

Citizen Survey for the Westminster Community Master Plan

Your Town - Your Future -Your Voice

(please take a few minutes to help make a difference)

Dear Westminster Resident,

We have begun a process to update the Town's Master Plan, which was last updated in 2000. Westminster's new Master Plan will provide recommendations for Land Use, Zoning, Housing, Open Space and Recreation, Natural Resources, Municipal Services, Economic Development, and Transportation. The only way we can accomplish this task is by hearing from you, the citizens. Please give some thought to how you want to see the Town developed in the future and give us your ideas for the betterment of the Town. The Master Plan update is a two-year process and this survey is the start of it. Over the next 24 months we will host several public forums and gather your input so that we may craft a new Master Plan that reflects the values of Westminster citizens.

Please mail your survey with your Town Census back to the Town Clerk's office, or you can simply drop off your completed survey with the Town Clerk. We ask that you return your survey by the END OF FEBRUARY 2012. If you need additional copies of the Citizen Survey for other members of your household, they can be found on the Town's website www.westminster-ma.gov on the Planning Department page.

Thank you for taking the time to help us shape Westminster's future.

The Westminster Master Plan Update Committee

General

1. What do you like about living in Westminster? Please rank your top 3 responses.

38 low tax rate	38 affordable housing	654 small town character
214 family ties	471 low crime rate	102 convenience to work
380 access to highways	291 open spaces	318 school system
59 municipal services	44 historic resources	85 recreation opportunities
53 community activities	6 employment opportunities	68 convenience to services
Other _____		

2. What do you find undesirable about living in Westminster? Please rank your top 3 responses.

642 high tax rate	288 lack of retail shopping opportunities
46 town center	89 lack of a community-gathering place
25 school system	94 lack of affordable housing
59 municipal services	55 lack of recreation opportunities
221 excessive traffic	196 lack of employment opportunities
127 excessive development	125 loss of small town character
Other _____	

Land Use

3. What buildings and/or sites in Westminster do you believe are worthy of historic preservation efforts (either through the Massachusetts Historical Commission or the National Register of Historic Places)?

List as many as you like: Top choices: Cracker Factory, Upton Building, Academy Hill, Library.

4. Would you support zoning for a traditional New England village in the Town Center? (compact development, a mixture of services and residential development, buildings in front and parking in the rear, sidewalks, period lighting, etc.)

605 Yes	178 No	380 Not Sure
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5. To preserve the Town's rural character, would you be in favor any of the following? (You can check more than one.)
- 784 protect open space
 331 create historical districts
 683 design guidelines for new development
 359 add scenic roads designation for some of Westminster's rural roads
6. What types of recreation opportunities would you like to see more of in Westminster?
- | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 100 ball-fields | 344 hiking | 207 playgrounds | 135 tennis courts |
| 174 swimming | 111 boating | 82 basketball courts | 85 soccer fields |
| 146 fishing | 449 bike trails | 269 ice skating rink | 258 performing arts |
- Other (please specify) _____
- Organizational programs (please specify) _____

Housing

7. What types of housing do you think Westminster needs more of? (You can check more than one.)
- | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 287 single-family homes | 50 two-family homes | 27 multi-family units |
| 81 apartments | 88 condominiums | 433 elderly housing |
| 104 subsidized housing for low-income citizens | 138 open space residential design | |
| 258 in-law apartments in existing residences | 376 assisted living senior housing | |
- Other _____
8. Do you favor zoning changes that would allow for new construction/conversion of existing buildings, in order to provide housing for low/moderate income households?
- 259 Yes 493 No 391 Not Sure

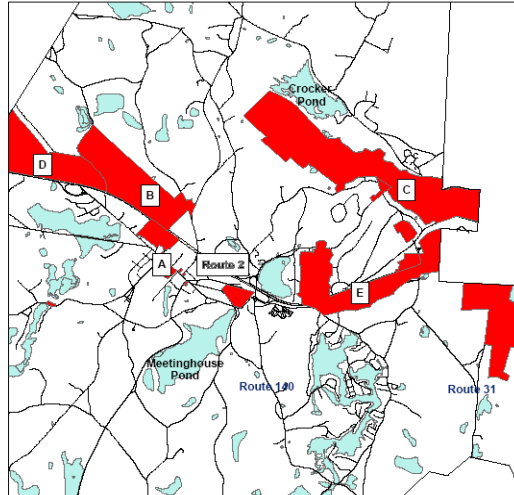
Energy, Utilities and Infrastructure

9. Would you be in favor of expanding the municipal sewer & water systems for the following uses? (You can check more than one.)
- | | | |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 332 commercial development | 261 industrial development | 464 residential development |
| 523 abatement of pollution (failed septic systems) | | |
10. How satisfied are you with the Town's access to internet services?
- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 324 very satisfied | 561 somewhat satisfied | 183 not satisfied |
|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
11. How satisfied are you with the Town's cellphone coverage?
- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 283 very satisfied | 570 somewhat satisfied | 281 not satisfied |
|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
12. What types of renewable energy would you like to see the Town support? (you can check more than one)
- | | | | |
|-----------|----------|----------------|---------|
| 804 solar | 803 wind | 387 geothermal | 98 none |
|-----------|----------|----------------|---------|

Economic Development

13. Residentially-based businesses are currently allowed as of right throughout Westminster. Do you have any objections to how in-home businesses are regulated?
- 118 Yes 590 No 376 Not Sure
- If yes, please explain: _____
14. What do you see as the benefit(s) of encouraging business/industrial development in Westminster? (You can check more than one.)
- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 723 more in-town jobs | 940 more tax revenues to help ease residential tax burden |
| 369 more retail stores | 593 more tax revenues to help maintain current Town services |
| 320 more services | 527 more tax revenues to help improve Town services |

15. What do you see as the disadvantage(s) of encouraging economic development? (You can check more than one.)
- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|-----|---|
| 676 | more automobile traffic | 564 | changing the basic character of Westminster |
| 615 | more truck traffic | 417 | damage to the environment |
| 408 | disruption of neighborhoods | 509 | loss of open space |
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To see a larger version of this map in color, please visit the Town's website at: www.westminster-ma.gov. Go to the Master Plan survey on the front page and click on "survey map". Large-scale versions of this map will also be available for viewing at the Town Hall and Library.

16. Use the map above to tell us what you want for economic development and where you want it.

Type of Business/ Location	Town Center (A)	Simplex Drive Industrial District (B)	Westminster Business Park Industrial District – The Depot (C)	Route 140 Commercial District - West (D)	Village Inn Road Commercial District – East (E)
Restaurants	451	244	132	210	348
Services (tailors, dry- cleaners, printers, etc.)	331	136	98	122	150
Hardware/home improvement stores	141	309	193	233	211
Clothing stores	159	261	119	174	188
Small-scale retail stores	358	243	123	173	243
Professional services (offices for doctors, lawyers, etc.)	315	240	197	217	313
Home-based agriculture business	49	51	160	156	101
Biotechnology	14	372	338	213	100
Light manufacturing	13	397	404	251	115
Research & development	19	419	384	231	122
Warehouse & storage	10	343	366	245	108
Office parks	26	371	333	258	176

Other types of businesses and industries? _____

Municipal Services and Infrastructure

17. How do you rate the services provided by each Town department?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Would you support More, Less, or the Same tax dollars for this service?
Fire	703	321	25	1	M-104, L-65, S-290
Police	685	336	32	7	M-109, L-66, S-284
Board of Selectmen – Town Administrator	178	505	184	36	M-20, L-85, S-293
Highway Dept.	303	487	166	59	M-107, L-47, S-269
Health Dept.	171	453	98	17	M-18, L-56, S-275
School System	392	470	69	13	M-157, L-64, S-212
Water	172	380	120	56	M-33, L-66, S-249
Sewer	151	317	142	75	M-48, L-67, S-234
Transfer Station	300	386	93	18	M-25, L-45, S-285
Recreation	193	471	173	35	M-97, L-48, S-234
Inspection Services	121	421	162	27	M-6, L-67, S-272
Planning	97	397	198	46	M-40, L-65, S-250
Conservation	137	453	145	34	M-69, L-63, S-226
Council on Aging	144	420	151	28	M-83, L-40, S-228
Library	397	460	76	14	M-61, L-46, S-213

18. In general, how satisfied are you with how easily you can access Town services and offices?

946 Yes 89 No

19. Have you visited the Town's **NEW** website www.westminster-ma.gov and what do you use it for?

477 Yes 614 No Purpose for visiting: _____

20. Any suggestions for improving the Town's website? _____

21. With the Town's growth and the ever increasing complexity of managing a municipality, do you believe it is time to revise the Town Charter? (i.e., change the form of government, consolidate management of departments, etc.)

231 Yes 210 No 605 Not Sure

LASTLY.....IN YOUR OWN WORDS – please tell us two additional things:

- Looking ten years ahead, what are your highest hopes for the Town's future development?
- Looking ten years ahead, what are your worst fears for the Town's future development?

Attach additional sheets if necessary.

Thank you for completing this survey. You can look forward to seeing the survey results in early April 2012.

2012 Master Plan Citizen Survey - Other Comments:

- Hopes: follow concord or Harvard's path / worst: Follow Lexington's or Acton's path.
- Hopes: keep clean central area & nice rural outskirts. Fears: That we won't look like Fitchburg.
- No Mall, Fix Overlook Road.
- Hopes: Industrial Development to lower taxes. Fears: No Industrial development and higher taxes.
- Hopes- wind/solar development, village character maintained /enhanced Fears-Over development & higher taxes.
- Hope for affordable elderly housing, more local jobs, support for agriculture, enlarged septic systems | Fear Lack of a good mater plan.
- Hope Town maintains its rural character.
- Hope- Town maintains small character especially center | Fear- Town will not commercial development & be similar to Gardner & Fitchburg.
- Hope= more business growth to increase tax revenue | Fear- Do Not destroy Westminster's character.
- Hope- more shops, small scale restaurants like concord ma | Fear- Big box retail in center of town.
- Hope-More & Better traffic management on South Ash Road enforce speed limit. Mailbox on same side of street as driveway.
- Hope- Day to day times need to get better.
- Hope- Bring industry to select areas in town for jobs & taxes | Fears-cluster developments, low income housing.
- Hope- Reduction of water & energy use, centralized services | Fear-unprepared for climate change, increased traffic.
- Fear- Too much Traffic.
- Hope-increased tax base, better control of school budget | Fear-building of private homes not developing a better tax base.
- Hope- Develop Simplex Drive .
- Hope- Retail Development to increase tax base to fund schools & lower taxes | Fear-No development will happen no progress & higher taxes.
- Hope-Change form of town government, make trees & clerk positions appointed develop ball fields | Fear-tax Increases.
- Hope- access to retail shopping, food, clothing etc... | Fear-Increasing gap between rich & poor residents.
- Hope-Maintain small town character | Fear- overdevelopment.
- Hope- Balanced growth to maintain rural character | Fear- Loss of open space.
- Hope-Business growth is essential | Fear- Loss of character, open space, over development.
- Hope- Employment opportunities for the residents | Fear- higher taxes suppressing residential growth.
- Fear-Higher taxes.
- Hope- Keep small town character.
- Hope- Balanced growth that doesn't compromise character of town.
- Hope- Maintain small town atmosphere.
- Hope- Business Development | Fear- Condo development.
- Hope- limited, retail, commercial & industrial development | Fear- even higher taxes.
- Hope- Light manufacturing & R&D | Fear- Town government too few in control.
- Hope- More development of alternative energy | Fear- Loss of small town charm to development.
- Fear- multi-family development.
- Hope- Fields/senior center | Fear- not having either of above.
- Hope-improve historical character, audit schools, Fears- higher taxes.
- Town should review floodplain laws & have flood insurance available thru town & FEMA.

