

East Prince Village District

EPVOD – exploring the potential of a establishing zoning specific to the district

Obtaining input from the residents

1 What do you most like about the East Princeton Village?

- * Mechanics Hall appears as a jewel in the center of a densely settled village, in contrast with the rural stretches surrounding EP. The presence of a couple of long established and useful businesses adds to its rural character
- * It is quaint but needs a spruce u in the form of either a better side walk or elimination of same and installing a nice looking stone wall where the side walk once was or both. It may take some purchase of land along that side of the road by eminent domain
- * Close proximity of homes and street front orientation of most homes gives the village its sense of being a neighborhood. The “personality” of the neighborhood stems from the architecture (antique homes, chapel, Mechanics Hall, mill ruins).
- * Quaint, no business, as it is
- * The older structures
- * Streetscapes remain much as it looked long ago. Density of population leads to knowing neighbors
- * We like the historic homes and the residential feel of the neighborhood
- * That it is a small village with many old historical houses
- * Quiet and easy access for commuting
- * The people: people friendly and helpful and down to earth
- * The history: ills – a vibrant industrious area
- * The landscape: natural beauty – rivers, streams, a ponds, historic building
- * My neighbors (mostly) are wonderful. It’s a great neighborhood
- * The architecture; that it largely has maintained its “village” appearance
- * Neighbors, rural historic character, the old houses and the fact that the majority of all houses are original to the settlement of the village, having a car repair facility within walking distance, Mechanics Hall, Access to state park/woods, being plowed first

2 What do you most not like about the district?

- * The derelict appearance of Mechanics Hal
- * Appearance of commercial property
- * The traffic and noise of automobiles and trucks year round, buses in the winter, motorcycles in the summer detracts greatly from our ability to enjoy our neighborhood.
- * Captain Bob's
- * The aesthetically unattractive structures; the general derelict condition of the sidewalk and the area in general
- * Lack of pride of ownership of certain properties, no sidewalks, speeding car traffic (businesses especially)
- * We do not like the traffic, namely the speed at which people travel, and that there is minimal to no police monitoring as of late. We do not like the condition of the road. The road in front of our has become a hazard and will most likely not survive the winter. Lastly we do not feel that homeowners are held to the same standards in EPV s they are in the center of town. Many of the homes here have commercial vehicles, debris, trash, and even abandoned cars on their property. Capt. Bobs is an eyesore. It needs to go away. An establishment of this nature would never be allowed in the town center.
- * Heavy traffic; disrepair of sidewalk; disrepair and under use of Mechanics Hall
- * Capt. Bobs
- * The traffic" traffic is heavy with lots of trucks and speeding
- * Traffic traffic traffic
- * Traffic: current condition of businesses
- * Traffic volumes and speed, noise from large trucks, diesel exhaust

3 How can we promote and preserve the most favorable characteristics of the EPVD?

- * Preserve the 19th century houses along the roadside and protect the area from any activities that would interfere with residential use
- * Preserve the historic character, meaning preserve Mechanics Hall, maintain the single family historic quality of the homes, and restrict vehicular traffic/speed.
- * Save Mechanics Hall (East Princeton Town Hall)
- * Spruce it up. I am a proponent of making it a designated village – slowing traffic, adding sidewalks, cross walks, street lamps and a few stores
- * Retain residential zoning for majority of district; sidewalk, speed bumps or brick rumble strips
- * Slow the traffic down. Restrict the types of vehicles that can travel on this road. Maintain EPV as you do the rest of the town. Our street is seldom swept in the spring and basic maintenance is almost nonexistent.
- * Discourage traffic, trucks, and speeding
- * Do not widen RT 140
- * Install historic street lights
- * Keep it residential –much quieter than where the “country store” & the P.O. was there
- * Retain current residential zoning; preserve Mechanics Hall
- * Current zoning helps preserve historic character as it places new construction away from historic houses (built behind preserving the row of older homes), nonconforming footprints, ability to keep animals on property, Supporting efforts to replace the sidewalks will benefit residents and visitors. Address exterior improvement needs of Mechanics Hall and determine a use for it. Sawyer Field needs maintaining. Fix fence and the playground equipment

