

OPEN SPACE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN WILLIAMSTOWN

An Analysis of the Recent Proposal by Williams College to
Subdivide and Develop a 25-Acre Parcel
within Hopkins Memorial Forest

Parts I & II combined

Marna Lee Schwartz
Environmental Studies 302
Profs. Bolton and Jenks-Jay
Spring 1987

The purpose of this paper is to analyze a subdivision proposal made in the spring of 1987 by Williams College for a 25 acre tract of land located on the western side of Northwest Hill Road immediately south of the Bulkley Street intersection. (See Map 1.) The parcel is currently owned by Williams as a contiguous section of the 2000-acre Hopkins Memorial Forest.

Description of Site

The site is characterized by a wide diversity of woodland habitats as it gradually slopes upward in an east-west direction. The northeastern section of the plot is a dense stand of planted red pines (Pinus rugosa). Immediately west of these trees is a double row of 100+ year old sugar maples extending south-eastward to Northwest Hill Road. These trees lined the old Northwest Hill Road before its re-routing. The southwest corner of the plot is an open meadow which is mown twice a year, bordered on the northern side by a row of white pines, (Pinus strobis). The rest of the plot is a mixed hardwoods forest, including ash (Fraxinus americana), red maple (Acer Rubrum), and sugar maple (Acer saccharum). The northwestern corner has slightly larger trees less densely situated than the rest of the plot, with a few paper birches (Betula paperifera).

The soil of the plot is predominately Amenia Loam which is characterized by severe wetness and frost action. The site is extremely muddy in the fall, spring and winter, probably due to ruptures in the tile drainage system constructed in the 1800's to

drain the upper fields. In the southeastern corner of the plot, there is a 35' long x 2' wide drainage culvert. The westernmost section of the plot slopes relatively steeply up and here the soil is Stockbridge Loam. This soil is relatively well drained.

The area may also be a nesting ground for Bard owls and a bedding down site for deer.

Description of Site Proposal

The proposed subdivision extends approximately 1050' west from its 855' eastern boundary on the edge of Northwest Hill Road, tapering to a 550' western boundary. Six 2-1/2 acre single family house lots are to be located off a 400' east/west road, ending in a cul-de-sac 50' in diameter. (See Plan.) The road and accompanying sewer, water and electrical lines would meet current town standards. Since the homes would be within 400' of existing town water and sewer lines, the College would be required to hook the development to the town systems at the western side of the Forest Road project. Sewer lines would be 8" in diameter with 6" house hookups. Sewage generated from the houses would be treated at the HWWQ treatment facility located off off Route 7 North.

The water mains would be 8" in diameter. Significant water pressure exists in this area of town, 108 lbs/inch², so that the installation of an additional pump would be unnecessary.

(personal communication, Water Department Spokesman, 3/10/87)

Fire protection would be from the Williamstown Volunteer Fire Department with the use of existing hydrants located at the connection point and at the corner of Bulkley and Northwest Hill

Roads. These new lots would initially be deeded only to Williams College tenured faculty and administrators in accordance with the College's point system.

In order to make the sites affordable and keep the property within the Williams College community, the College has designed a special purchasing agreement. The College would sign over the land deed to the individual home builder with an agreement that the College would get the property back when the owner sold the house. With the new owner, again a faculty member or administrator, the College would repeat the arrangement. The cost of the property would not come out of the home owner's pocket.

The subdivision and development of the property would entail the drainage of the wet Amenia loam, the construction of the access road, and the laying of water, and sewer (both of these at a depth of 5') and underground electrical lines. These activities would involve the cutting and clearing of some existing vegetation and the use of heavy excavation equipment. Some fill would probably be needed for road construction. Housing construction, which would be financed by the individual home owner, would entail further clearing of vegetation and the use of power equipment. Once construction was completed, the lots would be used for conventional single family home activities, some of which may place an additional burden on the environment including lawn care, wood smoke, and increased traffic generation.

Planned Benefits

The College hopes that the six lots will help to alleviate the current affordable housing shortage within Williamstown faced by its faculty and administrators. In order to maintain the close interaction among faculty and students which many feel is an integral part of College's special identity, Williams encourages its faculty to live near the campus. Located in a town whose housing prices are well above those of surrounding communities, the College has found it necessary to assist its faculty in finding affordable housing by providing low rent apartments and houses within close proximity of the campus. (approximately 110 units--Housing Needs Study, p. 62) However, once tenured, faculty are required to vacate these facilities and find their own housing. In the past, the college has assisted tenured faculty and senior administrators in obtaining lots within Williamstown, by selling them lots at development cost, such as the Forest Road development. Furthermore, the college has given faculty low interest second mortgages on homes within Williamstown.

