

## Chapter 8: Land Use and Zoning

This chapter inventories Acton's 2008 land use and existing zoning. It includes information on:

- Relationship of Land Use to Planning Goals
- Acton's 2008 land use patterns.
- Acton's existing zoning
- Potential future land use at build-out (i.e., full development of available land)
- Opportunities and Challenges Posed by Existing Land Use Conditions and Zoning

### Why Acton's Land Use and Zoning are Important to the Comprehensive Plan

Land use and zoning are critical elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Land use planning defines the location of uses within the community. Where people live, work, shop, play, and educate is reflected in the land uses. Existing land use reflects past decisions about the locations of these activities and is the basis for future decisions. Zoning and subdivision regulations are among the town's legal tools for enforcing where and in some ways how these activities are located and built.

### Relationship of Land Use to Planning Goals

*Goal: Preserve and Enhance Town Character*

Much of the town's existing character is the result of the pattern of land uses as they have developed through history and as a result of zoning and subdivision regulations. Neighborhood densities and character vary based largely on zoning. Much of the future character of the town will be determined by the development of vacant land and redevelopment of existing areas as controlled by zoning and other regulations.

*Goal: Ensure Environmental Sustainability*

The patterns of land use have a major impact on the energy spent on getting to and from work, school, recreation, and shopping. The inefficiencies of traffic congestion, wasteful commuting times, air pollution, over reliance on foreign oil, loss of open space and habitat, and deteriorated sense of community are all consequences of land use patterns that separate land uses and force the use of private vehicles in place of a more historical pattern of walkable, mixed-use villages.

*Goal: Improve Connections*

Connections between neighbors, connections between home, work, recreation, education, services, and shopping, and the physical and social connections that define a community are all impacted by land use and zoning. The proximity between land uses and the connections between them affect the livability of the community. Improving provisions in regulations that foster connections strengthens community.

*Goal: Support Inclusion and Diversity*

Land use and zoning influence the diversity of housing types and costs, which also affects the diversity of the community and its sense of inclusion. Zoning provisions that encourage a

diversity of housing types in new developments and the variety of housing choices created by the town's mixture of land use patterns and densities result in a community that has a place for all.

*Goal: Provide More Opportunities for Community Gathering and Recreation*

Land use and zoning influence the provision of places to gather. Gathering places are generally located in recreation areas, open spaces, and institutional settings like schools, libraries, and government buildings. Gathering places can also be located in commercial and office settings as well as in residential neighborhoods. Zoning regulations can encourage the provision of gathering places.

*Goal: Preserve and Enhance Town-owned Assets*

A livable community's town-owned assets like schools, open space, recreation, natural resources, water resources, and gathering places are reflected in land use patterns and zoning. Several zoning provisions are designed to help maintain and enhance town-owned assets as well as encourage quality in privately owned community assets.

*Goal: Maintain and Improve Financial Well-being of the Town*

Land use reflects the history of development, and zoning is the most important tool for regulating future changes in land use. As such, this element has great importance to Acton's financial well-being, because some types of development and/or patterns of development cost more to serve than others. This will be a subject of the subsequent steps in the comprehensive planning process.

## **Summary of Key Points**

### *Land Use*

- Almost 27% of the Town's area is in residential use.
- About 63.7% is open, including agricultural, recreation, forest, forested wetlands, open wetlands, cemetery, and other relatively undeveloped land.
- About 5.1% of the Town's area is in commercial or industrial use.
- The dominant residential type is a single-family home on a variety of different sized lots.
- Multi-family homes are principally concentrated along Great Road and also at Kelley's Corner, and in parts of South Acton. A multi-family assisted living community is also located in North Acton. Other multi-family homes are dispersed throughout other parts of town.
- Since the late 1980s most subdivisions of more than five lots have been cluster subdivisions (either Planned Conservation Residential Communities or Open Space Developments).
- Commercial uses are concentrated along Great Road, Massachusetts Avenue (around Kelley's Corner), and along Powder Mill Road (Rte. 2) in Acton's southeast corner along the Assabet River, with smaller commercial areas in West Acton, South Acton, and a few other sections of town.
- Industrial uses are concentrated in North Acton, along Massachusetts Avenue east of Kelley's Corner (mixed with commercial/office uses), and in Acton's southeast corner, with a few smaller industrial areas located in other parts of town.