4 What can we do to eliminate or reduce the impact of the things most disliked?

- * Clean up the façade of Mechanics Hall
- * Slow down the cars, reroute the trucks, make it less convenient to whiz through the neighborhood. Just because 140 is a numbered route doesn't mean we have to make the convenience of vehicular traffic our highest priority.
- * Speeders and traffic to slowdown
- * Grandfather in (I suppose) Bob's and Town line garage but do not add any more businesses with no sense of aesthetics
- * Offer low cost improvement loans for facades; require current businesses to freshen up; install speed bumps and or rumble strips
- * Hold homeowners and business owners accountable to the same standards as the town center. Enforce the existing zoning laws. Slow down and reduce the amount of traffic. This area was never design to handle the amount of traffic it sees today
- * Physically slow down the traffic through EPV
- * Knock down Capt. Bobs or force him to sell or fix up the place
- * Do not widen RT 140
- * Install signs that display speed of approaching traffic
- * Police presence at rush hours. Many large trucks go over the speed limit
- * Vehicle speed: increase enforcement of speed limit, install speed monitoring sign like that of a school zone and other traffic calming measures. Address Truck noise by considering truck exclusion, engine braking restrictions, enforce weight limit over bridge, prohibit engine idling at Kwik Stop
- * Rumble strips and other non-rotary methods of slowing traffic; sidewalks and streetscape beautification (e.g. more attractive lighting and underground utilities); investigate steps that could be taken to encourage the existing businesses (Kwik Stop, Capt Bob's) to clean up - if nothing else, could trees , container plantings be placed along the edge between road and parking lots?)

5 How do you see the future impacting the uses or potential uses of the area?

- * Because EP has a few grandfathered businesses it has been mistaken for a mixed residential – commercial area. It must not be seen as a magnet for development that would not be welcomed in other residential areas in Princeton.
- * If the future means more traffic, then the future will have a negative effect. Why can't we say that we are only able to accommodate so many vehicles/day? Where does safety and quality of life of residents weigh in? If future changes to the road are performed to make traveling through the neighborhood more convenient (i.e. faster), then we can expect the quality of life to be diminished. If the future includes introduction of more businesses, or conversion of current businesses to national chains, then the increase in commercial activity will likely coincide with an increase in traffic.
- * Negatively
- * The road is slated for upgrades. This is a good time to put restrictions on speed and add any cross walks and so forth.
- * It doesn't need a change in use, but hopefully it will be cleaned up a little
- * If there is an increase in traffic to the area the potential of adding more commercial options such as mechanics hall would bring increased revenue to the town
- * Just as in other parts of Princeton we wish to maintain the rural historic residential aspects of the area
- * Hope it remains residential
- * The possibility of RT140 improvements offers the opportunity to explore some of the suggestions above.
- * Fear pressure to commercial village along RT140 that will destroy rural and historic character of EPV. Making the road safe for pedestrians will enable visitors to navigate the village while learning about its history

6 Future general business, economic, and demographic changes expected to occur will affect lifestyles and needs of the area's residents. What alterations should be made in the immediate area or town's existing uses to enable the local and town residents to adapt and deal effectively with these future changes?