Residuals

The construction phase would cause a temporary increase in air and noise pollution, and topsoil runoff. Increased heavy vehicle traffic and the use of earth moving machines would increase the concentration of exhaust fumes, especially carbon monoxide, in the area and also result in additional noise. Once exposed to rainwater, soil previously held in place by vegetation

would be carried elsewhere by surface water runoff. Siltation screens set up around the drainage ditch in the southeastern corner of the parcel would help prevent the siltation of any free flowing waters. The same residuals would be present during housing construction.

Following construction, the project would increase the air pollutant levels and add small amounts of noise and light pollution. Air pollution levels would be affected by increased vehicular traffic. The average single family home normally generates 9.6 trips/day. (Grinnell, p.) For six homes, the total trips/day would be approximately 58. Considering that one or more of the drivers in the house would be working at Williams and therefore within walking or biking distance of work, the total could be less.

Although all of these increases in residuals seem relatively insignificant, the proximity of the project to a relatively undisturbed natural area, the Hopkins Memorial Forest, magnifies their impacts.

Hopkins Memorial Forest

On February 8, 1934, M. Theresa B. Hopkins donated the Buxton Farms owned and operated by her late husband Amos Lawrence Hopkins, a graduate of Williams College Class of 1863, to Williams College. Overwhelmed by the maintenance cost of the 1600 acre parcel, the College let the U.S. Forest Service use the site for a grided experimental forest, in which it studied reforestation of abandoned farm land, forest genetics--which

included the planting of fifteen plus hybrid species plots--and forest management up until the early 1960's.

Since then the tract has been administered by the Williams College Center for Environmental Studies. The Forest has been used for "scientific research, natural resource management research and applications, education of Williams College undergraduates, public education, passive recreation," and as a unique study site in which to interpret the past human interactions with the environment. (Hopkins Forest Internal Use Zoning Policy, p.1.) Currently, a study of the affects of acidic rainwater on soil composition is being conducted by several Williams College professors. The Forest Service censuses records provide researchers with a wealth of information dating back a significant amount of time and are of potential value in scientific research. Furthermore, interest in the Forest Service genetic plantations has continued, with a \$5000 grant being given to the College in 1981 by Wilson Greatbach of Buffalo, New York, for a recensusing and individual tree growth measurements of several hybrid poplar stands. Mr. Greatbach, who had used tissue cultures from several of the hybrid poplar stands for his work with grafting tissue culture, was interested in preserving and maintaining the existing stands.

The heaviest use of the Forest is in the Public Education Zone, near its eastern entrance, just north of the Bulkley Street intersection on Northwest Hill Road. (College zoning policy for the entire parcel can be found in the Hopkins Memorial Forest Internal Use Zoning Policy) This zone has been maintained in a

specific attempt "to recreate a landscape in keeping with the nineteenth century" ambience of Buxton Farms. (HF Internal Use Zoning Policy, p.4) Beyond a small dirt parking lot, with about a ten car capacity, a quarter mile dirt road leads to the Rosenberg Center--the renovated Buxton Farms Carriage House now housing the Hopkins Forest Farm Museum, a classroom, a dry and a wet lab, and the caretaker's residence. Also located in the near vicinity are the Buxton Gardens--a newly renovated herb garden, the reconstructed Moon Barn--housing several College owned sheep, a sugar house and adjacent sugarbush, the Williams Outing Club (WOC) cabin--used by WOC members approximately 7 times per month during the school year (Coach James Briggs, 4/8/87) and a weather station--used by the college for educational purposes. In this general area, a variety of annual day-long public activities are held by the Center For Environmental Studies, including a Fall Harvest Festival, a Spring Farm Festival, and several afternoon educational programs for nearby public elementary schools. Events are extremely well attended and few visitors stray far beyond the weather station.

Adverse Effects on Hopkins Forest

The 25-acre parcel is immediately south of this heavily used section of the forest. At its closest point, the boundary of the parcel would be 350' from the Rosenberg Center. The section of land between the Center and this point is a cleared wet field; the official boundary would run the southern edge of the field. A 100' restricted construction buffer zone has been proposed

south of the boundary line, in an effort to create a natural boundary between the Center and the new homes. Although 100' of leafy trees may provide some visual relief in the summer months, in the winter some of the homes would be visible from the area around the Center. As a result, it would be necessary to plant some type of dense evergreens within the northern boundary buffer zone. Especially suitable would be Hemlock trees (Tsuga canadensis), a native species found on the Forest property, which if planted at intervals would cover any lower branch thinning common in large hemlocks.

Nevertheless, during the year-long construction period, the visual impact on the Public Education Zone would be unavoidable. The sound of heavy equipment and power saws in particular would definitely change the character of this adjacent area. The noise and light generated by the six houses, one which could be within 450' of the area, would only be muffled by the tree barrier, changing the rural atmosphere of the entrance. Furthermore, the areas west of the proposed development which in the past has been used for scientific research, would be exposed to the nearby homes. This would probably alter the results of some experiments.

