

**From:** [Daphne Politis](#)  
**To:** [Kristin Alexander](#)  
**Cc:** [Acton 2020 Committee](#); [Jim Purdy](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Revised goals and objectives comments  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 05, 2011 11:45:32 AM

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Jim Snyder -Grant also sent comments in a number of emails. I have copied the comments below.

## GOAL: SUSTAINABILITY

As Acton residents, we recognize that our health and well-being depend on protecting the web of life of which we are a part. Therefore, it is vital that we live and work here in a manner that supports that web and the well-being of people everywhere, including future Actonians.

Objective: To protect the quality and quantity of the water in our watershed.

Objective: To move toward a sustainable material economy in which every part of every manufactured object becomes, at the end of its useful life, part of another sustainable product or process.

Objective: To make the transition to safer and renewable energy sources.

Objective: To reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from residential, commercial, industrial, and municipal uses.

Objective: To protect our trees and forests, especially in support of their capacity for capturing carbon for a long time.

Objective: To move toward patterns of land use and land protection that support broad biodiversity, soil preservation, and healthy local agriculture.

## GOAL: PRESERVE TOWN ASSETS

In the "Preserve and Enhance Town Assets and Resources" goal I would stay with our current language. Adding 'resources' and then saying they are covered in the "sustainability" goal instead doesn't seem like the right use of goal & objectives language.

I am also confused about whether we intend 'Town' here to mean the municipality or the entire town. I think making this about the entire town makes this goal too general - it encompasses too much. Keeping this about municipally-owned assets allow us to keep our focus on this particularly important topic. The non-town-owned stuff is covered in other goals. If we accept that, then we would shorten and change the goal a bit, perhaps as follows:

Preserve and Enhance Town Assets

GOAL: We value our town assets and wish to preserve and enhance them. These include our town-owned open spaces and recreational areas, schools, and municipal properties

What would happen with the objectives if we did this?

1. Objective: Protect Existing and Acquire Additional Open Space  
would stay, at least for town-owned lands. Encouraging private conservation restrictions and chapter 61 lands might belong elsewhere, perhaps in land use changes that support sustainability.
2. Objective: Support Excellence in Schools  
would stay
3. Objective: Improve Commercial Areas and Promote Economic Development  
This one deserves some discussion. Pieces related to these two related objectives emerged in the community feedback, but there was not a rousing "we need to promote economic development" rallying cry. The parts I can see are:
  - a) Restaurants to encourage community gathering.
  - b) Deeper tax base to encourage lower taxes to encourage economic diversity (I think this is a bit of a stretch, but that's just me. I don't think new businesses help taxes all that much in Acton, and I don't think lower taxes are what discourage less-well-off people from living here)
  - c) Enabling more local shopping for essentials in Acton supports some sustainability and community gathering goals.
  - d) There were some specific traffic safety and esthetic improvements in commercial areas that people asked for, that fit in to the Connection goal and the Town Character goal, respectively.

I am tempted by this analysis to remove this as a top-level objective, and instead have specific targeted strategies under some of the other goals & objectives as listed. I think its useful to question the assumption that economic development is a top-level objective, especially as it can compete against the other goals and objectives.

4. Objective: Maintain and Increase Recreational Opportunities

I am not sure that the townspeople want to generically "increase recreational opportunities". I am sure they want to maintain most of the ones we have, but I don't know if that calls for a specific objective of its own. I think we need to look at the parts of this. The town likes open space - does it want to see more open space converted in to soccer fields and baseball fields? I think there are many opposed to that, and a minority in favor of it. Are there kids in Acton who want to participate in organized sports and can't because there are not enough fields in our region? I don't see evidence, but I could be wrong. Again I'd look to the other goals to pick out the specific ideas for implementation that will help, and put them there. For example, to support our young people and our seniors, there may be specific activities that need support. I saw in the "Acton voices" section a mention of things such as Bike trails and Walkable

villages and Swimming Pools that would also support our goals for Connections and Village Centers, and Community Gathering. I also saw that improving the tennis courts was a priority - that would also support diverse age groups, and create chances for community gathering.

5. Objective: Support and Strengthen Neighborhoods

When I read the specific implementation strategies, almost all of them seem to me to be part of 'strengthening connections'. That is, we want good neighborhoods because they foster connections between people. I would move this to the "connections" goal.

6. Objective: Preserve Historic Buildings and Landscapes

I think this belongs as an objective in "Preserve Town Character"

7. Objective: Maintain Town Properties

This would stay.

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You saw my comments on the sustainability goal: I've shared them with the volunteer advisors for sustainability and I'm getting some edits back, so I'll have a revised version tomorrow.

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I think the other goals and objectives seem fine as is. I didn't review the implementation ideas in detail - I think that's for a slightly later part of our process. I do suspect we have too many of them, and we will need to find a way to winnow them down.

I do agree that adding the additional objective "Objective: Provide Additional Opportunities to Gather " in the community gathering goal made sense.

-Jim

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The circle is an inclusive shape, one that implies fairness and invites participation...  
It is the shape of a connected community  
....it is also used to indicate and define "place."

On Jan 5, 2011, at 8:50 AM, Kristin Alexander wrote:

Hi Everyone:

I'm trying to enter into DocuShare (and tonight's meeting packet) all the comments received on the "Acton Revised Goals and Objectives" document. I know some of you have made comments on the document, but I must not have received a copy. So far, I can only find comments on that document from:

Celia  
Roland  
Kristin

Can the rest of you forward me your comments on that document (and any of the chapters – if you have not done so)?

Daphne – if you've received additional comments, feel free to forward them.

Thanks!

Kristin