

Other Comments – Amherst

Repave the Rail Trail!

In my opinion increasing property taxes is detrimental to a certain segment of the Amherst community. Tax (property) augmentation is turning the community into a place that only the economically endowed and economically deprived can live. The lower middle and above are being squeezed out. Kindly develop some business alternative so that they aren't an issue from year to year.

More bike paths would improve the town significantly.

Look, I've lived here most of my life. It is a great place, we have so much. But we do need to remember what we have and if we build on it or develop it, it will never be the same again. I've seen too much farm land plowed under in the name of development. I know farmers aren't making what they should be so they sell their farm land to developers that don't care about what goes on or what things use to be like. We need to remember all of these things

Really start thinking about how much people can afford in paying their TAXES.

Been living here 12 years. Own home. We paid \$2500. Now it's up to \$5000. I don't know but \$5000 is a lot of money when I have 1 daughter in college and 2 more to go.

Village Centers should have equal consideration, equal opportunities and benefits. A concentration of large homes only in one village is not desirable nor is the concentration of services and small homes.

The town cannot be all things to all people. It is simply unattainable. It should focus on education, safety, public resources, such as the library and historical aspects.

Downtown signs in other languages.

PVTA Electric! Or alt. Fuels.

More Photovoltaic's powering town

Re-route heavy trucking from N. East St.

Industries to Rt. 9 routes to UMass (instead of along Strong St.)

Ax Leisure Services to Save \$

Put a lid on new housing

Institute "no-engine breaking in town limits" – rule to preserve the peace. (engine breaking is shifting to lower gear to brake trucks – makes a very loud noise)

Outlaw military recruitment centers in town (such as the one next to Gold's Gym & University Drive)

Amherst needs to expand its tax base to streamline regulations for builders & contractors, & to require town employees to pay more of their health insurance as a way to reign in spending, tying it to salary in relation to overall pay packages.

I don't see the requirement for housing for the poor addressed. Where will they all live – Colonial Village? That's got to have an undesirable outcome. Nor do I see any interest in correcting past planning "mistakes," through "to and fro" programs like incenting demolition and abating future takes for a time certain period.

- 1) I don't think that the average person is well equipped to understand questions about planning (nor are the questions well-framed) when we are untrained in matters concerning economic impact of emotionally-based questions re social equity, environmental protection. You can't EAT YOUR CAKE AND HAVE IT TOO!
- 2) In true Amherst "I've-got-to-have-my-say-too" fashion, the comprehensive planning committee process was allowed to go out of control when the group grew to ridiculous proportions!
- 3) Let professional planners do the job & present realistic cost-benefit scenarios.

I would like to see the town of Amherst put pressure on UMass to develop more student housing in Hadley &/or Amherst for single grad students/families/older undergrads. This should be apartment style housing similar to comparable universities. This would relieve some of the pressure on the town of Amherst for increasing housing availability.

Would like dogs to be allowed on buses, as in many other countries. Long-term parking (e.g. parking garage) should be cheaper than (or possibly same price as) short-term meters.

Thank you for doing this survey! Let's reduce the # of cars in Amherst through incentives for parking of hybrid cars & for bike lanes. Thank you!

For many of the actions proposed, the best course for Amherst is to do nothing. Let the market sort it out.

I don't pay property taxes so I can't provide feedback in this category. Also this questionnaire may not be easily understood by less literate citizens of Amherst.

I notice an emphasis on residential choices in this questionnaire – and few references to business. We really need to be serious about other means of income than residential/real estate taxes! I would like to see the planning committee pay attention to this long-standing issue – and plan for increasing business, commercial, and other "economic development initiatives." The need is an urgent one – note the failed "override" vote!

We need a YMCA. We need business to help fund schools, police, fire, library. Pools should always be open.

Restrict low income growth – Amherst has become less safe over the past 30 years that I have lived here. This is an unfortunate reality. Traffic is also now unbearable at certain times of the day. Also, the schools need to continue to meet the needs of all children, not just those within special needs. We need more quality teachers. My children are well behaved & therefore ignored.

Increased incentives for small businesses. The new Amherst Coffee/Cinema Building is a great example.

Please find a way to set and enforce occupancy limits on rental housing. This might help the serious problem of the degradation of neighborhoods by one or two rental houses overflowing with cars, litter, noise, etc.

This survey is difficult to complete because I do not know enough about all the issues. But I do know that housing density is important for environmental concerns. One other thing, it would be nice to allow/encourage more “al fresco” dining at area restaurants. **AND AN ORGANIC FOOD COOP!!**

Housing is the most important need for Amherst. It remains our prime tax base. High taxes and unbalanced budgets (need for overrides) have all but bankrupted Amherst. More efficient and less generous government is sorely needed.

I don't believe we need another parking garage.

I live in South Amherst where there is no bus transportation except from Atkins Farm a mile away. Maybe during school year buses will come down middle once in a.m. & p.m. Also having gone to Town Meeting for soccer planning 5 years ago, it was a travesty and town meeting should be done away with. Amherst wastes more money talking about things than getting things done & resending surveys.

Place a bench at Chestnut Court bus stop. And more benches for the walk to town from Chestnut Ct.

Sorry to be late in returning this, but my husband & I are so completely ensconced in Applewood that it has become sometimes difficult to relate to the many issues involved (and rightly so!) in the core of town. My best wishes to you – and the committee – for tackling this difficult job!

As a relative newcomer who was attracted by Amherst's beautiful old buildings, I am surprised at how little old housing stock is preserved and valued. The town seems to have a disproportionate amount of affordable condo/garden apt. housing, but a handsome 1815 brick house is considered a “tear-down.” Yes, the house was ultimately saved, but it was an emergency one-off solution. It would be nice to see the town go with its strengths & work harder to preserve the past.

My understanding is that the population of Amherst is not growing significantly, yet there seems to be the need to build more houses. I do not support people building large homes (2000+ sq. ft.) while a number of smaller homes & apartments are empty. The most crucial obligation we have is to minimize our impact on the environment, whether this

means preserving wild (as opposed to open) spaces, clean building & transportation, etc. I appreciate all the time & concern the committee is giving to these issues. Thanks.

Amherst has a total population of ~50,000 & half of this is mobile. I feel that during the development of the town, the rest half, i.e. residential population should be given priority. It's a university town & so it should be as green as possible & all the large malls should be kept away, the way it is right now. The frequency of the buses to Hampshire Mall/Big Y/WalMart should be increased. Also we should have more recreational facilities in and around the town & they should be either free or affordable for students.

Promote small businesses to encourage their success rate downtown – eliminate the need to shop elsewhere.

Our planning efforts should be guided by the needs of our youth and their future not the complaints of seniors like me.

I think it's time for Amherst to realize that there many people in this town who are finding it harder and harder to afford to stay. A lot are not vocal, and feel they can not make their opinions known. Because of the backlash. I work in the Amherst school system. Many people told me they voted against the over ride and didn't want anyone to know. Amherst can not be all things to all people – we need to take care of what we have – make sure repairs and necessary upkeep is done. Let's really look at programs and personal to see if it's really needed and a lot of taxpayer really get something out of it. Except for a very short period of time I have lived my life in Amherst. My roots are ddeep – I fear I may not be able to stay.

Please consider creating more wheelchair accessible spaces.
I have been looking for office space to locate a psychotherapy practice in and haven't been able to find a suitable accessible space in Amherst.

We need a greater tax base, cluster housing, ensure open space – encouraging light technology industry – use resources from Univ of MA –
Continue to support public schools – would support mayoral system of government.

Facilities for pre-high school kids because they have no where to go. (Pre-teen center).

- 1) As a single, non-married/partnered resident of town who supposedly makes a “decent” living, the high cost of single family homes price me out of the market. I simply cannot afford to purchase a home in Amherst on a one-person income.
- 2) A multi-generational/multi-ethnic facility is greatly needed. As a person of color, I don't see many Amherst residents of color spending “social” time in town, which I attribute to lack of affordable places to go.

Question 12 was unclear. I didn't know whether it referred to retirement communities or public housing. Thanks for your hard work!

I deplore the fact that Amherst is turning so up-scale and is an expensive place for middle income people to live in. I have seen so many changes from the small town I once knew. Write me off as an old fogey.

You need more Industry and less housing for tax purposes. This questionnaire is ridiculous and using tax money which you do not have.

Although development is necessary housings should be required to do background checks to each tenant before letting them move in. Southpoint has been overlooked for too long. The living conditions in this development are atrocious. Housing should have a certain standard of living conditions that they must follow. Plus this particular housing is horribly maintained. I would love to see Amherst buy this property and clean it up!

Not only are jaywalkers a source of traffic congestion, but ticketing them could be a source of revenue. Jaywalkers are particularly bad at the lights at Amity/Pleasant and Kellogg/Pleasant and also when they just cross anywhere rather than crosswalks.

I wish that money and development wasn't always the goal of making a town successful. Sometimes it's just good to say it's time to stop and just live as we are instead of trying to always grow.

A food store in downtown Amherst with fresh vegetables.

Amherst does not have a clue as to "real" potential for business development i.e. Number of workers

Quality of workers

Competition from other ?

Question #6 – My answer would likely change in another 10 years.

Question #17 – Too many variables to answer.

Please to read that Kendrick "Park" is about to be a reality!

Thank you very much for allowing me to complete this survey. I am a strong advocate of public transportation. Linking Amherst by commuter rail to Springfield, Hartford and Boston (with adequate parking at the station) would be great for college students and working folks, as well as making day trips to and from those cities much more practical and environmentally friendly.

We like Amherst as is but realize planning for future is important. Because we hear about problems with overcrowding in schools and needs for more social services, we think our contribution to low cost housing should be examined compared to other surrounding towns. With 3 colleges/university in town, with possibility of growth in their student/faculty populations, we have to give attention to possibility of damaging our environmental quality if we don't plan carefully. More attention should be given to public transportation between towns. At present there is no public transport to Bradley Airport for example.

I believe we should mandate quality, daily physical education in our school system (K-12).

The current fiscal crisis in Amherst makes it clear that we need a broader tax base to maintain quality. Attracting light industry/research /high tech organizations is paramount. Everything else is subsidiary.

Another idea: Luxury homes should be taxed a higher rate than lesser dwellings. As a suggested rule of thumb, I would define as “luxury” any home valued at over 50% more than the median home value.

Have Amherst College and UMASS contribute to the upkeep of the town and its services. Do they do anything?

Encourage mixed-income development (& easy walking distance) near the 7 town centers (senior housing too)

Frequent bus service from 7 town centers to downtown.

Hire an economic development director asap and get the permit office to lighten up so we can increase business tax base.

Hire a mayor. Town meeting is a futility rite – people just like to hear themselves talk!

