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Planning Department

MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Board **Date:** August 1, 2005
From: Kristin K. Alexander, AICP, Assistant Planner
Subject: **Affordable Housing Plan**

In June 2004, the Town of Acton submitted a Community Development Plan (CD Plan) for approval by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) pursuant to Executive Order 418 (EO 418). Work on the CD Plan began in early 2003, when the Town received a grant from DHCD to develop a long-range housing production strategy. The Town's CD Plan, *To Live in Acton*, addresses two mutually dependent concerns – housing options and economic development.

The housing element of *To Live in Acton* analyzes and identifies Acton's housing needs and suggests specific initiatives and actions for the Town to meet those needs. Notably, *To Live in Acton* was designed to address housing production at multiple levels of affordability, not merely housing that qualifies toward the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory under Chapter 40B. EO 418 promotes housing for "a broad range of incomes," including households with incomes up to 150% of area median income for homeownership units, and 100% of area median income for rental units. By contrast, to qualify under Chapter 40B's Subsidized Housing Inventory, housing generally must be affordable to households earning no greater than 80% of the area median income (hereinafter, "Chapter 40B housing").

DHCD's Planned Production regulations provide incentives to municipalities to increase their stock of Chapter 40B housing. Towns that make incremental progress toward reaching the statutory goal of having 10% of its housing stock affordable can deny or approve with conditions comprehensive permit applications without a meaningful threat of an appeal. To qualify for this privilege, towns must have an affordable housing production plan certified by DHCD. While recognizing that its housing needs were not limited to Chapter 40B housing, Acton desired to have more flexibility in managing comprehensive permit applications, and accordingly, submitted a plan for certification to DHCD on July 12, 2005. The *Affordable Housing Plan* supplements the *To Live in Acton* Plan by defining specific affordable housing production goals, analyzing the capacity of municipal infrastructure and services to accommodate increased affordable housing production, and identifying specific geographic areas for future affordable housing growth.¹

¹ Information in this memo was taken directly from the Executive Summary of the *Affordable Housing Plan*.