

# Town of Acton Housing Production Plan Housing Goals & Strategies

May 14, 2015

*Presented by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council*



## AGENDA

### Project Overview

### Review of Key Findings

- Housing Survey Results
- Housing Needs & Demand
- Development Constraints

### Discussion Groups

- Goals & Strategies
- Mapping Exercise

### Report Outs

### Next Steps

## **A Housing Production Plan (HPP):**

1. assesses local housing needs and demand
2. analyzes development constraints and opportunities
3. establishes affordable housing goals and implementation strategies

## **HPPs help communities to:**

1. understand local housing needs and demand
2. influence the type, amount, and location of housing
3. set a numerical goal for annual low- and moderate-income housing production
4. work towards the State's mandatory 10% affordable housing target

# Project Overview | Goal of Tonight

Agree on housing goals and strategies  
for Town of Acton Housing Production Plan

# Key Findings

What local housing **needs and demand** should the goals aim to address?

# Key Findings | Survey Results

“The middle class in Acton and surrounding towns is disappearing, and the cost of housing is going up. Larger numbers of people cannot afford adequate housing.”

“It is very hard to find affordable housing in Acton. We have been trying for some time.”

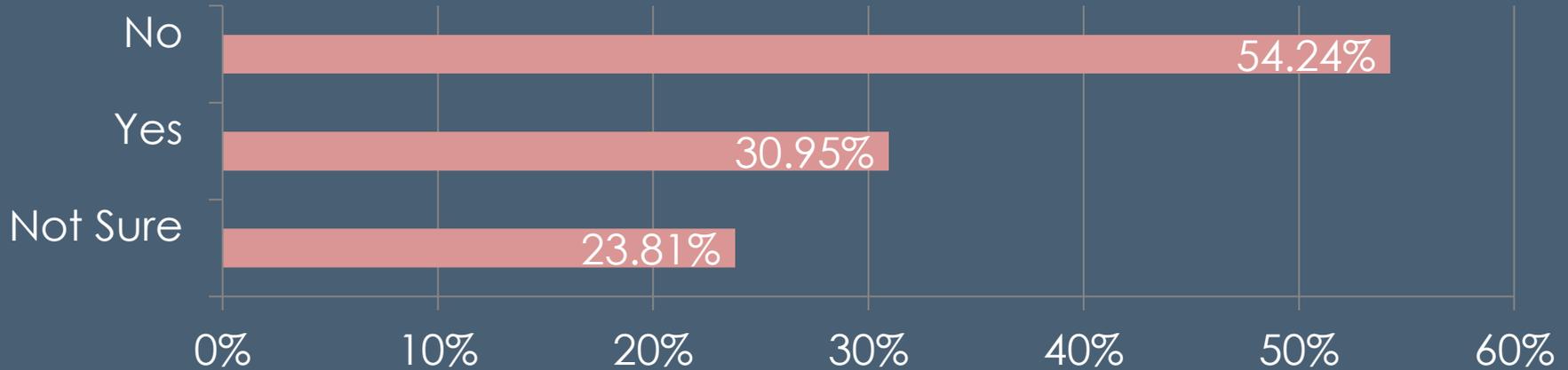
“I’m a person with a disability and I know a lot of people in Acton with disabilities who are low income. Many of us live in aging, degenerating apartment complexes along Great Road.”

“Seniors with IRAs cannot qualify [for affordable housing] because of assets.”

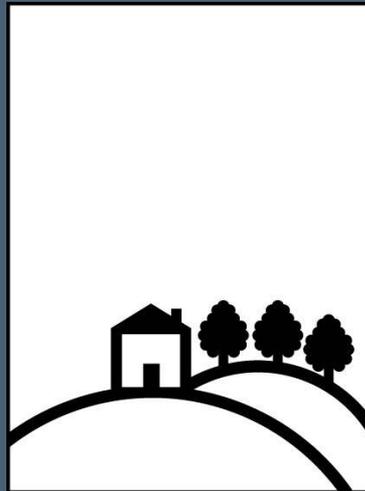
“We have LOTS of affordable housing in Acton. All we need to do is be more proactive about placing it in the ‘bank’ of ‘affordable’.”

