



Acton 2020 Comprehensive Community Plan

April 2012

Volume III APPENDICES

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Acton 2020 Report Outline

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Summary of Public Input



Today. Tomorrow. Together.

Appendix 7. Summary of Public Input: Community Conversation: Phase II

Phase II of the Comprehensive Community planning process continued the extensive outreach to Acton residents by providing multiple forums for public input. The community conversation was held at specific, specially designed events, as well as by providing an opportunity for a continuous conversation on the internet (see next page for detailed description) and included the following:

- “ **60 Acton 2020 Committee Meetings**
- “ **7 Public Workshops**
- “ **10 Roundtable Discussions with Town Boards, Committees, and Commissions**
- “ **Movie and video clip to generate enthusiasm and inspire participation**
- “ **Roundtable with Town Department Heads**
- “ **Multiple articles in local press**
- “ **Continuous opportunities for internet participation: blog, Facebook, Acton2020.info website**
- “ **Youth Art Contest**

Approximately 2,500 people participated in the process. Actonians expressed a great deal of care and affection for their Town and a dedication to improving Acton's future.

The vision, goals and objectives that provide the foundation of the Comprehensive Community Plan is based in large part on this input. There was a significant degree of consensus regarding what participants felt they most appreciated about Acton, and thus wished to preserve and enhance as well as what concerned them and felt would pose challenges to the future.

Underlying Themes: The following underlying themes summarize the desires and concerns of the majority of participants in the planning process.

- **Community Gathering:** desire for indoor and outdoor places and events to meet and interact casually, spontaneously as well as in a planned, more formal fashion.
- **Town Character:** desire to preserve and enhance features, physical and other, including a commitment to excellence in education, rural and historic characteristics, including the preservation of open space, and small town feeling, which make Acton unique and contribute to its sense of community.
- **Connectivity:** desire for walking, biking, public transportation, traffic calming and improvements, and increased opportunities for social networks and connections.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** concern regarding our ability to ensure the future health and well-being of our environment.
- **Social and Economic Diversity:** concern regarding the ability to accommodate a range of socio-economic levels as well as the ability to age in place.
- **Financial Viability:** concern regarding the ability of the Town to protect its assets and maintain a viable balance between taxes and services provided.

Summary Of Electronic Outreach and Feedback

actonoutreach.com

This website, designed and created by the consultant team, was a static website used during the outreach phase to explain the process, document the results, and encourage participation. It had a feedback form that collected a few replies.

acton2020.info

This website, designed and maintained by committee members, was used during phase 2. It used the same design elements as the phase I website, with some more flexible CSS markup, and additional features and much more frequent updates, especially on a 'news' page. The feedback form brought comments to a shared online spreadsheet that was monitored by the committee. 40 written comments were received, ranging from very specific proposed edits to the plan documents, to concerns about the direction of the plan, to concerns about other issues in Acton. These were reviewed periodically at committee meetings, and helped to improve the plan, and to have a better pulse on citizen concerns. The website also requested comments on specific draft documents, and some residents sent in comments by email to the planning department, or brought in marked-up paper copies.

implementation.acton2020.info

This website, designed and maintained by committee members, was used during phase 2 as the implementation steps were developed and refined. It is a database driven system using a 'Drupal' backend that allowed for a wide variety of views of the action items, including searching and sorting. It allowed for editing by consultants and committee members, and comments by members of the public on specific items. 90 comments were received. These comments were reviewed by consultants and some committee members during the development of the implementation plan, and resulted in many improvements to the plan. The largest number of comments were from a local environmental citizens group, Acton Citizens for Environmental Safety, and these helped clarify and sharpen a lot of language in the implementation plan, and led to some additional action items.

Facebook

Committee members maintained a Facebook page at www.facebook.com/acton2020 for phase 2. It was used primarily to announce events and build general awareness. It acquired 70 'Likes' and just under 1000 page views during phase 2. It was not specifically design to draw feedback, but 4 posts from Actonians were received, 3 of which were general messages of support, and one of which was a specific request of the plan (to deal with electric car charging infrastructure)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7XzqmODdGJ8>

The committee recruited and paid some to local experts to write and produce a video designed to drive turnout to the June 23, 2011 meeting, and to raise general awareness of planning issues in Acton. Local volunteers were the actors. The video received more than 1500 views. A few comments were received on the video, mostly a conversation

about the meaningfulness, or lack of, in the planning process. A specific question was raised and answered about a traffic light in the town center.

blog.acton2020.info

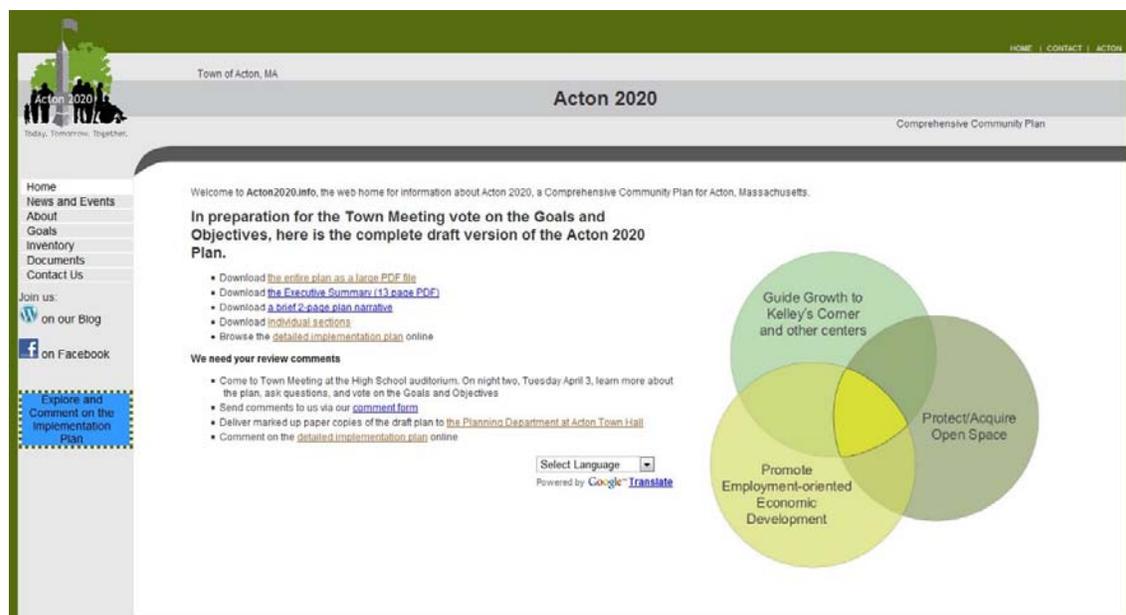
A blog was created and maintained by committee members using 'Wordpress' software to bring out comments about specific parts of the plan. This was particularly important leading up to the 'burning issue' meetings, where blog entries explored various possibilities for the future of the town, and encouraged responses and conversation. This worked very well. 258 comments from about 50 unique commenters were received on 40 posts. These comments were reviewed in committee meetings and improved the plan in specific ways, served to get and keep some issues in the public eye, and helped the committee understand the variety of public opinion.

Email lists.

The Phase 1 and Phase 2 committees maintained a list of email lists of various local groups, organizations, and neighborhoods in town. These were used mostly to drive attendance to public meetings, and to keep people apprised of the progress of the process. These updates also gave recipients an opportunity to reply with questions and comments, and many people did.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0X1grgnUvc>

Committee members wrote and acted in a short PSA created at the Acton public access studio. This played on the local cable, and was posted on youtube.com. It was designed for general education, and to drive attendance to the Town Meeting of April 3 2012, where the overall plan was described, and goals and objectives passed. No specific feedback was asked for, and almost none received: the YouTube posting received 92 views, 2 'likes' and one positive comment.



Summary of Public Input:

REVISIT, REFINE VISION AND GOALS:

OCTOBER 20, 2010

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**PUBLIC WORKSHOP:
Comprehensive Community Plan
Phase II**

Acton Boxborough Regional High School
Wednesday, October 20, 2010

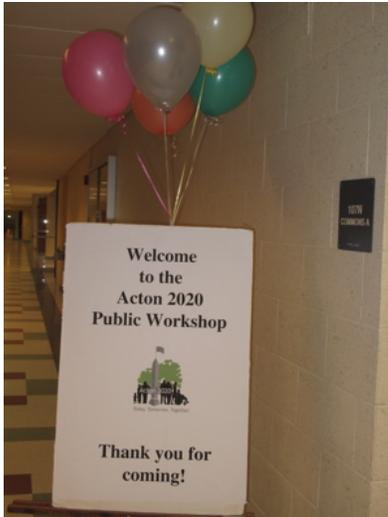
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MEETING PURPOSE AND PROCESS



Public Workshop

Acton Boxborough Regional High School
Wednesday, October 20, 2010
6:30 p.m.

Attendees: approximately 65 residents

Purpose

A town-wide public workshop was held at the Acton Boxborough Regional High School on Wednesday, October 20, 2010. The meeting was held to both inform the public about the comprehensive community planning process as well as to solicit their input on generating ideas to help move forward on Acton's master plan. More specifically, the purpose of this meeting was to bring together residents, business owners and other stakeholders to confirm the vision and goals developed in Phase I, and to begin to take these to the next step by taking stock of preliminary findings of an inventory of existing resources. The main objective is to continue the community conversation that will result in formulating recommendations for a community master plan for the future of Acton.

Process

Approximately 65 residents (based on sign-in sheets) and six (6) Acton 2020 Committee members attended the public workshop. The number of years participants reported having lived in Acton ranged from one (1) to forty-five (45). Participants were greeted at a sign-in table, were given several hand-outs and assigned to two small group discussions. Attendees were invited to view displays, information tables as well as to provide written input on large comment sheets located on the walls of the cafeteria while waiting for all to gather. There were also refreshments and childcare provided for anyone wishing to have their children supervised while they attended the workshop.

The Consultant Team (Planners Collaborative and Community Circle) presented a PowerPoint slide show summarizing the planning process, work completed to-date, and provided a brief overview of the inventory (data and analysis) they have recently completed of Acton's existing resources.

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The inventory of existing resources is organized by **master plan topic** (or element); these are:

Housing	Historic and Cultural Resources
Economic Development	Traffic and Circulation
Open Space and Recreation	Public Services and Facilities
Natural Resources	Land Use (to be completed)

Discussion Groups

Participants were then invited to join small discussion groups. The number of participants per group ranged from five (5) to fifteen (15). The groups were organized around the six primary goals that emerged from the Phase I Visioning process. These goals were developed around the six core values that were identified as being those that most residents cared most about; these were:

- ❖ Preserve Town Character
- ❖ Plan for Sustainability
- ❖ Improve Connections
- ❖ Provide Opportunities for Community Gathering
- ❖ Support Inclusion and Diversity
- ❖ Preserve and Enhance Town Assets

Participants were given a few minutes to skim the information handouts (described below), and then they were asked to participate in a facilitated discussion. They were asked the following questions in each group and were given the opportunity to participate in two groups (to discuss two goals of the six):

1. *Looking at the Goal Pages, please tell me whether you feel something is missing or should be given more of a priority in the comprehensive plan.*
2. *Do you see objectives as being potentially in conflict with other goals and objectives?*
3. *Is there any information in the inventory of existing resources (see Summary Sheets) which you would like to highlight and/or relate to this goal and objectives?*
4. *What are the biggest threats to meeting these objectives?*
5. *What are the most critical steps that Acton should take to meet this goal and related objectives?*

Participants were assigned to two discussion groups, so that two separate groups would discuss each goal. The main objectives of the discussion were to:

- Provide an opportunity for participants to review goals and objectives developed in Phase I
- Briefly review inventory of existing conditions and begin to relate these to the goals and objectives
- Begin to identify potential action steps to reach goals

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Informational Handouts

For each of these core values, participants were provided with “Goal Pages” a set of handouts that contained the goals and objectives developed around each of these (these goals are listed in the pages that follow under each the relevant discussion group summaries; participants had more complete descriptions to review).

Additionally, attendees were provided with a packet of “Summary Sheets.” These were organized by master plan element or topic (housing, economic development, open space and recreation, etc.) and summarized both what residents had said about this topic in Phase I (their concerns and desires) and what the Consultant’s have found in their inventory of existing conditions in Acton.

For example, for the topic of “Open Space and Recreation” residents in the Phase I Outreach seemed to agree in a variety of forums that they very much appreciated Acton’s open space and in fact would like more of it. They expressed this in a variety of ways such as:

WANT: “One of the things I like most about Acton is the parks, open spaces and green.”

- Almost three-fourths of Acton residents (74.4%) said they would like to see more open space preserved in Acton¹.

Research conducted by the Consultants in order to complete the Inventory of Existing Conditions revealed such facts as the following:

HAVE: “Approximately 25% of Acton’s 13,000 acres is in some form of public open space or recreation use. This is a higher percentage than Chelmsford, Westford and Littleton, but less than Concord, Carlisle, Maynard & Stow, and about the same as Boxborough.”

- More than 2000 acres are permanently protected

Participants were asked to also look at the other goals and to review all the master plan topics where there were both “wants” and “haves” that could potentially be seen as competing. For example, many residents reported wanting more activities – recreation, entertainment, restaurants, etc. On the other hand, many Acton residents also say they would like to see the “rural characteristics” preserved, more open space, etc. These two goals are potentially in conflict. Among the next steps in the discussion are deciding how to reconcile these by prioritizing and identifying locations where each of the goals can be most appropriately implemented.

The Existing Conditions Inventory provides information that describes demographic and market trends, current resources and their condition, potential future needs, etc. in order to aid in this discussion.

Report Back

All attendees were then asked to re-group for a brief report back and a summation of next steps. Door prizes were then awarded by lottery.

¹ From town-wide mail and web survey of all Acton residents

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HIGHLIGHTS OF PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

Among other issues, participants identified the following as being important to consider. Comments relate to each goal and to how the goals potentially relate to one another and to the inventory of existing conditions. The following is a partial list of suggestions offered by participants (see complete list in pages that follow).

PRESERVE TOWN CHARACTER

Missing / Emphasize:

- Preserve town character goal overlaps somewhat with the Town Assets goal
- Add something about Preserve and Protect Natural Resources
- Create more formal structures for collaborating with neighboring towns to address common issues (including 40B developments, open space protection, etc.
- Historic preservation should encompass landscapes as well as buildings
- Acknowledge the agricultural aspects that contribute to our rural heritage incl. orchards, pastures, dairy farms
- Importance of Design Guidelines to ensure business and residential development is in keeping with the goal
- “Preserve” West Acton and “enhance” the other villages
- Need:
 - More information and broader participation
 - Better governing structures to encourage an integrated approach to problem-solving
 - More data
 - To clarify which open space is not protected and to what degree protected space is indeed protected
 - To understand how water limits growth\

Limitations & Potential Obstacles:

- Provision of sidewalks could potentially conflict with aspects of other goals
- The cost of preserving historic sites is a potential obstacle to meeting the goal

Critical Steps to meet this goal:

- ❖ Create a visual build-out plan that captures goals for entire town
- ❖ Create a pro-active strategy to anticipate and react to open space, water resource protection issues and opportunities
 - Propose a package of by-laws (including for prevention of demolition, clear cutting, zoning, etc.)
 - Provide better incentives to preserve community assets
 - Plant trees to enhance Acton streets, especially in villages & Kelley’s Corner
- ❖ Consult the 1998 Plan

Additional Steps:

- Encourage regional cooperation
- Expand historic districts to include older historic homes
- Better non-car oriented connections
- Control residential development
- Strengthen village centers
- Publicize and make accessible town features (historic site, nature trails, etc.)