We moved to Amherst from San Francisco Bay area for the schools. The town has 3 years to fix the school budgets (or daughter is e) before we start to look at other towns. Good luck!

I am often disappointed with the failure of town employees to be responsive to the needs of its residents. I have noted discourteous behavior, a lack of willingness, open resentment frequently in the Public Works Department and at the Library, and even more recently in the Public Schools. This is very distressing to a longstanding taxpayer. You could not sustain a competitive business with such behavior.

Property taxes in Amherst as in many parts of the country are too high –

Fiscal responsibility and alternative & strategies for income are essential for lively and diverse community.. Increasing housing is only a stop gap measure because with every household, increased demands on city/town resources, schools which prop. Taxes cannot completely offset –

Amherst DOES NOT NEED TO Grow relative to increasing housing developments.

An emphasis on preserving and maintaining the “Amherst” that we already have – with all its uniqueness. Growth if and where necessary to be done in harmony with its historical and natural landscape and not necessarily by taking it into new and different directions. As always a need for high technology – this growth may be best done by integrating with the above and not necessarily creating a new landscape.

North Amherst could support a casino. The old landfills should be used as sites for using/recycling biomass to generate energy. (Why pay to truck our sludge elsewhere? Other neighboring towns might use our facility, too. We could add power to the grid.)

More economic development – property taxes and slashing services are not sustainable.

Too many students for such a small town.

More collaboration with area colleges, especially UMass, Amherst College & Hampshire College to think of creative ways of supporting the public schools & preserving historic sties.

As a family we would also like to see more retail stores (clothing & accessories) in town. We think it is important to preserve the quaint atmosphere and collegian character of our town.

The town needs a solid business base that pays taxes. It should be facilitating nonindustrial businesses moving to town. The town needs a mayor. The select board is ineffective and has been managing our resources poorly. The school system is terrible – way too many administrators, no respect for the students or their parents. Too much time and money is spent debating and arguing. Decisions need to be made in a timely manner. Downtown needs to be vigorous and inviting to drivers & pedestrians alike.

School funding – increased school funding, and economic development must be the top priorities for town government.

The goal should be 50% of Amherst land as public nature preserve and parks, no more, no less. All development must satisfy strict requirements of sewage and water quality.

It's important to create a balanced, long term economic development plan. Property tax is certainly not the only solution to resolve the financial problems the town faces. A well thought, and thoroughly planned, and balanced strategy is needed. Encouraging small business development around Five colleges will give Amherst a big advantage. Amherst is a college town. The future of Amherst requires out-of-box thinking and planning.

NO MORE SECTION 8 HOUSING.

- 1) Have more indoor recreational facilities for kids, especially during winter
 - 2) Support LSSE programs for kids
 - 3) To encourage biking and walking, build more sidewalks in residential areas.
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- 1) In surveys such as this, many terms (e.g. “small” house & “small scale business”) need definitions or basic parameters in order for us to decide our preferences.
 - 2) There is little in this survey addressing the tone or “flavor” of Amherst’s business district & the center – vibrant? Lively? Placid? More retail variety? Incubator spaces? Etc.

I'm very disappointed with the high property taxes and all the cuts going on in the schools. We pay so much in taxes, how could there be a lack of funding for school

programs such as band? Also the roads are in terrible shape with pot-holes, again, where is our tax money going??

My apologies for my delay in returning this questionnaire. I found it difficult to respond since I, and probably most others really want contradictory things. For example, I want Amherst to have a diverse population (which our schools now reflect), lots of open space, good public transportation, excellent schools and community services, better road maintenance, etc. and still be a place where people can afford to live. The Village Center concept appeals to me at least in theory, as a way to increase walk-ability and, hopefully community.

I do not spend lots of time in Amherst any more – my parents live there but I go to school out-of-state & don't live @ home during breaks. It has been 3 years since I was a full-time resident of Amherst, just thought you should know because it influences my responses.

I feel there are enough houses being built... and so many for sale. I feel strongly about our open space, but if there was development, I'd rather it be something to help with our tax load. An industrial park or a high-tech business could help us keep taxes down, and in the long run preserve more land.

* I support LSSE!! Don't stop funding them. We need their services.

Regarding public transportation – when I was a student, I used the bus all the time. Now with four kids, it is not feasible. Most people in town with families feel the same way. The PVRTA in town serves only a fraction of its citizens. I think money could best be spent expanding elder van service than to run more (often empty) buses. Amherst will never become an urban, bus-reliant town.

Please think of ways to enhance economic development that is “smart” (like Amherst Cinema Center Block) and provides support to our town – We are too dependent on property taxes as our town's income source – Thanks.

Our main priority should be to build up our tax base through businesses. Adding affordable housing would be great but we can't seem to support the schools now with the current enrollment. Adding more kids would add to the problem. We need to add clean, community friendly businesses, then when we are more financially stable, we can add more affordable housing.

We must have increased sources of tax revenue beyond residential housing. We need to foster greater interaction between people of color and white people in town, between upper middle class and lower income people and between older and younger people. We need dialogue and relationships if we are to avoid further splintering into very separate populations some of which are disadvantaged and left out.

In general, I oppose development. There is far too much traffic and no place to park. An increase in the population of Amherst would just create more congestion. I believe the

town should pressure UMass to forbid students from having cars here except for seniors and those who can prove they need cars to work. Our property taxes are already outrageous, and I believe most of the reasons suggested here for raising them are unnecessary and/or frivolous. Repair the roads!

I'd like to see a plan that really thinks about sustainability.

Overall limits of growth

Creative ways to remain affordable

Meaningful action to reduce traffic before it destroys our community.

Use land to provide food locally.

Essentials:

- Making the downtown center more alternative transportation accessible (anything other than single-occupant autos)
- Promote downtown businesses other than those catering to 18-23 year olds (Amherst downtown is unrecognizable from 30 years ago – e.g. no hardware or grocery store).
- Limit (or eliminate) the “McMansion on 2 acres” phenomenon.

My main complaint is my name – Mary Alice. I use both names. Unless I complain loudly my letter are sent to Mary Hubert – I'm tempted to tear the letter up but I don't so I did not tear up this survey!

Thank you for asking my opinion.

We should have more businesses in town.

The school system needs HELP! NOW!

I found many of the questions hard to answer.* Taken together, the questions make clear how hard the decisions are. I'm grateful to the CPC for doing this.

Many questions left me trying to balance what I would want for myself, and what I think Amherst ought to promote.

*Not because they were badly put, but because they were good at making conflicts clear.

Again, I believe all town services/preservation etc. deserve property tax support – as long as the taxes don't become too high in relation to surrounding communities. Many of us would like to buy worthy things, but if we can't afford them, we don't buy them. A diverse population of people who make their living in many ways including ways not oriented to large salaries – i.e. artists, crafts people, organic farmers, & other “interesting” alternatives – also help to enrich the town! If retirees and people without children in the schools are forced to move, the town budget will be even harder to afford & support in the future.

Please keep Amherst the quaint New England college town that it is. The traffic congestion is already very inconvenient – more growth will only dismantle the chain that is Amherst's.

Focus on global warming and low-income, affordable housing.

As I said previously I wish Amherst would stop building – I miss the quiet, small town I lived in 60's, 70's and sometimes 80's. I realize one can't stand in the way of progress but Amherst is not the same and its due to development and growth –when is enough, enough?

Can someone notify/contact the town of Poway, California to see how they developed a light industry park (which houses the likes of Calloway Golf) for example. Done so in a non-invasive plan which greatly increased the tax base of the now “City in the Country” without destroying its ambiance. Amherst could learn a lesson from this. I lived in this town turned small city from 1976 to 1997.

Being an older person on a fixed income I worry that the constant increase in property taxes will force me to move out of Amherst and the home I love. I am not alone in my concern – there are very many of us, retired faculty, parents of present faculty members, etc. who share my worries. Gentrification should not lead to the abandonment of the middle class.

I do not favor increasing density in existing residential neighborhoods and have answered questions in such a way. I support having new developments with increased density, provided there is a requirement for leaving open space.

Elderly residents who have lived in their homes for 20 years should not suffer a tax increase because of luxury homes being built next door.

Public spaces, conservation land should be cared for & maintained – quality land vs. quantity. I'd rather see a beautiful acre than an unkempt 20 acres.

Amherst must figure out a way to deflect costs from already “taxed” residential property owners. The town of Amherst needs more taxable business since the universities' land are tax exempt.

Amherst should propose to UMASS that students pay a nominal road fee to help off-set the millions of dollars that goes into repairing our roads.

Amherst must discover fiscal restraint, learn to negotiate more representative fees with the colleges, and concentrate on attracting residents and business that return more to the tax base than they take! We cannot continue to raise property taxes to cover the cost of every expenditure!

Affordability must be a part of all recommendations. Both immediate and long term cost analysis or income (tax) possibilities.

Greater diversity adds vibrancy small, non-corporate businesses are better for economic development. Build on the strength – university-college cooperation could be improved. Tourism/arts can be built on. Good schools are extremely important!

I am all for planning Amherst's future. The main problem with your questions is that they say "the town should do the tasks described." I agree 100% with encouraging small lots, small houses, open space, protection of water, etc., reduce global warming. However, the path should be via economic incentives that make it profitable for the people undertaking projects to do the above. Regulation without real world incentives are a waste of time. Encourage rather than control by more regulation.

If Amherst has to have additional development I think it should be a mix of price points. I think the developments should be clustered. I think it would be grand if they were designed to be a walking community – encourage green development that fosters a sense of community.

Amherst is pretty and quiet but pretty boring – there could be much better retail stores; there could be jobs in light industrial areas.

Emphasize Amherst's unique qualities as a small New England town. The questionnaire is good but one area is fuzzy: confuses ownership with housing type. Condo is ownership and can be single family, rowhouses, or apartment. Question #9 has several faults. Missing from questionnaire is the matter of procedures & regulatory process, and permitting. These areas in Massachusetts & Amherst greatly limit progressive developments in multi-family housing. The requirements escalate each year and anti-developmental forces use them to kill both bad & good proposals.

Please consider building new tennis courts at Junior High site or elsewhere!! Jr. high courts are a disgrace (and dangerous!)

Aside from the town's blatant intolerance (yet only from a small but vocal percentage of folks) this is a fantastic place to live and raise kids. I just wish our town resources and energy (of the humankind) could be better spent on the items included in this survey. So often we're distracted with issues that drain the good spirit of those who work for the town...

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

I support development in Amherst to create new sources for tax revenue.

Downtown needs a vibrant market life Greenfield Coop Market – which serves as a community meeting place and a place where you can get usable stuff.
A good indoor tennis club.