This buffer section of the Forest is also of scientific value. Two of the five hybrid stands that were to be reviewed with Mr. Greatbach's grant are located in this area. Other than these stands, three other different species stands would be removed if this project was completed. The area is also one of the few wet, marshy areas within the Forest which can be used

for scientific study.

Wetland's Designation

On March 27, 1987, the Williamstown Conservation Commission determined that the area was subject to protection under the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act. (G.L.c.131,40) However, "given the snow conditions and the lack of information in mapping submitted by the applicant, it is impossible to determine what portion of the area is not subject to protection under the act." ("Determination of Applicability Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act," p.1) Since only 2% of its total acreage is wetlands, Williamstown puts a high value on this limited resource. (Southworth, p.4) The town values wetlands for "flood control, water quality improvement, groundwater recharge and discharge, bank stabilization, food chain support, fish and wildlife habitat, aesthetics, recreation, education, and scientific potential." (Southworth, p.60, for an excellent discussion of these values, read through p.70) It is now the responsibility of the College to map the vegetation of the area to determine existing wetlands. If the Commission agrees with their mapping, then those areas designated as wetlands in accordance with the legislation, then "any removing, filling, dredging or altering of those areas" would require the filing of a notice of intent which would then be reviewed by the Commission. Pam Wetherbee, a member of the Conservation Commission, asserts that "if you take all of the vegetative wetlands, streams, banks and buffer zones, most of the property

is probably wetlands." (North Adams Transcript, 3/26/87)

Although, this would not prevent the construction of housing on the plot, it would limit the areas in which houses could be placed.

Benefits and Costs to Williamstown

However, this project would be economically beneficial for Williamstown. As a non-profit educational facility, Hopkins Memorial Forest is exempt from taxes. Once the lots are used for housing, they will be taxable. (Mass. Law, 90-438a) With property values in this area among the highest in Williamstown, the town's tax base would be increased. According to the local tax assessor, Mr. W. Barkin, each of these lots would be valued at \$100,000, based on a rule of thumb of \$75,000 for the first acre, \$25,000 for the second, and \$1500 for any additional acre. A modest, but well built 12,000 ft.² home, like those built by faculty on Forest Rd., would be valued at \$100/ft.² resulting in a total of \$120,000. Tax rates run \$20.10/ thousand dollars of value, each house would add approximately \$4,400/year to the tax revenue; and six houses, a total of \$26,400/year. Although assessed values will rise and tax rates will fall in the near future, these figures will probably not undergo change significantly.

The project would involve limited additional costs to the town. Once the College constructed the access road to the houses according to town standards, the town would make it a public road and be responsible for its future maintenance. According to

the town's Superintendent of the Highway Department, Mr. F. Thompson, the town would need to resurface the chip seal road once every five years at a cost of \$3,000. (Not only is this surfacing more aesthetically pleasing in rural neighborhoods, it is also cheaper than asphalt.) Although the section of Northwest Hill Road which the project would front is presently dirt, the town plans to resurface the entire road in the near future regardless of the subdivision proposal.

However, recent surveys have shown that Williamstown residents are more interested in maintaining the character of their community than increasing its tax base. Both "officials and residents set open space, not housing as priority."

(Transcript, 5/19/85) Williamstown is especially concerned with preserving the rural character of the NorthWest Hill Road Area. At a town meeting in May 1984, the road was designated Scenic in accordance with Massachusetts Law 15 C; Designation of Scenic Roads. As a result, any tree cutting or removal or tearing down or destruction of stone walls along the road would require written consent of the planning board following a public hearing.

(Annotated Laws of Massachusetts, p.110) The Open Space Board of the town of Williamstown disagreed with a report made in 1984, 2003; A Study of Williamstown Over the Next 20 Years, by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, predicting that the town would need over 600 new housing units by 2003. They based their conclusion on the inaccuracies of the 1960's update of the town Master Plan which made a "similar prediction for the 80's."

(Brunet, p.9) However the 2003 Report does recognize a shortage

of low to middle income housing while it protests against the "elegant pollution" of Williamstown, the construction of expensive single family homes, which is carving up open space. This project fits easily into this category.

Williams College Housing Needs

Initially the subdivision was to be used as a "stopgap measure to fill the need for faculty housing," until a larger development could be completed elsewhere, citing that "a severe housing shortage exists in Williamstown and the housing is overpriced." (Snyder, p,1) Although the College's special financial plan would help to make this housing affordable by newly tenured faculty, the mortgage payments and taxes would be steep on a single professor's income. One professor with a newly constructed home on Forest Road, had to work a second job in order to meet the payments associated with the house

However, no one really knows if there is a real housing shortage among Williams College professors and administrators. The Housing Needs Study for the Town of Williamstown recommended that the College survey its faculty to identify their housing needs. The College did so in the fall of 1986 by having faculty and administrators fill out a questionnaire. The analysis of the survey done by Riorden and Billicki points out a question which seems "to be so flawed as to be useless," and that several respondents to the questionnaire were confused as to whether or not the survey was asking what College policy should be or what the participants' personal response would be. Furthermore, it was

concluded that "large numbers of "perhaps" answers suggest a considerable reluctance to accept property from the College with repurchase strings attached." (Riorden and Billicli, p.6)

Without a clear knowledge of the participants' assumptions, it seems difficult to analyze whether or not there is an actual housing shortage and what kind. Another survey would help to clarify this situation.

