

SHOULD THE TOWN...

further investigate regionalization and more cooperative use agreements with other towns in the area to improve services even if they may not decrease costs?

Reasons For:

I'm concerned about our town being too isolated from neighboring towns and the region. I want to see proactive effort to regionalize municipal services. Our town needs to adopt more of a coalition mindset with other towns.

Leverett needs to pursue regionalization of its public schools, fire department, police department.

Reasons Against:

I think that as a bedroom community for Amherst to Northampton it is vitally important we support the elementary school, I do not think it should be regionalized...

COMMENTS / QUESTIONS

prioritize keeping taxes as low as possible, even if it may decrease services?

Reasons For:

Taxes are too high for fixed income people.

[Too] High taxes , less money for schools, more for fire and police

Continually increasing property taxes will make Leverett unaffordable to most people.

Town has become too progressive resulting in tax and spend mentality. We must learn to live within our means and not push our spending wishes on all. Lower tax burden will benefit all.

Reasons Against:

Too much focus on land conservation and too little on revenue, new homes or attracting businesses. Need to stabilize our taxes and not by cutting budgets. We need to increase revenue and affordable housing.

24 hour fire staffing for medical coverage for aging population

COMMENTS / QUESTIONS

prioritize reducing expenses, even if it may decrease services?

Reasons For:

Supporting the school system requires most of our tax dollars (over 90%?) while the town's population is aging and most people do not directly benefit from the school. Without decreasing the quality of education, how can people who don't have school age children get more direct benefit from property taxes paid?

Nonsense spending must stop. For example, spending \$11 million dollars for a bridge to a discontinued road is foolish

Reasons Against:

The community is aging and we need 24 hour emergency medical response

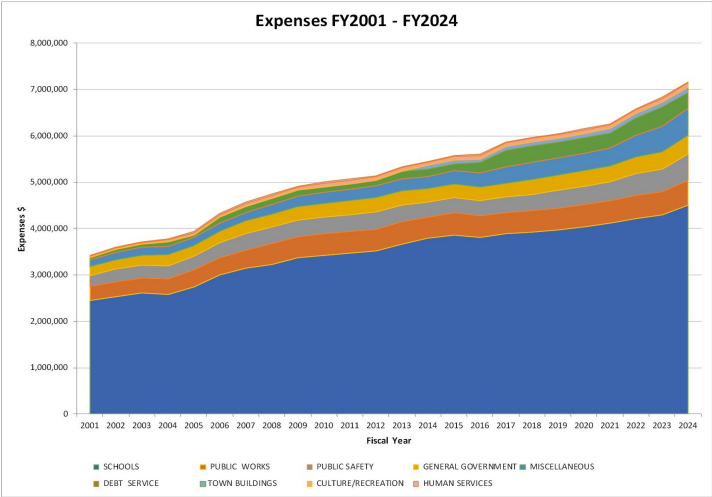
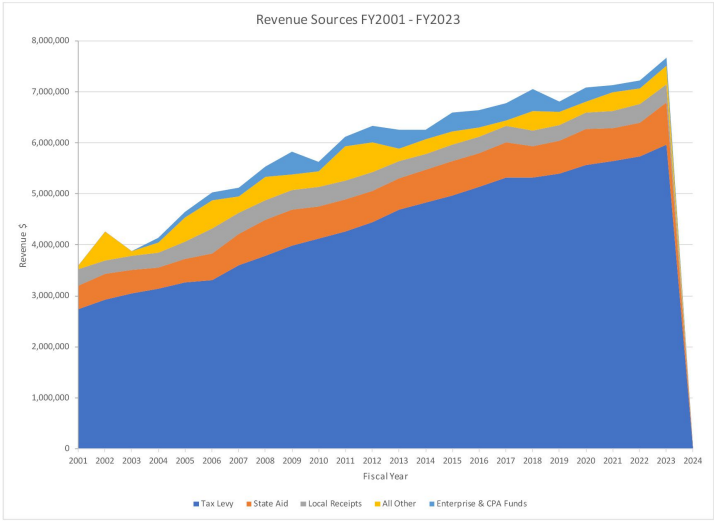
COMMENTS / QUESTIONS

# 7. LEVERETT'S MUNICIPAL FINANCES

## Leverett's Financial Background

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	\$35,114,320	\$562,531	16.02
Property			
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



## MUNICIPAL REVENUE SOURCES

### Property Taxes:

The amount that can be raised from 2.5% of the Town’s assessed property values. Increases in property taxes from year to year are limited to 2.5% (excluding any new construction/improvements in existing properties).

