

Acton 2020 (Blog as of 11:28 AM, 1/26/11)

a comprehensive community plan for Acton, MA

Where do you and where WOULD you like to eat?

Posted on [January 20, 2011](#) by [MWBusse](#)

Actonians love to eat out and love the gathering places that restaurants provide. Many residents have advocated for a better variety of restaurants and more restaurants in certain spots in town.

Where in Acton have you enjoyed eating out? What sort of restaurants would you like to see more of, if any, and why or why not? Where would you like to see restaurants located?

To get your thinking started, here's [a pretty complete list of eating places in Acton.](#)

This entry was posted in [burning](#) and tagged [burning issues](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

← [Are Actonians here to stay?](#)

21 Responses to *Where do you and where WOULD you like to eat?*

-  *Chris Schaffner* says:

[January 20, 2011 at 9:43 PM](#)

We need a Brew Pub in West Acton. Oh, and a train station.

[Reply](#)

-  *Kim* says:

[January 24, 2011 at 10:42 AM](#)

Here here! I totally agree with you, Chris!!

[Reply](#)

2.  *Sue Cudmore* says:

[January 20, 2011 at 10:46 PM](#)

I would love to see an analog to O'Naturals come back. Also, a Boloco or a Chipotle Mexican Grill would be great! Any restaurants sourcing local, healthy, fresh foods would be welcome. (And I 2nd the Brew Pub comment by Chris!)

[Reply](#)

3.  *Heather* says:

[January 21, 2011 at 6:34 AM](#)

I definitely echo Sue and Chris's comments. I am looking forward to seeing what will go into the new spaces in W Acton. Somewhere that had good food, with a relaxed atmosphere and did some local food would be great! Also a local coffee shop that stayed open later on the weekends.

[Reply](#)

4.  *Lissa* says:

[January 21, 2011 at 6:56 AM](#)

Please do not allow additional fast food restaurants into Acton! When I eat out I go to Concord. Why? Because they have a better selection of small business establishments that support variety and nutrition. I am a strong advocate of no fast-food and no drive-thrus. Locally-owned bistro-style food would be well-appreciated in both West and South Acton. This style of dining would encourage foot traffic and would not take away from the small-town charm of both areas.

[Reply](#)

5.  *Chris Schaffner* says:

[January 21, 2011 at 8:09 AM](#)

I'd prefer not to see chains, even if they are good ones like Chipotle. Concord has limits on "formula businesses" in their zoning. We should have the same.

I think we're going about this the wrong way. If West Acton had sewers and a train stop, it would have restaurants.

[Reply](#)



6. *Chris Schaffner* says:

[January 21, 2011 at 8:22 AM](#)

Of the 54 "restaurants" listed on Jim's link, 10 are Pizza, 13 are grocery/convenience/liquor stores, and 5 are Dunkin Donuts. Is that the average Actonian's diet – Donuts, Pizza and Beer?

[Reply](#)



7. *Debra Simes* says:

[January 21, 2011 at 9:59 AM](#)

I'll echo the focus on independent restaurants (that said, I'd be thrilled to have a better-managed O'Naturals back in town); and a focus on fresh, whole foods; and local/regional sourcing as much as possible. I'll add: businesses with an environmental consciousness re: food waste; use of one-time materials, esp. for takeout (Rick and Paula of Savoury Lane have been terrific on this front; I trust the new owner will be, as well; how about a "bring your own" discount for those who bring their own containers?); water conservation; etc.

Would also LOVE an independent coffee/bistro place that would stay open a bit later on weekends. Of course, that means we have to support that or it's not feasible.

We use few of the restaurants in town b/c of the poor quality. I dread more chains, pizza/pasta, fast-food, and/or crummy "ethnic" food restaurants.

SO glad you've established this means of weighing in; thanks!

[Reply](#)



8. *Dean says:*

[January 21, 2011 at 2:43 PM](#)

I agree with Chris about needing a brew pub in West Acton! We dine quite a bit at Not Your Average Joe's. Another place with that kind of food and atmosphere and price point would be great. I have no prejudice against chains, and would really like to get a Panera and a Bertucci's, both of which we visit frequently in Chelmsford

[Reply](#)



9. *Sally Thompson says:*

[January 21, 2011 at 4:16 PM](#)

I agree with the observation of Chris that of the listed food establishments, 10 are Pizza, 13 are grocery/convenience/liquor stores, and 5 are Dunkin Donuts. This is a regrettable situation.

