary moved to accept minutes of the September 26, 2023 meeting. Kim seconded. Vote for the motion passed unanimously.

General discussion and decision-making about Town-wide Survey---from now on known as the Town-wide Questionnaire

- Kim reviewed some minor edits made to the latest draft.
 - Rechristened 'survey' as 'questionnaire' to avoid implying that we'll use statistical survey methods.
 - Kim will now be the point of contact listed on the front of the questionnaire.
 - Andy requested that the printed version of the questionnaire have larger boxes for open questions to give people more space to answer. David advised adding a deadline date on first page, and that Likert scale questions be contained on a single page, because it's confusing to answer when that kind of question overflows to the next page.
- Discussion of relationship between questionnaire #1 and questionnaire #2: Emily and consultants will take data collected by questionnaire #1 and vision meetings to create questionnaire #2, which will present findings in terms of specific forecasting scenarios for people to give feedback on.

- Kim presented a hypothetical example: If a lot of residents voice support for traffic calming measures, the consultants would include information about best practices for a town like Leverett to achieve traffic calming measures.
- Kim, Tim, and Emily will connect after the meeting to determine questionnaire mailing roles and responsibilities.
 - Bob and Jim advised us to mail out postcards and/or questionnaires ASAP.
 - Arlyn advised mailing postcards only, not the full questionnaire, and instead set up stacks of printed questionnaires at key locations around town, and offer to mail to people as needed.
 - Steering Group agreed, per Kim's recommendation, to earmark \$2,000 of the available grant funds for postcard mailing: 2 postcards for each questionnaire (an initial notification, and a reminder).

Preparation for Community Vision (CV) meetings

- Discussion of promotion and outreach
 - Tim designed and printed color fliers, Arlyn and Kim have distributed them around town.
 - Tim also has posted twice about the meeting on Leverett Connects.
 - Matt will give the flier to the PD and FD, they can also share on their Facebook pages.
 - Tim and Kim reached out to Margie to arrange a robocall to all town residents.
 - David will coordinate an LC&A email list announcement.
 - Silas, Matt, and Andy will coordinate digital roadway signage announcing the event.
- Discussion of run of show for the October 17 meeting.
 - Schedule:
 - Consultants will arrive at Town Hall at around 2pm. Some SG members should arrive that early to help with set-up.
 - Note that we must work with sensitivity because we'll be in the same area as the Senior Foot Clinic – this was not known when we scheduled the Oct 17 meeting, it was not on the town website calendar and Lisa Stratford reported to Tim that there were no other events at Town Hall at that time.
 - First session: 3 or 3:15 to 5pm
 - Second session: 6 to 8pm
 - SG member availability:

- Both sessions: Arlyn, Gary, Jenny, David, Matt, Nicole, Andy, Jim, Kim
 - 6-8pm: Silas, Bob, Isaiah
 - Refreshment subcommittee: Kim, Nicole, Gary. Gary will bring bottled water. SG preference is to source refreshments from Leverett Co-op.
 - Consultants will give a brief presentation: SG prefers keeping this to 5 to 10 minutes. Consultants will then be available to chat with participants of the data walk.
 - Andy and Jenny will then give a brief talk to help people understand the context from which this project emerged. SG requested that Tim create brief content based on the flowchart he drew at a previous meeting. Tim begrudgingly agreed, albeit moistly and with a pitiful grunt.
 - Emily is already in process of printing and preparing table topic materials based on SG decisions made at September meetings.
 - Emily will print a large map of Leverett, possibly in multiple sections, which will allow people to apply stickers indicating areas of interest in relation to specific table topics.
- Data collection discussion
 - Need more info from Emily about whether she will print a brief questionnaire for SG members collect vision feedback from participants. Another data collection opportunity is post-it notes/stickers on topics or map locations of interest to participants.
 - All data collected will go to Emily for synthesis and production of downstream deliverables (i.e. questionnaire #2 and Comprehensive Plan drafts that will be submitted for comment to the SG, Planning, and the public at large).
 - SG also discussed different approaches to the small vision meeting formats. SG would like to develop a standard set of qualitative questions, and brainstormed the following:
 - What do you think are Leverett's assets?
 - Why do you live in Leverett?
 - How could we work together to improve Leverett?
 - What do you think is the greatest challenge Leverett will face in the future?
 - How should we respond to this challenge?
 - Kim's bumper sticker ice breaker ideas for small meetings
 - "Leverett or Leave It"

- “Leverett: My Forever Home”
- And Arlyn’s motto idea: “Leverett: Bear With Us”
- Gary shared that the Leverett Co-op will have a Harvest Festival on October 28, 12pm to 4pm. He will reach out to the Co-op to coordinate a Community Vision table.
- See below, Kim’s follow-up notes to Emily.

Next SG meeting will be 11/6/2023 at 7pm. Tim will not be able to attend that night.
Meeting adjourned at 8:40pm.

Appendix

Kim’s follow-up notes to Emily, sent by email 10/11/2023

On Wed, Oct 11, 2023 at 10:44 AM Emily Innes <emily@innesassocltd.com> wrote:
Good morning, everyone!

I understand the committee met last night, and I was sorry I was unable to attend.

We will be preparing the materials for the meeting over the next few days and sending you a draft on Friday for your review.

Was there any discussion last night specific to the meeting next week that I should know about as we complete our preparations?

Best regards,
Emily

From: **Kimberly VanWagner** <kimberlyvanwagner@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Oct 11, 2023 at 4:13 PM
Subject: Re: 22111 - Leverett: Preparation for next week's meeting
To: Emily Innes <emily@innesassocltd.com>
Cc: Jenny Daniell <jennydaniell@gmail.com>, codo <avlock@gmail.com>, Tim Shores <timothyshores@gmail.com>

Emily,
The team met last night. We are jazzed about our outreach plan and have many questions about next immediate and intermediate steps.

Please read the attached to learn what we need, and thank you for everything!