### State Aid:

Monies provided the state to every city, town and regional school district.

### Local Receipts:

This comprises motor vehicle excise taxes, local excise taxes (meals, room tax etc) plus department fees, permits fees etc.

### Other Available Funds:

This comprises the stabilization fund (“rainy day” fund), free cash (surplus revenue, unexpended funds, outstanding property tax collections) and other funds (gifts, federal & state grants etc)

### Federal & State Grants:

Federal & State grant funds for use with specific projects (emergency management, public works, community development etc). Funds are either directed to specific projects or line items and may not be part of the general revenue.

## HOW YOUR TAX BILL IS CALCULATED (FY23)

(a) Total Amount To Be Raised	\$6,837,954
(b) Total Estimated Other Revenues	\$1,437,892
(c) Tax Levy (a - b)	\$5,400,062
(d) Residential Class %	98.8523%
(e) Amount to be raised from Residential Class (c * d)	\$5,338,085
(f) Total Residential Assessed Valuation	\$333,213,800
(g) Tax Rate (c / f * 1000)	\$16.02
(h) Average Single Family Home Assessed Value	\$415,824
(i) Average Single Family Tax Bill (h / 1000 * g)	\$6,661.50



# TOWN CENTERS: WHAT WE HAD AND WHAT WE HAVE NOW

## Leverett Town Center

Then



Old Post Office and Gas Station, Montague Rd

<https://www.leverett.ma.us/gallery/11/35/Old-Post-Office-with-Gas-Station>

Now



## North Leverett

Then



Chapin's Store, North Leverett

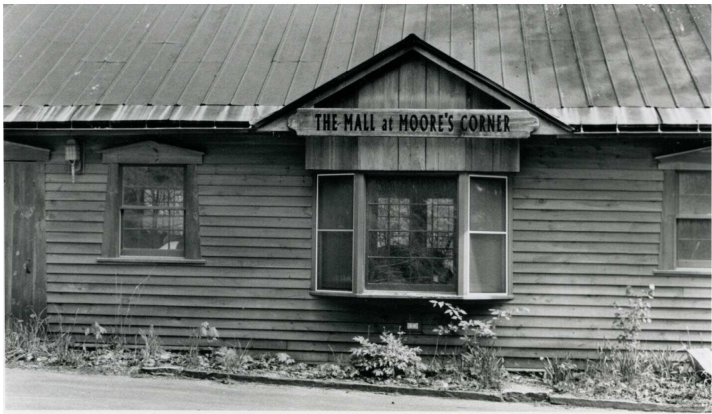
Kramer, Susan. Chapin's Grocery store: Front entrance to the store with Mobilegas gasoline pumps, ca. May 1975. Kramer-Mathews Collection (PH 080). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries

Now



## Moore's Corner

Then



The Mall at Moore's Corner originally LaClaire's store

Mange, Arthur P. The Mall at Moore's Corner, 2010. Arthur P. Mange Photograph Collection (PH 044). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries

Now



Should we be trying to return to the past by allowing more commercial uses?

# SHOULD THE TOWN...

reopen Rattlesnake Gutter to vehicular traffic?

Reasons For:

Would improve access to Moore's Corner from the town center

Reasons Against:

I hope Leverett preserves its few remaining dirt roads as dirt. I'd like to see Leverett maintain Rattlesnake Gutter as the valuable resource that it is. It needs water bars and some further engineering to prevent future washouts like we experienced last year. Its a fabulous place.

improve access to trails?