- Hope-More use of offices & parks on simplex drive Fear-over development & low income housing.
- Hope-maintain small town character, rotary @ South & Main | Fear- Upton building is a money trap.
- Hope- Maintain small character | Fear-Higher taxes.
- Hopes- Town retains small town character | Fears- over population and loses present character.
- Hope-Commercial retail development | Fear- Higher taxes.
- More professional management & less townie management.
- Hope- Maintain small town atmosphere but keep up with technology, my children want to live here Fear Low income housing, crime & + taxes.
- Hope- Maintain character, improve roads | Fear- Over development.
- Hope-Industrial development, preserving character.
- Hope- New Business Start-up businesses.
- Hope- Retain character | Fear- Higher Taxes.
- Hope- Good schools, historic protection, balanced growth/development | Fear- Overdevelopment, loss of character.
- Hope- curtail spending/share expenses, regionalize services | Fear-Loss of character.
- Hope- More elderly housing.
- Hope- local jobs, close recreation, local grocer & restaurants | Fear- Higher taxes & crime, road rage.
- Hopes: keeping it a town, don't grow too fast, do good planning, Fears: if you let it grow too fast let growth be done carefully, it must grow but keep it a town and keep your taxpayers happy.
- Hopes: train link to Boston, station and related opportunities, Fears: none, don't allow naysayers/obstructionists to stop or delay train project.
- Fears: more business-more traffic-less small town feeling, more homes-more school needs-more government, don't need large developments, older citizens cannot afford higher taxes to support them.
- Hopes: Bartherick Rd paved, other roads tended to, roads look patched repeatedly, they need to be paved, Fears: railway layover station will create noise & pollution & de-value property with no income to the town.
- Hopes: put trees back on main street, listen to Joe Serios ideas.
- Hopes: maintain small town character by all means, industry at a minimum.
- Hopes: more high-end business development Fears: development foe fast food, movie theater, restaurants, walmart, cvs, etc, let Gardner & Fitchburg have them and keep Westminster as it is.
- Hopes: get a small strip mall on simplex drive for tax revenues Fears; town costs more to live in.
- Hopes: small town feel with low taxes and ample services, Fears: too much development, high taxes, would have to leave town for loss of small town feel.
- Hopes: a senior center.
- Hopes: use the simplex land for retail site and the business park filled to capacity, Fears: no growth in town as towns around us grow and we have to handle and pay for the overflow traffic, garbage, etc.
- Hopes: adequately funded schools, more cultural programs, more town businesses, Fears: lack of commercial development to help with tax base.
- Hope: using existing simplex for development, Fear: too much development.
- Hope: more senior services and affordable housing for fixed income, Fear: too much growth of low income housing for welfare type.
- Hope: maintain small town living & environment while reducing residential tax burden. Overlap small business and industry to improve commercial tax base that will support continuous improvement to town services.
- Hope: water & sewer for all concentrated housing areas, a diversified tax base allowing more commercial, mixed use zoning such as simplex area, Fear: (residents?) set in their old ways, failing to move into the 21st century.
- Hope: slow careful development of retail & other business, not too much to change the character of the town, love the town as is wish more homes had water & sewer.

- Hope: every necessity in town, Fear: more traffic.
- Hope: town pride stays, local family owned business flourishing with larger business, keep with the times but keep town character.
- Hope: small town feel remains, town center is not built up anymore too much traffic, Fear: too much building, increased taxes, no funding for school, library, police, fire, school system decline.
- Hope: add light commercial/industrial business to ease tax burden, Fear: failure to create tax rate affordable to retired/fixed income citizens.
- Hope: rebuilding & keeping with town history, Fear: over development.
- Hope: more retail shops, more assisted living for seniors, lower taxes, larger downtown, more rental units.
- Hope: town stays small Fear: home prices continue to decline.
- Fear: too much town development thereby raising taxes.
- Hope: retain small town character, lower tax rate with increase in white collar/high tech business, maintain excellent town services, Fear: too much growth, high crime, service degradation.
- Hope: better maintained roads & traffic flow, maintain town center, do something with garage across from Dautey's.
- Hope: slowly developing town, keep it simple & peaceful Fear: too much development, too many large chains like Wal-Mart & Home Depot, etc.
- Hope: smart growth, less government, more common sense, Fear: town goes broke, no development, raising taxes.
- Hope: town center is more prominent, taxes are more equitable Fear: higher water, sewer & property tax rates, loss of small town atmosphere.
- Hope: keep small town charm, keep open space, co-op farmer's store of locally grown produce/items, Fear: over population.
- Fear: higher taxes, landfill over capacity.
- Hopes: stay small town I grew up in, Fear: we will be Fitchburg 2.0.
- Hope: land bought for senior use will be utilized/completed, sewer services on Bacon St.
- Hope: more traffic lights in center, Holmes Park s/b part of town water system, new senior center ASAP, Fear: new residents who don't care, the elderly are not taken care of.
- Hope: grow industrial base providing citizens jobs, maintain school system at current level, remains a small town, Fear: town budget burdened with paying retirement benefits, services decline from cost to maintain contracts with police, fire, teachers, town employees.
- Hope: more tax revenue from commercial & industrial property, 100% cellphone coverage, fantastic school system, Fear: nay sayers to business & other opportunities stop change, town hall gives too much credence to W.E.S.T. organization, they are not what they claim to be.
- Hope: traffic in town center gets better, keep property, sewer & water taxes affordable, more alternative energy.
- Hope: maintain rural character, districts chosen for econ development are good choices, Fear: school system at risk due to loss of faculty, staff & financial resources.
- Hope: better cellphone coverage, better web access, more street lights, Fear: higher property taxes.
- Hope: are we large enough to have a mayor, Fear: taxes too high that people have to give up the better life they came to town for.
- Hope: bus service for elderly & disabled to Fitchburg, Leominster & Gardner, transportation to Fitchburg for access to Boston for jobs & services.
- Hope: moderate growth, biotech industry, Fear: loss of town character, political bickering.
- Hope: better looking center of town, improve intersection of Main & South St, more sidewalks, repair existing sidewalks, senior center, Fear: houses falling to disrepair, wasteful municipal spending, increasing taxes, bloated police & fire departments.

- Hope: try to stay same, maintain town equipment vs buying new, maintain schools, public buildings and town government Fear: large scale retail, too much money spent on DPW, police cruisers replaced too frequently.
- Hope: more affordable senior housing in areas that won't interfere with job creation, improve traffic flow at main & south st intersection Fear: town center too cluttered with traffic due to development.
- Fear: McDonald's in town.
- Hope: more elderly housing, Fear: big box stores & losing small town character.
- Hope: large effort to allow introduction of green energy systems for both commercial & residential, Fear: zoning change for low/moderate income attracts less than desirable characters to town.
- Hope: more housing for seniors, Fear: too many businesses.
- Hope: more senior housing/apartments, more cultural services, keep main st & academy hill maintained (use volunteers), Fear: overbuilding, too much industrial development.
- Hope: keep small town feel & character, let big business be on the outskirts of town, Fear: center of town continues to become too commercial.
- Hope: senior center Fear: higher taxes.
- Hope: compost facility, public transportation NOW, individuals continue to have a voice in town govt, develop use of natural resources ie wind, education system keeps up with times, Fear: town run by small group with control & deaf ear, not attracting new industry for jobs growth, highly polarized community of haves & have nots.
- Hope: walkable areas/neighborhoods, improve on NE town center feel of main street, completion of Wachusett train station, Fear: fiscal challenge to maintaining school system, loss of small town feel to town center.
- Hope: to be able to reduce taxes, Fear: driving seniors out of homes due to high taxes.
- Hope: any future development is given good deal of thought, Fear: single family homes will be rare, everything we love about this town will be lost.
- Hope: more business to offset increased tax rates, be proactive to not lose out on opportunities to other proactive towns/cities.
- Fear: mall type development increasing traffic congestion & straining police, fire & highway departments.
- Hope: leadership maintains town's character, preserve old structures, support local farmers, Fear: growth of town services & government through gentrification forcing low/middle class families out, senior center should not be developed on green field out of center, reuse building in town center.
- Hope: small town/rural appeal remains, decrease property taxes, better environment to attract business, Fear: will have to leave town due to high taxes.
- Hope: we don't destroy the character of Westminster.
- Hope: town remains small in character but has services outside of the main street area, Fear: too much development makes the town more like a city.
- Hope: more commercial business will come here, Fear: decrease in commercial growth.
- Hope: town sewer expansion, sidewalks, street lights, Fear: too much low income growth.
- Development of new light manufacturing & other opportunities to expand tax base. Build senior Center. Trash-to-energy facility. Municipal + electric company. Worst fears: over Development.
- Keep small town atmosphere. Add Industry in the right areas. Worst fears: Town retirement will cause higher taxes.
- Need to attract more Businesses & stores.
- Green space expanded. mid-state Trail continued maintenance. Bike trails linked to other Towns. Fears: no more multi-unit Building, Keep Town small.
- More Water & sewer for residences.
- Hopes: more Restaurants; free Wi-fi throughout Town; Internet forms. Fears: Home Depot; Higher Taxes; lots of Traffic; Keep big business near Rt. 2 maintain appearance of town center. Improve technology in schools. Fears: Too large & unmanageable police & fire services & equipment that is not used for long periods of time/wk.