- * EP has not been an industrial center for the last century. It has never been a retail center. I do not expect that it will become viable for commercial enterprise in the future. It should be enhanced as a residential neighborhood with a village ambience. That would mean preserving the 19th century character of the housing stock and discouraging new commercial development.
- * Don't make it harder for Town Line Garage to exist
- * Purchase land rights or land along Keys Brook. Long range, buy the houses as they come up for sale along the south side of RT 140 then take them down in order to make the road wider
- * Limiting the number of residential units, preventing conversion of single family homes to multiunit apartments will help to maintain the current feel of the neighborhood. Maintenance of Mechanics Hall, improvements to the sidewalks and park (on Leominster Rd) will help to maintain residents pride in the village.
- * We want to protect the village the way it is.
- * Encourage their participation in the process as you are doing with this survey and public meetings. People who don't participate will still complain, but they can only blame themselves.
- * Not sure what is meant by this question. I oppose any expansion of business zoning other than to Mechanic's Hall, if that's what you mean
- * We do not need to be ignored as part of Princeton
- * Would prefer to keep it residential without enlarging business use potential beyond present permitted size due to poor parking with the exception of Mechanics Hall
- * Overall clean up the road, sidewalk, and bridge to make the drive more appealing
- * Keep commercial business in the existing commercial areas
- * Utilize Mechanics Hall
- * We need a sidewalk
- * I don't understand the questions as it is vague. Whatever the unspecified changes are, it is not clear why EP is the proposed site for providing services to address the changes.
- * 5 large homes have been converted to multi-family apartments which although not without problems has been essentially good due to the landlord attentiveness

7 What additional services, if any, should be made available in the area and how best can they be integrated with the existing permitted uses?

- * None
- * Gas station
- * Cable TV and Internet would be great
- * None
- * If Quick Stop could be transformed into a lovely general store it would be fabulous. Raze Bob's. Get the Mechanics Hall up to code and do something with it.
- * Clearly you are looking for answer regarding expansion of business zoning. I hope you will remain more open-minded throughout the process. And realize that East Princeton should not bear the burden of providing business tax revenue to benefit the rest of the town.
- * We see the need for a restaurant of some sort, possibly Mechanics Hall. But do not see the need for commercialization at private residences. This would lower property values. We do not need more services.
- * Improved park and walking trails along Keyes Brook
- * Re do the playground area at the corner of Leominster Rd with new swings, slide , climbing area, etc.
- * None
- * Home businesses without additional traffic should permissible
- * The village does not require additional services
- * Any limited expansion of business (i.e. Mechanics Hall) should include unique establishments that add to the character / charm of the village (e.g. antique store, coffee shop) not provide necessary service.
- * The Ride should be available to seniors and disabled residents
- *

8 Should MH currently in the ag-res zone be rezoned to commercial which would allow for business use?

- * Yes if it is covered by a preservation restriction that would enforce maintenance of its historic façade. MH is the only additional exception to residential use that should be made in EP.
- * It is a boat; a hole into which you throw your money
- * No. I would prefer the building to remain municipal, with an option for the town to rent space for commercial use. Mechanics Hall is the keystone of the village (it even says “East Princeton” right on the front). Without Mechanics Hall, East Princeton begins to disappear.
- * If a business can be put in without major changes and fix parking lot then okay
- * Yes. A movie / play hall with food made locally or Yoga, zumba, hiphop, jazzercise, etc. dance class facility like World Rhythms in Worcester or a general club where everyone can go to spend time or upscale pub. Anything – something
- * Yes
- * Mechanics Hall needs to be renovated and used. It is an important piece of Princeton history that should not be left to deteriorate and fall in on itself. Whether it is a restaurant, coffee shop, or meeting house does not matter. Leaving unused just adds to the feeling of abandonment of the entire district.
- * Yes
- * Yes because it is an eye sore and has the potential of being something greater than storage for all those books
- * Yes
- * Yes if feasible
- * Probably. However, this decision should be made in conjunction with a review of the findings of the underutilized assets committee and a plan for what might be the encouraged business use.
- * Not at this point, Mechanics Hall discussions are underway and a municipal use of the building might still be possible.

9 How can East Princeton improve safety and personal property enjoyment while dealing with increasing traffic volumes on RT140?