Reasons For:

Make it easier for residents and visitors to find and follow the trails increasing their use and enjoyment.

Reasons Against:

Who will maintain the trails when they are damaged by increased foot traffic?

allow more forms of recreation on Town-owned land such as four-wheeling, snow mobiles, hunting and fishing?

Reasons For:

Keeping hunting available on public land to prevent and over population of deer, bear and other wildlife

...Restriction[s] on some of this land has limited or reduced good management activities. in the past private clubs such as snowmobile and 4 wheeler groups would spend considerable time clearing old logging roads and maintaining bridges throughout some of the forested areas. This allowed much better access for hikers and cross country skiers. [Restricting] These activities along with hunting restriction have negatively affected these properties.

Reasons Against:

Who will maintain the trails when they are damaged by traffic?  
Will there be an increase in noise and traffic?  
Are there conflicts with having snowmobiles on the roads?

## COMMENTS / QUESTIONS

invest in its cultural resources?

Reasons For:

I would like to see Leverett develop more possibilities for arts and cultural projects.



SHOULD THE TOWN...

invest in providing additional public utilities such as solar solutions for the Public Safety Complex, School and Library?

Reasons For:

It is important that any and all Solar Energy development be required to serve Leverett's energy needs.

Reasons Against:

Clear cutting forests for solar development.  
Planning for climate resiliency/flooding

Forests are a treasure; concerned about losing them to development, especially solar arrays which are a travesty.

invest in improving cell phone and wifi service throughout the town?

Reasons For:

Ability to choose among any of the cell phone carriers. We are limited by our location in town.

Reasons Against:

Capital costs in an already restricted budget

invest money to improve Town communications?

Reasons For:

Improving communications with town bodies for citizens so they know what is possible, current efforts, changes in services, etc.. Due to changes in demands over the past decades the structures of town govt. no longer are able to keep us as informed as we need and would like to be.

I think it is an error to no longer mail out the Town newsletter. I used to read every word when it came in the mail but I have never gone online to read it.

Reasons Against:

Cost of mailing paper communications to residents?  
Cost of updating and maintaining website?

provide additional services to help seniors age in place and what would those be?

COMMENTS / QUESTIONS

### 3. TOWN OF LEVERETT: EXISTING TOWN SERVICES

#### UTILITIES

##### Broadband and Phone

- » LeverettNet through South Hadley Electric Light (post-2022)

##### Electricity

- » Leverett Community Choice Power Supply Program (Dynergy Energy Services)
- » Eversource

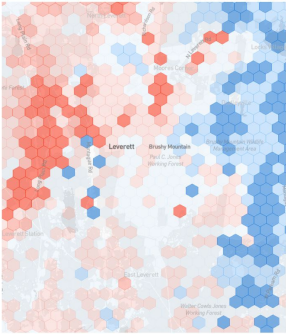
##### Natural Gas

- » No service within Leverett

##### Cell Phone Service Scores

(Coverage Critic.com)

- » AT&T (7.8/10 - blue hexagon)
- » T-Mobile (7.4/10 - pink hexagon)
- » Verizon (5.5/10 -red hexagon)



#### WATER AND WASTEWATER

##### Water

- » 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
- » 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

#### PUBLIC WORKS

- » 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

#### COMMUNITY-RELATED SERVICES

- » Leverett Elementary School (preschool - 6th grade)
- » Leverett Library
- » Transfer Station
- » Elder Services
- » Police
- » Fire



# SHOULD THE TOWN...

reduce barriers to new construction/housing to improve housing opportunities and increase economic diversity?

## Reasons For:

- Current barriers include:
- » Prohibition on multi-family housing and additional dwelling units in all districts,
  - » Difficult special permit process
  - » Lot and frontage restrictions
  - » Aquifer protections
  - » Board of Health regulations exceeding what Title 5 requires

## Reasons Against:

- Zoning to prevent hills from becoming built up with McMansions, windmills, and other eyesores. Zoning to put solar farms in old landfills, gravel pits and other discrete areas
- Sprawl should be prevented and not by allowing it at town center
- Protection of the farm land and forests. Not allowing large-scale development.

