

Hamilton Housing Element

Public Forum Summary

Prepared by JM Goldson 2/19/19

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

Forum participants valued the rural features and small town feel of Hamilton. The community wants to preserve these characteristics as a top priority.

Many participants expressed interest in converting existing buildings to housing, rather than building new developments.

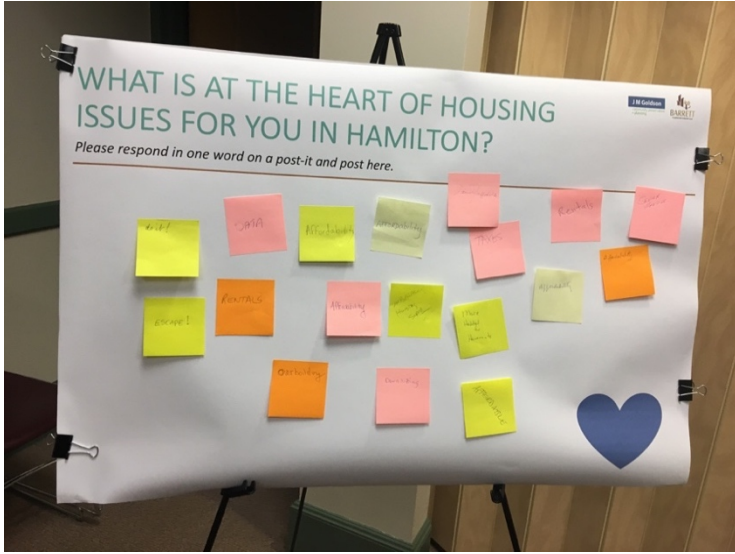
Participants saw opportunity and benefit of creating housing near transit and downtown.

Participants were generally supportive of cottage style new development since it would preserve open space and would fit with the character of existing housing stock.

Participants wanted to maintain the balance between new development and open space.

SUMMARY & BACKGROUND

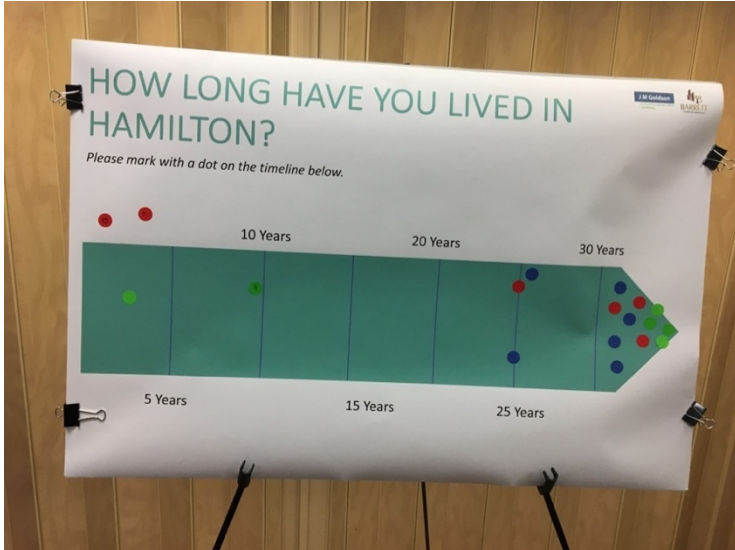
On Tuesday February 5, 2019 the Town of Hamilton hosted the first of two public forums to engage the public and collect feedback for the housing update to the Master Plan. The forum was held in the Hamilton-Wenham Library from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Approximately 20 people attended. Public forum participants answered participated in answering questions on two interactive boards participated in a mapping exercise and had the opportunity to ask questions and provide their feedback. Consultants, JM Goldson, presented an overview of town demographics, housing needs, and housing case studies across a range of types.



What is at the heart of housing issues for you in Hamilton?

List of responses:

- Data
- Rentals
- Affordability
- Overbuilding (5)
- Downsizing
- NIMBY
- Unbalanced housing supply
- Overbuilding
- More Habitat for Humanity

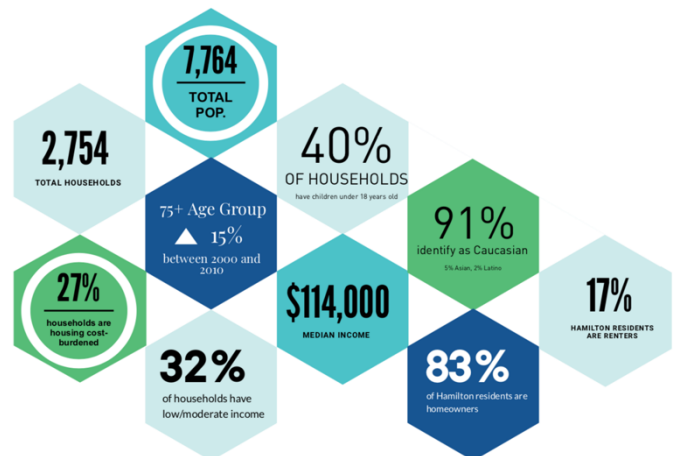


How long have you lived in Hamilton?