Part II

In the past two decades, Williamstown has repeatedly made the preservation of its rural character and the maintenance of a closeknit community high priorities. However, both of these qualities are threatened by growth and the diversification of the town's economy. As more agricultural and forested land is developed, housing remains in short supply and is becoming increasingly expensive. With the decrease in affordable housing, many middle and lower income families whose members work in the town have had to find housing elsewhere. Regardless, the town has committed itself to preserving both of these qualities, attempting to maintain open space and make affordable housing available. Repeatedly, the town has asserted that the people who work in the town should be able to live there. ("2003," p. 46)

Williams College, the largest employer in town, has also made a similar housing commitment to its tenured faculty and senior administrators. Since faculty salaries are low in comparison to those of other potential home buyers, the College provides assistance in purchasing homes. The proposal to subdivide and develop a 25-acre parcel within Hopkins Memorial Forest is an effort to continue in this tradition. In the past, the College has sold lots at development costs, but with the sharp increases in property value, many of these homes are no longer affordable for other faculty members. The College hopes that its "special purchase agreement" will keep these homes affordable and prevent their resale to people unaffiliated with it.

If the town and the College are to maintain the rural character of the area, careful planning and an indepth analysis of each housing proposal will be necessary. Evaluations should attempt to be as objective as possible by using standard techniques and methods. At the same time, the evaluators should remember the qualities that the public hopes to preserve--open space and a closeknit community.

In order to give a complete analysis of the College's proposal, several different techniques will be used. Land Suitability Analysis is a good method to examine the physical characteristics of the site and determine how suitable, scientifically, the site is for housing construction. The non-scientific factors affected by the project will be analyzed through a Planning Balance Sheet. This method allows the evaluator to take monetary, recreational, ecological, educational, existence, and utilitarian values into account. (See Kellert, p. 11-12) Lastly, the probability that the project will achieve its stated purpose can be evaluated through Decision Analysis.

A critical examination of the proposed plan is necessary in order to determine if the design of the project is a good one. Although the College has decided not to develop the area within this century, (Snyder, p.1) its decision to only postpone, rather than terminate the project, suggests that it sees the actual proposal as a good possibility. However, there has not been a critical assesment of the plan using standard evaluation methods. Without these techniques, it is questionable if the College's

evaluation takes into account all people's values equally. Although the College did hold a meeting for homeowners who reside near the project location, this meeting was poorly announced, at an inconvenient time (early in the afternoon on a weekday) and seemed to be held only to announce the project, rather than to ask the participants' opinions. Although the following assessment of the project attempts to take these values more fully into account, a better evaluation could be made by holding public meetings concerning the merits of the project.

Before examining the complex issues involved with a decision to subdivide and develop the plot, an evaluation of the actual design of the project, including the location of the access road and individual homes, would be helpful. A good evaluation method to use in this situation would be a qualitative form of Land Suitability Analysis (LSA). The method measures the physical characteristics of an area in terms of their suitability for a given plan. Each characteristic is mapped individually without making a quantitative judgment on its suitability for the given land use. Then all of the characteristics of a given location are taken into account to determine which area is more suitable. Usually, one characteristic is contingent upon another. For example, an area characterized by wetland vegetation, will have soil with poor drainage capacity.

In an LSA of this project, the area should be mapped according to characteristics which limit the suitability of the land for the construction of a house or access road. Since houses and roads are best located on dry, well drained, and

strong soils, these qualities of the land should be mapped. The Conservation Commission's wetlands designation would also limit the suitability of a site for construction, since these areas can not be drained or filled. A mapping of the vegetation would provide this information.

Although maps have not been completed for each of the characteristics, a map of soil types was prepared by the planners which seems to limit housing construction in most locations. The eastern two-thirds of the plot are characterized by wet Amenia loam, a relatively unsuitable soil for building. Only the westernmost section of the plot, with its drier Stockbridge loam would be suitable for building. (Allowing housing construction on only two of the six lots.)

However, LSA is not sufficient to determine if this project should be completed or not. The maps would require extensive field work and the expert knowledge of soil scientists and botanists. By relying on experts for this information and a subsequent determination of suitability, the method is biased. The values of the scientists may not be those of the general public. Furthermore, using the method to determine the suitability of only one site does not take into account the notion of need, the economics of the site, or the impacts of construction on adjacent areas. If houses are needed and this is the only site available due to economic, scientific, or historic reasons, for example, the physical limitations of the site may be overcome with technological innovations. Therefore, the method is best used to help decide which one of several possible

locations is best suited for the development.

