



**PUBLIC WORKSHOP
“Choose Your Acton”
Alternatives for Action**

Thursday, June 23, 2010
6:30 p.m.
Acton Town Hall, Room #204

Purpose:

The purpose of this meeting is to present three alternative courses of action that would meet the previously developed planning goals in a variety of ways and to differing degrees. The main objective is to seek input on these alternatives as we move forward in the process of selecting a preferred course of action. This workshop represents a continuation of the community conversation that will result in formulating recommendations for a community master plan for the future of Acton.

AGENDA

- 6:30 - 7:30 Visit Information Tables
Welcome and Introduction
Power Point Presentation
- 7:30 – 8:30 Break into Groups
- 8:30 – 9:30 Resume as Large Group
Next Steps

BACK OF AGENDA

There are some decisions to be made regardless of which general course of action (alternative) is selected to help guide Acton's growth in the future.

Please let us know your thoughts about the following choices.

Service and Facility Choices¹

Whether, how, and where to provide a new community center and/or senior center

Whether, how, and where to provide better emergency response to North Acton, including potential new Fire Station

Do we want/need more recreation? If yes, what kind and where should it be located? Should NARA be further developed?

OTHER SUCH ITEMS/ISSUES???

Are there any other such service and/or facility needs you feel should be addressed?

I wonder if there are a lot of choices independent of the alternatives. Where do we draw the line? Do you just want to focus on capital projects (i.e. a community center and fire station?)

What about bike paths and pedestrian connections, expanding historic preservation efforts, or encouraging the preservation and development of farms and orchards, or developing tourist sites based on some of our unique historic and open space assets? (some themes from the Oct workshop) – *I think we need to draw the line at capital projects for which we are not sure there is consensus. The items that you list here are very important, but we think there is more consensus regarding these and they will be included in the list of recommendations regardless of which alternative is chosen.*

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

¹ These are needs identified by participants in the planning process (in both Phases I and II).

6:30 – 7:30 POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

Introduction – welcome, overview of process and purpose

Key Issues/Driving Forces that alternatives try to address (e.g. demographic trends, trends in Town’s land use patterns, etc.)

Presentation of Alternatives and Evaluation

- Description of each Alternative
- Observations and issues identified regarding potential trade offs
- Graphic (map)
- Photos representing potential outcomes (“Zoom in” on Kelley’s Corner, large residential tract, village area, etc.)

Unpredictable “Wildcards”

Define potential sources of change that may impact the future that are less predictable (e.g. national economic trends, price of gas, future availability of state funding opportunities, changes in technology, elimination of mortgage deduction, etc.)

List of **Sample Strategies** that would be part of all and any alternative

Key Policy Choice *to be made and added to preferred alternative - Present issue of affordable housing policy in the powerpoint and then have a place for people to give their written input.*

Acknowledge that this issue is complicated. Use it as an example of things we need to work out and plan for a smaller, more focused future meeting (maybe include Jennifer Raitt, MACP).

<p><i>Large Comment Pad or Hand out to collect at end of meeting:</i></p> <p>Get relief from 40B by large rental complexes including affordable units OR State-approved Housing Production Plan with small-scale affordable development in scattered locations, and potentially buying deed restrictions to keep existing units of housing affordable.</p> <p>Other???</p> <p>Do you have any questions that you need answered in order to help you decide?</p>
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Description of evening’s **Workshop**

7:30 – 8:30 SMALL GROUPS

MATERIALS

- Goals and objectives (one set of laminated per table)
- Alternatives Description (including graphic)
- Evaluation Matrix (words and symbols with relative impacts)
- Evaluation Worksheet

Introductions around the table

Part A: WORK WITH PARTNERS / INDIVIDUAL EVALUATIONS

[30 minutes]

Assign partners (if someone prefers to work alone, they can. We have to hope for an even number of participants in each group, if odd, then Committee member needs to work with single group member.

Instructions to Participants: Fill out one EVALUATION WORKSHEET for each Alternative using the ALTERNATIVE DESCRIPTIONS and EVALUATION MAXTRICES as references.

Collect these at the end of the session

Part B: SMALL GROUP CONSENSUS [30 minutes]

Make an effort to reach group consensus

1. Acton's Future Resilience: *Which Alternative do you think supports Acton's "sustainability" for the next generation in terms of the following (and why)?:*

Alternatives 1, 2, or 3

- a) Natural environment (e.g. carbon footprint, natural habitats, water resources) _____
- b) Town character (historic, rural characteristics) _____
- c) Economic viability (commercial/residential balance, taxes/service balance, commercial development) _____
- d) Social fabric (diversity in terms of ages, socio-economic, race/ethnicity, sense of community) _____

2. "Wild Cards" *(potential sources of future change that are not easy to predict) – Review list presented in powerpoint.*

Ask participants if they have any more to add??

TRANSITION TO LARGE GROUP (10 minutes): As participants stand up to reconvene as a large group, ask them to place dots on a large pad with the alternatives listed. Each participant given ___#___ dots. All participants on same easel pad.

Instructions: Preferred Alternative: *If you had to choose one alternative as the base or foundation to build on -- which one would you choose? Use your dots to indicate your choice. Write any comments in column provided to the right of the list of alternatives.*

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION (1 hour, approx. 10 min./ question)

Identify the majority selection while carefully recording minority opinion and order of preference of the other two alternatives (as well as comments). Use to guide the discussion.

If you were unsure about which alternative to select, what would you need to know in order to express a preference?

- a) What do you like about this alternative?
- b) What don't you like or what concerns you about it?
- c) What would you change to make this alternative better?
- d) "Wildcards" (potential sources of future change that are not easy to predict)
 - Which alternative do you think would be best if gas prices doubled in the future? Why?
 - Other???

If majority selects Alternative 1 as base...

- ...
- ...

If majority selects Alternative 2 as base...

- ...
- ...

If majority selects Alternative 3 as base...

- Which town centers should we focus on first?
- What kind of uses should be concentrated where?
- How would you define the differences between each of the centers/potential centers? In terms of uses, size, look, function?

DRAFT EVALUATION WORKSHEET: ALTERNATIVE 1
(one sheet per alternative for individuals to use for evaluating alternatives either alone or with a partner)

Please note what you like and/or what concerns you about each alternative with regard to the planning goals and any other objectives you feel are important to consider.

Should you list the planning goals at the top of this sheet as a prompt? If there's only set per table, an individual might not be able to see them and be reminded what they are. – They will be listed on Matrix.

IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS

Positive

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Negative

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DISCUSSION

The best thing about this alternative is:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What I like least about this alternative is:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What I would like to keep from this alternative if another alternative is chosen or if it is merged with elements from others is:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Please note how your choice of preferred alternative is related to your sense of Acton's character and "developing story line." That is, what about this alternative makes you feel as though it is especially appropriate to Acton and the Town's future.

My **OVERALL RANKING** of this alternative is (out of a total of 3, with 1 being the preferred option. Consider how well the alternative meets the planning goals):