1. For the questionnaire

- a. Please add a deadline at the top, such as "This questionnaire will close December 15, 2023" and then we can take that mid-point reading of the results and decide if we need to keep the questionnaire open.
- b. Did you have a plan to mail the survey? We remember you saying something about unique identifiers for print versions, but is that printing and mailing coming from you? Otherwise.... Tim basically rewrote the whole thing so we can print and edit it. For the print version, we will have the open dialogue boxes much larger to allow for long handwritten responses and Tim will edit so that when printed the headers for each section will carryover to the next page so people can still see the scale categories. We will have copies at library, town hall, school, post office, and co-op and other locations, and delivered upon request. You can keep my info as the contact, and I will coordinate with the library to help people fill out the survey. Paper copies will also accompany folks at the small group discussions. We will also need paper copies at the October 17th Data Walk.
- c. Add a value question to the pertinent section that reads "Getting involved in improving Leverett is important to me." We are looking for commitment levels with this item.
- d. When the link is ready (again), please send to me/Tim and we will send it out ASAP.
- e. Tim and I will be coordinating mailing postcards about the survey. Please send Tim the QR code for the questionnaire ASAP.

2. For the Data Walk:

- a. You have requested to set up one hour before the event. There is a Council on Aging Foot Clinic in the same space that ends at 3pm. Tim and I will talk with the foot clinic about sharing the space possibilities, but please still plan on coming early.
- b. Please tell us who is coming from your team.
- c. Please confirm that you are providing: 9) 24"x36" maps of Leverett and the Data Walk stations, and please tell us what those station topics are and what they contain, and how much editing is possible between Friday when you send the info and the event.
- d. Please confirm you are providing sign-in sheets, volunteer sign up sheets, and some items folks can take with them when they leave [Tim is working on a little document, too].
- e. Please confirm you are providing pens/pencils.
- f. Please tell us how you are gathering the information people share - will people have post-it notes, easel paper, or other to write their ideas?

- g. Please tell us if there are specific roles each of our volunteers will play. We estimate we will have at least 6 people per shift to help with everything.
- h. Andy will introduce you on behalf of our town/group after he opens the event with an introduction to the process so far. Then you will have 10 minutes, then the "walking" will begin. So that will be at 3:30ish and 6:00ish.
- i. We will provide refreshments for participants and light supper for volunteers/your team.
- j. Besides the idea of the large maps, how many tables/chairs/other set up items do we need?

3. About Gathering Data and Interpreting Data

- a. What will you do with the results from the meeting?
- b. Can we have access to the raw data? What mode would that take? Would your team digitize the comments and collate for our ease of reading? I've worked on projects where the snips of dialogue and feedback were gathered into a document without identifying info and that was helpful to refer back to, so I think people in this group would appreciate something like that.
- c. Can you keep track of what data you link to what recommendations as we move forward (so, for example, I'm still wondering where the "poverty/public health" item came from, and in the future, I want to be able to have you point to your source)
- d. When will we meet to follow up with you on what we learned and prep for the next large event in December?

4. About Small Group Discussions/Tabling

- a. Once the Data Walk is over, we have several small group discussions ready to go. What materials are you providing?
- b. Andy is compiling some guiding questions to help facilitators lead discussions, but we are sure you have good suggestions too. Can you send us that?
- c. Are there materials, such as a large printed map, we could have for a few stationary tables, such as a section at the library? I know we haven't really talked about this, but please let's talk.

STEERING GROUP MEETING #8

TOWN OF LEVERETT

NOVEMBER 6, 2023

11/6/2023 Meeting of the Steering Committee for Leverett Comprehensive Plan

In attendance: Jenny Daniell, Andy Vlock, David Henion, Arlyn Diamond, Silas Ball, Gary Gruber, Bob Weitzman, Isaiah Robison, Kimberly VanWagner, Nicole Vajda

From Planning Board: Tom Ewing, Tim Shores (via Zoom)

Not in attendance: Matt Boucher, Jim Field

Meeting Recording:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eGoiW_JZVG2o5euiLPXjZGmNwV_lalle/

Meeting Start Time: 6:35pm

Meeting End Time: 8:15pm

Intros: everyone shared a thought about the Data Walk event

- More attendance than thought
- Great team effort
- Happy to see strangers
- Surprised by the level of interaction and involvement
- Impressed with consultants
- Beyond expectations
- Tom Ewing - tough to watch by Zoom
- Good movement around the room, enjoyed talking to others
- Impressed with Emily's presentation, lots of info, thoughtful, two thumbs up
- So happy with engagement from lots of people
- Really cool; impressed at how prepared people came

Meeting minutes from 10/10/2023 approved unanimously; noted that tonight's meeting started earlier than 7pm which was listed as the start time agreed upon at the 10/10 meeting.

Co-chairs discussed group values, asked for steering group members to: be careful to treat each other with respect, kindness, patience, transparency, collaboration, respecting all viewpoints; noting that significant differences of opinion can lead to getting "heated" in community events and interactions.

Discussion on the upcoming December 6 event:

Kimberly and Andy met via phone with Emily, who said that the December 6th event could have sample scenarios that people could see. Scenarios would be a forecast of the benefits and costs of a choice the town made based on the community data. Kimberly stated that Emily had suggested that as a group we come up with a few suggestions for scenarios to present on December 6th and that Andy had stated we would explore values and how we could create a decision-making tree.

Preparing for December 6 event:

Generally, people thought it would be difficult to make recommendations to Emily in terms of scenario planning without having completed the questionnaires (open until December 15th) and

without the Data from the Data Walk. Emily had sent some snapshot data from the Data Boards two weeks ago, but that info was not forwarded to the whole group; Andy says he will forward.

- Differing viewpoints and suggestions included:
 - Can we do rough estimates of what we think people will want?
 - Can we modify the date of the next event or extend the deadline Emily needs to write the plan in 2024?
 - Debate about June deadline, the contract with the state, the contract with Emily. Tim verified that, according to Margie McGinnis, the state grant contract specifies an end date at the end of June 2024. Tim will look up the contract terms for clarification.

There was discussion about how much the final comprehensive plan is about zoning as the way the town implements changes and how much the planning group's role is to build and/or uncover a value system of the town into which zoning would fit as one of many tools for change. Zoning sounds dry and technical but actually is an expression of values. Tom explained the usefulness of comprehensive plans to justify actions taken by the town in the future with state-funded dollars.