However, once the site has been chosen, a more complete evaluation of the effects of the project on the entire area is necessary. Factors other than the physical suitability of the site need to be considered. Since the decision to subdivide and the resulting construction involves intangibles and the distribution of benefits and costs among different members of the population, a Planning Balance Sheet (PBS) is best designed to take these considerations into account. Although Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) provides useful information in terms of this evaluation, it does not consider the above two factors. Since the College has proposed this project for reasons other than financial gain, it makes it difficult to weigh this project solely in BCA terms. The decision to provide housing lots for its faculty can not be translated into monetary values. The College thinks that this policy helps to attract higher quality faculty to the area and has determined that this quality is more beneficial for academic reasons than the cost of development and the loss of valuable property. However, in drawing the PBS for this project, it is important to take these monetary values, generated through BCA, into account.

In drawing up a PBS for this project, the impacts, referred to as "transactions," of the plan are examined by placing them into a format which allows one to see what groups lose or gain value. (See Planning Balance Sheet, next page) Those who produce the impact, the "producers," are separated from the "consumers," those who are affected by the impacts. These gains and losses are

PLANNING BALANCE SHEET

SECTOR	Benefit	Cost
Producers		
Williams College	Housing for faculty and administrators without suitable housing (Six lots) (I)	Cost of development and land (M)
Faculty and administrators	Place to live and financial investment (M)	Cost of housing construction (\$121,000) and taxes (\$4,400/year)
Consumers		
Faculty and students doing ecological field work		Loss of research facility, including five hybrid tree stands protective buffer zone for research areas deeper in forest (P)
Hikers and horseback riders		Loss of access trails to larger forest network (two trails)
Users of Public Education Zone		Loss of rural atmosphere (I)
Town	Increased tax base (\$726,000) and revenues (\$26,400/year)	Loss of wetland areas and open space along designated scenic road (I)
Other tax payers		Tax payments to support road maintenance (\$3000/5 years) fire protection, and educational facilities (M)
Non-college home buyers	Decreased competition for available housing in Williamstown	
Wildlife and plants		Loss of habitat (P)

Type of units used to evaluate impacts of proposed plan

- (M)-monetary
- (P)-physical
- (I)-intangible

then determined to be either a benefit or cost. In this project, the producers are Williams College and the faculty and administrators who would build homes on the lots. The Consumers include the faculty and students doing ecological field work, hikers, horseback riders, users of the Public Education Zone, the Town, other tax payers, and wildlife and plants. Of these categories, the two Producers; the Town, and the non-College home buyers, enjoy benefits from the project, whereas all of the groups, excluding non-College home buyers, suffer costs. By laying out the benefits and costs of the all of the groups that will be affected by the project, the public gets a more comprehensive view of the project. The PBS can take into account many of their different values, including those they place on the rural atmosphere, open space, and availability of housing.

However, the terms used to measure value in the PBS are inconsistent, making it difficult to compare the benefits and the costs of the project. Also, the lack of data on financial costs, which could be high due to the wetness of the area, and the unknown extent and locations of wetlands prevent full analysis. In order for this evaluation method to be effective, it would be best to compare the PBS of this project with that of an alternative site plan. By using the LSA and the PBS to evaluate the plan without other sites for comparison, the future of the project can not be decided.

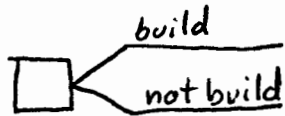
Yet, by looking at the planned benefits of the project and evaluating the likelihood of their occurrence, progress can be made toward making this decision. By using a modified version of

the Decision Analysis (DA) described by Stokey and Zeckhauser, the reason for the decision can be compared with its hypothetical results. This method is appropriate because the aims of the project are to alter a sequential series of events which depend to a certain extent on chance.

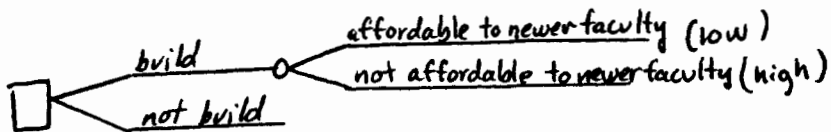
The purpose of this project was to help alleviate the current faculty and administrative housing crunch. The tight housing market within Williamstown has made it very difficult for tenured faculty members and administrators to find housing within town, once they are required to leave College owned housing. (See p.4) According to the "2003 Report," Williamstown has a very low rate of occupancy, 1.2%, which means that those people who already own homes within Williamstown tend to remain in their homes and those who "do not live in town have a very difficult time moving in." (p.51) Furthermore, those few houses which do come on the market are expensive and newly tenured faculty can not afford them on their College salary, even with the College mortgage assistance. The initial lump sum seems to be the problem (personal communication with faculty member). The high property values within Williamstown are in part caused by the increase in the number of second homes in the areas. Property values are pushed up as "these investors are often willing and able to pay much higher prices for property than local residents." (²⁰⁰³p. 51)