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- Improve town entrances / gateways to be welcoming & reflect our historic heritage
- There is no conflict with other goals because the others cannot exist without sustainability

PLAN FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Missing / Emphasize:

- The goal needs to be more active (e.g. not plan but do); needs more sense of urgency. Other things missing from goal: water, air, land use, quality of life, green house gases, encouraging denser zoning close to South Acton train station.
- Define and discuss sustainability further (what does it mean? Where are we and where to we want to go?, etc.)
- Identify specific actions
- Provide incentives
- Relate to transportation goals
- Relate to development, type, amount and location and reflect in zoning
- Relate to water
- Educate people on the need to be more sustainable
- Sustainability goal needs more attention to pollution threats and environmental threats
- Acton is a precarious place – the high school is at capacity and the town’s high tax rate discourages people from staying long term—it is not sustainable!

Critical Steps to meet this goal:

- ❖ Increase Awareness
 - Education in schools
 - Increase awareness town-wide (make goal more action-oriented)
 - Massive energy conservation drives
- ❖ Change rules and regulations (water, air quality, land use, green building, smart growth, mixed use development, etc.)
 - Water Resource Protection
 - Change zoning to restrict residential growth
- ❖ Town needs to be more financially sustainable
- ❖ Provide alternatives to car travel (public transportation, rail trails, paths, bike paths, sidewalks, share the road, light rail)

Additional Steps:

- Winterize homes
- Continue with town’s sustainability efforts (e.g. recycling, low-level street light fixtures, low-fuel vehicles, protecting water resources, etc.).
- We need actions not just “raised awareness about the need to plan”

Limitations & Potential Obstacles:



Planner’s Collaborative and Community Circle



11/15/10

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IMPROVE CONNECTIONS

Missing / Emphasize:

- Need to make biking safer
- Traffic congestion should be addressed (e.g. enforce lower speed limits, plow wider shoulders in winter, speed bumps, etc.)
- Provide better social connections for newcomers
- Potential conflict: adding sidewalks and protecting town character
- Need better communication of existing resources and events (signs, website, community bulletin board in multiple languages)

Limitations & Potential Obstacles:

- Budgetary constraints
- Walking and biking should be considered separately – they can potentially be in conflict

Critical Steps to meet this goal:

- ❖ More sidewalks
- ❖ More bike paths/lanes (and increase awareness regarding sharing the road issues)
- ❖ Improve communication regarding paths and events
 - keep maps current showing sidewalks and bike paths
 - Community Bulletin Board
 - Use Acton TV or Radio Station for better town-wide communication
 - Better town wide opt-in email communication system
- ❖ Provide transportation alternatives
 - Provide free shuttle around town
 - Add train station in West Acton

Additional Steps:

- Create neighborhood email lists
- Pave woody shortcuts so bikes, wheelchairs and strollers can use them

SUPPORT INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

Missing / Emphasize:

- American Indian history doesn't get as much focus as European history of the town
- Consider allowing people to subdivide their homes to allow parents and family members to live more economically
- We need to break out information regarding the Latino populations. The schools have this information
- We need to accommodate different needs (housing for the disabled, income diversity)
- We have more entrepreneurs and an increase in businesses out of the home
- Many town buildings, activities and trails are not accessible, that increases isolation
- Increase number of community events to include biking – kids learning together to bring community together
- Needs to be better communication between the Selectmen and the Housing Authority
- Too much talk about diversity – we just need to live our life
- Utilize seniors in the schools. What am I going to do when my children are not in the schools? What are we doing for our aging population?

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- ❖ Increase affordable housing²

Limitations & Potential Obstacles:

- Trying to find a balance
- Need to validate demographic projections
- More and more people are bringing their families-parents. Zoning needs to be more flexible.
- Future demographics have impact
- Who doesn't live here? Are you able to live in Acton no matter what your race, age, ability, economics?
- Connections are easier with people who have children
- Morrison Farm – trails – do we make them accessible – green vs. paved trails?
- Elderly moving out of town because cannot afford to live here
- Chinese population is very involved in their own community
- Economic recession
- Hostility in town towards low income housing

Critical Steps to meet this goal:

- ❖ Identify and use the tools we need to reach goals (e.g. zoning, disability, historic register protection)
- ❖ Increase the dialogue between multi-cultural groups
- ❖ Make a commitment to a community center
- ❖ Provide options for voting at Town Meeting (on-line, offsite, etc.)
- ❖ Transportation to connect seniors, teens, etc.
- ❖ Increase number and variety and location of community events

Additional Steps:

- Connect with technology

**PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES
FOR COMMUNITY
GATHERING**

Missing / Emphasize:

Community Center

Accessibility is key

- Community Center must be centrally located (Kelley's Corner?)
- Change the Kmart into a Community Center
- Should be a place where kids can walk after school

Other Considerations

- Offer place for connections with various ages and interests
- Expensive – which causes potential competition with other goals
- Create a virtual community center (but defeats the purpose of seeing friends and neighbors so would still need a place to meet).

Senior Center

- Given demographic trends, current senior center inadequate, location not ideal, should be a bigger resource for intergenerational connections
- Make it a community center with an emphasis on seniors
- Consider bring Danny's Place together with senior center
- Center should be central and versatile
- Should be multi-generational

² While Massachusetts has a statutory definition of affordable housing, participants may have defined this term in other ways.

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Other Ideas for Community Gathering

- Make the library more youth-friendly
- Need to develop a real town center (maybe West Acton?) to reduce driving/energy use
- Emphasize small outdoor gathering spaces (other than NARA Park)
- Acton Yard Sale or Flea Market (in Kmart parking lot)
- Increase use of current Senior Center
- More places to listen to and play music
- Look for ways to make existing community gatherings more multi-cultural and inclusive, e.g. Oktoberfest could be more diverse
- Danny's Place for adults
- Would be nice to have a town-wide group like the current Neighborhood Forums
- Movie Theater
- Need a diversity of places
- More collaboration – e.g. Community Ed, Rec Department and Town Boards should get together to offer programs
- Open space provides opportunities for community gathering (enhanced by Community Center). Protect open space.

Limitations & Potential Obstacles:

- Cost
- Accessibility (walking, parking, shuttle, location)
- Current budget priorities emphasize kids and education
- Lack of sewer in key central spots like West Acton
- People against change
- By-laws may present obstacles
- Security and safety
- Potential conflicts between:

- Desire for more businesses and unwillingness to pay for infrastructure to support them.
- Desire to protect open space and desire for more places to go (e.g. how do we bring in more restaurants and preserve character.... But there are opportunities for infill development, we need to zone where density is desirable so as not to gobble up our open space)

Critical Steps to meet this goal:

- ❖ Identify responsible party to lead effort (e.g. form a committee that plans programs)
- ❖ Ensure that zoning and budget are consistent with community gathering goal
- ❖ Identify development opportunities (partner with private sector)
- ❖ Utilize existing resources (identify potential)
- ❖ Identify accessible location(s) for gathering places
- ❖ Need community's consensus

Additional Steps:

- Ensure infrastructure and interests are in place
- Provide non-auto ways to access
- Careful design
- Foresee traffic impacts



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**PRESERVE AND ENHANCE
TOWN ASSETS**

Missing / Emphasize:

- The word “resources” should be used instead of “assets”
- People are assets, this should be a core value
- Stress the value and quality of water resources, both surface and drinking water
- Stress the value, protection and preservation of agricultural land
- Maintain and protect open space
- Include road capacity, rail trails and walking trails among assets
- Traffic not being addressed
- Need to serve low-income
- Need more non auto-transportation options
- Assets do not necessarily have to be publicly owned
- Non-public assets should be encouraged

Limitations & Potential Obstacles:

- Recreation uses versus Open Space
- Development versus Open Space
- Economic Development versus traffic impact
- Development versus water resources, road capacity, preservation and fiscal impact
- All the objectives are in conflict with the goal
- Need more data to better determine goal (including comparison to other towns)
- Developer’s need for profit
- Loss of private historical properties due to lack of resources of owners

- No outreach to private historical property owners from town or preservationists to help with funding
- Lack of tools and planning to allow agility for development

Critical Steps to meet this goal:

- ❖ Reduce growth
- ❖ Retain and preserve historic character
- ❖ Revisit 1998 Master Plan goals and objectives
- ❖ Strong support for historic assets (including roads, buildings, landscapes, stone walls)
- ❖ Identify and prioritize land needs and uses for all land in town (public and private)
- ❖ Develop practical implementation plan for the Comprehensive Plan
- ❖ Reduce town and school spending
- ❖ Define future obligations (measure impact of development, determine maximum capacity of town services)

Additional Steps:

- Redevelop economic development areas
- Ban clear cutting
- Archaeological by-law to preserve stone walls
- Indoor community facility
- More open space acquisition

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Some participants felt the need for additional data, while several participants expressed some frustration at not having enough time to review the information provided at the meeting.

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COMPILED PARTICIPANT RESPONSES

The following is a complete listing of suggestions made by participants in the small group discussions (the previous section summarized these and provided highlights). There were two group discussions per goal; both of these are combined for the purpose of the summary below. (Please see the Appendix for a detailed documentation of each group's comments listed separately.)

Preserve Town Character

GOAL: We feel strongly about preserving and enhancing what makes Acton special and unique, including its rural and historic characteristics and its village centers.

Objective: Preserve Rural and Historic Characteristics

Objective: Preserve and Enhance Village Centers

Question 1: Looking at the Goal Pages, please tell me whether you feel something is missing or should be given more of a priority in the comprehensive plan.

Overlapping goal. There is overlap with town assets goal

Natural Resources. Preserve and protect Acton's natural resources (features of land + water not just about owning it - but preserving and protecting).

Traffic. Come up with ways to ameliorate traffic

40 B Developments. Be active to ensure 40B developments don't undermine other goals. Make a plan, with other towns.

Historic Preservation

Emphasize value of historic preservation -historic roadways, landscapes, and walls, not just buildings.

- Preserve Morrison Farm as historic

Increase Awareness/Attention of Acton in revolutionary war period (and civil war)

Promote Historical tourism in Acton

Restore Acton Heritage (Gunpowder, pencils)

Create historic special events

Civil war: library, arboretum encampment, davis guards.

Attention to historic sites from Rail Trail

Rural Characteristics

Increase focus on **rural qualities**: Farms, orchards. (specifically: pasturelands / dairy farms)

Question whether Acton is rural. It is suburban, not rural.

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Question 2: Do you see objectives as being potentially in conflict with other goals and objectives?

Sidewalks

- Conflict with preserving what's there.
- Disability access (brick walkways) may conflict with historic design
- Sidewalks - conflict with image but not reality - not really in conflict with town character.
- Sidewalks vs. trees + stone walls
- Enhancing connections - bike lanes + sidewalks - hard to do on historic narrow winding streets
- Creating connecting sidewalks (and safety for children) may compete with historical preservation

Implementation: Goals vs. reality. How do we do them?

40B Development. poses challenge because of lack of local control.
- 40B Housing may impact existing historical housing

Design guidelines/considerations

- General housing development - to maintain town character / design considerations
- Economic development, without design guidelines.

Cost of preserving historic sites

Question 3: Is there any information in the inventory of existing resources (see Summary Sheets) which you would like to highlight and/or relate to this goal and objectives?

There are 3 **Historic Districts**

- Expand boundaries of historic areas
- Less school children = more \$ for historic buildings.
- Preserving town walls
- "Demolition by neglect"

Cultural Resources List - a good starting point

Open Space protection. Clarify what land that looks open is not protected - or to what degree it is protected.

- Preserving town space - support acquisition of property

Water. highlight how water limits will affect what we can do.

- Protecting land around surface water - need buffer zones
- There are 13 named streams in Acton - not 36.

Village/town centers. "Preserve" isn't the right term for villages except West Acton. Do need to "enhance".

- "connectedness: of building & enhancing town center
- commerce enlivens centers

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More data would be helpful

- Open Space and Recreation Data - comparative data from other towns would be helpful.
- Need more data on growth and development
- Want to Understand discrepancy between household count and units
- Need data checking - some seems to conflict.

Question 4: What are the biggest threats to meeting these objectives?

Growth Management. Unmitigated growth

- Lack of structures and will to manage growth
- Need to be proactive vs. reactive in general

Cumulative Impact. We don't look at cumulative impact, though our bylaws include it (i.e. wetlands bylaw)

- We're not implementing the cumulative impact rules we have.

Open space Preservation. Have limited options for open space preservation. Only tool used seems to be municipal purchase.

40B

Financing.

- Bad economy - people struggling.
- Competing fiscal priorities.
- Lack of incentives to restore historic residences - very costly - need to make it more conducive

Decision-making. Sometimes, lack of transparency, lack of information to encourage broad participation in decision-making esp. in order to preserve our assets.

- In group / out group. People get alienated.
- Lack of broad communication mechanism (like Beth Petr's list). Newspaper is fading.
- Fragmentation of Board and Committee responsibilities. Hard to look at whole issues.

Other Considerations

- **Sustainability** vs. historic improvements (ex: windows, doors)
- **Accessibility** (benches, wider sidewalks) vs. maintaining historic buildings.
- Need building & parking regulations that **maintain town character**
- (2A can be "anytown") - need to make businesses "uniquely Acton" / pedestrian friendly
- **Traffic** vs. expanding commerce and population
- Need indoor/outdoor **gathering areas** (ice cream)

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Question 5: What are the most critical steps that Acton should take to meet this goal and related objectives?

Critical Steps to meet Goals and Objectives of Preserving Town Character³

Action Step	Comments	# of groups (of two)	Priority Rating⁴
Visual build-out plan	That captures our goals for entire town	1	6
Better incentives	To preserve community assets	1	5
Traffic Mitigation		1	4
HDC, HC, Planning Board – package of bylaws	To prevent demolition, clear cutting, demolition by neglect, expanding HDC districts, improve zoning bylaws	1	4
Pro-active strategy	To anticipate and react to open space, water resource protection issues and opportunities – develop multiple tools	1	4
Preserve tree-lined streets	Tree-lined streets in West Acton and Villages and Kelley’s Corner.	1	3
Encourage regional cooperation	Urge people in town government to talk with other towns about common problems Learn from & collaborate with and share resources. Formalize structure for collaboration with other towns	1	2
Expand historic districts	To include older historic homes	1	2
Better non-car oriented connections	Park, eat, coffee/ice cream	1	2
Control residential development	To maintain character & open space/woods, keep the trees!	1	2
Strengthen village centers	Strengthen activities in village centers. Create destinations. Encourage strong town centers and less just passing through.	1	1
Publicize & make accessible town features	Highlight walking tours, etc. / draw people into Acton	1	1
Town entrances	Change + improve, more historic/welcoming	1	-
Consult 1998 Plan	Learn from ideas there. <i>Most participants asked that this be sent as a separate message.</i>	1	- see comment

³ both discussion groups compiled together

⁴ All participants were given an opportunity to contribute to a list of critical steps to meet the goal under discussion. Once the discussion was completed, all group members were asked to raise their hands up to three times in order to prioritize the list of steps.

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Plan for Sustainability

GOAL: Increase Awareness Regarding the Need to Plan for Sustainability
We value taking responsibility for our actions and planning for the future. We are mindful of our actions today because we are considerate of future generations living tomorrow.

Objective: Define and Discuss Sustainability

Question 1: Looking at the Goal Pages, please tell me whether you feel something is missing or should be given more of a priority in the comprehensive plan.

Missing

It is missing **water, air, and land use**

Quality of life is missing

Green house gases is missing

Urgency is not in goal

Wording of goal is off we need action

It is missing something on pushing denser **zoning** close to South Acton train station.

The goal is all wrong, no need to increase awareness we all know we need to be greener, we need to plan and implement changes **we need action** not planning

Definition and Discussion. What does sustainability mean?

Define and discuss sustainability what is the really

We have to not make things worse for future generations

How does a green house get built?

Historical, what is the impact of past changes to zoning?

