

Town of Shutesbury Community Visioning Workshop

Summary of Boards from Public Workshop #1 (11/3/2016)

Themes

1) Community (Around 120 Dots)

References to the people that make up Shutesbury appeared on all twenty-five boards. Positive comments -- those expressing values (Question 1) and what should remain the same (Question 4) -- centered on an ability to know one's neighbor and be known in return, and to reside in a supportive, nurturing community of independent thinkers. Residents also expressed gratitude for the Town's many volunteers.

When prompted to name their least favorite thing about Shutesbury (Question 2) or what they would change (Question 3), two themes emerged: residents wish there was a place for the community to gather and connect (e.g. "Lack of public spaces for comfortable, informal, community gathering", "Lack of small meeting spaces") and want a method to resolve future divisive issues and/or heal from past conflict.

2) Civic Space (Around 69 Dots)

The lack of high-quality, town-owned facilities (library, historical facility, senior center, survival center, Boys and Girls Club) was another consistent concern. A new, larger library was the most frequent request (16 Dots), followed by a more general appeal for a location for community events and gatherings.

3) High Costs (Around 64 Dots)

High and increasing property taxes were also repeatedly named. Some responses lamented the lack of a commercial tax base. (Side note: While a more robust town center (café, market, etc.) did not amass enough points to be shortlisted, at least a portion of Shutesbury's residents would be appreciative of these amenities.)

4) Environmental Conditions (Around 32 Dots, 60 if you count "Rural Feel")

Many residents named or dotted statements about Shutesbury's rural feel and natural resources. Naturally, deteriorating environmental conditions appeared as a common concern. Residents named air quality, water quality and quantity and invasive species in response to questions relating to current conditions and sustainability and climate change in response to the fifth question, "What factors will challenge Shutesbury now and into the future?"

5) Internet/Cell/Utilities (28 Dots for Internet, 28 Dots for Utilities)

Lack of a strong cell phone signal and Internet connection were frequently named concerns. In one case, the poor quality of these services was connected to property values. Energy planning was also discussed. Here, residents mentioned a desire for lower energy costs, charging stations, and, in relation to the Environmental Conditions theme, long range planning for self-sustaining energy.

What do you value most about Shutesbury? (Sorted popular to least popular)

Feel (16 Dots; 11 Lines; 5/5 Boards)

- Nature (See "Nature")
- Climate. Value elevations (Cooler summer, snow winter)
- Privacy, Sense of personal space. Spaciousness. Large, open tracts of land.
- Natural Beauty, Beauty, Experience of beauty. "Quiet, Dark Skies" (Language appears multiple times)
- Peaceful

Community (10 Dots; 15 Lines; 5/5 Boards)

- Knowing others and being known
- Supportive, nurturing, caring, neighborly, involved. "Considering greater good"; "Happy/Joyful/Grounding"
- "Community Building Opportunities" and "Variety of ways to connect"
- Environment for raising school-aged children/grandchildren
- Community Composition
 - o Small population, with access to a larger population
 - o Well-educated, independent thinking, progressive-minded
 - o Diversity (backgrounds, age, knowledge)
 - o Generational history of families

Open Space/Recreation (8 Dots; 15 Lines; 5/5 Boards)

- Lake Wyola (2 Dots, kind of; 3 Lines; 3/5 Boards)
 - o Activity, Social Space
- Quabbin Reservoir (x2), Natural Resources
- DCR Land (5 dots here), State Park, State-Owned Land (Shutesbury shares with everybody)
- Opportunities to get outside: Hiking, exercise
- Wildlife
- "The Hill" → Bicycle (0 Dots)

Education (6 Dots; 7 Lines; 4/5 Boards)

- Elementary School
 - o Local control
 - o Well-supported school system
- Amherst Regional High School "International"
- Five College Consortium (Amherst, Hampshire, UMass, Mt. Holyoke, Smith)
- Other Educational Opportunities
 - o Educational Workshops
 - o Educational Center
 - o Three Conference Centers/ Retreats

Sirius (10 Dots; 6 Lines; 3/5 Boards)

"An educational non-profit and eco-village celebrating over 35 years of educating and role-modelling for planetary healing
Visitors experience that awe & magic of nature, meditation, community, and sacred daily living."

