

Community Choices Public Meeting Results

This document summarizes for the CPC and Work Groups the results of the Community Choices Public Workshop conducted on March 29, 2007. There was excellent participation with approximately 150 participants at the meeting, 54 of which are Town Meeting Members, and 42 of which are Work Group members.

In order to prepare this summary, the Evaluation and Comment Cards were reviewed. Note that a similar document was presented to the CPC as part of Community Choices that included a sampling of 50 questionnaires. This document includes all cards – a total of 140 – that were received at the meeting, as well as those that were delivered to the Planning Department after the meeting.

This document includes three sections: general assessment, summary of the rating of the Draft Goals, and a summary of the rating of the Draft Land Use Principles. The comments for each of the draft goals and principles are available under separate cover in PDF format. This summary and the comments should be used by the CPC and the Work Groups in revising and refining their work. The evaluation of the Draft Land Use Concept and the Future Vision Assessment will be prepared by ACP and presented to the CPC at a future date.

General Assessment

The results described in this document and the comments received provide important feedback to the CPC and the Work Groups. The results suggest that the emerging plan – the goals and principles – accurately reflect the community's aspirations for the future of Amherst. All of the draft goals received average ratings of 3.9 or higher on a scale of 1-5, where 5 equals strongly support. Only two of the draft land use principles received average ratings lower than 4. In both cases, the lower ratings were mainly due to the need to clarify terminology or meaning. The results generally affirmed the intent of the goals and principles. The Work Groups and CPC should feel confident in now proceeding with the preparation of strategies that will support the realization of the goals.

Summary of the Rating of Draft Goals

Participants were asked to indicate their level of support for each of the seven (7) master plan draft goals by rating them on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = do not support, 3 = support, and 5 = strongly support). Comments related to a specific goal were also recorded on the cards.

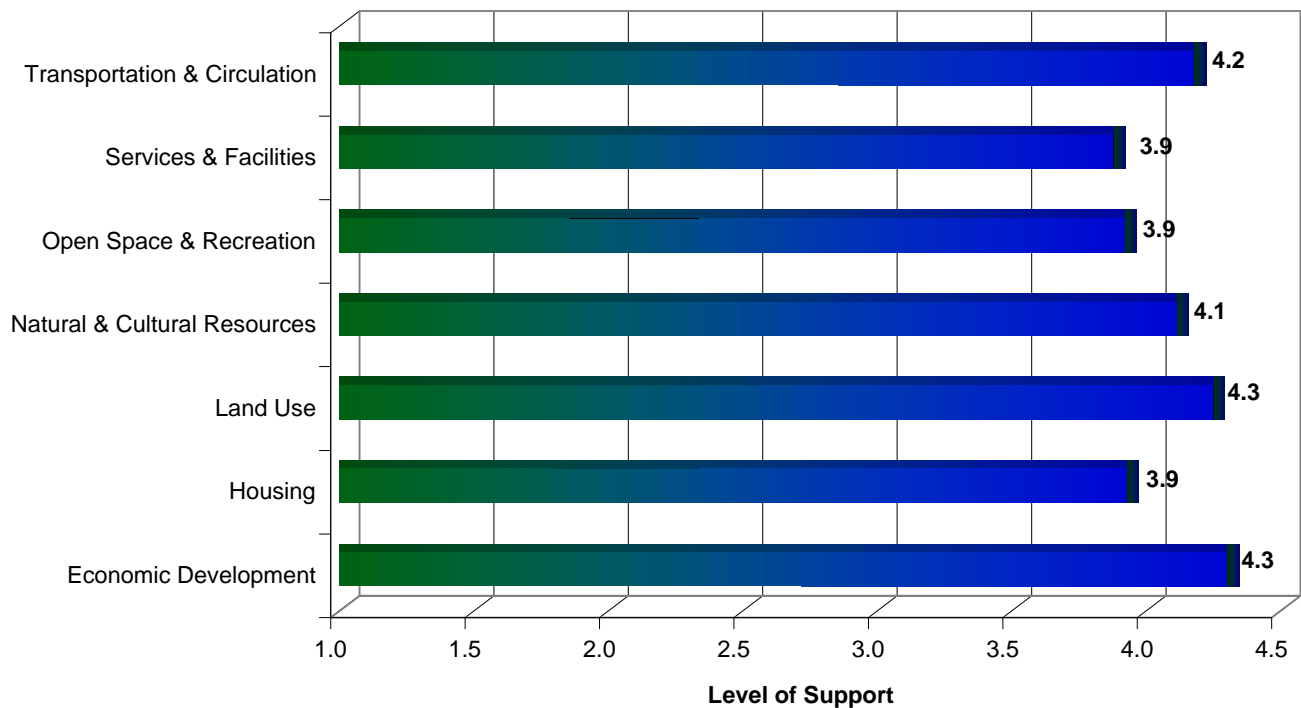
The draft goals are listed below for reference:

- **Economic Development** - Strengthen, diversify, and grow the tax base and employment opportunities in the town through smart development in the downtown, village centers, and industry zones. Focused initiatives will broaden our economic base in clusters of businesses, mixed services, high technology/clean industries, cultural attractions, education, tourism and agricultural resources. Such development will leverage our existing educational institutions, the town's diverse character and committed citizenship, while maintaining, improving, and sustaining quality of life, ecological consciousness, and social values.
- **Housing** - Provide a mix of affordable housing that meets the physical and economic needs of the full spectrum of our community.
- **Land Use** - A sustainable attractive town with a vibrant Downtown and viable mixed use Village Centers that are well connected with livable and diverse neighborhoods and campuses, and interwoven with protected open space, natural resources, and active farmland.
- **Natural and Cultural Resources** - Preserve and enhance our natural and cultural resources to foster a vibrant and diverse community life.
- **Open Space and Recreation** - Protect and enhance our rural character and agricultural viability, and provide and develop multi-generational recreational opportunities that bring townspeople together.

- **Services and Facilities** - Provide excellent accessible facilities, services, and programs reflecting values respectful of our ages and our diversity, which, through collaboration, contribute to a high quality safe, civil, healthy, and sustainable community.
- **Transportation and Circulation** - A balanced, inclusive, accessible, safe, environmentally responsible transportation and circulation system that serves users of public transit, pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers, and that is connected within and among different modes both in town and to the region.

The chart below provides the average score received for each goal. The table gives the percentage of responses for each rating score.

Draft Goal Average Scores



Percentage of Ratings by Rating Score and Draft Goal

Topic	Percent No Response	Percent 1	Percent 2	Percent 3	Percent 4	Percent 5
Economic Development	1.4%	1.4%	5.8%	11.6%	22.5%	57.2%
Housing	2.9%	1.4%	5.7%	26.4%	17.1%	46.4%
Land Use	2.9%	0.7%	4.3%	10.7%	23.6%	57.9%
Natural and Historic Resources	4.3%	0.7%	2.9%	15.0%	25.7%	51.4%
Open Space and Recreation	4.3%	0.7%	5.7%	19.3%	27.9%	42.1%
Services and Facilities	4.3%	1.4%	4.3%	22.9%	26.4%	40.7%
Transportation	2.9%	1.4%	3.6%	15.0%	21.4%	55.7%