### *Zoning*

- The town has nine residential districts, five village districts, two office districts, three business districts, five industrial districts, two special zoning districts, and four overlay districts.
- More than 60% of the town is zoned for residential uses: 58.1% for single-family homes, and 1.7% for multi-family homes.
- A Village Residential District (VR, 0.5% of the town's area) allows mixed residential and commercial uses.
- Two provisions of the zoning ordinance allow Open Space Development (OSD) and Planned Conservation Residential Community (PCRC), to encourage the preservation of open space, thus facilitating the preservation of significant land, water, historic, archeological, and natural resources. They are special permit options for residential development in all the single-family residential districts (R-2, R-4, R-8, R-8/4, R-10, R-10/8).
- Multi-family dwelling units are allowed under the provisions of the Residence A district (5 units/acre) and Residence AA district (15 units/acre).
- The five village districts comprise 1.2% of the town's total area. They allow a mixture of business and residential uses and have a number of provisions to encourage compact development including transfer of development rights from the Great Road corridor to the North Acton and East Acton Village Districts (NAV and EAV), and within these village districts.
- Office and business zones comprise 6.9% of the land in Acton and are located along some of the key transportation corridors in the town, including Routes 2A (Great Road) and 111 (Massachusetts Avenue).
- There are three office parks, one located in the northwest corner of town and two along Massachusetts Avenue (Route 2 and 111).
- The main business zones are located along Great Road, at Kelley's Corner (KC), and the Powder Mill district (PM), with other business located in West Acton and the other villages.
- Industrial districts comprise 6% of the town's area and are located in North Acton, along Post Office Square and Hayward Road near Acton Center, the southern end of Main Street, and in the Powder Mill area in the southeast corner of Acton.
- The Technology District (TD) is located in the southeast corner of town off Independence Road and Knox Trail.
- The Agriculture-Recreation-Conservation District (ARC) (14.1% of the town's total area) applies exclusively to land owned by the State, the town, and the Acton Water District. It excludes all residential, office, commercial, and industrial uses. Agriculture, conservation, recreation, municipal, educational and religious uses are allowed by right.
- There are four overlay districts:
  - Affordable Housing – encourages the development of affordable housing in new development.
  - Flood Plain – regulates development in flood-prone areas.
  - Groundwater protection – regulates the development in the town's water supply protection areas.
  - Open Space Development – encourages the preservation of common land; significant natural, historical and archeological resources; scenic vistas; rural

character; village clusters; water supply resources; and better overall all site planning.

- PCRC is the preferred method of land development and may be applied to any of the single-family districts in Acton.
- Full buildout of all developable land would result in an increase from Acton’s current 8,963 housing units to an order-of-magnitude total of 10,000 to 11,000 units, depending on the assumptions used in the analysis. A key point is that residential buildout is unlikely to be reached in the next 20 years.

## 2008 Land Use Patterns

Land uses in Acton reflect the historic development of the town, physical constraints like wetlands, land ownership, public investments (like roads, utilities, and public facilities), and zoning. Public investments, zoning and other regulations are the Town’s primary means of controlling the types and quality of development and their locations. Early industrial uses were located along the Assabet River and other watercourses that originally powered the mills. Commercial and residential uses were once focused on the villages, and most of the town was farmland and orchards. Beginning after World War II, farms began to be converted to residential uses, and the character of the town, like many others, began to change from rural to suburban. According to the 1961 Master Plan agriculture and other undeveloped land in Acton totaled 82% of the total area. By 1971 this proportion had shrunk to 66% as land developed. The following table shows the changes in major categories of land use from 1971 to 1999.

Table 8.1: Major Land Use Categories, 1971 to 1999

	1971		1999	
	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	830.3	6.4	582.3	4.5
Undeveloped	7,724.4	59.6	6,329.7	48.8
Developed	4,411.5	34.0	6,054.2	46.7
Total	12,990	100	12,990	100

In 1953 zoning was adopted by the town. It created districts that limited the location and density of uses, laying the framework for the current land use patterns.