- Generally, just "Sirius" or "Eco Village".
- One group specified the organic gardens, another said "25/30 residents"
- 35 years. Baker Road (0 Dots)

Civic Space (6 Dots; 5 Lines; 4/5 Boards)

- Library (6 Dots; 3 Lines; 3/5 Boards)
 - o Link to kayaking, nature
 - o Sponsors cultural activities
- Schools (See Educational Opportunities)
- Town Hall, Administration
- Local Markets

Politics (4 Dots; 4 Lines; 2/5 Boards)

- Open Town Meeting
- High Participation (Everyone can participate, people take advantage.)
- "Tenacity of getting through conflicts"

Shutesbury Athletic Club (3 dots; 1 board; 1 line)

History (2 Dots; 2 Lines; 2/5 Boards)

- Historical resources
- Connection to history (buildings, stone walls, dams, foundations)

Safety (0 Dots; 2 Lines; 2/5 Boards)

- Public Safety, Feeling of Safety

What is your least favorite thing about Shutesbury? (Sorted popular to least popular)

Community (49 Dots; 33 Lines; 5/5 Boards)

- Conflict Resolution (33 Dots; 18 Lines; 5/5 Boards)
 - o “We have a hard time understanding” and “Lack of constructive conversations engaging with respect”
 - o “Absence of an accepted (?) forum/venue where conflict can be resolved”
 - o Divisiveness, polarization, conflicting opinions, grudge holding
 - o Points of tension:
 - Ineffective and unentered (?) dog-owner policies, loose, unattended, barking dogs
 - Confederate flag on Montague Road
 - Fireworks
 - The library
 - Speeding boats on Lake Wyola
- Gathering and Connection (9 Dots; 11 Lines; 4/5 Boards)
 - o Place-based
 - Lack of public spaces for comfortable, informal, community gathering
 - Lack of large accessibly space
 - Lack of Small meeting spaces
 - No town center
 - Underutilized commons
 - o Non-physical
 - Lack of opportunity for intergenerational connections
 - Community building events
 - Lack of tie to HS
 - Difficult to make community connections if you don't have kids
- Community Composition (7 Dots; 4 Lines; 3/5 Boards)
 - o Lack of interest in bringing revenue into town. Business, solar project, revenue that brings value. (6 Dots)
 - o Lack of awareness of economic diversity - lack of understanding or economic disadvantaged
 - o Lack of racial/ethnic diversity
 - o Small volunteer pool

Civic Space (16 Dots; 9 Lines; 4/5 Boards)

- Library (6 Dots; 4 Lines; 3/5 Boards)
 - o Too small, too old, inadequate to serve the community
- Historical Facility, Senior Center, Boys and Girls Club, Camp Access
- Town Center
- Survival Center, Services for poor
- Better Maintenance!

High Costs (16 Dots; 5 Lines; 4/5 Boards)

- Taxes
 - o High or Increasing
 - o Lack of industrial or commercial tax base

Commerce (13 Dots; 6 Lines; 3/5 Boards)

- No bakery, pizza, milk
- Convenience Goods, Co-op
- No Take Out
- Poor attendances and # of vendors at farmer's market

Internet and Cell Phone (10 Dots; 6 Lines; 4/5 Boards)

- No Broadband
- Lack of Internet
- Lack of Cell Service
- Verizon (with skull and cross bones)

Dependence on Cars (6 Dots; 7 Lines; 4/5 Dots)

- Lack of public transportation (x3)
- No bike paths
- No sidewalks

Elder Services (3 Dots; 3 Lines; 3/5 Boards)

- Not elder friendly
- No assisted living (Aging in place assistance)
- Potential for isolation, especially as people age

Environmental Conditions (2 Dots; 5 Lines; 1/5 Boards)

- Invasive Plants
- Predators (chicken killers, mice) and Pests (ticks, mosquitos)
- Air Quality/Noise from Remediation Equipment at Town Hall
- Too much shade for solar power satellite connections

Infrastructure (0 Dots; 4 Lines; 2/5 Boards)

- Dirt Roads
- Road Maintenance, Pot holes
- Speeding Cars

No Marching Band - Infrequent Parades (0 Dots; 1 Line; 1/5 Boards)

What would you change about Shutesbury? (Sorted popular to least popular)