Summary of the Rating of Draft Land Use Principles

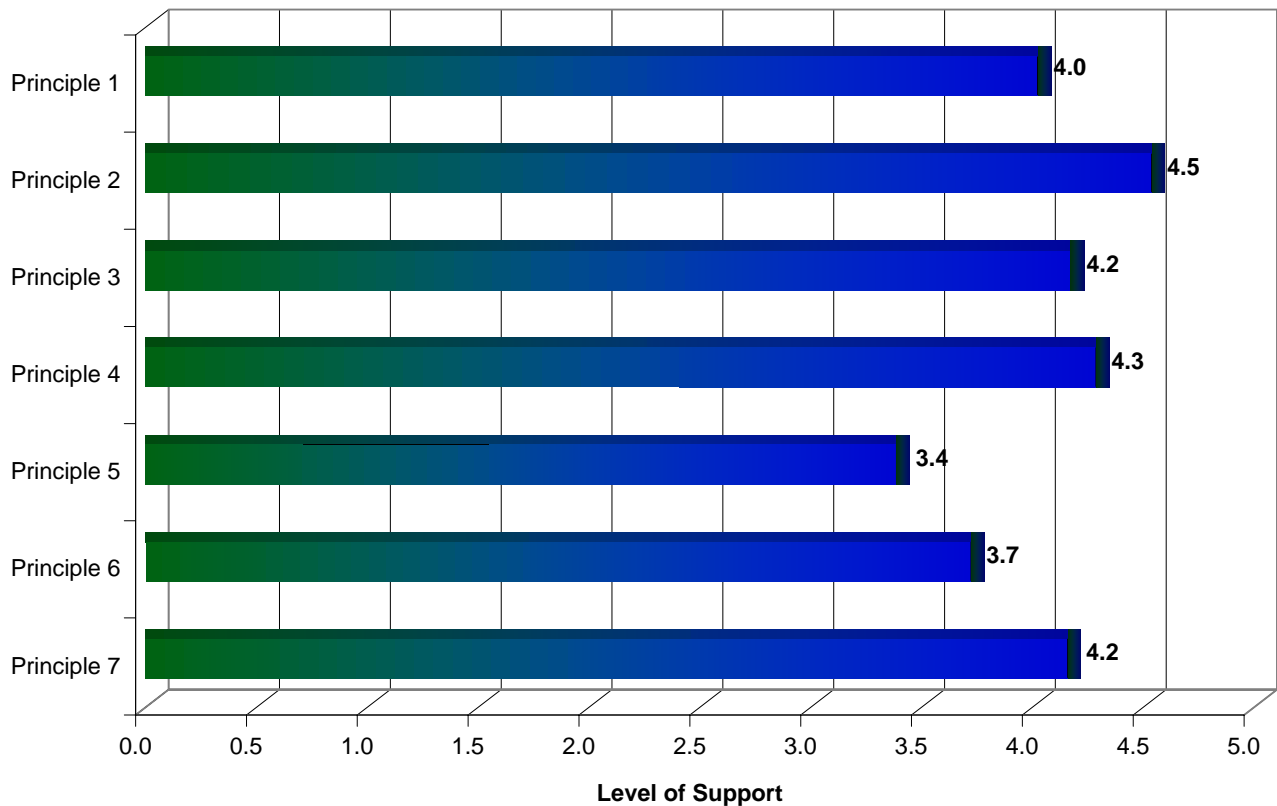
Participants were asked to indicate their level of support for each of the seven (7) draft land use principles listed below by rating them on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = do not support, 3 = support, and 5 = strongly support). Comments related to a specific principle were also recorded on the cards.

Listed below are the seven draft land use principles for reference:

1. The physical character of the area – especially at gateway locations, natural resources, scenic and farm corridors, town and village centers – will be of high design quality.
2. Key natural resources will be protected – especially water quality, air quality, wildlife habitat, greenbelt corridors around or along streams, vernal pools, forests, and soils.
3. Farmland will be preserved, maintained, and integrated into our landscape in order to encourage agricultural and other resource-based uses of open lands.
4. Redevelopment, intensification, and mixed use development in existing village centers and downtown will be preferred over developing open land.
5. New residential development and redevelopment will strengthen the sense of place and offer a range of housing choices.
6. Development will be encouraged to foster greater sustainability by proximity to goods and services, facilities, and transportation, and protection of open space.
7. Throughout the town, we will integrate public spaces, parks, and green spaces linked by corridors that offer a range of transportation choices including walking and riding.

The chart below provides the average score received for each draft principle. The table on the following page gives the percentage of responses for each rating score. Comments are available under separate cover.

Draft Land Use Principle Average Scores



Percentage of Ratings by Rating Score and Draft Goal

Draft Land Use Principle	Percent No Response	Percent 1	Percent 2	Percent 3	Percent 4	Percent 5
1	4.3%	0.7%	7.9%	21.4%	24.3%	41.4%
2	1.4%	0.0%	0.7%	12.1%	12.9%	72.9%
3	1.4%	1.4%	4.3%	17.1%	22.9%	52.9%
4	0.7%	3.6%	2.1%	13.6%	20.0%	60.0%
5	7.1%	5.7%	11.4%	22.9%	22.9%	30.0%
6	7.9%	2.9%	5.0%	19.3%	23.6%	41.4%
7	1.4%	0.7%	6.4%	14.3%	26.4%	50.7%

Based on the feedback received at the Community Choices Public Workshop, as well as the stakeholder interviews, ACP will provide suggested refinements on the principles to the Land Use Work Group for their consideration.