Our role as Steering Group is to act as a conduit for the data: to give the high level, broad value goals we gather from community to the consultant and to make sure that Emily is on track with deliverables and in keeping with the community values. The way our town is asking Emily to work with us as a group with lots of community input from a variety of sources is a new(er) model of participatory planning and that comes with the need for flexibility and creativity. These conversations around the planning table and with residents have value in and of themselves, and we are creating the process even as we experience it. In addition, this comprehensive plan may not be where everyone's opinion and voice is heard, but if there is overwhelming agreement for something that falls outside the scope of the master plan, we want to be sure to include it in the final plan. That's part of our oversight of Emily, and part of Emily's style is to be flexible with how the plan is written to reflect the community.

We debated whether and for how long to stay "broad" by asking for general input versus narrowing down a little so people can have some decision points. We need to stay open for at least the duration of the survey to capture people's ideas and not cut them off from our own timeline. At the same time, we would be doing a disservice for folks by continuing to ask them to give us all their ideas while knowing those ideas may not be part of the final plan or solvable by this group - so in that way, giving some scenarios is needed to help guide people to begin decision-making and choosing between outcomes.

The group decided to ask Emily if, for the December 6 event, she could allude/teach about the scenarios without specificity; that is, based on the data so far, could we offer folks some "kinds" of the things we may be talking about soon? We want the next event to be a "step forward" - we don't want to present a plan that limits further input but we don't want a complete repeat of the November event or the feeling of stagnation. Let's keep the momentum and build on it, but also start focusing somewhat. If we present the idea that we will be given questions and scenarios in the future; there will be choices and pluses and minuses of other choices; learning about these kinds of choices could be the focus of the next event.

After much debate and discussion, the Steering Group concluded that we cannot come up with scenario suggestions or a decision-making tree and that it is Emily's job to come up with scenarios. However, we will ask Emily to consider showcasing for December 6th work she has done for other towns and to help us think through scenarios. Folks said that some scenarios would be helpful for the December 6th event but not in a way that made people feel their ideas were not going to be included or that this is the final step. At the same time, we need a "hook" or attractive reason for folks to come back out after the November Data Walk, something different.

Question of whether to vote for "Data Walk +" concept, which is almost identical to original data walk with addition of "here are some ways that this data could be used" information.

Unanimous decision to ask Emily to clarify all, make recommendations, and help us understand what is possible.

Small group meetings & Tabling Discussion

Andy, Jenny, Nicole, and Arlyn held a Teawaddle Hill group at Andy's house on Sunday, November 5 at 4pm. Andy fliered Juggler Meadow and Teawaddle mailboxes 5 days in advance. Eight neighbors attended, all from Teawaddle Hill. People brought concerns about taxes and intersections. The group of leaders will combine notes [unclear who took notes] and will send them to Emily. Andy did not have questionnaires on hand but promised to hand deliver them to each attendee.

Tabling at events is different - there isn't time to have real discussions with folks. At the LES Open House, Nicole and Kimberly tabled by the gymnasium/cafeteria entrance. At first, they asked if people were residents of Leverett, but they were unclear if that was leaving out a large voice of people who have a stake in the community. Then they asked if people had filled out the questionnaire yet, and if not, explained what it was for so that people could decide if they needed to fill it out. They also had a volunteer sign up sheet and 5 people signed up. Kimberly and Nicole will follow up with those folks. Also, Nicole had a box with the QR code and a request for kids - What do you like about living in Leverett? What would you change? With post-it notes for answers that people could drop into the box. Kimberly will scan these and send them to Emily.

Gary tabled at the Harvest Fest Village Co-op, which had been postponed to Sunday, November 5th. Gary had posters for people to write thoughts and copies of the survey. The posters will need to be shared with Emily.

Several people, including Gary and Kimberly, have still not received postcards. Tim will contact the vendor, Minuteman Press, to find out what's going on.

Unanimous decision to cancel the meeting for next week and focus on November 20th instead. Tim will alert Lisa to remove public notice.