10 out of 17 respondents indicated that they had been in Hamilton for over 30 years. Three people had been in Hamilton for 5 years. There was a large gap with no respondents marking that they had lived in Hamilton between 5 and 25 years.

DEMOGRAPHICS, HOUSING NEEDS AND EXAMPLES

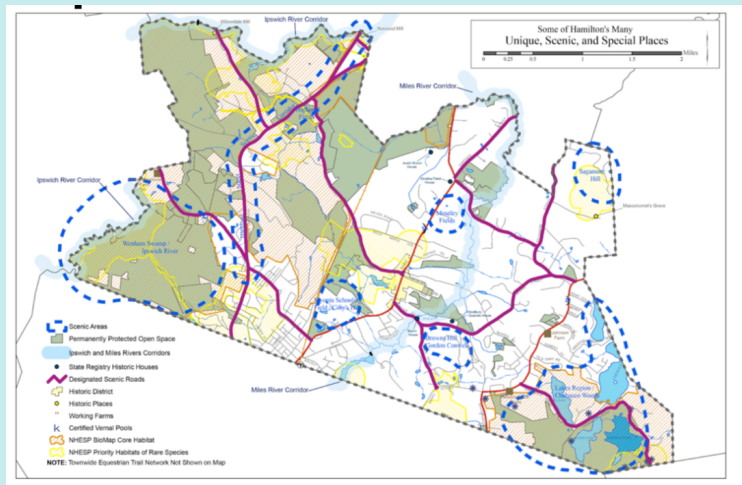
JM Goldson set the context of the forum with some background on the purpose of a master plan, and a recap of some of the housing goals in the 2004 Master Plan. Some key demographics were shared related to senior population, housing types, and income levels as well as data pointing to a mismatch between current median income, and median sales price. Focus group findings were shared as well as preliminary survey results from the SurveyMonkey that is still open. (Closing date March 8th). Five brief case studies were shared that represent different housing types in smaller communities that Hamilton could consider. Lastly, Barrett Planning Group presented an overview of the Fiscal Impact Analysis process.



EXERCISE FORMAT

Participants were seated at six different tables of 4-5 people with a map of Hamilton and a set of icons representing different housing types. They were asked to pretend that they were a town planner with the job of incorporating more housing types in town. They were asked to place the icons directly on the map and on white butcher paper explain how their housing choices

- Benefit the local economy, local business, or downtown?
- Preserve agriculture and protect open space
- Meet the needs of seniors
- Meet the needs of families
- Preserve historic buildings
- Support residents with a mix of incomes and backgrounds



OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Below is a summary of the top sites discussed. Those listed were noted by at least two groups out of the six. All notes are listed in the appendix.

Gordon Conwell Seminary

All groups mentioned Gordon Conwell as a possible site for multi-unit housing for seniors or families.

Winthrop Elementary School (or another elementary school)

Winthrop School was listed by all groups as a potential smart growth site (since it's near transit) for multi-unit housing.

Downtown area

All groups note the convenience of housing near downtown because of the proximity to retail and services, transit and the walkability. There was disagreement however about how much more density downtown can integrate.

Asbury Grove area

All groups marked the Asbury Grove area as a potential site for more similar cottage style housing.

Great Estates

In discussions, several groups noted the potential opportunity of retrofitting Great Estate sites to be multi-unit housing, preserving the open space on the property while providing more housing for residents.

Chebacco Road area

One group listed this site as a good place for 100+ units for young professionals, while another marked this site as a good fit for townhouses or condos.

PREFERRED HOUSING TYPES

Multi-family in Amherst designed to look like a farmplex



In the groups notes, the farmplex example that was presented in the beginning of the forum was mentioned as a possible strategy for retrofitting Great Estate sites into multi-unit housing.



Many attendees were very interested in cottage style housing as a way to preserve open space while adding housing. There seemed to be a prevailing feeling that the scale and character of cottage style housing fits with Hamilton's existing housing stock.

