

Municipal Plan Update Discussion

Planning Commission – June 2026

Purpose

The purpose of tonight's discussion is to review the results of the Municipal Plan Survey and consider how those results should inform the next phase of the Municipal Plan update.

The survey is one piece of the planning process. It provides insight into community priorities, concerns, and aspirations, but it does not determine goals, policies, or implementation actions on its own. Rather, it helps identify areas where additional discussion, analysis, and future action may be warranted.

The survey results will help guide future chapter updates and assist the Planning Commission in developing goals, policies, and implementation recommendations over the coming year.

What Did We Hear?

A total of 238 survey responses were received.

One notable finding is that the open-ended responses largely reinforced the results of the multiple-choice questions. The same themes appeared repeatedly regardless of question format, suggesting a high degree of consistency in the feedback received.

Several major themes emerged:

- Housing and affordability
- Flood resilience and infrastructure
- Economic development and downtown vitality
- Transportation and walkability
- Natural resources and recreation
- Community health and connection

These themes do not necessarily correspond directly to individual Municipal Plan chapters. Instead, they represent recurring topics that residents identified as important and that may influence multiple sections of the Plan.

For example:

- Housing affordability relates to Housing, Land Use, Economic Development, and Public Facilities.

- Flood resilience relates to Flood Resilience, Water Resources, Transportation, Public Facilities, and Land Use.
- Transportation and walkability relate to Transportation, Economic Development, Community Wellness, and Recreation.
- Community health and wellness relate to Public Facilities, Recreation, Housing, Economic Development, and the proposed Food Security & Community Wellness chapter.

Several broader considerations also appeared repeatedly throughout the survey:

Affordability

Residents discussed affordability in terms of housing costs, property taxes, utility costs, healthcare expenses, and economic opportunity.

Resilience

Residents discussed flooding, infrastructure vulnerabilities, emergency preparedness, housing recovery, economic recovery, and protection of natural resources.

Walkability and Connectivity

Residents frequently connected sidewalks, trails, transportation options, recreation opportunities, and village centers.

Community Wellness

Residents discussed healthcare access, pharmacy services, recreation, food access, aging in place, social connection, and mental health.

Community Identity

Residents consistently identified Hardwick's sense of community, local businesses, natural beauty, recreation opportunities, and historic character as important community strengths.

[Survey Summary]

Discussion Questions

1. What Surprised You?

- Were there findings that appeared more frequently than expected?
- Were there findings that appeared less frequently than expected?
- Did the survey confirm or challenge assumptions about community priorities?

2. Do These Themes Accurately Reflect What We Heard?

Major themes identified through the survey include:

- Housing & Affordability
- Flood Resilience & Infrastructure
- Downtown Vitality & Local Economy
- Transportation & Walkability
- Natural Resources & Recreation
- Community Health & Connection

Questions:

- Are any important themes missing?
- Are there themes that deserve greater emphasis?
- Are there themes that should be combined?

[Themes Summary]

3. Do the Survey Results Support the Future Conditions Previously Identified by the Planning Commission?

The Planning Commission has already discussed what success might look like in 2036.

Questions:

- Do the survey results support those future conditions?

- Are there future conditions that should be modified?
- Did the survey identify any future priorities that were not previously considered?

[Future Summary]

4. Which Chapters Require the Greatest Attention?

Major Updates

- Housing
- Economic Development
- Flood Resilience
- Public & Private Facilities & Services
- Transportation

Moderate Updates

- Land Use & Development
- Water Resources
- Land Resources
- Natural Areas & Wildlife
- Energy

Minor Updates

- Historic, Scenic & Archaeological Resources
- Education
- Regional Compatibility
- Appendix

Questions:

- Do these priorities seem appropriate?
- Should any chapters move up or down in priority?

[Chapter Overview]

5. How Should Resilience Be Addressed?

The 2019 Municipal Plan addressed resilience primarily through the Flood Resilience chapter.

Since then, Hardwick has experienced multiple federally declared disasters, buyouts, infrastructure damage, emergency response challenges, and significant recovery and mitigation efforts.

Questions:

- Should resilience continue to be addressed primarily through the Flood Resilience chapter?
- Should resilience also be considered throughout the Plan?
- What would it mean to consider resilience within Housing, Economic Development, Transportation, Public Facilities, Water Resources, and other chapters?

6. Food Security & Community Wellness

The proposed Municipal Plan update could include a new Food Security & Community Wellness chapter.

Survey responses repeatedly referenced:

- Pharmacy access
- Healthcare services
- Recreation
- Food access
- Mental health
- Aging in place
- Community gathering spaces
- Social connection

Questions:

- Do the survey results support the addition of this chapter?
- What topics should receive particular attention?