Where are we and where do we want to go

Actions

Having town make **decisions** based on sustainability of their actions

Increase implementation **stream and water protection**

Control of fertility of **lawns and chemicals** in homes

Protect Acton ground water we drink our septic water

Water resource management is lost on our town

Globally green house gases are killing us we need to **think locally** and act globally

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Question 2: Do you see objectives as being potentially in conflict with other goals and objectives?

Goal needs to be more active.

Nothing on actually doing anything no need to be aware
Not active enough more like other goals
It is actually a regressive goal where is the action?????

No conflict with others cannot exist without sustainability

It is all possible

Acton as a town is not sustainable we will not be here in 10 years. Acton should only and can only sustain a population of 5000 people we need to move back to the cities

Question 3: Is there any information in the inventory of existing resources (see Summary Sheets) which you would like to highlight and/or relate to this goal and objectives?

We **need more time** to digest the information can get this done tonight

Goal is not measurable or action items **we need action**

Green goals should be **incentives** for **economic** activity

Incentives to business to be sustainable give them a carrot not a stick

Use East Acton incentives for the rest of town

Transportation goals schedule for public transportation

Car pool parking spots at the train station

Transportation, Traffic

Business need to pay for transportation to the train

Attract young people. Make town interesting to younger people too many large homes

Population, housing and land use

22,000 is not sustainable

Control the type of housing that gets built we need co-housing and green living

Build near the train station

WATER



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Question 4: What are the biggest threats to meeting these objectives?

Way of life

Our way of life is not sustainable
Consumption is unsustainable too many products
We need to re think our way of life

Development

Development is not thoughtful we have thoughtless builders and planning in town
Sprawl development is killing us
Stop residential development
Change zoning to stop residential development
Town lacks planning
Too many people

Transportation

Better rotary is only going to increase cars
Lack of public transportation is killing us
Lack of transportation planning is very bad
Stop rail trails they need to be for trains
We need trains north to south not just east to west

Education

Educate people on the need to be more sustainable

Zoning

Change zoning to decrease lawns and increase trees

Economics

Economy is under stress
Fuel cost too high



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Question 5: What are the most critical steps that Acton should take to meet this goal and related objectives?

Critical Steps to meet Goals and Objectives of Plan for Sustainability⁵

Action Step	Comments	# of groups (of two)	Priority Rating⁶
Education	K-12 education program	1	8
Change rules & regs	On water, air quality, land use & start smart growth policies, green building, mixed use development	2	8
Massive energy conservation drives	Include businesses, schools, residents, municipality	1	7
Change zoning to restrict residential growth	Stop increasing FAR Acknowledge limits of residential growth	2	6
Increase awareness	Get people to understand the need for sustainability, make goal more action oriented	2	6
Financial sustainability of town	Town needs to be more financially sustainable	1	6
Provide alternatives to car travel	Public transportation, rail trails, paths, bike paths, sidewalks, share the road, light rail	2	6
Water Resource Protection		1	5
Winterize homes & Increase public transportation	Town government should obtain grants	1	1

⁵ Both discussion groups compiled together

⁶ All participants were given an opportunity to contribute to a list of critical steps to meet the goal under discussion. Once the discussion was completed, all group members were asked to raise their hands up to three times in order to prioritize the list of steps.

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Improve Connections

GOAL: We recognize that a community that is connected is safer, stronger, and provides more opportunities for meaningful interaction. We envision supporting these connections through physical means including sidewalks, bike paths, trails and public transportation to connect people and places, and to support independent and safe travel for all. We also envision open communication as a means to further connect residents (e.g. through the web, cable TV, community bulletin boards, etc.).

Objective: Improve Walking and Biking Experience

Objective: Explore Ways to Improve Circulation In and Around Town

Objective: Improve Communication

***Question 1:** Looking at the Goal Pages, please tell me whether you feel something is missing or should be given more of a priority in the comprehensive plan.*

Walking and biking

- Walking and biking should be considered separately. Walking and biking requirements are different and cannot be grouped together. In fact, providing facility for one can take away from the other.
- Bikers on road is dangerous (minority view) – others suggested more signage to remind motorists to share road with bikers will help improve awareness
- No designated bike paths in many areas – e.g. Central Street
- Investigate Framingham/Lowell, Marlborough “Right-of-way” (?) systems – used for both rail and recreation; last mile to/from home could be shuttle

Traffic congestion issues within town not addressed

- Need wider shoulders that are plowed during the winter
- Speed bumps on Main St to encourage slow driving
- Saturday traffic is too slow – frustrating to get around (so may end shopping in neighboring towns to avoid traffic)
- Tough spots to get around – e.g. Hayward Rd & Main St junction

Social Connections

- Better social connections for new comers (one person); but others responded such a service already exists. May be better publicity/communication of such resources required?

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Question 2: Do you see objectives as being potentially in conflict with other goals and objectives?

- Where is **Kelly's Corner** plan at?
- Adding **sidewalks** may conflict with natural resources (trees, etc.), town character? Sidewalk committee member present in the group said that such conflicts may be the case in most places.
- **Budgetary constraints**, of course!!

Question 3: Is there any information in the inventory of existing resources (see Summary Sheets) which you would like to highlight and/or relate to this goal and objectives?

- **Multi-use rail/walking trail**
- **Bike paths**
- Existing **signs for public events**
- **Better communication** of public events needed on Town web-site
Community bulletin board in multiple languages for centralized reference guide of existing Town resources

Question 4: What are the biggest threats to meeting these objectives?

- **Budget dependence** on state and federal budgets
- **Preservation/Conservation issues**
- Inability to **enforce lower speed limits**
- Master plan should be **flexible** enough to allow for course-correction down the line if circumstances require it



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Question 5: What are the most critical steps that Acton should take to meet this goal and related objectives?

Critical Steps to meet Goals and Objectives: Plan for Improve Connections⁷

Action Step	Comments	# of groups (of two)	Priority Rating⁸
More sidewalks		2	17
More bike paths/lanes	And increase town-wide awareness regarding sharing the road with bikes	2	14
Free shuttle	Around town	2	7
Improve communication regarding paths and public events	Via maps that are kept current (existing sidewalks and bike paths)	1	7
Better opt-in email communication system	Town-wide (if exists, do not create)	1	5
Multi-use options for transportation		1	4
Use Acton TV or Radio	Station (out of ABRHS?) for better town-wide communication	1	2
Community Bulletin Board		1	2
Add train station	In West Acton	1	2

⁷ both discussion groups compiled together

⁸ All participants were given an opportunity to contribute to a list of critical steps to meet the goal under discussion. Once the discussion was completed, all group members were asked to raise their hands up to three times in order to prioritize the list of steps.

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Provide More Opportunities for Community Gathering

We value the small town feeling and appreciate the sense of community that results from frequent opportunities for interaction. We support providing places for casual social interaction and organized events that bring members of the community together. We believe in offering opportunities for intergenerational experiences, and for sharing of inter-cultural celebration (e.g. community/senior center, park, farmer's market, cultural venues, community garden).

Objective: Expand Senior / Community Center

Objective: Increase Amount and Variety of Restaurants

Objective: Support Additional Cultural Activities

***Question 1:** Looking at the Goal Pages, please tell me whether you feel something is missing or should be given more of a priority in the comprehensive plan.*

Library. Making the library a more youth-friendly environment needs higher priority

Environmental Concerns. The sustainability goal needs more attention to pollution threats and environmental threats we face

Need for Town Center. Need attention to developing a real town center... maybe West Acton? Where is "downtown"?

Outdoor spaces. Parks and outdoor spaces must be emphasized -- areas other than NARA. Small Outdoor gathering spaces.

Accessibility, "it's key." The current Senior Center is difficult to get to. Citizens should be able to walk to a Community Center.

- Centrally Located Community Center: could be in Kelly's Corner, must be walkable. Change the Kmart into a Community Center (A Community Center across from the bowling alley—how fun!).
- Acton needs a new, better location for a Community Center. Location is important---should be a place where the kids can walk after school.

***Question 2:** Do you see objectives as being potentially in conflict with other goals and objectives?*

Desire for more business but unwillingness to pay for infrastructure. There seems to be conflict between the widespread desire for more business and restaurants... and the willingness to allow/pay for infrastructure and development that would bring these in.

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Desire to protect open space and desire for more places to go.

- There ARE opportunities for in-fill development, e.g. West Acton, we don't need to gobble up our open space, and we need to zone in on those places where density is desirable.
- There is conflict between the desire to protect open space, and the desire for more places to go, things to do, in other words, development.
- How do we bring in new restaurants AND preserve character? There's a conflict

Lack of "real center". One challenge is that Acton is made of "pockets", no real center.

- Need a real town center to reduce driving, energy use getting around.

Community Center

- Community Center would offer place for lots of connections with various age and interests.
- Community Center would be expensive, so this causes competition with other Goals.
- To decrease cost of creating a Community Center, create a virtual community.
- Virtual Community defeats purpose of seeing friends and neighbors in town. Virtual Community would still need a place too meet.

Ideas for Opportunities for Gathering

- An Acton Yard Sale or Flea Market would be good in the Kmart parking lot.
- I'm not sure what the current Senior Center is used for.
- It would be nice to have a place to listen to and play music. Currently limited to Acton Jazz Café. NARA has good music programs. So does The Faulkner House.
- It would be nice to have a Danny's Place for adults. Maynard has bars that have music; this is lacking in Acton.
- The current Neighborhood Forums are great; would be nice if there is a town-wide group

Limitations

- What are our limitations?
- Cost
- Self-sustaining

Question 3: Is there any information in the inventory of existing resources (see Summary Sheets) which you would like to highlight and/or relate to this goal and objectives?

Senior / Community Center

- If the demographics hold true, look at our senior center, it's inadequate, location not ideal, it should be an intergenerational place, a bigger resource for social connections across generations.
- Make it a "community center" with an emphasis on seniors
- Maybe bring Danny's Place together with the senior center in a multi-generational space
- A center should be central and versatile
- Look for ways to make existing community gatherings more multi cultural and inclusive, e.g. Oktoberfest could be more diverse
- *A Community Center offers space for all people in Acton---multi-generational.

Movie Theater.

The desire for a movie theater fits in well with our goal, it's a gathering place.

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Accessibility

Transportation. “If you can’t get there, you can’t get there.”

- A van service has possibly already started in Acton.
- Fixed-route schedule would be good.
- Location is important.
- Walking is ideal; we need sidewalks.
- Parking needed---and a shuttle bus.

Housing and zoning. Dense area for housing needed---zoning.

A **diversity of places** is needed: many available places in Acton should be/can be developed.

Question 4: What are the biggest threats to meeting these objectives?

Current emphasis on children.

- Current community budget priorities emphasize kids and education... will need a shift to prioritize spending on other goals like senior centers

Lack of sewer in key central spots like West Acton

People against change, e.g. opposition to WAVE project

By-laws present possible obstacles.

- Are there things in zoning by-laws which are making things difficult?
- Are there parking by-laws?

Funds---sidewalks and programs for different groups.

Collaboration. Community Ed, Rec Department, Town Boards should get together to offer programs.

Open Space/land

- Land equals Community Gathering, enhanced by Community Center.
- It would be great to have a movie theatre...a drive-in! In the Kmart Parking lot!
- The uncontrolled development is taking over Open Space. Open Space equals Gathering Areas.

Security and Safety

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Question 5: What are the most critical steps that Acton should take to meet this goal and related objectives?

Critical Steps to meet Goals and Objectives of Plan Community Gathering⁹

Action Step	Comments	# of groups (of two)	Priority Rating¹⁰
Identify responsible party to lead effort	Person, champion, professional whose job it is to realize this goal Form a committee that plans a program every week for different age groups Publicize	2	9
Ensure zoning & budget are consistent with community gathering goal		1	8
Identify development opportunities	And market to private developers/ investors willing to align with this goal	1	5
Utilize existing resources	Protect open space and different types of spaces; identify the potential for these resources and environmentally sensitive ideas. Review existing options, e.g. Great Road, define appropriate & realistic vision	2	5
Identify accessible location	Evaluate current spaces, new or established; Where will the community gathering place be located ¹¹	2	4
Need community's consensus		1	3
Ensure infrastructure & interest is in place		1	2
Provide non-auto ways to access	Alternatives to car for getting to gathering places	1	2
Careful design	e.g. parking lot locations	1	2
Foresee traffic impacts		1	1
"I'm Speechless"	Apparently said jokingly	1	1

⁹ both discussion groups compiled together

¹⁰ All participants were given an opportunity to contribute to a list of critical steps to meet the goal under discussion. Once the discussion was completed, all group members were asked to raise their hands up to three times in order to prioritize the list of steps.

¹¹ added after prioritization exercise had been completed

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Support Inclusion and Diversity

GOAL: We value a diverse population and wish to foster respect, promote interaction and actively support a wide variety of individuals to live, work, and play in our community. This includes a range of ages and socio-economic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Objective: Support All Ages

Objective: Support Socio-economic Diversity

Objective: Embrace Cultural Diversity

Objective: Support the Disabled Community

Question 1: Looking at the Goal Pages, please tell me whether you feel something is missing or should be given more of a priority in the comprehensive plan.

Demographics

- Balance-a holistic balance-“always fighting extremes”.
- “We need to validate the demographic projections.”
- I interpreted the question differently- who doesn’t live here? There are very few black people- very few disabled in the community.”
- “I am an American Indian- we participated in the American Revolution. We are Maliseet, part of the first international treaty- there is not a lot of Native American history here. There is a little bit of history but not a lot especially being a revolutionary town.”
- Focus on people who will want to live here. How do you manage this growth? Projections show downward trend for the future, but people will move here – it is attractive.
- “These are great. I love it”.
- “I wish I hadn’t drawn this ticket. I’m not sure this should be a goal. My wife is Hispanic. The more we talk about diversity- we need to just live our life”

Options to make housing more affordable

- “What do you do about letting people subdivide their homes to allow parents and family members to live more economically? A thoughtful way for the town to increase the stock of housing- think about this!”
- “I work with people in low income who state Acton is affordable.”
- “I dispute some of the figures presented- this is visceral not facts.”
- “More and more people are bringing in their families-parents. Zoning needs to be more flexible.”

Question 2: Do you see objectives as being potentially in conflict with other goals and objectives?

- “Where does Acton position itself environmentally- globally?”
- Future demographics have impact-businesses have direct impact.
- “I think it is supportive- hand in hand- not at all in conflict”
- Consistent with town assets.

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Question 3: Is there any information in the inventory of existing resources (see Summary Sheets) which you would like to highlight and/or relate to this goal and objectives?

Demographics

- “Love the idea of saying who is not here. We are driving people out to the woods and cars. We are building town houses. Who are we not serving? Who lives here? We are not taking care of people we have...”
- Existing conditions-“Are you able to live in Acton no matter what your: race, age, ability, economics?”
- Category white/including Hispanic. “We need to break out Latino populations. That is happening the schools are very aware.”
- Incredible multiage population. Good school system equals an increase in property values.
- Chinese population is very involved in their own community.
- Historical demographics in slide presentation only made some reference to Native American. It doesn’t get as much focus as European History of the town
- “Data was provided as fact- housing- septic”

Seniors

- “We need to be putting our thoughts into what we need to do for our aging population. We have a great school system, but? What about services for everyone else?”
- Multigenerational is more of an issue. Utilize seniors in the schools.
- “That’s why I am here-I have two children in the schools-connection in community through the schools. What am I going to do when my children are not in the schools? I am not involved in a church or senior group.”

Socio-economic Diversity

- There are 500 other businesses in town that are not reported to the State. We have more entrepreneurs an increase of businesses out of the home.
- Housing-disabled, income diversity- we need to accommodate different needs.
- Family units are very diverse these days. They should feel included.

Disabled Community

- Increase handicap accessibility. Many buildings in town are not handicap accessible that increases isolation. (Theater III is getting funding, but Exchange Hall, Citizens Library are examples of buildings not accessible.)
- Activity examples: Oktoberfest- running, add biking marathons, wheelchair races.
- Morrison Farm- trails- do we make them accessible- green vs. paved trails.