- Fears: Big commercial ventures, such as Box stores-bringing in outside traffic in & a burden to public safety.
- Keep the natural beauty of Town. Fears: We'll turn into a box store, outlet store haven.
- Hopes: Development of Rt. 140 District. Fears: Higher taxes.
- Hopes: more commercial & Industrial development to broaden the tax base. Fears: Too expensive to live here.
- Hopes: Access to public Trans., senior Center with prof. staffing. fears: Too much on preserve past not addressing future. Keep small town character but be aware of progress.
- We've become like Ashburnham: shoot down every opportunity that comes along with maintaining Town Character.
- In 10 years development - more services & Business. Fears: ghost Town, Bad schools.
- Looking Ahead: To have a local Hardware store or general store.
- Hopes: needs more retail & Indus. Put gate at Crocker pond like the one at the transfer station.
- Hopes: I hope that town maintains Character. Fears: Taxes will rise - driving us out.
- Hopes: new senior Center. Fears: projects not getting completed on time causing overruns, delays additional town meetings. Not happy with BoH regulating bake sales.
- Hopes: looking for tax decrease. Improving school system.
- Keep out low income bums with subsidized housing. Bring in businesses for employment & tax revenue. lower # of Town employees.
- Remain the same. Hate to see too many developers, i.e., shopping malls, condos. The town is near perfect as is. Raising a child in quaint setting and friendliness of town. Like the school system now & hopes to see it get better while maintaining small town friendliness.
- Hopes: To get the people's heads out of the sand. Look around we no longer have a "great" school system. We no longer have a "low Tax Rate". We no longer have vision or leadership to foster growth. We can't have our cake & eat it too. We all like the small town feel but no one likes the feel of the pinch to the pocket. We pay more and get less. And we live through too many petty squabbles at Town Hall. Too much inaction and talk has kept us stuck in the mud. This type of survey committee is repetitive. Ten years out, hopefully we'll see change. If it means bringing in Commercial & Industrial development, don't be afraid to go forward. It can be done & we can still have a terrific town- most likely, a better town! Move forward.
- Hopes: To stay a small town as much as possible. Fears: over development of open space. Not being able to live in town due to a higher tax rate & water cost
- Hopes: Town can learn to live within its means, ie; spend less money & lower Taxes with smaller government.
- Hopes: to provide our children with excellent education, recreational opportunities & the elderly with affordable housing. Fears: is change to our town to a busy, traffic filled, crime filled area due to expansion of too many business & low income housing.
- We strongly support the layover station.
- Surveys & master plans are a waste of money & time. If the people responsible don't like the results they just ignore them.
- Hopes: It stays rural, small town. Fears: Development.
- Please fix South St. entirely!! (the road).
- No large developments. Maintain small town character.
- Hopes: Keep small town feel. Fears: overgrowth.
- Hopes: That Westminster brings in more restaurants, retail stores. I hate getting home from work & having to drive to Gardner, Fitchburg or Leominster to do my shopping. Our market & pharmacy are terribly outdated. I also hope that cable Tv & Internet are provided for all. Fears: I hope that we don't lose our open spaces to excess residential development.
- Hopes: productive use of the capped Town landfill, maybe solar farm or Industrial wind turbines. Fears: getting left behind in recruiting High paying Jobs to Westminster Due to lack of service.

- Hopes: maintain its rural Character. Fears: losing the Rural Character.
- Hopes: Would like to see more restaurants & stores with a larger food store like Whole foods store fears: Taxes much Higher.
- Hopes: some nice small industry like Fitchburg Welding. Some small unmanned Hydro plants to use our available water power & as mentioned before a modern lumber mill small & efficient. Fears: That outsiders will be allowed to come in with large retail outlets & large apartment style living, this would destroy our small town atmosphere.
- Hopes: maintain small town atmosphere while expanding services & Tax Income & Improving Roads. Fears: Too much traffic in town center!! Not enough traffic lanes or lights.
- Hopes: Keep open space, get small manufacturing jobs, continue good schools & keep taxes low. Fears: Too many new roads in what used to be nice woods to hunt. Too many new homes, overcrowded schools.
- Hopes: putting sewage in many more places Fears: Too much development.
- Hopes: We are looking to see more business coming into town to help ease the tax burden. We feel taxes are getting out of hand. We hope there are more restaurants and small retail stores coming to town. Fears: our worst fears are that the planning board and selectmen will continue to make uneducated decisions which lead to destructive development for this town. We feel that out of towners have the upper hand and citizens of Westminster are not being informed or allowed to put their two cents in.
- Hopes: ensuring the quality of our school system and managing a reasonable tax rate for residents is essential to the success of small towns & that is there attraction. fears: I am in fear that our school system if not budgeted properly will fall under its current good quality & high taxes will force people to move or worse, force us to pay for "school Choice" for students going elsewhere for their education.
- Fears: Taxes & 2 1/2 overrides.
- Hopes: That the town will allow business to locate here & lighten the tax burden on the home owners. Fears: That the town will continue to bow to the "Tree Huggers" who continually block any commercial or industrial growth in Westminster.
- Hopes: since I just moved here in 2010 - I do not feel Knowledgeable enough to make any suggestions.
- Hopes: need more business & Industrial growth. Fears: school system out of control they should share the burden.
- Hopes: Too much low income housing growth that stresses schools & town center. Fears: Higher property Taxes.
- Hopes: Development of the simplex Area, provide current jobs & future jobs for my children (who are now 8).
- Hopes: staying small town feel with more job opportunities. Fears: Allowing low income housing to destroy town like it has to Worcester.
- Hopes: put in more sidewalks on south Ash Rd, from Monty Tech to Oakmont Ave. Fears: find a way to stop the rape of sand behind Depot Road, The promise of Business going back there was a pipe dream jammed up the residence with no real hope of ever happening. Limit the cost of housing types being allowed like that on Woodland Drive & Tommy Francis, it's not in character with the town at all.
- Hopes: That it maintains its small town culture while keeping up with improved town services. That the school system continues to receive more support from the town - it's truly needed. Fears: That it losses it's charm and high expectations.
- Hopes: In action will be our worst failure. Let's decide which direction most people want to go and let's give 100% in getting there.
- Hopes: leave as is. Fears: Worst fear is losing small town feel.
- Hopes: Job growth & Business growth. Fears: low income housing - This will do nothing but destroy this town.
- Hopes: I hope Westminster keeps its "small Town" feel.
- Hopes: Reduction of taxes thru additional commercial investment. Fears: Town development like Rindge, NH.
- Hopes: need active veterans services.

- Hopes: Better schools, Retail & Industrial Development in the designed Zones, same small-town character, population growth kept to a minimum. Fears: poorer Quality schools, population growth out of control, loss of small-town character.
- Hopes: maintain Rural Character.
- Hopes: not to outgrow rural settings. Fears: growing too large scale for area - Keep small Town New England Atmosphere.
- Hopes: That we maintain the school services that brought us & many families to the Town. Fears: That we allow malls or like retail. There are already many shopping opportunities close by & more stores than the economy can handle. There is nothing more depressing then a dead or dying mall.
- Hope: Save Town Hall Fears: Under-development .
- Hope: Small Town Character intact Fear: Spending money on preserving unnecessary buildings.
- Fears: Mall behind Simplex.
- Hope: Business in industrial parks Fears: Center of Town becomes commercialized, traffic.
- Hope: More Business Fears: High Taxes.
- Hopes: More shopping in center. Fears: Poor drinking water.
- Hopes: Zoning stays the same Fears: Local government not listening to the population.
- Hopes: The town stays safe and inviting. Fears: Overdeveloped like Fitchburg and Gardner.
- Hopes: Town maintains feel, while allowing business in. Recreation and library improves Fears: Loss of character and high taxes.
- Fears: Increased Taxes.
- Fears: Pollution.
- Fears: taxes are too high now and will get higher Hopes: The Town cuts back on spending.
- Hopes: School system a high priority, and keep small town feel Fears; Big business driving out smaller ones.
- Hopes: Maintaining Town's character, Decorate town for X-mas Fears: Retail chains and Strip Malls moving in.
- Hopes: More retail and condos Fears: Loss of small town feel.
- Hopes: Low taxes and reasonable public services Fears: High Taxes.
- Hopes: Small Town feel, same quality of life Fear: Industrialization.
- Hopes: Control development. Fears: Too much development, pack housing.
- Hopes: Commercial industry to lessen taxes Fears: To do nothing and expect to remain the same.
- Hopes: Get rid of the Historical Society. Fears: Stagnation because no new businesses move in due to lack of space.
- Hopes: Modernization Fears: That it stays a 20th century town.
- Hopes: Common sense development Fears: Bad master plan.
- Hopes: Improve School system Fears: over-development.
- Hopes: Town stays the same Fears: High taxes.
- Fears: High Taxes.
- Hopes: That there is affordable housing for elderly Fears: Mall on Simplex drive.
- Fears: Over-Development.
- Hope: New Businesses and affordable pricing Fears: crime and lack of a young tax base.
- Hopes: More Recreation for kids Fears: Commercialization and low income housing.
- Hopes: Tax breaks for elderly Fears: Higher Taxes.
- Hopes: Maintain character and increase recreational activities Fears: Development and low-income housing.
- Hope: More businesses and jobs Fears: Lack of jobs and opportunity for youth
- Hope: No telephone poles or wiring on Main Street.
- Hopes: Retain small town character Fears: Big Box Retail.
- Fears: High Taxes.

- Hope: Stay the same.
- Hope: Remains a small town Fears: Malls being built without townspeople's vote.
- Hopes: More Businesses and lower taxes Fears: High Taxes.
- Hopes: Town stays small.
- Hopes: More Businesses, lower taxes.
- Hopes: Increase the appeal of Westminster to draw people in and get them to stay.
- Hopes: Good school system and an affordable town.
- Hopes: More Businesses, lower taxes. Fears: High Taxes drive people out.
- Hopes: pace the changes the town makes. Fears: High Taxes.
- Hopes: Remain a small town, growth on the outskirts Fears: Overgrown with industry, keep it away from Route 2.
- Hopes: Westminster stays quaint, senior center, high-end housing.
- Hopes: Train stop with a little village, quicker approval of building permits Fears: Deterioration of residential property, crime.
- Hopes: Good private roads, MART buses to access the T, Farm subsidies, Fears: loss of small town character.
- Hopes: Better sewer and water services. Fears: Large Housing Developments.
- Hopes: Recreation activities for young adults. Fears: Bored kids committing crimes.
- Hopes: A traditional town center, more business in outlying parts of town.
- Hopes: More businesses, more extracurricular Fears: Less funding for schools and extracurricular.
- Hopes: Change with the times Fears: over development .
- Hopes: maintain small town feel, maintain services, low taxes Fears: No large scale industrial development.
- Hopes: Continue to be a New England town with modern features.
- Hopes: Maintains small town character.
- Hopes: More Businesses, lower taxes, break the status quo.
- Hopes: Lower Taxes Fears: Higher Taxes.
- Hopes: Town government works for the residents. Fears: High taxes cause elderly to leave town.
- High hopes-- increase industry; worst--no increase in industry.
- Hopes: some appropriately situated, low-impact industrial development; a better-funded school; very slow housing growth; kids' baseball fields;; worst: rampant housing development, cluster development, condos; 40b blackmail; too much traffic; too many kids added to schools; commercial development like Walmart forced on us.
- Fear--we will look like every other town with same chain store/ mc'donalds; buildings that take away from the character of the town-- I.C, subway; no one-of-a-kind, unique small-town-atmosphere stores.
- Keep residents safe; bring in more companies/jobs.
- More small business; when landfill closes there will be a lack of income
- Affordable senior housing, affordable housing, maintain quality public education; maintain safety... no fears.
- High hopes--town will grow economically but not lose its character. Fear: nothing changes, increased taxes, too expensive to live here and schools decline.
- Hopes--maintain small town atmosphere with neighbors helping neighbors. Fears-become a city, roads in disrepair and school system downgraded and services stretched to cover more with less.
- Fear-- I won't be here.
- More business, industry, retail.
- Hopes-accepting commercial building to reduce taxes. Fears-taxes are too high, will have to move.
- Hopes--lower taxes; fear- taxes go up with more spent on schools
- Hope: senior center.
- Fear — overdevelopment.

