

**22126 – Egremont
Comprehensive Plan and OSRP Update
Last updated February 5, 2023**

Comments on the Boards from the First Public Workshop

1 Data: Housing and Affordability in Egremont

- Why is there no data her? (Pointing to Housing stock by year built for the last two groups of years)
- This is the A number one issue. How we support creative solutions to housing crisis is the question.
- How can Egremont prevent the main cause of US housing crisis/bankruptcy/homelessness and poverty: illness and short-term crises?
- Look for opportunities to convert existing properties to affordable housing – affordable housing should have the same aesthetic & quality standards as are usual in the town
- Looking to explore affordable housing and attract diversity in our community – both/and...protect land and affordable housing YEAH construct (sp?)
- More affordable housing is needed but should be done w/o rezoning for “development” and no multilevel units and with maintaining rural character
- Where are existing structures that could be used for affordable housing?
- Keep Egremont an affordable community for future generations
- Workforce housing! Yes! Affordable housing for workers!
- The answer is clearly No! This (affordable housing) should be very high on the list of town’s priorities
- No housing development
- No housing developments. Preserve historic buildings
- Answer: No . Too much land has become Land Trust, i.e. buildable land
- What resources are available to treat hunger in Egremont?
- Limit building of ALL new homes: Egremont has enough housing.
- In order to keep our natural resources, I would like to see multi-family structures* built rather than stand-alone housing. I.e, a small, pretty cluster of buildings for all ages and economic categories. *no higher than 203 stories + in keeping with our New England style. P.S. I support land conservation, which is why I prefer clustered, multi-family housing.
- #41 is Monthly Housing Costs Owner Households: Create affordable utilities options, Create renewable utilities options.

1 Data: Egremont’s Workforce – no comments

1 Data: Population and Municipal Budget

- What Would Happen if so many people put their land in Chapter 61, 61A, 61B that our tax base would be compromised? Who’d be left to pay taxes?

2 Preserve

- Preserve rural character of Egremont.
- Why do we need a North & South Egremont? Why can't we just be EGREMONT??
- Please develop plan for invasive species mitigation. Bittersweet in particular is killing our trees.
- Please develop plan for Spongy Moth mitigation.
- Preserve dirt roads + rural atmosphere. Resist suburban development.
- Create connectivity between open spaces/protected land for wildlife corridors.
- Address major issue of invasive plant species and educate community about natives.
- Lack buildable/affordable land because of "Land Trust" has become too much.
(2)
- Impt.
 - 1 Wildlife corridor +
 - 2 Climate change +
 - 3 Eliminate invasive species (as much as possible)

- Support and donate to Eg Land Trust – working on the corridor!
- Establish an education program and experiments for large scale organic farming. Bring in guest speakers that have been successful in these areas.
- Measure organic life in soil as a baseline and to measure success in preservation of environmentally sensitive areas.
- Test and measure ground surface and well water to ensure safety for people and wildlife diversity.
- 22. Figure 9 Open Space Map: Rename APR Land to reflect true ownership. APR definition vs. public use
- 8. Filling in Karner Brook watershed with houses – means water table rising in other places
- Pass a demolition delay to preserve the historic character of the town. (Mindful development)
- As relates to not stopping village development – WE NEED HOUSING FOR EVERYONE. Kudos to housing committee for trying to come up with creative, affordable ideas.
- The town should not be preserved in amber. Building, particularly for affordable housing, absolutely needs to happen. How much and where are the central questions.
- No noisy recreation vehicles on conserved land eg ATV's, snowmobiles
- Prohibit hunting on public lands. Post – No guns! Or other weapons
- Keep land available for housing that working families can afford
- Important to preserve Phillips Rd as an old dirt walking path – the Baldwin Hill Loop is a treasure
- We must preserve the small town feel of N + S Eg, limit buildings, keep open spaces + protect land, lakes from overbuilding. Keep Egremont SMALL + BEAUTIFUL!