APPENDIX

Table Activity Notes

Table A:

Brown's Hill/Gordon Conwell – 3-9 Unit Building, incorporate into existing multi-unit complex, keeping architectural consistency

Downtown – Very limited additional rental units over existing commercial, access to downtown/train, preserves character of downtown

Winthrop School – Accessible to downtown, convert school on school land, barn style – similar concept to Carlisle, Benfield Farms, 10-19 units

Asbury Grove – Incorporate cottage style housing, compatible with unique architecture of Asbury Grove

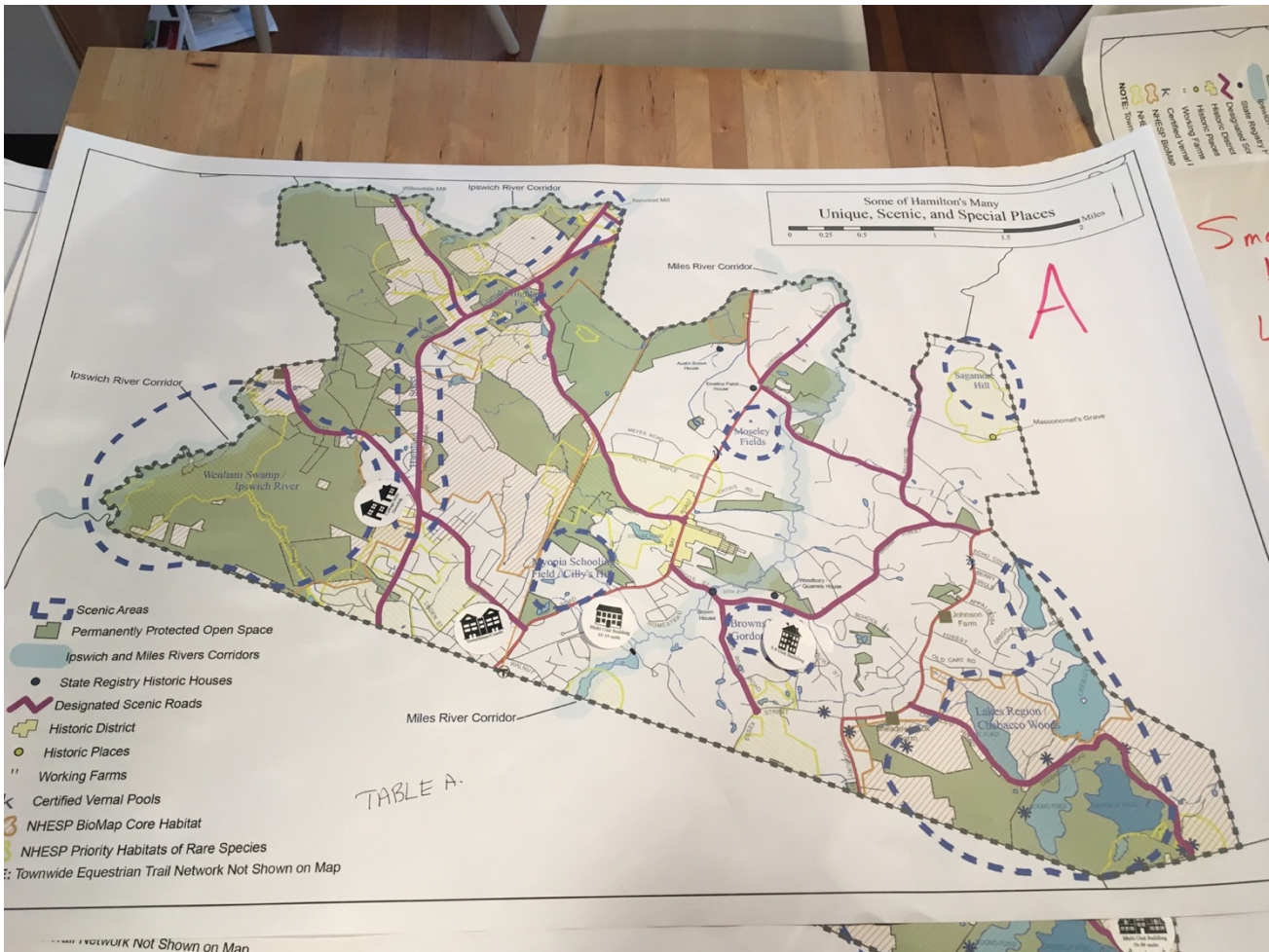


Table E:

- Hold ups – Septic and Neighborhood Opposition, Town limited by protected space
- Multi-Unit at Gordon Seminary
- 2-3 acre sites could be used for affordable housing (Small Developments)
- Duplexes could be on 1-2 acres

