

**ARTICLE 31            ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INDUSTRIAL CORPORATION (EDIC)**  
(majority vote required) as passed

To see if the Town will vote to declare a need for an economic development corporation to be known as the Acton Economic Development and Industrial Corporation and to adopt Chapter 135 of the Acts of 2001, or take any other action relative thereto.

**SUMMARY**

This article asks the Town to accept Chapter 135 of the Acts of 2001, an Act establishing the Acton Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (EDIC). The 2000 Annual Town Meeting voted to submit the EDIC Home Rule Petition to the Massachusetts Legislature. It passed in November 2001. The Town must now vote to accept the legislation in order to establish the EDIC.

In 1990, Acton derived over 23% of its tax revenue from businesses and industry. Since then, the business and industrial sector has grown much less than the residential sector. By 2003, the business and industrial share of tax revenues had slipped below 13% leaving a much heavier tax burden on Acton's residents. Recognizing this trend, the 1998 Master Plan Update recommended that the Town encourage limited business growth while maintaining the quality of life our residents expect. A study of how this goal could be met revealed that an EDIC is perhaps the only tool that is available to a relatively affluent town like Acton. Other alternatives are limited primarily to poorer communities with serious structural problems such as a large low-income population, a declining industrial base, and high unemployment. The primary purpose of the EDIC is to help mitigate the residential tax burden and stem the relative decline of business and industrial tax revenues. The EDIC is the tool, with which the Town can assume a proactive role in encouraging commercial and industrial growth of the type and scale that residents want, consistent with the Master Plan.

The scope and extent of EDIC activities is governed by the EDIC's Economic Development Plan. Following the adoption of this article, the Board of Selectmen will appoint the EDIC Board of Directors who will write the Economic Development Plan with much public participation. This plan must be approved by a 2/3 vote at a future Town Meeting before the EDIC can begin its mission.

The EDIC is legally and financially separate from the Town. Within the scope of the approved Economic Development Plan, the EDIC may acquire land and improvements; develop, redevelop, and rehabilitate land and buildings; make public improvements; and, perhaps most importantly, can access State and Federal economic development assistance. The EDIC is subject to the same zoning rules and development regulations as any private developer. It can incur its own debt, which is not backed by the Town. The Town is insulated from liability should the EDIC default on its debts. At the same time, the Town remains in control. The EDIC can only work within the scope of the Town approved Economic Development Plan. It is governed by a 7 member Board of Directors, whose members are appointed by the Board of Selectmen to 3-year or shorter terms.

Direct inquiries to:     Roland Bartl, AICP, Town Planner - 264.9636  
Selectman assigned:

Selectmen:  
Finance Committee:  
Planning Board:         Recommendation deferred