Ways of Connecting

- Increase number of community events to include biking events- all kids learning together to feel normal to have the events in common.
- Connections are easier with people who have children.

Question 4: What are the biggest threats to meeting these objectives?

Elderly moving out of town because they cannot afford to live here. Working for the town to get minimal money off of your taxes- why would you do that? Elderly have limited income. WE need to do something about that. It is a real dilemma. It is a loss for the town.

Economics is a threat. Funded by soft money. Hard time effect firefighters etc. Length of recession is a factor. People go where the work is this will impact Acton.

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In order to have socio-economic diversity in Acton there is **hostility in town toward low income** housing. People forget these are our neighbors.

There needs to be **better communications** between the Selectmen and the housing authority.

Question 5: What are the most critical steps that Acton should take to meet this goal and related objectives?

Critical Steps to meet Goals and Objectives: Inclusion & Diversity¹²

Action Step	Comments	# of groups (of two)	Priority Rating¹³
Identify & use the tools we need to reach goals	- Zoning, designations (historic register), protections, laws – disability and accessibility, documentation - We need to document and either ignore or serve our current obligations. How do we measure who we are not serving?	1	10
Increase the dialogue between people in town in different situations	- How do we accommodate multi-cultural groups and get them talking? - Put funds towards a great community center to have a place to stay connected. The town needs to make a commitment to a community center	1	10
Provide options for voting for Town Meeting	Saturday voting, on-line voting/ offsite voting	1	8
Transportation to connect seniors, teens, etc.	Get people to group functions. How to get teenagers to use public transportation – how to make it “cool.”	1	8
Increase number & variety & location of community events	Include variety of ages, encourage diverse groups, bike events, walks, bike education. Acton Recreation & Community Ed need to spread out community wide events & activities to other geographic areas beside NARA Park.	1	8
Increase affordable housing ¹⁴	Avoid tear downs. Try to maintain income housing	1	8
Connect with technology		1	7

¹² both discussion groups compiled together

¹³ All participants were given an opportunity to contribute to a list of critical steps to meet the goal under discussion. Once the discussion was completed, all group members were asked to raise their hands up to three times in order to prioritize the list of steps.

¹⁴ While Massachusetts has a statutory definition of affordable housing, participants may have defined this term in other ways.

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Preserve and Enhance Town Assets

GOAL: We value our Town assets and wish to preserve and enhance them. These include our open spaces, schools, historic sites, municipal properties, commercial areas, recreational areas, and our neighborhoods.

Objective: Protect Existing and Acquire Additional Open Space

Objective: Support Excellence in Schools

Objective: Improve Commercial Areas and Promote Economic Development

Objective: Maintain and Increase Recreational Opportunities

Objective: Support and Strengthen Neighborhoods

Objective: Preserve Historic Buildings and Landscapes

Objective: Maintain Town Properties

***Question 1:** Looking at the Goal Pages, please tell me whether you feel something is missing or should be given more of a priority in the comprehensive plan.*

The word resources should be used instead of assets

- Assets also pertain to buildings, housing, schools
- A neighborhood is not an asset
- People are assets, this should be a core value

Water Resources

- Should stress the value and quality of water resources both surface and drinking water
- Protect the quality and preserve our natural resources
- Water resource protection should be added as a goal
- Include water resources and the importance of land that helps protect environmental resources (aquifers, streams, etc)

Agricultural Land. Need to stress the value, protection, and preservation of agricultural land and water used for it

Open Space Maintain and protect open space and water resources

Road capacity should be listed

Rail trails and walking trails

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Question 2: Do you see objectives as being potentially in conflict with other goals and objectives?

Potential Conflicts

- Recreation uses versus Open Space
- Development versus Open Space
- Economic development versus traffic impact
- Development versus water resources, road capacity, preservation, and fiscal impact
- “All the objectives are in conflict with the Goal” (one person)

Additional Concerns

- Traffic not being addressed
- Need to serve low income
- Need more non-auto transportation options

Other

- Redevelop commercial land to generate revenues to buy open space (one person)
- Assets do not necessarily have to be publicly owned
- Non public assets should be encouraged e.g. YMCA
- Define obligations (priorities?) as they relate to build out (one person)
- **Need more data** to better determine goal

Question 3: Is there any information in the inventory of existing resources (see Summary Sheets) which you would like to highlight and/or relate to this goal and objectives?

- The trend downward for housing development is a good thing
- Existing conditions data needs to be compared with other towns so we can know where we stand (one person)
- Need to include goals in data presentation

Question 4: What are the biggest threats to meeting these objectives?

- Profit pressure on developers
- Loss of private historic properties due to lack of owner’s resources
- No outreach to private historic property owners from town or preservationists to help with funding
- Lack of tools and planning to allow agility for development

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Question 5: What are the most critical steps that Acton should take to meet this goal and related objectives?

Critical Steps to meet Goals & Objectives: Protect /Enhance Town Assets¹⁵

Action Step	Comments	# of groups (of two)	Priority Rating¹⁶
Reduce growth	Understand limits to growth Establish objectives to limit growth that would be in the best interest of the town, first determine what is in the best interest	2	9
Retain & preserve historic character/assets	Including roads, buildings, landscapes, stone walls Encourage siting of development to retain rural character e.g. house back in woods to allow fields in front (merged into retain historic character)	2	7
Revisit the 1998 Master Plan goals & objectives	To use same wording for protect and preserve natural resources, esp. water	1	5
Identify & prioritize land needs & uses	For all land in town, public and private	1	4
Implementation plan	Develop practical implementation plan for the Comprehensive Plan	1	4
Reduce town & school spending		1	3
Define future obligations	Measure the impact of development and build out Determine maximum capacity for water, schools, roads	1	3
Redevelop economic development areas	To generate new revenues	1	2
Ban clear cutting		1	2
Archaeology bylaw	To preserve stone walls	1	2
Indoor community facility	Encourage building of such facility, such as YMCA	1	1
More open space acquisition		1	-

¹⁵ both discussion groups compiled together

¹⁶ All participants were given an opportunity to contribute to a list of critical steps to meet the goal under discussion. Once the discussion was completed, all group members were asked to raise their hands up to three times in order to prioritize the list of steps.

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COMMENTS FROM COMMENT WALL

Post-It Note comments from the side wall

Improve Connections

1. Be creative. Do it without adding infrastructure or cost.
2. Get grants and/or use volunteer efforts to bring housing authority homes to be wireless and train residents to use computers – use adaptive technology when necessary.
3. Create neighborhood email lists
4. Pave woody shortcuts so bikes, wheelchairs and strollers can use them (e.g., Idylwilde to Boxborough, the path from ABRHS to Dunkin Donuts, the path from West Acton Cemetery through conservation land to South Acton, Piper Rd. through Great Hill to Roche Brothers, and the Crossing at Quail Ridge to connect Acorn Park to Rte. 27).

Preserve and Enhance Town Assets

1. Preserve and protect natural resources, including water. It's not just about acquiring land but also protecting its features, including streams, wetlands, groundwater, etc.
2. Buy all the land – control our destiny. It's cheaper.

Preserve Town Character

1. Preserve and protect our natural resources, especially water – streams, ponds, etc., and drinking water.
2. Don't screw up West Acton.
3. How to save barns.

Support Inclusion and Diversity

1. Define who we care about.

Plan for Sustainability

1. "Sustainability" concept needs to include very long-range planning at water, power, and agricultural resources. Food-sheds and energy-sheds will be increasingly important realities.
2. Continue with Acton's sustainability efforts – recycling, low-level street light fixtures, low-fuel vehicles, protecting water resources, etc. We need actions – not just "raised awareness about the need to plan."
3. What is the capacity of our water?
4. This goal is regressive. It talks about education – we are already well into implementation. Re-work this goal.
5. Need to include the protection of our grand water supply system to ensure its sustainability.

Opportunities for Community Gathering

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1. Social and emotional well-being could be hugely enhanced by the creation of a central, multi-use, multi-generational community center!!!
2. The challenge will be where to locate it. [Arrow to above comment]
3. Leverage existing facilities better – empty buildings.

COMMENTS ON BACK OF AGENDA

“Erroneous statement – 75% of Acton not ... suitable for onsite wastewater disposal. Check map in Phase I CWRMP

Streams not important for Acton’s drinking water. Acton gets all its water from shallow overburdened wells.

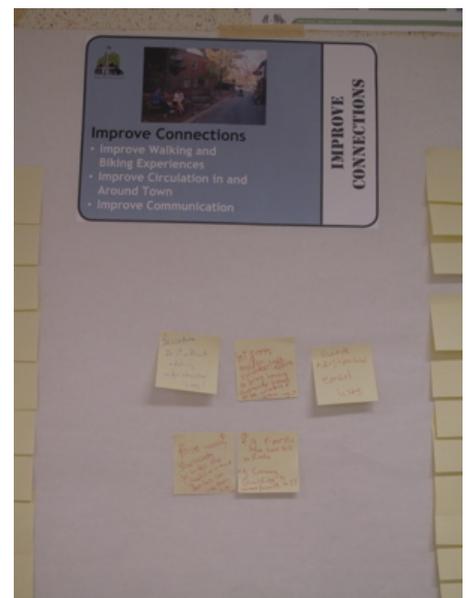
Nothing for water, air, land use under sustainability.

Nothing for storm water management – CID, NPDES”

“Acton is a precarious place – the high school is at capacity and the town high tax rate discourages people from staying long term – it is not sustainable!”

“This is a good exercise to encourage participation in town boards and to focus attention on the town needs.”

“Missing: One of the goals should be to Protect and Preserve Natural Resources and especially to protect both surface water and our drinking water. Please use the 1998 Master Plan Update as a basis for goals and objectives, for this and other subjects. Clean water is something that is both critical and highly valued in Acton and essential to our quality of life.”



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**APPENDIX:
DETAILED NOTES FROM EACH OF THE
DISCUSSION GROUPS
(Facilitators' Notes)**

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PRESERVE TOWN CHARACTER

1) Overlap with town assets goal

Preserve and protect Acton's natural resources (features of land + water not just about owning it - but preserving and protecting).

come up with ways to ameliorate traffic

be active to ensure 40B developments don't undermine other goals. Make a plan, with other towns.

Question whether Acton is rural. It is suburban, not rural.

Emphasize value of historic preservation □-historic roadways, landscapes, walls, not just buildings.

(2) Potential Conflicts

Sidewalks - conflict with preserving what's there.

sidewalks - conflict with image but not reality - not really in conflict with our town character.

Economic development, without design guidelines.

Goals vs. reality. How do we do them?

Sidewalks vs. trees + stone walls

40B poses challenge because of lack of local control.

Enhancing connections - bike lanes + sidewalks - hard to do on historic narrow winding streets.

(3) Inventory Data

there are 3 Historic Districts

Cultural Resources List - a good starting point

Open Space and Recreation Data - comparative data from other towns would be helpful.

Clarify what land that looks open is not protected - or to what degree it is protected.

Highlight how water limits will affect what we can do.

Protecting land around surface water - need buffer zones

There are 13 named streams in Acton - not 36.

"Preserve" isn't the right term for villages except West Acton. Do need to "enhance".

Need more data on growth and development

Want to Understand discrepancy between household count and units

Need data checking - some seems to conflict.

(4) THREATS

Unmitigated growth

Lack of structures and will to manage growth

We don't look at cumulative impact, though our bylaws include it (i.e. wetlands bylaw)

We're not implementing the cumulative impact rules we have.

need to be proactive vs. reactive in general

Have limited options for open space preservation. Only tool used seems to be municipal purchase.

40B

Bad economy - people struggling.

Sometimes, lack of transparency, lack of information to encourage broad participation in decision-making esp. in order to preserve our assets.

In group / out group. People get alienated.

Lack of broad communication mechanism (like Beth Petr's list). Newspaper is fading.

Fragmentation of Board and Committee responsibilities. Hard to look at whole issues.

Competing fiscal priorities.

(5) ACTION STEPS

> 4) 1. Traffic Mitigation

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- > (4) 2. HDC, HC, Planning Board -> package of bylaws coming to prevent demolition, clear cutting, demolition by neglect, expanding HDC districts, improve zoning bylaws.
- > (2) 3. Urge people in town government to talk with other towns about common problems. Learn from + collaborate with + share resources. Formalize structure for collaboration with other towns.
- > (4) 4. Pro-active strategy to anticipate & react to open space water resource protection issues + opportunities - develop multiple tools.
- > (0 but many folks asked that this be sent as a separate message) 5. Consult 1998 plan + learn from ideas there.
- > (1) 6. Strengthen activities in village centers. Create Destinations. Encourage strong town centers, and less just passing through.

Top vote getters were 1,2 & 4.

Most in group wanted #5 to be a general message to committee. Not just a step on a list.

Town Character: GROUP 2

#1

- Increase focus on rural qualities: Farms, orchards. (specifically: pasturelands / dairy farms)
- Preserve Morrison Farm as historic
- Increase Awareness/Attention of Acton in revolutionary war period(+civil war)
- Promote Historical tourism in Acton
- Restore Acton Heritage (Gunpowder, pencils)
- Create historic special events
- Civil war: library, arboretum encampment, and Davis guards.
- Attention to historic sites from Rail Trail

Q#2

- Creating connecting sidewalks (and safety for children) may compete with historical preservation
- 40B Housing may impact existing historical housing
- General housing development - to maintain town character / design considerations
- Cost of preserving historic sites
- Disability access (brick walkways) may conflict with historic design.

#3

- Less school children = more \$ for historic buildings.
- Preserving town space - support acquisition of property
- Preserving town walls (editor note: (malls?) (halls?))
- "demolition by neglect"
- "connectedness: of building & enhancing town center
- commerce enlivens centers
- expand boundaries of historic areas

#4 Threats

- Lack of incentives to restore historic residences - very costly - need to make it more conducive
- Sustainability vs. historic improvements (ex: windows, doors)
- Accessibility (benches, wider sidewalks) vs. maintaining historic buildings.
- Need building & parking regulations that maintain town character
- (2A can be "any town") -> need to make businesses "uniquely Acton" / pedestrian friendly
- Traffic vs. expanding commerce and population
- Need indoor/outdoor gathering areas (ice cream)

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Question 5 Most Critical Steps

- (3) 1. Tree-Lined streets in W. Acton + Villages + Kelley's corner.
- (6) 2. Have visual build-out plan that captures our goals - for entire town.
- (0) 3. Town entrances - change + improve: more historic / welcoming
- (2) 4. Better Connections within town WITHOUT DRIVING (Park, Eat, coffee/ice cream)
- (1) 5. Publicize + make accessible additional town features/highlights: walking tours, etc / draw people in to Acton
- (2) 6. Control residential development to maintain character & open space / woods / keep the trees!
- (2) 7. Expand Historic Districts to include older historic homes
- (5) 8. Better incentives to preserve community assets

Top vote getters: 1,2,8

PLAN FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Notes from 10/20/10

How many years in Acton

Years: 3, 15, 13, 5, 36, 17, 36, 12, 15, 7, 35, 4

Question 1

It is missing something on pushing denser zoning close to South Acton train station.
The goal is all wrong, no need to increase awareness we all know we need to be greener, we need to plan and implement changes we need action not planning.
Increase implementation stream and water protection
It is missing water, air, and land use
Quality of life is missing
What does sustainability mean?
Green house gases is missing
We have to not make things worse for future generations
Having town make decisions based on sustainability of their actions

Question 2

Nothing on actually doing anything no need to be aware
Not active enough more like other goals
It is actually a regressive goal where is the action??????