# COMMENTS / QUESTIONS

allow a wider range of housing types in residential areas?

## Reasons For:

- ...I dream of being able to move back to Leverett (I'm currently homeless...) but I doubt I'd ever be able to afford it
- I would support an increase in housing stock if it were for low income housing. I don't want to see more affluent developments/subdivisions

## Reasons Against:

- I wouldn't want Leverett to lose its rural character and become 'slick'. I'm concerned about new houses being built in public views with extremely modern designs and excess lighting...such as bottom of Cave Hill Road.

# COMMENTS / QUESTIONS

increase housing density to increase the tax base?

## Reasons For:

- I would like to see low income housing offered, so that Leverett doesn't evolve into a wealthy enclave.
- Too much focus on land conservation and too little on revenue, new homes or attracting businesses. Need to stabilize our taxes and not by cutting budgets. We need to increase revenue and affordable housing.

## Reasons Against:

- Avoid population density. The old-timers (pre-1960) did well in planning.

# COMMENTS / QUESTIONS

## 2. LEVERETT'S HOUSING POPULATION

What Housing types are allowed under the current zoning?

PRINCIPAL RESIDENTIAL USES BY ZONING DISTRICT					
	RV	RR	RO	GB	COM
ONE-FAMILY	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
TWO-FAMILY	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
MULTI-FAMILY (3+ UNITS)	N	N	N	N	N
FLEXIBLE DEVELOPMENT	N	N	SPR	N	N
BOARDING HOUSES	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP

CURRENT RESIDENTIAL HOUSING TYPE POPULATION						
RESIDENTIAL DESCRIPTION	PARCELS	PARCEL %	UNITS	UNIT %	ACRES	ACRE %
Single-Family	655	90.59%	664	84.37%	2,824	92.01%
Condominium	4	0.55%	4	0.51%	11	0.36%
Mobile Home	18	2.49%	18	2.29%	56	1.84%
Two-Family	34	4.70%	71	9.02%	136	4.43%
Three-Family	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Multiple Houses on one parcel	11	1.52%	25	3.18%	51	1.66%
Apartment (Four to Eight Units)	1	0.14%	5	0.64%	2	0.07%

What are the dimension restrictions under the current zoning?

### Minimum Lot Sizes

#### Base

RV and GB have the same dimensions

RO = 200,000SF  
RR = 60,000SF  
RV, GB, COM = 40,000SF

#### Two-Family

RV and GB have the same dimensions

RO (Two-Family) = 200,000SF  
RR (Two-Family) = 90,000  
RV, GB, COM(Two-Family) = 60,000SF

### Minimum Yards / Maximum Coverage

#### Base

Front: 40 feet  
Side: 25 feet  
Rear: 30 feet

RV: 35%  
RR: 35%  
GB/COM: 50%

#### Two-Family

Front: 40 feet  
Side: 30 feet  
Rear: 45 feet

RV: 35%  
RR: 35%  
GB/COM: 50%

Note: Parcels in the Aquifer Overlay District have increased minimum lot size and frontage requirements. The minimum lot size is increased to 120,000SF in the RV, RR, GB and COM districts, the frontage requirements for single family are increased to 300ft in the RV, RR and GB districts, 200ft in COM and 450ft for two family structures in all districts.

RV

RR

RO

GB

COM

Sources: Town of Leverett Zoning By-laws (Sections 2231 and 2340)  
Town of Leverett FY23 Assessors Data



# POTENTIAL LEVERETT TOWN VALUES

Potential town values are listed below. Do you agree with them or not? Do you have other thoughts on what the values should be?

