

“Burning Issues” from the Inventory

1. Housing: Is more housing development desirable? If so, what kind and where?

Effect of new housing (market and affordable) on schools, town facilities and services, and tax rate.

Implications: measures to encourage or discourage certain housing types., preservation of town character issues (including design review)

2. Water Quality: Impact on groundwater from existing and new development, particularly in areas of high soil transmissivity (the “wishbone”)

Implications: potential lot size restrictions; wastewater management, inspection, and regulation; extension of sewer system, potential limit to development ?

3. Land Use/Location of Development: current zoning of developable parcels (large outlying areas and parcels adjacent to existing villages)

Implications: reconsideration/definition of villages and their character; design guidelines; development scenarios with compact and dispersed housing development and/or mixed use development

4. Commercial development: effect on tax base and availability of gathering places and village vitality.

Implications: whether, where, what kind, and how to encourage it

5. Village Character: (see 3 location of development and 4 commercial development)

6. Public Facilities 1: need for new senior and/or community center

Implications: budget impacts, desirability of combined or separate facilities

7. Public Facilities 2: need for new fire station in North Acton

Implications: budget impact, effect on response times, use of newly available space if a new station is built, shared agreements with neighboring town an option?

8. Transportation 1: specific measures to promote walking/bicycling

Implications: sidewalk improvements, off-road path opportunities; on-road bicycle improvements (signage, wider shoulder, bike lanes); priority links/locations

9. Transportation 2: specific measures to promote shared ride use of public transportation to reduce automobile trips

Implications: public acceptability and ridership frequency necessary to support these modes, measure to promote them

10. Transportation 3: need for measures to control traffic speeds

Implications: need focused traffic speed study.

11. Historic Resources: are specific measures needed to conserve them?

Implications: demolition delay bylaw, zoning to limit size of housing; programs to invest in maintenance and rehab. of historic homes/buildings.

12. Open Space: priorities for acquisition; policies toward agriculture, policies/approaches other than acquisition

Implications: consistency with development scenarios, budgetary impact of acquisition.

13. Sustainability: how to define it in terms of carbon footprint, energy use, town character, natural resources, and financial viability of town services.

Implications: programs to encourage home and town-owned facilities energy conservation; also above issues on transportation, open space, and location of development.

14. Schools: in absence of new evidence, no major facility needs anticipated except eventual replacement of the oldest elementary schools and some repairs and improvements to existing facilities.

Tradeoffs:

- More/better facilities/services vs tax rate impact
- Types of new housing vs. school and tax impacts and effects on town character
- More commercial development vs. effects on town character
- Conservation of groundwater quality vs regulation and cost to owners
- Loss of open land vs. more development in and around villages