



Acton 2020

Community Comprehensive Plan

“Burning Issues” Forum
Housing in Acton:
Where, How Much, What Kind, For Whom?
March 12, 2011





This Afternoon

- Welcome, Information, and Presentation
- Discussion of Hypothetical Scenario – 2:30 to 3:30
- Small Group Discussions – 3:30 to 4:15
- Reconvene to Compare Notes – 4:15 to 4:30





The Planning Process





Acton 2020 Comprehensive Plan

- Phase 1 Outreach
- Goals and Objectives
- Inventory
- **Burning Issues**
- Recommended Actions
- Implementation Strategy
- Final Acton 2020 Plan





Phase I Outreach

- Phase I in 2008 developed Emerging Vision and Goals
- Input from:
 - people who consider the schools one of Acton's most important assets.
 - residents concerned about the high cost of living.
 - people for whom sustainable development is a major concern.





Final Goals

1. Preserve Town Character
2. Ensure Environmental Sustainability
3. Improve Connections
4. Provide More Opportunities for Community Gathering and Recreation
5. Support Inclusion and Diversity
6. Preserve and Enhance Town-Owned Assets
7. Maintain and Improve Financial Well-being of the Town





Vision: Housing

Imagine an Acton:

- where new residents continue to be attracted to: the **excellent schools**; as well as welcoming, safe and **lively neighborhoods**
- that **welcomes all its residents** – of all ages, socio-economic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds – by providing a variety of housing choices





Housing Highlights





Aspects of Housing

- Demographics
- Existing Housing Stock
- Housing Market
- Affordability





Population Growth

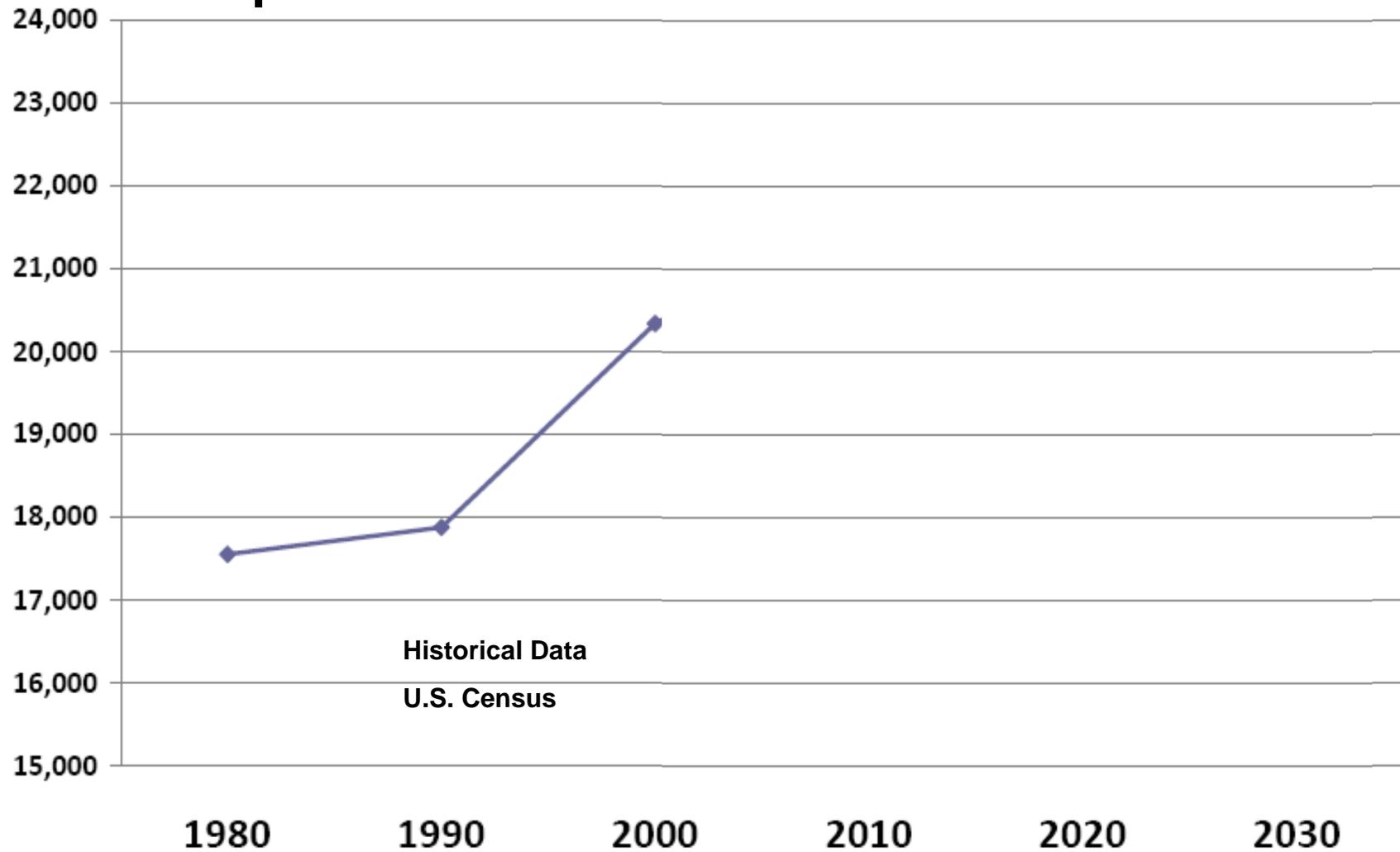
- Population growth has slowed in recent years.
- Expect market for 500 units by 2020, 400 more by 2030.





