FlashVote

Survey Results: Coffin School Property

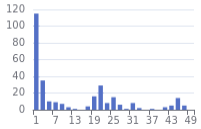
Survey Info - This survey was sent on behalf of the Town of Marblehead to the FlashVote community for Marblehead, MA.

These FlashVote results are shared with local officials

300
Total Participants
273 of 488 initially invited (56%)
27 others
Margin of error: ± 6%

Applied Filter:
All Responses

Response Time (hours)



Started:
Sep 29, 2026 1:17pm EDT
Ended:
Oct 1, 2026 1:16pm EDT
Target Participants:
All Marblehead

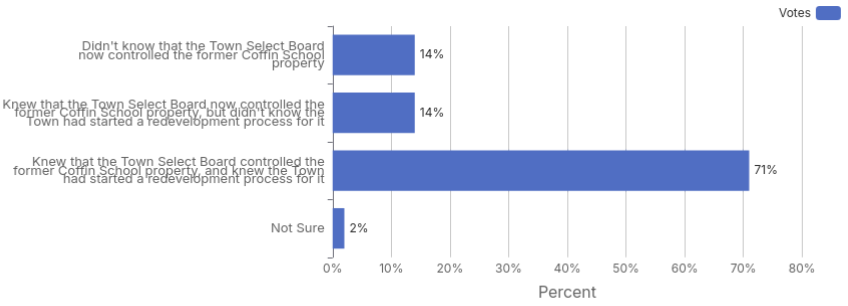
Q1 Control of the former Coffin School property at 1 Turner Road has been transferred to the Town of Marblehead Select Board, and it is not expected to be used as a school again. The Town is inviting proposals for redevelopment.

Prior to reading this, which best describes what you knew about the former Coffin School property and the Town's current redevelopment process?

(297 responses)

Survey response data for survey question 1

Options
Didn't know that the Town Select Board now controlled the former Coffin School property
Knew that the Town Select Board now controlled the former Coffin School property, but didn't know the Town had started a redevelopment process for it
Knew that the Town Select Board controlled the former Coffin School property, and knew the Town had started a redevelopment process for it
Not Sure

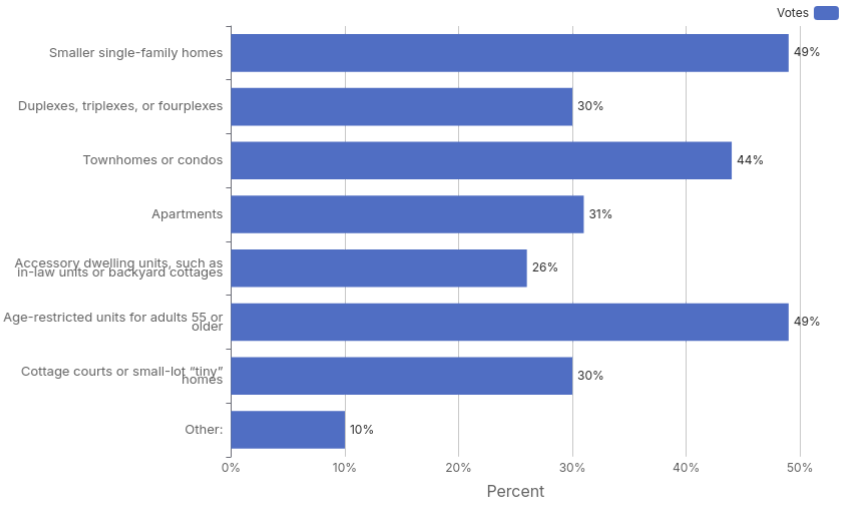


Q2 Which of the following types of housing do you think Marblehead needs most in order to offer more affordable options? (You can choose up to FOUR)

(280 responses)

Survey response data for survey question 2

Options	**Votes** (280)
Smaller single-family homes	49% (137)
Duplexes, triplexes, or fourplexes	30% (83)
Townhomes or condos	44% (124)
Apartments	31% (87)
Accessory dwelling units, such as in-law units or backyard cottages	26% (72)
Age-restricted units for adults 55 or older	49% (137)
Cottage courts or small-lot “tiny” homes	30% (83)
Other:	10% (27)