“Land use” refers to the actual use of land and is generally determined from interpretation of aerial photographs. The land uses for Acton were determined from 2005 Massachusetts Geographical Information System (MassGIS) information and updated based on 2008 aerial photos. Assessors’ parcel information was used to check the accuracy of the MassGIS interpretation in some areas. Assessors’ parcel information is included below in Table 8.2 for comparison. In most cases assessors assign a single land use to each parcel regardless of the actual size and use of the land. For example a five-acre parcel with a single residence would be counted as five acres of residential use while the land use interpretation would likely assign  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre to residential use and the remainder of the parcel would be counted as forest or open land<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Before the widespread availability of GIS, a computer mapping tool with extensive capabilities for data storage and analysis, Assessors’ parcel information was the common data source that formed the basis of land use analysis and mapping. The land use data and maps in the 1990 Master Plan and the 1998 update were primarily based on the Assessors’ parcel information.

## Land Use and Zoning

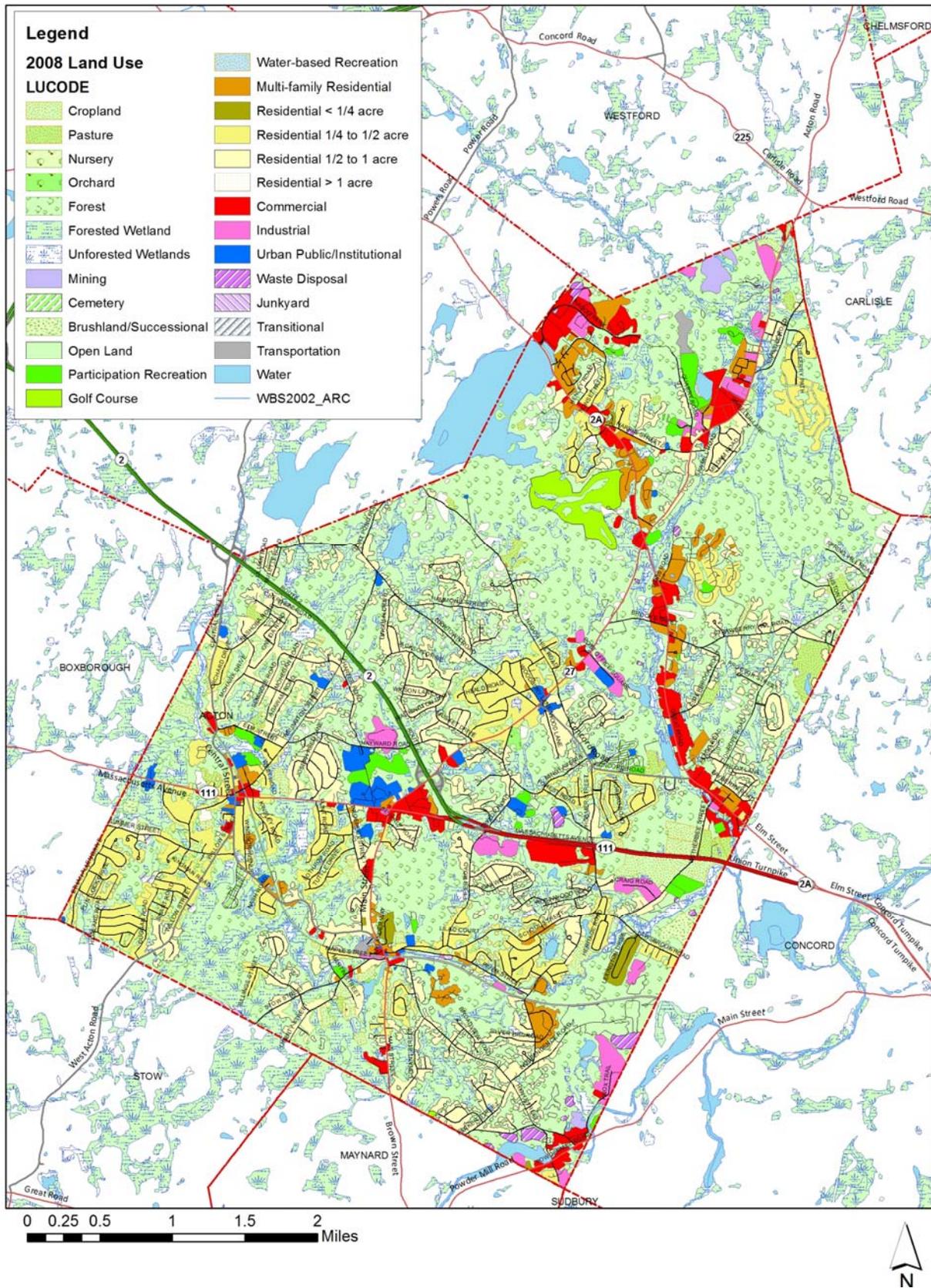
Land use in Acton is primarily residential and open. Almost 27% of the Town's land is in residential use, and about 63.7% is composed of agricultural, recreation, forest, forested wetlands, wetlands, cemetery, and other relatively undeveloped or open land. About 5.1% of the Town's area is in commercial or industrial use. The Town's land uses (based on 2008 aerial photos) are summarized in Table 8.2 and illustrated in Figure 8.1.