I agree with Debra's suggestions about environmental consciousness and waste reduction.

I would like a Viet Nameese restaurant to open in town. And I would really like a vegetarian restaurant with fresh and organic foods to open here.

Like Debra, we usually eat at home.

[Reply](#)

10.  *Elizabeth Hickey* says:

[January 21, 2011 at 5:32 PM](#)

I would not like to see any chain restaurants, no matter how good. I can go to Chelmsford or Westford for that. We love the Cast Iron Kitchen in Maynard (fun, innovative menu, good drinks). Vincenzo's in West Concord is a local chain with a colorful, cafe feel we like. Ichabod's was delicious and innovative, too. O'Natural's for a quick lunch. Local food made by local people.

[Reply](#)

11.  *Sudha* says:

[January 21, 2011 at 10:09 PM](#)

This is a great topic..

I agree with Chris' observation of an overdose of Pizza/fast food chains.

All the same, I am really thrilled to see Acton has great chains like Trader Joe's, Not your Average Joe's and Idylwilde farms.

It would be nice to have some family-friendly healthy chain restaurants like Olive Garden, Romano's Macaroni Grill, Panera Bread etc. This will cater to a wide variety of palates without getting too specific.

[Reply](#)

12.  *Greg Hutchins* says:

[January 22, 2011 at 4:35 AM](#)

I rarely eat out and avoid fast food at all costs. Love well prepared Asian cuisines, especially Indian. I have eaten at the Monsoon in Maynard, though not the one in Acton,

and it was excellent. Also fond of BBQ. The point of eating out is to get something I can't or don't make at home. A brew pub is a terrific idea even though I hardly ever drink.

West Acton will need to address its waste water issues before it can host restaurants.

[Reply](#)

13.  *Greg* says:

[January 22, 2011 at 1:51 PM](#)

I find it interesting that so many folks commenting here are so into controlling other folks eating habits. I know that they “know best” what people should and shouldn't eat. Yes Chris, we should pass ordinances “to control” what is allowed. The government knows best. It has done such a wonderful job with everything it does in our interest ! The market decides what “kind” of restaurants will succeed. Just look at the ones that have failed.....the kind you are advocating. Maybe they should also be “green restaurants” and they should be “sustainable” as well, serving a “diverse” clientele.

[Reply](#)

▪  *admin* says:

[January 22, 2011 at 2:53 PM](#)

Hi Greg: I'm letting this comment be posted, but please watch the tone. We need a civil dialog, and this is on the edge.

[Reply](#)

▪  *Chris Schaffner* says:

[January 22, 2011 at 3:10 PM](#)

I see no problem protecting local business at the expense of chains. Strong local businesses keep their profits in the community, which is better for all of us.

As a business owner, I have chosen to locate my business in West Concord, in part because of the thriving village center created by so many unique locally owned establishments – not just restaurants, but also businesses like the 5&10. This wouldn't happen without enlightened planning and zoning, including their restrictions on formula businesses. I think the people of Concord have made wise decisions, and the people of Acton should learn from that.

Government has a role to play. Personally I'm happy we have ordinances to "control" things like driving on the correct side of the road – anarchy is not desirable. We need to remember that Government is not "them", it's "us". A community deciding, in a democratic process, how to govern itself, is the American Way.

[Reply](#)



▪ *Greg Hutchins says:*

[January 23, 2011 at 3:32 AM](#)

It seems to me that this Greg wants a different forum. This isn't the place for those with an ideological axe to grind.