- Hopes: to have a five member selectman's board to make better decisions. Fears: that there will be no future development.
- Hope: keep my attitude about the town positive. Fear: I won't be able to afford to live here. Thank you for this survey.
- Hope-that small businesses will increase and thrive in town; fear-that the railroad layover station. It will be a disaster for nearby residents.
- Hope-maintain beauty and tranquility of a small town, but modern amenities and services; fear-increased traffic
- Hope- a sign on my road.
- Hope-keep it a TOWN; fear: become Fitchburg.
- Hope- lower taxes.
- Hope- we get new commercial and industrial development; new senior center. Fear-loss of small town character.
- Hope-- more commercial and industrial development; fears- costs too high to retire here in town.
- Hope-- continue good school system and keep small town character fears-over-development either residential or commercial.
- Hope-that development considers all residents; and is honest. All in all, this is a pretty nice town.
- Hope- keep town rural and small town; fear: big box stores, shopping malls.
- We need to opt out of school system shared with Ashburnham; town roads need improvement; but we're on the right path!
- Hope- to oppose folks who oppose new sources of revenue generating entities that would lower our taxes; maintain services as we have now.
- Hope- expand water and sewer; fear-expand without planning and design needed.
- Hope--more industrial and commercial; mountain bikes at Crocker Pond and other recreation; fears-increased taxes; too expensive for kids and seniors.
- Hope- sewer on Sargent Rd.
- Hope- more families here; fear- over-commercialization and traffic.
- Hope-more economic development away from rural areas; fear-low-income housing that will burden schools and taxes.
- Hope- maintain small town; fear-overbuilt/housing.
- Fear-over development—residential.
- Fear--too commercial.
- Hope-develop retail and business in Simplex/Village Inn; increase in non-residential tax base in properties where traffic won't interfere locally and character will be maintained; fear- status quo will be maintained so middle class can't afford to live here.
- Hope- water and sewer to Lakewood Park.
- Fear-town grows and role of government increases; if people want more conveniences they shouldn't live here; hope: restrict town and government size; schools privatized.
- We need smart growth. Like boutiques, whole foods, restaurants.
- Hope-remain small town feel with increased conservation/recreational land. Fear-development, decreasing open space, big box, excess traffic.
- Hope-small town charm. Fear-too many low income properties.
- Hope- we can remain in our home after we retire and my children can afford to buy here; fear- we won't bring in smart bio-tech industries; and tax burden will be solely on homeowners.
- We need more businesses so people don't have to go to Leo and Gardner for everything.
- Hope - keep town character. Fear- box stores.
- Increase traffic lights; keep class size low; no graffiti
- Maintain small town and sense of community. Fear- excessive housing and business development.
- Hope-increase service and retail business; fear-low income housing.

- Create local retail; self-reliance for electricity provision
- Small town feel, but bring in business in appropriate places; thanks for survey!
- Small town feel.
- Small town character; fear- too much development; apathy.
- No development; we're getting too big!!!
- Capitalize on Wachusett tourism; with local coffee shops, etc.
- High taxes make it hard on retirees; I'm just hanging it.
- Be more like Concord, Ma.
- Hope-tasteful development, esthetic, respect to town flavor and historic beauty; traffic. Fear; destruction of historic flavor, increased traffic, but business park should be accessible to Route 2.
- Hopes: better roads, more business opportunities, fears: higher taxes, no change in politics.
- Like feeling safe here, small town feeling, enjoy open space and scenic views.
- Too much residential development. Want to see more industries in north industrial zone to keep traffic out of the center.
- More development would result in loss of wildlife- ex turkeys. Too much development, which will eventually crowd existing space. Too much traffic.
- Fear: too much development.
- Management of town business has been poor. Hope for improved planning & management.
- Hope: more elderly services.
- New senior center.
- Hopes: employment without disturbing town character. More of what attracts tourists, wind/solar farms to decrease town energy bills. Do not want large mall.
- Hope: steady growth industrial/commercial outskirts of center to keep allure of center and help tax base. Like Leominster for example.
- Hope: thoughtful economic development planning to maintain/return character of center. Supporting business on targeted areas to foster jobs and tax revenues.
- Hope: plan for retail, commercial, industrial grown with controls to protect center. Visible retail to highway is benefit. Replace landfill revenue. Fear: town will vote down growth and can't provide current services or grow services.
- Fears: don't want to see the town get too big. Hopes: keep small town charm.
- Hopes: more community gathering places. Children are most important. Fears: no modernizing high rises and polluting industries.
- Hopes: that children will want to raise their family here. Afford to keep property. Woods behind property, buy local produce and drink the water. Fears: volunteerism will be replaced by non-resident professionals. That infrastructure won't be affordable which will create a decay of quality of life.
- Fears: ruin landscape by bringing in big box stores that would destroy many local businesses. They would not add jobs.
- Hopes: hiking trails, allow assisted living or in-law housing to help the elders. Fear: do not want low income housing.
- Hopes: bring business to simplex drive, retail and business would have to be highly desirable in order for development to be successful.
- Hopes: lower taxes, fears: bad road conditions.
- Hopes: revenue to ease property taxes, less government.
- Hopes: retain character but add restaurants, bakery, deli. Limit or refuse low-income housing. Add period lights to downtown. Eliminate tractor trailer traffic on Main St.
- Hopes: bring in some retail and business, fears: we keep buying ladder trucks that we never use.
- Hopes: keep small town feel and safety. Fears: allow big retail business and turns into a "Fitchburg".
- Hopes: encourage small/mid-size business into commercial areas & and another restaurant. Fears: low income housing. Do not want Westminster to become a Leominster or Fitchburg.

- Hopes: set aside tax dollars and grants to attract new business to set up in town. Fears: town's economic base will go away causing tax increases for same services.
- Hopes: commercial/industrial development at simplex or business park. Reuse old town hall. Fears: action won't be taken to replace landfill revenue and taxes will be increased to residents.
- Hopes: senior housing, senior center. Need businesses to help with taxes. Fears: we don't change.
- Hopes: proud of small town heritage, create welcoming environment for small business & restaurants. Fears: becoming a home to big box stores and national chains, losing the charm that draws people here.
- Fears: greed in over development.
- Hopes: see more single family homes and same zoning rules. Fears: low income housing coming to town and crime rate rising.
- Hopes: elderly housing.
- Hopes: that Westminster will retain small town atmosphere.
- Hope: town would develop 2 tier tax- 1) town water sewer roads, 2) water, sewer, roads not maintained by town.
- Hope: town will build up some business, but keep small town character of Main Street. Fears: if development if it is done without rules, health and pollution could be bad.
- Fears: lower & middle income people will be pushed out of town and Westminster will become as snobby as Harvard.
- Fears: stop being a "snob" community, stop runaway costs for school department. Hopes: consider businesses on individual basis.
- Hopes: people who love the town work to keep charm intact. Fears: people with ulterior motives push personal agendas through. Taxes too high, costs must be contained or curtailed.
- Hopes: retain small town character, fears: loss of open space from landowners selling land to pay taxes, clusters of homes in previously open spaces.
- Hopes: development is done with restraint and common sense to protect small town character. Fears: selling of land to developers to pay taxes.
- Fears: loss of small town atmosphere, more traffic, still waiting for senior center.
- Hopes: controlled growth, keep good schools, recreation, town services and small town feeling. Fears: large retail malls and outlets, overbuilding, loss of small town feeling.
- Hopes: well planned developments carefully crafted to impact fewest people. Maintain character of the town.
- Hopes: more retail stores, to make it cheaper to shop in Westminster. All for supporting local business, but it's too expensive.
- Hopes: letting more small businesses in to help relieve taxes and allow for economic growth. Fear: placing business in wrong places which would increase traffic and speeding. Route 2 ramp needs more vigilance.
- Hopes: consolidate management of departments.
- Fears: town government workers are weak performers who sometimes don't know what's going on. We are concerned about costs of pensions and healthcare for town and school employees dictated by union contracts.
- Hopes: improvement of standard of quality in the schools and horrendous roads. Town needs to raise concerns of balancing industrial growth and having affordable taxes.
- Fears: low income housing bringing in crime.
- Fears: Westminster will become a business town and school system will be sub-standard. Town should provide inexpensive places/services for children & teenagers. School curriculum should be comprehensive.
- Hopes: less traffic, trader joes. Fears: school will continue to diminish with budgets, less resources and bigger class sizes year to year, cuts in teachers.
- Hopes: sewer on lake drive east and town maintenance of the road.

- Fears: high property taxes and water bill hike.
- Hope: retail & manufacturing with discretion, plenty of room for parks & rec places. Allow train depot. Fears: abandoned buildings because people can't afford to live here. Losing sports programs because \$ spent elsewhere.
- Hopes: keep rural character while expanding tax base. Fears: we've become overbuilt with housing, schools continue to be cut,
- Hopes: keep the small town feel of town. Comment: police, fire and school supt salaries are exorbitant for small town.
- Hope: small town feel and excellent school system do not change.
- Fears: overcrowding at the schools from funding cuts will lose kids in the system.
- Fears: don't want to see any retail mall or strip mall. Traffic! A few restaurants would be nice but not "chain" food.
- Hopes: enough commercial/industrial/retail in the area to keep young families in town, town properties and roads well maintained and low crime rate. Fears: with little commercial/industrial growth allowed, Westminster becomes a dead town.
- Fears: don't become Fitchburg, Leino park being treated unfairly; no sewer, no road repair or upkeep, no help with bridge, 25 minute response time for ambulance.
- Hopes: retain small town feel, keep low crime rate, attract more business to offset high taxes. Fears: development of existing open space or undeveloped land.
- Higher ranking schools/elementary.
- Hope: provide for seniors. Fear: school budget gets out of control.
- Hopes - stay small bedroom community 2 school w/good rankings 3 more renewable energy. Fear overdevelopment/big stores/ large manufacturing.
- Hopes more commercial to offset taxes/bring services the town needs. Fears too rural, no growth, rising taxes, longtime residents will have to move.
- Hopes; schools are maintained, expand environmental friendly business, meeting place that holds dances like elks in Leominster. Fears schools decline.
- Hopes: 1 keep small town char 2 better school system 3 better use of alt. energy. Fears: 1 loss of small town character 2 continued decline of school system 3 loss of conservation area to development.
- Hopes sewer everywhere in town, control beaver population.
- Hopes small town character balanced with com/ind in proper area alleviates tax burden. Fears Westminster will become another Fitchburg crime, drugs, poverty, relying on state and fed aid.
- Increase development to provide tax base, more disclosure on fluctuating tax base, community not growing.
- Maintain same standard.
- We need one-floor boomer housing, no large developments.
- Hopes: some intelligent leadership from BOS and School Com fears: school budget growth, police and fire contracts need wage and health ins. restructured. Selectmen and AWRSC too cozy with employees. Police OT out of line.
- Town service hours not convenient for working residents.
- Hope: lower taxes. Fear: higher taxes.
- Hopes: more elderly and empty nester housing, future development to offset taxes. Fears: can't stay in homes, taxes too high.
- Hopes: keep small town character, good school system, keep town people as family feeling. Fears loss of open space, becoming too built up, reduced services.
- Fear going from small town to small city.
- Hopes maintain small safe family town charm, continue neighbors helping neighbors feel. Fear: business and low income homes will bring traffic, crime and lower property values.