? 3

We need more time to digest the information can get this done tonight
Green goals should be incentives for economic activity

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Incentives to business to be sustainable give them a carrot not a stick
Use East Acton incentives for the rest of town
Transportation goals schedule for public transportation
Car pool parking spots at the train station
Make town interesting to younger people too many large homes

? 4

Development is not thoughtful we have thoughtless builders and planning in town
Better rotary is only going to increase cars
Lack of public transportation is killing us
Consumption is unsustainable too many products
Our way of life is not sustainable
We need to re think our way of life
Educate people on the need to be more sustainable
Change zoning to decrease lawns and increase trees
Economy is under stress
Fuel cost too high

? 5

8 votes Education of Sustainability get a k to 12 education program
7 votes Change rules and regulation on water, air quality, land use and start smart growth policies
5 votes Alternatives to the car: public transportation, rail trails, paths, sidewalks, share the road
7 votes Massive energy conservation intuitivism conservation drives to include businesses, schools, residents, municipals

Group 2

Years in Acton
15, 11, 2, 41, 36, 43, 45, 22, 2, 3, 10 18

? 1

Control of fertility of lawns and chemicals in homes
Protect Acton ground water we drink our septic water
Define and discuss sustainability what is the really
How does a green house get built?
Historical, what is the impact of past changes to zoning?
Wording of goal is off we need action
Where are we and where do we want to go
Urgency is not in goal
Globally green house gases are killing us we need to think locally and act globally
Water resource management is lost on our town

? 2

No conflict with others cannot exist without sustainability
It is all possible
Acton as a town is not sustainable we will not be here in 10 years. Acton should only and can only sustain a population of 5000 people we need to move back to the cities

? 3

22,000 is not sustainable

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Not measurable or action items we need action

Control the type of housing that gets built we need cohousing and green living

WATER

Transportation

Traffic

Build near the train station

Business need to pay for transportation to the train

? 4

Stop rail trails they need to be for trains

Lack of transportation planning is very bad

We need trains north to south not just east to west

Town lacks planning

Sprawl development is killing us

Stop residential development

Too many people

Change zoning to stop residential development

? 5

1 vote Town government needs to get grants to winterize homes and increase public transportation

0 votes make goal more action oriented

0 votes acknowledge limits of residential growth of the town

0 votes plan for sustainability

6 votes change zoning to restrict residential growth stop increasing FAR

6 votes Get people to understand the need for sustainability

6 votes Town needs to be more financially sustainable

1 vote light rail and bike paths

1 vote green building smart growth mix use development

5 votes water resource protection

IMPROVE CONNECTIONS

Facilitators: Ashish Kumar & Padmini Narayan

- 7 people in the first session, all long-time Acton resident ranging from 10 yrs to 41 yrs.
- 10 people in the second session, ranging from 1 yr to 36 yrs.

General Comments

1. Artificial linking of two very different topics – physical connections (walking, biking, shuttle) vs. communication. They should have been discussed separately.
2. Too much material to digest (especially summary sheets) in the given time that evening.
3. Not too many responses for Questions 2 & 3 due to lack of time to review the material.

Question 1:

1. Walking and biking requirements are different and cannot be clubbed together. In fact, providing facility for one can take away from the other.
2. Traffic congestion issues within town not addressed
3. Need wider shoulders that are plowed during the winter
4. Bikers on road is dangerous (minority view) – others suggested more signage to remind motorists to share road with bikers will help improve awareness
5. No designated bike paths in many areas – e.g. Central Street

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6. Investigate Framingham/Lowell, Marlborough “Right-of-way” (?) systems – used for both rail and recreation; last mile to/from home could be shuttle
7. Speed bumps on Main St to encourage slow driving
8. Saturday traffic is too slow – frustrating to get around (so may end shopping in neighboring towns to avoid traffic)
9. Tough spots to get around – e.g. Hayward Rd & Main St junction
10. Better social connections for new comers (one person); but others responded such a service already exists. May be better publicity/communication of such resources required?

Question 2: (folks felt they didn’t have much time to review other goals to provide much useful feedback for this question)

1. Where is Kelly’s Corner plan at?
2. Adding sidewalks may conflict with natural resources (trees, etc.), town character? Sidewalk committee member present in the group said that such conflicts may be the case in most places.
3. Budgetary constraints, of course!!

Question 3: (again, not enough time to review summary sheets, so what’s listed below is what folks thought was MISSING!)

1. Multi-use rail/walking trail
2. Bike paths
3. Existing signs for public events
4. Better communication of public events needed on Town webs-site
5. Community bulletin board in multiple languages for centralized reference guide of existing Town resources

Question 4:

1. Budget dependence on state and federal budgets
2. Preservation/Conservation issues
3. Inability to enforce lower speed limits
4. Master plan should be flexible enough to allow for course-correction down the line if circumstances require it

Question 5: (both groups came up with very similar priorities)

	Group 1	Group 2
1. More side-walks	6	11
2. More bike-paths or bike lanes along with increasing town awareness of sharing the road with bikes	6	8
3. Better communication of Town-wide opt-in email system (if it exists, if not create)	5	-
4. Free shuttle service to go	1	6

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around town		
5. Improve communication of existing side-walks, bike-paths (via maps that are kept current) as well as better communication of public events	-	7
6. Multi-use options for transportation	-	4
7. Use Acton TV or Radio Station (out of ABRHS?) for better town-wide communication	2	-
8. Community bulletin board	-	2
9. Add train station in West Acton	-	2

SUPPORT INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

Acton 2020 Committee Public Workshop

Goal: Support Inclusion and Diversity

The participants in group one lived in Acton for the following number of years:

5, 10, 14, 15, 15, 25, 27, 35, and 36 years.

Goal and Objective pages for this theme were reviewed.

Ground rules for participation were read.

Question 1- Looking at the goal pages, please tell me whether you feel something is missing or should be given more of a priority in the comprehensive plan.

Balance-a holistic balance-“always fighting extremes”.

“These are great. I love it”.

Then we shared a reading of all six core values.

Focus on people will want to live here. How do you manage this growth? Numbers say the numbers are down for the future, but people will move here it is attractive.

“What do you do about letting people subdivide their homes to allow parents and family members to live more economically? A thoughtful way for the town to increase the stock of housing- think about this!”

“I work with people in low income who state Acton is affordable.”

“I dispute some of the figures presented- this is visceral not facts.”

“More and more people are bringing in their families-parents. Zoning needs to be more flexible.”

“We need to validate the demographic projections.”

I interpreted the question differently- who doesn't live here? There are very few black people- very few disabled in the community.”

*Question 2-*Do you see these objectives as being potentially in conflict with other goals and objectives?

“Where does Acton position itself environmentally- globally?”

Future demographics have impact-businesses have direct impact.

Question 3- Is there any information in the inventory of existing resources which you would like to highlight and/or relate to this goal?

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“Data was provided as fact- housing- septic”

“Love the idea of saying who is not here. We are driving people out to the woods and cars. We are building town houses. Who are we not serving? Who lives here? We are not taking care of people we have...”

“We need to be putting our thoughts into what we need to do for our aging population. We have a great school system, but? the services for everyone else?”

Existing conditions-“Are you able to live in Acton no matter what your: race, age, ability, economics?”

“We haven’t read the summary we may be off the mark.”

“The handouts are 6 goals- the summary is difficult to absorb tonight.”

“Look for what is the one category that conflicts with or helps another. A Narrow example is the Towne building. It is an historical building which qualifies for a tax credit which brings investors to build affordable housing. The Historical register is not always on the radar.”

Category white/including Hispanic. “We need to break out Latino populations. That is happening the schools are very aware.”

Incredible multiage population. Good school system equals an increase in property values.

What about utilizing bright seniors to be in the schools-intergenerational, interdiverse, intermingling.

Chinese population is very involved in their own community.

“That’s why I am here-I have two children in the schools-connection in community through the schools. What am I going to do when my children are not in the schools? I am not involved in a church or senior group.”

“I wish I hadn’t drawn this ticket. I’m not sure this should be a goal. My wife is Hispanic. The more we talk about diversity- we need to just live our life”

Connections are easier with people who have children.

Multigenerational is more of an issue. Utilize seniors in the schools.

Question 5-What are the most critical steps that Acton should take to meet this goal and related objectives?

1-Identify and use the tools we need to reach goals:

Zoning, designations (historical register), protections, laws-disability and accessibility, documentation.

We need to document and either ignore or serve our current obligations. How do we measure who we are not serving?

2-Increase the dialogue between people in town in different situations. How do we accommodate multicultural groups and get them talking?

Put funds towards a great community center to have a place to stay connected. The town needs to make a commitment to a community center.

3-Connect with technology.

4-Saturday voting, online/ offsite voting for town meeting.

Votes for numbers are as follows:

1-10 votes

2-10 votes

3-7 votes

4-8 votes

Our group had a member who requested to put all three of her votes on one topic. The group said no, but the 2020 committee members moving from group to group said yes.

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Group Two

People participating lived in Acton for 8, 13, 15, 17, 18, 25, 27years.

Question number 1

“I am an American Indian- we participated in the American Revolution. We are Maliseet, part of the first international treaty- there is not a lot of Native American history here. There is a little bit of history but not a lot especially being a revolutionary town.”

Question number 2

“I think it is supportive- hand in hand- not at all in conflict”

Consistent with town assets.

Question number 3-

Demographics hit in slide presentation. Historical- some reference to Native American. It doesn't get as much focus as European History of the town.

Housing-disabled, income diversity- we need to accommodate different needs.

Family units are very diverse these days. They should feel included.

Increase number of community events to include biking events- all kids learning together to feel normal to have the events in common.

Activity examples: Oktoberfest-running, add biking marathons, wheelchair races.

Increase handicap accessibility. Many buildings in town are not handicap accessible that increases isolation. (Theater III is getting funding, but Exchange Hall, Citizens Library are examples of buildings not accessible.

Morrison Farm- trails- do we make them accessible- green vs. paved trails.

There are 500 other businesses in town that are not reported to the State. We have more entrepreneurs an increase of businesses out of the home.

Question number 4-Biggest threats

Elderly moving out of town because they cannot afford to live here. Working for the town to get minimal money off of your taxes- why would you do that? Elderly have limited income. WE need to do something about that. It is a real dilemma. It is a loss for the town.

Economics is a threat. Funded by soft money. Hard time effect firefighters etc. Length of recession is a factor. People go where the work is this will impact Acton.

In order to have socio-economic diversity in Acton there is hostility in town toward low income housing. People forget these are our neighbors.

There needs to be better communications between the Selectmen and the housing authority.

Question number 5- Critical Steps Acton should make to meet this goal and related objectives.

1-Transportation to connect seniors etc. Get people to group functions. How to get teenagers to use public transportation- how to make it “cool.”

2- Increase community events inclusive of age. Encourage divers groups, bike events, walks, bike education. Acton recreation and Community Ed need to spread out community wide events and activities to other geographic areas besides Nara Park.

3- Avoid tear downs. Increase affordable housing and try to maintain moderate income housing. The votes for the 3 critical steps were 8 votes for each step.

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PRESERVE AND ENHANCE TOWN ASSETS

Facilitator: Mike Kreuze

Recorder: Nancy Tavernier

Group #1: 5 attendees

1. Looking at the Goal Pages, please tell me whether you feel something is missing or should be given more of a priority in the comprehensive plan.
 - Include water resources and the importance of land that helps protect environmental resources (aquifers, streams, etc)
 - Need to stress the value, protection, and preservation of agricultural land and water used for it
 - Maintain and protect open space and water resources
 - Road capacity should be listed
 - Rail trails and walking trails
2. Do you see these objectives as being potentially in conflict with other goals and objectives?
 - Define obligations (priorities?) as they relate to build out (one person)
 - Need to serve low income
 - Economic development versus traffic impact
 - Need more non-auto transportation options
 - Development versus water resources, road capacity, preservation, and fiscal impact
3. Is there any information in the inventory of existing resources which you would like to highlight and/or relate to this goal and objectives?
 - The trend downward for housing development is a good thing
 - Existing conditions data needs to be compared with other towns so we can know where we stand (one person)
 - Need to include goals in data presentation
4. What are the biggest threats to meeting these objectives?
 - Profit pressure on developers
 - Loss of private historic properties due to lack of resources of owners
 - No outreach to private historic property owners from town or preservationists to help with funding
 - Lack of tools and planning to allow agility for development
5. What are the most critical steps that Acton should take to meet this goal and related objectives? (votes)
 - Define future obligations and measure the impact of development and build out (3)

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- Establish objectives to limit growth that would be in the best interest of the town, first determine what is in the best interest. (3)
- Retain and preserve historic character (3)
- Encourage siting of development to allow retention of rural character, e.g. house back in woods to allow fields in front. (merged into retain historic character)
- Determine maximum capacity for water, schools, roads (merged into define future obligations)

List top 3 priorities.

1. Define future obligations and measure the impact of development and build out
2. Establish objectives to limit growth that would be in the best interest of the town, first determine what is in the best interest.
3. Retain and preserve historic character

Group #2: 10 attendees

1. Looking at the Goal Pages, please tell me whether you feel something is missing or should be given more of a priority in the comprehensive plan.
 - The word resources should be used instead of assets
 - Assets also pertain to buildings, housing, schools
 - A neighborhood is not an asset
 - People are assets, this should be a core value
 - Should stress the value and quality of water resources both surface and drinking water
 - Protect the quality and preserve our natural resources
 - Water resource protection should be added as a goal
2. Do you see these objectives as being potentially in conflict with other goals and objectives?
 - Recreation uses versus Open Space
 - Development versus Open Space
 - Need more data to better determine goal
 - “All the objectives are in conflict with the Goal” (one person)
 - Redevelop commercial land to generate revenues to buy open space (one person)
 - Assets do not necessarily have to be publicly owned
 - Traffic not being addressed
 - Materials provided for discussion not relevant (one person)
 - Non public assets should be encouraged e.g. YMCA
3. Is there any information in the inventory of existing resources which you would like to highlight and/or relate to this goal and objectives?
 - This question was not answered due to the time taken up by disruptive group members
4. What are the biggest threats to meeting these objectives?
 - This question was not answered due to the time taken up by disruptive group members
5. What are the most critical steps that Acton should take to meet this goal and related objectives? (Votes)
 - Strong support for historic resources including roads, buildings landscapes, stone walls (4)

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- Revisit the 1998 Master Plan goals and objectives to use same wording for protect and preserve natural resources, especially water resources (5)
- Reduce town and school spending (3)
- Identify and prioritize land needs and uses for all land in town, public and private. (4)
- Encourage the building of an indoor community facility such as YMCA (1)
- Understand limits to growth, reduce growth (6)
- Re-develop economic development areas to generate new revenues (2)
- Need a practical implementation plan for the Comprehensive Plan (4)
- Ban clear cutting (2)
- Archeology bylaw to preserve stone walls (2)
- More open space acquisition (0) (They had run out of votes by then)

List top 3 priorities.

1. Understand limits to growth, reduce growth
2. Revisit the 1998 Master Plan goals and objectives to use same wording for protect and preserve natural resources, especially water resources
3. Need a practical implementation plan for the Comprehensive Plan

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY GATHERING

Helen Payne Watt (and Deb Verner, she'll submit notes for our second group)
October 27, 2010

12 participants, 2 facilitators, lived in Acton from 1-18 years

Q1: What's missing or needs more attention?

- Making the library a more youth-friendly environment needs higher priority
- The sustainability goal needs more attention to pollution threats and environmental threats we face
- Need attention to developing a real town center... maybe West Acton? Where is "downtown"?

Q2: Is there conflict between any of these goals? Or, between our "Community Gathering" goal and the others?

- There seems to be conflict between the widespread desire for more business and restaurants... and the willingness to allow/pay for infrastructure and development that would bring these in.
- There is conflict between the desire to protect open space, and the desire for more places to go, things to do, in other words, development.
- One challenge is that Acton is made of "pockets", no real center.
- Need a real town center to reduce driving, energy use getting around.
- How do we bring in new restaurants AND preserve character? There's a conflict.
- But there ARE opportunities for in-fill development, e.g. west acton, we don't need to gobble up our open space, we need to zone in on those places where density is desirable.
- What are our limitations?