[Reply](#)



14. *Celia says:*

[January 22, 2011 at 6:44 PM](#)

I echo the desire for a brew pub in West Acton because I live in West Acton and would love a neighborhood place to unwind on a Friday night that I could walk to. The closest thing we had to this used to be Daniela's next to Ace Hardware which was convenient because it was close to the train station and we could go there on a whim after my husband picked me up at the train station (so, several times/month). It wasn't that I loved the food per se, but it had the right mix of being intimate scale, crowded in a good way, kind of funky, great margaritas, place you could get together with friends OR bring your family, relatively inexpensive, and good for a vegetarian. When they moved to North Acton, we searched for a replacement Friday night place to relax, so far in vain. (Ichabod's, pre-renovation, came the closest but a bit more expensive and formal and

quiet). Other restaurants we like, but go to less frequently, are mostly in Maynard. I prefer restaurants clustered on a street rather than singly in a strip mall: Monsoon, Siam Village, Little Pusan, Cast Iron Kitchen.

[Reply](#)

15.  *Fred says:*

[January 24, 2011 at 9:54 AM](#)

As one who works in Town but does not live in Town, my focus is more on the lunch options rather than dinner. Someone mentioned a Panera Bread Store, I think that would be a great restaurant for Acton. I have to admit though, from a lunch perspective, I wish Pizza Hut and Burger King were still in Town. I'd also like to see a Taco Bell nearby.

[Reply](#)

16.  *Bettina Abe says:*

[January 24, 2011 at 10:08 AM](#)

I miss having Daniela's Mexican restaurant at its old location in South Acton! It was a good place to eat, nice bar to hang out at, and really good take-out that's not too expensive. But they moved soooo far away from South Acton 😞

[Reply](#)

17.  *Pete says:*

[January 24, 2011 at 12:09 PM](#)

As a younger couple who recently moved to Acton from Newton, its shockingly hard to find a place to grab dinner or a drink at night. Even something like Main Streets Cafe in Concord would be a huge addition to the town.[Reply](#)

Are Actonians here to stay?

Posted on [January 19, 2011](#) by [MWBusse](#)

A well-rounded, robust town consists of residents not only from many different ethnicities and socio-economic strata, but also from a whole range of age groups. Moreover, having residents stay in Acton for the long haul fosters healthier social cohesion and connections.

In addition to contributing to a more well-rounded community, having more of Acton's households consist of adults without school-age kids helps keep classroom sizes down, and tends to help the overall tax burden, since it costs more to educate a family of children in Acton than the typical household pays in taxes. The [latest school enrollment projections](#) support the notion that this is starting to happen in Acton: there are more older households, and school enrollments have just started going down after many years of going up.

However, some residents think that these projections don't capture a certain phenomenon they have observed; namely, that because our schools have such an excellent reputation, people move here so their children can attend the schools and then leave after those children graduate from high school, making way for more families with children. Has this been your impression? Is this what you are planning for your family? **If so, what are some ideas the town can implement to encourage residents (and/or yourself!) to stay in town after their children finish school?**

Other residents express the desire to stay in town well into retirement and observe many of their friends doing so. Is this your impression? Are you planning on staying in Acton? **If so, what are the elements in town that exist now that encourage residents to stay? What could the town do to encourage more people to stay?**

Finally, Acton values all types of residents, including its many families with children. **How can the town best support families with children?**

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← [Where are YOU in Acton's water cycle?](#)

[Where do you and where WOULD you like to eat?](#) →

8 Responses to *Are Actonians here to stay?*

1.  *Heather* says:

[January 21, 2011 at 6:45 AM](#)

My son's kindergarten class added 3 students in the first weeks of school and of the 19 that started in September, 2 had moved into town in the summer so their kids could start school in Acton. To me, this still says people are moving to Acton for the schools. To keep me in Acton as I get older, I would like to see more public transportation to the train and local stores so that I know I will continue to be able to get around if I can no longer drive or don't want to drive. And keep up those sidewalks.

[Reply](#)

2.  *Debra Simes* says:

[January 21, 2011 at 10:06 AM](#)

Our expectation is to stay in town until the bitter end! Probably only changed financial or health circumstances, or relocation of adult children to a distant elsewhere, could change this.

For us, being here for the long haul is best supported by public transportation options, manageable COL (cost of living), and vibrant community.

[Reply](#)

3.  *Dean* says:

[January 21, 2011 at 2:39 PM](#)

My family has been here for many generations, and we plan on staying as long as possible. The major adverse factor is the increasing property tax burden, especially for

those of us who no longer have kids in school. At some point you realize that through the taxes the long term residents have paid for thier own kid's education several times over. There needs to be some reasonable limits to property taxes for folks who are now using very few services.