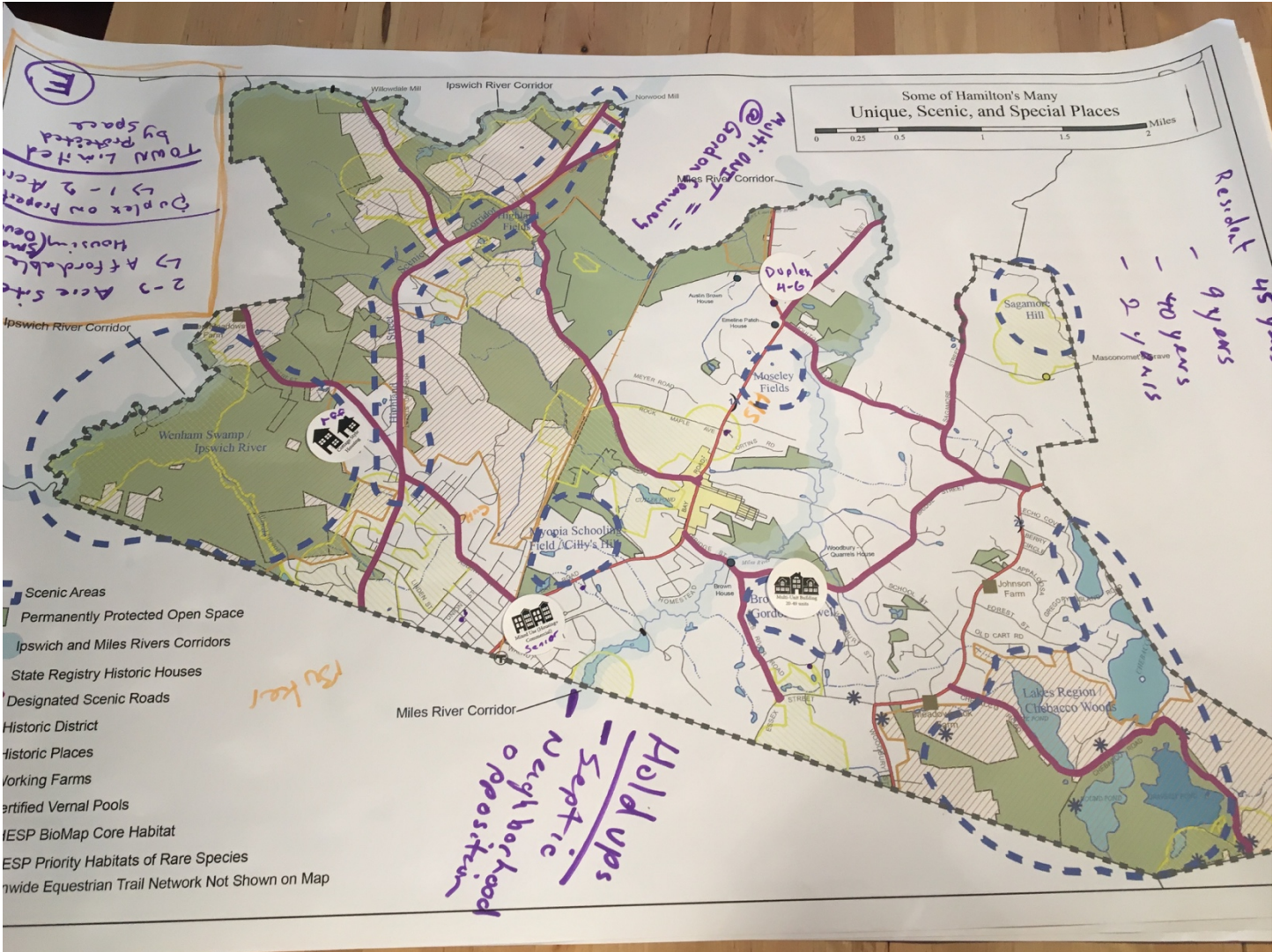


Table F:

Benefit downtown:

- Locating development downtown – Smart Growth

Meeting the needs of seniors:

- Development of Winthrop School, Smart Growth Senior housing

Preserve agriculture + Open Space:

- No building on open space

Support residents with a mix of incomes

- Multi-unit at Chebacco (workforce housing) rentals for young professionals (100+)
- Patton – Town owned land for veterans and young families

Families could live on Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary 20 acres, trade with town in Pilot Agreement (10-19 units)

Can also think outside the box (outside of just adding new developments) by incentivizing current homeowners to change use in their homes (add accessory dwelling apartments, offer Airbnb, etc.) and changing zoning regs to allow for new uses.