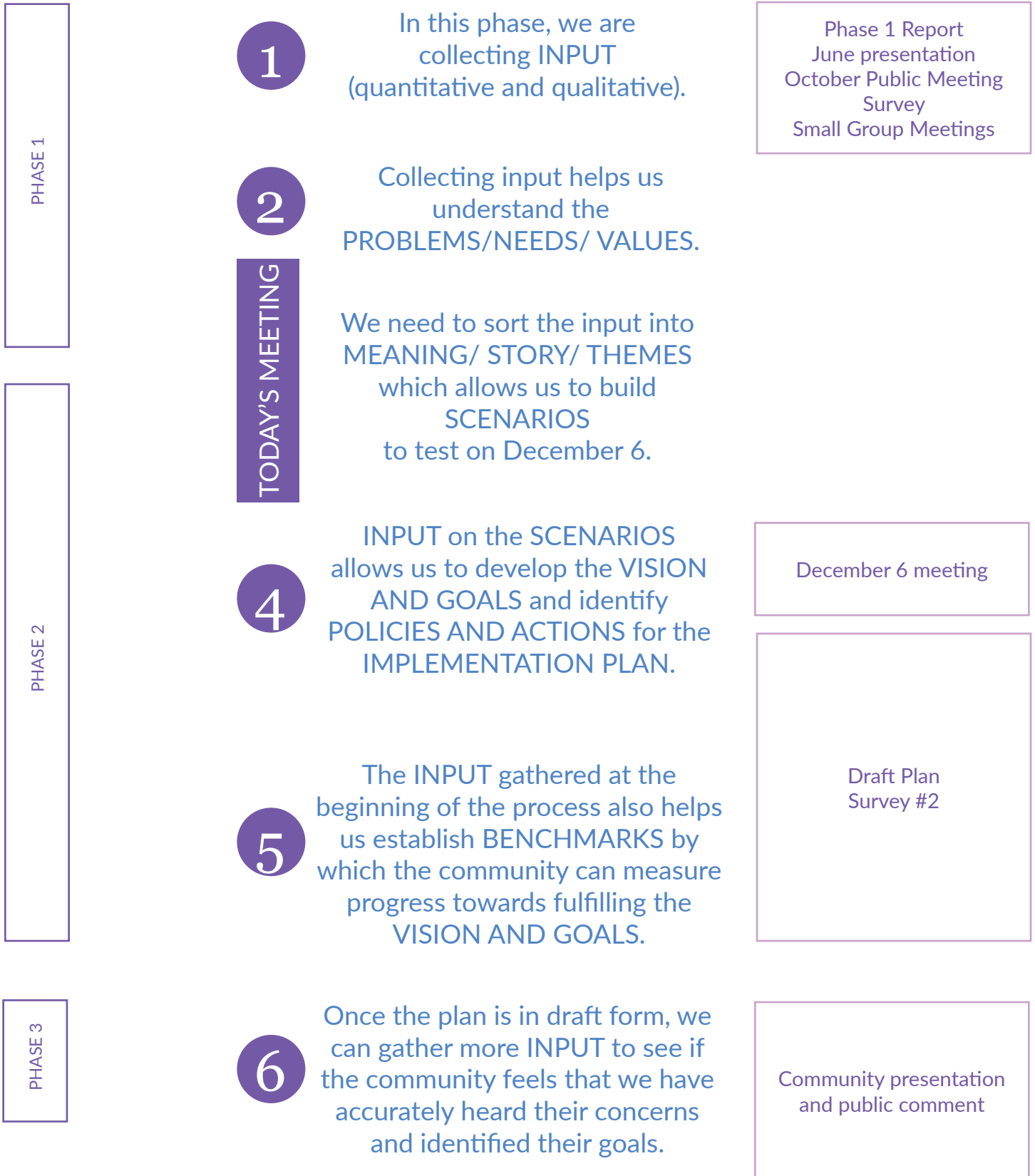
Minutes taken by Kimberly VanWagner

**STEERING GROUP
MEETING #9**

TOWN OF LEVERETT

NOVEMBER 20, 2023

FRAMEWORK OF PLANNING PROCESS



PROPOSED PLAN OUTLINE

1. Executive Summary
2. Leverett **Story** and Supporting Data
3. Vision and Goals
4. Implementation Plan
5. Benchmarks

Our goal for today is to identify **MEANING/ STORY/ THEMES** which will lead to the scenarios that we test on December 6.

SAMPLE SCENARIOS/STORYLINES FOR DISCUSSION

PAIRS	The Town installs sewer along Route 63.	The Town does not install sewer along Route 63.	The Town expands sewer in the Town center.	The Town does not expand sewer in the Town center.
	The Town creates microgrids on Town-owned land.	The Town allows/encourages microgrids on private land.	The Town allows ADUs (tiny houses?) as of right.	The Town allows home occupation as of right.

OPTIONS	The Town allows multifamily dwellings with development standards and/or design guidelines.	The Town creates policies to adapt to climate change.	The Town allows new/ missing uses.	The Town creates a community gathering space (senior center/ park/activities).
	The Town promotes or requires affordable housing.	The Kitteredge Property is developed as proposed.	The Town establishes public transit/ adds FRTA.	The Town increases services for seniors.
	The Town prioritizes keeping the tax rate as low as possible.	The Town puts resources to arts/ culture/history.	The Town puts more resources to enforcing traffic laws.	The Town restarts the paper newsletter to all households who want it.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What themes stood out to you as you read through the collected data?

Which additional scenarios did you think of based on the comments?

Based on the comments, can you see a “Story for Leverett” from a vantage point of ten years from now?

Should the Town...

...install sewer along Route 63?

...**not** install sewer along Route 63?

Reasons for:

Reasons for:

Collected input: data or quotes

Collected input: data or quotes

Reasons against:

Reasons against:

Collected input: data or quotes

Collected input: data or quotes

Comments/Questions

Comments/Questions

Should the Town...

...provide additional services to help seniors age in place?

Reasons for:

Collected input: data or quotes

Which services are needed?

Collected input: data or quotes

Reasons against:

Collected input: data or quotes

How should they be funded?

Collected input: data or quotes

Comments/Questions

Minutes from Comprehensive Planning Steering Group meetings 11/20/23 & 11/27/2023
unanimously approved by Steering Committee on 1/15/24.

11/20/2023

Attendees: Emily & Ewan Innes (Innes Associates), Nicole Vajda, Jenny Daniel, Andy Vlock, Bob Weitzman, Tim Shores, Kimberly VanWagner, Matt Boucher, Silas Ball, David Henion, Isaiah Robison, Arlyn Diamond

Not in attendance: Gary Gruber, Jim Field

1. Vote on values discussed previous meeting: passed unanimously

2. Minutes from last meeting: passed unanimously

3. Updates from small group discussions/tabling

4. Lookback at 10/17 Data Walk

* Innes Associates felt we did very well, got good input, would change the maps based on the layout next time

* Currently, online questionnaire has 200 replies, comparable to a much larger survey size at this stage

5. Looking forward to 12/6

* Innes Asso. reviews Framework handout explaining process with the prompt: Should the Town....

* Group spends a few minutes working on ideas in small teams/individually

We name the following as possible scenarios:

* Should the Town...improve and promote bike lanes throughout town?

* Should the Town...promote tourism and support cultural/historic sites to improve economic opportunity?

* Should the Town...reduce costs by regionalizing more town services, including building coalitions with Shutesbury for schools and vendor contracts?

* Should the Town...change zoning to promote a commercial corridor, including a gas station, along Route 63 to attract economic opportunity?

* Should the Town...install microgrids and electric charging vehicle stations and invest in town-owned public utility of electricity similar to town-owned broadband?

* Should the Town...commit the resources needed to fix Rattlesnake Gutter so it is a viable road for vehicular traffic?

* Should the Town... create a zoning overlay to allow for the community lifestyle development being introduced to Planning for the unused Yankee Candle Kittridge property on Juggler Meadow Road

* Should the town...encourage cell phone towers to provide better coverage?

* Should the town...promote the creation/use of a sundry station and/or tool shed to reduce purchase prices by buying in bulk?