- #2. The map is wrong – there is no large park in So. Eg. Village on the No. side unless it is the fire dept. (#41)
- Don't overuse conservation resources by promoting recreational use + tourism
- 2003 preserving the land, low home density. The last thing I want Egremont to be is a minim Gt. Barrington
- [Several comments]
 - Wildlife corridor s- yes
 - Addressing climate change – yes
 - NO WATER PRIVATIZATION
- Why are there carve outs for land for houses filling in Karner Brook watershed?
- Keep population density in mind when considering affordable housing solutions – keep Egremont rural w/ open spaces, no high-rise construction
- Make community aware of PFOS damage to our water supply: near town have to be proactive in protecting water ways!
- #3 Preserve this area
 - Scenic
 - Ecologically important
 - Wildlife corridor
 - Agricultural
 - Recreational
 - Important for all above reasons
- Slow the growth
- Preserve wetlands – do not fill in with houses etc. Parking for houses fills in also
- Support goals of 2003 Master Plan!
- Preserve our forests/open areas + create workforce housing by allowing development in concentrated areas.
- Commercial – have distinct zones – no special permits – too discretionary – no mix of commercial in residential area (except villages)
- Preserve rural character. Why do residents choose to live here?
 - Beauty of landscape
 - Historic villages
 - Views
 - Quiet roads
- Protect scenic roads
- Get rid of invasives = more native plants/animals; prettier roads
- *Independent research studies (not Telecom sponsored) on the impact of 5G technology (towers) on local pollinators and plants. This should happen before granting permission for any more towers!
- Is the community aware of the amt. of chemical fertilizers being used agriculturally + and also on private lands. Shouldn't we look at preservation of resources in terms of use of chemicals?

2 Preserve: Map of Open Space and Chapter 61

- #3 is south of Appalachian Trail Corridor and west of Bow Wow Woods
- #8 is Jug End Fen WMA, above Mount Washington Road
- #22 is Baldwin Hill BNRC APR
- #41 is Main street, just below Town Park
- Not numbered: Blue Rider Stables – six parcels: 3 outlined and 3 with asterisks, just west of Egremont Land Trust APR

2 Preserve: Map of Biomap Habitats and Natural Landscapes

- #3 is brook/stream heading northwest from town boundary at north Under Mountain Road

3 Enhance

- Outdoor swimming, skating, canoeing, kayaking, Ping Pong (pavilion)
- Plan & zone to avoid Rt 7 (Stockbridge Road) type of growth
- Our recycling & composting program are exemplary. Spread the word
- Ice skating rink, swimming, kayaking...more outdoor activities for everyone
- Make villages denser & more lively. More housing in N. Eg. Village & S. Eg. Village
- Need bike lands that double as walkways.
- Diversity of age & race. How do you propose to solve this “problem”?
- Gathering places
 - Town Beach
 - Community Ctr
 - Planned activities that make use of our outdoor spaces – ie softball + tennis leagues

- Invasive plant species area major problem in our existing conserved land – what are we going to do about this? Protecting more land is great, but need a plan to better manage existing protected land.
- Combo bike-pedestrian land connecting North + South Egremont (Rt 71 – Creamery Road – Rt 23) so we can travel to/from without driving
- Many more community gardens and orchards and food forests
- Permaculture!
- Make an effort to stop speeding in N. Egremont village. Limit commercialism in both villages
- Caution around electrification to protect pollinators + wildlife
- Protect our pollinators, wire our connections everywhere, please!
- Speed cameras! (good revenue source)
- Permaculture. Encourage farming that does not have pesticides or herbicides. This protects animals and human ground water. Increase biodiversity.
- Keep the character of the town which has attracted so many to relocate here.
- Community gathering spot in N. Egremont center.
- The 2003 Master Plan points are still good.
- Preserve our nature. Preserve our waters, ground water, healthy ecosystem
- Speed bumps on Buttonball Lane
- Community space – for dancing, parties, games
- Look to repurchase the church on Main Street in South Egremont. It is a quintessential New England structure + NEVER should have been allowed to be purchased by a private homeowner. The church is a hallmark of Egremont and the town should convert it to community property.
- Striping of rural roads either center line or side. Unlit rds at night, hard to see
- Affordable housing we need more around town. Time to move beyond NIMBY
- Senior housing ie. condo’s etc. for people who want to downsize or not capable of doing yard work – locals or out of state
- Save our remaining dirt roads
- [Several comments]