- 1) We need places without cars (cafes, shopping area, restaurants)
- 2) Downtown traffic should be reduced

- 3) Access to UMass should be made easy though highway 116, see drawings. At the same time, commuter traffic through Amherst should be reduced to a minimum.

All of Amherst, school system and Town Hall, is over-administered. There are people in the school system doing an administrative job at 75,000 per year – a job I've never heard of in spite of my spending my whole career in public education. Amherst needs more people in the trenches – less in administrative spots. DeCostillo was responsible for much of this – God help the people he's working for now.

Keep Amherst in the country. Not country like Canada is a country, but the other type of country.

Affordable housing is a must!!

Not all village centers are the same, so questions regarding density, mixed use, etc. might have a different answer for say, downtown than for others which are in more “residential” areas.

Closer scrutiny of the Regional School spending – number of and high salaried administrators – excessive! Empty school buses, while the student vehicles impede traffic on all streets close to the high school. Education is a priority, but for those who desire the luxury of a private school – Amherst cannot offer that, ex. Russian now offered in the middle school. The number of vehicles registered by the town of Amherst and to what departments excluding Police, Fire, DPW or other emergency vehicles. Yearly override votes need to cease, and belts must be tightened; i.e. live with our means!

We would like a more fruitful discussion about money toward a mayor based system of govt.

I would like to share my opinion about low income family who wants to stay at Amherst, primary because of school of their children, that should have an option to have a look for affordable housing they can own. Duplex would be a very good alternative from renting.

I am currently planning to sell my home in Amherst, as our youngest children leave for college, as the taxes have become prohibitively high. That said, I have greatly benefited from the services (mainly the public schools) that those taxes have paid for. Amherst is a lovely town and I wish it could stay just as it is – though I know that more tax-paying businesses must be brought in, in order for families with children to be able to live here! Good luck!

Sell the golf course.

Amherst needs to pass on bringing in clean manufacturing and locating it in designated office parks. This will create jobs, increase tax revenue and attract employees whose focus is other than education. The town needs more economic diversity. Downtown area

needs to be expanded for new business office space, etc. More parking will have to be considered. NOTE: People who complete this survey should be fluent in ENGLISH!!!

Increase revenues via retirement communities

More business

Decrease outgoings via

Close bell Cherry hill

Make LSSE self support

Close 2 of 3 libraries

Close 1 of 2 fire stations (some houses will always be further away; if someone builds house on top of mountain, will you add another station to be close to them?!)

Stop frivolous spending such as on soccer fields.

I think the new town managers, Larry Schaffer is showing promise for the future of Amherst.

I wish something could be done with all the posters on “the poles” – Should not be allowed. Thank you.

I don't know anything about town planning.

However, if the town plans to build moderate income housing which I support, then it must also be prepared to meet the needs of those people with regard to other town services, including education.

I would tend to not support increase “population density.”

I would tend to support strongly public education & environmental causes.

I would tend to be wary of large-scale business influence.

I would tend to support cultural /pro-social events/activities/access.

Amherst is a lovely town, but it seems like town representatives rarely take a balanced approach to land use. We need new housing development of all kinds and also balance open space, farming, and town recreational needs.

Obviously, the town needs a healthy tax base, and this must be taken into consideration. Schools, police, fire, & health services should be a priority.

I do think that Amherst needs to broaden its tax base by being more friendly & supportive to a variety of businesses. We have so many students here, we should support businesses that meet their retail needs. We also need to have housing that is affordable to our own town employees.

Continue looking at transportation needs as well -

Zoning for Amherst has been established many years ago. Many changes have taken place in town during these years. Zoning map may be improved with some changes to the current map.

Good survey but some questions are competing i.e. have competing opinions (examples 9, 17,21).

I would like to see the development of more industry, less committees and more action, more cooperation from the three colleges to keep the tax rate in check

UMass is doing a poor job in selecting students who represent the values of a healthy, moral society. There is too much emphasis on the bottom line and it shows with the violent, ugly antics of too many undergraduates. I live here and don't appreciate the conduct and lunacy I have read about. We need someone to take responsibility for a change.

I believe that walking can & should be encouraged by the addition of sidewalks – especially on main thoroughfares such as North Pleasant Street. It is currently dangerous to walk downtown from many locations, even those that are reasonably close.

To cooperate with UMass to encourage establishing new businesses, light industries and also moderate industries which will create new jobs and pay more taxes!

In my opinion Amherst needs to first get its finances in order. Planning for the future is good and responsible but it usually means spending money. Like any well run business or household Amherst needs to stay within its budget and build up its account. Once that's in order, then it can work on things addressed in this survey.

Yes, we've had a huge increase in property tax. I feel Amherst needs to develop within the parameters of preserving conservation areas to help bring in more revenue. A car-free pedestrian mall might truly encourage people to come to Amherst. We need to be more retail (small biz owners) friendly so coming into downtown Amherst more interesting as well as practical.

This questionnaire has helped me to see the difficulties involved in strategic planning. What's missing is the explicit issue of balance & how each decision ultimately shifts the balance.

In the end I prefer to live within limits with an emphasis on open spaces & not congestion and simply increased growth.

I have mixed feelings about cluster housing. The green space is good but it doesn't cut down on the distances everyone has to drive to get anywhere.

I wish there was bus service on South East St.

When you ask whether more apartments/condos are a good idea, do you mean small personal buildings or giant complexes?

In Amherst, I think our priorities should be:

- Clean water, air, and open land
- Schools
- Keeping & developing some affordable housing for those w/incomes under \$150,000*
- The promotion & celebration of the arts

* As someone in this category, I know how difficult it is to afford even a very modest home here.

I am a student and will be leaving Amherst this fall. The town is very like the one I grew up in but with more farm land. The variation of commercial areas and farm/natural is a good mix but to get more people a slight increase in population & industry would help businesses. A new public works building would be very good and water treatment as well since I do not like the water and it give me headaches.

- 1) Since Amherst in the downtown area has a terrible traffic problem & parking, the town needs to develop areas outside the center such as more hours at branch libraries, greater areas of small businesses out of the center, improve traffic flow in the entire town, and not add any more housing developments.
- 2) To preserve McClure St. and the area north of Fearing turn Sunset North of Fearing into office buildings for UMass to create a buffer zone.
- 3) Better street lights in the center of town!
- 4) Why are you contracting on housing when it is businesses we need?

I remember the old Amherst, Louis Foods, College Drug Store, Aubuchon Hardware, Gas Light I & II, Ann August. Those were reasons to go downtown. Things I want, I go somewhere else. My money seems to go to Hadley stores. Housing prices are unattainable, I am very seriously considering moving somewhere affordable. A lot of folks feel the same way.

- 1) Comprehensive revision of zoning to allow for more residential development.
- 2) Amend zoning by-law to allow 2-3 family houses if owner occupied.

I am for appropriate cluster development in town centers (i.e. the cohousing in N. Amherst is a good example). I'm not for using a zoning change like this to build high density developments in inappropriate places (ex. Southeast St. next to bike path.)

I would like to permit increased density where the amount of land set aside in cluster zoning is consistent with the buildable land that would otherwise be used by single family houses that were not "clustered." Wet land, which would never be developed anyway should not be "preserved" in order to justify greater density as is now done. This, of course, requires a change in town regs and ordinances.

Route 9 is a horror story.

Amherst missed out on big box stores – needs tax base (property taxes are horrific)

Use University Drive for this. Get some condos downtown.

Downtown s/b more walker friendly – more pedestrian crossings. More shops for young people – Gap, Banana Republic - -Northampton has "it" Amherst doesn't.

Attention must be paid to the physical deterioration of public spaces such as the near end of Belchertown Rd/Rte9 – a sorry welcome to Amherst from the south & west.

Our family has been in Amherst and the Amherst area for 5 generations and while there are many things we love about this town, we also see room for improvement. Amherst needs to become more business friendly and develop a larger tax base. As homeowners our property taxes have skyrocketed and we cannot keep up this pace. While the idea may be unpopular, we need to find space for and promote more business in this town.

This is a poorly designed survey that makes huge assumptions, limits options, ignores alternatives, and reduces complex planning issues to simplistic one-liners. For example, cluster subdivisions done as co-housing can work well, but when done by developers, the “open space” is usually just the least desirable area, or is left unusable, or with no plan for upkeep. It’s too easy to envision the common responses to this survey as making for easy justification of California style high-density development with token open space that becomes an eyesore. Amherst should be working on development plans that emphasize holistic creation of community, including agriculture, shared space, community services, less centralization in the absence of workable public transport, more self-sufficiency.

I love the way the center of town is mostly old buildings. Please do whatever possible to preserve them. Also, parking is a huge problem in town (during the school year) and anything that can be done to provide cheap parking for residents would help. I love Amherst.

You speak of developing “more affordable” housing while increasing property taxes more than 50% in the past 5 years. Please consider making the existing housing more affordable by keeping a lid on spending & expanding the tax base.

I would like to see a change in zoning to foster more small café’s and pubs (such as Cushman Market or the Moan and Dove)

The population of the planet is too big currently for current global resources. I oppose all new growth until population levels are reduced significantly.

There were no questions in this survey dealing with beautifying the town or accessible recreational activities. The town could do more to support small businesses (Select Board and Town Meeting).

Re the question whether increased density should be allowed in all areas of town if the developer leaves open space – How much open space? This could mean a handkerchief size space. What good is that?

#21 the “open space” is usually not taken care of – no mowing, no weeding, etc.

Increase limited business development

Encourage smaller/cluster homes

Reduce/limit growth of town/school government/bureaucracy

Avoid increasing taxes to fund elitist projects (e.g. beautifying downtown sidewalks & fixing unbroken items).

Have easy walking & seating facilities for the less able bodied.
Don't tax seniors out of their homes.

- 1) More daycare needed = from newborn ~ 5 years old kids (someone waiting for one year)
- 2) Now my big kid join Head Start Program (only every morning), my little kid join University Child Care (12hours/week) It's free for us. But I need my kids can go to daycare for whole day, their English will better, and I will have enough time to prepare TOEFL at home.
- 3) I wish my kids can go to daycare in the summer. They don't like stay at home for long time.
- 4) We're living in University family housing, we wish the apartment is smaller, so the rent can be cheaper. I wish the fuel assistant program can help us like last year, they cut half money this year.
- 5) I wish University tuition fee can cheaper for foreign students.

The next time you spend the taxpayers' dollars to conduct a survey, please consider at least consulting with a statistician!

I am 88 years old and fixed income would have to leave if taxes rise.