*Should the Town...change zoning to promote affordable housing units?

6. Values discussion (pic by Andy needed here)

7. Upcoming meetings: Pre-applicant meeting at Planning Board regarding Juggler Meadow on 12/13 and Emily presenting on 1/10/24

8. Adjourn 8:35pm; next meeting 11/27/23 Monday to prep for 12/6 event

**STEERING GROUP
MEETING #10**

TOWN OF LEVERETT

NOVEMBER 27, 2023

MEMORANDUM

To Comprehensive Plan Steering Group
From Emily Keys Innes, AICP, LEED AP ND, President
Date November 27, 2023
Project 22111 – Leverett Comprehensive Plan
Subject Draft Stations for December 6 community meeting
Cc:

The stations below are our proposed stations for the second community meeting on December 6. We would like to have two-three additional “Should the Town” questions for stations 2-7 for a total of four questions per station. We look forward to your thoughts!

- Station 1: Zoning and relationship to comp plan
 - Board 1: Information only: why are we talking about zoning?
- Station 2: Affordable housing and housing
 - Board 1: Data on Leverett’s housing population and what is currently allowed by district
 - Board 2:
 - Should the Town...invest in public affordable housing?
 - Should the Town...allow a wider range of housing types in residential districts?
- Station 3: Town services and aging in place
 - Board 1: Data on Leverett’s existing Town services
 - Board 2:
 - Should the Town...invest in providing additional public utilities?
 - Should the Town...provide additional services to help seniors age in place?
- Station 4: Recreation – Rattlesnake Gutter, Leverett Pond
 - Board 1: Data on existing recreational options in Leverett
 - Board 2:
 - Should the Town...reopen Rattlesnake Gutter to traffic?
 - Should the Town...improve access to trails and recreational and cultural resources?

- Station 5: Route 63 – uses and infrastructure
 - Map
 - Board 1: Should the Town...rezone the Route 63 corridor as a commercial district?

- Station 6: Centers: Town Center, North Leverett, and Moore’s Corner
 - Maps
 - Board 1: Should the Town...rezone the district to allow wider commercial uses?

- Station 7: Municipal Resources operating, capital, volunteer, staff)
 - Board 1: Data on Leverett’s budget and tax rates and how a comprehensive plan relates to the municipal budget and other resources.
 - Board 2:
 - Should the Town...further investigate regionalization of services?
 - Should the Town...prioritize keeping the tax rate as low as possible?

- Station 8: Kittredge Estate –
 - Map
 - Board 1: What is there now and what is proposed?
 - Board 2: How does this potential project relate to a comp plan (with map)?
 - Board 3: What is the Town’s role and what is the community’s role in the process?

11/27/23 Minutes from Steering Committee of the Comprehensive Planning Group

In attendance: Silas Ball, Bob Weitzman, Tom Ewing, Nicole Vajda, Andy Vlock, Matt Boucher, Jim Field, Kimberly VanWagner, Tim Shores

Absent: Jenny Daniel, David Henion, Gary Gruber

Meeting start: 6:35 pm

We have a quorum and let's get started

Small discussions updates:

Kim and Nicole and Tim coordinating with Principal Annie to talk about project with staff at LES; Kim will confirm with Annie and hand off to Nicole and Tim

Jim has been having meetings all over; Cowls family members and other targeted stakeholders, getting surveys filled out

Tim passed around a handout of people who on surveys said they would be interested in being contacted

Other outreach:

Tim & postcards:

New mailer went out, some houses in Leverett served by other post offices, so the mass mailer may not reach them

Getting the newsletter back is a big thing for people that Bob and others have talked to

Discussion: Other learnings from small groups/tabling/door-to-door work

Concerns that Leverett zoning unnecessarily restricts development

Concerns about the accountability of boards and committees; the Leverett volunteer committee structure can sometimes seem capricious or based on the individual serving; special permitting process unclear and sometimes if a committee or review board doesn't have quorum, the person seeking a permit has to delay

Discussion: Values challenges in Leverett

Environmental stewardship has been the primary or central value of Leverett; some people suggest that it's too much; but Leverett did not want to be overdeveloped like Hadley/UMass; so at each juncture of boards and committee decision-making, environmental stewardship vs. less regulation has been the conflict in Leverett

Protecting our areas (in Leverett) may cause other environmental concerns elsewhere...

If you want to build here, even if we had less regulation, we have other limitations - no transportation, no sewer or water system, no buses, no utilities. Leverett has an unjustified maybe fear of development.

How do we know the trade-offs of decisions about regulation or less regulation? How do we balance renewable energy, land conversation, tillable land vs. cut trees, etc.?

Jim - we only have to ask - there are many experts and people who will help in the valley; UMass resource to help us understand more and learn

Going through the proposed Stations from Emily:

Communication with Town Government is key to making government work better for everyone; came up with COA research last year; people not knowing where to find info; people not knowing about resources.

Let's go through the proposed topics one by one and get changes to Emily tomorrow:

See attached "20231127 Draft Stations for Review kv edits" as part of this record, showing the changes we recommend to Emily; sent to Emily 11/28 and some of our discussions/concerns.

Topic: Juggler Meadow Estate Development

How should we handle this at the Data Walk on 12/6?

Debate about whether to include a scenario board.

Pros - we have already alluded to it in our outreach materials (household mailer sent week ago with info about the questionnaire); it's really happening so we should help community figure out a role and start discussions. We want to be transparent.

Cons - it may or may not really be happening; we don't know enough; we are not the right group to position the discussion right now; all the issues as general we already are covering in other areas. Developer could pull the proposal.

Call for a vote on whether to include JM as a station at Data Walk in some way, or even mention potential development: did not pass. 3 yay, 4 nay.

Call for a vote on whether to provide a small handout that reads something like: Interested in Learning more about proposed Juggler Meadow development? Please come to the next Planning Board meeting at Town Hall on 12/13 at 7:30pm: pass unanimously.