- Broad band town wide
 - Historical plaques
 - Water quality
- Plant more pollinators + keep forests strong + healthy
 - 3. More public parking – or at least signage relevant thereto – at Prospect Lake, please. Is there a walking oath around the Lake?
 - The geologies of South Village – No. side of 23 is ledge , so side of 23 is brook – you cannot expand septic fields!
 - Change zoning bylaws to encourage cluster housing, leaving more open space. Single house on 3 or 5 acres of mowed lawn is ridiculous!
 - Community center needed
 - Speed bumps for Sheffield Road in South Egremont (Pinecrest – Button Ball Lane intersect.
 - Sidewalks on 23 west to Terra Ferma for young families in developments
 - Small community meeting place (eg So. Egremont church)
 - Creating workforce housing in part by acquiring existing buildings and homes for that purpose
 - No subdivision on Phillips or anywhere!
 - So. Egremont Village: 5-9 + No. Egremont Village 1, 5, 2, 3. More pedestrian + bike paths, please!! And in the “commercial” areas of each village, signage to clearly delineate parking.
 - South Egremont
 - Highly hazardous speeding
 - Posted limit at Sheffield Road (by intersection of Pinecrest and Buttonball) is 25 mph, and over bridge is 20 mph – vehicles of all types incl. heavy vehicles go 50 mph + many times per day
 - Residents and visitors of all ages walk these streets
 - I’ve been nearly hit many times
 - Traffic calming through villages (speed bumps, police presence, etc.)
 - No right turn signs on Buttonball Lane (and Rt 23 _ Sheffield Road)
 - Sidewalks for village centers
 - Senior housing for those living in town who wish to stay
 - W/o church – need place for community meeting
 - What has been accomplished since the 2001 plan? Same question for the 2003?
 - Traffic calming, Bike paths
 - No parks – had chance with Egremont fun land, golf club
 - Increase diversity of residents. Maplewood, NJ has a Community Coalition on Race, which helped integrate their town w/ professionals who could afford to live there. We could do the same thing. Contact + ask them how they did this.
 - We will lose young families and service industry workers (and open space) without suitable rental housing and connective transportation
 - No. Egremont: Need a bike + pedestrian path from N. Egremont village (5) to Beach area at Prospect Lake (2)
 - Egremont block parties meet our neighbors

- Get rid of the neon sign at town Hall (Seconded!!)
- Need a community center
- Catamount lights should be off after closing
- Avoid commercialism keep Egremont SMALL + BEAUTIFUL
- I suggest a hall/community center (e.g. Mettabee Farm of Lenox CC) for workshops, dances, lectures, yoga, etc. to strengthen community bonds and draw young people to the village(s).
- What happened to affordable housing??
- Egremont needs to have hunters ask permission to access private property – current reg says property owners needs to sign property per state law
- Keep historic villages intact while adding businesses.
- More parking
- Make sure we use fiber to the premises (no wireless antenna)
- We need affordable housing!
- We need sidewalks and lower speeds on Route 71
- Town regulations prohibiting the use of engine brakes on Rts, 71, 23 and 41
- Town-wide program to remove invasive plant species and plant natives
- The survival of our restaurants, and of Fairview Hospital depends on staffing. There is very little rental housing for these people. We need to fix this problem.

3 Enhance: North and South Egremont

- No comments

4 Enjoy

- Access to Prospect Lake
- Protection of the Guilder Farm Complex + Enhancement to emphasize the historic relevance
- The 2003 Master Plan mission is still good.
- Love French Park + Jug End Reserve. Wish we had a town beach + more organized activities ie softball teams + tennis leagues
- Like the idea of organized sports. Also basketball courts
- Would love Prospect Lake access. Used to do day passes – no longer available
- Reduce farm fertilizer, herbicide, and pesticide run off into other properties and water supply
- Test surface ground and well WATER for safety PFAS, herbicides and other contaminants
- French Park Dog Park is actually major destination for people/dogs from many towns in surrounding areas. Great sense of community! More attention to other ways to create similar kinds of community.
- Better access to Prospect Lake – offer similar setting as Lake Munsford in GB! (In addition to the campground access)
- Swimming + non-motorized boat access to Prospect Lake
- Make exercise stations for folks of all ages
- Help the pollinators!!! More flowers and food please! Less antennas
- There is a lack of soccer fields in Berkshire County – add youth/adult soccer fields
- Sidewalk or walking path from N. Egremont County Store to Town Hall
- Swimming and beach access to Prospect Lake
- Outdoor pool
- Plan for organic growth instead of forced resulting in Berkshire Mall experience
- Easy/convenient Prospect Lake access for kayaking!!
- Accessible trail at French Park
- Major issue with invasive species blocking access to Green River on ELT property on 71 – Mountain trail to river
- Bylaw (general) BAN leaf blowers
- Access to Prospect Lake
- Important to preserve rural character including unpaved roads (Gen. Knox Lane + Phillips Rd.)
- Town Beach Access to Prospect Lake (Ditto!!)
- More walkable areas including better connection between parts of Egremont esp. walking/biking.
- Prospect Lake access
- Farmer’s Market to help our community
- Sidewalks along Rte 23 to get into town
- Safe public access to Prospect Lake
- Eg needs a large meeting space so we don’t have to go to Mt. Ev. School.
- Need access to Prospect Lake
- [Several ideas]