[Reply](#)



4. *Roswitha Pinto* says:

[January 21, 2011 at 6:45 PM](#)

I agree with Dean. Having lived in this home of mine for 30 years, and having had only one child go through only 5 years of school here, I think I have done more than my share of supporting public education. I have friends in a New York State town where senior citizens get a considerable break from school taxes (which are treated separately from town taxes). At the same time, they seem to get a lot more town services including trash removal from their curb. That is why they are able and willing to stay there.

I have always felt it would be wise if a town spent most of its collected tax money in ways that benefit most of the residents, if not all, rather than spending large sums on line items that benefit few. If I am going to continue to pay full fare, I would like to see the town offer more of the kind of services that I can actually use at my stage in life (60's).

My pet peeve at this time of year is the big berm left behind by each pass of a Town snow plough. As everyone knows, these berms are extremely hard to remove because they pack down so quickly. Moreover, when the terrain is such that the street leads up-hill on the right side at the end of a driveway (where one is supposed to place the extra snow to be in line with the plough movement), it is nearly impossible to push or shovel it up there, especially after successive snow falls when the previously accumulated mixture is already several feet high. The only thing I can do is push it back out into the street, which is against the rules. Recently, when I called the Town with my dilemma, a nice lady came and removed it with a smaller plough. But she emphasized that this was strictly a volunteer effort and not available on a routine basis. I told her about my medical condition, and she was sympathetic (while probably also noticing that I am not living in a Mac-mansion) but reiterated that I would need approval from the Council on Aging for her to come again! It puzzles me that OWNERS OF OLDER PROPERTIES (Powers Gallery, Exchange Hall) can obtain funds to fix up their private property, but

OLDER OWNERS OF PROPERTIES cannot obtain help getting in and out of their residences in winter weather. I have to say, there is something wrong with that picture.

Suggestions:

- 1) Exempt seniors from the CPA tax, if nothing else. As a group they have too few years left to enjoy the benefits of Community Preservation.
- 2) Homes where all the owners / residents are over 65 might be able to be put on a Highway Dept. list of addresses to be revisited later in the day by another snow removal vehicle to handle the berms left by the prior ones.

Sorry this comment got to be so long, but it was good to get off my chest what has been sitting on it for quite a while. Thank you, Jim, for providing the opportunity. I'll be interested if anyone else pipes up in similar fashion. I just hope there are enough bloggers among the older folks in town, so they, too, can make themselves heard in terms of what they would require for a 'comfort zone'.

[Reply](#)

5.  *Greg Hutchins* says:

[January 22, 2011 at 5:14 AM](#)

I have owned and lived in a condo in S. Acton since 1989. I chose Acton because I expected a condo here to hold its value better than one in most other towns in which I could afford to buy. Obviously a lot of that expectation had to do with the school system. I bought it not expecting to be here much more than 5 years but its value halved. Now I am retired and cannot afford to "trade up", at least nowhere in the vicinity. Having no children of my own I have long been subsidizing the education of other people's kids, but that's fine with me. An educated, knowledgeable, and informed electorate is a prerequisite for a functioning democracy.

Public transportation will ultimately be a necessity for me to be able to stay as health issues will inevitably render me unable to drive. Sidewalks will also be sorely needed.

I believe Acton offers all the “senior tax breaks” the state allows. If I’m wrong, then the town should complete the set. Outreach to older residents to ensure that all are aware of the options available to them would help.

An expanded array of offerings from the Council on Aging – in substantially expanded quarters – will also be vital to ensure the continued viability of Acton as home for older residents.