Using DA, one hypothetically diagrams the situation in a decision tree which outlines the decision and the possible outcomes. For the College's decision to build, the diagram looks

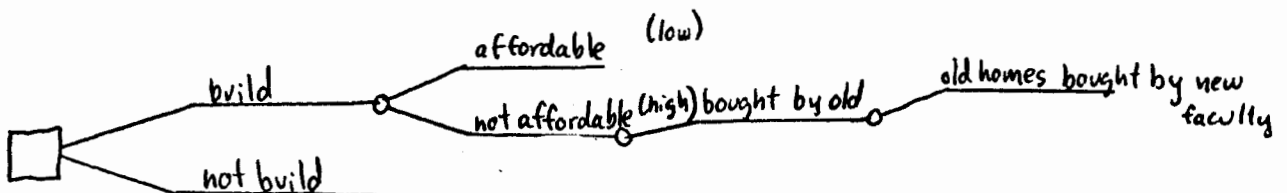
like this:



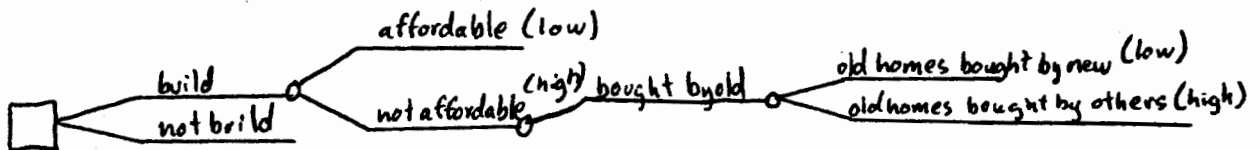
A decision is marked by a square with the possible choices branching off from it. If the College develops the lots, the newly tenured faculty and administrators may or may not be able to afford them. Faculty claimed that the large lot size and high tax rates in this part of town would make the taxes on the homes unaffordable to the people the project was for. This chance is marked by a circle with the payoff branching off and an indication of a high or low probability its occurrence.



The College responded that this housing, on large lots and in an expensive area in terms of taxes may not be appropriate for the younger faculty. If not feasible, the lots could be used by faculty already owning homes within Williamstown who needed more space than their present home provided. This would then place less expensive homes on the open market, making them available for the newly tenured faculty.



However, this scenario is of low probability. According to the "Housing Needs Study," the buyers of existing homes in Williamstown are "in many cases more affluent than the sellers" ("Housing Needs," p. 18). Homes on the open market have a high probability of not ending up in the hands of lower paid faculty, rather going to people with even higher incomes than the faculty who build on the new lots. If this assumption is made, when the new homes are eventually sold to College affiliated faculty (due to the special "buy back plan"), the faculty who buy the homes will sell their houses on the open market, moving more land out of College affiliated hands.



By analyzing this scenario through a revised form of Decision Analysis, it appears that the College will be providing large, highly desirous lots to a few selected employees. The likelihood of the project alleviating the faculty housing crunch seems unlikely. Removing this benefit from the PBS, the project appears to be even less beneficial than in the past.

This combination of Land Suitability Analysis, Planning Balance Sheet, and Decision Analysis are all useful in evaluating the proposal to subdivide and develop six lots on the boundaries of Hopkins Forest. Although this project does not seem to be appropriate, there is a real problem of affordable housing within