Responses for "Other":"

two family homes
for marblehead residents only
Open space
I don’t think Marblehead wants more housing

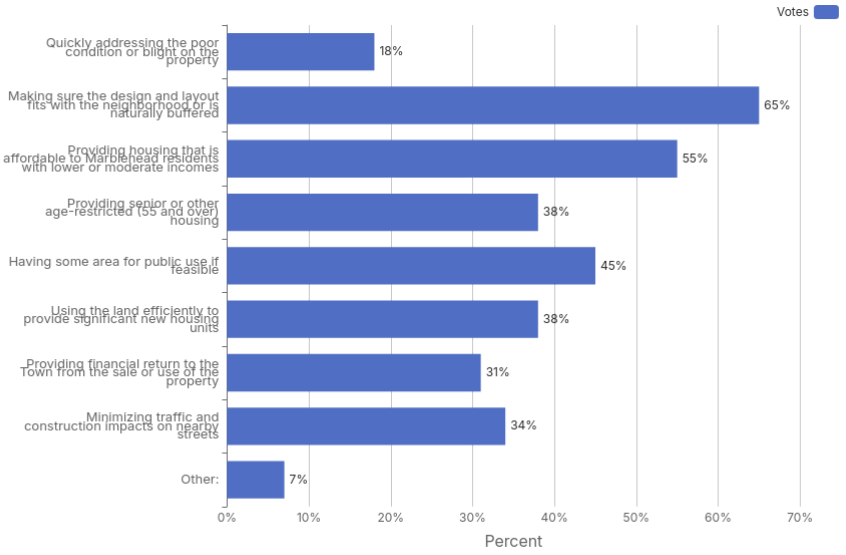
targeted housing options that fit the town's existing character and infrastructure
Veteran’s
Town has sufficient housing
Indoor recreation facility for kids and adolescents.
Sell the school land and use the money to endow the existing schools, or return it to the taxpayers
Veteran's housing
Elderly housing
I prefer that they be owner occupied rather than rentals.
workforce housing with some senior housing, affordable based on income,
Open PUBLIC space
None
Public employee housing
If you’re going to sell it off again, please don’t sell it for nothing like you did with the Gerry.
No more housing!!!!!!!
park or sports complex
Keep as open space
Income restriction housing
Affordable housing
Open land park for the public’s use
Affordable housing that looks good in the coffin neighborhood
3A multi family and be done!
Housing for people with disabilities
Marblehead is densely populated on 4 square miles. We need more open space, not more housing.

Q3 Which of the following should be most important when the Town reviews proposals for redevelopment of the former Coffin School property? (You can choose up to FOUR, if any)

(274 responses)

Survey response data for survey question 3

Options	**Votes** (274)
Quickly addressing the poor condition or blight on the property	18% (49)
Making sure the design and layout fits with the neighborhood or is naturally buffered	65% (178)
Providing housing that is affordable to Marblehead residents with lower or moderate incomes	55% (152)
Providing senior or other age-restricted (55 and over) housing	38% (104)
Having some area for public use if feasible	45% (124)
Using the land efficiently to provide significant new housing units	38% (105)
Providing financial return to the Town from the sale or use of the property	31% (85)
Minimizing traffic and construction impacts on nearby streets	34% (92)
Other:	7% (20)



Responses for "Other":"

Ensure that we give a developer that has connections to elected officials the winning bid

Keep any new buildings in character with the neighborhood and Marblehead's other historic buildings

