



PUBLIC WORKSHOP

How Do We Get There?

Strategies for Action

A Public Meeting to Present Recommendations for Acton's Future

Purpose. The workshop held on Wednesday, November 9, 2011 at the Parker Damon Building, was a continuation of the community conversation that will result in a comprehensive community plan for the future of Acton. The purpose of this meeting was **to present the implementation plan**. This set of strategies was developed to help guide Acton to reach the vision developed with extensive input from the community at large. The workshop was held **to solicit input on the recommended strategies, including feedback on prioritization**.

Process. Approximately 65 residents attended the public workshop that began with a PowerPoint presentation that provided an overview of the purpose of the master plan, the process to date, brief summary of the results of both the research conducted on existing conditions and future trends as well as input from previous public workshops. This was provided as context to the main focus of the presentation which was to provide a summary of the implementation plan.

Following the presentation, participants were asked to distribute themselves among seven “goal stations” and one “cost station”. Each goal station was “staffed” by members of the 2020Committee as well as members of the Consultant Team. At each “**Goal Station**” participants were asked to read the priority action items posted on the wall and to make comments (adding strategies, agreeing/disagreeing with actions, etc.). They were also given 6 small dots (color-coded by goal) to prioritize strategies within each goal as well as three large red dots to prioritize across goals. Each goal station also had a wall sheet with a key question that participants were asked to respond to by writing their response on a post-it note and adhering it to the large sheet of paper on the wall. Every 10 minutes a bell was rung to inform participants that if they wanted to visit all of the stations, it was time to move to the next one.

The **Cost Station** was furnished with a board displaying a table of “Potential Estimated Cost Impacts of the Comprehensive Plan Recommended Capital Expenditures.” Each participant was given five \$20 Acton dollar bills and asked to express their spending priorities by inserting the bills into the boxes labeled with each item. Participants were also given the choice of inserting their money into a piggy bank that represented people’s “personal savings account,” for those who would prefer to save the money. Participants were also given post-it notes to make comments.

Participant Priorities Across Goals

The following is a listing of the strategies that participants felt were most important, represented by the number of “large red dots” they placed on the wall sheets at the “goal stations¹.” Please see per goal tables for a complete list. The top priority strategies are as follows:

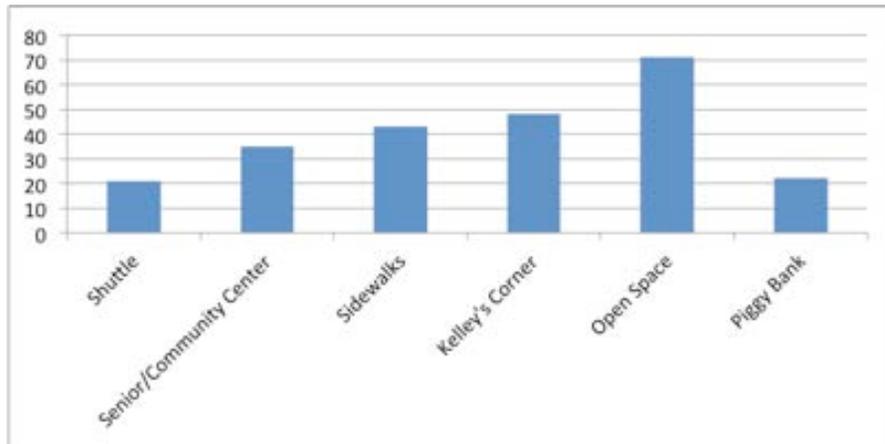
- Create a building that can accommodate the Senior Center & the larger community
- Support the implementation of the Open Space and Recreation Plan.
- Continue to support & achieve the high educational standards of Acton’s schools.
- Preserve historically significant buildings, landscapes & other historic features.
- Protect the quality & quantity of the water
- Increase opportunities for safe biking.
- Provide & encourage public transportation.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive site and design review process
- Build more sidewalks.

Also high priority were:

- Increase the Town’s fiscal capacity to implement all goals by proactively recruiting new businesses and retaining existing ones throughout the Town.
- Increase recycling and reuse.
- Reduce energy use in existing buildings.
- Review and revise the Town’s bylaws and planning process to support the 2020 Plan goals.

¹ Only those items receiving more than 4 red dots are listed

Summary of Spending Priorities



Summary of Responses to Key Questions

1. Which center should we focus on first: Kelley's Corner or West Acton or other?

Most participants felt that the Town should focus on Kelly's Corner first; some felt that West Acton has more potential and should receive attention first. One participant felt that the Town should move on both centers at the same time, just in different ways.

2. How can the town of Acton and the residents of Acton start preparing now for what might happen if oil and other fossil fuel products become much more scarce and expensive over the next 20 years?

Participants offered a range of recommendations including exploring alternative sources of energy, tracking the carbon footprint and planning for local capacity in terms of energy, water, food, etc. Most comments made connections between land use, planning and sustainability by focusing on mixed-use development, sidewalks, local shopping options walkable from neighborhoods, improvements to biking, clustering housing, and supporting employment oriented businesses.

3. Should we invest in maintaining and expanding the town shuttle?

Of those who commented on this question, twice as many participants felt that the Town should invest in maintaining and investing in the town shuttle than didn't. An additional number made comments that implied that they supported such an investment (e.g. "expedite development of vehicles that do not run on fossil fuels."), without saying so directly.

4. Should we create a center that accommodates seniors and the larger community (e.g. Senior/Community Center)?

The majority of participants responding to this question were in support of such a center. A minority felt that this is a major expense and that the Town should try first to maximize use of existing resources such as the library, schools, town hall, etc.

5. Should we develop an aggressive policy that GETS US TO 40B NOW (eg., by meeting the requirements of 40B in order to gain control over our land use as soon as possible by pursuing large rental developments) ...

OR ... should we instead RESPOND TO HOUSING NEEDS AS THEY EMERGE (e.g. give way to market forces while attempting to plan proactively with town investment in small-scale, scattered sites of housing affordable to a wide range of individuals)?

The majority of participants responding to this question seem to feel that the Town should promote the provision of affordable housing in small-scale, scattered sites and were not in favor of large developments.

6. If school enrollments decline do you think the increased fiscal capacity (e.g. funds) should be re-invested in the schools only or should it be allocated to other Town priorities?

The majority of participants responding to this question felt that in the event of increased fiscal capacity, the additional funds should first be re-invested in the schools and then shifted to other town priorities. Approximately an equal number of participants felt the money should remain in the schools as felt should go to other town priorities.

7. Should we aggressively invest in trying to attract businesses to Acton by for example, hiring an economic development officer? The majority of participants responding to this question either supported this statement or said that they might given certain conditions. A smaller number opposed it and yet others had other comments to make regarding economic development that were not directly relevant to the question.

Top Three Priority Strategies by Goal

Goal 1: Preserve and Enhance Town Character

- **Improve Kelley's Corner** (Develop Kelley's Corner (KC) into a mixed-use town center and transportation hub.
- **Improve West Acton Village** (Consider designating West Acton Village (WAV) as a "key center" to which some growth is guided.
- **Protect Open Space** and support implementation of the Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Goal 2: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

- Consider **extension of sewer to West Acton Village**
- Improve the **Transfer Station**
- Conserve **farm land** and support **agriculture** in Acton

Goal 3: Improve Connections

- Build more **sidewalks**
- Increase opportunities for safe **biking**
- Provide and encourage public transportation (Expand the **MinuteVan shuttle** system)

Goal 4: Provide more Opportunities for Community Gathering and Recreation

- Create parks and **informal outdoor gathering places in key centers**, and encourage commercial opportunities for gathering.
- Create and maintain **parks and playgrounds**, and increase opportunities for active **recreation** for all age groups.
- Create a building that can accommodate the **Senior Center and the larger community**

Goal 5: Support Inclusion and Diversity

- Integrate **teens** in the community by providing services, easier mobility, and activities
- Support **seniors** by providing easier access to housing, transportation, and connecting with the community
- Develop a comprehensive and proactive affordable housing strategy that supports the provision of a wide **range of housing types**².