# Key Findings | Survey Results

## Is there sufficient affordable housing in Acton?



Strong support for housing paired with open space anywhere in town, and support for mixed-use development in targeted areas



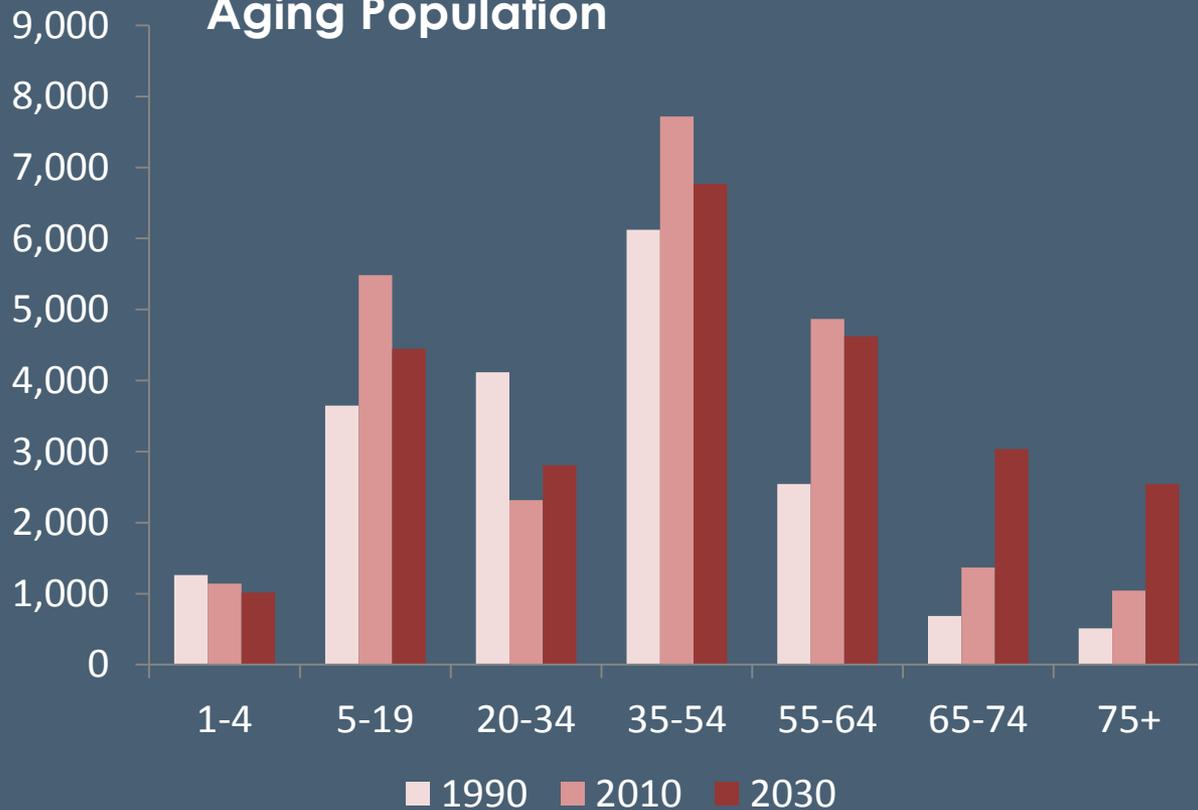
Strong support for multifamily housing throughout town, especially in business or TOD areas

# Key Findings | Demographics

**Growing  
Population:**

1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
17,872	20,331	21,924	22,577	23,625

## Aging Population



Decreased School Enrollment



2003-2014:

