

**City of Easthampton, MA
Master Plan Community Survey Results as of March 10, 2007**

The purpose of the Master Plan Community Survey was to guide the efforts of the master plan committee as to the qualities that are currently valued by the residents and how, if at all, they should change over the next 10 to 20 years. The survey addressed questions from the following categories: land use; housing; economic development; natural, cultural and historic resources; open space and recreation; energy and sustainability; education; public service and facilities; and transportation. This summary analyzes the results and attempts to make connections between the focus areas. As of March 10th, the total number of survey entered reached 2679—as more continue to be submitted they will be entered and included in the analysis. Based on 6,854 households (Census 2000) the survey response rate was 39%.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographic questions show that the survey respondents cover a broad slice of the Easthampton population. Long-time residents (greater than 10 years) are in the majority (66.3%) and well distributed over the decades—33.6% of the respondents have lived here for less than 10 years.

Homeowner response was twice that of renters (3:1) based on Census (2000) data that shows Easthampton has 1.5 homeowners for each renter. More Females (55.3%) than Males (44.7%) responded—it should be noted that this question was skipped by 21%, likely an indication that it was filled out by a couple or a household.

See Chart 1 for details on workforce characteristics.

About 68.2% of residents are not retired, or are considered to be a part of the workforce.

The survey showed that only 19.1% work in town. This figure might require some adjustment based on two indicators: the high number of non-respondents (n/a=436) who are most likely non-working retirees and respondents that are retired but who responded “no” to the question. This could potentially increase overall percentage of persons that work in town. Only 5.4% of residents responded that they earn money from home. There were 209 or 8.4% who responded that they were disabled.

All voting precincts were equally represented with 13% to 24.5% of the responses. It should be noted that 28.2% of surveys had no response for this question. This is most likely because the map was illegible.

EDUCATION

Only 19.8% of those surveyed responded that they had children in school: 72.2% Easthampton Public Schools; 19.3% Private School; 16.3% School Choice; and 1.1% Home Schooled. When asked would you be likely to support an override for the construction of a new elementary school and renovation of the high school, 40.1% were not likely, 32.5% likely and 27.4% very likely. There was a non-response rate of only 6.6%; it was observed that some respondents were split on the decision, very likely to

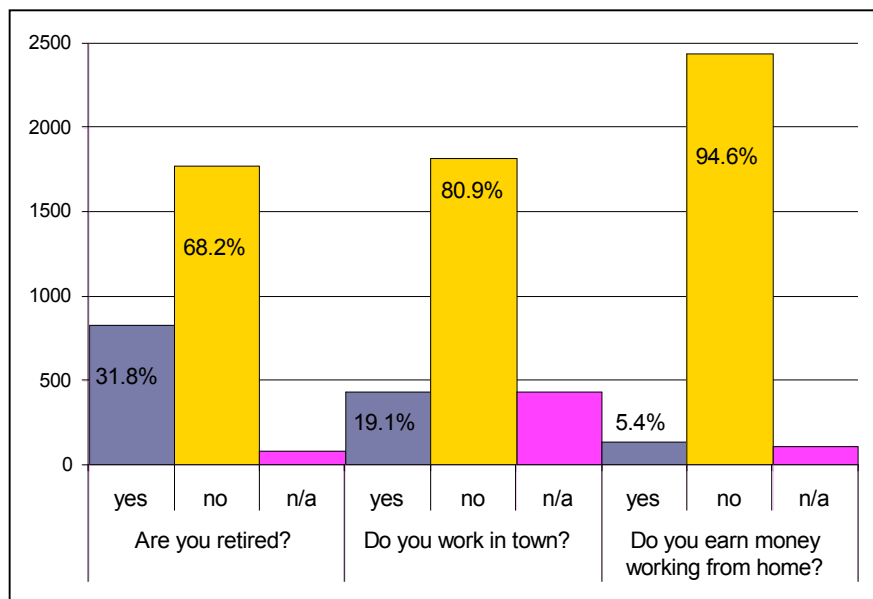


Chart 1. Question 5, 6 and 7 on workforce characteristics.

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support renovation of the high school, but not likely to support construction of a new elementary school.