Goal 6: Preserve and Enhance Town-Owned Assets

- Support the implementation of the **Open Space and Recreation Plan**.
- Preserve **farmland** and **conservation** land with agricultural and **forestry** uses.
- Continue to support and achieve the high educational standards of Acton's **schools**.

Goal 7: Maintain and Improve Financial Well-being of the Town

- Increase the Town's fiscal capacity to implement all goals by proactively **recruiting new businesses** and **retaining existing ones** throughout the Town.
- Do more to promote economic development to **enhance the commercial tax base** in order to reduce the residential portion of the tax levy.
- Develop new policies (such as providing a new **Senior/Community Center**) that encourage seniors to stay in Acton in order to increase the taxpayer/student ratio.

² including for people of limited means, and also allows Acton satisfy state 40B regulations.

APPENDICES

Detailed Listing of Top Priority Action Steps
Detailed Listing of Participant Response to Key Questions
Cost Station: Participant Spending Priorities
Participant Priorities of Strategies by Goal
General Comments

TOP PRIORITY Strategy	TOP PRIORITY ACTION STEPS ACROSS GOALS (as indicated by participants)	Goal #	# of red dots 
Create a building that can accommodate the Senior Center & the larger community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fund the planning, siting, and design of the building. Include representation from CoA and other potential users of the building to develop a space program, operating budget, and architectural design for the facility, and investigate potential funding sources to supplement Town funds. (Capital Investment \$\$) 	4	26
Support the implementation of the Open Space and Recreation Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect and increase Town-owned open space by applying a range of preservation and acquisition measures, e.g., purchase of conservation restrictions or use of Transfer of Development Rights zoning. 	6	11
Continue to support & achieve the high educational standards of Acton’s schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to keep the school system up to date and achieve academic excellence, using standards and best practices as they are developed. 	6	11
Preserve historically significant buildings, landscapes & other historic features.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordinate Historic District Commission review with development of design guidelines and BoS special permit review of development in historic village centers. Continue to define historic characteristics (buildings, views, landscapes, etc.) and work with relevant committees to actively preserve these. 	1	10
Protect the quality & quantity of the water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider extension of sewer to West Acton Village to serve redevelopment of the commercial area north of Massachusetts Ave and also to serve existing high priority neighborhoods identified in the Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan. Consider whether to rely on betterment fees for these improvements or to include Town contributions. 	2	9.5
Increase opportunities for safe biking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify locations for off-road multi-use paths, bike lanes, and wider shared lanes and shoulders to improve the ability of people to bicycle to destinations in Town. Construct improvements. (Capital Investment \$) 	3	8
Provide & encourage public transportation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand the MinuteVan shuttle. system with more vehicles, more frequent service, and longer service hours. Consider making it a fixed route system. (Operating Expense \$\$) 	3	8
Develop and implement a comprehensive site and design review process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Further refine Acton’s Design Guidelines for Commercial Development and extend the guidelines to include large multifamily and village center mixed-use 	1	7

TOP PRIORITY Strategy	TOP PRIORITY ACTION STEPS ACROSS GOALS (as indicated by participants)	Goal #	# of red dots 
	development. Consider ways to improve the design review process		
Build more sidewalks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Construct new sidewalks according to the priority list. Follow the sidewalk design guidelines when constructing new sidewalks or updating existing ones. Emphasize projects that provide safe access to schools, recreation areas, the train station, and the villages, particularly the designated growth centers. (Capital Investment \$) 	3	7
Increase the Town’s fiscal capacity to implement all goals by proactively recruiting new businesses and retaining existing ones throughout the Town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Actively promote employment-oriented development (e.g., high tech/R&D offices) in targeted areas. 	7	6
Increase recycling and reuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve the Transfer Station <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create a permanent sheltered drop/swap site at the transfer station. ○ Research single-stream recycling at the transfer center. ○ Re-consider implementing a ‘pay as you throw’ system. ○ Allow any Acton resident to get a “recycling only” sticker for free. 	2	5
Reduce energy use in existing buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a position for a Sustainability Coordinator, funded by the Town at ½ full-time equivalent (0.5 FTE), and expand these hours as other sources of funding allow. Provide advice to home-owners, businesses and contractors to undertake new building and renovation projects that reduce energy use. As workload permits, this person would assist GAB with other sustainability efforts. (New Staff Position \$) 	2	5
Review and revise the Town’s bylaws and planning process to support the 2020 Plan goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Carefully review all current zoning Town-wide and its build-out potential to ensure that zoning supports the goals articulated in the master plan. 	1	4

PARTICIPANT RESPONSES TO KEY QUESTION PER GOAL

Goal 1: Preserve Town Character

Which center should we focus on first: Kelley’s Corner or West Acton or other?

Center	Total # of comments For this center first	Comments
West Acton	4	
		<i>“West Acton has an actual chance of really becoming something in a reasonable time frame. Concentrate there first and it will be accomplished, then move on to Kelley’s Corner.”</i>
		<i>“West Acton doesn’t matter until sewers are there.”</i>
		<i>“West Acton! Kelley’s Corner is an eyesore, but if attention was given to W.Acton it could be a really functional town center with restaurants, cafes, and possibly a community center. Kelley’s Corner is already restricted by schools, Roche Bros., shopping, etc. W.Acton could be very quaint and attract high quality businesses. Fix sewer lines, put in sidewalks, make it pedestrian friendly, etc. I think it would be a great location for proposed community/senior center, if possible.”</i>
		<i>“Focus on West Acton Village. Make improvements to sewer system to support restaurants and quality businesses. Sidewalks, community center? Recreation...”</i>
Kelley’s Corner	12	
		<i>“Kelley’s Corner first.”</i>
		<i>“Kelley’s Corner has a huge development going on across from Starbucks. Get involved now or it will be set by others for the next 100 years.”</i>
		<i>“Put community center with mixed use housing/independent stores in Kelley’s Corner/ Kmart area.”</i>
		<i>“Kelley’s Corner needs more improvement than W. Acton. W. Acton is well on its way for town gathering space, but Kelly’s Corner is far from this goal.”</i>
		<i>“Kelley’s Corner equals eyesore. Fist priority, others to follow.”</i>
		<i>“Kelley’s Corner for sure!”</i>
		<i>“Buy the old Midas and Stop and Shop which owns McDonalds and Kmart.”</i>
		<i>“For 11 years I have been to meetings that talk about Kelley’s Corner. Less talk, more action. I would vote for it. W. Acton is great, minor refinements are good. Kelley’s Corner is terrible and needs love.”</i>
		<i>“Buy the old Midas to control its future.”</i>

		<i>"Kelley's Corner needs the long-range planning & zoning & infrastructure so that changes can happen, consistent with 2020 goals, as they become possible. W. Acton is important too, but if we focus there and ignore KC, we'll have lost the KC "battle" permanently."</i>
		<i>"Kelley's Corner: raze buildings, move roads to side, create Quebec-city and Mashpee Commons style walking village."</i>
		<i>"Kelley's Corner: more flexibility, an eyesore now, therefore a chance to improve a very visible part of town/ an entryway; close to schools – walkability."</i>
<i>Other or General</i>	<i>9</i>	
		<i>"We've lost the character battle. Let's preserve what's left."</i>
		<i>"What land does the town own in West Acton , South Acton or Kelley's Corner? Hard to prioritize until I know that."</i>
		<i>"How will people pay for the new Kelley's Corner? Seems to me it all comes out of taxpayers dollars, both local and state."</i>
		<i>"Infrastructure limits growth opportunity. Consider NO GROWTH like a Weston or Harvard. Too much traffic."</i>
		<i>"What about septic water quality?"</i>
		<i>"Shuttle up and down 2A too."</i>
		<i>"West Acton already too crowded."</i>
		<i>"Kelley's to effect change before too late, but sewers and continued growth of W. Acton too. Not an either or."</i>
		<i>"Put sidewalks, bike paths and transportation shuttle to the area you're developing."</i>

Goal 2: Ensure Sustainability

How can the town of Acton and the residents of Acton start preparing now for what might happen if oil and other fossil fuel products become much more scarce and expensive over the next 20 years?

