

**Acton 2020 Recommended Implementation Program**

Strategy	Implementation Phase Actions	Responsibility	Timing/Priority
<b>GOAL 1: Preserve and Enhance Town Character</b>			
<b>Objective 1.1: Preserve rural characteristics and open space</b>			
Document the rural characteristics that should be preserved, and develop a mechanism for prioritizing those elements which contribute to an appreciation for Acton’s history and the pleasure of living here.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expand Acton’s Scenic Roads Bylaw to protect stone walls, mature trees, and other landscape features to other locations that need protection<sup>1</sup>. Explore ways to provide protection for this broader list.</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support the further exploration/implementation of recommendations from the 2006 Freedom’s Way Landscape Inventory.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that new sidewalks conform with Acton’s Sidewalk Design Guidelines whenever possible. Choice of layout, materials, landscaping should be in keeping with the nature of the area.<sup>3</sup>)</li> </ul>		
Preserve and acquire open space (See also Objectives 2.4 and 6.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support the implementation of Acton’s 2002 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) and the update being prepared for 2011.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Define primary purpose of protecting open space and develop criteria for prioritizing parcels(e.g. conservation, views, active recreation, protection of water resources, etc)</li> <li>○ Create a short list of open space protection priorities and stay focused on that list</li> <li>○ Insure broad public understanding regarding which open space is not protected and to what degree protected space is indeed protected</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement the OSRP’s proactive strategy to anticipate and be poised to respond to open space in terms of protection and acquisition of parcels, as well as water resource protection.</li> </ul>		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use zoning to protect open space parcels               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Continue existing practice of utilizing cluster zoning for most residential development outside the centers</li> <li>○ Provide incentives for transfer of development 4away from open land to desired growth centers (thus preserving the entire open parcel) and cluster zoning for the development that does occur outside the centers (thus preserving half of the parcel).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider multiple ways to fund the acquisition of desirable open space parcels so the Town is in a position to take advantage of opportunities when they arise.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use tax income from economic development</li> <li>○ Consider higher Community Preservation Act assessments and continue to use Community Preservation funds for purchase of high priority sites</li> <li>○ Borrow funds for major purchases</li> <li>○ Research other fund opportunities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Utilize other regulatory tools and incentives to protect open space.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Actively support agriculture</li> <li>○ Provide tax incentives to protect open space</li> <li>○ Promote community gardens, country fairs and farmer’s markets</li> <li>○ Purchase agricultural preservation restrictions (APRs), with money coming from the Community Preservation Act funds, Transfer of Development Rights, and other sources.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

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<b>Objective 1.2: Preserve historic buildings and landscapes</b>			
Develop preservation priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Define historic characteristics (buildings, views, landscapes, etc.) and work with relevant Committees to actively preserve these.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Incorporate appropriate recommendations from 2006 Freedom’s Way Heritage Landscape Inventory and refer to Mass Historic Commission Survey Forms</li> <li>○ Consider desirability of expanding current historic districts to include older historic homes and historically significant structures (as listed in the Cultural Resources List)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
Preserve historically significant buildings, landscapes and other historic features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expand and use Acton’s Scenic Roads Bylaw to protect landscape features (See Objective 1.1)</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Coordinate Historic District Commission review with development of design guidelines and special permit review of development in village centers. (See Objectives 1.3 and 1.4)</i></li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct outreach to private historical property owners from town or preservationists to help with funding and encourage preservation</li> </ul>		
<b>Objective 1.3: Foster an understanding and appreciation for what makes Acton unique, including its history.</b>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Invest in tourist support infrastructure for certain key sites and publicize town features (historic site, nature trails, etc)</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve town entrances / gateways to be welcoming &amp; reflect the Town’s historic heritage</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to support historic celebrations and efforts to increase awareness of historic past (e.g. events, plaques, Historic Marker program)</li> </ul>		

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<b>Objective 1.4: Manage growth pro-actively</b>			
Develop a comprehensive site and design review process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support the further refinement of Acton’s design guidelines for commercial development<sup>5</sup> and the extension of the guidelines to include residential and mixed-use development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Add incentives dependent on preserving character and compatibility with historic resources [example in endnote<sup>6</sup>]</li> <li>○ Make guidelines specific to targeted growth centers and other areas of town to make residential and commercial development consistent with other 2020 Plan goals</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider ways to strengthen the design review process and implement improvements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This may include providing decision-making authority to the reviewing board in certain cases (the Design Review Board is an advisory board currently). Consider whether design review authority should reside with an elected Board and if a Board other than the BoS should have this authority.</li> <li>○ For special permits, expand and standardize the information required from developers, e.g., fiscal impacts of proposed development</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
Review and revise the Town’s bylaws and planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Research further use of by-laws beyond those already in place (e.g. we have a demolition delay bylaw, we don’t currently have a bylaw against clear cutting, etc.)</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review all current zoning and its build-out potential to insure our zoning supports the goals articulated in the master plan. Aim to simplify the zoning code to insure clarity of intent and to support the regulatory review process.</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage regional cooperation; create more formal structures for collaborating with neighboring towns to address common issues (including 40B developments, open space protection, etc.)</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Address 40B restrictions on Acton’s planning and zoning authority by preparing and implementing a Housing Production</li> </ul>		