Meeting adjourned: 8:48pm

Links to Data Walk Plus (Scenarios & Maps); held on 12/6/23

- [Leverett Community Vision Meeting 2 - Data Walk Future Scenario Boards](#)
- [Leverett Community Vision Meeting 2 - Map Tiles](#)

**STEERING GROUP
MEETING #11**

TOWN OF LEVERETT
JANUARY 15, 2024

Leverett Comprehensive Planning Steering Group
Minutes from the 1/15/24 meeting

Attendees: Jim Field, Gary Gruber, Arlyn Diamond, Andy Vlock, Nicole Vajda, Isaiah Robison, Bob Weitzman, Jenny Daniell, Kimberly VanWagner, Silas Ball; guests Tim Shores and Tom Ewing

Absent: Matt Boucher, David Henion

Meeting opened: 6:35pm

1. Previous minutes approved by unanimous consent
2. Discussion on December community data walk
 - a. Guessing about 50 people attended
 - b. People seemed engaged and interested, the format was educational and casual
 - c. Dropping in is a useful format, friendly but maybe not optimal for gathering data; however, it is a good way to capture unusual/outlier data points [quote from one attendee: "I don't want Leverett to become a wealthy enclave" vs. some people even on committee feel the town is already on its way to that vision]
 - d. But maybe the next event can be more discussion-based and accommodate different learning styles (not all text)
 - e. The Juggler Meadow stuff didn't hijack the event
 - f. The mapping format/walk around was better than the first event.
 - g. Other learnings: small group discussions with a focused topic have been better than larger or more general discussions; so, maybe next event should be more topical/limited in scope; maybe next event will be smaller, but more precise
3. Small Group meetings discussion
 - a. Request from Emily and group leadership to be more careful and consistent about documenting these interactions - send to Emily and copy leadership as soon as possible after event, not sending handwritten notes but using a format that more easily can be incorporated into ongoing document
 - b. Maybe have Emily train us in what she wants/needs, make sure to have worksheets and then be able to type those up
 - c. Even if what people say doesn't seem important, it may be and we need to send to Emily everything that people are telling us
 - d. Are the existing worksheets for dialogue still relevant? We may need a revamp or are they still leading to other questions that are interesting?
 - e. We could use the results of the first questionnaire as discussion topics and then record that discussion and the resulting follow up questions people are bound to have
 - f. The conversations with others are important - we are stimulating people, getting them to engaged, have dialogue - we are laying the groundwork for community involvement and understanding that will be critical to any changes we advocate for in the future and for the future implementation of the plan
4. What about small group presentations/info sessions on select topics? Eg. environmental stewardship, climate resilience, affordable housing, zoning, aging in Leverett, rural character, recreation
 - a. We need Emily to create fact sheets so we can have informed discussions

- b. Scheduling topical meetings - do we have the capacity for this?
- c. How about a library series, civic education, with experts such as UMASS faculty?
- d. Or sitting open hours for 2 hours on Saturday at library for casual conversations about certain topics such as economic development, ADUs, what other towns are doing and what is allowed?

The group debates:

- i. Topical info sessions sounds like a later project; right now we need to focus on the next community event, explaining what we learned so far from the questionnaire, and describe next steps/where we are going
- ii. What is our timeline now? What do we understand about the survey?
 - 1. 1/31 Emily presents to planning board on the survey
 - 2. 2/12 Emily meets with our group to plan next event
 - 3. 2/28 Next community event: Forecasting?
 - 4. Feb - Mar: wrap up data analysis and begin drafting plan
 - 5. 4/30: last day for 2nd questionnaire submissions (if we even do a 2nd questionnaire)
 - 6. 6/30 Deadline of comprehensive plan submitted to planning board
- iii. Rushing to finish by deadline vs. creating a sound document discussion:
 - 1. Our need to understand the survey results before making decisions;
 - 2. What obligation do we have to get this done by 6/30;
 - 3. The plan as a tool to codify zoning recommendations and town values

5. Action Steps

- a. Jenny and Andy will request Emily make a video for us summarizing the results of the questionnaire, information sheets on select topics from those listed above
- b. Let's wrap up the "listening" portion of our overall timeline by end of January, and make plans for the next stage
- c. Once we have the info from the questionnaire and a sense of what the listening sessions have yielded, let's prioritize the topics we will focus on in the plan
- d. The next Community Event should be a "gong show" or "speed dating" type; "Leap Into Leverett" more of a deep-dive of what's implied by certain decisions; eg. allowing ADUs vs environmental conservations/clean water/septic use etc.

Meeting concluded 8:15pm

**STEERING GROUP
MEETING #12**

TOWN OF LEVERETT
FEBRUARY 5, 2024

2/5/24 Minutes from Steering Group for Comprehensive Planning

Attendees:

Jim Field, Matt Boucher, Jenny Daniell, Arlyn Diamond, Isaiah Robison, Gary Gruber, Kimberly VanWagner, Andy Vlock; guest Tom Ewing

Not in attendance: Silas Ball, Bob Weitzman, David Henion

Meeting open: 6:35pm

1. Unanimous vote on minutes from 1/15/24 meeting
2. Preparing for Emily Innes consultant meeting with group scheduled for 2/12 to plan 2/28 event

Discussion:

- Recap of Emily's presentation to the Planning Board on the questionnaire results and the history of zoning in Leverett
 - Vast majority of respondents were 65+
 - Environmental stewardship (clean water & soil) was highly rated by respondents
 - Affordable housing was also highly favored (what do people mean by affordable housing)
 - Are affordable housing and environmental stewardship at odds with each other - more houses, more septics, more well water being used has environmental impacts for years to come
 - Leverett has pretty restrictive zoning to help protect and preserve the environment, but at the cost of growth
 - Do we need even more protective zoning?
 - The land available for development is very small
 - The economic opportunities in terms of commercial corridor do not look like a promising solution
 - At the same time, Leverett has a culture of saying "no" to any new development/economic opportunity and this is not a solutions-mindset
- Preparing for Emily & the upcoming event
 - Purpose: Framing the Trade Offs
 - Format: Small discussion groups at tables with set topics, maybe people chose or are told which topic to sit at
 - Proposed topics:
 - Senior Services
 - Affordable housing
 - Rural Character
 - Drinking water
 - Recreation
 - Climate resilience
 - ADU's
 - Discussion on proposed topics
 - Unanimous vote to recommend the following to the consultant:
 1. Each table will have a worksheet.