- 1) Downtown needs to be fully developed. There are way too few stores. A town is no good with only service-oriented businesses (restaurants, hair salons, etc.). Move the fire station out of center and create a Thornes Market-like place inside. Cap number of restaurants. Mixed-use buildings need to be added on Pleasant St.
- 2) Fully develop University Drive. Put mall-like strip on an already eyesore-like street. Students will come and residents won't have to look at it in their back yards.
- 3) Don't interfere with downtown congestion. We want town busy & crowded. No none wants traffic re-routed through their neighborhood streets.

Need to have more questions about schools.

Question #11 – Stop dictating neighborhoods! Our developer was forced to sell houses below market value and some of the people who got the deal don't appreciate it and don't take care of their houses & resent others.

Economic development is a must. We have to allow light industry, retail services, research parks, high tech, office buildings to become part of Amherst.
If we keep on our current path, then Amherst will be only for the wealthy & it will lose the diversity etc. that makes Amherst what it is.

I'm delighted I've had the opportunity to be a contributor by participating in this questionnaire.

The colleges and University add greatly to this town, but not some of their contributions which create problems for the town – i.e. traffic congestions, add'l trash and noise. It is time to find a way for these institutions to pay more to the town to cover pollution (noise, filth, air) and water usage!!

Questionnaire too technical. Does not address areas promoting community & vitality in town. Something important is missing from the questions about how to build was man & community.

I believe it is of utmost importance to provide builders incentives for using solar power technology, green building practices & creating high efficiency homes. Amherst should be working towards offering residents renewable energy through the creation of wind farms.

Thank you for allowing me to participate in this survey.

We should promote “cluster sub-division” as a way to add to our tax base, promote affordable home ownership, and offer incentives for “green” construction of these homes. Create new business through incentives, stream line town approval process, and eliminate sign approval.

Continued diversity in the population should be supported as a goal for decisions.

UMass & Amherst college and the town government need to work more cooperatively.

I am impressed with the steps being taken to involve the community in the planning process and also encourage engagement of professional planners such as we have in the Valley.

Dump Cherry Hill – either sell it or make it into beautiful affordable homes.

This survey was written with a disproportionate bias towards certain forms of housing (that is, the agree statement was ? towards a particular type overall). I would say you need to give the survey in an appropriate manner.

Why are we subsidizing Cherry Hill Golf course & closing War Memorial pool along with the wading pool? We don't have unlimited funds. Why not charge \$1 per child for the wading pool? Why is Mill River open so that we all have to drive to it? War Memorial is within walking distance for many residents & we don't have to use our cars. Maybe we could take a look at similar college towns to find out how they solve the retail issues w/o ruining quality of life.

Focus on Town/Gown
Business friendly town!

I am concerned about the schools losing funding. I moved back to Amherst from Holyoke to take advantage of the superior school system, but I am finding the cuts to

services disturbing. There also should be more affordable housing, since I am among many single parents who may need to look for a more affordable home in Amherst as I can no longer afford mortgage PLUS taxes.

We need a more viable, attractive downtown. Why does it take 12 months to open a restaurant here? Let's improve our downtown and support our public schools. Both are critical.

Parking is a major problem for Amherst. The current system of parking meters inequitable and cumbersome. Why is it that you have to pay until 8 pm in parking lots, but only until 5 pm at parking meters? (I refuse to use the parking garage for this reason). Payment is cumbersome. The system in Northampton is much easier, cheaper, & allows 1 hour of free parking. Current system makes it easier to go to Barnes & Noble to buy a book, rather than buying it in Amherst.

Question 4: cannot lump downtown and village centers; I would support high rises downtown but strongly oppose in Cushman.

Question 17: I prefer that the population of Amherst grew little or not at all.

Question 19: I don't understand the terms, What is the need to "enhance fire and ambulance services"? Does this include a new fire station in S. Amherst?

Question 25: What is meant by "historic resources"? I can understand the Dickinson or Strong House but what else are you referencing?

I would like Amherst to remain diverse, therefore offering a range of housing options is important. I do not want to see Amherst become an all middle to upper class town!

Run Amherst in a fiscally responsible way. Stop using overrides and property value increases to fund expense growth that is not sustainable. The home owner base cannot keep giving more. Get the universities to provide more support to the town.

I love the idea of a downtown pedestrian mall (like Church St. in Burlington, VT). I also like the idea of more & better bicycle paths; ideally independent of auto roadways.

Improve allowing business and development of stores and job opportunities for citizens. I see great things for Amherst, allow it to flourish and grow the difference and community is wonderful. We need to let expansion happen. It also brings in TAX relief. Thank you.

The town of Amherst should strongly encourage the University to supply adequate housing for students on campus.

The desirability of clustered housing, increased density in Village Centers depends on the details of those plans.

Increase property taxes are not the answer and are part of the problem. Therefore increase residential development is also not an answer.

Enforce occupancy limits on student houses.

Close branch libraries & the pool to maintain current levels of public safety. Prioritize wisely!

Summary: the main reasons we moved to Amherst last year were the green space and the culture of the area. In general we'd prefer if the area didn't get much more developed, but if some development does take place, we'd prefer that it be available to people from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. Thank You.

This town has always prided itself for its ties to education and agriculture, support the people that bring it here, make it affordable for those that work or want to work in this area. Amherst has created an image of a bureaucracy that makes it not worth trying to live or start business here. We need to prove ourselves as welcoming and worthy as neighboring towns.

I think the town needs to encourage more business development along the entire length of Routes 9 & 116.

The town needs to reconsider businesses like Maplewood Farm. It's now an eye sore. Drop the permitting required for roadside garden stands.

- 1) Many (most) of your questions are meaningless outside of a specific context – e.g. what does “development” mean in reference to what size lot? Other examples could be quoted.
- 2) Too many questions presuppose micromanagement, and ignore crucial distinction between domain of town govt, state govt, federal govt.

Greater planning with Amherst & campus police forces to quell over-rowdy students, drunkenness & a strictness in enforcement of noise violations that affect town residents near campus.

As I am for sure a sr. citizen, and so far in good health, tis hard for me to answer many questions. I shall stay in my house until I cannot drive any more, as no buses come this far.

- 1) Enlarge the business tax base
- 2) Encourage luxury home development to protect housing prices
- 3) Support the schools
- 4) Make local colleges pay the full amount that they impact the town
- 5) Reduce non-core spending

We need a better understanding of some basics. Such as

- 1) the condition of Public Works Bldg. Why we need a new bldg.
- 2) recreation center – what is the status of the current center? Who uses the center? How often residents use the ctr. Etc.
- 3) Referring to page 5, small houses small lots? One-bedroom? Two-bedrooms?

- 4) Referring to page 6 Question 12, housing for seniors. How many housing currently we have for seniors? Is the supply meeting the demands? Do we need more housing?
- 5) Pg. 6 Question 13, light industry – What is considered light industry? What will be considered suitable to have in Amherst?

I/we feel fortunate to live here. We also feel that Amherst has come to take for granted many of the advantages of living here, and is not prepared to curtail expenses when economics dictate, as now. To remain excellent, our schools do not need to introduce/return sports and recreational programs that are not central to their mission of education. Fees for trash removal are exorbitant, especially because additional fees are required for disposal of many items. Roads/streets are not being well-maintained (neglected potholes, etc.)

I have always believed that Amherst's problem is its archaic form of government. Town Meeting may have worked well in the 19th century. It is inadequate for the 21st century. Get rid of it. On a scale of 1-10 with 1 the worst and 10 the best, I would rate this survey a 5.

Don't spend any more money on fancy sidewalks & walk lanes – the paving blocks are dangerous to anyone on heels or who is unsteady. They become more uneven with time & require more maintenance and are harder to keep ice free.

Concentrate on increasing the tax base with light industry, retail, etc.

Greenfield has had training of non-medical & medical people for crisis/catastrophic intervention. I realize Amherst has a task force training now, but it is only for medical personnel. It would be advantageous if everyone was up to speed in the event of a town emergency.

- 1) Make it easier, not more difficult, for an expanded common market(s) to thrive.
- 2) Together with Northampton, Springfield & Worcester, negotiate for a high-speed rail-line the length of the current I-90 to Boston.
- 3) Create the "Amherst Learning Center" that exploits the presence in town of retired faculty & professionals to provide accredited, enhanced post-secondary education for immigrants, workers, & post-secondary students.
- 4) Make it easier not harder for local churches to renovate their facilities.

Student housing should be principally the responsibility of the University – "privately owned student housing" is an unclear term. Why not encourage the University to make land available for those privately-owned housing units if the University itself cannot obtain funds to build more student housing itself? (No more crappy apts for students in private houses.)

Good luck!

Administrative positions need to be considered when deciding how to live within the town budget. Direct service positions need to be maintained to preserve the “basics.” This would include: police officers, firefighters, teachers, teaching assistants, library staff, etc. Huge expenditures, such as the soccer fields on Potwine, are not in the town’s best financial interest. The town’s residents cannot afford more overrides. Property taxes are already very high.

Maintain character of town & environment. Downtown could be developed a little more densely if carefully done to encourage local business.

University drive could absorb a little more development leaving other places to remain rural & open – No more McMansions unless for communal living!

Trees- trees & more trees for downtown!

I would like to see zoning changes to encourage senior community living. Zoning changes that encourage compressed housing (cluster & used) by right, while making conventional subdivisions more difficult – perhaps by special permit. In addition, I would like to see ANR applications undergo site plan review. Viewshed zoning is non-existent in Amherst, as well as hilltop clearing regulations. I would like to see redevelopment of the train station area, and mixed use development along the north end of southeast street, just north of Colonial village. Some PRP zoning can be changed to Office Park along Belchertown Road near Valley Medical.

We put this to one side because we despair that anything will ever be done in this town of zealots promoting their own nutty agendas. We have a superb planning staff but nobody listens to them; this town of committees all know better, led by a loony select board. The archaic town meeting might be appropriate for historic Deerfield or Sturbridge Village but this is a contemporary small town that faces contemporary challenges. We should be managed by an elected council directing a town manager & mayor. If we must continue with this utopian fantasy then there should be term limits. Many members are clearly certifiable or approaching senility. Town committees have 6 year limits, why not T.M.? Many sit there, unelected year in year out. The pathetic election turn out is a reflection of deep apathy, face it. Village Stores, a la Cushman, are highly desirable but economically shaky. How will these be incorporated into the other centers? Tax breaks? Cushman wanted this but to judge by the way town officials & committees threw the book at the owners, no one in their right mind would consider opening one in future!

If the bus service here was hourly, not twice daily, we would use it, and not come into town by car, we could even get rid of our second car! Think how much O² that would save and ease parking in town.

Bicycling, except for recreation is unreal and is being pushed by zealots who are happy to risk life and limb in competition with speeding (exceeding the posted speed limits seems to be an Amherst concept) vehicles.