Demographics

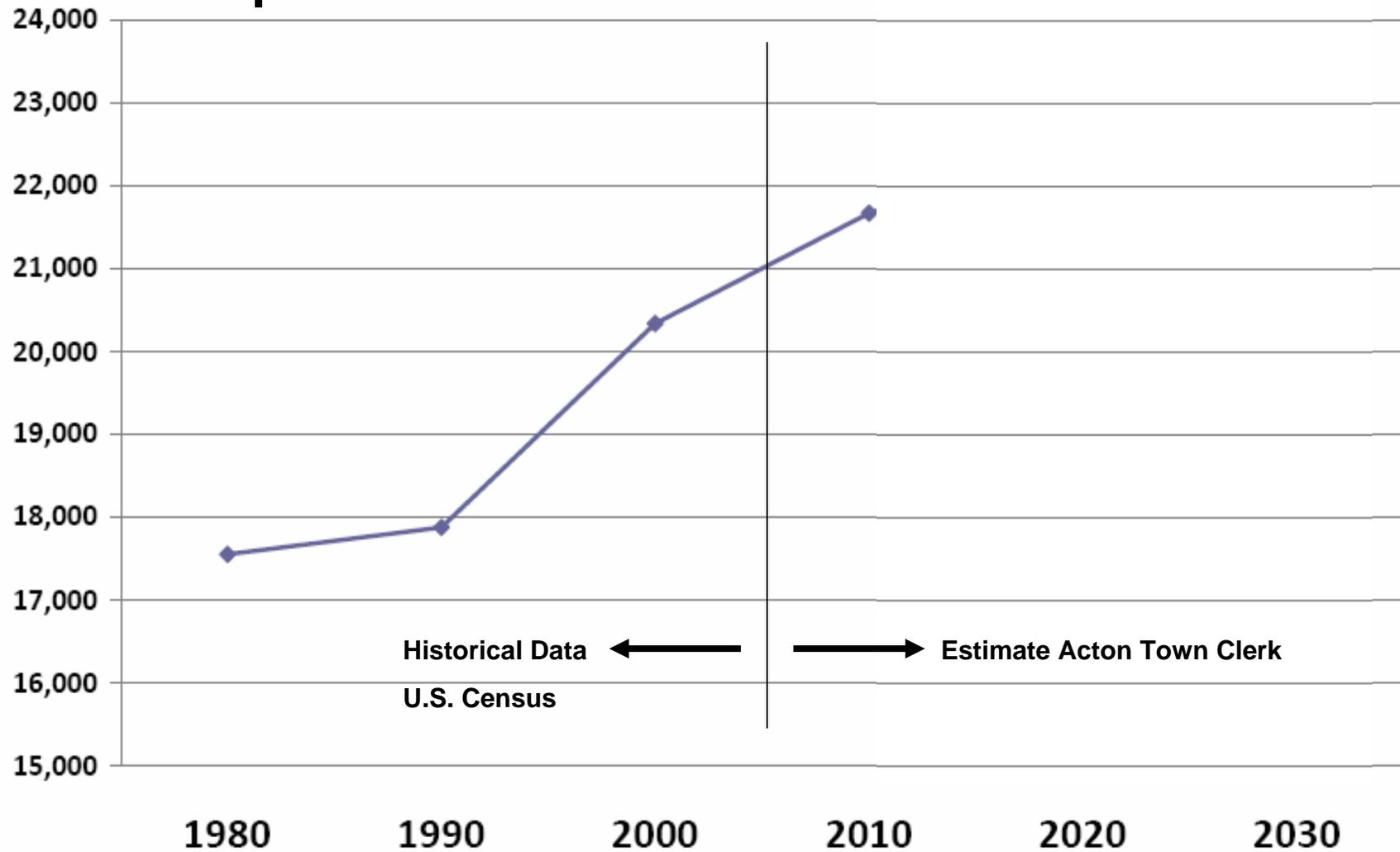
Population Growth to 1980 to 2000





Demographics

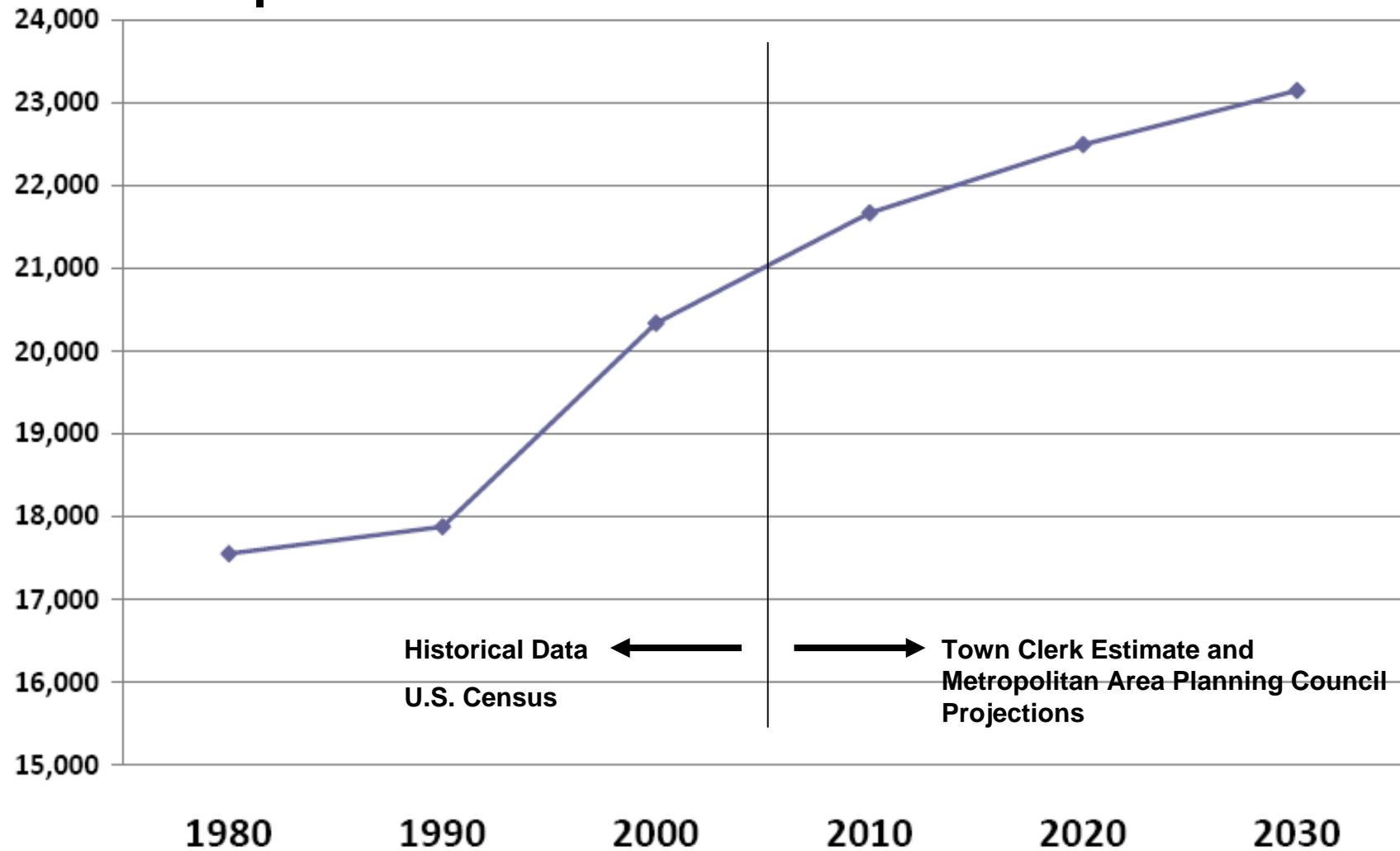
Population Growth to 2010





Demographics

Population Growth to 2030





Growth in Households