11

the town, for both Williams College faculty and other residents. Instead of making quick decisions about how to resolve the problem, both the College and the town should continue to develop a more comprehensive plan for the construction of moderate income housing. Since the College owns a considerable amount of land within the town, both need to decide which areas are more valuable in an undeveloped state than others. (This has already been done in the "2003 Report" by using a variation of McHarg's quantitative LSA. See p. 54) In depth planning needs to be done for each parcel and then the alternatives can be compared through LSA and PBS. With so few highly valued wetland areas and public recreational lands close to the center of town, it seems unnecessary that suitable sites for housing must be located on them or in their near vicinity. Also, the many non-monetary values associated with the quasi-public Hopkins Memorial Forest which would be affected by a development immediately adjacent to its entrance, need to be taken more seriously into consideration when comparing the suitability of this site with others. Furthermore, affordable middle income housing may need to be situated in "less desirable," lower taxed sections of town in order to make the homes more easily affordable in the future. Families may also need to be satisfied with less of their own private space, instead using public lands for recreation. Also, by aggregating the development within certain sections of town more intensively developed, the rural atmosphere of its outlying areas and the closeknit quality of its community can be preserved.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Annotated Laws of Massachusetts, "Designation of Scenic Roads...", p.110.
- Barkin, William, Town Acessor, interviewed by Marna Schwartz, 3/20/86.
- Briggs, Jim, Faculty Advisor to the Williams Outing Club, interviewed by Marna Schwartz, 4/8/87.
- Brunet, Kathleen, "Officials, Residents Set Open Space, Not Housing a Priority," The Transcript, 4/19/85, p.9.
- Determination of Appllicability Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act by the Williamstown Conservation Commission for a 25 acre tract within Hopkins Memorial Forest, 3/27/87.
- "Forest Genetics Plantations at the Lawrence Hopkings Memorial Experimental Forest," USFS, Williamstown, MA, 1961(?).
- The Housing Needs Study for the Town of Williamstown, Williamstown Planning Board, 1984.
- "Hopkins Memorial Forest Internal Use Zoning Policy," Center For Environmental Studies Williamstown, MA, Sept. 1986.
- Kellert, Stephen R., "Assesing Wildlife and Environmental Values in Cost-Benefit Analysis," Journal of Environmental Management, Sept. 1983.
- Massachusetts General Law-Assesment of Local Taxes [90-438a], p. 46.
- McAllister, Donald M., Evaluation in Environmental Planning, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA., 1986.
- Open Space and Recreation Plan for the Town of Williamstown, Conservation Commission and the Recreation Committee, Williamstown, Oct. 1986.
- Peterson, Dick, Town Water and Sewer Department, interviewed by Marna Schwartz, 3/10/87.
- Riorden and Billicki, "Williams College Housing Survey Analysis," Oct. 8, 1986.
- Sasaki Associates, Mount Hope Farm Subdivision Environmental Impact Statement, 1985.
- Snyder, Debbie, "College Plans 6 Houses in Hopkins Forest," The Record, Williams College, Williamstown, MA.

"Soil Interpretation Record," Stockbridge and Amenia Loam Series,
Soil Conservation Service.

Southworth, Anne, "Williamstown Wetlands," Honors Thesis,
Williams College, Williamstown, MA, 1986.

Stokey, Edith and Richard Zeckhauser, A Primer for Policy
Analysis, 1978, 201-236.

"2003, Williamstown Over the Next Twenty Years," Berkshire
Regional Planning Commission and the Williamstown Planning
Board, 1984.

"Williams Gets Ruling on Wetlands," North Adams Transcript,
3/26/87.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON COLLEGE POLICY REGARDING
RENTALS, BUILDING LOTS AND CONDOMINIUMS

Name _____

Position or faculty rank _____

Date Began at Williams _____

Current Housing Situation Rent _____ Own _____

I. RENTALS

A. Have you ever rented from Williams? Yes _____ No _____

1. If yes, address of last rental _____

2. If no, please skip and go to Section II on building lots.

B. Please provide comments regarding your most recent college rental unit in terms of:

1. Cost (Did rental cost plus utilities exceed 30% of your gross income?) _____

2. Location _____

3. Overall quality of the unit

Excellent _____ Good _____ Fair _____ Poor _____

4. Maintenance _____

C. Assuming the cost of improvements was amortized over five years, would you be willing to pay more rent for those improvements?

Yes _____ No _____ Perhaps _____

D. Improvements Most Needed (your comments, please)

1. New Kitchen--cabinets and appliances _____

2. Bathrooms modernized with new fixtures _____

*Should these
be asked
before E*

Not clear if survey of need or of what policy should be.

3. Other (your preference) _____

E. Of the rental units the College currently owns, which would you like most to live in? _____

Why? _____

F. If the College decided to build new rental units, are there special features that should be incorporated into the units?

G. If the College builds new rental units, how would you rate the following:

1. Units should be within walking distance of the College. (Check one)

A. Very desirable _____

B. Desirable _____

C. Doesn't really matter _____

D. Not desirable _____

2. Number of bedrooms, with rent adjusted proportionately (Check one)

A. Three _____

B. Two _____

C. One _____

H. Do you think the College should continue to purchase for rentals single family homes that are close to the campus?

Yes _____ No _____

Why? _____

I. Should the College have rental housing available for tenured members of the faculty and equivalent administrators?

Yes _____ No _____

Why? _____

II. COLLEGE BUILDING LOTS

A. At the present the College has no building lots available for purchase by eligible faculty and staff. Land is very scarce in Williamstown, and what land is available is extremely expensive. If new building lots are made available, a provision will have to be incorporated to insure that the land does not leave the Williams College family. Such a provision would make initial ownership more affordable but would reduce the appreciation of the property. Under these terms, would you be interested in buying a College building lot?

Yes _____ No _____ Perhaps _____

B. If the College provided building lots, assuming they all would be in the Williamstown area, which area would you prefer?
(Check one)

A. In town _____

B. Country (Mt. Hope or Hopper Rd.) _____

C. Other (specify) _____

- C. Should the College serve as a "developer" purchasing a large block of farmland and subdividing it into building lots? Owners would put in their own septic and water systems. The College would recover its full cost, but the owner would be able to sell their house and property at the market rate.
- A. Yes, definitely _____
- B. Perhaps _____
- C. No, not a good idea _____
- D. Other comments you might wish to make regarding the College providing building lots. _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

III. CONDOMINIUMS

As suggested in the Jorling Report, the College is considering the construction of a small number of condominiums which would be individually owned by faculty and staff, with the condominium owners arranging for the mutual maintenance and upkeep of the property.