“Increase availability of natural gas.”

Make it easier to bike, walk (paths), centrally park, implement wind power along Rt. 2, solar

“Designate an officer in town hall that can walk citizens through the steps to installing energy efficient/renewable resource appliances: Solar, Geothermal Heating and Cooling, etc.”

“Supporting employment oriented businesses and development so people are living and working locally through reducing transportation demand.”

- “Local green businesses”

“Supporting mixed-use development so that people live, shop, dine, work, etc. in one locale thus reducing transportation demand.”

“Create more sidewalks and shopping area local to neighborhoods; center of town area expansion necessary.”

“Tracking carbon footprint and put individuals on Quarterly tax statement.”

“Should have Super Stretch Code.”

“Let’s plan for local capacity regarding energy, water, food, support networks, etc. “

“Reduce, Reuse, Recycle”

-“Extended Producer Responsibility Resolution”

“Building construction utilizes extremely large amounts of energy – the higher proportion along with transportation; therefore, take steps to ensure that all new construction and retrofit/remodel in Acton is as sustainable as possible. Use LEED/Energy Star standards for ALL Acton construction.”

“Clustered housing with community and social connections. Public transit”

“Increase local shopping option.”

“Explore alternative sources of energy to heat and light public buildings, especially solar.”

“Paved paths through conservation lands.”

“Encourage solar!”

“The greenest building is that that already exists. Retrofit sparingly. Reduce new construction.”

Goal 3: Improve Connections

Should we invest in maintaining and expanding the town shuttle?

Yes/No	Comments	Total
No	<i>"If it is not economically self-sustainable, it is not needed."</i>	2
Yes	<p><i>"Never financially viable BUT <u>very</u> important and worth paying for."</i></p> <p><i>"Yes, promotes economic, mental, and physical health."</i></p> <p><i>"Yes, consider expansion to use by all ages, with marketing."</i></p> <p><i>"Absolutely!! A shuttle should be available all day for all citizens with frequent runs. Teenage use should be promoted."</i></p> <p><i>"Yes, consider expansion for all ages."</i></p> <p><i>"Yes, but it should be financially self-supporting through revenues of selling bus/shuttle passes, state/fed subsidies, donations, etc."</i></p> <p><i>"Yes, great way to support sustainable resource use and energy consumption."</i></p> <p><i>"Yes, reasonable cost/price."</i></p> <p><i>"Yes and regionally, Acton is not in isolation."</i></p>	10
Other (Yes, but..)	<p><i>"Expedite development of vehicles that do not run on fossil fuels."</i></p> <p><i>"Also should promote private companies like ZipCar."</i></p> <p><i>"Need to partner with other towns and organizations (e.g. Westford also has shuttle to Emerson)."</i></p> <p><i>"If it's well promoted and utilized yes. If underused, no."</i></p> <p><i>"Not sure ... like the idea, but not sure it can be done in a way that makes trips short and convenient enough."</i></p>	5

Goal 4: Community Gathering

Should we create a center that accommodates seniors and the larger community (e.g. Senior/Community Center)?

Yes/No	Comments	Total
Yes	<p><i>“Yes – possibly have both – either in house or “twin” building use like McCarthy Towne and Merriam.”</i></p> <p><i>“Strongly prefer multi-use space rather than senior only. Don’t like empty space.”</i></p> <p><i>“Not a” community center.” Encourage programs for young seniors (60-70)”</i></p> <p><i>“Have a senior center close to centers and shopping areas where seniors could meet all kinds of neighbors NOT just other seniors. Parks, shopping and community areas too (they could go to meetings and shop and library, etc.).”</i></p> <p><i>“Let’s create a place where seniors can have private use until times when the community could use the facility for other functions.”</i></p> <p><i>“Yes, both.”</i></p> <p><i>“Yes, accommodate both seniors and larger community in one building.”</i></p> <p><i>“Yes to community center. Maybe to senior center (new one).”</i></p> <p><i>“A senior center should be in a location that brings them into contact with the larger community is essential. It should be located in a village center where they can diversify the daytime population. West Acton would be ideal. Don’t put them in another isolated location at he edge of town.”</i></p> <p><i>“Yes, but I wonder if this should really be a town thing? They can’t manage a small</i></p>	13

	<p><i>playground, never mind a community center. A good one would probably be better if privately done.”</i></p> <p><i>“Critical that it be a community center that accommodates needs of all community demographics and integrates – rather than separates – opportunities for contact across age groups. Center should be central, reachable via public transportation (now/future), not at periphery where car travel would be required.”</i></p> <p><i>“Yes, but it should be located on the north of town, not on Audubon Hill. It needs to be accessible to all seniors regardless of where they live.”</i></p> <p><i>“Yes, though activities are as important as their space. A vibrant Kelley’s Corner and other centers with food and recreation together a la European parks.”</i></p>	
No	<p><i>“Reusing and better utilizing our current assets such as existing meeting spaces and schools makes fiscal and environmental/socially sustainable sense.”</i></p> <p><i>“I’m not aware that the existing Senior Center is lacking. I’m concerned about funds for building. And I’m a senior.”</i></p> <p><i>“It feels like Acton has plenty of meeting space (schools, library, town hall, etc.). Encourage its use by making it easier.”</i></p>	3
Other	<p><i>“Now that libraries are all digital, library buildings are not needed. Evolve the Acton library into a community center.”</i></p> <p><i>“I travel to Waltham to use the YMCA. Affordable and Awesome. Acton should embrace this! Young and old, use this! Pool, exercise – not just for old.”</i></p> <p><i>“Seniors should not be located at the edges/outskirts of town which would isolate them further. They ought to be part of town centers and villages.”</i></p> <p><i>“I agree!”</i></p>	4

Goal 5: Inclusion and Diversity

*Should we develop an aggressive policy that GETS US TO 40B NOW (eg., by meeting the requirements of 40B in order to **gain control over our land use** as soon as possible by pursuing **large rental developments**) ...*

***OR** ... should we instead RESPOND TO HOUSING NEEDS AS THEY EMERGE (e.g. give way to **market forces** while attempting to **plan proactively with town investment in small-scale, scattered sites** of housing affordable to a wide range of individuals)?*

Approach	Comments	Total
Get rid of 40B ASAP with large developments	<i>"Lets get to 10% ASAP because too difficult and political football to change 40B."</i>	1
Plan small-scale scattered sites	<p><i>"We do not want another large rental."</i></p> <p><i>"Not another large rental"</i></p> <p><i>"Smaller "friendly" projects (40B) and/or proactive efforts to develop affordable housing a la Lincoln (or whichever town bought land and set conditions for developer – really nice development (wherever it is)."</i></p> <p><i>"Smaller "planned" developments accessible to shopping and transportation."</i></p> <p><i>"Let the market forces work but the Town needs to embrace not shun developer so that there are more friendly 40Bs and less hostile ones."</i></p> <p><i>"Respond as needed with planning that is flexible to changing economics."</i></p> <p><i>"Promote use of deed restrictions as means to 10% without behemoth developments. Small, infill units are much more desirable, aesthetic, environmentally responsible."</i></p>	10