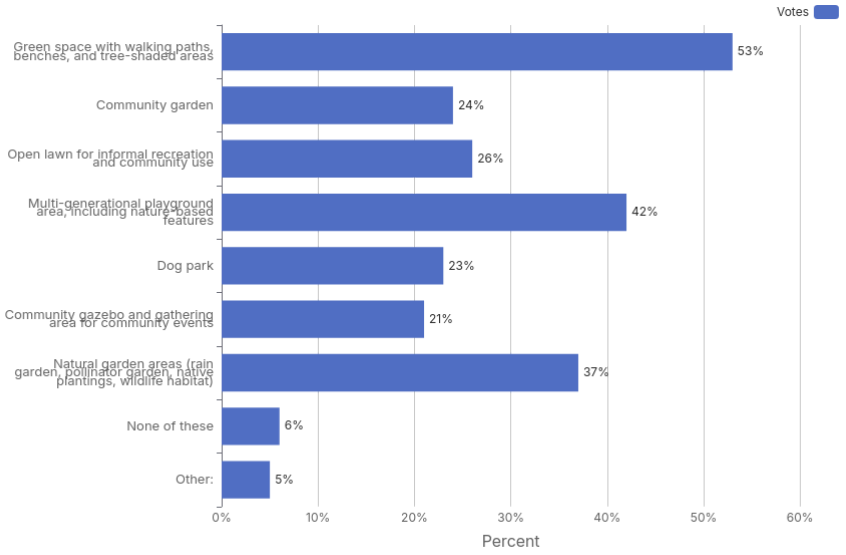
to marblehead residents only
Don't do what you did with the Gerry. Limited housing isn't going to solve anything...
It would be the perfect spot to have a public turf field for youth sports.
If housing then eco friendly and energy efficient
Scale should not overwhelm neighborhood of mostly smaller houses, no ugly blocky look
First homebuyer opportunities
Keep it green space. NO MORE HOUSING!!!!!!
having most if not all area for public use
Please keep as open space
Geothermal or heat pumps for whatever housing is built to
DO NOT USE IT FOR LOW INCOME HOUSING - IT WILL RUIN THE NEIGHBORHOOD!!!
Providing housing where people can downsize vs making them
Partnering with organizations like the YMCA to do affordable housing!
Providing affordable housing for those who work in Marblehead and can't afford to live here.
Town employees, low/moderate income families, senior citizen housing. Respect the neighborhood
All electric construction
Indoor Winter Garden, housing for people with disabilites
Renovation of town-owned affordable housing should be our priority, not building on open land.

Q4 If the Town were to retain a portion of the former Coffin School property for public use, which uses or features would you prefer, if any? (You can choose up to THREE, if any)

(272 responses)

Survey response data for survey question 4

Options	**Votes** (272)
Green space with walking paths, benches, and tree-shaded areas	53% (143)
Community garden	24% (66)
Open lawn for informal recreation and community use	26% (72)
Multi-generational playground area, including nature-based features	42% (114)
Dog park	23% (63)
Community gazebo and gathering area for community events	21% (58)
Natural garden areas (rain garden, pollinator garden, native plantings, wildlife habitat)	37% (101)
None of these	6% (16)
Other:	5% (14)



Responses for "Other":"

Something the town does not have to maintain since we don't maintain anything.

There is a park across the street

No preference
for marblehead residents only
Turf field for youth sports
Don't keep any land for public use, let it all be developed
There is plenty of green space in the surrounding neighborhood and more would come with development
NO MORE HOUSING!!!!!!!!
Plenty of open space nearby
Playing fields
Fields for sports
enhance the neighborhood and inspire accessible community life
Renovate Powder House Ct and Farrell; as is being done on Broughton Rd for additional affordable un

Q5 Any other comments or suggestions about the former Coffin School property, reviewing proposals, or other things the Town should consider when making these decisions?

(97 responses)

Individual Responses | AI-Generated Comment Summary

Whatever is decided, it has likely been decided long before this survey went out. Hopefully it's not too impactful, but doubtful.

WE LIKE THE PARK & REC'S IDEA THAT PART OF THE PARCEL SHOULD BE PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE SPACE, ESPECIALLY FOR EXCERISING DOGS AS NOW OCCURS AT THE OLD PLAYGROUND.

Perfect opportunity to stay in (or get in) compliance with the Commonwealth's MBTA town zoning laws.

Make sure any new developments match the historic character of the town. Consider adding starter homes or other housing for young people in their 20''s and 30's.

Housing is of utmost importance for the town. If senior housing is decided as important, loosening the parking requirements is a must. This is a great opportunity for a great addition of housing to the town.