- Hopes: good public access to state forest, cozy country store coffee shop meeting place. Fears loss of Route 31 landfill, big box stores and acres of unneeded shopping malls.
- Fear multi-family apartment buildings all over town like Leominster.
- Fear not much land to develop.
- Hope we bring in major retail to offset taxes. Fear too much debate means nothing will get done.
- Hopes business moves to town, new intersection at south main and academy.
- Fears school becomes overpopulated, taxes rise, not enough business.
- Hopes to retain small town character while continuing to develop.
- Hopes to keep small town image with a few more businesses. Fear high crime rate and city like attitude.
- Hope lower taxes. Fear crime.
- Hopes to maintain town atmosphere, avoid over development, keep taxes down to allow citizens to live affordability. Fear large housing development.
- Tax rate too high, need more nonresidential.
- Hope to be here in ten years depending on economy and reinvestment.
- Have town hall open one night.
- Hopes more industry next ten years. Fear not allowing commercial building next ten years.
- Hopes little town w/diversity and use of clean energy. Fear too much expansion too fast, too restrictive for growth, overly historical.
- Hopes some industry to employ our college graduates. Fears traffic, overly developed, retail that supports only minimum wage jobs.
- Hope population base stays the same while industry help stabilize taxes. Fears: mega housing plans like 140 units off Ellis putting a strain on services
- Hope: town offices open later in the day. Tear down old town hall to create a memorial park for fallen hero's armed services and fire and police.
- Fear Westminster turning into Fitchburg or Gardner.
- Hope to build senior center.
- Fear DPW becomes a contracting inspection agency w/ less accomplished for our taxes, police work too many detail hours and rest on regular duty.
- Hopes to rebuild police cars instead of buying new ones. Learn to live on your budget, stop overspending and waste.
- Hopes using simplex for huge retail, more retail in other areas, demolishing old town hall and get rid of Upton building. Fears nothing will change.
- Too much new housing, new houses should have 3 acres /lot.
- Stay small, don't overdevelop, don't allow downtown become congested with traffic.
- Hope: open spaces are kept and increased. Fear: town becomes over developed.
- Stay a small desired town, less taxes.
- Hope industrial and commercial diversification of tax base. Fear reliance on residential tax base.
- Hoping to not be taxed out of our home.
- Hopes for rubbish pickup. Fear higher taxes on retirees' property.
- Hopes more business more jobs more competition to offset tax burden. Fears the not in my town mentality would ease, balance of services for elderly empty nesters families with children in school.
- Hopes for revitalized classic style downtown, parking behind buildings, manufacturing at simplex. Fears hodgepodge development resulting in sprawl.
- More businesses but not manufacturing to lower taxes, solar and wind. Fears lowering house values we lost 100k in 5 years, taxes in the 20-30% range.
- Hope change will be carefully thought out. Fears tax increases on fixed income.
- Hopes to add revenue generating business that adds to our culture. Fear we could be forced to sell out our culture.

- Hopes for more light manufacturing jobs, and some commercial for tax revenue keep down water and sewer rates, green development. Fears unchecked residential without com and industrial causing higher tax rates development not closely regulated.
- Hopes development of Business Park and 140N. Fears over restricting policies prevent growth unplanned growth not conducive to quality of life.
- Hopes to further enhance character of town. Fear loss of small town character.
- Hopes to keep a small town small. Fear tax burden, encourage business to come to town.
- Hope some increase in retail and commercial but keep small town feel. Fear large scale developments commercial condos and apartment buildings.
- Hopes to keep small town charm, more industry to offset high taxes.
- We need to watch costs, fire department has a ladder truck that could not get down my driveway good decision there. Police also need to watch cost.
- Hopes to remain a small town, business out of sight, small stores and business as small as they are now. Fears too much development, big stores on Main Street, please keep small town look! Losing our excellent schools.
- Fears big box stores, hopes keep Westminster small and charming. We are surrounded by shopping plazas in every direction.
- Increase tourism opportunities by maintaining small town character. Old Mill and Wachusett Mt. are attractions but do not keep tourists in town. Downtown is not well landscaped or attractive. It would be great if the Cracker Factory could be featured in a venue that would draw tourism (e.g. small in town open market place).
- I look forward to minimal changes in the town's character as a rural community - a bedroom community for people working elsewhere. My fear is that the character will change - perhaps driven by people's aversion to raising taxes.
- Increase jobs and local shops without more downtown development. Other places are available to increase tax income and decrease or freeze individual tax burden. Supply affordable housing to improve the integration of less affluent people of all nationalities - Westminster is a very unaffordable place for young families. Overdevelopment of downtown area with open spaces plundered for development purposes.
- Bring some chain restaurants here. Gardner has none. Expand sewer & water system especially if we bring in businesses that will contaminate groundwater. Fear taxes keep going up. Services stay the same, plus overspending by public safety departments. PD is in better shape with resources above a municipality capacity. This is not Harvard or Bolton - never going to be.
- Wants lower tax rate. There is too much congestion on Main Street.
- Hope that Westminster maintains its small town appeal though additional retail shopping access is needed it should not be added to the downtown area. Downtown should be kept historic. It is what Westminster is all about. Worst fear is Westminster begins to look like Fitchburg or Gardner with higher crime rates, etc. I moved here from Fitchburg 20 years ago to get away from that.
- Keep our small town character. Locate new services/businesses on the outskirts off Rte. 2 Village Inn area. Keep our center unique and lower traffic. Do not allow over development. Reuse what we have. Reconstruct. New services like restaurants, coffee shops, retail should not be in the town center. We can't fill the empty spaces in town. Joseph's building is empty, ugly, has no character, no trees.
- Keep it simple. Don't forget the residents. Don't try to make Westminster into something that it isn't. People live in this town for a reason. It has character, it has tranquility that other towns in MA are lacking or have lost. I fear Westminster will try to become a city and lose its charm. (I moved here from Worcester for one reason - to get away from the city & its problems) That is why people live here. They work in the cities, but Westminster is a quiet sanctuary for them.
- Would like to see control over signage in the center of town.

- More tax base outside residential. Too much "protected" open space cutting down on construction. Loss of "dump" funds and what will happen to our already high tax base. School funding is out of control!!!
- Staying within budget - Overspending is dangerous for all people. Attract solid, useful, respected, honest business to locate here to lower our taxes. Stop trying to save unused town buildings at prohibitive cost to taxpayers.
- More businesses, manufacturing at Simplex Drive/Route 140. Tax rate becomes so high that people who have lived here all their lives can no longer afford to live here, ie the elderly.
- Highest hopes - Promote tourism. Worst fears - mindless industrial development that will yield nothing but empty office parks and abandoned industrial sites. How often do residents have to say this? How often do outside consultants have to say this for town leaders to get it?
- Hope to keep the town business strong but not over developed. We have a great town; let's keep it that way.
- Preserve open space. We are satisfied with town as it is. We are content to drive to Fitchburg, Leominster and Gardner for stores. The schools will continue to degrade due to lack of Ashburnham SPT. Fear too much development, esp. large stores.
- Hopes - To remain a beautiful community. Fears - allow toxic industry to relocate to Westminster and decrease quality of air.
- Hope - More historic look to town center; community meeting place; Fears - Too many single family developments; outgrow schools.
- I hope the town does not change much. My worst fear is that it will become too commercialized.
- The Master Plan would promote Retail Development along Route 140 as Westminster' Business District. Town Center would restrict future development to professional services and trees and other plantings would enhance our small town. Simplex Drive would have research/development, bio-technology and light manufacturing in operation. The Depot Park with rail access would provide warehouse and storage, and light manufacturing. Worst fears would be inappropriate trust and reliance on wind turbines and bad placements.
- Keep the charm we all love about the town. Fear that it will probably change!!!!
- I moved here from Billerica many years ago. It was similar to what Westminster is today but has been destroyed by rampant development in all categories. I hope Westminster can avoid this. My worst fear is that the clumsy and amateurish selectmen form of government will be overwhelmed and overrun by profit driven developers and that the town in desperation for mythical revenue sources will make some really poor choices.
- Hopes - That any development takes place in a logical and gradual fashion and that only necessary development take place so as to preserve open space and the small town character of the town. Fears - Rash development in attempt to raise fast tax revenue which changes the character of our community, diminishes open space and recreational opportunities; overbuilding and loss of small town character; cookie cutter residential development; industries that bring air, noise and environmental pollution; or unsightly industries/projects.
- Senior citizen recreation and housing.
- New to town - Like Westminster for its small town atmosphere and culture.
- Retain N.E. Charm w/o DD, McD, & chain stores but locally named stores with character, uniqueness. Do not want to see it become Gardner/Leominster.
- Need business to offset our taxes. We stay stagnant in our development. We must keep up with progress.
- Moderate reasonable growth of tax base while keeping our town's character. We want residential growth of multi-family and low income homes continuing to burden the school system without fair and equal contributions to the tax base.
- Hope - that development does not change small town nature of town. Fear is that it will and there will be more buildings, more traffic and more activity. There should be no train layover station and no additional developments.
- Hope - Not to be living here. Fear - Robbing poor even more through taxes.

- Maintain small town atmosphere and reasonable tax rate. Various departments will not control spending and work within reasonable budgets.
- Jobs for local people while keeping our nice town charm.
- We do not plan to live in the town in the future as the tax rate and water/sewer charges are too high for the elderly. We have been here over 50 years and are not happy with the direction of the town.
- Highest Hope - Retain rural character. Worst Fears - Escalating taxes for services; Big Box/Mall destruction of industrial areas.
- Desires a mix of new and old. Preserve Main St. with retail commercial on 140/Simplex Dr. Open space via cluster development. Wants solar panels on roof of Fire Station.
- Worst Fears - traffic and higher taxes.
- Adopt system to reduce taxes for long term residents; after 20 years owner receives 1% abatement; after 20 years his taxes reduce by 1% for each additional year. A 30 year resident would receive 10% abatement. This is most needed for the elderly. Because of not using funds judiciously we will leave our long held houses due to exorbitant taxes.
- Hopes - Maintain small town character akin to other N.E. towns. Fears - Out of control or mismanaged growth.
- Keep the town small.
- Maintain small town ambiance. Less is more. We can't be everything to everyone.
- Hopes - Industrial growth; Fears - Lack of controlled growth both industrially and commercially.
- Increase tax base without negatively impacting small town character. Reuse Old Town Hall and Upton School. Update business appearances - Cumberland Farms Plaza, Gas Stations, etc. Doesn't want Fitchburg's problems spilling into our town.
- Hope that green jobs will be created in any new development. Fear MBTA will build layover station on their terms only. No tax income, unforeseen expense, environmentally and added services provided by fire and police departments.
- We will fall prey to big box development; will look like Leominster or Gardner with strip malls and Home Depot. We will ruin Westminster.
- Keep main village "New England"; locate industrial/commercial in other areas; Exit 24 off Rt.2 perfect for development.
- Work with business and compromise to increase tax base while maintaining a small town. Growth will happen or we become obsolete. We are on Rt.2! Use that access to direct traffic accordingly. Schools need help! Large class sizes and fewer teachers! Growth and change are good. We are not rural Vermont. Without some compromise, Westminster will fail and we'll have no legacy for the future.
- HOPES: Hopefully having a stable tax base that does not increase exponentially every year. Hopeful for better road maintenance in outlying areas of Westminster. FEARS: My worst fear is that we would become like Shrewsbury - too many houses & industries for the amount of land.
- HOPES: More business in commercial areas, tax benefits for residents. FEARS: No development.
- HOPES: Increase Tax Rate to lower "our" Taxes. FEARS: Taxing to control expenses with School Dept.
- HOPES: I would love to see the town develop into a place where you can walk along the sidewalks & visit Mom & Pop stores. Downtown would be best for this of course. We want something along the same lines of Newburyport. Still has the quiet small town feel.
- HOPES: Water, Sewer, more houses, more jobs. FEARS: Nothing being done for advancement!
- HOPES: Continue to provide good school system, keep small town feel, controlled growth to ease tax burden. FEARS: Too much commercialization, loss of small town feel & character.
- HOPES: Keep town small, do not commercialize more than we have already. FEARS: Getting over crowded, School System will not be as good.
- HOPES: To maintain the small town charm, but on the outskirts of Main Street & increase jobs. It would be nice to have more walkable downtown.