Civic Space (46 Dots; 20 Lines; 5/5 Boards)

- Library (16 Dots)
- Community Meeting/Gathering Space (11 Dots; 5 Lines; 4/5 Boards)
 - o Pleasant, Not Molding
 - o More places for community events
 - o More gathering spaces – adult ed/recreation
- Town Buildings: Functional, Contemporary, Better Maintained, Modern Facilities
- Increased Utilization of Town Buildings, School, Senior Lounge
- Town Center: Band Stand, Fountain
- Building Maintenance: Get rid of mold in buildings, Replace school auditorium curtain
- Rely less on volunteers and more on paid employees

Community (22 Dots; 17 Lines; 5/5 Boards)

- Conflict Resolution (9 Dots; 6 Lines; 4/5 Boards)
 - o Less polarized town
 - o Ability to agree on common ground and vision
 - o More respectful dialogue, improve public discourse, build consensus
- Engagement (4 Dots; 6 Lines; 5/5 Boards)
 - o Increased Civic Engagement, Increased Engagement of young people (government, social, recreation)
 - o Provide childcare at town meetings
 - o More Volunteers
- Communication (1 Dot; 4 Lines; 2/5 Boards)
 - o Better communication about new issues, find way to access/inform public about issues, ongoing town communication group
- More opportunities for social gatherings/activities
- More family attractions
- Welcoming (2 Dots; 2 Lines; 2/5 Boards)
 - o Raise awareness of economic differences for those who have those needs, Proud services for people in need
 - o Increase intergenerational support

High Costs (18 Dots; 3 Lines; 3/5 Boards)

- Lower Taxes

Utilities (14 Dots; 7 Lines; 3/5 Boards)

- Energy (14 Dots; 5 Lines; 2/5 Boards)
 - o Long range planning for self-sustaining energy, More sustainable energy (Homes, public land, geothermal), More municipal solar farms
 - o Lower Energy Costs
 - o Charging Stations
- Water (0 Dots; 2 Lines; 1/5 Boards)
 - o Private drinking water protection assistance

- Public water supply well for clean water

Commerce (12 Dots; 10 Lines; 5/5 Boards)

- Access to staples (bread, milk)
- General Store, Little Store, Cushman-type location
- Coffee Shop, Café, Internet Café
- Encourage Small Business
- Space for Small Businesses, Artists, Makers Space
- More people for the farmers' market

Internet and Cell Phone (8 Dots; 4 Lines; 4/5 Boards)

Elder Services (4 Dots; 6 Lines; 4/5 Boards)

- More aging in place services
- Support services for elderly/disadvantaged neighbors (Housing, Meals on Wheels, Visiting Nurse)

Waste (4 Dots; 1 Line; 1/5 Boards)

- 'take it or leave it' location

Dependence on Cars (2 Dots; 7 Lines; 4/5 Boards)

- Public Transportation (x3)
- Carpooling
- Walkability, mention of safety (x3)
- Bike Paths, mention of safety (x3)

Sirius (2 Dots; 2 Lines; 2/5 Boards)

- Greater inclusion, more connection

Housing (1 Dot; 5 Lines; 3/5 Boards)

- Less restrictive housing/family restrictions – Extended
- Shared living accommodations
- More aging in place services
- Senior Houses
- Increased affordability

Financial (1 Dot; 2 Lines; 2/5 Boards)

- Find different funding sources, apply for more grants

Roads (1 Dot; 2 Lines; 2/5 Boards)

- Take better care of dirt roads
- Redo Pelham Hill road to the way it was

Emergency Services (1 Dot; 1 Line; 2/5 Boards)

- More fire ambulance
- Post a police blog

Population (0 Dots; 2 Lines; 2/5 Boards)

- Attract young families

Environmental Conditions (0 Dots; 2 Lines; 2/5 Boards)

- Invasive Species

Open Space / Recreation (0 Dots; 2 Lines; 1/5 Boards)

- More public gardens
- Limit motor boats on Lake Wyola (size, space)

Butter on popcorn (?) closer to ocean (0 Dots; 1 Line; 1/5 Boards)

What about Shutesbury should stay the same? (Sorted popular to least popular)

Open Space / Recreation (14 Dots; 20 Lines; 5/5 Boards)