The town should not give undue consideration to the views of the closest surrounding residents. This is a town property and the wishes and potential benefits to the entire town should be considered. Personally, I feel the town should maximize the potential property tax revenue which could be produced by multiple owner-occupied units. Large areas of open space or recreational space should not be prioritized.

The site should be used for as many housing units as possible!

Keep the main building for low income/senior housing (one day), get rid of annex. Make field and playground.

for marblehead residents only, and to increase all neighbors property value not decrease

Make sure we’re not kinda bein’ pricks. We can preserve character and build housing. Not just housing for “Marblehead residents” as stated in this survey, but for people who would love to become Marblehead residents. The town should not attempt to engineer the kinds of people that can make up the future of Marblehead. I’m therefore against things like age restricted housing.

Stay focused on addressing the housing challenge we have in Marblehead. Other locations can accommodate recreation, dog park, etc.

Make money for the town.

Make sure there is adequate parking

It’s too bad the school committee took so darn long turning it over.

I sir on the Master Plan committee. The 2026 community survey conducted as part of Marblehead’s Comprehensive Master Plan provides useful guidance. The largest group of respondents, 45%, favored evaluating each town-owned parcel individually based on its location and context, while only 15% favored prioritizing housing development. The Coffin property should similarly be evaluated for its best long-term use, considering municipal needs, housing, open space, infrastructure, neighborhood compatibility and fiscal impact. If housing is ultimately selected, it should be appropriate in scale and character for the surrounding neighborhood.

We should do what is best for the whole town, not just the abutters. More housing and more revenue, please.

Maybe consider apartment or townhouse housing for town employees like police and firefighters that actively work for the town.

Would be a great place for an indoor ice skating rink.

Figure out how to get the maximum $ return and relieve some tax burden on the citizens. Use the money to fund the seemingly always broke school system or as a mechanism to reduce the out of control property tax burden.

Let it all be developed. We need more housing.

More green or community space for residents of town to enjoy!

Lots of affordable units of housing is most important!

Development should increase future town net cost. Generate more tax revenue than ongoing costs.

Marblehead Community Charter School is in desperate need of a new building. Most of the classrooms are falling apart and even lack windows. Many residents choose to send their children here in spite of the building because of the benefits to the type of education that is provided. The school is still a public school and a representative of the Marblehead community.

Dismantle all buildings, create a green field and use ALL the space for low income, senior housing.

Match density of surrounding neighborhoods. Plant many many shade trees. Reduce amount of impervious surface. Use low level lighting. Architecture should match surrounding house styles.

The town has plenty of green space already, but far too few moderately priced housing for all ages.

Parking. There is so little parking in this area. It would be great for each unit to have parking for 1-2 cars, and please don't put garage doors directly on the street.

That plans are executed before costs go up as they did with high school roof fix, for example

Whatever the property is used for, develop it so it generates property tax for the town

Retain original building. Minimize parking spaces by using it for elderly housing.

The town needs more housing across all income and square footage. The existing town development laws provide more than adequate guidelines for green space. The entire town needs must be addressed first and the NIMBY concerns of the adjacent neighborhood a distant second. That area was open farm land until after WWII when they developed it for Veterans families housing. Times and needs change. MHD does not need a dog park and there is abundant green space of all kinds

Make it fit in with the existing neighborhood.

If housing comes off the docket, a children's playground and ballfield would be welcome.

Can’t emphasize enough that the style of buildings should not be a monolithic mass but should be in keeping with the smallish houses in the neighborhood. This should be developed by a nonprofit developer so that town doesn’t end up with yet another luxury high-rent project. That would be a far more long-term benefit than simply selling the land to the highest bidder, and Marblehead residents and town workers could be given preference.

Providing affordable housing to Marblehead long-time tax-paying seniors who need an affordable home.

The Town should consider that the zoning for That parcel is not flexible

None

I think the town should maintain some ownership of public space. If that happens, no matter what the ultimate use(s) are decided, please be clear about which organization(s) will maintain that space (and which budget(s) will cover the cost) to ensure that it will continue to have a positive impact on the rest of the development as well as the broader neighborhood.

What ever direction the town takes they will surely mess it up as usual.