The map clearly illustrates the dominance of residential uses, forest and other undeveloped land, and the distribution of other land uses in Acton. The dominant residential land use type is single-family homes on a variety of different sized lots. Multi-family homes are principally concentrated along Great Road and also in Kelley's Corner, and in parts of South Acton. Other multi-family homes are dispersed throughout other parts of town.

Table 8.2: Acton Land Use and Parcel Use

	2008 GIS Area (Acres)	Percent of Town's Total Area	Assessors' Parcel LU (Acres)	Percent of Town's Total Area
<b>Residential</b>				
Very Low Density Residential	181.5	1.4%		
Low Density Residential	1,695.5	13.1%	5,971.0 <sup>1</sup>	46.0%
Medium Density Residential	1,238.4	9.5%		
High Density Residential	22.7	0.2%		
Multi-Family Residential	326.9	2.5%	1,270.1	9.8%
	3,465.0	26.7%	7,241.1	55.7%
<b>Commercial and Industrial</b>				
Commercial	457.7	3.5%	313.1	2.4%
Office	NA <sup>2</sup>		144.1	1.1%
Industrial	207.0	1.6%	232.5	1.8%
	664.7	5.1%	689.7	5.3%
<b>Public and Institutional</b>				
Urban Public/Institutional	101.5	1.0%	174.5	1.3%
Cemetery	37.9	0.3%		
	142.5	1.1%	174.5	1.3%
<b>Recreation</b>				
Participation Recreation	136.3	1.0%	63.7 <sup>3</sup>	0.5%
Water-based Recreation	2.3	0.0%		
Golf Course	102.4	0.8%	151.1	1.2%
	248.3	1.9%	214.8	1.9%
<b>Agricultural<sup>4</sup></b>	333.5	2.6%	131.2	1.0%
<b>Forest</b> (including forested wetlands)	7,048.4	54.3%	2,625.3	20.3%
<b>Open Land<sup>5</sup></b> (transmission lines, abandoned fields, etc.)	206.1	1.6%	1,242.9	9.6%
<b>Other</b> (including mining, waste disposal, etc.)	255.7	2.0%	44.7	0.3%
<b>Total Land Area</b>	12,364.2	95.2%	12,364.2	95.2%
Water	252.7	1.9%	NA	
Non-forested Wetlands	373.1	2.9%	NA	
<b>Total</b>	12,990	100%	12,990	100.0%
<sup>1</sup> Assessors assign residences to either single family or multi-family without regard for density <sup>2</sup> Included in Commercial <sup>3</sup> School recreation fields are included under Urban Public/Institutional by Assessors <sup>4</sup> Several agricultural fields are classified as residential by the Assessors <sup>5</sup> Assessors column includes undeveloped or vacant land				

Figure 8.1 Acton Existing Land Use



at Kelley's Corner, and in parts of South Acton. A multi-family assisted living community is also located in North Acton. Since the late 1980s most subdivisions of more than five lots have been cluster subdivisions (either Planned Conservation Residential Communities or Open Space Developments). The Acton Planning Board and its Subdivision Rules and Regulations encourage cluster subdivisions (see Residential Districts below).

Commercial uses are concentrated along Great Road, Massachusetts Avenue (around Kelley's Corner), and along Powder Mill Road (Rte. 2) in Acton's southeast corner along the Assabet River, with smaller commercial areas in West Acton, South Acton, and a few other sections of town.