[Reply](#)



6. *Peter Ashton says:*

[January 22, 2011 at 12:56 PM](#)

The town’s demographics have shifted over the last 10-15 years, but the total population has grown very little in the last ten years. According to data published by the town, in 2000 we had 20,300 residents and today we are at 21,665 – an annual growth rate of less than 0.65% per year – very small. The major change has been a significant shift in the age of our population and well as its ethnicity. Again, according to data published by the town, Acton’s population of children between the ages of 0-19 has fallen 6.6% between 2001 and 2010 whereas our population aged 60 and over has increased 34% or roughly 3.3% per year! Too much focus appears to be on the perceived growth in school age population which while a major issue in the 1990s is no longer as big an issue. The enrollment projections bear this out. In fact it is still important that the town support a strong public education system in Acton because a significantly higher proportion of Acton residents send their children to Acton public schools (due to its high quality) and because all citizens in the town benefit from a strong school system because as various studies have shown it has a direct, positive impact on our property values. Attempts to discourage families from moving into town would serve to depress property values. The other demographic trend of course is a shift in ethnicity with growing Asian and eastern European populations in town. Attention should be focused on providing more services to these segments of the population as the author states, we should encourage greater diversity, in terms of different age groups, different ethnic groups and different socio-economic strata.

We should also focus on providing more services and benefits to the empty-nesters and seniors in town. This includes more in the way of property tax relief for those seniors who need help (this issue is currently being worked on by STAC and the Selectmen, although we do provide all of what the state allows), and to resume the effort to build a new senior center in town. The current senior center is out of date and too small to serve our growing senior population. Our over 60 population is expected to continue grow significantly (thus countering the perception that people move into town for the schools and then immediately leave once their kids graduate from high school), and the town should plan now to provide more services and benefits to those citizens in that age bracket.

[Reply](#)



▪ *Ann Sussman says:*

[January 23, 2011 at 4:14 AM](#)

Thank you for your great post Peter!

When looked at more regionally Acton's Demographics and school size give pause, I think. It's true Actonites are aging – but I think that's happening in neighboring towns like Concord or Lexington too.

Acton, as you probably know, has a CITY-sized high school – without a city tax roll to support it. I think this puts the town in a unique and really difficult place. In fact, on the face of it, it would seem to me – and I'm no expert like some here – the town's in a strategically weak position, with residential property values, school standing, student learning – all at risk in the next decade.

I was amazed to learn recently that AB is larger than high schools in many cities. AB's 2,000 students make it larger than Cambridge's only High School – Cambridge Rindge + Latin, (1600 kids) larger than Brookline's high, (1700 kids) and even larger than Newton North (1700 kids). AB's larger than all of the high schools in all towns we touch! (Concord's 1200 kids)

Unfortunately, even with Acton's tax rate now one of the highest in the state – at 18.08 per thousand – to help pay for it, AB today really seems at a growing disadvantage. AB

has much less money to hire teachers and make new facilities than districts mentioned, as well as many towns, including ones like Bedford or Wayland not normally considered wealthy. This is the case even though today the elementary schools + AB consume 83% of all Town Taxes collected. (debt servicing included)

AB does really well with what it has (some \$12,000 per student) And I'm told it's had less money than most for awhile. But over time, my hunch is it will be really, really hard for it to compete; even if the Town's able to pass overrides (less likely post housing bubble?) Fact is today Cambridge can spend \$24,000 per high school student; Brookline \$17,000 ; Bedford, \$16,000; Weston, \$18,000. Many of these high schools have 25% to 30% more teachers now than AB – and consequently smaller class size – frequently considered a marker of quality education.

To sum up – People deciding to stay put I guess was the heading on this post! I think Acton is in an uncertain place, at a 'tipping point' of sorts; its real estate values are wobbly post 2008 (check zillow.com); its tax rate primed to keep inching up; its build out and overall population target unknown (as far as I can figure) – which adds to citizen confusion on Town direction.

I really don't know if people will stay now. Curiously, here's what a sales manager at the Trader Joe mall volunteered, on Thursday. I can't imagine she'd seen this blog. She told me she grew up in Concord and lives in Stow. And then she added, Acton changed, "it's now a transient town."

Ann

[Reply](#)



7. *Greg says:*

[January 22, 2011 at 2:05 PM](#)

Great topic. I too share the concern of our ability to remain in our Town where we raised our children these 26 years. When we moved here, our taxes first year, \$2,800; last bill, nearly \$10,000 . We want to stay here in retirement. I fully realize that the school system is the main attraction and reason for the relative stability of property values and

the swing in the ethnicity of our Town. I also believe that the cost of our quality educational system here in Acton has always been a “pay it forward” type responsibility. In Waltham, they allow property tax relief to folks over 65, who remain in their homes, through a tax credit, not a deferral.[Reply](#)

Where are YOU in Acton’s water cycle?