-4%

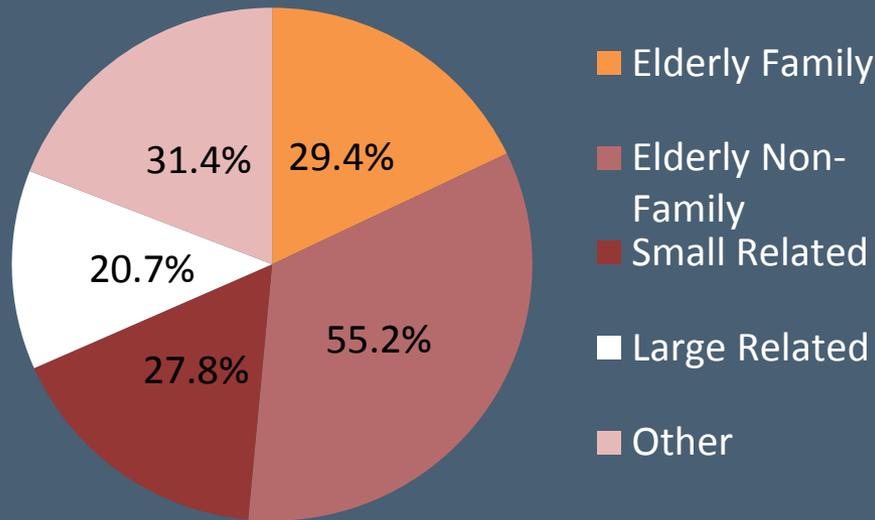


# Key Findings | Demographics

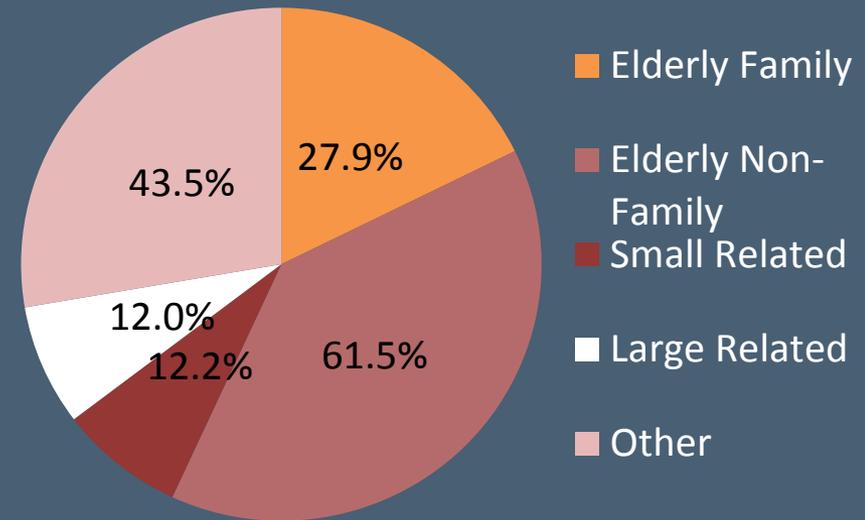
**MORE,**  
smaller  
households:

2000	2010	2020	2030
7,495	8,187	9,128	9,971
2.69	2.66	—	—

## 28% of Households Are Cost Burdened

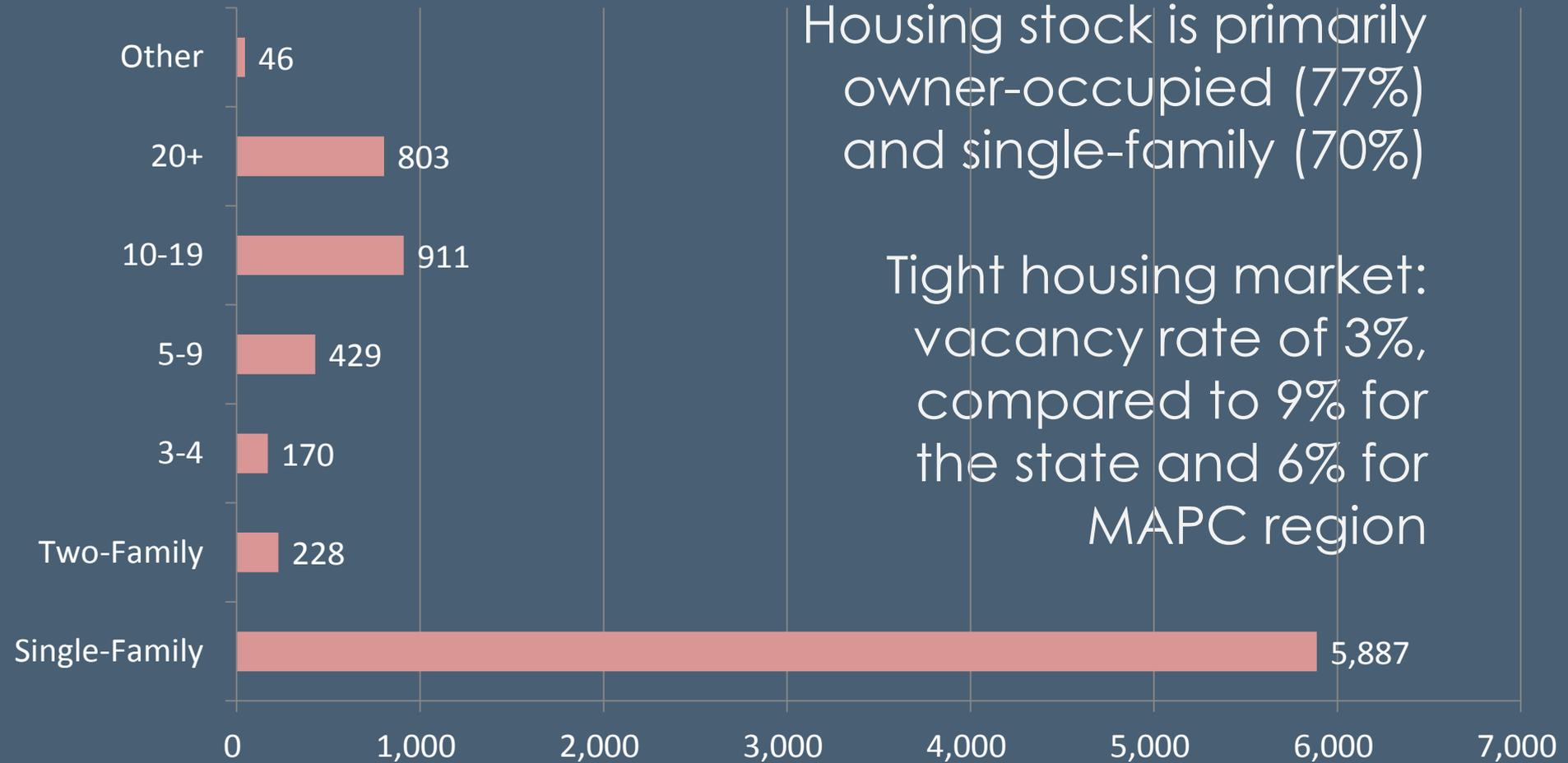


## 24% of Households Are Low Income



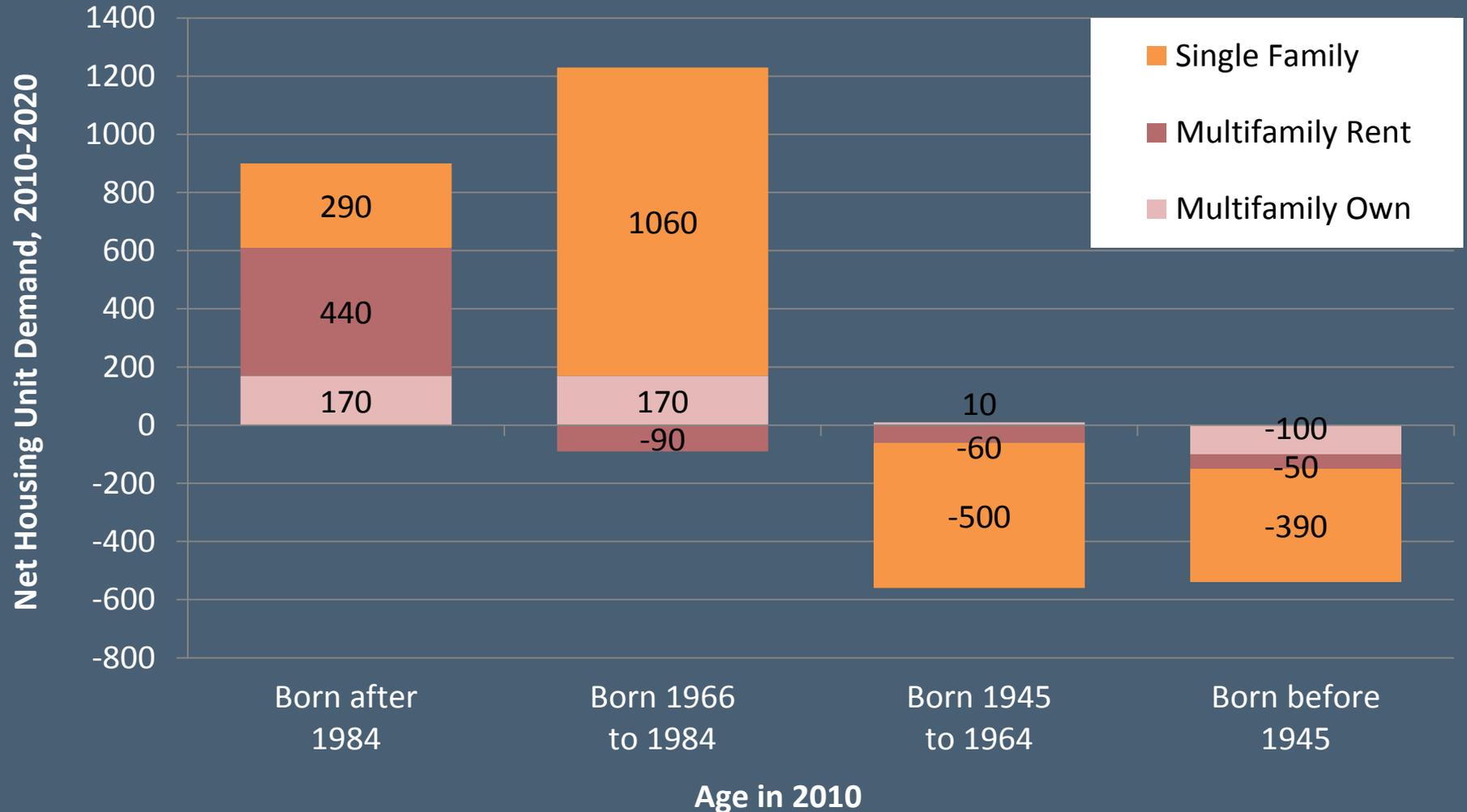
# Key Findings | Housing Stock

## Housing by Type, Acton



# Key Findings | Housing Stock

## Projected Housing Unit Demand, 2010-2020



# Key Findings | Housing Stock

## Acton Development Pipeline

Development	Location	Units	Housing Type	Stage
40B	Acton Center	12	Single-Family	Permitted
40B	Great Rd.	28	Apartments	Design Process
40B	West Acton	12	Single-Family + 8-bed group home	Design Process
40B	South Acton	16	Single-Family	Conceptual
Subdivision	Acton Center	4	Single-Family	Permitted
Subdivision	Acton Center	2	Single-Family	Permitted
Subdivision	North side of Rt. 2	8	Single-Family	Preliminary discussion
Subdivision	West Acton-Kelley's Corner	3	Single-Family	Conceptual

# Key Findings | Housing Stock

## 6.5% SHI



1,860 Eligible Households

551 Units

Shortfall of 1,309 units  
to meet the needs of  
current population

Vast majority of units  
are affordable in  
perpetuity

## Key Findings | Primary Housing Needs

- More housing to address low vacancy rate and a growing number of households
- Housing that is accessible and affordable to an aging population
- Smaller housing for shrinking households
- More multifamily housing to meet projected demand
- More affordable housing to meet the needs of low-income households
- More affordable rental housing to meet the needs of cost-burdened renters