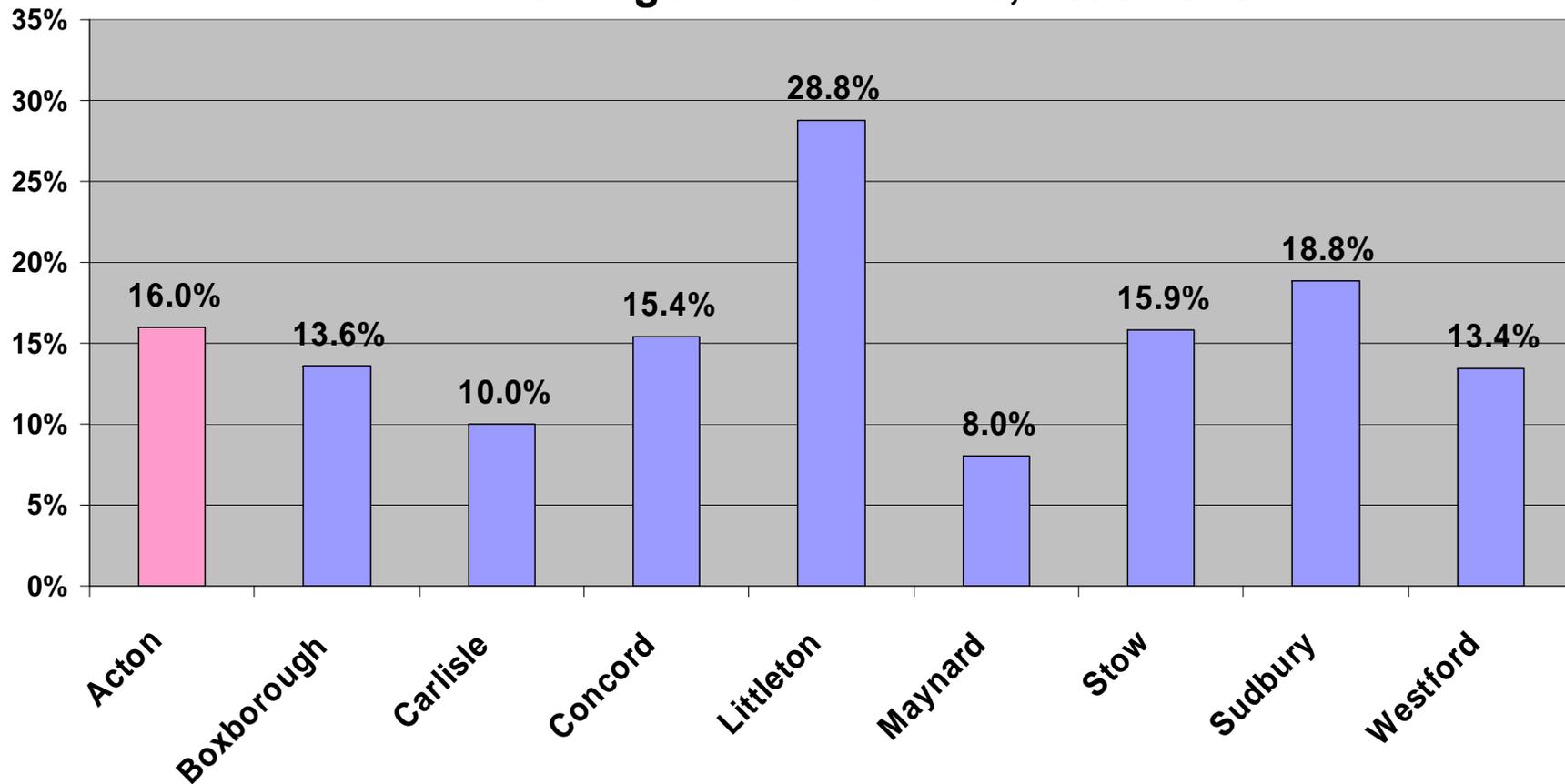
- Household size declined from 2.71 in 2000 to 2.50 in 2010
- Consequently, households (and the housing they live in) grew more than population.
 - Household growth 2000-2010 = 16%
 - Population growth 2000-2010 = 7%