Pickle ball courts

This is a rare opportunity to have an impact on the critical lack of rentals, affordable housing and accessible housing. I really hope we maximize the resource and make the design fit the area.

The housing that is built looks like it belongs in this neighborhood.

Absolutely no multi family unless age restricted and or mixed income . Tiny family or single family homes only

Past projects have not considered ADA (library and stramiski community building) and then the project gets redesign ($) - let's do ADA upfront and not use the architects that seem to be to go to.

Don’t try to save any of the existing structure

Density and open space prime concern. As well as fitting in with the neighborhood.

Respect for the resource area

Open space and a fit for the neighborhood should be a priority!

There should be time limits put into the contract for completion so it doesn’t stay a construction zone forever - with penalties Perhaps some of the profit could go towards paying teachers more or paving out dilapidated roads.

No More Housing!! Public Green space.

Please be mindful of creating something that fits /compliments the existing homes in the neighborhood.

If the development retains building that’s fine; but if not, then development should match the character of the neighborhood with similarly moderate sized homes. 55+ would be ideal.

Think the whole project thoroughly; that's thoroughly! Too many Marblehead projects seem to be not well thought out, and, inferior products result, at taxpayers' expense.

Stop trying to force affordable housing

I do not want condos and maximal housing for developer's profit. I would like this to be available to Marblehead seniors for them to stay in town, preferably small, attractive, cottage style homes. I would like green space.

Don't let it look like a "housing project" and leave some area for all residents to enjoy. I would have rather seen it used for a park to begin with. Our town has already become too cramped with too much traffic. It already takes 20+ minutes to get out of town on

West Shore drive in the morning

It should be high priority that if there are to be new buildings built, that they be built to the highest standards of efficiency and modern electrification. It should be recommended by the Town that they should ideally be all electric and ultra-efficient, as to not tax the grid, while offering low cost utilities to the purchasers, and/or tenants. I am specifically recommending the use of heat pumps for HVAC as well as for hot water and clothes drying. While making sure all appliances are as efficient as possible. Also, on this front, it would be nice if these buildings would be 'right sized' and not 'mega-structures' that just fill the entire plot we are sitting on. We are very good at saying that we want new homes and buildings that fit into the character of the homes around them, but in reality, this is a farce, as most new homes being built here are huge, and most dwarf the homes that surround them. Shame on the Planning Board, and hope that the Town can make better choices here.

Don't be held hostage by the neighborhood. There has been traffic there for decades with a school. We need housing.

I think one of the things of utmost importance is to consider traffic and how it will impact the neighborhood when developing the land

Avoid adding housing; use the space that all residents could enjoy. There is not much space left in the town; avoid the build out!

Since there is always a budget shortfall for the school I would hope terms of transfer of the property helped or could help the school close the gaps in funding.

We have an over congestion problem in town and our infrastructure, from roads to utilities, cannot support new buildings. We need to preserve all open space we can.

Just don't sell it to a developer below market value, please.

Please do something that makes sense for the town at larger and the immidiate neighborhood. Do not left egos and inflated sense of being "wok" influence the decsions.

Anything that is developed should be tasteful and in keeping with the neighborhood

Affordable Housing is the top priority

I appreciate the concern of the neighbors to the Coffin School, but how long they will actually live there is unknown, while the desperate need for affordable housing (in whatever form) is on-going and only getting worse.

Affordable housing, dense to maximize # units on the space, and some small units (1-2bedroom with walk in shower, one level for older residents to downsize into, with some green space to garden and walk and sit in the shade, not a lawn or big grassy area. Dog park area to be included is great idea, especially as that allows seniors who might have pets (but decreasing mobility to walk them) a nearby place to get their dog some exercise.

Advertise community and town committee meetings in local papers, not just the town website

The former Coffin School property is in a tightly nestled, quiet neighborhood. The impact of traffic with construction & high volume building & the continued impact would be a real detriment to a quiet, out-of-the way neighborhood. Please consider quality over quantity in this scenario!

A small but serious suggestion: Marblehead has a rather severe shortage of space where owner-supervised dogs are able to run off-leash. Our dogs enhance families and benefit our community. I think pet friendly areas should be included in plans for future property development.

identify metrics to estimate all costs and benefits

Sit down and talk with the neighbors about any plans before moving forward on any construction.