See Chart 2 for a summary of the responses on options for one of the old elementary school buildings, should a new elementary school be constructed. The responses for “Other”, about 232, vary widely but common suggestions were that it sold be sold, renovated for other uses, or that more information is needed.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Fifty-five percent of respondents “Agree Very Much” that the City should address traffic congestions and busy roads (37% somewhat agree). There was no major consensus on whether the City provides adequate sidewalk in neighborhoods (37% agree very much, 35% somewhat agree and 28% disagree). There was a majority (56%) of residents that somewhat agree that playgrounds and structures are safe, numerous and accessible enough for Easthampton’s young children.

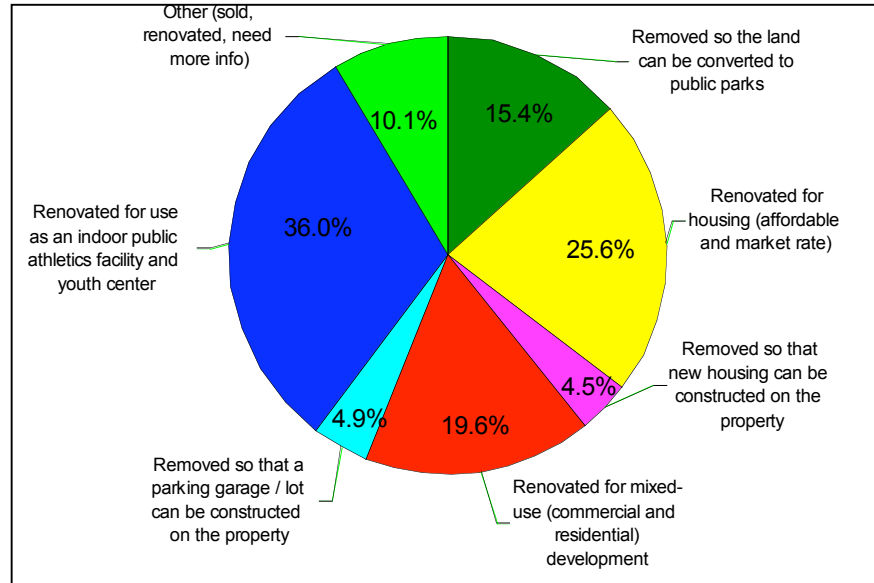


Chart 2. Question 12, options for old elementary schools.

HOUSING

A majority of respondents agreed that a certain percentage of municipal land should be set aside for affordable housing (60.8%) and that the city should be involved in helping property owners keep housing affordable (71.9%). However, only 52.7% thought that current rental prices are a problem for residents. Most residents thought that improving areas of substandard or poor quality housing in the city was either very important (50.4%) or fairly important (40.9%). A similar response was found when asked whether it was important to preserve the character of existing neighborhoods—slightly more people said it was very important (55.1%) to fairly important (37.5%).

NATURAL, CULTURAL, HISTORIC RESOURCES; OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

The majority of respondents (72.9%) would put \$100 (or some fraction of) towards Preservation of farmland and natural resources. The other categories received a similar percentage range from 29% to 38.3%. The total amount will be calculated once all of the surveys have been entered. A majority of respondents (81.1%) said that preserving, maintaining and protecting exiting natural resources in Nonotuck Park is a priority over developing additional recreational facilities. It should be noted that some surveys stated that both should be a priority. Citing that since 1985 developed land has increased by 35%, the majority of respondents found that to be too fast (67.4%) while some found it just right (29.3%) hardly any found it too slow (3.3%). Only 46.5% of respondents had ideas for properties to protect; these will be analyzed once all of the surveys have been entered.

There was strong support for more musical events (57.4%) and theater and film (53.7%) followed by Art in Public Spaces (30.1%), Dance/Performance (20%) and Visual Arts (18.8%). When asked whether the city should support these initiatives—66.3% said yes and 33.7% said no.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

See chart 3 for a relative ranking of the most important actions Easthampton can take to ensure future economic success. "Cleaning and redeveloping and reusing existing industrial sites" was ranked number 1 (58% for 1) and was the only item to receive more than 50%. The least important was "a major retail shopping center" which ranked number 4 (40% for 4). Some items had unclear rankings with at least 33% in more than one; these have been categorized as "1 to 2" or "2 to 3". A total of 32.7% of respondents had a response for how to market Easthampton. These responses will be analyzed for once all surveys have been entered.