Household Growth Rates

Percent Change in Households, 2000-2010

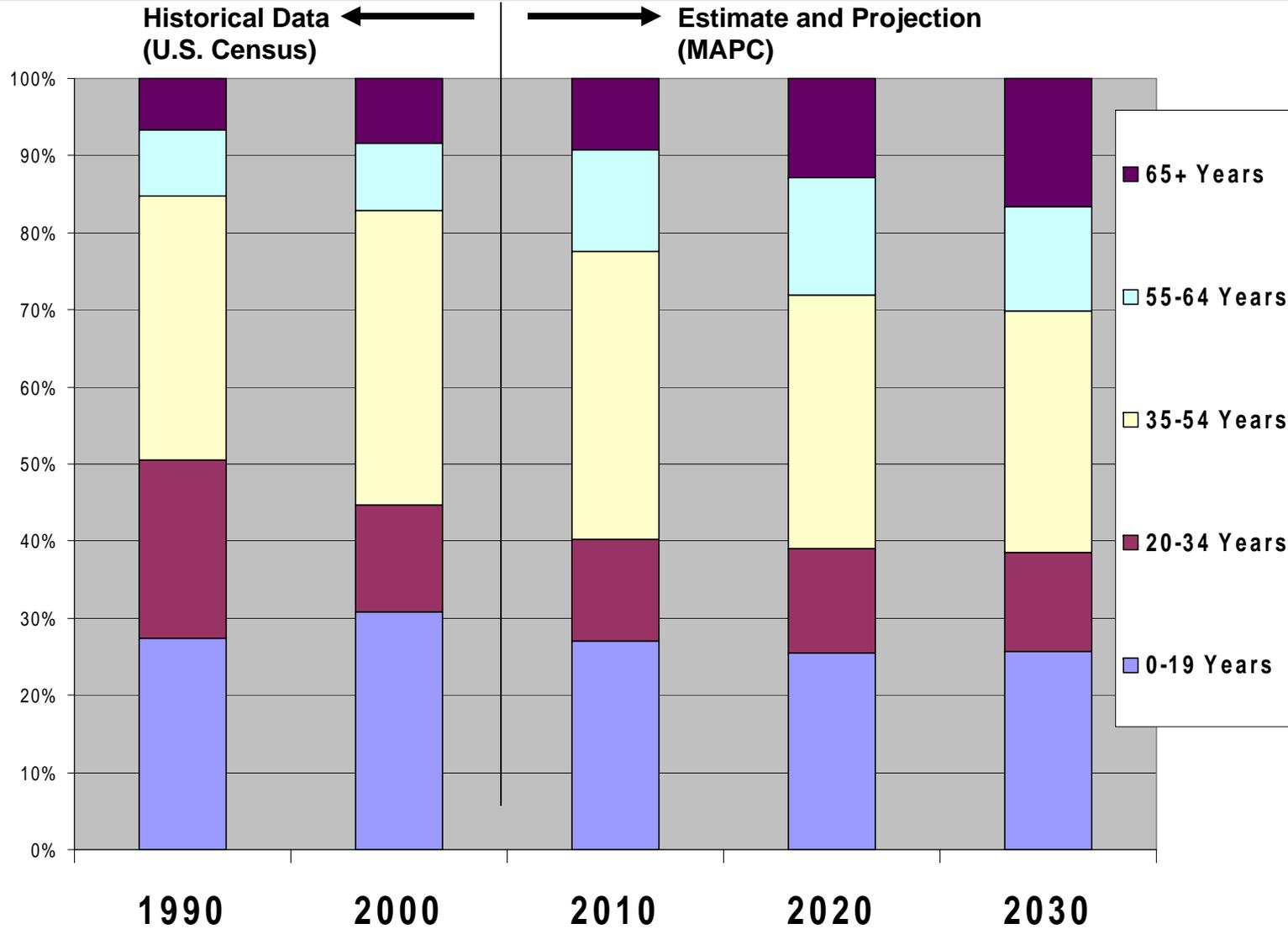


Sources: U.S. Census 2000, Town of Acton 2010, MAPC 2010





Aging of the Population





Aging of the Population

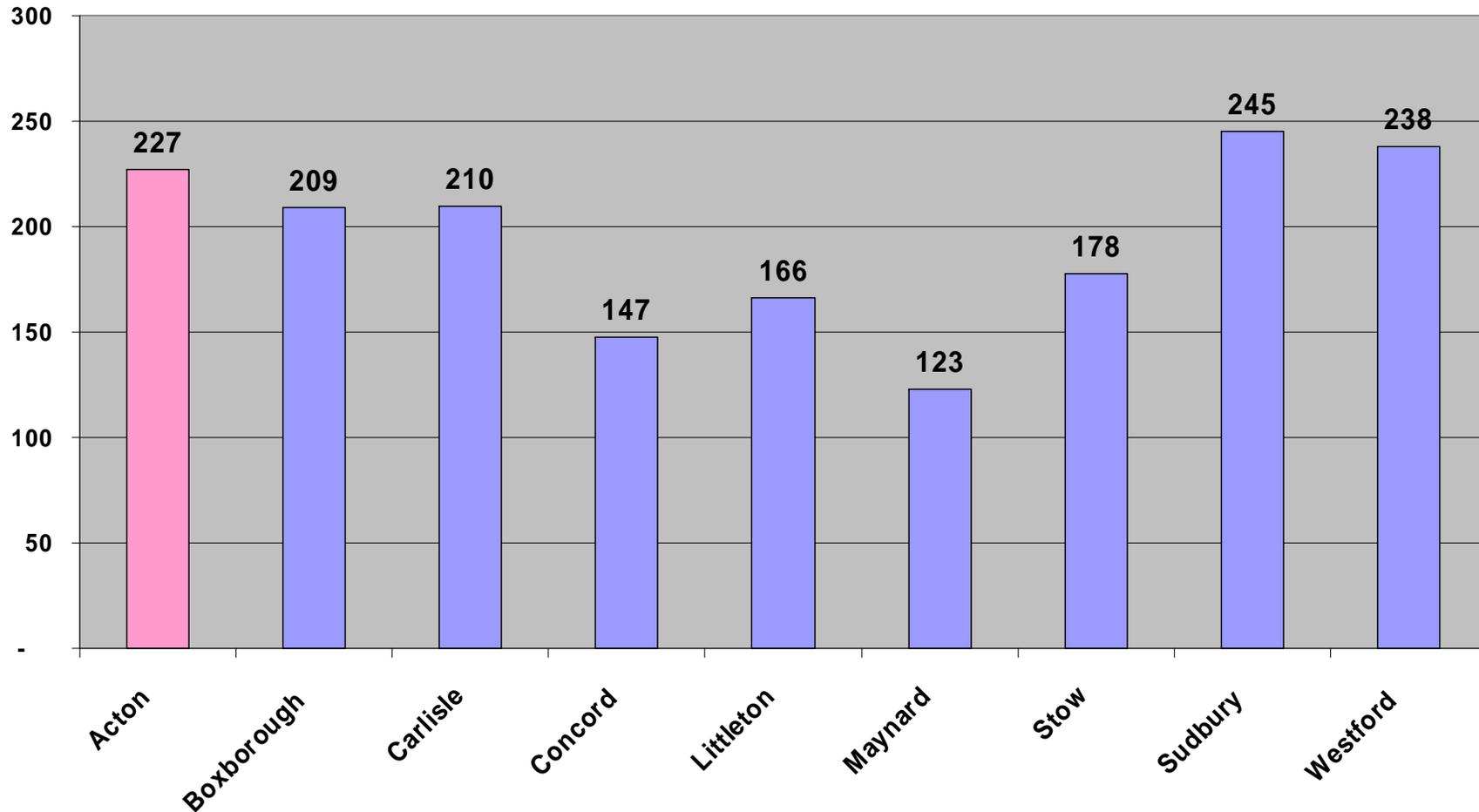
- The over 55 share will increase by 2020
 - 600 more “empty nesters” (55-64)
 - 856 more seniors (65+)
- 700 fewer adults 35-54 (family formation age group)
- Market shifting from larger units(4-5 bedroom) to smaller units (2-3 bedroom)