The property should absolutely not be used for low income housing. The area is currently a beautiful and safe neighborhood comprised of residents who take pride in their homes. A low income housing development will inevitably cause problems and ruin the character of the neighborhood.

Let’s move on this ASAP! Space like this should not sit idle for so long.

The Town should make sure to budget for maintenance of any new public structures and/or outdoor play spaces. If grass is to be planted, please allow for underground sprinkler system to be installed in order to keep the space green. If a gazebo is built, please plan on regular inspections and upkeep so that it doesn’t fall into disrepair. It would be fine to allow volunteers to help keep the public space in good shape. An easy way to do this is to have the Town set up quarterly clean-ups and invite residents to help in the process.

Let's do this quickly and create another stream of revenue for the town. It has sat empty for long enough....time for development.

Affordable housing for Marblehead residents Who have been in town for at least five years or some similar metric to favor, local families, workers, seniors, etc.

Only that the property should not be sold. Keeping it and delveloping it with oversite will allow us to keep control of the design and purpose. If it is kept for green space, there needs to be a plan for upkeep, which is going to involve an annual budget.

Don't hesitate to innovate to increase variety of housing options!

housing needed for town workers

Don't waste $ on consultants! Its time for elected officals and employees to step it up and do their jobs. Also,,create a "citzen's review board, to monitor the project and prove visibility and ensure accountability-

“Ever have the feeling you’re being cheated!”

strongly support vet and senior housing that is affordable for them with parking and gardens

The town has very little land left for development. We need this to be affordable/low income/veteran housing that will keep giving to the community over the years. A quick profit is no longer necessary with the passage of the top tier override. The town should turn the land over to the MHA to develop like the new Broughton Rd. project. the property will stay with the town to a degree if a land use lease is done and benefit the residents for years to come.

Leave it be do nothing with it.

Be respectful of neighbors, I would really love to see the original portion of the School retained. It’s a shame we stopped taking care of our old architecturally, beautiful schools. What school that you’ve seen built in this century has really beautiful marble water fountains?

The Coffin School is iconic to those who have lived in town for a long time, if there is an opportunity for something to be placed on the site to remember it, that would be nice.

No doubt, some parking will be provided. A large proportion of EV charging needs to be available from the start, and all the parking spaces should have conduits to easily enable installation of level 2 EV chargers in the future.

Apply proceeds to the out of control school budget and hold spending accountable instead of an override

Marblehead ranks near the bottom of MA's 351 towns measured by percentage of open space. Further crowding does not help the town and only further strains existing infrastructure. With every additional unit built, the Town should consider _expanding_ the amount of usable open space, by (for example) purchasing lots that are adjacent to existing open space, so that the mix of housing shifts to smaller, more concentrated, and more affordable housing, plus more open space, without significantly expanding the town's total population.

The Town should be very cognizant of how the use of the space impacts infrastructure requirements. Marblehead has very little internal economic activity and is reliant on being a commuter town for Boston—that means car commuters to Boston. Affordable housing for seniors has two practical benefits—seniors generally drive less and seniors moving out of existing homes into senior-designated housing frees up their existing housing for working families (and also allows those properties to be taxed at prevailing property tax rates)

Please retain as many trees as possible and design the housing to be as sustainable as possible. This is an opportunity to help fight climate change and use it as an example of how homeowners can do it. We could hold a competition at the Boston Architectural College for best neighborhood design and have landscaping plans and housing plans done at no cost. Please refer to Serenbe in Georgia for great ideas.Architectural diversity and natural landscaping. Reference Isaacfrench_ on Instagram. We could build a model for other towns- it’s an incredible opportunity if done well!

Networked geothermal, solar panels, space allocated for a small convenience store or market, can a bus route be altered to serve the area better?

Since the town is not financially stable yet, anything to bring recurring revenue should be primary goal

Do NOT build on Coffin or Eveleth sites. Expand and renovate units at Powder House, Farrell Court, Rhodes School, and Barnard Hawks. We need open space NOT more building sites.

Additional survey reports

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