- HOPES: To keep the "Small town" feel of Westminster & Limit large retail & housing development. There is plenty in the surrounding towns for shopping & subsidized housing. We moved to Westminster because we wanted to live in a nice town with great schools. We would not want Westminster to turn into a "city" type atmosphere. We want to keep the small home town feel & Quality Schools, etc. & services.
- HOPES: To keep Westminster simple & friendly. I love this town. FEARS: turning Westminster into an overcrowded mess with more crime.
- HOPES: Maintain small town character.
- HOPES: The town has carefully planned growth so that young families still enjoy a rural community, safe from industrial pollutants, crime & congestion. The school system is highly rated & citizens of all ages can enjoy fair housing, recreation & reasonable cost to live here. FEARS are that self-serving individuals control the town future development and politics prevail over the common good. The possibility of over regulations infringes on the rights of neighborhoods. No gated communities please!
- HOPES: Additional retail stores. FEARS: Higher Taxes & more traffic on Main Street.
- HOPES: Limited growth with lower taxes while retaining small New England town character. FEARS: Overpopulation & higher taxes.
- HOPES: NO DEVELOPMENT. FEARS: Too much development.
- HOPES: That existing bad roads would be improved, to prevent embarrassment! FEARS: the town government form might be changed. What the town needs is a better system of money expenditure priorities, would be directed to maintain roads and senior/elderly assistance. Much of the great past history came from the commitment that many of the remaining elderly citizens had devoted their time to, & they need to be recognized for that. I was born & raised here & have seen a lot of change, & some change is good & needed - but don't forget those that made our town what it is. To those involved should be SMART with our town planning.
- HOPES: Growth Management, Renewable Energy & employment opportunities.
- FEARS: Unrestrained Low Income Housing. Unrestrained municipal agency growth such as Fire & Police. We currently have more fire equipment than cities such as Gardner. No need for a tower truck costing .75 million dollars.
- HOPES: I would hope that planning would be done ahead of future development, and that the small historic down town can be kept. FEARS: Too much traffic!
- HOPES: More roads paved & repaired.
- Hope - South St/Main St. intersection gets fixed ASAP. Fear - losing small town feeling.
- Fear of increasing school class sizes and diminishing education quality.
- Hope - more recreational opportunities for kids. Fear - uncontrolled retail development diminishes small town character.
- Hope - maintain high quality schools, police, fire. Fears a decrease in quality of services.
- Hope - downtown maintained or improved w/r to building facades, and remove eyesores like old gas station near cracker factory
- Hope - promote industry for local jobs, provide incentives for renovation of old homes vs. building new. Fear- Housing (senior?) will be denied for life-long town residents, loss of rural character related to encouragement of "mcmansions".
- Hope - same (high) level of town services could be provided at lower cost plus encouragement of business could stabilize or reduce taxes.
- Hope - Enhance small town appearance of town center, the Senior Center doesn't "move out", ugly ReMax building goes and an ice cream shop is added. Fears - Center of town continues to look like a "drive by".
- Hope - Still remains a quiet community. Fear - High taxes force residents to leave.
- Hope - New senior center, limited retail development and clean-up of Main St. rental properties. Fear - Too much retail and industrial development, inadequate school funding, and degradation of Main St. rental property.
- Hope - maintain high quality schools. Fear - diminished school quality due to budget cuts.

- Hope - Attract commercial/industrial dev. to stabilize res. tax rate. Fear - Obstructionist attitudes will prevent orderly comm./ind. dev.
- Hope - Town stays as is. Fear - Influx of commercial/industrial development.
- Hope - enhanced character of town, open space/farmland preservation. Fear - diminished town character and excessive tree clearing.
- Hope - small town feel is preserved.
- Hope - Preservation of historic sites, tax increases minimized, sense of community improved.
- Hope - Development that will broaden tax base is encouraged. Fear - Commercial/industrial development is restricted.
- Hope - well-planned retail/comm/ind is encouraged to ease res tax burden, government spending reduced. Fear - Lack of proper planning for dev.
- Hope - Programs for youth and seniors increase, tax burden shifts from res to comm. Fear - Crime and population increase.
- Hope - Chain restaurants/grocery stores will be accessible in town. Fear - "NIMBY" attitude holds town back, and loss of landfill revenues.
- Hope - Town growth in harmony with historic and natural beauty will occur. Fear - Commercialism will take over town center, cell phone towers and wind turbines will proliferate.
- Hope - Open spaces are maintained and development is limited. Fear - Over-development and loss of nat. beauty in pursuit of tax revenues.
- Hope - More restaurants, retail, ind, and high tech. Fear - Restriction of commercial development increases residential taxes to point of unaffordability for many long-time residents. High income people move here and leave after kids are through school.
- Hope - Installation of traffic lights at Rt 2A and Ashburnham State Road.
- Hope - Preservation of small town character. Fear - Increased retail development.
- Hope - Improved schools and strategically developed comm/ind areas that don't impact town center. Fear - Over development of subsidized single family housing (like Gardner).
- Hope - Controlled development of restaurants and businesses with appropriate signage (no neon).
- Hopes: more elderly housing, keep downtown businesses looking like New England small town. Fears: too much traffic on main road, no longer a small town, town center having too many modern buildings.
- Hopes: remain a small town. Fears: large residential developments and population density.
- Hopes for senior housing and better municipal services. Fears: over-development and lack of zoning, affordable housing complexes, more crime, more people mean more need for services.
- Hopes: development that increases tax base without altering town character. Place large-scale development away from town center, use current commercial & industrial areas.
- Fears: taxes too high, will force elderly out of their homes.
- Hopes: more local jobs. Fears: loss of small town feeling.
- Hopes: peg home values more realistically and equal to market. Taxes go to services, not people sitting around town hall, and no one in town earns more than the median income. Eliminate bad teachers, no tenure and bargain tough with teachers.
- Hopes: keep school system strong and stay a small town. Fears: low income housing and over-development.
- Hopes: slow and steady growth, Fears: overcrowding, too much of everything new - cheap looking.
- Fear: commercialization of Simplex Drive.
- Hopes: town stays small. Fear: over-development.
- Hopes: keep small town character.
- Hopes: successful downtown businesses. Fears: town could go downhill.
- Hopes: industrial growth. Fears: stagnation.
- Hope: no development and low population.

- Hopes: development of clean industries and keep excellent school system.
- Hopes: a sensible use for old town hall. Save the façade and construct a modern building around it. Fears that the new senior center gets stalled at the planning stage.
- Hopes: Develop existing industrial areas, leave downtown alone, address the old town hall issue, and keep municipal buildings accessible to all.
- Hopes: Develop Simplex drive with mini mall. Fears: low income housing, not enough funding for schools.
- Hopes: town can find ways to support new businesses to sustain town services without excessive tax hikes, yet maintain small town character. School system needs to be a priority.
- Hopes: growth in small businesses. Maintain our current level of services as we grow, while keeping taxes low. Fear: rapid growth will overburden our ability to provide services.
- Hopes: we can create the mixed-use development along Route 140. Wishes we could stop the transfer station from becoming a reality (I think she means layover station).
- Hopes: wants restaurants, retail stores and industry. Fears: over-development.
- Need longer hours at town hall on Friday.
- Hopes: lower property taxes, Fears: low income housing and more crime.
- Hopes: better roads, water & sewer service for Wyman Pond area.
- Hopes: no further development. Fears: too much development.
- Hopes: more conveniences, but keep small town charm.
- Hopes: extend water and sewer to all residents, preserve our lakes and forests, preserve small town feel. Fears: large housing projects, manufacturing companies, overloading of forests and lakes, loss of natural wildlife.
- Hopes: exploit recreation assets for tourism. Fears: large retail stores, deteriorating roads, loss of conservation land.
- Hopes: keep town clean and safe, use clean solar power. Fear: too much tax \$ being spent on fire/police pensions & retirement & overtime, and not enough for our schools.
- Fears: overdevelopment.
- Hopes: town stays as is.
- Hopes: have a thriving downtown and make historic Westminster a destination spot for tourism. Fear: that the town becomes a bedroom community.
- Hopes the town doesn't change too much. Fears the town will become more of a city, more people, worse schools.
- Hopes: healthy and supportive community for all citizens. More help for elderly with financial burdens. Fears: taxes will continue to rise and we won't be able to afford to live here. Our taxes have tripled in 16 years and for what?
- Hopes: Continue to have a strong school system Fears: High taxes, traffic.
- Fears: Foreigners.
- Hopes: keep small town charm without adding too many homes and businesses.
- Hopes: Reduce excess cost in maintaining police vehicles.
- Hopes: town will stay small and rural.
- Fears: overdevelopment of large homes on small lots.
- Hopes: keep small town character. No big commercial development. Give town center a more traditional New England look, keep town government small. Fears: loss of small town feel, more traffic, and more people.
- Hopes: Remain Quaint Town, gain hardware store and auto parts store Fears: Over development and chain stores.
- Hopes: Small town feel with close by shopping Fears: High property and water taxes.
- Hopes: More businesses.
- Hopes: Town keeps its reputation Fears: High Taxes.