Industrial uses are concentrated in North Acton, along Massachusetts Avenue east of Kelley's Corner (mixed with commercial/office uses), and in Acton's southeast corner, with a few smaller industrial areas located in other parts of town.

One industrial area, located off Independence Road, is the location of the W. R. Grace Superfund Site. The 260-acre site (including 80 acres in Concord) was used for industrial purposes since the 1800s. After purchasing the property in 1954, W. R. Grace & Co.'s manufacturing operations produced a variety of latex and rubber based products as well as cellulose battery separators. Many of the waste products from these operations were disposed on site. In early 1982, Grace discontinued its organic chemical operations at the site.

In 1978, groundwater contamination was detected in two Acton municipal supply wells, Assabet 1 and 2, located southwest of the Grace property. This discovery prompted the temporary closing of the wells and a series of investigations that culminated in the installation of the Aquifer Restoration System (ARS) in late 1984, which remains in operation, and the installation of a water treatment plant for the wells. In 1983, this site was included on the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL). In 2000, the Acton portion of the site was rezoned as part of the Technology District.

## **Existing Zoning**

The Town of Acton adopted zoning and created its first zoning map in 1953. The map had one residential district, one commercial district, and one industrial district. Acton adopted subdivision control in 1953 also, but did not adopt a comprehensive set of subdivision regulations until 1965. Concord, on the other hand, adopted zoning in 1928 and its first subdivision controls in 1938. With less regulation and more available land, property in Acton was relatively easy to develop when suburban development began in the 1950s.

Today the town has nine residential zoning districts, five village districts, two office districts, three business districts, five industrial districts, two special zoning districts and four overlay districts. Table 8.3 lists the primary districts; the overlay districts are listed in Table 8.4. Figure 8.2 depicts the primary districts.

Table 8.3: Acton Zoning

		<b>Total Acres<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Percent of Town</b>	<b>Developable Acres Remaining<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Percent of Total Acres</b>
<b>Residential Districts</b>					
Residence 2	R-2	3,941.9	30.3%	454.8	11.5%
Residence 4	R-4	593.2	5.0%	68.2	11.5%
Residence 8	R-8	1,162.6	8.9%	187.0	16.1%
Residence 8/4	R-8/4	765.7	5.9%	342.8	44.7%
Residence 10	R-10	74.1	0.5%	7.8	10.5%
Residence 10/8	R-10/8	1,554.8	12.0%	669.2	43.0%
Residence A (multi-family)	R-A	225.2	1.7%	39.6	17.6%
Residence AA (multi-family)	R-AA	7.7	0.0%	0.5	6.5%
Village Residential	VR	62.6	0.5%	4.6	7.3%
<b>Village Districts</b>					
East Acton Village	EAV	31.1	0.2%	1.7	5.5%
East Acton Village 2	EAV-2	19.8	0.2%	0.3	1.5%
North Acton Village	NAV	43.0	0.3%	22.7	52.8%
South Acton Village	SAV	34.2	0.3%	7.0	20.5%
West Acton Village	WAV	22.9	0.2%	0.8	3.5%
<b>Office Districts</b>					
Office Park 1	OP-1	119.2	0.9%	64.2	53.9%
Office Park 2	OP-2	105.4	0.8%	22.1	21.0%
<b>Business Districts</b>					
Kelley's Corner	KC	47.0	0.4%	3.4	7.2%
Limited Business	LB	158.6	1.2%	9.6	6.1%
Powder Mill District	PM	72.8	0.6%	9.5	13.0%
<b>Industrial Districts</b>					
General Industrial	GI	135.1	1.0%	5.7	4.2%
Light Industrial	LI	39.1	0.3%	5.5	14.1%
Light Industrial 1	LI-1	191.5	1.5%	5.7	3.0%
Small Manufacturing	SM	119.0	0.9%	8.5	7.1%
Technology District	TD	302.6	2.3%	255.8	84.5%
<b>Special Districts</b>					
Agriculture-Recreation-Conservation	ARC	1,837.0	14.1%	NA	NA
Planned Conservation Residential Community	PCRC	304.8	2.3%	0	0%

<sup>1</sup>. Zoning Districts generally exclude major roads and highways, so the total of this column is less than the total acreage in the land use table.

<sup>2</sup>. The acreages indicated as developable excludes public open space, private common land, and areas like known wetlands that are clearly not developable, but they remain as rough estimates of development capacity, as many factors influence the feasibility of development of a parcel of land.