Approach	Comments	Total
	<p><i>“You can’t chase 40B. Will never attain. Respond cautiously and carefully trying to decrease big development but providing affordable housing.”</i></p> <p><i>“Allow sub-division of McMansions into little units, with benches and paths between – sort of turning big houses into cohousing of sorts.”</i></p> <p><i>Get out from under 40B ASAP BUT do it with <u>small</u> infill developments targeted to teachers, police, etc. PREIDENTIFIED rather than on spec.”</i></p>	
Other	<p><i>“I support affordable housing, but not 40B – 40B is seriously broken as a means of A.H.”</i></p> <p><i>“Acton has more than 20% affordable housing, most not deed restricted. So.. offer tax reductions in return for deed restriction,”</i></p> <p><i>“Idea of tax incentives for deed restrictions is an excellent one.”</i></p> <p><i>“40B is NOT always working for us (town). The system is broken.”</i></p> <p><i>“Do we have a clear sense of Acton’s growing senior immigrants?”</i></p>	5

Goal 6: Town-owned Assets

If school enrollments decline do you think the increased fiscal capacity (e.g. funds) should be re-invested in the schools only or should it be allocated to other Town priorities?

Approach	Comments	Total
Allocate to Schools Only	<p><i>"This has not been my experience. My 4th grade is in a class of 26. Class size too big."</i></p> <p><i>"Maintaining school quality is critical."</i></p> <p><i>"Acton schools are underfunded and even if you get 1600 kids in 2020- that's still a city-sized high school!"</i></p> <p><i>"Keep schools strong even if smaller."</i></p> <p><i>"School populations will not decline until the population stays in place throughout their lives."</i></p> <p><i>"Name a school that couldn't use some improvement or more enrichment opportunities. Not enough PE in school. Poor nutrition in cafeteria. Maybe more art and music? Use the money for the schools I guess."</i></p>	6
Allocate to other town priorities	<p><i>"If enrollments decline use the dollars to buy land."</i></p> <p><i>"Allocate to other priorities."</i></p> <p><i>"Fiscal capacity should shift to Town and infrastructure such as sewers."</i></p> <p><i>"Other town priorities including more programs for young people and improving quality of life for all Acton residents."</i></p> <p><i>"Allocated to other Town priorities."</i></p>	5

Approach	Comments	Total
<p>First re-invest in the schools, then to other town priorities</p>	<p><i>“Great schools keep property values high. We should invest what is needed to stay at the top and allocate the rest to other priorities.”</i></p> <p><i>“Maintain quality of schools for students in town, but consider revising split if extra dollars would be better used on municipal side.”</i></p> <p><i>“If requirement go down, keep the grounds up, don’t let the buildings decay, however redirect assets to projects that have been talked about forever, Kelley’s Corner, paths, etc.”</i></p> <p><i>“I think the Town should take only some of the money and use it for building more sidewalks or help building get in better condition, the rest should stay with the school to improve education.”</i></p> <p><i>“Allocate to other priorities AFTER bringing the spending per pupil to MA average levels (or higher)!”</i></p> <p><i>“Good schools = good environments, good education whether population demographics change or not schools are an essential part of a good community. All resources do <u>not</u> need to be devoted to the school system, but the standard needs to be maintained.”</i></p> <p><i>“Reallocation of a portion of resources.”</i></p>	<p>7</p>
<p>Other</p>	<p><i>“We need representational town meeting to aide fiscal responsibility.”</i></p>	<p>1</p>

Goal 7: Financial

Should we aggressively invest in trying to attract businesses to Acton by for example, hiring an economic development officer?

Approach	Comments	Total
Yes	<p><i>"1/2 FTE"</i></p> <p><i>"Yes"</i></p> <p><i>"Yes, by working with businesses, truly listening and responding to their needs and implementing policies and procedures that encourage public/private cooperation."</i></p> <p><i>"Yes with specific criteria for business types, etc. Businesses that maintain Acton's character."</i></p> <p><i>"Yes, make it fun, easy and exciting for businesses to come here."</i></p>	5
Maybe	<p><i>"We have an EDC. Before we hire an EDO, we should decide what we want and if EDC can do it."</i></p> <p><i>"No, businesses should be able to find their own way. Hire if we have the right environment."</i></p> <p><i>"If they are local, independent businesses in villages (retail) and work-oriented (high tech, R&D) that is near parking."</i></p> <p><i>"What do other municipalities do? What have they done to attract/keep businesses successful? Is having an Economic Development Officer the most effective?"</i></p> <p><i>"Possibly, but let's be sure that an economic development effort looks broadly with e.g. farming/food production, sustainable energy-related enterprises, etc. rather than just "standard" commercial business."</i></p>	5
No	<p><i>"Have seen no data from other towns that this will work."</i></p>	3

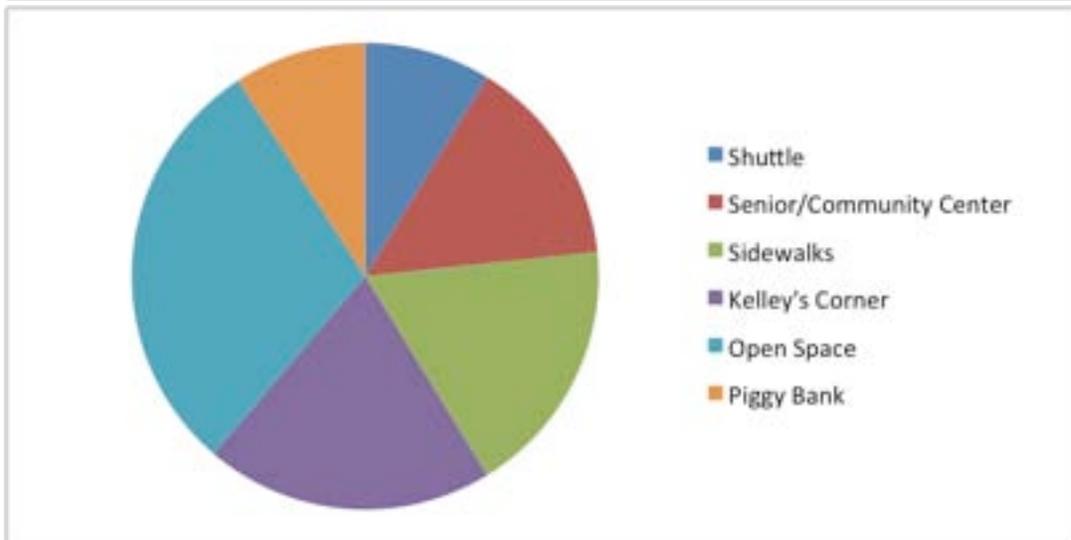
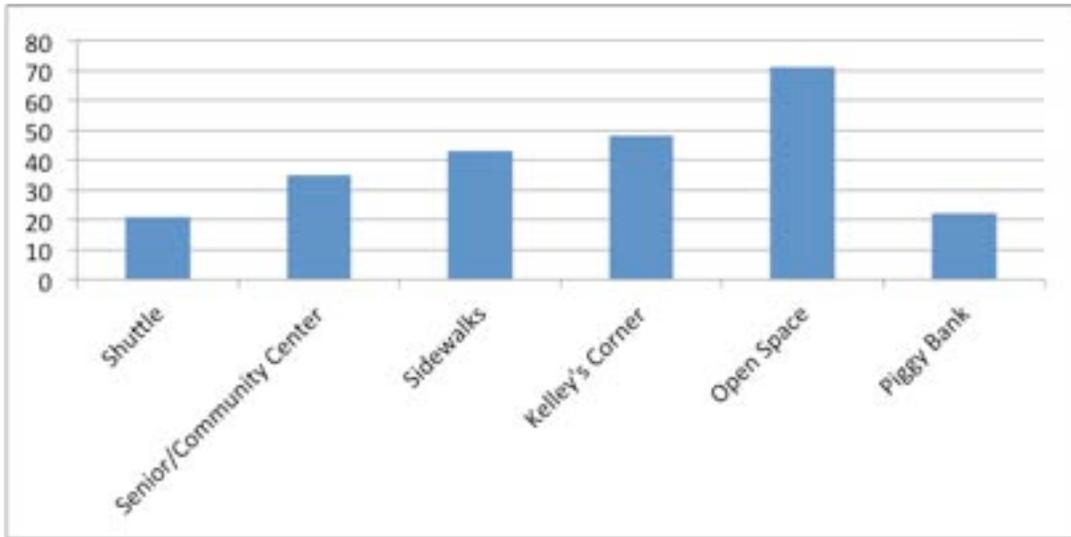
Approach	Comments	Total
	<p><i>"Agreed."</i></p> <p><i>"NOT if it means offering tax and other incentives."</i></p>	
Other	<p><i>"How do we compete with Devens and surrounding towns?"</i></p> <p><i>"We want to attract businesses but also be <u>selective</u> in terms of clean and green and employment/job creation."</i></p> <p><i>"If 87% of revenues come from residential why would we want more commercial stuff?"</i></p> <p><i>"Instead do something to encourage WORK FROM HOME and improvements to public transportation."</i></p> <p><i>"The town employees and staff ought to be well qualified, well educated and responsible citizens who place the interest of the town and its goals over their personal objectives and policies of pleasing selectmen or land developers. The present fabric of this town is fraught with inconsistencies where every zoning rule is malleable."</i></p> <p><i>"To encourage seniors to stay in town only tax above \$250,000 - \$300,000 of property value."</i></p>	6