- * The most important improvement would be lighting and cleaning up the front of MH. Its current derelict condition is an invitation to trouble and degrades the whole area
- * Slowing traffic to a less convenient speed (25 mph), enforcing speed limits and weight limits, rerouting trucks.
- * Enforce speed limits
- * The more it is cleaned up with, slow speeds and signage, more attractive streetlights with flags, etc
- * Sidewalks, speed bumps and or rumble strips; plant trees etc. to block / breakup streetscape of parking lots.
- * Devise means of physically slowing traffic on both ends. Suggestion would be a small round about at 140/31 end and a speed deterrent at Leominster Rd such as a short (10") raised pad.
- * Lower the speed limit even further adding sidewalks, better lighting and clearer signage at the intersection 31 and 140
- * Discourage extra traffic speeding and trucks
- * Do not widen RT 140
- * Install signs that display speed of approaching traffic
- * Restore existing sidewalks

- * Traffic control
- * A sidewalk on the east side from Sawyer Park to garage or Mechanic's Hall
- * Trees and nicer lighting that remind drivers it is a neighborhood not a highway
- * Install sidewalks, increase police presence, enforce bridge weight limit, support RT 140 safety improvements efforts,

10 What amenities and features would EPVD residents most like to see established or improved upon in the district?

- * Don't know of any
- * Reestablish Mechanics Hall as the centerpiece of the village. Take back the halls frontage, put in a sidewalk and some grass, and give the building its pride back. If Mechanics Hall was downtown we would spare no expense to preserve it. It would also be nice if the park was used for cultural activities such as concerts. What would it cost to get a little cupola like they have downtown?
- * nothing
- * Get the sidewalk in shape. I know I am sounding like a snob here but the businesses are really crappy so that is affective the perception that it is an uncared for area.
- * The pat of the village we like – residential character – is already established. It just needs to be cleaned up.
- * Improved sidewalk, benches at Leominster Rd park, walking trail along Keyes Brook, and a small relaxation park by the granite foundations of Keyes Brook on Gleason Rd.
- * More visually appealing at driving thru the district. Most historic districts look historic, EP not so much. I think cleaning up the road and overhead cables is a good start.
- * More prominent signs indicating entering a historic district
- * Restore existing sidewalks
- * ?
- * The residential character is already established. We need to ensure it is maintained. People go elsewhere for “amenities and services” needed
- * More street lighting, snow removal at the cluster mailboxes, sidewalks and crosswalks, underground utilities, exterior improvements to Mechanics Hall, playground improvements (fence repair, drainage)

11 What features within EPVD are thought to have the most impact on maintaining or increasing property values? How should we responsibly promote these features?

- * EPVD is the home of an unusually complete collection of historic housing styles and is uncommonly beautiful. This and its village ambience are the keys to its value.
- * Prevent growth of businesses and keep residences single-family. Prevent the possibility of the domino effect, if one of our existing businesses (such as Capt Bob's) converts to a recognized retail or restaurant chain.
- * Don't
- * Maybe the playground and the onion patch, the waterfall, Mechanic's Hall
- * Introducing more non-residential uses other than Mechanics Hall would decrease property values.
- * Improved maintenance of the Historical Village signs at both ends; encourage owners of historical houses antiquity signs promoted by the Princeton Historical Society
- * History of village and historic building
- * Rivers ponds and streams
- * Signs upon entering East Princeton
- * Historic Street Lights
- * ?
- * Current residential zoning. The introduction of further non-residential uses other than mechanics hall would adversely impact property values
- * Maintaining existing zoning is critical to maintain property values, any new commercial construction should be subject to design restrictions and guidelines, providing pedestrian access throughout the village (business zone to Sawyer Field) , and limit multi-unit housing

12 What are the appropriate measures for addressing Commercial/Business zones currently built out as residential? What future uses of these areas is seen as enhancing the viability and livability of the area?