Q3: What is important to highlight/recognize about the Community Gathering Goal? What did we learn from the research that informs this goal?

- If the demographics hold true, look at our senior center, it's inadequate, location not ideal, it should be an intergenerational place, a bigger resource for social connections across generations.
- Make it a "community center" with an emphasis on seniors
- Maybe bring Danny's Place together with the senior center in a multi-generational space

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- The desire for a movie theater fits in well with our goal, it's a gathering place.
- A center should be central and versatile
- Look for ways to make existing community gatherings more multi cultural and inclusive, e.g. Oktoberfest could be more diverse

Q4: Biggest Threats to meeting this goal?

- Current community budget priorities emphasize kids and education... will need a shift to prioritize spending on other goals like senior centers
- Lack of sewer in key central spots like West Acton
- People against change, e.g. opposition to WAVE project

Q5: Brainstorm of steps needed to meet the "Community Gathering" goal

Top 3 per voting

Make sure zoning and budget are consistent with community gathering goal 8

Identify a person, a champion, someone professional who's job it is to realize this goal 6

Identify development opportunities and market to private developers/investors willing to align with the goal 5

Others

Need community alignment/consensus around the goal 3

Make sure infrastructure and interest is in place 2

Put plans for non-auto ways to get to gathering places in there 2

Do a review of existing options, e.g. Great Road... what are appropriate and realistic visions? 0

Be careful of design features e.g. parking lot locations 2

Foresee traffic concerns 1

Identify the place – where will the community gathering place be located? (this was added on at the end after the voting when someone felt it needed to be said.)

Deb Verner, Scribe (Acton citizen for 7.5 years)

Core Value: Community Gathering and Connections

Group Two

Participants and time living in Acton:

Helen (Facilitator) 4 years

Bill, 12 years

Angie, 10 years

Susan, 23 years

Anne, 35 years

John, 20 years

Questions:

1. Looking at the Goal Pages, please tell me whether you feel something is missing or should be given more priority in the comprehensive plan.

*Parks and outdoor spaces must be emphasized; areas other than NARA. Small Outdoor gathering spaces.

*Accessibility, "it's key." The current Senior Center is difficult to get to. Citizens should be able to walk to a Community Center.

*Centrally Located Community Center: could be in Kelly's Corner, must be walkable. Change the Kmart into a Community Center (A Community Center across from the bowling ally—how fun!).

*Acton needs a new, better location for a Community Center. Location is important---should be a place where the kids can walk after school.

2. Do you see these objectives as being potentially in conflict with other goals and objectives?

*Cost

*Self-sustaining

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- *Community Center would be expensive, so this causes competition with other Goals.
- *To decrease cost of creating a Community Center, create a virtual community.
- *Virtual Community defeats purpose of seeing friends and neighbors in town. Virtual Community would still need a place to meet.
- *The current Neighborhood Forums are great; would be nice if there is a town-wide group.
- *Community Center would offer place for lots of connections with various age and interests.
- *An Acton Yard Sale or Flea Market would be good in the Kmart parking lot.
- *I'm not sure what the current Senior Center is used for.
- *It would be nice to have a place to listen to and play music. Currently limited to Acton Jazz Café. NARA has good music programs. So does The Faulkner House.
- *It would be nice to have a Danny's Place for adults. Maynard has bars that have music; this is lacking in Acton.

3. Is there any information in the inventory of existing resources (see Summary Sheets) which you would like to highlight and/or relate to this goal and objectives?

- *Accessibility: Transportation. "If you can't get there, you can't get there."
- *A van service has possibly already started in Acton.
- *Fixed-route schedule would be good.
- *Location is important.
- *Walking is ideal; we need sidewalks.
- *Parking needed---and a shuttle bus.
- *Dense area for housing needed---zoning.
- *A diversity of places is needed: many available places in Acton should be/can be developed.
- *A Community Center offers space for all people in Acton---multi-generational.

4. What are the biggest threats to meeting these objectives?

- *Are there things in zoning by-laws which are making things difficult?
- *Are there parking by-laws?
- *Funds---sidewalks and programs for different groups.
- *Community Ed, Rec Department, Town Boards should get together to offer programs.
- *Open Land equals Community Gathering, enhanced by Community Center.
- *It would be great to have a movie theatre...a drive-in! In the Kmart Parking lot!
- *The uncontrolled development is taking over Open Space. Open Space equals Gathering Areas.
- *Security and Safety.

5. What are the most critical steps that Acton should take to meet this goal and related objectives?

- A. Utilizing current resources and Protecting Open Space, and different types of spaces. Review what Acton has: human resources, money, buildings and spaces, the **potential** for these resources and environmentally sensitive ideas. (5 votes)
- B. Form a committee that plans a program each week for different age groups. (3 votes)
- C. Create accessible location for a community center. Evaluate current spaces, new or established; Publicize; Form Town Committee. (4 votes)
- D. "I'm Speechless" (1 vote)

Summary of Public Input:

BURNING ISSUES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: MARCH 3, 2011

TRANSPORTATION: MARCH 9, 2011

HOUSING: MARCH 12, 2011

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PUBLIC WORKSHOP ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Purpose: To hold a public workshop with the purpose of better understanding economic development in Acton by inviting “resource people” to contribute their experience and expertise to help the Acton 2020 Committee gain perspective and deeper understanding of the issues and ways of addressing them. The public was also invited to contribute to the discussion. The workshop was held on Thursday, March 3, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. at Acton’s Town Hall.

Process: In order to be more interesting and engaging, a hypothetical scenario was developed and purposely exaggerated, in order to better illuminate the issues and tradeoffs. Acton 2020 Committee members performed a role-play of the different points of view (derived from master planning goals) to help to dramatize these tradeoffs as well as think through mitigating factors. The attendees (comprised both of the general public and resource people) participated by asking and/or answering questions. The role-play resulted in a list of pros and cons as well as mitigating measures agreeable to most. This then led to a more general discussion of the issues.

Prior to the discussion, the Consultants presented a PowerPoint slide show summarizing some of the main findings of their research regarding existing conditions and future trends in Acton. A Highlights Handout was distributed in order to provide participants with relevant facts and figures to help inform the discussion.

The discussion was followed by smaller break out groups, where among other things, attendees were invited to participate in a mapping exercise to begin to try to locate desirable types of activities and facilities. They were then asked to suggest action items and to prioritize these.

Following the small group discussions the group reconvened to share priorities and to outline next steps. The forum was well attended and was characterized by a high energy level and productive dialogue. Approximately twenty-five (25) to thirty (30) people were in attendance.



Key Themes:

The following are some key themes that emerged from the discussion with the “large group” of participants as well as in the small group discussions (See appendices for detailed notes).

UNDERLYING THEME: There seemed to be consensus regarding the fact that what seemed both more desirable as well as most feasible in terms of future development was small-scale --mostly in the form of restaurants and shops --in-fill development in the village centers and Kelley’s Corner. The discussion also focused on the importance of understanding how to attract and retain desirable businesses (e.g. providing incentives, investing in infrastructure, streamlining permitting, etc.). Participants also emphasized the importance of supporting small and home-based businesses.

- ❖ **Main motivators for wanting economic development** were a desire for more goods and services, especially retail and restaurants, followed by some desire (expressed as a lower priority) for job creation and increasing the tax base.
 - Additional thoughts include aging population (and changing needs), enhancing the school system (by connecting research and development to schools, internships, etc.)
 - Also commented on the desirability of a diverse economy (more robust), localizing economy (e.g. food), capitalizing on spin off effects and supporting home-based businesses
- ❖ **Creating walkable destinations by clustering retail and restaurants** seemed to be a clear priority above job creation for participants.
 - Interest in small-scale, clustered, walkable areas of retail and restaurants mostly as in-fill, mostly in and around villages and Kelley’s Corner; interest in clustering creating synergy. Each village should have its own identity
 - Need to attract young affluent families (walkable, good restaurants, movies, night life, places to gather)
- ❖ Need to understand how to **attract desired businesses**.
 - Streamline permitting
 - Understand what businesses need and how Acton can match those needs
 - Provide incentives
 - Access and services are important to consider
 - Lack of large amounts of developable land with easy access from interstate highway means that most future development will most likely be smaller scale, in-fill development of smaller parcels
- ❖ Need to **retain existing desirable businesses**
 - Create a business-friendly environment
 - Improve communication between town and business community
- ❖ Interest in **support of small and home-based businesses** in a number of ways including providing space, training and support centers for solo-preneurs, establishing a small business ombudsman to advocate for small businesses and incubator space for starting up small businesses.
- ❖ **Main concerns regarding additional economic development – impacts** on traffic, water, septic, and town character.

Priority Action Steps

If you could do one thing to address economic development issues in Acton what would it be?

Action	Comments	# of groups¹	# of dots²
<i>Space for solo-preneurs</i>	<i>Destination creation</i>	1	12
<i>Village Infill</i>	<i>Incl. reuse of existing buildings</i>	2	11
<i>Create a land development corporation</i>		1	10
<i>Kelley's Corner</i>		1	9
<i>Recreation</i>		1	7
<i>Improve town interdepartmental communication regarding business interests</i>	<i>Incl. creating a one-stop permitting center</i>	1	6
<i>Retail/restaurants</i>	<i>Including children's stores</i>	2	5
<i>Improve connections</i>		1	4
<i>Establish a small business ombudsman</i>	<i>To advocate/negotiate for small business interests</i>	1	4
<i>Incubator Space</i>	<i>For small businesses</i>	1	4
<i>More commercial activity in S. Acton</i>		1	4
<i>Children's activities</i>	<i>Parks and play spaces</i>	1	4
<i>Use large parcels for job creation</i>		1	3
<i>Sewerage</i>		1	2

Important ideas regarding implementation:

- **INFILL DEVELOPMENT** (24) includes:
 - Village infill (11)
 - Kelley's Corner (9)
 - More commercial activity in S. Acton (4)
- **SUPPORT OF SMALL AND HOME-BASED BUSINESSES** (20) includes:
 - Space for solo-preneurs, support center for training, shared services (12)
 - Establish a small business ombudsman to advocate for small businesses (4)
 - Incubator space for small businesses (4)
- **PROACTIVE APPROACH TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** (20) includes:
 - Create a land development corporation (10)
 - Improve interdepartmental communication including one-stop permitting (6)
 - Establish a small business ombudsman (4)
- **CONNECT RETAIL AND FOOD TO RECREATION** (11) includes:
 - Locate more recreational space (7)
 - Parks and playspace (4)
- **FOCUS ON CHILDREN** (6) includes:
 - Parks and play spaces (4)
 - Children's stores (2)

¹ Out of total of three (3).

² After all participants added their thoughts to a list, each was given five (5) dots with which to prioritize. They were instructed to use all five (5), but no more than three (3) on any one item.

Small Group Exercise: Summary

In addition to the action steps that participants were asked to suggest and prioritize (summarized on the previous page), participants were asked a couple of questions and invited to participate in a mapping exercise.

Questions

Place of employment. In terms of their place of employment, participants ranged from retired, work at home, work in town and work out of town.

Shopping and Dining. In terms of where participants shop and dine, they made the following comments:

Group 1: majority does most of their shopping in Acton, but most of their dining out of town.

Group 2: felt that shopping lacks diversity and is often expensive, but not enough stores for children's clothes and toys. Restaurants lack variety and affordability.

Group 3: mostly buy food, hardware and personal services in town and major appliances, clothing and shoes mostly out of town (including New Hampshire).



Mapping Participants were asked: **“Where would the different kinds of economic development be best located?”** They were instructed to use color-coded legos with which to indicate locations on the map. Post-it notes were available for making comments on the map.

(Types of development/activities available on the key were: Restaurants/coffee shops/pub, Entertainment (movie theater, musical performance space), Small shops, Big box, Personal services (e.g. dry cleaners), Professional offices (e.g. doctor, dentist, lawyer), Industrial/manufacturing, High tech/R&D, Other ____)

- All three maps concentrate majority of development around existing villages and major roads (i.e. West Acton, South Acton, Kelley’s Corner, North Acton, and all of Great Rd.).
- Restaurants and shops are the most popular kind of development for around the villages.
- Services or other development (such as a hotel or movie theater) were also put in either West Acton or Kelley’s Corner by all three groups.
- The auto auction lot, Transfer Station site, and WR Grace space were each selected as possible spaces for job creation or R&D sites because of their existing space and relative remoteness. The auto auction space has access on Route 2 and one group locating development on the WR Grace site assumed that there would be a new access road).
- Closer to North Acton Village most groups put either recreation or community center spaces and one group even thought of locating some mixed use development to create walkable services for the nearby residential area and elderly housing.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: NOTES FROM LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

What do you want Acton to be – bucolic or everything you want?

- Neither extreme, walkable environment with stores (like Maynard), local businesses (not Bolton);
- develop its road system (says an engineer) for better biking and walking, and schools
- Independent villages with identifiable character and local boutiques and restaurants that fit the village
- How to attract young, affluent families? More affordable than Concord but need more walkable, good restaurants, movies, night life, place to gather
- Not only retail, development does not always have to be new stuff – redevelopment, and reuse and infill
- Climate change – relocate food production
- Boxborough shows movies at?? artist building; West Concord has artists work and exhibit in a warehouse; Acton could do similar to attract interesting young people
- Elderly people need to be able to get around easily without driving, especially to shops

Hypothetical Situation

Cons (as listed by participants):

- Wetland impacts
- Storm water runoff from pavement
- Add traffic to congested roads
- Overloaded infrastructure
- Impact on walking children to school
- People come to Acton for rural character – this would be a direct threat to that
- 1.5 million SF more than all town buildings put together
- Can we encourage developer to match jobs to local workforce skill level? Can encourage but can't discriminate against out of towners

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Pros (as listed by participants):

- Tax base – reduce rate of residential taxes
- Community sense from people coming together – this will create dining and shopping opportunities
- Jobs in town reduce commuting to and from Town which in turn reduces traffic
- Jobs go to Acton people

Following Discussion:

- Deed restrict existing units to house the workers we want to attract
- Linkage
- Start with road improvements by developer to accommodate the added traffic. Also sidewalks for the schools.
- Also enhance train station and subsidize shuttle service
- Bring to compromise that leaves more open land, also incorporate retail/restaurants, place for playgrounds and public open space
- Underground parking
- Get developer to convert the barn to community gathering place
- Pervious pavement, rain gardens, green roof
- Parking garage to reduce amount of pavement
- Wastewater and stormwater needs to be handled and treated
- Do bylaws require all this parking? Yes but could discuss in future situations
- Does it meet current bylaws? Yes (but such a site does not exist)
- Water supply – is it adequate? Challenge to reduce water in zone 4 – opportunity for water re-use system. Developer could reuse water and wastewater, well if they can get enough in zone 4
- Multiple visions = trade-offs needed: multi-floor building, multi-level parking – easier to capture; stormwater; and screen garage with building; LEED certified design
- Can a direct connection from Rt. 2 be built? Yes if proven necessary and safe, but the challenge is left turns
- Town meeting decides taxes – development adds capacity but will town use it to reduce taxes? Can stabilize taxes but no instant benefit
- What if too much is demanded? Won't get development because too many restrictions and good locations elsewhere.
- From a developer's view – want good location and good workforce. Make it easy and lower risk if you want development

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- Spaulding wouldn't come here – not enough acres in close to the interstate (like Groton or Westford) – not if they get beaten up by the town
- Rt. 27 development illustrates impacts of a big development
- Encourage small scale development
- M Gould (small developer) – Acton is compatible with their vision – people need to go to the variety of stores in his plaza, on a weekday basis; also Acton is difficult to navigate for the development process
- Amenable to current ideas of planning? Would try to accommodate if it works for everyone: location is important – drive by traffic on 2A; level of income; intelligence; rural character
- Cart before the horse – understand business first and what the developer needs to be successful
- What's the right type of business to attract/ retain?
- If not a “player” (in the development process) the Town doesn't have much say in the outcome; it can mostly restrict, there are not too many incentives it can offer; can provide infrastructure as an incentive. Build it first, then attract businesses
- #1 attractor is the schools – Acton known for nice people, good schools, town character
- much of commercial environment already there – hardcore of many small home- or shared space businesses
- to retain: business friendly environment: avoid friction unless necessary; prepare to tell businesses how to solve their problems with the town and answer their questions
- auto-auction property – big box, office, R/D? is it developable?
- Vacancies ... leading up to that parcel; maybe relocate town offices to “soft” area like that parcel
- Need to encourage developer to come – what incentives could we offer?
- Recent purchases, parceled off Nagog Park to business for good price
- If there is a demand they will come and stay: Acton is the 1st affordable town on Rt 2 belt; why need to drive so far for shops and restaurants? Vacancies on 2A – try to fill them up
- What is the main motivator for econ dev? ...? More goods and services: retail, professional offices, restaurants, coffee, pubs, theater. Places to go, casual interaction, more job opportunities, work closer to home, increase tax base
- Demographic changing – aging population
- Single level, complexes of smaller units
- Enhance the school system – R&D expertise lent to schools – educational programs, internships

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- Econ diversity will strengthen the town (not Maynard/digital) – also stronger in downturn
- Spin-off effects - growing web of businesses
- Localize economy – food production, basics of life
- People working from home – provide \$300 per month small offices, incubator
- Show positive results of other businesses to attract more
- Ways to address the budget trend out-stripping revenue growth – way to balance budget
- Roland Bartl – have a parcel for 1.9 msf: WR Grace – on the market, multiple access points

APPENDIX B: NOTES FROM SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Group 1 (Jim Purdy & Roland Bartl):

Intro: Themes

- o What can we do for young people;
- o Needs of senior population;
- o Hope Acton could identify a center;
- o Kelley's corner.