COST STATION: PARTICIPANT SPENDING PRIORITIES

Participants were given five \$20 Acton bills with which to express their spending priorities.



Shuttle	21	\$	420
Senior/Community Center	35	\$	700
Sidewalks	43	\$	860
Kelley's Corner	48	\$	960
Open Space	71	\$	1,420
	21		
Subtotal	8	\$	4,360
Piggy Bank	22	\$	440
	24		
Total Deposited	0	\$	4,800



Comments at Cost Station

Kelley's Corner Improvements

"\$22 + normal tax increase."

"Are they about \$150 on average!"

"You need to explain the other "normal" tax increases that will happen every year."

"This is the area with the greatest potential to provide the needed community gathering businesses needed. It has sewers, access to conservation land, schools, historical society, Discovery Museum, office space banks, etc."

Open Space Purchase and Park Improvements

"There will always be times when CPA funding is not the appropriate course of action and we should continue to support this as an important part of the quality of life."

Townwide Sidewalks & Bike Paths/Lanes

"This can be created and added as part of economic development. At some point the cost of keeping up sidewalks and bike paths will become an issue as we add them. For instance Main Street sidewalk with trees down from the storm creates hazard because people assume they can use it and it isn't cleared. Adding this to the property owner's responsibility will add to the burden of homeownership just the same as taxes to pay for town upkeep of sidewalks. Something to think about. Good shuttle service is better option for most o the town outside the village nodes."

New Senior/Community Center

"Hope this becomes a multi-use community center. This feels like it will be a missed opportunity to build something that may not serve the whole community. Let's use our dollars wisely."

"I agree with this."

"Please make it multi-use, it at all. Believe there is ample empty community space that could be made more accessible for lower investment."

“This is a hard one to say no to, but I must. As I approach the age to use a Senior Center I have to stop and think hard about the changing life style of us baby-boomers who will be the users of a facility like this. Will I use it? Do I need it? Do I even want it? Is there a way to have the functions with out government doing it? My answer is yes. A vibrant business community with small cafes/lunch places for friends to interact. More options, i.e. price ranges and better transportation to them will fill the need.

The existing location needs better scheduling or even an alternative location for exercise classes. It also needs better designed parking if possible.

Just because the population is aging it doesn't mean it will need or have the time to use something like this. For the younger set encouraging businesses as gathering places is a win-win. Tax revenue, job creation, especially for teens or retirees.”

Expanded MinuteVan Shuttle

“This is important on all levels for our environment as well as for the well-being of our population of all ages. Studies show that mobility and sociability are the most important aspects to a healthy life.”

Other

“Design Review and additional preservation integration planner is an ongoing cost which I would support.”

Cost Station Set up at the High School

Results of Pip Stem 2011 "Reverse Science Fair" voting on Acton2020 dollars:

Franny Osman of the Transportation Advisory Committee repeated the Cost Station exercise with some high school students and their parents. They same boxes that were out at the Acton2020 event were brought to the high school science fair along with a copy of the goals/strategies. There didn't seem to be many people reading the strategies, so they used their "dollars" to prioritize spending on the words on the boxes: the piggy bank (personal savings account), the MinuteVan shuttle, Senior Center/Community Center, Sidewalks, Open Space, and Kelley's Corner.

Students and some parents streamed by and put in their votes by picking up a pile of 20's, laid out neatly in front of the boxes, and voting as directed. There was no oversight to prevent misunderstandings or double voting but there was a sense that participants were compliant. People seemed pretty serious.

The votes were as follows, in Acton Dollars:

\$1,580 Sidewalks
\$900 piggy bank³
\$620 Kelley's Corner
\$580 MinuteVan Shuttle
\$580 Open Space
\$320 Senior Center/Community Center⁴

³ NOTE 1: "The clipped money inside made the counter (my 9th grade son) feel there might have been some extra votes piled in--and I am not sure if the counter reduced the count to \$900 because of finding those clipped piles or if this was the actual number in there, which wouldn't be so surprising".

⁴ NOTE 2: "I suspect this would have been very different in this high school environment if "Community Center" had been written first!"

COMMENTS??

Please write any comments or questions you have regarding the process and/or content of the Plan and present these to a Steering Committee member, Staff, or Consultant.

The following comments were written on the back of agendas and submitted.

“These meetings are by far the most community-oriented I’ve ever experienced. On one level it is encouraging to see so many engaged town residents. My concern is that tonight’s gathering represents less than 5% of our town. How do we increase awareness/participation? I would have liked to been able to put a different color dot on plan items that I oppose rather than just those I support. I am curious to know what force of law the end result of these proposals have.”

“This meeting was one of the best I have ever attended. It was informative as well as allowing me to give my detailed opinion on a number of important proposals.”

“I loved tonight’s meeting. I learned a lot and really enjoyed the format.”

“I love that there are young people here tonight.”

“I thought tonight’s meeting was very successful. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on the plan.”