Table 8.4: Overlay Districts

Overlay Districts		
Affordable Housing Overlay District		Applies to two “sub-districts” that are located in various areas
Flood Plain District	FP	Designated floodplains
Groundwater Protection District	GPD	Applies to Watershed Protection Areas

**Residential Districts**

More than 60% of the town is zoned for residential uses: 58.1% for single-family homes, and 1.7% for multi-family homes. A Village Residential District (VR, 0.5% of the town’s area) allows mixed residential and commercial uses. The Residence 10 and Residence 10/8 districts require a minimum lot area of 100,000 square feet and are located in the northern section of town. If the cluster option, with common open space, is used in the Residence 10/8 district, density can be reduced to 80,000 square feet of area per dwelling unit including common land. Likewise in the Residence 8/4 district density can be reduced from 80,000 square feet to 40,000 square feet per dwelling unit, including common land, if the cluster option is used.

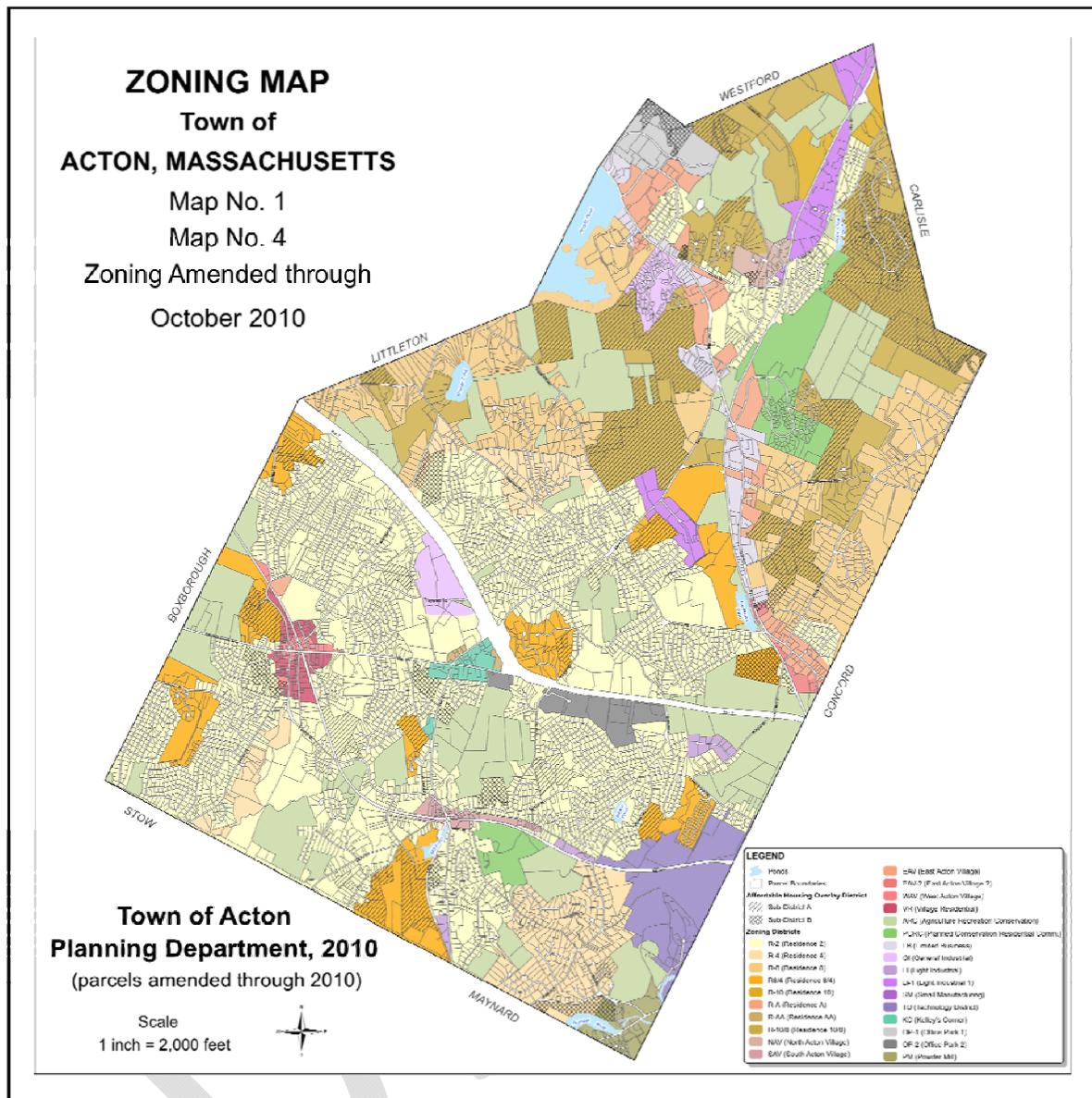
The Residence 2 district is located in the southern portion of town and requires a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet. The other residential districts are smaller and more dispersed. There is also a Planned Conservation Residential Community (PCRC) district that encouraged the preservation of open space. The PCRC district is built out, with no more developable land, but the PCRC provisions can be applied to any single-family residential district. Two provisions of the zoning ordinance allow Open Space Development (OSD) and Planned Conservation Residential Community (PCRC), encourage the preservation of open space, facilitating the preservation of significant land, water, historic, archeological, and natural resources. They are special permit options for residential development in all the single-family residential districts (R-2, R-4, R-8, R-8/4, R-10, R-10/8). The PCRC district is built out, but the PCRC provisions can be applied to any single -family residential district.

