

Acton 2020

BURNING ISSUES: Highlight Sheets

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Key Points to Consider

- In 2010, on average, 11,248 people were employed in Acton. (Jobs in Acton held by Acton residents and residents of other cities and towns.)
- There were 784 establishments in Acton in 2009 (2010 data is not yet available.)
- Acton is an important employment center in its nine town sub-region. Concord and Westford are the other important employment centers.
- Acton is expected to remain an important sub-regional employment center.
- Major categories of employment in Acton are retail trade, public administration including public schools, health care and social assistance, computer systems design and related services, education services (not including public schools), and eating and drinking establishments.
- Health care and social assistance and computer systems design and related services are the fastest growing categories of employment (147% and 112% respectively, between 2001 and 2009).
- The average weekly wage in Acton establishments was \$938 in 2009.
- Average weekly wages ranged from \$226 (used merchandise stores) to \$2,346 (scientific research and development services).
- The average number of employees per establishment in 2009 was 12.
- There are about 500 home based businesses in Acton.
- In September, 2010 Acton had a labor force of 11,757 (Acton residents who hold jobs anywhere.)
- In September, 2010 5.6% of Acton's labor force was unemployed (compared to a statewide figure of 8.0%)
- Most of Acton's commercial development is located along its numbered highways (Routes 2, 2A and 27) and in village centers.
- The value of retail sales in 2007 in Acton was \$644,864,000.
- Motor vehicle and parts dealers and food and beverage stores accounted for 58% of all retail sales in 2002 and 64% in 2007.

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- Acton collects 12.9% of its property taxes from commercial and industrial property.
- Acton is a town of small businesses, measured by employees per business
- The largest number of Acton residents are in the high wage/high education categories of management, computer/mathematical, educational/training/library, sales related and office/administrative support
- In a survey¹ conducted in 2008, more than half (57%) of Acton residents reported doing more than half of their shopping outside of Acton
- For the last eight years, Acton has had the highest residential tax rate of all towns around it, except for Stow which had a higher rate from 2003 to 2005.



West Acton

Village



125 Nagog Park Office Building

¹ Phase I – explain....>>>>

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Table 2.9: Amount and Percentages of Property Tax Revenues Raised from Commercial, Industrial and Personal Property in Acton and Surrounding Towns in 2010

Town	Commercial	%	Industrial	%	Personal Property	%
Acton	5,497,569	8.6	1,675,574	2.6	1,110,816	1.7
Boxborough	1,341,843	8.4	2,286,998	14.4	326,253	2.1
Carlisle	144,139	0.7	19,309	0.1	193,075	1
Concord	5,100,090	7.8	406,458	0.6	669,985	1
Littleton	1,796,882	7.6	4,259,388	17.9	750,419	3.2
Maynard	1,780,763	7.9	2,158,385	9.6	751,915	3.4
Stow	919,565	4.7	417,504	2.2	364,708	1.9
Sudbury	3,158,019	4.8	1,294,359	2	1,264,922	1.9
Westford	3,297,328	5.9	3,618,276	6.5	1,072,015	1.9

Opportunities and Challenges posed by Existing Conditions

Acton has a strong and diverse economic mix of activities that provides a base for further growth. While further strengthening its role as a sub-regional employment center, Acton can improve its visual character by better design in new and redeveloped commercial and industrial properties.

- Floor-area ratios in industrial areas and the villages can be increased to obtain greater density and better utilization of the land.
- It is possible to seek home rule authority to establish a differential property tax policy in order to encourage and retain start-up ventures, micro-business incubators and micro-business cooperatives in Acton.
- A graduated commercial property tax increase, starting from a lower base, would make Acton desirable for start-up companies and entrepreneurs by reducing their operating costs for three to five years.
- Economic development and housing affordability are mutually dependent public policy issues.
- Commercial development can be focused on creating more local opportunities to shop for goods and obtain services, and publicizing the shopping opportunities that already exist.
- Some of the existing strip commercial development is unsightly but presents opportunities to redesign and redevelop it.