Shopping/Restaurants

Two people in the group are retired, two work in Acton and two work out of town. Five people in the group mostly buy their groceries in Acton, and four do the rest of their shopping mostly in Acton as well. However, only two of six do most of their dining in Acton. It was mentioned that Scupperjack Restaurant (at Nagog Woods) is a restaurant that is missed since it closed.

Mapping Exercise

The group concentrated their development ideas around the existing villages in Acton. Kelley's Corner and West Acton Village were identified as good sites for small shops. Restaurants were put in Kelley's Corner, West Acton Village, Nagog and South Acton Village with the most in Kelley's Corner and West Acton Village. A movie theater at the K-Mart site was also a recommended addition to Kelley's Corner. A shopping mall with a Whole Foods was discussed for the Transfer site (but decided to put incubator space there).

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Notes on Maps:

Location: Assabet wells and Independence Rd

Note: Needs water access

Location: above Great Rd near Azelea

Note: more usability in East Acton village with shops already in front and in back

Location: Acton/Whittier Forest area to Wompus Ave

Note: locate residences and senior center and/or community center

Location: Nagog Park and Northernmost corner of Acton border with Littleton

Note: small incubator/ office incubator

Priorities

In prioritizing their development ideas, the group identified Kelley's Corner as their main concern and focus. "Village infill" is the second focus, echoing the concentration ideas shown in the grouping of new development in the existing villages and centers of Acton. Finally, tied for third place were the ideas of improving connections (including safer sidewalks) and an "incubator" space where small startup companies could share office space and services. Other interventions included general sewerage infrastructure, and job creation on large parcels of land.

Votes:

Kelley's Corner = 9

Village Infill = 5

Improve Connections = 4

Incubator space for small businesses = 4

Large parcels – job creation = 3

Sewerage = 2

Group 2 (Brian Barber, Facilitator; Jim Snyder-Grant, Scribe)

People in Group = 9

Years lived in Acton: 2, ½, 18, 34, 31, 15, 15, 4, 7. Average =14

Items purchased primarily in-town: Food, Hardware, Personal Services

Items purchased primarily out-of-town including in New Hampshire: Major Appliances, Clothing, Shoes

Biggest need for additional businesses: More restaurants to broaden dining choices

Favored creating small business support centers to service home businesses, and bring some of them into offices and retail space in commercially zoned areas.

Voting for the one thing to support economic development

- Create a land development corporation: 10 votes
- Infill and reuse of existing buildings: 6 votes
- More commercial activities in South Acton: 4 votes
- Establish a small business ombudsman to advocate and negotiate for interests of small businesses: 4 votes

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- Improve town interdepartmental communication regarding business interests: 4 votes
- As part of that create a one-stop permitting center in town government: 2 votes

Notes on Maps:

Location: Powdermill Rd, next to a restaurant/coffee shop/ pub

Note: Replace one store in mall

Location: intersection of Main St and Mass Ave

Note: Mixed use residential community center in Kelley's corner, hotel?

Location: near West Acton and Willow St

Note: small scale services and boutique shops in West Acton village

Location: between Strawberry Hill Rd and Great St

Note: some restaurant and stores on Great Rd

Location: Nonset Path, next to a restaurant/coffee shop/pub

Note: restaurant

Group 3 (Elizabeth Resor):

Shopping/Restaurants

Of the seven people in the group, 4 work at home, 2 in town and 1 out of town. The majority of the group shops and dines out of town (5 and 6 people, respectively, of seven). The group agreed that the shopping options in Acton lacked diversity and were often more expensive than out of town options. For example, many go to Market Basket in Westford for their usual grocery needs, citing the variety of good and lower prices as reasons for preference over Acton groceries. Everyone in the group agreed that Idylwilde offered great produce in season but did not replace a regular grocery store. Some people noted that a 24-hour store could be helpful, though others pointed out that there are some 24-hour options in Acton (CVS) and that others would change the quality of the town. The same argument was made against big box stores such as Wal-Mart and Target. However, a minority in the group (two people) continually said that there were not enough stores that offered options for children's clothes and toys. Comments about restaurants in Acton were similar to those about shopping – the lack of variety and affordability. Maynard was used as an example of a town with a better collection of restaurants that were “interesting, but not too expensive”. Many wanted better “environment” and “quality” in the offerings and some saw a particular need for family oriented restaurants.

Mapping Exercise

During the mapping exercise the group had difficulty coming to a decision, although much was discussed in the process. Increasing traffic was a constant concern that made people eager to concentrate development around existing main roads. Despite all the discussion about the lack of restaurants and shopping options people seemed indecisive about where to put them. However, when the phrase “destination creation” was used by someone in the group everyone got behind the idea – essentially

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grouping development to make multi-stop destinations with shopping, dining, and work space all together. Under this banner the idea of converting existing buildings into a professional services center for “solopreneurs” was also very popular. This idea centered on creating a space and service for existing at-home workers of Acton (the so-called “solopreneurs”), a space where they could get together for career development opportunities (social media and marketing trainings were the example) or simply share the cost of simple services (internet, printing, etc).

Towards the end of the exercise the creation of recreation areas was introduced and almost immediately agreed upon. Specifics and location were not determined but everyone seemed to think that more recreation spaces would be a positive addition to Acton. Some wanted to include outdoor eating areas. Others were more interested in focusing on children’s play spaces (indoor or outdoor).

Notes on Maps:

Location: Between River St and Drummer Rd

Note: River St open space/Brookside walking paths

Location: Between Mass Ave and Barker Pond

Note: Office/commercial development access off Rt 2 to mitigate traffic

Location: Between Mass Ave and Oakwood Rd

Note: Next Generation

Location: Martin St and Jones Field

Note: Assabet river rail trail restaurants and coffee shops, bike rental, etc

Location: Between South Acton and Monson Land

Note: work with existing owners for re-development for South Acton village retail/boutique and restaurants/coffee shops

Location: Mass Ave and Flint Rd intersection

Note: outdoor/café dining area – shared by 4 restaurants

Location: Acton Center

Note: small offices in fire station after it moves

Location: Open space across from/ North of Post Office Sq.

Note: recreation

Location: Next to Nagog water site and Grassy Pond Area

Note: recreation/ playground area

Location: near North Acton

Note: locate office support, restaurants, places to do chores near offices, ideally within walking distance of new village CTV

Location: North Acton, just above NARA

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Note: Professional offices, lots of residences across the street so this suits the space much better than industrial (worried about traffic increasing)

Location: North Acton, next to R&D and Professional Offices

Note: more opportunities for internships for high school students

Location: between Wills Hole Town Forest and Quarry Rd

Note: elderly recreation

Notes:

Destination Creation: Solopreneurs = 12

Recreation = 7

Destination Creation: Retail/Restaurants = 3

Children's Locations: Play Spaces = 2

Children's Locations: Parks = 2

Children's Locations: stores = 2



PUBLIC WORKSHOP ON TRANSPORTATION

Purpose: To hold a public workshop with the purpose of better understanding transportation in Acton by inviting “resource people” to contribute their experience and expertise to help the Acton 2020 Committee gain perspective of the issues and ways of addressing them. The public was also invited to contribute to the discussion. The workshop was held on Saturday, Wednesday, March 9, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. at Acton’s Town Hall.

Process: In order to be more interesting and engaging, a hypothetical scenario was developed and purposely exaggerated, in order to better illuminate the issues and tradeoffs. Acton 2020 Committee members performed a role-play of the different points of view (derived from master planning goals) to help to dramatize these tradeoffs as well as think through mitigating factors. The attendees (comprised both of the general public and resource people) participated by asking and/or answering questions. The role-play resulted in a list of pros and cons as well as mitigating measures agreeable to most. This then led to a more general discussion of the issues.

Prior to the discussion, the Consultants presented a PowerPoint slide show summarizing some of the main findings of their research regarding existing conditions and future trends in Acton. A Highlights Handout was distributed in order to provide participants with relevant facts and figures to help inform the discussion.

The discussion was followed by smaller break out groups, where among other things, attendees were invited to participate in a mapping exercise to begin to try to locate desirable types of activities and facilities. They were then asked to suggest action items and to prioritize these.

Following the small group discussions the group reconvened to share priorities and to outline next steps. The forum was well attended and was characterized by a high energy level and productive dialogue. Approximately forty (40) people were in attendance.



Key Themes:

The following are some key themes that emerged from the discussion with the “large group” of participants as well as in the small group discussions (See appendices for detailed notes).

UNDERLYING THEME: Strong interest expressed in reducing auto travel by providing alternatives including walking facilities (sidewalks), bike lanes/paths, town shuttle, and by reducing driving to the schools.

❖ Much interest in extending sidewalk system

- Recognition that “connectivity is central to sense of community”
- Walking for exercise, independence for seniors and children
- Work with Sidewalk Committee criteria to prioritize (currently Sidewalk Committee has plan, design guidelines and much responsibility for assisting DPW in obtaining easements from private property owners)
- Sidewalks don’t necessarily have to follow the road. Using direct routes for sidewalks may reduce distance and be safer
- Examples of pleasing sidewalks: new sidewalk on Main St. from Post Office to 2A/27, fits in with town character, avoids trees, stone walls
- Winter sidewalk conditions are hazardous
- Sidewalks lacking in many neighborhoods – unsafe for kids, can’t walk to school
- Prioritize provision of sidewalks to destinations such as village centers and schools and transit
- Connect apartments, e.g. on 2A, to key destinations (use social equity as a criterion when determining priority sidewalks)

❖ Bike travel

- Interest in extending biking facilities and making it safer throughout the town.

- Recognition that some roads are much narrower than others and would require other treatment to maintain safety
- Bike lanes on some narrow streets may alter trees, walls, and historic character. May also be more costly.

❖ Town shuttle

- Would like there to be fixed route
- Would like to find more permanent funding (current funding runs out after 3 yrs)

❖ Reduce driving to schools

- Teens driving to school (other communities limit)
- Parents dropping off and picking children up at schools create traffic issues
- Provide bus option for after school activities (e.g. late bus)

❖ Other ways of reducing auto travel

- Provide disincentive to auto travel by providing less parking
- Address cut through traffic by implementing calming measures in the neighborhoods (thus discouraging cut through drivers)
- Bay Area example of working together with employers to survey their employees and to promote ride sharing, biking/walking incentives

- ❖ **Main concerns** regarding making changes to transportation system include cost and impact on town character.

Priority Action Steps

If you could do one thing to address transportation issues in Acton what would it be?

Action	Comments	# of groups¹	# of dots²
More sidewalks	Speed up construction \$10 million for sidewalks	3	19
Fixed route bus	Permanently funded	3	19
Finish Bruce Freeman Rail Trail		1	10
Kelley's Corner redesign		1	9
Create bike lanes and paths		1	9
Sidewalks on my street		1	8
Safe Routes to School		1	8
More on-demand transit	Including help w/packages	1	8
Reconstruct Rt. 2 Rotary	In Concord	1	7
Regional shuttle		1	6
Buses to surrounding towns	Lexington, Framingham, Lowell	1	4
Link rail trails		1	4
Cost of existing transit	the MinuteVan dial-a-ride cost is too high for some	1	4
Finish sidewalks on High Street		1	3
Sidewalks to NARA		1	3
Extend bus service at schools	To later in the evening	1	3
Impose a per-mile tax on car travel		1	2
Commuter rail stop at Alewife	In Cambridge	1	1
Limit school kids driving to school	Teenagers	1	2
Hayward Rd. 1-way	During school start/pick up hours	1	1
Policy to reduce vehicle use		1	-

Main ideas regarding implementation:

PROVIDE ALTERNATIVES TO DRIVING AND LIMIT AUTOMOBILE USE

The main theme seems to be to reduce driving by providing alternatives to the car as well as by creating some policies to encourage/discourage specific modes of transportation. The main ways proposed to reduce travel by car are by:

- Extending sidewalks
- Extending transit service
- Creating bike lanes and paths
- Limit driving to schools

Additional ideas include:

- Commuter rail stop at Alewife
- More on-demand transit
- Management policy to reduce car travel, e.g. Impose a per-mile tax on car travel

¹ Out of a total of four (4).

² After all participants added their thoughts to a list, each was given five (5) dots with which to prioritize. They were instructed to use all five (5), but no more than three (3) on any one item.

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- **EXTEND SIDEWALKS (33)** includes:
 - Sidewalks on my street (8)
 - More sidewalks (19)
 - Finish sidewalks on High Street (3)
 - Sidewalks to NARA (3)
- **EXTEND TRANSIT SERVICE (27)** includes:
 - To surrounding towns (4)
 - Fixed route bus (19)
 - Reduce cost of transit (4)
- **CREATE BIKE LANES AND PATHS (23)** includes:
 - Finish Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (10)
 - Create bike lanes and paths (9)
 - Link rail trails (4)
- **LIMIT DRIVING TO SCHOOLS (14)** includes:
 - Safe Routes to Schools (8)
 - Extend bus service at schools (3)
 - Limit school kids (teens) driving to school (2)
 - Hayward Rd. 1-way during school start/pick up hours (1)



Small Group Exercise: Summary

In addition to the action steps that participants were asked to suggest and prioritize (summarized on the previous page), participants were asked a couple of questions and invited to participate in a mapping exercise.

Questions

How often do you walk, bike or car pool around Town?

There was a range of behavior with regard to walking, biking and car-pooling ranging from very frequent (several times a day, every day) to never.

Where do you go?

Where people walked:

- Recreational trails
- To shop in West Acton
- To the train
- To the farmer's market
- To school with children

Suggestions for increasing walking and biking:

- Increase safety
- Connect Nagog to 2A
- Connect shops on 2A with a connection between the Bruce Freeman and Assabet River Rail trails.
- Increase density (reducing the distance between destinations)

What are reasons that you choose not to walk or bike?