- Hopes: More businesses in town just not in center, one gas station disappears, concrete building in center is torn down.
- Hopes: Road improvement, more businesses, good schools Fears: Zoning not used correctly, loss of history in center.
- Hopes: Shopping center on the outskirts Fears: None.
- Hopes: Stay a small town Fears: Over Development.
- Hopes: More Activities Downtown, public transportation.
- Hopes: Marginal commercial growth Fears: Retail chains, low income housing, condos.
- Hopes: The town develops at a reasonable pace.
- Hopes: Stays a small town Fears: Businesses destroying the feel of the town
- Hopes: More businesses Fears: Removal of sand and soil from undeveloped business park.
- Hopes: Stay a small town Fears: Too many people and businesses in town Hopes: More businesses utilizing Simplex Drive location.
- Hopes: Effective town government, economic growth Fears: Bad government, complex residential codes, high taxes.
- Hopes: Small town character is maintained Fears: Too much development with loss of open space.
- Hopes: small retail/restaurants, and smaller class sizes Fears: Schools and property value decline.
- Hopes: Preserve open space Fears: Failure to preserve open space.
- Hopes: Maintain character and tax rate.
- Hopes: Shopping Center.
- Hopes: Good education, small town atmosphere, low crime Fears: Forgetting to support programs.
- Fears: High Taxes.
- Hopes: Westminster stays the same Fears: Fitchburg expands into Westminster.
- Hopes: more retail businesses Fears: Taxes are raised, schools get worse.
- Hopes: Allowing the town to grow in a way that is beneficial to the residents.
- Hopes: Taxes stay the same, improve departments Fears: Spending too much in government.
- Hopes: More businesses and jobs Fears: Stagnation.
- Hopes: Develop Simplex Drive.
- Hope: Town stays the same Fear: Overdevelopment occurs.
- Hopes: More small business, good schools, open space Fears: Overdevelopment and bad schools.
- Hopes: A healthy safe community with good schools Fears: Lack of development destroys town.
- Hopes: Reasonable town services and taxes for them Fears: Overdevelopment destroys town.
- Hopes: Preserve small town, more recreation Fears: Overdevelopment.
- Hopes: Senior housing and senior center Fears: Too much traffic, high taxes.
- Hopes: Develop in a way that preserves character Fear: Losing town character.
- Hopes: More Businesses, less government regulations.
- Hopes: Roads and traffic problems are fixed.
- Hopes: Green energy, visually appealing center, art center Fears: Pollution and commercial decay.
- Fear: overdevelopment.
- Hopes: small business, more restaurants, new septic system.
- Hopes: Retain rural character, Green energy Fears: High Taxes.
- Hopes: Quaint downtown that capitalizes on Mt. Wachusett Fears: strip malls, turning into Leominster.
- Fears: Failing to help those with learning disabilities in the schools, loss of small town charm.
- Hopes: Stable population and small town feel Fears: High Population and McDonalds.
- Hopes: Improve town center while maintaining feel fear: Overcrowding.
- Fear: \$20 per 1000 property tax.
- Hopes: Large retail and manufacturing Fears: Historical downtown will hinder development.
- Hopes: Attracting more business and more local jobs.

- Hopes: Family oriented small town Fears: Traffic filled downtown, retail chains.
- Hopes: for commercial development, but not too much Fears: Lose small town feel.
- Hopes: Good schools, low crime, elderly housing.
- Hopes: Striking a balance between citizens and service Fears: A cheap local government.
- Needs: to fix intersection near Academy and Main St, new senior center, food pantry at a community center.
- Would like sewer system for Wyman Pond area.
- Keep town rural and not develop with industry and condos. Need more oversight for building near lakes and ponds.
- Broaden economic development tax base, more businesses, rely less on Chapter 70 for schools. Fears: status quo. Letting groups like WEST run the town.
- Keep the people and environment in mind when thinking about change. Fears: the town won't live up to my highest hopes.
- Less traffic easy access to shopping Fears: Traffic.
- Be more like Concord MA and Not Shrewsbury. Fears: it will become a mecca for motorcyclists.
- Hopes: town grows its commercial/industrial tax base in areas zoned for those purposes. Keep town center more rural and keep small town feel. Require new businesses to adopt traditional NE look. Tax incentives for existing businesses upgrade/improve.
- Hopes: town becomes more vibrant, more activity, main street looking like a NE village. Fears: taxes, seniors are leaving, town dying.
- Loves small town feel, doesn't want town to become overdeveloped. We want more public areas for families to gather.
- Growth should be limited to commercial areas, preserve small town character, more reliance on renewable energy, more green spaces, limit growth to near Route 2 and 140.
- Allow retail development in designated areas. Fear: town does not embrace retail and industrial development.
- Keep character of town, but keep in mind individual rights when making decisions.
- Keep town small. Fear: overpopulation.
- Hopes: pay attention to details. Fears: not paying attention to details.
- Hopes: new senior center, commuter train stop near layover, develop priority development site, make use of foreclosed homes, fears: future development will be difficult if we say no to everything.
- Hopes: keep it rural, fears: too much development - traffic congestion.
- Hopes: forward thinking planning, make town a destination, small town feel, walking atmosphere for downtown, design standards for downtown, yearly festival. Fears: using our industrial areas for retail. Leaders need to realize that the Digital days may come again in our children's lifetimes, need good living wage jobs. Fears instant gratification.
- Hopes: the town creates a land trust and better traffic plan for Main Street and the streets that intersect it. Better use of Bacon Street and former town hall property. Keep Academy Hill unchanged.
- Take care of the elderly, outdoor and indoor activities for elderly: walking paths, swimming, fears: remain stagnant.
- Hopes: more bike paths, and open space recreation activities. Fears: strip malls and retail that ruin open space.
- Hopes: maintain quaint town character by carefully planned development, more sidewalks.
- Hopes: town stays the way it is. Fears: overpopulation and overdevelopment.
- Hopes our school system will improve. Maintain small town character and be affordable for our children. Fears: loss of small town character, the town will grow too fast and town becomes unaffordable to those on fixed incomes.
- Hopes: more local retail and job opportunities. More places for kids to gather and play. Fears that our kids have to keep going to playgrounds in other communities.

- Develop successfully while retaining character. Could renovate an old school for senior apts., be realistic for future.
- Small town character, do not want to see economically challenged influence prevail.
- Worried about school funding, worried about taxes/ lack of senior housing, trees! Add sidewalks.
- Wish: strong schools, small town feel, high income residents. Fears: bad schools, too commercial, declining income & low income housing.
- Wish: the town remains the same. Fears: town changes to a big city.
- Wish: more elected managing officials, more accountability of officials to public, when budget cuts come, every department must comply. Fears: If we don't change our form of town leadership, a few pressure groups will decide for all.
- Hopes: the town develops in a way that doesn't ruin small town character. Fears: the town will go forward with the layover station.
- Hopes: town will retain small town character. Fears: short-term gratification, big box stores, doesn't want to become Fitchburg or Gardner. No shopping malls!
- Hope: town stays a small town, fear: town will become a city.
- We need a grocery store/drug store.
- More industry, decrease agriculture land from 5 acres to 3 to 4, more sidewalks, control traffic speed, affordable grocery store, wind/solar. Fears: unable to afford taxes after retirement.
- Hopes: protect natural resources and keep town character, strong school system, sense of community, town events. Fears: loss of open space & farms, degraded environment, congested downtown, lack of extra-curriculum activities at schools.
- Hopes: keep town the same.
- Fears: train yard.
- Fears: mountain bike trails, subsidized housing.
- Keep town the way it is.
- Hopes: move ahead with services but retain our character, beautify downtown, more arts and culture. Fears: that we don't start planning carefully now for development.
- Hopes: new growth well planned integrated with neighborhoods. Fears: short sighted planning, personal gain project.
- Hopes: town will encourage businesses in the available business areas in order to create jobs and expand our tax base. Fears: the "let's keep Westminster the way it is" crowd, increased taxes.
- Hopes for a continued and growing focus on education. We want municipal water & sewer. Hopes the town remains small.
- Hopes: balance between town center development, drawing in light industry and tech firms while maintaining character. Fear: big scale retail.
- Hopes: biotech, R & D, light manufacturing. Fears: none of the above happens, low income housing, the cost of basic services increases and taxes keep going up.
- Hopes for better planning to provide services to the elderly.
- Hopes for a master plan that keeps Westminster a small NE town.
- Keep out the riff-raff, keep the town safe, more police in the neighborhoods.
- Hopes: maintain small town character for recreation & open space. Fears: unplanned development, quality of life degraded.
- Hope the town encourages intelligent future development. Fears: the Town won't.
- Hopes: retain small town character, lively town center with local businesses, more walking paths, economy based on a mix of local businesses, light industry and tourism, when an emphasis on outdoor recreation, housing for young and old, value sense of history, better sense of community. Fears: turning into Natick or Framingham.
- Hopes: more acceptance of cottage industries and keep large industries in existing districts to preserve town's present look.

- Hopes: town encourages growth to help with taxes, fill in the downtown. Fears: the town continues to strangle school budgets.
- Hopes: town hall becomes more transparent, opposed to comp time for employees, no special rules for some employees.
- Hopes the town doesn't get much bigger.
- Hopes: increase commercial tax base, more retail, shopping mall at simplex, more money for schools, fire & police, more recreation: parks & playgrounds. Fears: retail and traffic without increasing public safety.
- Hopes: don't become Gardner, Fitchburg or Leominster, no Wal-Mart's or McDonalds, keep farming. Fears: low end housing, crime, loss of town character.
- Hopes: advances in providing technology (cable, cell, internet), moderate growth. Fears: Not allowing moderate growth in retail and service sector.
- Hopes: more commercial and industry, especially off Route 140. Wants more recreation for children and a better public safety building.
- Hope: keep small town look and feel. Fears: Not allowing more low-income developments in town.
- Hopes: to bring more jobs in town by bringing in more retail. Fears: don't get so large that we turn into a city, doesn't want more crime.
- Hopes: Ten years from now, have school system with new personnel with new attitudes.
- Hopes: more in-town services, but in designated areas. Keep small town feel and New England appearance. I hate the look of the Cumberland Farms mall area. Fears: overdevelopment and decrease in school rating.
- Hopes the town will stay the same.
- Hopes the town retains its small town feel. We fear too much development and high taxes to pay for it all.
- Hopes; make town center a destination (restaurants, shops, services & activities). Fears: the school system will continue cutting services and opportunities for our children will decrease. If the school goes down, housing values go down.
- Hopes: excellent schools, fair taxes, preservation of scenic and historic resources: Fears: over-development, poorly managed resources, overburdened town government, too many cell towers, failure of school system.
- Hopes: our town continues to have wonderful schools, senior center built, more community events, more senior house sing. Fears: over-commercialized, more traffic, and declining schools.
- Hopes: keep the town affordable, my property taxes have doubled in the last 5 years. Fears: my children won't be able to afford to live here.
- Hopes: development of Simplex area for shopping (malls) and/or industrial/office park, while maintaining look and feel of town center.
- Hopes: more young families to keep up the town's growth rate and single family tax rate and make town attractive to young people and retirees. Also keep the town sustainable, support our businesses while fostering business growth.
- Hopes: more money put into schools. Fears: money won't be put in schools and our students become education "poor".
- Hopes: preserve town's rural character.
- Hopes: maintain small town character, pedestrian friendly downtown, and more small privately-owned businesses. Fears: big chains, losing town character.
- Hopes: expand commercial base in the proper areas, renewable energy in the landfill area. Fears: increased taxes.
- Hopes: maintain small town character. Fears: overdevelopment and traffic.
- Hopes: retain small town character and be family-friendly. Fears: overdevelopment, traffic, crime, transients.
- Tear down the old town hall - it's an eyesore.
- Consider a split tax rate if commercial and industrial development increase.