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	<p>Plan (see Objective 5.2), and by supporting legislation that would increase the control that Acton has over how and where affordable housing is constructed and that would recognize the affordability of Acton's less expensive housing units.</p>		
<p><b>Objective 1.5: Preserve and enhance village centers</b></p>			
<p>Enhance Village Centers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complete a Village Centers Plan, based on professional expertise and public input [wording?], that considers all potential village centers as part of a system of centers [or maybe a series of village center plans for selected areas such as WAV and KC] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Define the desired character for each village and prepare development and design guidelines<sup>7</sup></li> <li>○ Reevaluate the Village District Plans and develop a priority strategy for implementation of key components so that the centers' full potential as villages are realized.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Planning, with consultant</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop zoning to guide growth through infill and redevelopment in and around existing centers in support of the village centers plans.</li> <li>▪ Specify minimum performance standards and density incentives for meeting additional specified criteria, including Transfer of Development Rights from areas the Town wishes to preserve. (See Objective 2.4 and 6.1)</li> </ul>	<p>Writing zoning: Planning, Planning Board, BoS, with consultant</p> <p>Application and development review: Planning, BoS (or other designated special permit authority), Design Review Board</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Update the Sidewalk Design Guidelines to include village-specific design guidelines.</li> </ul>	<p>Sidewalk Committee, Design Review Board</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage vitality; create attractive and walkable village centers through public investment, development guidelines, and developer contributions, e.g., small-scale “vest-pocket” parks and playgrounds. (See end note for more specifics.)<sup>8</sup></li> </ul>		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a non-profit semi-government organization to revitalize village centers [this needs more explanation or an example]</li> </ul>		
Preserve West Acton Village Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider designating West Acton Village (WAV) as a “key center” to which some growth is guided<sup>9</sup>. Prepare an urban design study of the village, and based on this study:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Decide whether to guide growth to WAV</li> <li>○ Delineate areas that should receive development, infill, and redevelopment</li> <li>○ Prepare WAV-specific design guidelines</li> <li>○ Create list of criteria to apply as incentives during special permit development review</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Concentrate Town investments such as sidewalks, landscape and streetscape improvements, traffic calming, and sewers in and around the village.</li> </ul>		

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Improve Kelley's Corner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop Kelley's Corner (KC) into a mixed use town center and transportation hub. Prepare an urban design study of KC, and based on this study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Delineate areas that should receive development, infill, and redevelopment</li> <li>○ Determine desired density and type of use for these areas, e.g., wide range of shops and restaurants</li> <li>○ Prepare KC-specific design guidelines</li> <li>○ Create list of criteria to apply as incentives during special permit development review, e.g., provision by developers of outdoor seating; separating seating areas from sidewalk with plants, low fence, etc.</li> <li>○ Consider Kelley's Corner gateway opportunities, i.e., what the design of this area should communicate to visitors and citizens as they drive into town?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make Town investments in the area to make it more pedestrian-friendly and to serve as a gateway (including sidewalks, benches, signage, landscaping, etc.); encourage the provision of outdoor seating; separate seating areas from sidewalk with plants, low fence, etc.</li> </ul>		

CI- Capital Investment, P – Planning, M – Management, R – Regulatory, E - Encouragement

<sup>1</sup> Acton's Scenic Roads Bylaw regulates the removal of stone walls and trees within the right of way for 33 roads. Using this prioritization as a starting point, consider other locations where stone walls provide an important reminder of Acton's historical development and land use or contribute to our appreciation of the landscape.

<sup>2</sup> The Freedom's Way Landscape Inventory is a 32 page report with many recommendations related to this preserving rural character. *[It may be advisable to list the most pertinent actions here]*

<sup>3</sup> See Guidelines for Acton Sidewalk Design at <http://www.acton-ma.gov/DocumentView.aspx?DID=856>

<sup>4</sup> Short definition or reference as to where to find definition

<sup>5</sup> See current at <http://www.acton-ma.gov/DocumentView.aspx?DID=343>

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<sup>6</sup> Example of incentives for preserving character.

<sup>7</sup> Identify and define roles, character, uses, issues in each village, and develop a traffic and parking plan.

<sup>8</sup> Examples of achieving vitality, attractiveness, and walkability include:

- Encourage activity by promoting a variety of uses at different times of day and night, such as grocery store, a variety of businesses, family restaurant, places for programmed events, pubs, movie house, etc.
- Support walkability in the centers by providing sidewalks along the street and well-lit and landscaped pathways to buildings and within parking lots. Provide parking on street and in combined lots behind buildings
- Encourage unique and fun window-shopping
- Support locally owned shops; develop “buy local” campaign
- Identify, seek, and support anchor with “pulling power”
- Provide more on-street parking to support businesses and help slow down traffic.
- Plant flowers and trees to enhance village streets and contribute to traffic mitigation
- Encourage our ethnic communities to contribute vitality through cultural events, celebration, food, etc
- Learn about the interrelated uses, street layout, and design elements that contribute to the success of village centers in other New England towns, e.g. West Concord.

<sup>9</sup> Use this planning process to ensure we understand what makes West Acton currently a successful village so that efforts to enhance it don't threaten what contributes to its village identity and livability.