- Natural Resources, Quality of Air, Water, Environment
- Lake Wyola, Quabbin Reservoir
- Wendell State Forest
- New Zoning/Open Space
- Unfragmented Backland, Extensive Forest
- Real Open Space
- Welcoming Hiking Trails, Skiing (Cross Country out your back door)
- Kayaks from Library
- Hiking Trails

Community (13 Dots; 18 Lines; 5/5 Boards)

- People, Neighborliness, Friendly. Unposted Private Land (No "No Trespassing" Signs)
- Diverse population, Different backgrounds, Ages
- Liberal Spirit, Independent Thinking, Openness to new people and ideas, Sense of cooperation
- Informality/Familiarity in Community
- Variety of Small, Home-based Businesses
- Governance (7 Dots; 7 Lines; 4/5 Boards)
 - o Governance by Volunteers, Level of Volunteerism
 - o Local Control – Long Tradition, independence, self-reliance
 - o Annual Town Meeting

Feel (13 Dots; 13 Lines; 5/5 Dots)

- Natural beauty
- Nights are dark
- Just driving home (Experience)
- Low Density (building, population), People not on top of each other
- Artsy Nature (Studio Art Tour, Holiday Market)
- Rural (7 Dots; 2 Lines; 2/5 Boards)
 - o Living in the woods
 - o Wooded, night sky, dirt roads
- Village Co-op

Athletic Club (8 Dots; 5 Lines; 4/5 Boards)

Education (5 Dots; 6 Lines; 5/5 Boards)

- Beautiful Elementary School (Local Control, Great Quality, Independent, Quiet. Heart of community)
- Access to 5-College Community
- School House

Waste (5 Dots; 4 Lines; 2/5 Boards)

- Curbside Trash Collection
- Bulky Waste Day

Utilities (5 Dots; 3 Lines; 3/5 Boards)

- Energy (Focus on alternative energy sources, interest in continuing to make progress)
- Water (Clean drinking water)

Events and Traditions (3 Dots; 10 Lines; 5/5 Dots)

- Garden Tours
- Halloween and Cider Doughnuts
- Dancing
- Celebrate Shutesbury
- Pancake Breakfasts
- Spaghetti Supper
- Fireworks
- Beerfest – Craft Brewers
- Senior Potluck on First Tuesday
- Programs: School, library, COA, History Com., Community Network for Children (CNC)

Safety (3 Dots; 1 Line; 1/5 boards)

- Crime rate is low
- Safe to raise children

Emergency Services (2 Dots; 5 Lines; 4/5 Boards)

- Supportive departments
- Great Police Department
- Great Fire Department

History (2 Dots; 4 Lines; 3/5 Boards)

- Historic Assets (Unspoiled, historic buildings)
- Old time New England
- History still part of presence

Civic Space (2 Dots; 7 Lines; 3/5 Boards)

- Library
- Post Office
- Town Common, Monument on Green
- Church
- School Houses

Infrastructure (1 Dot; 5 Lines; 4/5 Boards)

- Rural Road Network
- Main Roads in great Shape; Dirt Roads that Discourage Cut-Throughs
- S-Curves
- Lack of traffic

Population (1 Dots; 2 Lines; 2/5 Boards)

- Keep it consistent
- Grow with young families NOT smaller (Tax Base)

Sirius (1 Dot; 1 Line; 1/5 Boards)

- Neighborhood Around Sirius (Attract Outside, Green Building)

Farmers' Market (0 Dots; 4 Lines; 3/5 Boards)

Commerce (0 Dots; 1 Lines; 1/5 Boards)

Distance to Boston (0 Dots; 1 Line; 1/5 Boards)

Environmental Conditions (0 Dots; 1 Line; 1/5 Boards)

- Climate, Always Cooler

Lousy Phone Lines (Buzz and Crackle) (0 Dots; 1 Line; 1/5 Boards)

Ceremonial Native American...? (0 Dots; 1 Line; 1/5 Boards)

What factors will challenge Shutesbury now and in the future?