Important in terms to the future economic success of Easthampton: (1-Very Important to 4-Not Important at all)	Relative Ranking
Cleaning redeveloping and reusing existing industrial sites	1
Attracting tourists and outside money to downtown or other targeted areas	1 to 2
Improving technology infrastructure (i.e. broadband wireless fiber optic technologies)	1 to 2
Working with area colleges universities and economic development agencies to encourage innovation new businesses and improved workforce development	1 to 2
Keeping residential population about the size it is now	1 to 2
A more walkable downtown	1 to 2
Establishing architectural and site design standards for new non-residential projects that promote community character	2
Enhancing opportunities for startup businesses	2
An economically diverse population	2
A city-appointed official to address the interests of citizens business and government in economic development efforts	2
Encouraging more mixed-use development (e.g. businesses with residential upper stories)	2 to 3
Lodging (Hotels Bed & Breakfast)	2 to 3
A new industrial park	3
A major retail shopping center	4

ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

When asked if they would approve of the City's investment in the following, 86.8 % of those surveyed chose the at least one: wind power, solar power, hydro-electric, conservation measures, replacing city-owned

Chart 3. Question 25. ranking relative importance

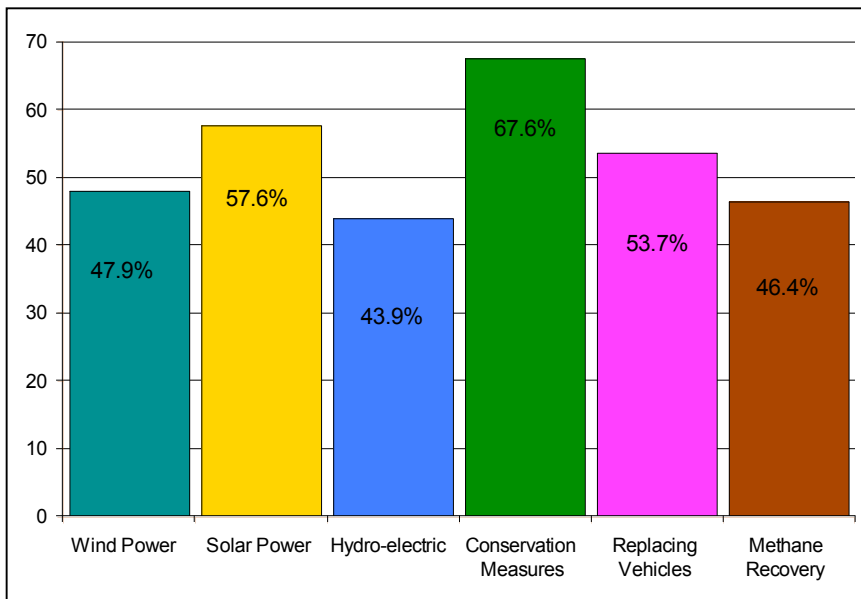


Chart 4. Question 27, Approval for conservation measures

vehicles with fuel-efficient models or methane recover from the landfill. Chart 4 details percentage of approval each measure received.

When asked if the City were to adopt development strategies to save energy, preserve open space and decrease car use, the respondent's chose to direct development to (in order of popularity): areas that are already developed, preserve open space (63.7%); areas that have public transportation and bike/pedestrian facilities (52.5%); safer streets (44%); neighborhood stores (41.4%), more sidewalks (38.8%); mixing retail and residential uses

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(34.7%); community gardens for local food production (34.2%); bike lanes (32.1%); and smaller lots and multi-unit housing (12.6%).

TRANSPORTATION

Only 8.6% of respondents use the PVTA bus system and 71.7% of the users ride it only occasionally (13.3% daily, 15% weekly). More than just PVTA users (39.4% of total respondents) answered the question, "Would you use it more?", indicating that there might be a larger audience than current users. If the PVTA had connections to more areas around the Valley (59.1%); was available to more house of the day, evening and weekend hours(58.6%); had faster and more frequent connections to Northampton and Holyoke(53.9%); or even had lower fares(27.2%), respondents would use it (more).