Multi-family dwelling units are allowed under the provisions of the Residence A (R-A) district (5 units/acre), Residence AA (R-AA) district (15 units/acre), and the Village Residential (VR) district (4 units/15,000 square feet). The R-A and R-AA districts are located along the Great Road corridor. The minimum lot area in the Residence A district can be reduced if all single-family units are built on the lot.

**Village Districts**

The five village districts comprise 1.2% of the town’s total area. They allow a mixture of business and residential uses and have a number of provisions to encourage compact development including transfer of development rights from the Great Road corridor to the North Acton and East Acton Village Districts (NAV and EAV), and within these village districts. The South Acton and West Acton Village Districts overlap with the Local Historic Districts.

Figure 8.2: Existing Zoning



**Non-Residential Districts**

Office and business zones comprise 6.9% of the land in Acton and are located along some of the key transportation corridors in the town, including Routes 2A (Great Road) and 111 (Massachusetts Avenue). There are three office parks, one located in the northwest corner of town and two along Massachusetts Avenue (Route 2 and 111). The main business zones are located along Great Road, at Kelley’s Corner (KC), and the Powder Mill district (PM), with other businesses located in West Acton and the other villages. A few businesses are located in other parts of town.

Industrial districts comprise 6% of the town’s area and are located in North Acton, along Post Office Square and Hayward Road near Acton Center, the southern end of Main Street, and in the

Powder Mill area in the southeast corner of Acton. The Technology District (TD) is located in the southeast corner of town off Independence Road and Knox Trail.

### **Special Districts**

The Planned Conservation Residential Community (PCRC) district (2.3% of the town's total area) is a historic artifact that comprises two housing developments (Audubon Hill and Bellows Farm) that were initially approved under special rezoning rules in the early 1980s. The Agriculture-Recreation-Conservation (ARC) Districts (14.1% of the town's total area) applies exclusively to land owned by the State, the town, and the Acton Water District. It excludes all residential, office, commercial, and industrial uses. Agriculture, conservation, recreation, municipal, educational and religious uses are allowed by right.

### **Overlay Districts**

#### ***Affordable Housing Overlay District***

The affordable housing overlay provisions encourage the development of affordable housing in new development in Acton by a Special Permit. (See additional discussion of affordable housing in the Housing Chapter.)

#### ***Flood Plain Overlay District***

The Floodplain District is an overlay district whose boundaries and regulations are superimposed on all districts. The Flood Plain District regulates development in flood prone areas and includes all special flood hazard areas in Acton designated as Zones A and AE, in the Acton Panels of the Middlesex County Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), dated June 4, 2010.

#### ***Groundwater Protection District***

Each of Acton's nineteen wells is located in one of the town's five water supply protection areas, known as "Zone IIs". The wells are located in shallow aquifers with a high vulnerability to contamination. Land uses and development within these Zone IIs are regulated under the provisions of the Groundwater Protection District that divides the Town into four zones with varying protection levels in relation to the proximity to the wells.