Internal

High Costs (24 – 35 Dots; 11 Lines; 5/5 Boards)

- Affordability (1 Dot; 2 Lines; 1/5 Boards)
 - o Affordability for young people
 - o Divergence between median income and property taxes
 - o Cost of pensions and obep (?)(See Board 5e)
- Property Sales (1 Dot; 2 Lines; 2/5 Boards)
 - o “Inability to market homes with limited technology”
 - o Decrease in property values
- Taxes (22 – 33 Dots; 7 Lines; 4/5 Boards)
 - o High taxes/budget, Property tax burden
 - o Lack of consensus
 - o Commercial (2 Dots; 2 Lines; 2/5 Boards)
 - Lack of commercial tax base, lack of commercial enterprises to support tax base

Community (17 – 28 Dots; 15 Lines; 5/5 Boards)

- Conflict (9 Dots; 5 Lines; 4/5 Boards)
 - o Ability to communicate over differences (arrow to Lake Wyola water quality, also: school, library, municipal buildings), developing a narrative that respects differences, healing from past divisive issues
 - o Civil discourse/Communication
- Gathering (4 Dots; 2 Lines; 1/5 Boards)
 - o Lack of a central meeting place, informal gathering place
- Governance (3 Dots; 4 Lines; 4/5 Boards)
 - o Aging of Town volunteers, ability to attract volunteers, need for continued expertise
- Attitudes towards change, fear of change
- Rural character changes/definitions/gentrification
- Community building structure

Internet and Cell Phone (14 Dots; 6 Lines; 4/5 Boards)

- Related to property values
- Connected to external factors

Population (12 Dots; 15 Lines; 4/5 Boards)

- Population change, too much growth, not enough growth
- Attracting young families/school population (4 Dots; 4 Lines; 3/5 Boards)
- Aging Population (7 Dots; 5 Lines; 4/5 Boards)
 - o Lack of infrastructure to age in place (Transportation, Medical, etc)
 - o Aging of Town volunteers
 - o Connected to external factors

Civic Space/Commerce (4 Dots; 3 Lines; 2/5 Boards)

- Lack of gathering place/coffee shop, lack of market place venues//retail economy/gas/food/etc.
- Library size problematic

Environmental Conditions (3 Dots; 4 Lines; 3/5 Boards)

- Air quality (Wood stoves)
- Water quality and quantity
- "Availability/sustainability of natural resources"

Education (1 Dot; 2 Lines; 2/5 Boards)

- Decrease in school age population, declining enrollment
- Supporting school (arrow to aging population)

Infrastructure (1 Dot; 2 Lines; 1/5 Boards)

- Deteriorating infrastructure
- Dirt road issues

External

Environmental Conditions (7 Dots; 15 Lines; 4/5 Boards)

- Climate change (4 Dots; 4 Lines; 3/5 Boards)
- Sustainability
 - o Ecological sustainability, adapting a non-fossil fuel paradigm
 - o Non-sustainable funding (Perhaps financial?)
- Animal habitat loss, animals encroaching
- Resource exploitation
- Reliance of fossil fuels
- Waste disposal issues
- Water
 - o Water quantity: Drought/water issues
 - o Water quality: Lake Wyola

Economy (3 Dots; 7 Lines; 4/5 Boards)

- State of large economy
- New economic imperatives
- Increase in cost of living/raising children, Energy prices
- Local
 - o "Closure of businesses in Leverett/Wendell", "Lack of viability of small business"
 - o Change in revenue

State (3 Dots; 6 Lines; 4/5 Boards)

- State budget, loss of state revenue, lack of federal/state funding, state support for services,
- State Infrastructure
- Public policy – state/federal mandates

Drug problems (2 Dots; 1 Line; 1/5 Boards)

Education (1 Dot; 8 Lines; 5/5 Boards)

- Regional School Issues (ie. Lead in the water), Sharing High Schools
- Regionalization Changes ie. Schools, Regionalization pressures, Regionalization of schools K - 12
- School funding
- Higher education (1 Dot; 2 Lines; 2/5 Boards)
 - o Changes with UMass, Five Colleges (including employers)

Infrastructure (1 Dot; 1 Line; 1/5 Boards)

Politics (0 Dots; 2 Lines; 1/5 Boards)

Population (0 Dots; 1 Line; 1/5 Boards)

- Attracting a more diverse population

Public Ownership of land, potential financial issues (0 Dots; 1 Line; 1/5 Boards)