2. The worksheet will have the shared values at the top for ALL topics (same values for ALL).
 - ***The values must include Environmental Stewardship and Community and Rural Character as part of a checklist for the group to go back to after their discussion.
3. The worksheets will then have the following sections which pertain to each topic:
 - a. Challenges/problems
 - b. Relevant information, existing conditions, survey results, regulations/pending regulations, history, etc.
 - c. Suggested relevant options/solutions
 - Aging in Leverett
 - Affordability in Leverett
 - Climate Resiliency in Leverett
 - Includes clean water & soil,
 - Environmental Concerns, and
 - Environment as Resources
 - Recreation in Leverett
 - Includes wildlife corridors,
 - Hunting,
 - Trail maintenance &
 - Four-wheeler access
 - Recreation field & open spaces
 - Economic Opportunity in Leverett
 - Includes ADU's and
 - Supporting small businesses

Next Steps: the co-chairs and coordinator will meet with the consultant via phone on 2/8 to share these decisions. The consultant should be at the next meeting 2/12/24.

Meeting adjourned: 8:26pm

**STEERING GROUP
MEETING #13**

TOWN OF LEVERETT

FEBRUARY 12, 2024

2/12/24 Minutes from the steering group for the Leverett Comprehensive Plan

Attendees: Jenny Daniell, Bob Weitzman, Arlyn Diamond, Matt Boucher, Andy Vlock, Isaiah Robison, Silas Ball, Kimberly VanWagner, Jim Field; guest Tom Ewing; consultant Emily Innes
Not in attendance: David Henion, Gary Gruber, Nicole Vajda

- Meeting called to order 6:32pm
- No minutes to approve yet, but when they go out, include the data from Emily from the questionnaire (attached)
- Emily introduces her revised format suggested for the 2/28 event
 - Attendees play the game, preparing for the year 2040
 - 6 tables at each of two time slots (3 to 5; 6 to 8), with 2 tables in each section of town hall
 - Emily will send sample flier
- Group discusses the game; makes suggestions for revisions, including
 - posing firmer recommendations based on the data we've gathered so far and based on Emily's expertise;
 - making more clear what using an "age-friendly" or "environmental stewardship" lens for zoning changes would look like;
 - eliminating the voting tokens;
 - making the tradeoffs more clear;
 - using less graphics and more narrative descriptions;
 - considering adding an estimation of financial cost to any recommendations.
- The group also requested clarifying a few key notes [not all for 2/28 but to be included in the notes as needing updating]:
 - the parcel of developable land that is not accessible by public byway;
 - the shelter for emergencies at the school vs. CORI concerns and backup power;
 - more descriptions of what water storage looks like for fire;
 - the cost of Franklin County Transit Authority membership for our town.

TASKS:

Emily will work on the game and prep for 2/28.

Group members need to state if they can be facilitators, note-takers, or help in another way.

Kimberly will work with Town for the Robocall.

Matt and Andy will work with the signage (marquee) as they did last time.

Kimberly will make a pre-registration sheet.

Arlyn will help with phone banking.

EVERYONE will post to Leverett Connects and help hang fliers around town.

At the event, Silas will hold the iPad and connect the folks who are at home if we have a remote option.

STEERING GROUP MEETING #14

TOWN OF LEVERETT
MARCH 11, 2024

This Steering Group Meeting did not provide any notes to the Consultant.

STEERING GROUP MEETING #15

TOWN OF LEVERETT

APRIL 23, 2024

This Steering Group Meeting did not provide any notes to the Consultant.



40R Merrimac Street, Suite 201 W
Newburyport, MA 01950

MEMORANDUM

To Planning Board, Town of Leverett
Comprehensive Plan Steering Group

From Emily Keys Innes, AICP, LEED AP ND, President

Date April 5, 2024

Project 22111 - Leverett

Subject Annotated Outline for the Comprehensive Plan

Cc: Ewan Innes, Innes Associates
Eric Halvorsen, AICP, RKG Associates
Tracy Adamski, AICP, Tighe & Bond

Annotated Outline

Cover

- Title
- DRAFT May 2024 (Second draft will be June 2024)
- Town seal
- Team logos
- Background photo(s)

Table of Contents

- Planning Board (list of members)
- Select Board (list of members)
- Steering Group (list of members)
- Special Acknowledgments (ask Planning Board)
- Consultant team (Innes Associates, RKG Associates, Tighe & Bond)
- Cover photo credits, if needed

Table of Figures and Tables

- Maps (tie to Section 81D; some topics may be combined. Consider 11x17 fold-outs)
 - Town's zoning map
 - Current land use
 - Housing

- Economic development
 - Circulation and Transit
 - Location of Community Facilities/ Historic and Cultural Resources
 - Open Space and Recreation (review current OSRP)
 - Protected Land and Natural Resources
- Future land use map (also 11x17 foldout)
 - Demographic and economic tables
 - Photos/diagrams
 - Other (TBD by content)

Executive Summary (2–4-page graphic spread or stand-alone poster)

- Community values
- Community goals
- Strategies – diagrams and map
- Explanation of the plan document

1. Introduction (4 pages)

- 1.1 About Leverett’s Comprehensive Plan
- 1.2 Summary of the Planning Process
- 1.3 Comprehensive Planning: Land Use and Zoning
- 1.4 Comprehensive Planning: Community Engagement

2. Existing Plans and Recommendations (2-4 page spread – see Scituate)

- 2.1 Planning Timeline (Past plans to current process)
- 2.2 Existing Recommendations
- 2.3 Linking Past Plans to Future Actions

3. Planning for the Future (2-4 page spread)

- 3.1 Listening to the Community
 - Community engagement (meetings, small groups, survey)
 - What we learned
- 3.2 Values and Goals
 - Top ten values from the survey
 - Top ten goals from the survey
 - Modifications based on community workshops

4. Impact of Existing Conditions (~4-6 pages per topic – 24-36 pages total)

- 4.1 Demographics
 - Who is here now?