Posted on [January 19, 2011](#) by [Jim Snyder-Grant](#)

Acton residents get most of their water from local public and some private wells; Acton residents dispose of most of their waste water in their ground, in septic systems. This is in contrast to most other surrounding towns, where the water comes from far away – often from the Quabbin Reservoir– and goes far away – often via sewers to treatment plants. (Acton used to be the most populous town in the state without any sewers, and now our sewer system serves just 10% of the town’s households).

So we have both the risks and the responsibilities of cycling water within our town. A lot of water from our septic systems eventually finds its way in to our underground aquifers, and then some of that gets pumped back up to our water tanks for distribution to town homes and businesses.

This gives us control – remember we had water when the Quabbin pipes broke in 2010 – but it also makes us vulnerable: we had mandatory lawn watering bans in 2010 when many of the neighboring towns did not.

Do you know what stream is closest to where you live? Do you know where the water goes from where you live when you flush? Do you know which of the big public water tanks are near your house? Do you know where the nearest Acton public water pumps are? Are you in a part of town that has sewers or septic systems, and do you live in a part of town that has waste water issues that can’t be entirely dealt with by septic systems?

(And then there’s the whole thing about stormwater – a burning issue for a later blog post)

When our ongoing development starts risking outgrowing our ability to supply water, what should we do?

Some clues:

- The [Acton Stream Teams](#) website, which includes a [map of streams](#)
- The [Acton Water District](#) also has a good [map of wells and tanks](#).
- The [Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan, phases I and II](#), has all this and more, but it's a bit overwhelming at first (and at second). [Phase II Volume 1](#) has a cool map at figure 1-2 showing all the Maximum Needs Areas.
- Or you can phone a friend: the volunteers at the [Water Resources Advisory Committee](#) are wrestling with all of this right now.

This entry was posted in [burning](#) and tagged [burning issues](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

← Where and how should we gather?

Are Actonians here to stay? →

4 Responses to *Where are YOU in Acton's water cycle?*

1.  [Matt](#) says:

[January 21, 2011 at 12:38 AM](#)

A couple points of clarification as folks think about water issues and respond to this post. A number of the properties along Great Road are supplied water by the Town of Concord, this represents approximately 75 accounts including residential and commercial properties. This highlights our interdependencies with neighboring communities for water resource management. Many of our direct neighbors have similar water cycles as Acton. Only when you move east of Concord and near Lowell do you start to have a more artificial water cycle that includes piping water in and out of the community at large volumes. As for the status of outdoor water use bans, Acton was not alone in this state of water supply emergency. Most of Massachusetts was REQUIRED to implement non-essential water use restrictions, we were ahead of the curve but certainly not alone. It should be noted that state water use policy discourages outdoor summer water use and this issue will be less of a local resource management tool and more of a regulatory compliance tool moving into the future. I thank Jim and Acton 2020 for addressing water concerns in the community and ask any interested residents to contact

me directly to discuss water management in Acton. Stop by the Water District at 693 Mass Ave, call 978-263-9107, or email me at matt@actonwater.com.

[Reply](#)



2. [Debra Simes](#) says:

[January 21, 2011 at 11:07 AM](#)

I really value our relative water “independence,” and would like to keep sewerage to whatever is a sane minimum. Given that I’m not a water techie, my lay thoughts are that the West and South Acton village centers seem to me to be sensible candidates for some degree of sewerage (to support vibrant community/business centers); my impression is that the EAV district doesn’t necessarily need sewerage. For areas in which geography and current buildout are problematic for septic systems, I’d encourage us to look at pocket treatment options, if they’re doable, before jumping immediately to sewerage.

And on the bigger question: yes, I think we need to restrict development vis a vis water issues sooner rather than later. Restriction/control doesn’t necessarily mean the end of development innovation; redevelopment is an underexplored option, it seems to me.