Housing, housing and more housing ~ who is going to fund the extra school enrollments? Poor homeowners? Or are we to be ejected in favor of the rich seeking utopian living with their McMansions or starter castles! Housing moratorium is in order.

My biggest concern is “keeping Amherst small.” I’d rather see no new development at all, rather investing in roads & other de-congestions tactics. I want to keep vistas and open lands clear from development first. So, I would rather see development clustered in the village centers to create walkable communities where people interact more – in contrast to Hadley’s mass retail that requires a vehicle. I also would want new development to be in the form of houses – not apartments! There are too many complexes already, and we should promote home ownership. Many new grads stay here – offer an ownership program. Also, the destruction of much of the Robert Frost trail is a perfect example of why the town needs to purchase undeveloped land in the public interest.

Groups of people should not be able to take money from groups smaller than their own to fund projects that benefit the takers.

Life is not about a majority controlling a minority, if people worried more about their own responsibility and not their neighbors, Amherst would be a better place. There was no better town than Amherst in the 1950s.

The town should support Cherry Hill Golf course and not expect to make a profit – its not a business – it’s a town recreation opportunity for our health and well being. Not everyone uses it – but I don’t play soccer, have kids in the Amherst School system, etc. We pay for all – even if we don’t all use everything.

Devastatingly disappointed. The questionnaire focuses on housing & not the financial future of Amherst that was discussed in the meetings.

Blocking big businesses coming to Amherst will hurt its future. Big business, stores & hotels are at the door steps of Amherst generating big revenue for Hadley, e.g. out of towners who come to Amherst stay in hotels & there is not a single hotel in Amherst, where as there are 7 hotels just outside Amherst on Route 9. Think Amherst future. It would not happen within strong finance base. Please!

The parking for handicapped folks is not very well placed to allow access to many shops and restaurants!

I don’t use public transportation – so have no opinion.

I believe that if you continue to pay high salaries for town employees we are going to go BUST!!

Go Mayoral and decrease 1 salary by \$60,000 or less. Mayors in other towns get \$65,000 or less. Just because we are a historic town, does not mean we need to keep a town manager or have town meetings.

Fix the ? - Balance the budget, figure out what we can afford to do before we make promises we can’t afford. Let’s figure out a way to partner with colleges (our biggest potential asset and biggest potential liability) to create an atmosphere that would be encouraging to environmentally cleaner businesses ? off from the work at UMass,

Amherst College, Hampshire College. Please do not duplicate bureaus at the town level for oversight that is already happening at the state level – like D.E.P., Conservation!

My responses were influenced by economic consequences, with reliance on long-term sustenance of revenues, income, etc. Also I was influenced by placing low-priority on choices requiring tax support.

Best wishes to all of you in this endeavor.

I'm sorry to be neutral about so many subjects I know nothing about.

The beauty and history of our town is its biggest asset. That should be preserved rather than doing lots of social engineering schemes.

Issues & institutions I think are important to sustain well, or better than we do now:

- Student riots & drinking (including on Pleasant st.)
- Police & Fire companies need man/woman power increases?
- Serious repair to town roads (Main st./ Pelham road is a disaster, but so are other roads & side streets with existing housing)
- Encourage & bring in high-tech businesses.
- Develop retail stores on University Drive
- Develop individual and group housing suitable to elders. Most important, develop low-priced services aimed to sustain keeping seniors in their existing homes!!

The main reasons I chose to buy a house/live in Amherst 20 years ago were large tracts of conservation land/woods, large tracts of farmland/open space, awareness/caring for the environment, historical and vibrant downtown with locally owned businesses, support of alternative transportation, cultural diversity, small town feel with wide variety of fine arts and cultural events, minimal large scale housing and retail development & good public schools. I voted yes for the override because it would help to preserve all of the above, while working to build up our tax base a careful thoughtful manner. More time educating the public could pass it in future. Please hold UMass accountable for unpaid bills! And consider investing in cleaner, quicker buses.

Co-housing

Agricultural development on the community scale

Renewable energy sources

Non-car based transport alternatives

Bike paths

Are all essential to our immediate and especially our long term future

The car-based suburban culture we think of as normal and assume will continue has no future though it takes imagination to think anything other than the next five years will be like the last 50.

There seems to be a lot of pressure from large developers in our town, so we need to be careful not to gradually ruin the landscape. I also understand that taxes & housing prices

are too high & that Amherst would be culturally a more interesting town if this were not so. I think that all of the colleges could contribute more to the town than they do. I also think we as a town are afraid to say no to any and all public safety precautions & do not hesitate to pay for the most expensive equipment (fire trucks, new computers, DPW equipment, etc.) which drives up costs. Also, higher officials are paid too much compared to the lowest paid workers (for example in the public school system). I wonder if we could provide incentives for UMA to allow fewer cars on campus (while providing more bus service if needed). I think a pedestrian mall in Amherst (closed to cars) would make it a more unique attractive & friendly place, and would attract more people to spend time there. I'm not sure where the ideal place would be – some place like where the garage is now, that abuts so many restaurants & businesses, would be ideal.

Expanding tax base absolutely essential. Appointment of economic development expert ditto. Competition for outdoor sculpture on commons corners. 10-minute vans to & from peripheral parking lots tied to making N. Pleasant main drag a pedestrian mall. Encourage small, open (rentable) low-horsepower vehicles for town center banning cars, trucks etc. from the center – a la the Netherlands. This would mean a pool of such vehicles for 2 or 3 people w/space for shopping bags at the common. Encourage more sculpture/art in town.

Look at cutting administrative costs by further professionalizing town administrators (accountability; hiring/firing), downsizing # of administrators, & providing top-quality web-based information & services. See the town of Needham as a model of stellar town services. No more McManions: they are an eyesore & bad environmentally.

We must start now to move away from the automobile-driven community to a more diversified form of transportation. Example: the two proposed roundabouts @ Atkins Corner are a disaster; totally automobile driven! Roundabouts are death to pedestrians & bikers! There are NO questions about the transition from oil-dependent energy to sustainable energy!!! Let's MOVE forward w/joy into our future & stop dragging our feet!!

Amherst obviously needs to generate more tax revenues so that it can continue to offer excellent public schools, enhance fire and ambulance services, and support social services for its residents. These tax revenues cannot keep coming from increases in property taxes, so the town must recognize and accept the fact that it must become more business friendly by removing unnecessary impediments to the establishment of real businesses and commerce. For example, there is a large population density in the Pomeroy/West street, East Amherst/Amherst Woods, and Echo Hills areas. Why not create an attractive supermarket of the Big Y or Whole Foods type along Route 9 east? We have little convenience stores and service stations and now a new quick lube/inspection station but no full scale grocery store that would keep food dollars in Amherst instead of in Hadley or Belchertown. Why not convert the old Maplewood Restaurant building into an attractive drug store? I really resent having to go to either

Hadley or Belchertown to find stores that sell the everyday necessities. Don't be afraid of commerce! Rezone some of the land that is currently zoned for research and establish some new business sites.

When I moved to Amherst in 1982, my income did not allow me to purchase a home. Now that my income is "comfortable" (I live simply) I find that housing prices are ridiculous and out of reach. Thus, I continue to rent. Still if I didn't have a reasonable landlord and an "agreement" with him on care of the property, I wouldn't be able to afford to live in Amherst. House prices are too high, there is essentially no affordable housing for low and moderate income individuals or families, and rental costs are forcing people in these brackets out of town. Is there a solution? Is there a common will to find a solution?

- 1) Encourage donations rather than tax initiatives for certain desired projects.
- 2) Clean up and discourage the posted ads on lampposts and on transformers, etc. downtown. They look terrible! It would be easy enough to identify (the phone #'s are usually listed) and fine offenders.
- 3) Consider all the consequences of your decisions. For example, the unloading of trucks on Main St. is a poor consequence of the parking garage.

I support sensible business development to create a larger tax base to support our public schools.

Tax increases s/b kept to an absolute minimum so lower and fixed income residents can stay here.

Social programs including historical preservation, s/b self-funding. Also dump the golf course if it can't support itself.

High industry s/b encouraged to provide both work and taxes. Remove administrative obstacles to commercial developers. Don't develop residential areas until some commercial areas are in place to provide jobs.

Open space more important than organized cultural activities given room, people can organize their own activities.

- 1) I'm very hesitant about more low income housing
- 2) I'm very hesitant about family who can afford to live in Amherst, but depart after their children have used the school system, and have made demands for them.
- 3) Regarding people who have and still live here, having to pay for other family higher needs, when they themselves, do not have those needs anymore.

As a single adult, I would like to see more opportunities for co-housing. Ownership & small space & not a huge condo complex.

We lived near Princeton University from 1980-2002 and saw the Hopewell Township in Mercer County grow exponentially. The reasons for living there near a university town

were completely destroyed it because a suburb of New York! Our two daughters went to Smith & Amherst colleges and we moved to Amherst, just by chance to support our younger daughter graduate from Amherst. We like the “college town” “non-corporate” atmosphere of Amherst so much that we stayed back. This area reminds us so much of Princeton area in 1980. So we will try to do everything in our hands to help preserve it.

Reopen PVTA stops in South Amherst.

I do not support raising taxes in Amherst. We need to stay within our budget. This is a town not a city. Amherst is becoming too expensive to live here. Take care of the working class. As for this booklet, try not to repeat the questions over & over, its redundant anyways. Have a nice day.

Amherst need to get its permitting process in order / Building Insp. – Fire Dept, etc.
We need more mixed use in town – More retail development downtown.

- 1) The town planning form of government is outdated for Amherst. It over-represents retirees and makes needed change almost impossible.
- 2) The public school system in Amherst is in free fall. It must have the highest priority. That means that development strategies to increase Amherst’s tax base are crucial.

Keep open spaces and views.

Small businesses should be promoted – and chains should be discouraged.
It’s great you’re involving the community in the planning process!

Better sidewalks downtown for use of wheelchairs & medical scooters. Better schools to work with all of our children – especially those who need special services. Not all kids are served correctly in Amherst. UMass to build more student housing that the University would be responsible for students. Build a community services center downtown to serve the needs of low income families (i.e. WIC family center, survival center, literacy project).

I would keep Amherst as it is. Build equally through out the whole town. Encourage more down town businesses, more senior housing out of down town so we can develop restaurant business and night life and not have to hear about noise complaints from seniors. Move them to the country with a bus route.

I did this survey – sorry it didn’t reach you. My home in the center of town is convenient, yet I continue to need a greater “sense of community” having little or no contact with neighbors. For this reason, “The Tabella” and “Fresh Side” are important, as well as the Amherst Cinema – where old and younger gather together – I once told Niels Searing who owns “Black Sheep” that if he left town I would too. That was 25 years ago, I believe. I even attend a neighborhood church (UCC) and worked at the Dickinson House & Woman’s Club all near at hand.