(Projections by Metropolitan Area Planning Council)





Students per 1,000 Population

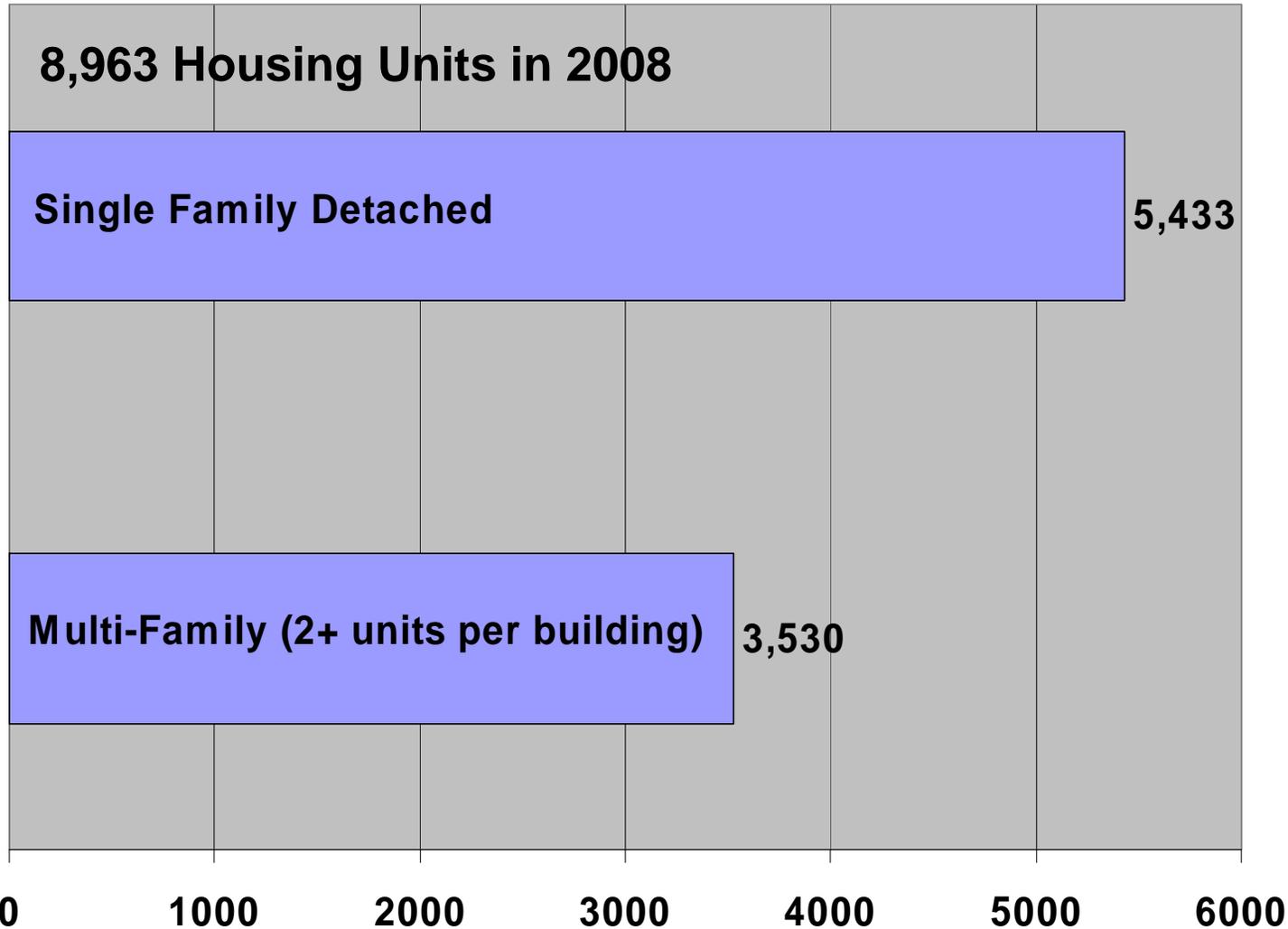


Sources: MA Dept of Education, Town of Acton, MAPC





Existing Housing Stock



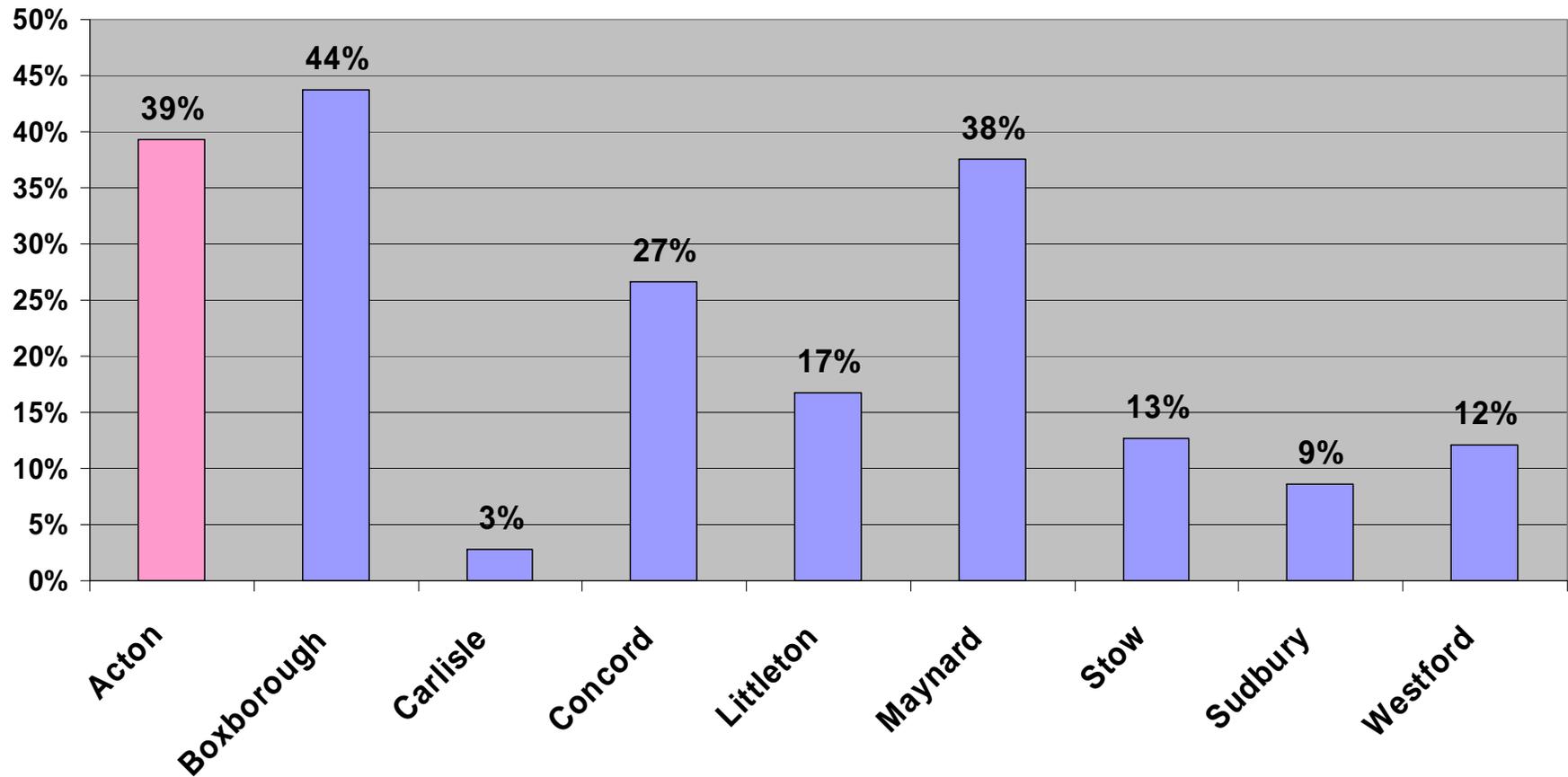
Source: Acton Assessor's Office





Multifamily Housing Percentage

Percent of Housing in 2+ Unit Buildings



Sources: Town of Acton, U.S. Census 2009 American Community Survey





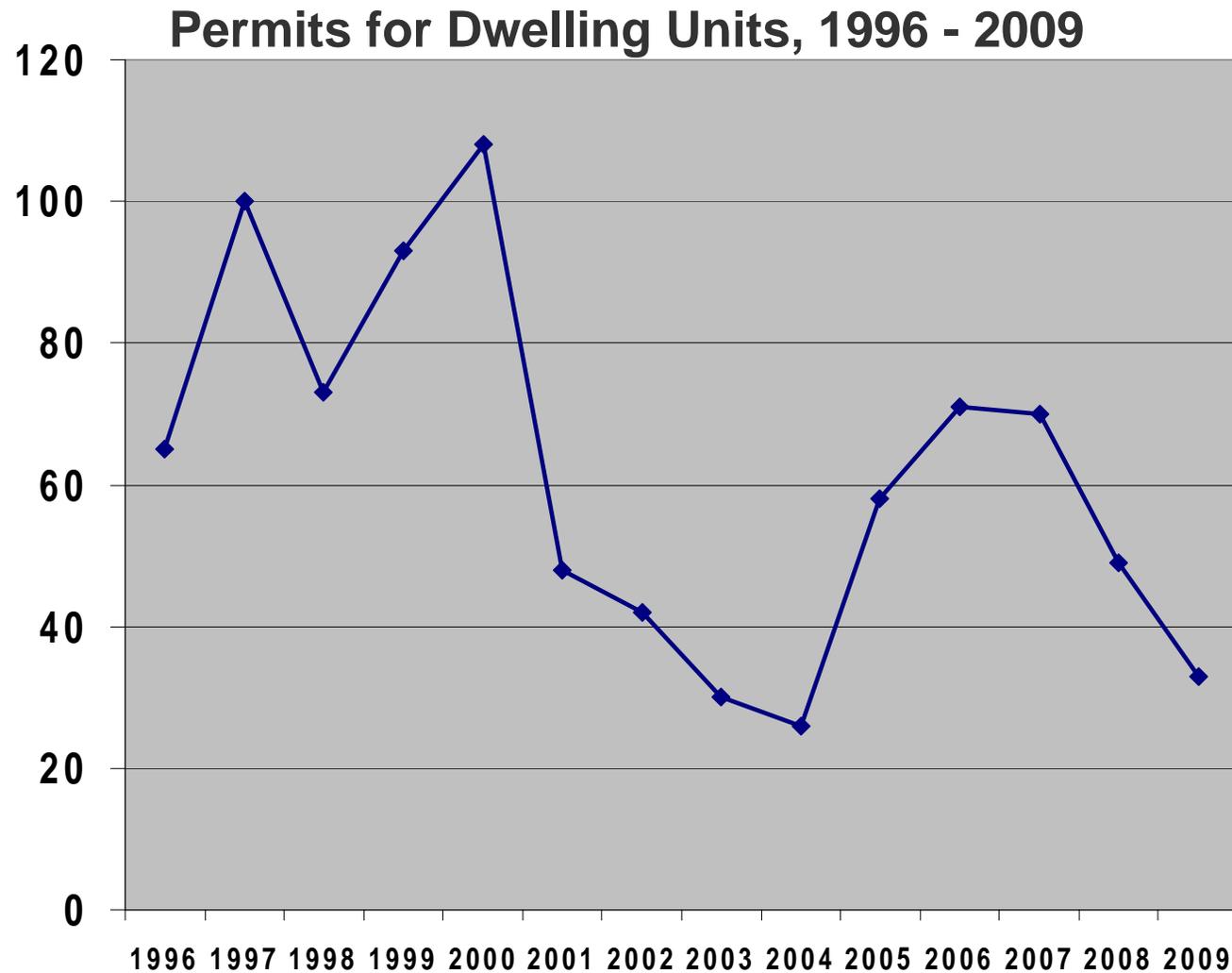
Existing Housing Stock

- 61% single-family detached
- 75% owner-occupied
- Vacancy rate 3% overall (owner-occupied and rental)





Housing Construction



Source: U.S. Census Bureau





Housing Market

- Average selling price in 2010:
 - \$498,750 single family
 - \$280,000 condominium
- About 5% of existing units sold each year
 - Approximately 400 units until recent downturn.
- Average length of stay in 2000
 - 17 years for owner-occupied
 - 7 years for renter-occupied

Sources: U.S. Census 2000, American Community Survey, Banker and Tradesman