[Reply](#)



3. [Greg Hutchins](#) says:

[January 22, 2011 at 5:38 AM](#)

The absence of comprehensive waste water management in the 90% of town without sewerage is a severely limiting factor in the potential development of a commercial tax base. Commercial development at some level would help offset the property tax burden on Acton homeowners on both the revenue and expenditure sides. I am at a loss to understand the passion shown by many residents in their disdain for sewers and apparent love of septic systems. I consider myself very fortunate to be in the 10% of town that is on the Fort Pond Brook sewer system.

[Reply](#)

4.



Greg says:

[January 22, 2011 at 2:26 PM](#)

Another great topic. One writer was correct in noting that economic development in town is somewhat limited due to our lack of sewerage disposal capabilities. This is especially true in limiting restaurants. I would like to see more use of small treatment plants in our larger subdivisions. The technology has evolved quite a lot in 20 years. We have a number of them in use now in large residential and commercial developments (Acorn Park and Nagog Woods for examples). If there were a way to subsidize the retrofit of some of our older larger subdivisions (use of nearby Town conservation land for plant and leach fields) and require them to be used in new developments (of whatever size makes economic sense for the developer), we could address the disposal problem over a period of time in a manner that does not place an enormous burden on the property owners. This would also recycle the water into the aquifers.

[Reply](#)

Where and how should we gather?

Posted on [January 18, 2011](#) by [Jim Snyder-Grant](#)

We Actonians like each other! One of the goals identified in Phase I was to support more community gatherings: times and places where Actonians meet with each other to learn or socialize or do other entertaining and meaningful things together.

After reviewing [the October 20, 2010 feedback sessions](#) we discovered we wanted to learn more about what this means.

So...

Tell us about some of the times you've enjoyed with many other Actonians. Would you like to do more of that? How could Acton encourage more community gatherings? What would be the ideal setting for more community gatherings?

This entry was posted in [burning](#) and tagged [burning issues](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

← “Burning issues” need your input!

Where are YOU in Acton’s water cycle? →

2 Responses to *Where and how should we gather?*

1.  *Lissa* says:

[January 21, 2011 at 7:04 AM](#)

South Acton needs a boost! The problem to me is too much traffic on the Exchange Hall Corner. Now, of course, we most likely can’t lessen the traffic, but.... Somehow that corner needs to encourage more walking and a separate town center that encourages socializing. Right now, there is nothing that would encourage one to walk to this area on a weekend. Incorporating a small-town center near the train station, but away from the busy intersection would be great. A separate walking path away from the street — if it ran all the way down the river (off river street and school) to the Exchange Hall. There’s a great community in South Acton — we just need a place to socialize and enjoy our section of the town together!

[Reply](#)

2.  *Debra Simes* says:

[January 22, 2011 at 11:18 AM](#)

The addition of a couple of bistro/coffee places will be a good start. (I miss being able to do the annual holiday carol singing thing that David and I organized for a few years at the Continental Cafe!)

So many larger gatherings in town revolve around kids/schools, which is great, but leaves out a mess of the population. How about using a few of our (Acton’s) claimed nights at Exchange Hall for informal community gatherings with music, dancing, conversation, games, light potluck foods? Volunteer organizing could make this happen.

I’ll advocate here, once again, for the creation of a Community Center in a central location (one that could easily be served by our Minutevan and is walkable from the

central schools campus). I imagine a multi-use, multi-age facility with spaces for recreation, classes, workshops, small meetings, kitchen, large meeting/function/dining, performance (and many more ideas I won't iterate here.) How about the Towne Building if the current plan comes to nought (less expensive)? Or siting it on a portion of the current, awful McDonald's-cum-KMart-asphalt blight at Kelley's Corner (expensive, I know)? Or where the current central fire house is, should we ever abandon it? How do we pay for such a thing? It helps, obviously, to site it on land the Town already owns. (Or to find a wealthy Patron!) Pull together all stakeholders as potential funders (Town, residents, local businesses, nonprofits, state, CPA Rec funds). Recognize that it's a long-term project.

Full disclosure: I'm on the board of the Acton-Boxborough Farmers Market. That said, the ABFM has become a great seasonal, informal gathering spot! Remember, too, that when the Morrison vision is realized, it may represent another community gathering space.

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