(Some questions here seemed ambiguous – w/o more examples or open-ended; i.e. transportation year-round for all areas and viable times; or enhancing all social services. One hesitates to commit.)

- 1) Open space/greenery/air and water quality are things (the first two anyway) that cannot be recaptured; they should not be sacrificed for short-term economic gains that moreover bring further expenses in town services.
- 2) Valley air is pretty polluted – greenery help absorb it (& replace oxygen).
- 3) Try to go slow on development catering to college/Univ. students. Amherst has lost much of its “real town” character already. Gone are such basics as 2 small drugstores, 2 hardware stores, 1 grocery store, even a 10¢ store decades ago, plus several more traditional clothing stores, 2 shoe stores... all replaced by transient businesses catering to a transient population. As you seek a new economic base, explore independent models with their own reasons for being (not 5D, 13H). The tourist-town syndrome isn't pleasant.

Questions seem geared toward the raising of property taxes, as opposed to discussing options that might allow growth where needed while holding excess spending in check. No one wants additional traffic congestion, pot holes in streets, or impossible bike lanes: but it is near impossible to discuss the allocation of tax dollars to specific needs without looking at area demographics (actual or projected) and current budgetary restraints. Nevertheless, I hope my responses are of assistance.

Amherst should support development of retail services so we don't have to buy everything we need (e.g. groceries) in Hadley. The annual subsidy that Amherst residents provide to neighboring towns (that support business development) is enormous.

The cost of residential houses is too high for the low-income families. The houses are not repaired and tenants are not forewarned of the increase in time. Solution for downtown traffic congestion should be sought may be flyover pedestrian bridges at some crucial areas.

- 1) More bike paths – a connecting network of paths that do not use existing sidewalks & roads would make biking safer and more prevalent & would reduce traffic & pollution.
- 2) Christmas lights – I love having some lights, but I think ours are remarkably unattractive. Either plant evergreens or string them like the ones in S. Hadley. Ours remind me of demented spider webs.
- 3) What I love about Amherst is the combination of cultural & intellectual opportunities mixed with a rural feeling. I wish for more businesses to provide tax revenue & am concerned about the eroding quality of the public schools.

It is hard to answer these questions without a specific project in mind or with specific “trade-offs.” I think Amherst should maintain its open vistas along main routes such as 116, Bay Road and East St. The high density housing seems to make more sense to me

near Orchard Valley (used to live there) than in the meadows along SE St. Sometimes Amherst is compared to State College, PA. State College has had success with commercial growth but as I have witnessed over 30 years a substantial loss of natural beauty, open space and quality of life.

Many of the questions herein imply behavioral and cultural issues, particularly as it relates to student behavior! I would strongly oppose establishment of off-campus student ghettos. Without efforts to encourage civil behavior, any plans are meaningless. In brief, how the colleges and university affect the town are absent from this questionnaire.

Amherst should be more bike-friendly. If the west side of West Street was smooth it would be a good bike ride to the rail trail or a commute to UMass or Amherst Center. Riding with the traffic on the right side of 116 is dangerous & unpleasant (so much traffic). Connect the village centers to downtown with separate walkways, bike-ways and people would use them. Also landlords who rent to students should be held more accountable to the neighbors.

- Too many community centers identified for purpose of this survey
- Survey asks for detailed answers to very broad general questions. Answers therefore of dubious significance.
- Survey raises critical question of choice between free market decisions & planned decisions.

I certainly would not place much credence in the answers to this survey – very doubtful that most residents are in a position to supply intelligent, informed answers.

Do we not live in America where the basic language is English? Why shouldn't U.S. citizens be "encouraged" to learn English, by not translating for them at every turn?

This form was given to me by my daughter who is away at school & declined to fill it out.

Careful prioritization in execution of town policy will be critical. For example, open space is nice, but we can't preserve it all. Preservation should be focused on parcels we identify as critical. It would be good to have more moderate priced housing in Amherst. I'd support construction of more small houses on smaller lots, if it accomplished this. But if the result is still homes priced above the level of folks with moderate incomes, I would not support them.

For me, one of the big concerns is how student rentals can negatively affect a neighborhood – between the lack of concern for littering & noise daytime & nighttime as well as lack of concern landlord/owners have to keep their property attractive, a student rental can quickly destroy the pleasant atmosphere of a neighborhood and bring down property values.

19D – Town should insist state & university pick up more – the students cost us a lot.

19C – Town could acquire open space & lease it back to young, start-up farmers.

The fewer new houses/apts/condos the better. Maintain farm lands.

We value the presence of farms, of conservation areas, of culture, and believe that it is shameful that Amherst schools are growing less good (for financial reasons) with each passing year.

If we maintain what we have now it will save money in the long run. Put projects on hold until such has been done. Cut free busing and propose a token amount of money to maintain the cost of such. We are going to lose the middle class people because of what the town is trying to create now. If we ran our homes like the town does we would be broke before the year's end. Is Amherst trying to make Amherst into a city?? If so, let's have a mayor type of government.

Please provide as many English education programs for foreign students' family.

Question

5D – The students have ample access to retail services already.

6 – We use public transportation daily because it is available already!

8 – No more McMansions!

9 – Define your terms: “more affordable” & “average household”

10 – Why does this question feel like a fait accompli?

I shall state this simply and absolutely – I am opposed to increasing density in Amherst

11 – Amherst follows the marketplace, for good or ill. We do not need additional Section 8 housing.

12 – With current tax rates it is difficult to imagine seniors living out their twilight years in Amherst.

13A – “clean” – what does this buzzword mean?

13B – Is this an incentive for the town?

13D – Not Home Depot!

This is a college town. The college community does not benefit from “economic development initiatives” the planning board does.

14 – Stop trying to get my support for issues I oppose. Your language is vile and deceitful.

15C – This already exists.

15G – We cannot afford what we have already!

15I – Where do you have in mind?

15J – Is this a euphemism for more bars?

17 – “How many more” – We have enough!

“should be built” – None

17H – No additional student housing!

18C – Only during on reduced schedules!

19I – This is a state/fed issue, not a local one!

21 – “like Amherst” – Why are we speaking in hypotheticals and not about Amherst? This question proceeds from the position that we need new housing, which we do not.

22A – This is not a statement!

23C – This question does not clearly ask anything!

24 – Do you mean to suggest that large national chain convenience stores (a la 7-11) are small scale? We should not encourage any more convenience stores!
If you want a dialogue, include space with each question.

We need seriously, to put in a side walk down Pomeroy Lane.

I would be willing to contribute my expertise.

Our town needs a new way of determining its budget other than 13 different articles before town meeting. I think this is critical to our town's future.

Amherst has a large supply of low cost housing in the form of apartments. Our neighboring communities should contribute their share before we offer more.

I believe the future of Amherst rests in the hands of its educators. If we can't support our children's education, nothing can be achieved. It would be an utter shame for the school system to lose any more funding. I also think it should be considered to build a new middle school. Preferably one that doesn't look like a jail and where all classrooms have windows.

The greatest problems facing Amherst today are:

1. The idiocy of 4/5 on the select board (all except last elected)
2. The lack of democracy (!) inherent in our "representative" town meeting, which is both inefficient and incomprehensible.

Please promote/support another attempt to get mayor/council.

Amherst needs to let a moderate range of industry into town to ease the tax burden. The taxes are very high and are driving people out of town.

Amherst should strive to preserve its "charm."

Questions 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 21, 24, 25

NO NEW DEVELOPMENT

Questions 19, 25

NO NEW TAXES.

My priorities for Amherst are:

- Protecting the small town/rural aspects – we are rapidly turning into a "bedroom community" (if we haven't already done so).
- Our natural resources are limited – keep open land, aquifer protection.
- "luxury" houses should have a tax surcharge.
- Negligent or absentee landlords should be fined for not maintaining student rental properties (take a look at Phillips St. or Main St.) That's why I'm wary about creating more off campus rental housing.

Question

5B – Let's focus on developing current ones – unless they could be developed w/the campuses designed to cater to the student populations (near the campuses) i.e. across the street from Hampshire or near Atkins or off of Eastman & E. Pleasant St.

8 – However, moderate income families still need to overcome the tax burden – which could drive them to neighboring towns. How about a more progressive tax.

9D – Not ideal, but probably needs to be a part of the solution for low-income housing.

10 – New Snell Street neighborhoods is a good thing. Neighborhoods are good. Push businesses to district Village Centers.

There are a lot of presuppositions in these two questions.

11 – Not necessarily. Echo Hill is a better model than Amherst Woods. Apartments & Condos -> Ranch Houses -> Capes & Colonials. Amherst Woods has a small-moderate income neighborhood, but that could be augmented w/more. However, The Gatehouse Road would be a great village center to develop. On Rt. 9 on bus stop. Sandwiched between two huge neighborhoods – Apartments.

19I – This is an issue of social justice.

I like that we have open space. I just think the pendulum needs to swing to the center and have some balance.

21 – I wish you would have defined “large lot” (> than ___ acres). I will define large as > .75 acre.

22 C – If possible but I wouldn't make it a make or break issue.

Thanks for your hard work. These decisions are not just about lifestyle but for some it is an issue of equal & just access. Thanks for wrestling with all of these issues.

The town meeting form of government no longer works for Amherst. It over-represents retirees who tend to oppose change and will sacrifice the school system for the sake of services for seniors, low taxes, and open space.

It was difficult to answer this without context. Many questions depended upon the circumstances and details of a given option. These issues do not exist in a theoretical vacuum, but within a complex set of variables and without more details, the answers may give you an idea of what citizens are thinking, but not a picture of what would happen if these ideas were brought under greater scrutiny.

For me these questions are in a vacuum which makes answering difficult. I don't know what the unintended consequences are to any planning response nor do I know what the town's needs really are.

Thank you for including me in your survey. Good luck with your efforts.

Again traffic moved fine until the 116 islands. It holds up traffic, making a left (going north) bad idea. Same with speed bumps. Two well lit cross walks would be safer. When I first moved to Amherst there was no building allowed for (X) amount years. Also stop building on conservation land such as Amherst Woods. I was told that no building would ever happen, “Its conservation land” according to Town, but through enough money at the Town and poof, it is buildable.

Question 4I – University Drive only.

19 – No more taxes. You are driving middle class out!

As w/surveys such as this, it is frustrating to answer questions w/a limited space to reply. In some cases I didn't feel I knew enough to answer/judge, in others I felt a need to explain.

