



*Today. Tomorrow. Together.*

**Date:** May 14, 2015  
**To:** Board of Selectmen  
**From:** Acton 2020 Implementation Committee  
**Re:** Land Use and Economic Development Director Position Feedback

We thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the draft job description for the Land Use and Economic Development Director position. We appreciate your willingness to solicit feedback from the Town's various Boards & Committees on this very important issue.

This past Wednesday, Acton 2020 convened a meeting of the following boards and committees to collectively discuss the LU/EDD position. There were 18 individuals present representing 10 different boards and committees, specifically: Acton 2020 Committee, Economic Development Committee, Board of Selectmen, Design Review Board, Finance Committee, Acton Community Housing Corporation, Green Acton, Acton Conservation Trust, Historic District Commission and Council on Aging.

Although this letter will represent the views of the Acton 2020 Implementation Committee, we think it is important to note that there was a striking level of agreement within the group on the following recommendations and observations:

- 1) The duties and responsibilities of the LU/EDD should be undertaken in support of the goals and preferences outlined in the Town's Comprehensive Community Plan. Throughout our discussion, the group even began referring to this position as the "CEO of the Comprehensive Community Plan". Acton 2020 believes that this job description should specifically reference the goals laid out in the road map for growth as set forth in the Comprehensive Community Plan. This road map for growth was built with direct input from the community and should serve as a guide for the work done by the LU/EDD. The goals are as follows:
  - To preserve and enhance town character
    - Strengthen planning tools to manage growth pro-actively
    - Preserve and enhance key centers
    - Preserve rural characteristics and open space
    - Preserve historic buildings and landscapes
    - Promote sustainable development
  - To ensure environmental sustainability
    - Adopt land use strategies that reduce development of open land
    - Promote biodiversity
    - Planning for reducing Acton's carbon footprint
  - To preserve and enhance town-owned assets and services
    - Support the implementation of the Open Space and Recreation Plan
    - Provide more opportunities for community gathering and recreation
    - Protect town-owned open space



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- To maintain and improve the financial well-being of the Town
  - Promote economic development that supports the Acton 2020 planning goals
  - Recruit and retain businesses
  - Develop and maintain good relationships with existing businesses
  - Balance regulatory burden between public benefits and business needs
  - Actively work to be the public face for local business

2) The scope of work in the job description does not support the title of the position as Land Use and Economic Development Director. The duties currently listed are overwhelmingly administrative and supervisory in nature, as if hiring for an Assistant Town Manager rather than an LU/EDD. As written, the position is internally focused on the day-to-day functions of governing rather than on pro-active and long-term strategic planning in the areas of land use and economic development.

3) As currently drafted, the job description does not reflect the dual nature of the role that its title suggests. The scope of work is heavily weighted toward land use and mentions very little content that relates to economic development. The group recommends that the job description include more duties related to proactive economic development in accordance with the Acton 2020 Plan and that the description clearly delineates the two roles of land use and economic development.

4) The current draft has a boilerplate feel to it and does not speak to the unique and exciting opportunity this individual would have in helping to shape the future of Acton. The individual who fills this position must possess a diverse and unique set of skills in order to successfully combine the roles of Land Use Director and Economic Development Director in such a way that they support the long-term planning goals of the town. This person must also coordinate many diverse groups both in and out of government. In order to fill this challenging position, we believe the position should feature the following qualifications (among others):

- Experience in both the public and private sector
- High-level and lengthy experience, possibly 20 years
- Environmental planning experience and/or credentials
- Excellent interpersonal skills and experience at creating and managing teams
- Excellent multi-tasking skills
- Be an innovative thinker and a proactive problem solver

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide our comments and feedback.

Sincerely,

Acton 2020 Implementation Committee