LAND USE

In order to protect the water supply: do not allow development beyond the capacity of our city water supply (86.1%); increase public education about water supply (58.3%) and decrease the use of salt in wintertime to prevent salination (46.7%). A majority (64.7%) said that they would be more inclined to bring recyclables to the Northampton Street transfer station if the hours were expanded.

About 73.2% of respondents had some type of additional comment on the future growth of Easthampton. These will have to be analyzed once all of the surveys have been entered. Here are some of the comments:

"THE FUTURE OF OUR CITY DEPENDS ON THE STRENGTH OF OUR SCHOOLS. WE NEED TO MAINTAIN THE POSTIVE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT THAT WE HAVE SEEN AND WE NEED TO IMPROVE OUR SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND TECHNOLOGY CAPABILITIES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE."

"OPEN SPACE NEEDS TO BE PRESERVED. WE CAN'T LET EVERY LOT BE DEVELOPED! ONCE ITS GONE--ITS GONE!"

"DEVELOP SMART. CONSIDER THE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT ON TRAFFIC FLOW AND CONGESTION. MAINTAIN AND ESTABLISH A GROWTH BOUNDARY. DEVELOP MORE GREEN SPACE. CREATE MORE BIKE LANES. KEEP DOWNTOWN WALKABLE-AND MAKE IT MORE WALKABLE IF YOU CAN. DO NOT ALLOW WALMART, SHOPRITE OR MCDONALDS."

"I WAS NOT AWARE OF THE TRANSFER STATION AND I AM PASSIONATE ABOUT RECYCLING. I DON'T KNOW THE PRESENT HOURS OF OPERATION. MAYBE EDUCATE PEOPLE THAT THIS RESOURCE EXISTS. THANKS FOR THE GOOD WORK, PLEASE PRESERVE OPEN SPACE AND FARMS IN EASTHAMPTON. THEY HAVE CO-EXISTED WITH INDUSTRY FOR YEARS."

"THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO ME (AND I NO LONGER HAVE CHILDREN IN SCHOOL) IS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, SCHOOLS, TEACHER SALARIES, MORE PHYS ED FOR STUDENTS, ETC. THE HIGH SCHOOL IS A DISGRACE."

"WE NEED A STORE- A DEPARTMENT STORE. TRASH PICK UP IS AN ISSUE AS WELL. WE PAY OVER \$400 A YEAR TO HAVE OURS PICKED UP. I THINK SOMETHING ELSE SHOULD BE DONE IN EASTHAMPTON TO LOWER THIS COST. OUR TAXES ARE HIGH ENOUGH AND FOR WHAT WE PAY SOME OR ALL OF TRASH PICK UP SHOULD BE INCLUDED."

"I BELIEVE THE TOWN COULD SUPPORT A SMALL MOVIE THEATER, MAYBE 2 SCREENS- ONE SIDE "ART FILMS" THE OTHER SIDE "CURRENT HITS." WE HAVE TO TRAVEL SO FAR TO GO TO THE MOVIES! I AM VERY WORRIED ABOUT THE TRAFFIC ON RTE 10 IF THAT GROCERY STORE GOES INTO THE GOLF RANGE. WE NEED A TOWN PRIDE BUMPER STICKER AVAILABLE AT ALL DOWNTOWN STORES."

"I AM PROUD TO BE APART OF A COMMUNITY THAT IS THINKING ABOUT SMART GROWTH. THIS IS A GREAT QUESTIONNAIRE, HOW CAN ONE GET INVOLVED IN TOWN CONSERVATION EFFORTS? "

"THIS SURVEY IS GOOD BUT A BIT ONE SIDED. DEAL WITH THE HAND ISSUES LIKE BIG BOX STORES ON NORTHAMPTON ST. WE NEED ANOTHER SUPERMARKET IN THIS TOWN LIKE A HOLE IN THE HEAD. TRY GETTING A DEPARTMENT STORE INSTEAD. THIS SURVEY CAN DEAL WITH FUN & GAMES BUT THAT ISN'T GOING TO IMPROVE ANY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. MOST OF THESE ARTSY FARSTY PEOPLE LIVE OFF FREE TAX MONEY AT THE TAXPAYERS EXPENSE."