# Review of Key Findings | Dev't. Constraints

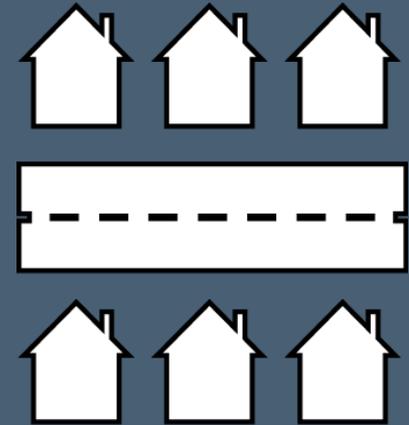


Natural & Built Environment

Capacity Limitations



Regulatory Barriers



Broader Context

# Goals & Strategies | Proposed for HPP 2015

What **goals** can we set to position the town to meet housing needs and demand given development constraints?

# Goals & Strategies | Proposed for HPP 2015

Goal	Lead & Support
<b>1. Work to Preserve &amp; Advance Housing Affordability in Town</b>	
1.1 Monitor and preserve affordability restrictions on existing units for as long as possible	Planning Department; RHSO
1.2 Work toward the 10% goal on the Subsidized Housing Inventory	Board of Selectmen; Town Manager, ACHC
1.3 Preserve “naturally affordable housing,” or those dwelling units that lack deed restrictions but which are less costly, such as smaller starter homes	Planning Board; Planning Department
1.4 Encourage “friendly 40Bs” by working with developers to create housing affordable to low-to-moderate-income households	ACHC

# Goals & Strategies | Proposed for HPP 2015

Goal	Lead & Support
<b>2. Build Community Awareness of Housing Demand, Issues, &amp; Activities</b>	
2.1 Increase resident awareness of unmet housing need and demand	ACHC; Planning Department
2.2 Provide affordable and fair housing educational/training opportunities to Town staff, and ensure compliance with the Fair Housing Act and other legal housing requirements	ACHC; Town Manager, Planning Department via consultant(s)
2.3 Engage the local real estate and development community to better understand trends in housing demand	ACHC, RHSO

# Goals & Strategies | Proposed for HPP 2015

Goal	Lead & Support
<b>3. Increase Town Funding &amp; Organizational Capacity for Affordable Housing Production</b>	
3.1 Consider increasing the Community Preservation Act (CPA) surcharge from 1.5% to 3%	Board of Selectmen; Community Preservation Committee
3.2 Ensure cross-Town Board coordination and alignment on housing activities	Acton 2020 Implementation Committee, Planning Board; Board chairs and relevant department heads, Town Manager
3.3 Seek out opportunities to work collaboratively within the Town and with the Housing Authority, ACHC, Community Preservation Committee, and the local Habitat for Humanity affiliate	ACHC, RHSO
3.4 Cultivate partnerships with the South Middlesex Opportunity Council, the regional independent living center, to deliver housing and other services to low-income residents	LHA; ACHC
3.5 Explore opportunities to work collaboratively with non-profit housing developers	

# Goals & Strategies | Proposed for HPP 2015

Goal	Lead & Support
<b>4. Target Affordable Housing Production Goals to Appropriate Areas</b>	
4.1 Encourage housing development opportunities at appropriate sites, including Kelley's Corner, Villages, and others identified through the master planning process	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen; Town Manager, Planning Dept, ACHC
4.2 Redevelop/re-use Discovery Way for housing opportunities	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen; Town Manager, Planning Dept, ACHC
4.3 Use Town-owned land for affordable housing production, with a special focus on development opportunities in South Acton	ACHC, LHA, Board of Selectmen; Town Manager, Planning Dept, ACHC
4.4 Identify vacant and other parcels with potential for development or redevelopment of housing varying in type, tenure, and affordability; market and support interest in these opportunities	ACHC, LHA, Board of Selectmen; Town Manager, Planning Dept, ACHC