- Who is here in 16 years?
- Needs of an aging population
- 4.2 Economy and Housing
 - Profile of existing housing types
 - Profile of existing businesses
 - What is missing?
 - What is needed?
- 4.3 Projected Impacts of Climate Change
 - Heating/cooling days
 - Precipitation and drought
 - Invasive pests and species
- 4.4 Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater
 - Existing infrastructure
 - Identified concerns
 - Environmental impacts of current strategies
- 4.5 Public Connections (community places and public transit)
 - Existing places
 - Desire for more community interactions
 - Existing transit options
 - Desire for more options/needs of an aging population
- 4.6 Current Zoning and Regulatory Limitations
 - Allowable uses
 - Dimensional restrictions
 - Permitting processes
 - Board of Health and septic systems

5. Strategies and Case Studies (~4-6 pages per topic – 16-24 pages total)

5.1 Strategies for a Healthy Community

- What is a healthy community?
- Aging rural communities (case studies)
- Age Diversity
- Income Diversity
- Community Gathering Spaces
- Town Services

5.2 Strategies for a Healthy Economy

- What is a healthy economy?
- Living and working in a rural community (case studies)
- Housing Affordability and Diversity
- Rural Businesses
- Impact on Municipal Budget

5.3 Strategies for a Healthy Environment

- What is a healthy environment?
- Impact of climate change on people, wildlife, plants, and infrastructure (case studies)
- Environmental impact of managing water (case studies)
- Climate Resiliency
- Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater

5.4 Strategies for Land Use

- Zoning for a Rural Community (case studies)
- Zoning Changes for Leverett (Recommendations)
- Public Transportation (Evaluation of local options)
- Community Values and Future Development (How community values can influence development standards)

6. Next Steps (~8-10 pages)

- 6.1 Continuing Community Conversations
- 6.2 Prioritization based on final community workshop
- 6.3 Planning Board and Zoning Changes
- 6.4 Other Roles and Responsibilities
- 6.5 Options for Additional Studies
- 6.6 Measuring Success

7. Resources for Implementation (~10 pages)

- 7.1 Financing Resources
- 7.2 Data Sources

Photo credits

Standard back cover

**STEERING GROUP
MEETING #16**

TOWN OF LEVERETT

JUNE 4, 2024

6/4/2024

Steering Group for the Leverett Comprehensive Plan

In attendance:

Nicole Vajda, Bob Weitzman, Arlyn Diamond, Andy Vlock, Kimberly VanWagner, Gary Gruber, Silas Ball

Absent: Isaiah Robison, David Henion, Jenny Daniell, Matt Boucher, James Field

Meeting called to order 6:45pm

1. Recap of what happened at the previous meeting on 5/23/2024. No minutes presented for approval from 5/23/24.
2. Decided next steps will be drafting a letter to the Planning Board and a letter to the consultant Emily Innes. Drafting ideas during this meeting; Kimberly will type and send around, individuals can also comment to Emily by the 6/10/24 deadline if possible.

Ideas for the letter to the Planning Board:

- Emphasize the remarkable response rate for the survey and the challenges of pleasing everyone in a representative democracy
- Acknowledge the challenges of the diversity of opinions and interpretation of values, and the presumed demographic bias of older retirees inherent in the data from in-person exercises (data walks, tabletop)
- Recommend the next steps based on the comprehensive plan, including adoption of final draft
 - Using the next year of community conversations to focus on the top tiers of actions and inviting in the related committees/boards required to help enact changes
 - Prioritizing the floodplain management/climate resiliency, transportation, and housing aspects of the plan in particular, as these intersect with larger political changes at the state/federal level that we must address as a town
- Request official end to the steering group and a pizza party

Ideas for the letter to Emily Innes, consultant

- CRITICAL: CHANGE THE TERMINOLOGY OF “DO, EXPLORE, DISCUSS, RETHINK” TO “TOP TIER, MIDDLE TIER, LOWER TIER, LOWEST TIER” [especially take out the idea of “do” because it sounds like a mandate]
- CRITICAL: page numbers need to be larger and not white-on-black; very challenging for older eyes to see
- CRITICAL: quotes need to be in quotations
- P 108 - add to barriers for ADUs - septic regulations and community understanding of what more housing means for environmental protection, the involvement of Board of Health and Conservation Committee [this may also help to show how/why the tension of housing vs environment seems to show up in the values/goals [environmental protections as top priority from survey, but then housing is the top “do” in the chart from the tabletop - this contradiction must be teased out more and then expert Innes advice needed!]

- CRITICAL: please create a visual timeline of the recommended “top tier, middle tier” steps for the next 10 years/recommended rollout
- CRITICAL: Add the key to the charts so easier to read/understand what values/goals, etc relate to; or at least at the top of that section; very challenging to always go back to the beginning
- CRITICAL: move the recommended timeline into the Executive summary; move all historic data to back of the report, we want less of a chronological story of how we got here and more of an actionable document
- Correct many typos; submit a final draft for final round of corrections before the “final final” version; chart page 102 the numbers for units vs parcels doesn’t add up for condos and two-family homes
- Add description of the “2040” imagining exercise part of the tabletop exercise to lend more context to the results and explain the purpose of the “2040” idea [p 32 doesn’t say anything about the 2040 exercise and we are not sure how the priorities changed because of this imagining]
- Specifically name the available, buildable parcels remaining in town
- Specifically add more information on climate change/resiliency/air conditioning grants to the resources page
- Was there existing conditions analysis of climate change (e.g. increased floods/heat/ticks) that could be added?
- Note the demographic bias that may have skewed the choices became priorities in the tabletop exercise - specifically here we are thinking of #18, which we still hear/see as
- We didn’t see solar setbacks, native land givebacks, gray water, compostable toilets, important for the community based on the survey data but which didn’t seem to register as priority for the participants in the tabletop exercise

All participants in the meeting agreed unanimously on these ideas, although Silas left the meeting at 7:15pm, thereby ending quorum, which was noted before each vote.

Meeting adjourned 7:40pm.
Minutes by Kimberly VanWagner