**Detailed Documentation of Participants Comments and Prioritization
Represented by numbers of dots per goal**

Acton 2020 Recommended Implementation Program

Selected Action Steps

Strategy	Action Steps	Comments	Place Dots Here
<p>GOAL 1: Preserve and Enhance Town Character</p>			
<p>Objective 1.1: Strengthen tools to manage growth pro-actively.</p>			
<p>Review and revise the Town’s bylaws and planning process to support the 2020 Plan goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Carefully review all current zoning Town-wide and its build-out potential to ensure that zoning supports the goals articulated in the master plan. 	<p><i>“We don’t have the zoning in place to protect the town. This wouldn’t happen in Concord or Lincoln – they have laws to protect the place and public! (photo of Kelley’s Corner recently cleared parcel attached to table).</i></p> <p><i>Any growth is going to require massive infrastructure investment. Traffic sucks now.”</i></p>	<p>26 small dots</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***</p> <p>(4 large red)</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In order to implement the 2020 strategies, add a full-time position to the Planning Department to assist with plans for villages and key centers, development review, and economic development. This position would also fulfill the role of Economic Development Officer (EDO). <p><u>Additional Staff \$</u></p>	<p><i>“Preservation planner would be most useful for the town.”</i></p>	<p>11 small dots</p>

Acton 2020 Recommended Implementation Program

Selected Action Steps

Strategy	Action Steps	Comments	Place Dots Here
Develop and implement a comprehensive site and design review process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Further refine Acton’s <i>Design Guidelines for Commercial Development</i> and extend the guidelines to include large multifamily and village center mixed-use development. Consider ways to improve the design review process 	“Acton zoning needs to reflect Acton’s fragile eco-system.”	17 small dots  (7 large red)
Objective 1.2: Preserve and enhance village centers.			
Develop priorities and framework for enhancing village centers.	Complete a <i>comprehensive Village Centers Plan</i> , including recognized villages and Kelley’s Corner, to determine which villages should receive more concentrated growth and to assess the amount and type of new development that is appropriate. The Plan should include a review of the existing <i>Village Plans</i> and their outcomes to date, and identify the highest priority components for early implementation to help the Town realize the centers’ full potential as destinations.		24 small dots  (4 large red)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and enact zoning, including Transfer of Development Rights, to guide growth through infill and redevelopment in and around existing centers in support of the <i>Village Centers Plans</i>. (See also Objectives 2.4 and 6.1) 		5 small dots
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore the possible benefits and risks of the Town’s financial participation in the development of key centers, with the objectives of catalyzing desired development, increasing control over outcomes, and sharing the financial benefits. Financial participation could include the acquisition of developable parcels and/or the acquisition of development rights to be used in Transfer of Development Rights. 		5 small dots

Acton 2020 Recommended Implementation Program

Selected Action Steps

Strategy	Action Steps	Comments	Place Dots Here
Improve Kelley’s Corner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Kelley’s Corner (KC) into a mixed use town center and transportation hub. Prepare a design study of Kelley’s Corner, and concentrate Town investments in and around it. <p><u>Capital Investment \$</u></p>		48 small dots **
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the development of an organization to revitalize Kelley’s Corner such as business association that could in time become a Business Improvement District or Community Betterment Association. 		7 small dots
Improve West Acton Village Center while preserving its historic character.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider designating West Acton Village (WAV) as a “key center” to which some growth is guided. Prepare a design study of the village, and concentrate Town investments in and around the village. <p><u>Capital Investment \$</u></p>		33 small dots *

Objective 1.3: Preserve rural characteristics and open space.

Protect open space and support implementation of the Open Space and Recreation Plan. (See also Objectives 2.4 and 6.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use zoning to protect open space parcels, and provide incentives for transfer of development away from open land to desired growth centers. 		32 small dots **
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 (e.g. tax income from economic development, higher Community Preservation Act assessments, “purchase and develop part” strategies as a way of funding open space purchases, etc.) <p><u>Capital Investment \$</u></p>		19 small dots **

Acton 2020 Recommended Implementation Program

Selected Action Steps

Strategy	Action Steps	Comments	Place Dots Here
Objective 1.4: Preserve historic buildings and landscapes.			
Preserve historically significant buildings, landscapes and other historic features.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordinate Historic District Commission review with development of design guidelines and BoS special permit review of development in historic village centers. Continue to define historic characteristics (buildings, views, landscapes, etc.) and work with relevant committees to actively preserve these. 		28 small dots  (10 large red)

Strategy	Action Steps	Comments	Place Dots Here
GOAL 2 Ensure Environmental Sustainability			
Objective 2.1 Protect the quality and quantity of the water.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider extension of sewer to West Acton Village to serve redevelopment of the commercial area north of Massachusetts Ave and also to serve existing high priority neighborhoods identified in the <i>Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan</i>. Consider whether to rely on betterment fees for these improvements or to include Town contributions. 	<p><i>Consider no betterment along Rt. 111.</i></p> <p><i>Improve tap water quality to W. Acton with orange, rust-colored, high mineral water.</i></p>	<p>42 small dots</p> <p>*** **</p> <p>* 1/2</p> <p>(9.5 large red)</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Where possible and consistent with water quality protection, utilize advanced package wastewater treatment with groundwater recharge for other concentrations of residential and commercial development. 		<p>17 small dots</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhance the quality of all discharges into the ground (both stormwater and wastewater) in current and new sources. 		<p>11 small dots</p> <p>*</p>
<p>Manage stormwater to reduce impacts on streams and to recharge groundwater.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In reviewing development, consider incentives and infrastructure to create better managed runoff recharge by limiting impervious surfaces. 	<p><i>Begin to regulate and track fill being brought in by developers to prevent further groundwater pollution</i></p>	<p>14 small dots</p>
Objective 2.2 Move toward a material economy in which there is no waste or accumulation of toxins.			
<p>Increase recycling and reuse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve the Transfer Station <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create a permanent sheltered drop/swap site at the transfer station. ○ Research single-stream recycling at the transfer center. ○ Re-consider implementing a ‘pay as you throw’ system. ○ Allow any Acton resident to get a “recycling only” sticker for free. 	<p><i>Revisit PayT!!</i></p> <p><i>Yes! Swap Shop!</i></p> <p><i>Install a conveyor belt at the transfer station instead of having to replace the concrete floor every few years (healthier too!)</i></p>	<p>39 small dots</p> <p>*****</p> <p>(5 large red)</p>

Strategy	Action Steps	Comments	Place Dots Here
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make private waste haulers more accountable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Require multifamily residential developments to provide a recycling strategy for residents. ○ As a license condition, require that trash contractors report annually to the town on numbers of households they serve, and trash and recycling amounts. 	<i>Consider town trash pickup to reduce travel time to dump – or perhaps a compromise of a single centrally negotiated contract for just those who want to use it to reduce environmental impact of multiple pickups.</i>	15 small dots
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase composting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Educate, advocate, and encourage home composting, and provide inexpensive composting bins. ○ Provide more composting services at the transfer station. ○ Study if requiring or encouraging curbside composting service would be practical and effective. ○ Encourage the schools to explore options and develop a food composting program, starting at the central campus. 		27 small dots *** 1/2 (2.5 large red)
Objective 2.3 Reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider a policy that new public buildings are to be LEED certified Gold or better. 		7 small dots *
Reduce energy use in existing buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a position for a Sustainability Coordinator, funded by the Town at ½ full-time equivalent (0.5 FTE), and expand these hours as other sources of funding allow. Provide advice to home-owners, businesses and contractors to undertake new building and renovation projects that reduce energy use. As workload permits, this person would assist GAB with other sustainability efforts. <p style="text-align: center;">New Staff Position \$</p>		13 small dots ***** (5 large red)

