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ALTERNATIVE 1: What if we... **Continue Current Policies and Trends** **... and focus on:**



Continuing use of cluster zoning



Small scale commercial development



Continuing open space acquisition/protection

This alternative continues existing policies and practices governing the type and location of development, resulting in incremental changes that continue recent trends.

Key Features

Residential

- Continued encouragement of clustered residential development
- Small-scale affordable housing without a strong geographic focus

Commercial

- Small scale commercial development without a strong geographic focus.

Open Space and Historic

- Continued open space acquisition/protection and historic preservation as opportunities arise and resources permit.

Transportation/Circulation

- Continued extending of sidewalks at current rate of construction
- Extend funding for MinuteVan shuttle at current level of service

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ALTERNATIVE 1: Continue Current Policies and Trends, continued

Positive Impacts

- Continued encouragement of PCRC and OSD as the preferred method for residential development.
(Over 600 acres of open space have been preserved to date with use of these zoning provisions).
- No new legislation or administrative support required.
- Town retains its existing spread-out “leafy” character.
- Continues past practices of good planning and development regulation.

Negative Impacts

- Traffic will become more of a problem than now.
- Town remains susceptible to 40B projects.
- Fiscal implications of current housing trends on school enrollments and resulting budgets.
- Development in villages and Kelley’s Corner may not fit with or improve their character.

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ALTERNATIVE 2: What if we ... Limit Residential Growth and Expand the Commercial Tax Base ... and focus on:



Limiting the residential growth rate; no change in type or size



Encouraging employment-oriented low-impact commercial development



Increasing open space acquisition

This alternative aims to retain the existing settlement pattern and to avoid change in the existing physical and demographic character of the Town. Its chief focus is to control residential growth in order to curb the demands on existing facilities and services. It also encourages employment-oriented commercial development to provide fiscal benefits and finance acquisition of open space and trail easements.

Key Features

Residential

- Limit the amount and pace of residential growth without limiting the type and size of new housing units (resulting in more detached single-family houses)

Commercial

- Promote employment-oriented development (e.g. high tech/ R&D offices) in areas that don't directly impact neighborhoods: Great Road, Nagog Park, Powdermill, and large commercial parcels on Rt. 2

Open Space

- Use tax income generated from economic development to accelerate purchases of open space

Transportation/Circulation

- Focus effort on traffic improvements and limited sidewalk expansion

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ALTERNATIVE 2: Limit Residential Growth and Expand the Commercial Tax Base, continued

Positive Impacts

- Slower growth based on building permit limitations tied to infrastructure capability (e.g. sewer/ water and physical capacity of schools) and potential impact fees for new development.
- Better assurance of not requiring new school expansion with resulting fiscal burden.
- Commercial development will increase Town revenue which in turn could facilitate open space protection and reduced tax rate (or more services)
- Retention of key open space parcels.
- Limited growth in traffic.
- Later and potentially lower residential build-out.
- Potential local employment opportunities which would reduce commuting time and carbon emissions related to commuter driving.
- Does not address need for affordable housing.

Negative Impacts

- Possible challenges to growth limiting measures such as capping annual building permits and impact fees.
- Market for large scale office/R&D is uncertain
- More stringent vigilance (and staffing) required in reviewing development proposals and administering environmental protection measures.
- Less emphasis on transportation measures (such as sidewalks and shuttle service) that would encourage less driving than today.

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ALTERNATIVE 3: What if we ... Guide Growth to Villages ... and focus on:



Directing residential growth to mixed use infill and redevelopment



Transforming existing commercial development to fit village character



Emphasizing walking, biking and public transportation

This alternative aims to guide growth to West Acton, South Acton, East Acton, and potentially Kelley's Corner, with strong design review to protect their historic fabric and existing neighborhoods. It includes a variety of housing types including smaller units together with small scale commercial development in mixed-use village centers.

Key Features

Residential

- Limit and guide growth geographically through infill and redevelopment of existing village centers (West Acton and South Acton) and potential village centers (East Acton and Kelley's Corner)

Commercial

- Develop Kelley's Corner into a town center and transportation hub
- Redevelop village commercial areas into mixed use that respects the existing village character

Open Space and Historic Preservation

- Use strong design review to protect historic character
- Develop opportunities for recreation near village centers and small vest pocket parks and tot lots in villages

Transportation

- Concentrate transportation investments such as sidewalks and traffic calming in and around the villages
- Build MinuteVan shuttle into a more comprehensive system

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ALTERNATIVE 3: Guide Growth to Villages, continued

Positive Impacts

- Moves toward a more sustainable settlement pattern requiring less driving.
- Each village has its own distinct identity and new development does not impact existing residences and historic character, (Conduct a study of the villages and Kelley's Corner, to establish design guidelines and create village overlay districts.
- More efficient in the use of Town facilities and services.
- Utilizes existing sewer capacity in South Acton and Kelley's Corner.
- The type and location of new residential development better fits Acton's changing demographics (i.e., stage in the life-cycle and socio-economic background).
- Development in villages will increase Town revenue which in turn could facilitate open space protection.
- More opportunities for public gathering, communication, and walking will be provided.
- More opportunities to create architecture in villages consistent with existing historic character.
- Expanded transportation investments result in:
 - Fixed-route shuttle with stops at the villages
 - Expanded sidewalks and bike lanes/paths going in and out of villages
 - A path system independent of streets
 - Calming of traffic in villages (e.g. speed tables at pedestrian crossings)
- Creates opportunities for affordable housing in villages.

Negative Impacts

- Possible increased traffic congestion, traffic safety and parking issues in the villages.
- Potentially sooner and higher level of residential buildout (because incentive may be needed to transfer development rights to villages).
- Town revenues may not be as great as they might be because smaller residential units will replace larger ones with higher assessed value and no emphasis on large office/R&D development as in Alternative 2. This may be partially offset by fewer school children in smaller village residential units.
- More stringent vigilance (and staffing) required in reviewing development proposals.