- A. Would you be interested in purchasing a College-developed condominium? Yes _____ No _____ Perhaps _____
- B. If yes, what price range do you think would be desirable assuming that price was related to quality? (Check one)
1. \$150,000 to \$175,000 _____
2. \$125,000 to \$150,000 _____
3. \$100,000 to \$125,000 _____
- C. In principle, would you agree to a provision for a College buy back of your condominium at a predetermined rate (i.e. initial cost plus rise in CPI) if the College subsidized the initial purchase price of the condominium?
- Yes _____ No _____ Perhaps _____

D. Do you have strong feelings about the location of a condominium unit?

1. Must be near the campus _____
2. Mount Hope area _____
3. Other (specify) _____
4. Doesn't matter as long as the location is nice and convenient to Williamstown _____

E. Special features you feel should be incorporated into a condominium _____

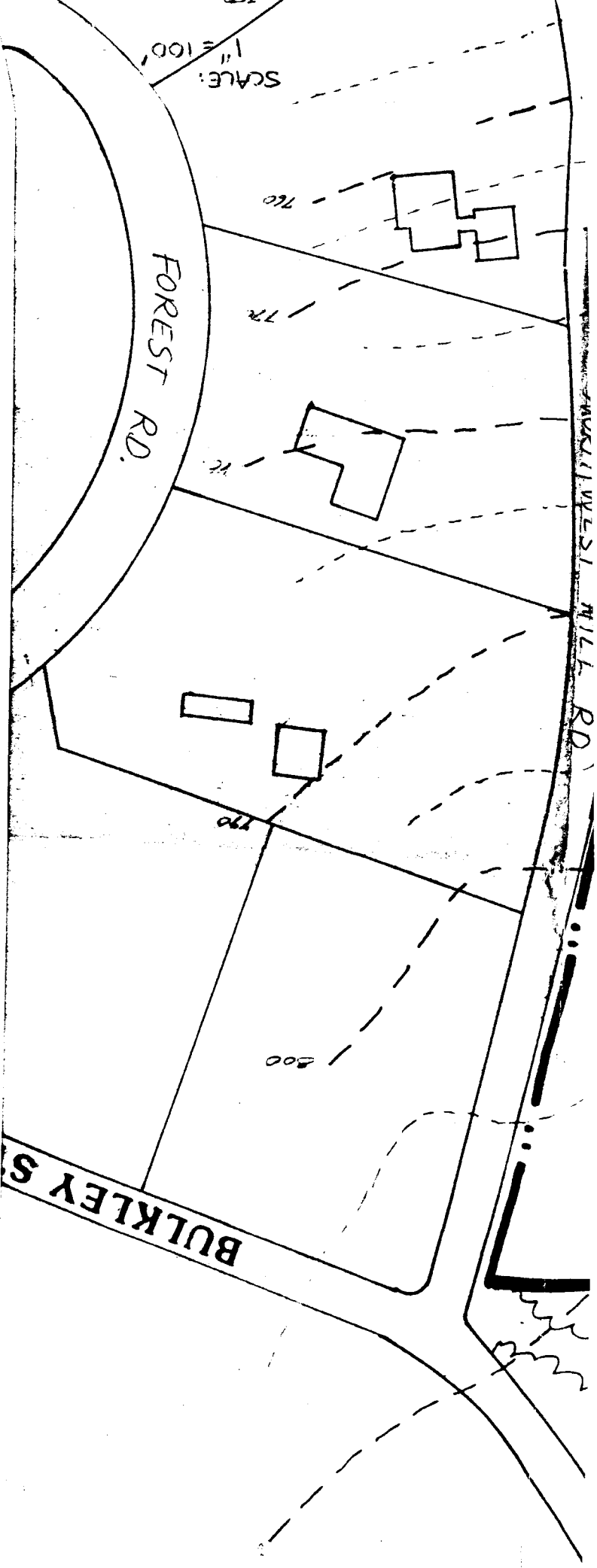
IV. SUMMARY OPINIONS

The College will not be able to undertake all of the housing initiatives described above. Would you therefore rank each of the options, using a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 meaning the most preferred option and 5 the least preferred?

- _____ College builds new rental units.
- _____ College purchases existing single-family housing for rental.
- _____ College makes building lots available from College land.
- _____ College purchases a large block of land and acts as a developer.
- _____ College builds condominiums for sale to individual owners.

Thank you for your assistance. Please feel free to add additional comments or observations to this questionnaire.

Please return in campus mail to William S. Reed, Treasurer's Office, Hopkins Hall or by U.S. mail to P. O. Box 67, Williamstown, MA.



Ingrid Ambreyer
OFFICE
S U 2720