Acton 2020 Recommended Implementation Program

Selected Action Steps

Strategy	Action Steps	Comments	Place Dots Here
Reduce transportation-related CO2 emissions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organize web-based car pooling and ride sharing. 		11 small dots
Inform and educate Acton residents and businesses regarding energy efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct town-wide carbon footprint tracking and prepare and implement an energy reduction plan. 		19 small dots * *
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluate starting a “Transition Initiative,” a community-wide collaborative effort of citizens and Town government, using education, planning, and action steps to move Acton toward local resilience and energy autonomy. 		6 small dots *
<p>Objective 2.4 To move toward patterns of land use and land protection that support broad biodiversity, soil preservation, and healthy local agriculture.</p>			
Conserve farm land and support agriculture in Acton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect existing agricultural land through acquisition or transfer of development rights and promotion of agricultural tax abatements. 		38 small dots * * *

Strategy	Action Steps	Comments	Place Dots Here
GOAL 3: Improve Connections			
Objective 3.1: Make walking and biking easier and safer.			
Build more sidewalks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct new sidewalks according to the priority list. Follow the sidewalk design guidelines when constructing new sidewalks or updating existing ones. Emphasize projects that provide safe access to schools, recreation areas, the train station, and the villages, particularly the designated growth centers. <p>Capital Investment \$</p>		59 small dots  (7 large red dots)
Increase opportunities for safe biking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify locations for off-road multi-use paths, bike lanes, and wider shared lanes and shoulders to improve the ability of people to bicycle to destinations in Town. Construct improvements. <p>Capital Investment \$</p>		46 small dots  (8 large red dots)
Objective 3.2: Improve transportation around town.			
Provide and encourage public transportation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the MinuteVan shuttle system with more vehicles, more frequent service, and longer service hours. Consider making it a fixed route system. <p>Operating Expense \$\$</p>		38 small dots  (8 large red dots)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate the MinuteVan and Council on Aging shuttles, and consider combining them into a single system with both fixed route and demand-responsive capabilities. 		17 small dots 
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the number of Acton residents who use the commuter rail system, by providing more parking, encouraging ride-sharing, developing partnerships with business to provide additional shuttles, etc. 	<p><i>“Work with MBTA to get more cars on most popular runs.”</i></p> <p><i>“Commuter lot should have tiered parking (accessibility)”</i></p>	22 small dots 

Strategy	Action Steps	Comments	Place Dots Here
Work with MassDOT to improve access to and from Acton.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work through the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization to promote the completion of planned improvements at the Concord Rotary 		11 small dots
Objective 3.3 Promote communication among town government, citizens, schools, and the business community.			
Promote active engagement of citizens and the transparency of town government. Improve communication and centralized information regarding existing resources and events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disseminate information about existing Town resources and services, at highly frequented locations such as the Senior Center, libraries, and on shuttle vehicles. 	<i>“Encourage hitchhiking.”</i>	12 small dots
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create an event calendar on the town website that lists all town and school sponsored events including all Town Board and Committee meetings. (See also Objectives 4.3 and 6.4) 	<i>“Maybe if the town could manage this well. Right now I don’t like it’s website or communications all that much.”</i>	5 small dots
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider the formation of an Acton Citizens Academy providing classes, information, and events, where participants (both newcomers and established residents) learn about the different functions of local government including volunteer opportunities. (See also Objective 5.3) 		8 small dots
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Broadcast meetings of key boards (Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Finance Committee, Planning Board) and place copies of these broadcast videos on the Town website. 		
Objective 3.4 Support and strengthen neighborhoods.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage private efforts to organize neighborhoods, including communication among neighbors and group activities. 		14 small dots

Strategy	Action Steps	Comments	Place Dots Here
GOAL 4: Provide More Opportunities for Community Gathering and Recreation			
Objective 4.1: Provide community facilities designed to accommodate a variety of uses and a wide range of programming.			
<p>Create a building that can accommodate the Senior Center and the larger community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fund the planning, siting, and design of the building. Include representation from CoA and other potential users of the building to develop a space program, operating budget, and architectural design for the facility, and investigate potential funding sources to supplement Town funds. ▪ Capital Investment \$\$ 	<p><i>“And the larger community!!”</i></p> <p><i>“I second that.”</i></p> <p><i>“Larger community.”</i></p> <p><i>“Community center with a pool!”</i></p> <p><i>“Yes! But maybe not a town project.”</i></p>	<p>54 small dots</p> <p style="text-align: center;">  </p> <p>(26 large red dots)</p>
<p>Create and/or make available indoor facilities for use by families with young children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore accommodating the needs of families with young children in existing and/or new Town buildings, e.g., re-use of the existing Senior Center and scheduling space in schools and a new Senior Center. 	<p><i>“Town Pool!”</i></p> <p><i>“Gym”</i></p> <p><i>“Community & Senior Center can be connected space – with common central lounge/open area. Seniors & young families benefit from meeting opportunities.”</i></p>	<p>25 small dots</p> <p style="text-align: center;">  </p>
Objective 4.2: Provide enough playgrounds, fields for team sports, parks, and conservation lands that Acton residents can reach with safe, accessible, non-motorized access from nearby neighborhoods.			
<p>Create and maintain parks and playgrounds, and increase opportunities for active recreation for all age groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement the recommendations of the 2011 <i>Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)</i>. Develop a schedule to create conservation land, maintain and improve existing public playgrounds (with priority to NARA), and create new playgrounds using both public and private funds. <p>Capital Investment \$</p>	<p><i>“More basketball courts.”</i></p>	<p>54 small dots</p> <p style="text-align: center;">  </p>

Strategy	Action Steps	Comments	Place Dots Here
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve a playground, to include a play sprinkler and shade for young children. <u>Capital Investment \$</u> 		10 small dots
Increase opportunities for team sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore methods to maximize the use of existing playing fields and create new playing fields. Potential Capital Investment \$ 		10 small dots
Objective 4.3 Create new gathering spaces and utilize existing ones.			
Create parks and informal outdoor gathering places in key centers, and encourage commercial opportunities for gathering.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage developers to create pockets parks and public seating areas in infill projects and redevelopment projects. 	“Town Pool” “YES!”	57 small dots ***
Encourage use of existing and new gathering spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a ‘one stop’ mechanism for reserving meeting spaces in either town or school facilities. 		17 small dots
Objective 4.4: Support additional cultural activities.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the coordination between the Acton Memorial Library, the West Acton Citizen’s Library, and the Council on Aging. Continue to support programming geared to different age groups (particularly children and seniors). 		18 small dots

Strategy	Action Steps	Comments	Place Dots Here
GOAL 5: Support Inclusion and Diversity			
Objective 5.1: Support residents of all ages.			
Support seniors by providing easier access to housing, transportation, and connecting with the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the provision of housing that is appropriate to seniors (e.g. smaller units, located within walking distance of goods and services such as Kelley’s Corner) 		33 small dots
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide more transportation service for seniors. (See also Objective 3.2) 		10 small dots
Integrate teens in the community by providing services, easier mobility, and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide more activities for teenagers that are accessible without an automobile, (e.g. improved walking access from the schools to Kelley’s Corner and an expanded shuttle system) and involve them in the planning process (See also Objectives 3.1 and 3.2) 		43 small dots
Objective 5.2: Support households of all income levels.			
Develop a comprehensive and proactive affordable housing strategy that supports the provision of a wide range of housing types including for people of limited means , and also allows Acton satisfy state 40B regulations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide incentives for the development of housing that is “affordable” (meeting state standards) and/or simply within the means of people and families with low and moderate incomes, such as empty nesters, town staff, and young families at small, scattered sites especially in proximity to village centers. 		25 small dots
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a proactive plan to make rental and owner housing available at prices that Acton families of low and moderate income can afford and at the same time provide a means to meet the 10% state requirement that frees Acton from 40B development. The plan should be consistent with the planning for key centers. 	<i>“Need more detail.”</i>	22 small dots * *
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and expand the ability of residents who wish to subdivide their homes (and property) for economical housing (e.g., “in-law apartments”), subject to review of septic systems and effect on historic districts, as applicable. 		8 small dots
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider “purchase and develop part” strategies as a way of providing affordable housing sites while helping to fund open 	<i>“mainly care about open space (3 small</i>	8 small dots

