

To: Hardwick Planning Commission
From: Kristen Leahy, Zoning and Floodplain Administrator
Re: Consistency of Community Survey Themes
Date: May 11, 2026

In March 2026, staff provided the Planning Commission with a preliminary overview of the first 39 responses received through the Municipal Plan community survey process. At that time, staff noted that the early responses represented only an initial snapshot of community perspectives and that additional outreach would continue throughout the spring.

As of May 2026, approximately 170 survey responses have now been received through both online and paper outreach efforts.

One of the clearest findings from the expanded dataset is that the major themes identified in the preliminary review have remained remarkably consistent as the response pool has grown.

The larger dataset did not substantially shift the direction of the survey results. Instead, the additional responses reinforced many of the same priorities and concerns that were already emerging in the initial sample.

In particular, the following themes have remained consistently strong throughout the survey process:

- Affordable and diverse housing options
- Flood resilience and infrastructure improvements
- Support for local businesses and downtown vitality
- Safe walking, biking, and transportation connections
- Preservation of Hardwick's sense of community and small-town character
- Interest in maintaining and strengthening village centers
- Communication and emergency preparedness

The expanded responses also continued to demonstrate strong support for housing near village centers, mixed-use development patterns, and investments that balance resilience, affordability, and quality of life.

As the survey response pool grew, additional nuance and detail emerged around issues such as property taxes, affordability pressures, healthcare access, recreation opportunities, and community communication. However, these responses generally expanded upon the original themes rather than replacing or contradicting them.

This consistency is significant because the initial overview was based on a relatively small number of responses. With approximately 170 responses now received from residents, business owners, and community members, the survey represents a substantially broader cross-section of the community.

The continued alignment between the preliminary findings and the expanded dataset suggests that the original identified themes are recurring priorities that are being expressed consistently across the broader response pool.