#### ***Open Space Development Overlay District***

Open Space Development and PCRC and Open Space Development are the preferred methods of land development and may be applied to any of the single-family districts in Acton.

## **Buildout Analysis**

Table 8.3 contains an estimate of undeveloped land in each zoning district that is not clearly foreclosed from development by open space protection or factors such as major wetlands. As noted in the table, this is necessarily a rough estimate because many factors may affect the feasibility of development for a specific parcel, and most of these factors cannot be ascertained from the "bird's eye view" of the town-wide land use analysis.

A simple order of magnitude of potential future development can be calculated by using the intensity of development prescribed by the zoning bylaw for each district. For example, in the R-2 district, the number of housing units per acre is approximately 2 (or potentially a little less when subdivision street layouts are accounted for).

Using this simplified analysis, approximately 1,842 new units could be built on the land shown in residential districts in Table 8.3. Added to the 8,963 current housing units in Acton, this would result in approximately 10,800 total housing units (not counting housing units that could be built in Village Districts or Business Districts). This is roughly the same magnitude that other estimates made in the past. It is somewhat higher than the most recent previous buildout estimate in the 2004 To Live in Acton Community Development Plan because the estimate of developable land by zoning district (Table 8.3) reflects a more detailed examination of 2008 land use data which identified additional developable land; however, the previous estimate also made assumptions of the likelihood that infill development would occur on parcels of various sizes, and this reduces the calculated buildout from full use of all developable land. As reported in Chapter 1, Population and Housing:

The buildout analysis done for the 1998 Master Plan estimated that 10,600 housing units could be built in Acton, given its available developable vacant land at that time. The 2004 Community Development Plan reduced the estimated future total to 10,200 dwelling units. Planners Collaborative estimates that Acton has 8,963 dwelling units in 2010 and that the number could increase to 9,176 by 2020 and 9,515 by 2030, given current zoning. (The future estimates are based on MAPC projections of population and households.)

A detailed analysis of vacant lots approved for residential use done by the Acton Planning Department indicates that there are 343 lots ready for construction. These are scattered around town in various subdivisions and approved residential projects and in a few cases (15 lots) on land where subdivision approval is not required. The map in Figure 1.7 shows the location of subdivisions as of 2007. The 343 lots are likely to accommodate more than 343 housing units since 2-family and multi-family and town house units are likely to be built on some of them. Potential demand estimates for housing units by 2020 by MAPC (213 new units) suggest that all new forecast units can be accommodated on lots already approved.

A key point is that residential buildout is unlikely to be reached within 20 years. A more useful buildout analysis can be done by considering scenarios for development, including the use of overlay districts, or even the “what-if” scenario of zoning change. This is a step that goes beyond the inventory phase of the Acton 2020 plan. It also must be kept in mind that a buildout analysis does not necessarily provide any information about the time that it would take to reach full development, and that development does not necessarily stop when no more buildable land remains, because redevelopment at a higher or lower density could ultimately occur. Also see the brief discussion of build-out in the Housing Chapter.

## **Overall Summary of Existing Conditions**

As noted in the beginning of this chapter, land use and zoning are critical elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Existing land uses in Acton are a reflection of past decisions; physical limitations, like steep slopes and wetlands; and regulations that control where daily activities are located. Future land use is limited by land available for new development and there is likely to be increasing pressure for redevelopment in some areas.

## **Opportunities and Challenges Posed by 2008 Land Use and Existing Zoning**

- Agriculture and some other relatively undeveloped land is challenged by continuing development.
- The use of Open Space Development and Planned Conservation Residential Community provisions in the last 20 years has provided a considerable amount of common land that is an opportunity for maintaining much of the Town's character.
- Concentrations of automobile-oriented businesses, especially along Great Road, result in congestion.
- The mixture of residences, businesses and industries provides some residents with an opportunity to live and work in the same community.
- Several relatively innovative zoning provisions encourage open space and a mixture of uses in some areas of town.
- There is very little space in several districts available for new development.
- Pressure for redevelopment will increase as areas for new development are filled.

In conclusion, zoning and future changes in zoning, along with the provision of services, can guide future land use. What future land use will be depends on the desires of Acton's residents and their determination to make and implement choices about the town's future.