Strategy	Action Steps	Comments	Place Dots Here
	space purchases	<i>dots for open space).</i> "	
Provide social support and economic opportunities for residents of low and moderate income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publicize and disseminate information regarding Acton’s Safety Net resources. 		6 small dots
Objective 5.3: Embrace cultural diversity.			
Meet with Town Department Heads to identify ways in which demographic changes (specifically cultural and linguistic) may have affected community needs and the provision of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore the need and feasibility of implementing actions such as: having the Police Department subscribe to AT&T’s translation service, translating key portions of the Town’s website especially pages dealing with regulations, services and emergency announcements, etc. 		3 small dots
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the recognition of cultural holidays and consider holding an annual Acton Multi-cultural Celebrations Day. 		16 small dots ***
Objective 5.4: Support citizens with disabilities in participating fully in the life of the community.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Apply Universal Design principles in new Town facilities and development guidelines and review to provide physical access benefits to all.ⁱⁱ 		10 small dots
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide more transportation options for the disabled community, e.g., expanded MinuteVan shuttle. (See also Objective 3.2) 		21 small dots

ⁱ“Affordable” housing is defined by the MA Dept of Housing and Community Development in terms of its cost and deed restrictions that maintain affordable cost over time. This definition is used by MGL Chapter 40B, which allows developers to override local zoning if a minimum proportion of units meet the state affordability requirements.

ⁱⁱ Universal Design refers to design principles that accommodate people with and without disabilities in the same way, e.g., curb ramps that provide access for strollers and shopping carts as well as wheelchairs. All new Town facilities and alterations must comply with ADA Accessibility Guidelines.

Strategy	Action Steps	Comments	Place Dots Here
GOAL 6: Preserve and Enhance Town-owned Assets			
Objective 6.1: Protect Town-owned open space.			
Support the implementation of the <i>Open Space and Recreation Plan</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect and increase Town-owned open space by applying a range of preservation and acquisition measures, e.g., purchase of conservation restrictions or use of Transfer of Development Rights zoning. 	<p><i>“TDR should not be lumped into here.”</i></p> <p><i>“Acton needs to change its zoning, it hurts the town.”</i></p>	<p>60 small dots</p> <p></p> <p>(11 large red dots)</p>
Preserve farmland and conservation land with agricultural and forestry uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conserve existing farming on town-owned land and support new and expanded agricultural activity and uses. 		<p>52 small dots</p> <p></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the Conservation Commission’s efforts to develop a Forestry Management Plan 		<p>1 small dot</p>
Objective 6.2: Support excellence in schools.			
Ensure that school facilities are well-maintained and updated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As enrollments decline allocate increased fiscal capacity in an appropriate balance between educational improvements and other Town priorities. (See also Objective 7.1) 	<p><i>“Don’t count on such a dramatic fall in student population – schools will pull in more kids.”</i></p>	<p>14 small dots</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with other participating districts to renovate the Minuteman Career and Technical High School. 		<p>5 small dots</p>
Continue to support and achieve the high educational standards of Acton’s schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to keep the school system up to date and achieve academic excellence, using standards and best practices as they are developed. 	<p><i>“Change schools to allow student-centered education.”</i></p>	<p>34 small dots</p> <p></p> <p>(11 large red dots)</p>

Strategy	Action Steps	Comments	Place Dots Here
Objective 6.3: Manage the Town's Facilities Efficiently			
Review and manage Town facilities in a manner that is proactive and cost effective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluate the condition and use of all buildings owned by the Town (including schools) to determine their most effective use. Identify appropriate reuse for potentially surplus facilities and determine whether or not it is more cost-efficient to sell, lease, mothball or demolish. 	<p><i>“We could make better use of resources by sharing them in times of lots use/no use. Example: The schools (esp. HS) have big libraries that could be opened in the evenings for the town’s people.”</i></p> <p><i>“Bury wires.”</i></p> <p><i>“Establish Acton’s own electric company, like Concord, Lincoln, Shrewsbury.”</i></p> <p><i>“If not our own power company, at least take over (from N-Star) the maintenance of power line clearances of vegetation (N-Star is not performing very well).”</i></p>	21 small dots
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manage, preserve, and replace Acton’s street trees. 		16 small dots ***
Objective 6.4: Continue to provide high quality services that are responsive to Town needs.			
Explore ways of providing Town services to address needs in a cost-effective manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore ways in which Town Hall can use current technology to communicate and disseminate information and provide services, (e.g., updating the contents, aesthetics, and access of the Town website, setting up payment notifications for taxes and other bills online for residents, and making the permitting process simpler by establishing online application forms 		20 small dots

Acton 2020 Recommended Implementation Program

Selected Action Steps

Strategy	Action Steps	Comments	Place Dots Here
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore regionalization opportunities to cut costs in service delivery, (examples include police and fire services, services such as community center, housing authority, inspectional services, and nursing). . (See Objectives 4.1 and 7.1) 		15 small dots
6.5 Provide Excellent Public Health and Safety Services			
Ensure that public health and safety services respond to demographic and other changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determine the most effective way to deliver public safety services (including dispatch) quickly and efficiently as the Town grows and its distribution changes. 		6 small dots
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluate the Acton Nursing Service to determine the most appropriate way of delivering this service, in light of an increasing elderly population. 		12 small dots

Strategy	Action Steps	Comments	Place Dots Here
GOAL 7: Maintain and Improve Financial Well-being of the Town			
Objective 7.1 Promote fiscal responsibility.			
Actively manage Town finances to avoid an undue tax burden on residential property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do more to promote economic development to enhance the commercial tax base in order to reduce the residential portion of the tax levy. 	“Consider increasing business tax rate”	31 small dots ***
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new policies (such as providing a new Senior/Community Center) that encourage seniors to stay in Acton in order to increase the taxpayer/student ratio. (See also Objectives 1.5, 4.1, 5.1, and 7.4) 	“How does encouraging the seniors to stay help? They consume less , do not provide jobs, and require more services. They add value in other ways, but I want to understand how it helps Acton financially.”	31 small dots ***** (8 large red dots)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accelerate the process of long-range planning for major capital expenditures and integrate capital planning with the Acton 2020 Comprehensive Community Plan. 		24 small dots *
Optimize the productivity of Town staff and resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the level of services that the Town can provide with existing resources through the evaluation of priorities and by incorporating improvements in technology. 		23 small dots
Objective 7.2 Promote economic development that supports other Acton 2020 comprehensive planning goals.			
Increase the Town’s fiscal capacity to implement all goals by proactively recruiting new businesses and retaining existing ones throughout the Town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively promote employment-oriented development (e.g., high tech/R&D offices) in targeted areas. 		54 small dots ***** (6 large red dots)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively recruit a small-scale movie theater to locate in Acton. (See also Objective 4.4) 		9 small dots

Strategy	Action Steps	Comments	Place Dots Here
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Actively recruit restaurants to increase their number and variety. (See also Objective 4.3) 		19 small dots *
Objective 7.3 Improve existing commercial areas.			
Be more business friendly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve the business permitting process, including implementing permit tracking software. (See also Objective 3.3) 		25 small dots **
Objective 7.4 Support the financial ability of all residents to stay in Acton for a lifetime.			
Implement measures that give seniors a real choice regarding aging in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the creation of a wide range of housing types, as consistent with other Acton 2020 planning goals. 		20 small dots *