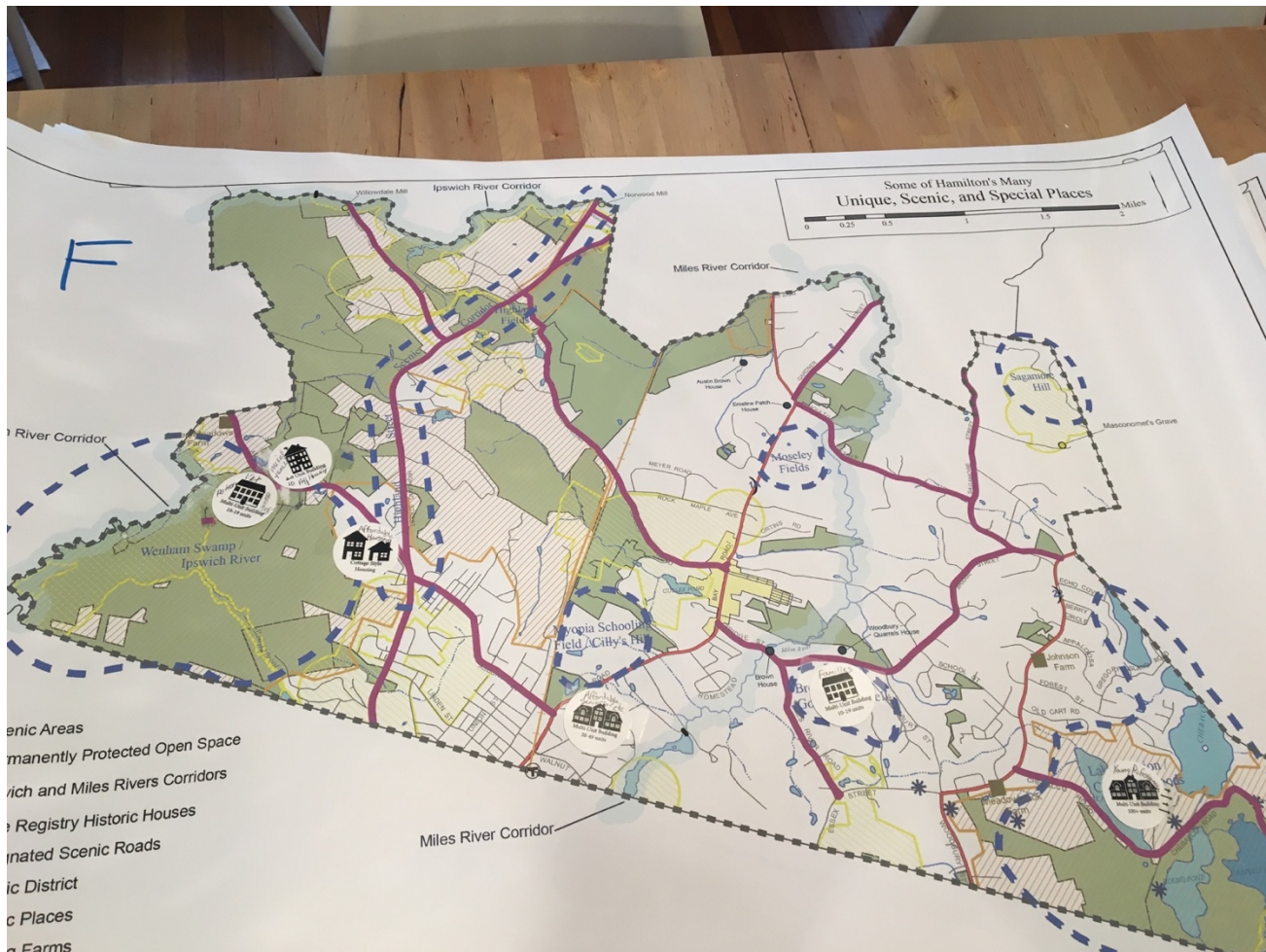


Table G:

1. Patton Property – Single Family – Senior, Town Property
2. Madorelle Property- Cottage Style Seniors
3. Highland new Pongree, Withrop Property – Single Family Affordable
4. Bay Rd, Sears Property – Townhouse Condos
5. Meadowbrook – Multi-Unit 50-99 Affordable
6. Gordon Conwell – Multi-Unit 20-49 – Seniors
7. Cottage Housing Bylaw – 1-1/5 Acres – 4 condos, location TBD by owners
8. Moulton St – Cottage Style – affordable/senior
9. Chebacco Rd – Townhouse Condo

