

From: [Margaret Woolley Busse](#)
To: [Acton 2020 Committee](#)
Subject: FW: Master plans from other towns - fyi
Date: Sunday, December 11, 2011 10:37:49 PM

From Ann Sussman.

-----Original Message-----

From: ann sussman [<mailto:annsmail4@gmail.com>]
Sent: Friday, December 09, 2011 11:17 AM
To: Margaret Woolley Busse
Cc: Celia Kent
Subject: re: Master plans from other towns - fyi

Hi Margaret,

fyi -

Here are master plans that are good bench marks for excellence, I think, which you are welcome to share with your committee + consultants - if you haven't seen them already. (you are welcome to forward this email too) What strikes me is they are clear, well-written, graphically attractive + show integrated thinking - even though they are divided into sections as state mandates. To me, they offer a benchmark to compare Acton's master plan against.

Town of Hopkinton

http://www.hopkinton.org/planning/pdf/Hopkinton_MP_2007.pdf

Town of Lincoln

http://www.lincolntown.org/CLRP%20Master%20Page/Master%20Plan/Lincoln%20Comprehensive%20Plan_Rev%2010-14-09.pdf

As you know, I think there are certain key data points that need updating or are missing from PCs work so far.

In the Population document, the tax rate and tax burden do not match Department of Revenue statistics online now; Also for the total build-out population # for Acton, even if it's an estimate, I couldn't find it....although curiously it's mentioned in previous master plans. Maybe I missed it? Here's a great opportunity to knit together past master plans with this one - you know, there's a great story to tell here, let's tell it!

In general, comparative data from other towns in the metro-region with top school districts is missing. This makes it harder to snap Acton data into sharp focus, I think and prevents parents from knowing things they need to know. Here are general data I'd like to see:

- 1) If Acton is building 50+ new single family homes a year, what are the other metro-west towns doing (particularly one with top schools)? What's Lexington, Sudbury, Concord, Lincoln, Weston, doing?
- 2) If Acton expects school age population to decline by 1% a year....what does Concord, Sudbury, Lexington, Weston expect? The same number - the

opposite? The fact is - if there's a greater regional decline in kids in other towns, say Concord goes down 5%, - then Acton could be struggling even MORE than it does now to maintain services for kids in 2020 - in other words we can't say this work really looked out for our kids interests.

3) I think it would be very helpful for residents to see a listing of tax rates and tax burdens for Acton compared with the 9 towns it touches +/- top school towns. Will middle class families be able to afford to stay in Acton? It would be really relevant to see a graph of how Acton's tax rate (and tax burden) has changed since its first master plan effort in 1990. I have a hunch what it would look like - but could be wrong. My sense is many others would like to see this graph too.

Margaret, I'll be forwarding a more explicit list of concerns in the near future - but am awaiting input from other people. One key document that needs work and is misleading as written is here - Best Practices for Village Centers prepared in October 2011 - Lexington, Arlington, Concord, can not be considered models for anywhere in Acton for many reasons - would love to explain this to you and your committee in the new year. What Acton is trying to do with its village planning - four at once no less - has NO actual model - Acton will have to invent its own specific to Acton's uniqueness - and it's important your committee understand that before going to Town Meeting.

Have a good one!

best,

Ann