- Hopes: keep small town charm, keep taxes low.
- Hopes: slow growth, clean industry in designated areas, Upton Building finished and Senior Center built. Fears: malls, haphazard development.
- Hopes: town preserves rural charm. Fears: that the town loses sight of the resident's wellbeing and goes for what will "bring home the bacon".
- In view of the current economy, the Town should offer programs that teach survival skills: planting, harvesting, renewable energy.
- Keep town the same.
- Hopes: keep town safe, beautiful and small. Honor history, Create a livable community that encourages energy conservation, discourages pollution. More bike paths to new commuter rail station, locally owned businesses. Fears: big box retail stores, malls, condos, residents with no community pride, apathy, social isolation.
- Hopes that all artifacts belonging to the Historical Society are displayed in a historical building.
- Hopes: keep small town character, facelift for downtown. Fears: too much growth, big box stores, increase in crime, traffic and traffic lights.
- Hopes: more playgrounds and recreation for children and families. We need more farms and weekly farmer markets, more small-scale shops and artists, and restaurants. Fears: overdevelopment, big box stores.
- Fears: with current economy and not a lot of business dollars in town, our taxes will increase. I like the idea of bringing a New England chain to downtown and developing the Route 140 and Simplex areas.
- Hopes: fair treatment of seniors (senior center). Integrate youth with green and environmental events and teach them about town history.
- Hopes: better plans for seniors (senior center, housing options).
- Hopes: lower taxes.
- Tear down the old town hall.
- Fear: overdevelopment.
- Hopes: the town remains a small, family oriented quiet town. Fears: taxes continue to rise and residents have to move.
- Fears: losing existing farms and small town charm, and having Main Street a continuous strip mall.
- Fears: overdevelopment, loss of small town character, loss of open space.
- Hopes: town maintains its integrity and old time charm while increasing business development in the designated areas. Fears: ever increasing taxes will drive people out of town.
- Fears: big box stores, no more regulations on homeowners.
- Hopes: wants a strip mall with some chain restaurants. Fears: increased taxes.
- Hopes: developing local economy to improve services, or keep same level of service without changing town character. Town should use renewable energy. Fears: losing the town character and open space.
- Hopes: more retail development so that you don't have to go out of town to shop. We need a real grocery store. Fears: over-population and tons of traffic.
- Big business in housing areas - keep them in industrial.
- Hopes: mixed commercial development off Simplex Drive. Fears: this won't happen.
- Hopes: that we can live here in retirement. Fears: that we won't be able to continue living here.
- Hopes: taxes are used to improve taxpayer quality of life. Fix the road - Lake Drive East.
- Hopes: town stays the same, not too much industry or big retail stores. Fears: excessive development that ruins town character.
- Hopes: town maintains charm and excellent school system. Fears: the town will become too expensive to live in.

- Hopes: keep the small town feel, keep riff-raff from Fitchburg and Gardner out, keep businesses independent and don't go for the big box retailers and chains. Keep population growth at manageable level, no more condos.
- Fears: doesn't want the town to grow bigger.
- Hopes: more high quality amenities in downtown. Fears: becoming like Gardner.
- Hopes for stronger economy to offset residential tax burden: Fears loss of town center retail and services.
- Fears: concerned that the town will not have enough in taxes to maintain our current level of service once the dump closes.
- Hopes: a senior center and a youth center.

Memo To: Westminster Master Plan Committee
From: Stephen Wallace, Town Planner
Date: April 10, 2012
Subject: Citizen Survey Results

The Details:

- Twenty-one questions covering such topics as land use, zoning, housing, economic development, open space, recreation, and municipal services.
- Sent to every household in Westminster (approximately 2,630 households)
- There were 1,222 responses received for a total response rate of 46.5%.

Question #1: What do you like about living in Westminster? The top three responses were:

- Small town character (654 #1 votes)
- Low crime rate (471 #1 votes)
- Access to highways (380 #1 votes)

Not far behind were....

- Schools (318)
- Open spaces (291)

The results for Question #1 indicate a clear preference for a quiet, rural, crime-free community, where open space is valued.

Question #2: What do you find undesirable about living in Westminster? The top two responses were:

- High taxes (642 #1 votes)
- Lack of retail shopping opportunities (288 #1 votes)
- Excessive traffic (221 #1 votes)

Not far behind was lack of employment opportunities (196 #1 votes)

It should come as no surprise that high taxes ranked number one as the most undesirable thing about living in Westminster. That a majority of respondents (52.5%) listed this as their number one dislike should be cause for concern. I've reviewed other Master Plan citizen surveys I've been involved with and none of them listed the Town's high tax rate as the number one most undesirable thing about living in their community.

Question #3: What buildings and/or sites in Westminster do you believe are worthy of historic preservation efforts (either through the Massachusetts Historical Commission or the National Register of Historic Places)?

The top five responses were: the Cracker Factory, Old Town Hall, Upton Building, Academy Hill and Library.

Question #4: Would you support zoning for a traditional New England village in the Town Center?

- Yes: 605
- No: 178
- Not Sure: 380

The results for Question #4 indicate a moderately strong desire for New England village zoning in the Town Center, with close to half of the respondents (49.5%) responding in favor. For the large number of respondents that were “not sure”, perhaps more explanation of what would be involved is in order. This will be our charge once we get to the Land Use chapter.

Question #5: To preserve the Town’s rural character, would you be in favor any of the following? (You can check more than one.)

- protect open space 784
- design guidelines 683
- scenic roads designations 359
- create historical districts 331

The results for Question #5 indicate that a majority of respondents favor open space protection (64.1%) and design guidelines for Town Center (55.9%). It is interesting to note that there was not as much support for scenic road designations or creating historic districts.

Question #6: What types of recreation opportunities would you like to see more of in Westminster?

- Bike trails 449
- Hike trails 344
- Ice skating 269
- Performing arts 258
- Playgrounds 207

Question #7: What types of housing do you think Westminster needs more of?

- Elderly housing 433
- Assisted living 326
- Single family 287
- In-law apartments 258

While there was not the support for housing that we found for character preservation techniques, there does seem to be a good deal of support for housing typically associated with seniors: elderly housing, assisted living facilities and in-law apartments.

Question #8: Do you favor zoning changes that would allow for new construction/conversion of existing buildings, in order to provide housing for low/moderate income households?

- Yes 259
- No 488
- Not Sure 396

The results for Question #9 indicate that there is not a lot of support for building new housing or converting old homes for low/moderate income households. However, the fact that so many respondents were “not sure” leads me to believe that quite a few respondents did not understand the question, or needed more information.

Question #9: Would you be in favor of expanding the municipal sewer & water systems for the following uses?

- Pollution abatement 523
- Residential development 464
- Commercial development 332
- Industrial development 261

Question #9 indicates a preference for expanding the municipal water & sewer systems for the purposes of abating pollution and residential development.

Question #10: How satisfied are you with the Town’s access to internet services?

- Very satisfied 324
- Somewhat satisfied 561
- Not satisfied 183

Question #11: How satisfied are you with the Town’s cell phone coverage?

- Very satisfied 283
- Somewhat satisfied 570
- Not satisfied 281

While the majority of residents are very satisfied to somewhat satisfied with the Town’s internet access and cellphone coverage, there are significant numbers of people that are not satisfied.

Question #12: What types of renewable energy would you like to see the Town support?

- Solar 804
- Wind 803
- Geothermal 387
- None 98

Clearly a majority of respondents are in favor of solar power and wind power (65.8%) as renewable energy sources.

Question #13: Residentially-based businesses are currently allowed as of right throughout Westminster. Do you have any objections to how in-home businesses are regulated?

- No 590
- Not sure 376
- Yes 118

Almost a majority of respondents do not have a problem with how the Town currently regulates home-based businesses, but the large number of “not sure” responses leads me to believe that quite a few respondents did not understand the question or needed more information.

Question #14: What do you see as the benefit(s) of encouraging business/industrial development in Westminster?

- More tax dollars to ease residential tax burden 940
- More in-town jobs 723
- More tax revenues to help maintain current services 593
- More tax revenues to help improve services 527
- More retail stores 369
- More services 320

The fact that 77% of the respondents see easing of the residential tax burden as the number one benefit of encouraging economic development is another indication that taxes are taking their toll on local residents.

Question #15: What do you see as the disadvantage(s) of encouraging economic development?

- More automobile traffic 676
- More truck traffic 615
- Changing town character 564
- Loss of open space 509
- Damage to the environment 417
- Disruption of neighborhoods 408

Question #16:

Preferred land uses for the Town Center:

- Restaurants 451
- Small-scale retail 358
- Services 331
- Professional offices 315

Preferred land uses for Simplex Drive:

- Research & development 419
- Light manufacturing 397
- Biotechnology 372
- Office parks 371
- Warehouse & storage 343

Preferred land uses for the Westminster Business Park:

- Light manufacturing 404
- Research & development 384
- Warehouse & storage 366
- Biotechnology 338
- Office parks 333

Preferred land uses for Route 140 Commercial District:

- Office parks 258
- Light manufacturing 251
- Warehouse & storage 245
- Hardware stores 233
- Research & development 231
- Professional offices 217
- Biotechnology 213
- Restaurants 210

Preferred land uses for Village Inn Road Commercial District:

- Restaurants 348
- Professional offices 313
- Small-scale retail 243
- Hardware stores 211

I'm relieved to see that the respondents want to keep industrial uses in the industrial districts and commercial uses in the commercial districts. The uses preferred for the Town Center are consistent with those of a typical New England village.

Question #17: Rate the services.

Westminster's municipal services ranked by level of satisfaction:

- Fire Department – rated excellent or good by: 97%
- Police Department – rated excellent or good by: 96%
- Schools – rated excellent or good by: 91%
- Library – rated excellent or good by: 90%
- Transfer Station – rated excellent or good by: 86%
- Board of Health – rated excellent or good by: 84%
- Highway Department – rated excellent or good by: 78%
- Conservation – rated excellent or good by: 77%
- Water Department – rated excellent or good by: 76%
- Council on Aging – rated excellent or good by: 76%
- Recreation – rated excellent or good by: 76%
- Administration – rated excellent or good by: 76%
- Building/Inspection – rated excellent or good by: 74%
- Sewer Department – rated excellent or good by: 68%
- Planning Board – rated excellent or good by: 67%

With a few exceptions, the responses here are very typical of what is usually seen from other citizen surveys: fire/police/emergency always rate very high (usually above 90% good/excellent), and planning/building/conservation (boards that occasionally have to say “no”) usually score between 65% and 75% good/excellent. However, the fact that the Planning Board received the lowest satisfaction score should provide the Board with a bit of humility as it plans for the Town’s future.

For the people that took the time to answer the question on additional tax dollars for our municipal services (more, less or the same), the vast majority of respondents were in favor of less tax dollars for all services, another indication that the Town’s high tax rate has become burdensome to residents.

Question #18: In general, how satisfied are you with how easily you can access Town services and offices?

Approximately 91% of survey respondents said they were satisfied with how easily they can access Town services and offices.

Question #19: Have you visited the Town’s NEW website?

This question received a very interesting response. Of the paper surveys returned, only 42% of respondents said they had visited the Town’s new website. However, of those who took the survey on-line, 85% said they had visited the Town’s new website. So for the on-line survey takers that haven’t visited the Town’s new website, just how did they find the survey then?

Reasons for visiting the Town’s website included: looking for meeting agendas, contact information, hours of operation and to pay taxes.

Question #20: Any suggestions for improving the Town’s website?

This question didn’t get many responses, but for those that did, here’s what they said: check all links to make sure they work, put assessor maps on line, keep the meeting information up to date, many committee pages have incomplete information, provide a link to public transportation, put more forms on line, and put property tax information on line.

Question #21: With the Town’s growth and the ever increasing complexity of managing a municipality, do you believe it is time to revise the Town Charter?

- Not sure 605
- Yes 231
- No 220

The high number of people who responded that they weren’t sure, indicates that many survey takers did not understand the question and that more explanation was needed. The “yes” and “no” responses were fairly evenly divided, indicating that there is not presently a groundswell of support for changing the Town’s Charter.