Build-Out Capacity

- “Build-Out”: How much can be built on existing developable vacant land?
- Most recent town estimate:
 - 10,200 units at build-out
 - 8,963 current
 - 1,237 additional
- At projected growth rates, reach 93% in 2020, 97% in 2030
- Will look at scenarios in next phase of Acton 2020.





Affordable Housing

- State definition: uses no more than 38% of disposable income
- Translates to \$140,000 to \$175,000 for owner-occupied units.
- Currently, 7.2% of Acton's housing stock meets state definition.
- Chapter 40B is applicable unless 10% of housing units in town are "affordable".
- Since 1998, have created 375 total affordable units (31 per year).





Chapter 40B

- State law passed in 1969
- Enables local Zoning Boards of Appeals to approve affordable housing developments under flexible rules if at least 20% of the units have long-term affordability restrictions.
- “Friendly” and “Unfriendly” 40Bs
- If developer unsatisfied with local ZBA decision, can appeal to state Housing Appeals Committee.
- All rental units in development count toward 10% goal.





Questions and Answers





Next

- Discussion of Hypothetical Scenario
- Small Group Discussions
- Reconvene to Compare Notes





Hypothetical Housing Scenario

- Not a proposal: designed to elicit viewpoints.
- Imagine a 390-unit apartment complex
 - Seven 5-story buildings
 - Six townhouse clusters
- 702 people, including 113 school children
- Brings Acton to the 10% affordable housing threshold needed to avoid 40B developments





Discussion of hypothetical scenario

- Role-play by Acton 2020 Committee (from point of view of five of the Planning Goals)
- Discussion of the scenario and related issues by all





Last: Group Discussions





Small Group Discussions

- Purpose: thinking together about your experience of housing issues in Acton.
- Mapping: what are desirable locations for housing of various types?
- Prioritizing: What one thing would you do to address housing in Acton?

Re-convene at the end of the evening to compare notes.