Basically it seems we have enough "McMansions." Speaking as a longtime resident and a retiree, I am concerned about higher tax rates. It does not seem fair to have to consider moving because I can no longer keep up with the escalation. Less is more. Let's preserve what we have, be socially conscious environmentally and cut out the greed (i.e. parking fines, etc.) Good luck with the survey. I look forward to the results.

I am very strongly opposed to allowing students to rent in "family" residential areas. They have no concern for neighborhood children's safety. They consistently speed on our street, toss fast food garbage out of their cars (on our street), have loud parties & they/landlord do NOT maintain the property. Furthermore, a large pit bull lives there & is not always on a leash. Student rentals should be kept close to their schools & not in family neighborhoods. Also Main Street (from Triangle to S. East looks very unsightly due to student housing!)

I miss the center of town community activities. Find that the Cinema Center has revived what used to be and given us adults/residents a place to congregate and visit with one another. Without the brashness of loud music or tv/videos blaring.

Amherst should strive to become a town like Northampton.

Keep the public schools strong and cure public schools supporters of their charter public school phobias. The charter schools are not the enemy and they make great contributions to all townships.

Create incentives for bus & bike ridership.

1. Amherst needs to concentrate on bringing in more businesses, whether downtown or in village centers, to relieve the tax burden on homeowners.
2. The Finance Committee should be elected by vote.
3. Amherst needs a thorough investigation of the moneys and how they are used in the schools. Too much waste on unimportant items, get back to basics!
4. Less dissension, finger pointing among Select Board needed. The focus is too much on personalities and not enough on town problems and the solutions to them.

Amherst failure to be flexible adopt to change and self-centered feelings of grandeur has led to the current fiscal crisis the town is facing. The various members of town meeting take great pride in driving business out of Amherst to neighboring towns, i.e. Hadley. The town has done nothing to diversify the tax base, discouraged business from staying or coming to Amherst. A lot of talk but little action, and results for the working people of Amherst.

I dislike multiple choice questions; I always want to qualify an answer. In view of the on-coming energy crunch, new housing should be near public transportation or place of employment. This factor also favors duplexes or multiples family dwellings.

I wish we could find a way to make UMass prohibit undergrads from having cars on campus.

The main arteries from Rt. 9 to UMass need to be improved so they flow better and reduce the traffic congestion in downtown & downtown neighborhoods e.g. longer left turn lane on Rt. 9 for University Dr., etc.

My wife and I searched the US for a year and rejected 15 other towns in favor of investing in Amherst. Historical charm, the 5 colleges, the smart people, Town Meeting, quality of life are unique & precious. Obviously the town is being pushed to grow. The more we grow, the more we try to accommodate socio-ethnic and cultural differences – then we dilute, squander the essence of Amherst, lose the thing that makes Amherst special.

One of the reasons we moved here (Amherst) was the appeal of open space preservation. To see the mini-subdivisions being built scars the landscape. Amherst should work on bringing in businesses to support the tax base (like Hadley has done so successfully) and not more subdivisions. Try to use all of University Ave. for businesses.

How can we retain those unique characteristics that make Amherst special, and yet still live within our means, in an era of decreasing state aid?

A person's income, home ownership, age, or ethnic background do not add value to this survey. Answers reflect only 1 person's thoughts – you didn't ask if there school children in the homes – but it has no value as one's opinion may not be indicative of support for the school – or not.

1. No further use of over 2 story buildings in Amherst commercial area or elsewhere.
2. No further allowance of commercial fast-food plans (Plenty (too much) of that now available on Rte. 9 in Hadley!)

P.S. Arriving her from Alaska in 1964, there was nothing on Rte. 9. Look at is now! I raised 3 children here, cleared 3 acres of property. I love this town. Please preserve its beauty and wild areas! Our children & grandchildren deserve it.

We need businesses in Amherst to help support the tax base. Make Amherst appealing to businesses by cutting the red tape and giving them incentives to move here!!

Please keep Amherst affordable for those like myself who grew up here, my grandfather & great grandfather grew up here.

My son cannot afford to live in Amherst. The wealthy are taking over Amherst. People who have lived here all their lives will be forced out – the same way the colonists drove out the Native Americans.

- Work on making Amherst “green”
- Give discounts for using own shopping bags at stores
- Encourage biking!

This plan is absolutely necessary. Thank you. The school cuts are ridiculous. Why not set some goals too that are measurable.

I would like to see an estate tax incentive or deduction for the elderly, retired on a fixed income. If taxes etc. keep climbing I certainly will have to sell the property that I have lived in for over 47 years.

I would also like to put a moratorium on low income apts. Many people with school age children do not pay their share of taxes for the school system which puts added strain on the elderly in my opinion. (Cut extreme spending and lower taxes.)

I think that we have a real opportunity at this time to “be green.” Caring about our planet/environment as well as our town/backyard. Amherst is unique and has been a haven for so many for so long. We can continue to stand-out in positive ways, which will only enhance us and our planet in the long run.

I think that any further development of Amherst would be negative. We need to preserve the aspects of our community that have been loved by generations. Amherst is nothing if not a liberal, care free, passionately P.C. environmentally conscious, educationally oriented old New England town. Let’s improve what we have, not expand into infinity. We have a lot, work with it.

I see Amherst as a town/community that is nice and peaceful, but at the same time, fun and exciting. It serves people of different ages and groups. For example, college students, elders, families, couples, etc. Actually, when I think of Amherst (especially downtown Amherst) it reminds me of the community in the TV show “Gilmore Girls” and I like that.

There is a need to find a way so that people who work in town can live in town – therefore a need for moderate income housing.

There is a need for the select board (and other town officials) to operate in a manner which considers the ideas of all while maintaining respect for the proponents of those ideas. Common Sense & Courtesy!

Senior center location is poor – difficult for handicapped to use. Emergency service for elderly not satisfactory.

I do not support any further tax increase. Current funding should be used more wisely.

There should be more independent/academic not “business,” non-local, non – “in-group” oversight of development/planning decisions involving conservation encroachment/change. e.g. the Plum Brook Soccer field dev. is an outrageous elitist “crony-ist” project – prime example of local influence peddling, overriding common

sense, as well as scientific sense and community interest. In general, there is far too much reliance on advisement provided by one or two local “old boy” environmental issues/assessment companies = high risk of decisions influence by personal feelings &/or monetary interests.

Local newspaper (Gazette) frequently guilty of propaganda versus reporting – including censoring letter to dilute or distort content under the guise of “editing!” this is unworthy of community which purports to uphold values of “integrity” & “altruism.”

We live in Amherst because it is unique. Talk of convenience stores, more apt. houses, development is what every other town in the USA has chosen. I just don’t want Amherst to become anywhere USA. Open spaces, hiking, pedestrian mall, “clean” development, selective congestion, etc. will help Amherst retain its essence.

More student specific should be developed along University Drive. UMass should be held accountable and develop greater ambulance service for their drunken students or pay the town of Amherst to address this. Large Biotech and other companies should be encouraged to build along Rte. 116 from Rte 9 to the University.

Too much for this space. In brief:

- Incentives for small business owners to thrive.
- Promotion of diversity through economically accessible housing.
- Make it easier for light industry, etc. to come to Amherst and increase our tax revenue, so that..
- Maintain high level of service in our schools.
- As a resident of Cushman, I think each of the villages should have a place like the Cushman Market. It promotes community and reduces car travel.

I didn’t answer #30. I am not even on your scale.

As Amherst adds more housing and commercial buildings we must not let our traffic problems get out of hand. Overdependence and over-accommodation of cars will not serve our town well in the long run. The storage needed for accommodating cars is very costly (parking at home, work, shopping, recreation, etc.) I applaud the efforts to make Amherst downtown and village centered. We need to make as many amenities walkable, bikeable as possible. I also applaud the notion of smaller houses on smaller lots! Thank you for the opportunity to speak out.

More businesses, small & large. Taxes are high enough!

Having gone to Amherst College over half a century ago and having returned here to live and work 6 years ago, I think that #1 priority is to preserve the historic character, natural beauty and rural nature of the town. I consider the Rte. 9 mall, the oversized and rowdy Umass and the Bank of America building blots on the landscape. And I think the college and university should share more of the expense of running the town.

Amherst needs sidewalks, not bike lanes. My children are not safe biking to school along E. Pleasant, as the bike lane is not protected and the traffic is dangerous! Sidewalks Please!!

With my answers I have tried to give an initial impression of my thoughts. Many answers might change as the details of the issue become known.

I would like Amherst to have & maintain existing:

- Economic/class diversity
- Cultural/racial diversity
- Excellent schools
- Open space/wildlife habitat
- Wonderful/common space for community activities inside & out.

1. Bargaining agreement should reflect ability of town's financing – when times are tight (like now) wage increase should be cost of living & a modest increase above this (i.e. – 1%)
2. High –paid town administrators (i.e. > \$80K) wages should be frozen or cola increase only.
3. Privately owned rental housing units > 6 should be banned. < 5 units should be at least 1/8 mile apart.

1. The town should encourage UMass, Amherst, & Hampshire to work with high tech business & have them locate here – the Palo Alto/Stanford U model should be followed.
2. The town should encourage more housing in the village centers, especially increasing the density downtown so more people can walk & take public transportation. This will require zoning & parking changes. We must create more parking downtown – parking garage a must. We should encourage housing above retail shops.
3. The town should stop spending \$ on poorly-utilized bus routes.
4. The town should not look at parking meter money and parking fines as a significant revenue source. This is very short-sighted.
5. The town should not use tax \$ to support private social service agencies such as the Survival Center.
6. The town must give better support to our Police.
7. Supporting “cultural tourism” is good business!

- Re: Public Facilities for cultural activity – make use of the high school, middle school and library buildings as much as possible.
- The more the whole community works together to make life better for each of its members the stronger and finer a community it will be.

I applaud your efforts.

The town has good intentions with preserving land. Agriculture is a key part of our community but the people in charge of the towns funding are clueless. Local farmers should be consulted in making land preservation & agricultural decisions. Also quit using \$ that could be used for education on pointless items like soccer fields.

I'd like to see Amherst pursue planning that will preserve what it has & work on improving the quality of life for the people already here & not strive for quantity (more of everything). We've already missed that boat! There is no sense in competing with Hadley & Northampton in terms of growth & development. They had "91" to help them AND do not have a large university & 2 smaller colleges who pay no taxes & are there w/accompanying problems as well as some benefits. I probably won't be around to see & appreciate the planning you're attempting to do, but I hope that quality instead of quantity will prevail. Good Luck! I found the survey challenging!

Top 3 priorities:

1. Preserve open space & link it where possible
2. Pedestrian mall in the downtown!
3. No more McMansions!

I'd like to see an expanded farmer's market, with meals, crafts, etc. as in Ithaca, NY, and I think the park in the triangle of land between N. Pleasant, E. Pleasant, & Triangle that will be coming available when the house moves (I forget it's name) would be a great place for it.