- * Princeton is a residential town and all residents are entitled to the same protections. Such zones should allow grandfathered businesses to remain but should not encourage current residential properties to be converted to commercial use.
- * The region is overwhelmingly residential, and should stay that way. Commercial use is the exception and should stay that way. Future uses that promote the cohesive neighborhood feeling such as improvements to Mechanics Hall, improvements to the park, reduction of vehicular traffic should be promoted.
- * Grandfathering in these people
- * Well, you could make it so that when a house is sold, it has to be for a commercial use
- * You have not publicized the exact zoning boundaries nor any problems regarding the comm. / bus used as residential. Maybe the solution is to change the zoning to conform to existing use, not the other way around.
- * Answered above
- * As long as they are paying the appropriate taxes I don't see the zoning as a major issue,
- * Keep residential building residential!
- * Restore existing sidewalks
- * I am fully aware of the zoning boundaries. However my understanding of East Princeton is that of a chair factory, a chapel, post office and school amid a congregation of houses. Other than the occasional small store (which we now have in the form of the Kwik Stop) there does not appear to be support for the idea that its commerce-based origins have been wrongly abandoned due to the encroachment of residences.
- * Areas that developed into mixed use should be designated as such which is a compromise and could limit future businesses contemplated, Redemption rock to be built out as residential which will limit traffic somewhat, nothing along that stretch is viable for commercial anyway

13 What is your individual or collective vision for EPVD?

- * Maintain EVPD as it is.
- * A neighborhood with historic roots and character which is preserved and can be enjoyed by all. There is no way for non-residents to enjoy East Princeton currently. If we could restore our sidewalks and prevent our hats getting blown off by passing 18 wheelers, then people could walk through the village and enjoy its character. I don't accept the future that says route 140 will always be a highway, and there's nothing that can be done to make foot traffic safer and more enjoyable. If that's the case, then why not just build high rises? Route 140 is historic, pre-automobile historic, it can't accommodate 20 ton trucks doing 40 mph, it wasn't built for that. We either say it is the old neighborhood, where people worked and lived, or it's just a highway with pretty houses on it.
- * Fix existing sidewalk without widening the road. We do not want to widen the RT140. WE do not want Dunkin Donuts or McDonalds or anything other than what is already there such as the Quick Stop. Thank you
- * It currently looks run-down and neglected (with the exception of many individual homes which are wonderful) and so you just want to zip right through it when driving. If it was revitalized with a sidewalk on at least 1 side, cross walks, some lamps with flower baskets hanging from them or flags of some type, maybe using the playground area for craft fairs, pumpkin festivals, etc, people would understand that the community uses the area and cares about it. I think that if it looked like quaint country village cars would naturally slow down instinctively. Right now it's a vehicle artery and that dominant feature affects how people perceive it. If there was a way to make a little hill between the road and the Onion Patch where people could sit and look at the view it would add a lot aesthetically. Or raise the road so everyone could get good look at it like the Hall's field.
- * I would like to see a village with sidewalks, improved streetscapes, and slowed traffic. I would like the few existing businesses to (plus Mechanics Hall) clean up and help create/preserve a historic feel. I would also like to see less bias against E. Princeton residents and residential use in the future.
- * If EPV was cleaned up like the town center was and is maintained the way the town center is it will go a long way to achieving the goals of most involved
- * Steps should be started to beautify the village. Examples: set up hanging flower baskets (possibly maintained by the Garden Club) – change the light poles to old style fixtures – submerge the pole wiring when the sidewalk is rebuilt
- * It has the potential to be a designation or stopping ground but with limited offerings and lack of charm is preventing interest and causing motorists to drive fast without looking back or thinking twice about E Princeton
- * Re-establishment of East Princeton Village Improvement Committee that focuses on preserving safety, history and rural character of area (buildings, people, roads, landscape)
- * Install historic street lights
- * Better signage at intersection RT 140 and 31 indicating way to Princeton Center
- * I've been here XX years in January – I like it like it
- * I would like to see a neighborhood village with sidewalks and other improved streetscape features where traffic slows and the few businesses allowed (including perhaps Mechanics Hall) take pride in themselves and in the village

- * A walkable residential neighborhood whose history is well interpreted and well promoted. In commercial area, I envision locally owned businesses in original buildings or new buildings that are architecturally compatible with the area.

14 Other

Several of the questions in the survey evince a bias in the favor of pursuing a commercialization of EP