- Maintain hiking trails
 - Have bike lanes
 - More swimming
- Prospect Lake for ALL
 - Don't allow big investors to make Egremont the next "Hamptons"
 - Egremont village needs play space, recreation fields, walking area!
 - Access to Prospect Lake
 - Re-establish the French Park committee. Add swings + equipment for adults to enjoy.
 - More trails in French Park. Take care of the invasive growth of the forest in FR. We need a designated NICE place to swim at Prospect Lake
 - Bocce courts at French Park!
 - Let's host/enable "Music in the Park" events, please! (French Park) 2-4 and maybe a holiday or winter festival in the Villages or at French Park
 - Make sure residents who own river frontage understand that the Green River itself is public land. People can swim or wade anywhere in the river.
 - Swimming and kayaking in Prospect Lake
 - River access without being accosted by abutting land owners.

4 Map: Unique Features

- #1: South Egremont (to left of 5)
- #2: Curve of Main Street to Creamery Road
- #4: Intersection of Main St. with Sheffield Rd.
- #5: South Egremont (to right of 1)
- #6: Center of triangle formed by Blunt, Phillips and Hillsdale
- Can funds be secured to help inoculate the Baldwin Hill Elm? Too precious to lose!
- Proper and safe parking on Baldwin Hill
- Build a flat trail like the rail trail in Hillsdale
- Some recognition of Chair Factory area on Hillsdale Road?
- The goals of the 2001 Plan are still viable. Keep them in the forefront.
- Not all open space should be "developed" or managed – keep some in reserve for future central park
- Is Marsh Pond public or private? Need attention!
- Small civic spaces in the village proper (#2)
- #1 Protect green spaces in the village including forest open spaces.
- Very valuable – conserved corridor or properties so that native plants + animals aren't isolated.
- Keep unpaved roads. Don't widen them. Don't pave them
- #4 This omits (I think) path along Karner Brook to Mom's parking lot – a major benefit for South Village, otherwise sparse in public spaces.
- Make the pollinator garden a destination like the Bridge of Flowers in Shelburne Falls
- #4 Lighting & sidewalks in Village of Sheffield Rd. Complete streets
- #5 Look for ways to better connect North + South Egremont.

- i.e. Some public gathering in South Egremont
- In between places to gather

5 Support

- Historic chair factory – Preservation Smiley’s
- Wetland overlay (Coopers, Tuller ppty) Protection needed Karner/S. Egr
- IT Incubator in Egremont
- E. Village Inn Russell Becker
- Use the option to purchase chapter land when it becomes available
- [Series of notes]
 - Bus route/turn around
 - Water Dept. – conundrain (sp.?)
 - Recycle station/upgrade
 - Mt. Everett/merge w/ MMtn.
 - Housatonic River Worry
 - Open space vs. housing needs
- We need 2 zoning districts:
 - The 2 villages
 - Rural
 - 2003 goals still great!
- Careful planning for local control over solar arrays – use already developed land only and have local benefit \$
- Develop priorities for small civic spaces within the Historic Districts.
- Road safety for pedestrians, bikers, those w/ mobility issues, speeding
- No mix of commercial with residential except in villages
- Getting rid of invasives – public advocacy
- Commercial mixed use in Villages (Agree!)
- Provide affordable housing in a way that respects the rural nature of the Town + utilizes existing structures
- ADU’s not to be used for short term rentals.
- Make more of an effort to slow traffic in N. Eg. Village. Keep the historic integrity of the villages
- Rental housing for hospitality, healthcare, and other workers.
- Connect housing to N. + S. Egremont and Great Barrington
- Small business but not large-scale businesses, keep in character with historic villages
- Home occupations by special permit with no external evidence of business use. No other commercial in residential areas except villages.
- Have restrictions on cell towners. Have their levels tested randomly.
- Keep trees as part of the Town Plan – as they are removed, they should be replaced.
- Worried about commercial sprawl on Rte 23 west of village. New zoning to protect residential character.
- Water! Incorporate work done by Water Study Commission in Comp Plan
- More housing + sidewalks for young families

- If our restaurants and hospitals are going to be operative, we need housing for their workforce!
- No short term rentals – in residential areas. 6 mos rental minimum
- How to preserve open spaces while creating workforce housing – in part by acquiring existing buildings for workforce housing
- Preserve character. No more than 2-story buildings and 2 family use
- Bring back N. Eg. Zip code