Good work on this survey.

Questions are poorly worded, sometimes asking for a response to an unacceptable proposition.

Please that I have not thought deeply about all this – these are basically off the top of my head responses and some could no doubt be changed by discussion.

There should be more aesthetically appealing sites for local businesses.

The public libraries are essential to a healthy town.

Please do not take away the beautiful flowering trees on Pleasant Street & the center of Amherst!!! Cut the sidewalk away from the tree, or whatever you must to keep the tree!!! Bumper to bumper cars & people, but please keep our Amherst a beautiful New England town!!!

We need to broaden the tax base, encourage more business to stay in village centers. We also need to look at the way citizens are able to talk with those running for office or appoint at UMass.

We need a tax base other than private residential property!

We need adequate parking in downtown to preserve the businesses we've got.

We need to be more business friendly.

We need to actively pursue kinds of businesses that we would like to have here.

Increased density, increased mix use, more intensive use of professional research parks, i.e. traffic – will allow for growth and add to tax base without unduly changing the nature of the town. Too much emphasis has been placed on the notions of suburban residence. Our road system is excellent for moving lots of people, we should allow more intense uses of existing developed areas – and set aside more space for additional commercial, light industrial.

I think it's important for Amherst to move beyond the planning/talking/debating stage & begin to act on development. Increasing revenue through economic development will always have opponents in this town, but if businesses with low environmental impact can be attracted, & if development is mindful of preserving some open & historic spaces & managing traffic adequately I do believe it can work.

Keep the downtown businesses alive by providing consumer friendly parking i.e. more levels on parking garage, longer meters at movie theater.
Be open to light industrial or research based business to help lighten the tax burden of the residents.

The planning for parking downtown has been terrible, most noticeably the public garage. We definitely don't need more large, luxurious single family development. A healthy restaurant/convenience store, specialty retail downtown would be most welcome. We absolutely need a multigenerational recreation center. Higher density moderate/mixed income housing with open spaced included would be excellent. *Most important principle to follow: faster diversity and balance to foster a healthy, spirited community.

How about options in questions for people who oppose planning. Or is it just so obvious that elite planners will do better than the ordinary folk that one does not need such an option.

We would like to see the schools, parks, pools & libraries given priority along with sensible business development. We would love to see Amherst known as a friendly place to start a business not a place (as it currently is known) that can be overly bureaucratic to navigate. We would like Amherst to maximize opportunities for businesses like a hotel when it does not compromise farmland & open space. We don not want more sprawl here or in the region.

Need businesses (retail, hotels) for tax revenues.

We have enough land in conservation. Control the use of land with zoning, etc.

Please fix the Norwottuck Rail Trail.

Town government should remember that while many things are good or desirable, that does NOT mean that we can or should spend tax money on all of them.

I think that a portion of taxes should be used to improve/maintain public roads and streets. Going over the train tracks on Strong St. is a nuisance. Also, streets and roads like Sandhill Road and So. Whitney St. are in need of real repair (not just some tar dumped into the largest cracks.)

Plant more trees, e.g. College St./Rt. 9.

We moved to Amherst because it is a community with communal facilities. We are so upset that the town is not supporting War Memorial swimming pool. It is in town, in walking distance, and a community center in summer. Closing it hurts the environment, low & mid-income residents (without their own pools) & the sense of community. It needs a longer season, longer hours, better play structures for kids!!

Amherst quality of life in combination with higher education institutions creates the UNIQUE conditions for the town to become the world class place for technology breeding – the most important asset in wealth & economic growth known to man...
WAKE-UP AMHERST ! POUNCE ON THAT OPPORTUNITY!

1. Enforcement of rules for rentals to students – their responsibility to keep noise down in neighborhoods, their landlords' responsibility to keep property looking decent. Also not exceeding the # of non-related persons renting & living in a house.
2. Years ago, the Town – through eminent domain – “stole” Cherry Hill Golf Course from Dave Maxson. He had planned to build beautiful, one family homes on the edge of the course. Amherst took his land, set some aside for ugly co-housing, and has botched the golf course ownership – it loses thousands per year. The Town put him through hell and he died of a heart attack soon after. Shame on Amherst's representatives. So much for the value of planning.
3. No questions here address the impact of residential growth on our schools before new housing is built. Crocker Farm is overcrowded, yet the Town insists that land set aside for lower income housing off Longmeadow Dr. should go through. The NOVA group continues to fight this. FYI, when Longmeadow Rd. & Greenwich Rd. were added to the Orchard Valley mix, (after the original neighborhood was built) those houses were considered lower income. Now, the Town wants to add more.

Frankly – I don't thin this questionnaire will yield successful growth. Amherst is too busy trying to be politically correct (itself) and not making attractive to business and industry. Lower our taxes – residential. Sick of the fights & threats to lose fire, ambulance & police.

Now, with UMass/Town Police able work in the other's “territory,” will UMass police begin the weekend Pleasant St. bar detail of babysitting patrons – crowd on sidewalk detail, relieving the town of this unnecessary expense?

Connect everything with safe bike paths - & I think people in this area will notice. Very important to an effort to preserve our town & planet.

1. Work with Amherst College to come up with a plan for the town.

2. Only business development that will help our budget is large scale senior housing and large scale student housing.
3. Overhaul zoning to cut down on sprawl.

I applaud efforts to provide more affordable housing in Amherst, but the lower the incomes, the more money is needed for social services, so the higher the taxes, which makes living in Amherst difficult for lower-income people. It's a Catch 22. Amherst can't be all things to all people. On the other hand, many of us are utterly mystified by the million dollar homes going up. Who buys them? Where do they work? Is Amherst just a "bedroom" in their minds?

Sustainable commercial development should be a priority in order to expand the town's tax base.

These questions are fine, but priorities are a balance between goals and cost. It's hard to reflect that balance in some of these questions.

Downtown should be developed commercially with foot-traffic in mind: more cafés, more gift shops, clothing, housewares – and most important, a medium-sized supermarket (like Louis Foods used to be) and hardware store. Parking should be multi-level underground, across from Jones Library, w/one street-level layer fronted by shops along the sidewalk. The street-level parking above current parking garage should become a piazza, with shops facing it. Cafés & garden as part of piazza plan. Terrible waste of prime space as it is. The new cinema complex is great. Property taxes are killing moderate-income homeowners – this should not become a wealthy ghetto!

We love living here, but can not afford to buy a home here.

It'd be great if the bike lanes were wide even to safely ride w/a trailer attached. I like to ride with my one year old son in a trailer but don't feel safe on the street, so I ride on the sidewalk, i.e. from my house off of Old Farm Rd on Rt. 9 to Main St. to the Jones Library.

Support energy saving in public buildings.

This town planning of Amherst is a vital activity, a true exercise of what democracy should do to give citizens a voice in the character and quality of their lives and their children's future. We live in a unique and wonderful town. Such future planning will preserve its advantages for many years!

UMass is an example of not building with a comprehensive plan. On the other hand, Amherst College has developed a campus that is a source of pride to the residents. Like Easthampton, a check on 55+ communities should be considered. It's becoming another form of discrimination – ask a 30-something.

We need to plan for a future (coming soon) without dependence on cars. Hi density walking town center & or village centers. Local agriculture & all necessary services in downtown or village centers. Quality of life will go way up – not down if we create this vision.

Public education is the value, the bedrock of the community, which out ranks anything presented here in this survey, or what I say below.

The importance of walking/jogging/"scooting" to community cohesion is vastly underestimated. Sidewalks, or parallel paths are only useful if they connect as part of a network. I have often wondered if Amherst couldn't take the lead in creating –through eminent domain – a path network through the town, starting perhaps with some heavily traveled roads like SE. However, this has to be part of an overall plan, which addresses maintenance too. The maintenance of the pavement of lower end of the bike trail is abysmal – a cracked area needs to be fixed & Amherst College should repair the rattled path it has created by using the path for its vehicles around Rt. 116/? The success of the path should be used to model the quality of Amherst's life.

- Amherst needs to be much, much more business friendly. A greater emphasis should be put on business (retail, food, etc.) and cultural orgs. The two can be beneficial to one another and residents (Look at the "South End" of Burlington, VT and SEABA – South End Arts & Business Assoc.).
- More emphasis on the arts! (yes Amherst is "arty" but it is very disjointed and poorly organized/publicized).

Not too buy land for conservation.

#12 Amherst should place more emphasis on attracting single people and childless couples – they're better for the tax base.

#22 Where could we possibly block off traffic in the downtown?

#22 Sidewalks should be installed and maintained on all our streets (well, most).

I've grown to appreciate sidewalks. I see more people of all ages walking, running and bicycling every year. Sidewalks increase our quality of life (as do bicycle lanes) so that people will exercise and come into town without a car! It is wonderful that there is a sidewalk from Amherst center all the way to Hampshire College. And Rt. 116 is a very busy road. Let's have more sidewalks!

The town of Amherst is a wonderful college-rural town with important historic components. However, there needs to be planning for future development & growth of businesses & housing. Hopefully – this questionnaire will allow proper planning.

I planned on living in Amherst for my whole life. I recently moved to VT. Primarily to get away from this gigantic non-conforming ugly house that dominated my back yard, front yard and kitchen that was recently built. There should be a zoning law that requires the house designs to be some what compatible with existing neighborhood,

I believe at one time there was a local ordinance passed limiting the number of non-related people living in the same house. (cont. on attached handwritten note.)

Responses to open-ended questions

Q19

1. Bike lanes
2. Encourage business
3. Street lighting
4. Public transportation
5. Offset farming costs
6. Police/Public safety
7. Farm preservation
8. Mayor
9. More benches
10. Use of “green”/renewable energy
11. Comprehensive planning
12. Open spaces
13. Child care services
14. Animal services – dog park
15. Hire an economic development director
16. Improve public schools
17. More parking
18. Sidewalks
19. Invest in “green” economic development
20. Sustainable energy projects
21. Pool/recreation services
22. New sources of revenue
23. Live within budget
24. Tennis courts
25. Community supported agriculture
26. Speed up inspection services & less restrictive
27. S. Amherst fire station
28. Mixed “green” co-housing
29. Golf course
30. Fix roads
31. Shopping mall
32. Teachers/paraprofessionals salaries
33. Traffic violation enforcement
34. More public sports fields
35. Ambulance services maintained by UMass for their students
36. Enhance aid for children
37. Tax base diversification
38. Technology breeding infrastructure
39. Want to maintain school & town services as they currently are not “enhance”
40. LSSE
41. Community cultural center

Q29

5. Mixed race
6. Am. Indian/white
7. Jewish