- RESILIENCE
- FREEDOM TO HAVE A SUSTAINABLE COST OF LIVING
- TRANSPARENCY
- SELF-DETERMINATION
- FELLOWSHIP AND COOPERATION
- DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT
- DIVERSITY (ECONOMIC)
- ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP
- FAIRNESS AND ACCESSIBILITY
- COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC ASSETS
- ARTS AND SELF EXPRESSION
- DIVERSITY (ETHNIC)
- TRADITION
- PRESERVATION OF INTERGENERATIONAL KNOWLEDGE
- STABILITY

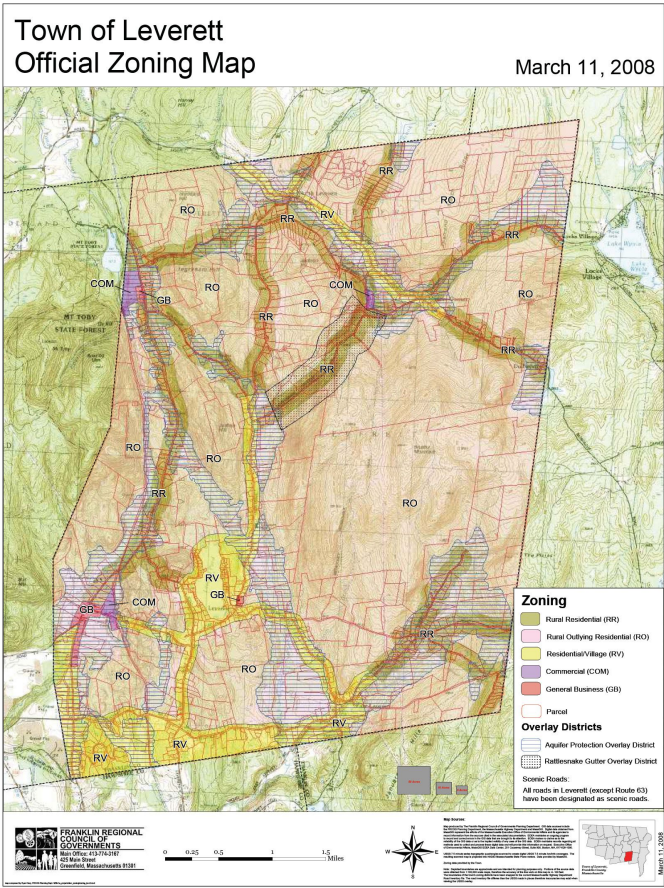
COMMENTS

# ZONING AND HOW IT RELATES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## Why are we talking about Zoning?

### Zoning...

- » **Governs how a community can change.**
  - » Zoning may not match the existing built environment.
  - » Zoning may not match community values for future development/ preservation strategies.
- » **Has a significant impact on the social and economic health of a community.**
  - » Controls on land use impact where people live relative to where they work, shop, learn, and play.
  - » Such controls may also impact how people move from place to place.
- » **Has a significant impact on the physical health of a community.**
  - » Distances between uses can determine whether someone walks, bikes, or drives to another use.
  - » Development standards work with other laws and regulations to address environmental health.



If you have not taken the questionnaire yet, it is available online (link below or QR code to the right) or in paper form tonight and at the Leverett Library or Town Hall.



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LeverettSurvey>

**SURVEY CLOSES DECEMBER 15!**

## CURRENT 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).

## COMMENTS



# SHOULD THE TOWN...

make better use of the its public facilities including the library, public safety, and school buildings for greater public use (such as community gatherings, council on aging)?

## Reasons For:

Desire for community gathering space, rentable event space

Lack of a good community gathering space. A facility with indoor/outdoor spaces, food and drink, and recreational/performance options would be ideal.

## Reasons Against:

Libraries are a thing of the past with the internet and UMass library. Leverett library is only a social gathering place.

prioritize local control of the school or consider more regionalization?

## Reasons For:

Leverett needs to pursue regionalization of its public schools, fire department, police department.

## Reasons Against:

I think that as a bedroom community for Amherst to Northampton it is vitally important we support the elementary school, I do not think it should be regionalized...

# COMMENTS / QUESTIONS

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