# Goals & Strategies | Proposed for HPP 2015

Goal	Lead & Support
<b>4. Target Affordable Housing Production Goals to Appropriate Areas</b>	
4.5 Promote healthy housing through development of sites in walkable areas with limited exposure to outdoor pollutants	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen; Town Manager, Planning Dept, ACHC, Health Dept
4.6 Ensure coordination between the ACHC and Open Space Committee when reaching out to key land holders in order to balance housing and open space needs in town and on a given site	Board of Selectmen, Town Manager; Planning Dept
4.7 Provide opportunities and resources for Acton Housing Authority and others to develop supportive housing	LHA

# Goals & Strategies | Proposed for HPP 2015

Goal	Lead & Support
<b>5. Adopt Zoning Changes to Allow for Housing Choices &amp; Flexible Approaches to Achieve Housing Affordability</b>	
5.1 Rezone to allow the re-use and redevelopment of office buildings and other large structures suitable to multifamily housing	
5.2 Rezone to allow by-right development of well-located vacant office buildings or other large structures for multifamily housing	Planning Dept; Town Manager, Board of Selectmen, ACHC
5.3 Leverage development opportunities in the Historic District by allowing conversion of single-family homes to multifamily housing	Planning Board; Board of Selectmen/Town Meeting, Planning Dept, ACHC, Historic District Commission
5.4 Expand accessory dwelling unit bylaw to support the development of backyard cottages and other smaller dwelling units	Planning Board; Board of Selectmen/Town Meeting, Planning Dept, ACHC

# Goals & Strategies | Proposed for HPP 2015

Goal	Lead & Support
<b>5. Adopt Zoning Changes to Allow for Housing Choices &amp; Flexible Approaches to Achieve Housing Affordability</b>	
5.5 Establish a design review process as part of proposed development evaluation	Planning Board; Board of Selectmen/Town Meeting, Planning Dept, ACHC
5.6 Adopt Open Space Residential Design (OSRD) zoning bylaw with density bonus and inclusionary elements	
5.7 Consider adopting zoning that allows development of affordable single room occupancy (SRO) or micro units	
5.8 Offer developer bonus to encourage accessible and adaptable housing development	
5.9 Consider additional districts where zoning for mixed-use development may be appropriate, such as along Great Road	Planning Board; Board of Selectmen/Town Meeting, Planning Dept, ACHC

# Goals & Strategies | Proposed for HPP 2015

Goal	Lead & Support
<b>6. Address Unmet Housing Needs Through Programming</b>	
6.1 Assess need for diverse housing programs, including employer-sponsored housing, cohousing, intergenerational housing, and housing for homeless and at-risk populations	ACHC, Planning Board; Planning Dept
6.2 Encourage developers to build energy efficient units (LEED)	ACHC, Planning Board; Planning Dept
6.3 Encourage property owners and renters to minimize in-home exposure to irritants by adopting smoke-free housing policies	Board of Selectmen; Health Dept
6.4 Connect homeowners and renters to energy efficiency/renewable energy programs and incentives	Town Manager, Planning Dept, ACHC, RHSO
6.5 Promote existing programs aimed at helping seniors stay in their homes, such as housing rehabilitation and modification, emergency repair services, and buy-down programs	AHA; Town Manager, Planning Dept, ACHC
6.6 Foster linkages among social and health service providers, Council on Aging, Housing Authority, and seniors	AHA, Council on Aging, Community Services Coordinator
6.7 Promote existing and consider new programs that address the housing needs of veterans	Housing Authority
6.8 Promote homeownership opportunities for first-time homebuyers	RHSO; ACHC

# Discussion Groups | Feedback

1. Break into groups to discuss and prioritize proposed goals and strategies
2. Identify development and redevelopment opportunities on map
3. Report out

INSERT MAP HERE

## Next Steps | May - September

1. Finalize draft report and post online for public review
2. Meet with Planning Board & Board of Selectmen for plan adoption
3. Submit HPP to DHCD for approval

Questions? Comments?

Thank You!

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