- Weather
- Not safe
- Lack of time
- Distance

The main reasons people walked: Scenic values, e.g., on Strawberry Hill Road (even if not safe), exercise, walking the dog, to deal with car problems

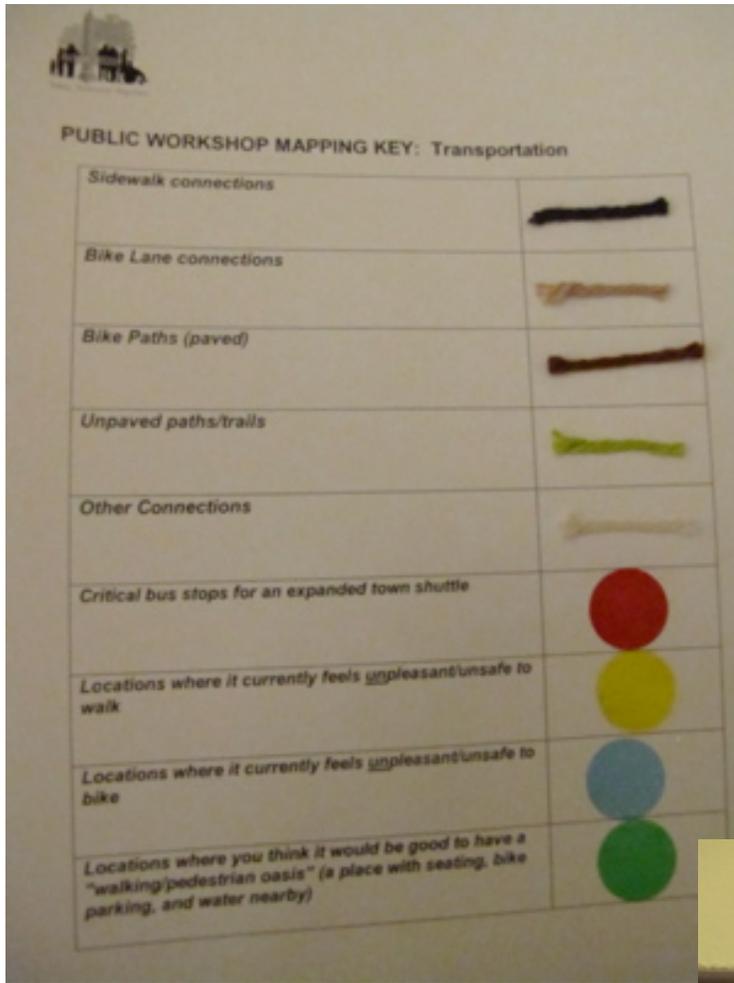
The main reason for car-pooling: Children's activities, e.g., soccer practice and games

Acton 2020

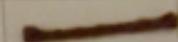
Mapping Participants were asked: **“Which activities/locations would you like to be better connected?”** Participants were instructed to use color-coded yarn to indicate in which way they would like these locales to be connected (choices included sidewalks, bike lanes, bike paths, unpaved paths/trails, other ___). Post-it notes were available for making comments on the map. Additionally colored dots were available to indicate desired locations for bus stops to an expanded town shuttle and locations where participants felt it was unpleasant or unsafe to walk and bike.

- All groups chose many similar locations for bus/shuttle stops including all of the village centers, Kelley’s Corner, the traffic signal in North Acton on Great Rd at Route 27, and at Nagog Woods.
- Most groups wanted some form of path or trail along at least part of the rail tracks from Concord and extending from South Acton to West Acton Village.
- Most groups put sidewalks around or connecting the villages.
- Two of the four groups wanted some sort of trail or path through the Nagog Hill area, one connecting to Nara Park and the other leading to Acton Center. One group wanted a trail connecting the Bruce Freeman and Assabet River Rail Trails.
- Areas considered unsafe varied from group to group though Great Rd and Route 27 in North Acton (particularly at intersections) was a frequent choice, and at least one group identified Arlington Street, Newtown Road, and Nagog Hill Road; Hosmer, Piper, Taylor, Valley, and Stow Roads; Mohawk Drive; High Street and Main Street in South Acton; and Main Street and Mass Ave at Kelley’s Corner. The groups tended to propose sidewalks at the locations they felt were unsafe.
- One group identified critical traffic signals for adding auditory signalization for the visually impaired.





PUBLIC WORKSHOP MAPPING KEY: Transportation

Sidewalk connections	
Bike Lane connections	
Bike Paths (paved)	
Unpaved paths/trails	
Other Connections	
Critical bus stops for an expanded town shuttle	
Locations where it currently feels unpleasant/unsafe to walk	
Locations where it currently feels unpleasant/unsafe to bike	
Locations where you think it would be good to have a "walking/pedestrian oasis" (a place with seating, bike parking, and water nearby)	

APPENDICES



APPENDIX A: NOTES FROM LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Review selected locations, beauty → adds to already high cost
- No eminent domain
- Stormwater mitigation – can we use pervious pavement?
- Will people use the sidewalks? Yes, if properly located and designed (i.e. benches along trails)
- Transit – “chicken-and-egg” situation - invest in serious system
- Sidewalks next to road are scary! Lincoln example.
- Distances are shorter than people realize – don’t stick to road, use direct route
- Rail trails – yes people use them! Safe interaction among users, positive effect on value of property near trail
- New sidewalk on Main St – Post office to 2A/27 – *does* fit into town character, avoids trees, stone walls
- Nothing like this would happen without painstaking planning
- Traffic calming can transform a community – repaint the edge line to narrow lanes and widen area for bikes and pedestrians on all roads
- A couple people should not be able to stop a good project, need for selective eminent domain
- We will *never* see a tax increase of this magnitude
- Walking/biking are good, but be selective (sidewalk committee)
- Acton needs a center for shopping, a community center – connect that
- Winter conditions are hazardous for walkers and bikers
- Sidewalks lacking in many neighborhoods – unsafe for kids
- Priorities needed – distance, neighborhoods,
- Half Moon Hill paid for the sidewalk to W. Acton – a major part of her life
- Sidewalks promote development of the centers, e.g. North Acton
- Connectivity is central to community
- Are there examples of economic development resulting from these connections? Placemaking – viable walking opportunities can support this
- High level of intention in Acton

Acton 2020

- Provide incentive of *less* parking
- Transit and sidewalks to transit (not necessarily sidewalks along transit routes)
- Transit *frequency* is critical
- Issue of cut-through traffic, avoiding bottle necks
- Need to identify demand corridors to serve with pedestrian/bike routes
- Great Road sidewalks – issue of state hierarchy, ROW, etc – anticipate constraint with design studies
- Rt 62 in Concord (improvements were made using local money, should explore further)
- Status of Rt 2A as state-owned highway
- Acton in catch-up mode – allowed development where no sidewalks existed, but developers didn't build them – need to require what's needed
- Totally support increase in walking portion of road, but rather not widen pavement
- prioritize sidewalks – people who have been here longer
- town is under-funding police, ... service, schools → need \$250 - \$1000 per household to take care of current needs; could use override for these as well
- Kate – sidewalk committee building sidewalk on Great Rd now: Davis – Woodvale corridor
- Sidewalks and bike friendliness improve town character (in sense of community)
- Bruce Freeman and Assabet Rail Trails should connect
- In favor of sidewalks but not feasible to accommodate all modes so suggest piecemeal approach
- Assume schools are the key center to prioritize
- Many roads have specific issues. Need to go door to door to convince abutters to grant easements – sidewalk committee does this
- Bike lanes may not be fit on some narrow streets without altering trees, walls, historic character. Also cost issue.
- Way too many parents dropping and picking up school kids – need to increase bus transport, Minute Van does this 3:15 to 8:15
- Increase price of gas
- Frame the debate in terms of safety – lighting, road marking signage, maintenance, etc

Acton 2020

- Nagog village is an example of good road design
- Increase tax to discourage more cars
- Don't allow parking lots in front of stores – could do this at Kelley's Corner and Great Road to make it more pedestrian friendly; don't force people to walk through parking lots to stores
- North Acton – no sidewalks on NARA, forces people to walk on roadway
- But don't raise taxes to over-burden people who can't afford necessities vs. luxuries
- Route 2A sidewalk important – connect many apartments, social justice
- solicit money from Quail Ridge, Lexian – High St, etc
- need man hours to design, survey, communicate, ROW acquisitions (would need to take off other staff priorities)
- Bay Area example – got companies to survey their employees, promote ride sharing, bike/walk incentives
- Need fixed route as well as on-demand – Minute Van is providing a pilot study of where fixed route would be needed
- What incentives work to reduce car use?

APPENDIX B: NOTES FROM SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Small Groups

Group 1 (Bill Schwartz):

Five people in the group bike regularly, while 3 people do not. Reasons for not biking were either not owning a bike or being afraid of traffic. Seven people walk regularly for exercise, walking the dog or to deal with car problems. Two people do not walk regularly. None carpool. Suggestions for improving biking and walking habits included connecting Nagog to 2A, and connecting shops on 2A with a connection between the Bruce Freeman and Assabet River Rail trails.

As priorities, the group chose “sidewalk on my street” and redesign Kelley's Corner with pedestrian friendliness and calmer traffic. Other ideas included \$10 million for sidewalk construction, regional shuttle, buses to Lexington, Framingham, and Lowell, finish sidewalks on High St, commuter rail stop at Alewife, Hosmer St sidewalks and walk to West Acton, Willow St.

Votes:

Kelley's Corner Redesign = 9
Sidewalks on my street = 8
Regional shuttle = 6
Buses to Lexington, Framingham, Lowell = 4
\$10 million for sidewalks = 4
finish sidewalks on High St = 3
Commuter Rail stop at Alewife = 1

Notes from Maps

No sticky notes.

Group 2 (Jim Purdy):

Of the seven people in the group (having lived in Acton for 6 to 35 years), 5 walk about once a week for exercise and enjoyment. One person bikes weekly and one monthly. A biker felt that Rt 27 has become too dangerous and so quit their biking group. Four people carpool weekly, one carpools monthly. Safety, time and distance were all reasons not to bike, walk or carpool. The group suggested grouping businesses on 2A with the possibility of creating an oasis. Density was seen as a necessary quality to encourage walking – with distances of no more than ¼ mile, but it was also noted that often people oppose density.

Safety seemed to be the main concern of the group. Safe routes to school and more sidewalks were the two main priorities by far. Other ideas included fixed route buses, Hayward Road becoming one way at school start and pickup hours, limit school kids driving to school (emphasis on teenagers), extend bus service at schools to later in the evening, provide sidewalks to NARA, and link rail trails.

Votes:

Safe Routes to school = 8
More sidewalks = 7
Link rail trails = 4
Sidewalks to NARA = 3
Extend bus service at schools = 3
Fixed Route bus with varieties = 2
Limit school kids (teenagers) driving to school = 2
Hayward Rd 1-way, school start/pick-up hours = 1

Notes from Maps

Location: along West Acton Rd (but in Stow – maybe got moved?)

Note: Add exercise areas along the path; put path along rail ROW

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Location: along T between Nash Rd and Maple St
Note: Rail with Trail

Location: along Mass Ave, above Nadine Rd
Note: density Kelley's corner

Location: along Rt 2, by Hayward Rd and skateboard park
Note: have all the high school students take the bus to/from school instead of driving their family's cars

Location: Coolidge Dr
Note: Newton good for biking

Location: Great Rd near Ice House Pond
Note: ice cream on rail trail

Location: Fort Pond Rd
Note: Arlington pretty but unsafe

Group 3: Jim Snyder-Grant

walking

one for every day - 1
couple for every week - 2
one every month - 1
multiple times every day - 1

biking

Every month - 1

Car pooling

once a week - 2

Address traffic and circulation

1. Finish Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (10 dots)
2. Fixed bus route (8 dots)
3. More on-demand transit, including help with packages (8 dots)
4. Cost of the transit (4 dots)

Notes from Maps

Location: Near Assabet River Trail and Powder Mill Trail

Note: Map and education about path and trails

Location: Next to red dot on Puritan Rd and Parker St

Note: Collection Point

Location: Knox Trail near Concord border

Note: Avalon advertises a bus stop; they should pay for shuttle

Location: Right of Great Hill, near Piper Rd

Note: or something in housing (?) cluster

Location: Below red dot on Russell Rd and Hosmer St

Note: need auditory signal here

Location: intersection of Elm St and Azelea Rd, next to red and blue dots

Note: durn soccer gavel (?) in season

Location: Below Nagog pond, on Nagog water site

Note: we assume ARRT and BFRT are top priorities

Location: next to Kate Dr and Mildam Rd, on top of green area with Nashoba brook

Note: more accessible to students from high school

Location: on border with Carlisle, near Blueberry Path

Note: unsafe to bike, Carlisle border, Rt. 27 to intersection with 2A

Location: on the bottom of the map (off the mapped area)

Note: 3 notes said auditory signals key

Group 4

(Brian Barber, Facilitator and Roland Bartl, Scribe)

7 People in group

Years living in Acton: Didn't ask because they jumped right into first exercise on how frequently they walked, biked or car pooled.

	Every Day	Every Week	Every Month	Never
Walked	2	1	2	1
Biked	1	4	1	0
Car Pooled	0	1	1	4

The main reason for car pooling: Children's activities, e.g., soccer practice and games

Where people walked:

- Recreational trails

Acton 2020

- To shop in West Acton
- To the train
- To the farmer's market
- To school with children

Reasons for not walking or biking

- Weather
- Not safe

Reasons for walking

- Scenic values, e.g., on Strawberry Hill Road (even if not safe)

One thing to improve transportation in Acton

- Create bike lanes and paths: 9 votes
- Permanently fund fixed route local bus (a shuttle now running on a 3-year grant): 9 votes
- Speed up the pace of sidewalk construction: 8 votes
- Reconstruct the Route 2 Rotary in Concord: 7 votes
- Impose a per-mile tax on automobile travel: 2 votes
- Other management to reduce vehicles miles of travel: 0 votes

Notes from Maps

Location: Audubon Hill Condos, near River St and Drummer Rd

Note: All major South Acton roads feel unsafe for biking. High, River, School Sts.

Location: where commuter rail tracks cross border with Concord

Note: Historic agreement with T to have bike/ped paved route sharing train corridor with access vehicles

Location: Intersection of Musket and Coolidge Drive

Note: sidewalks in Patriot's Hill!

Location: Nagog Hill Rd near Hammond St

Note: Sidewalk on Fort Pond Rd, Nagog Hill needs widening – sidewalk & bike lane; Newtown – sidewalk to access library

Acton 2020



PUBLIC WORKSHOP ON HOUSING

Purpose: To hold a public workshop with the purpose of better understanding housing in Acton by inviting “resource people” to contribute their experience and expertise to help the Acton 2020 Committee gain perspective and deeper understanding of the issues and ways of addressing them. The public was also invited to contribute to the discussion. The workshop was held on Saturday, March 12, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. at Acton’s Town Hall.

Process: In order to be more interesting and engaging, a hypothetical scenario was developed and purposely exaggerated, in order to better illuminate the issues and tradeoffs. Acton 2020 Committee members performed a role-play of the different points of view (derived from master planning goals) to help to dramatize these tradeoffs as well as think through mitigating factors. The attendees (comprised both of the general public and resource people) participated by asking and/or answering questions. The role-play resulted in a list of pros and cons as well as mitigating measures agreeable to most. This then led to a more general discussion of the issues.

Prior to the discussion, the Consultants presented a PowerPoint slide show summarizing some of the main findings of their research regarding existing conditions and future trends in Acton. A Highlights Handout was distributed in order to provide participants with relevant facts and figures to help inform the discussion.

The discussion was followed by smaller break out groups, where among other things, attendees were invited to participate in a mapping exercise to begin to try to locate desirable types of activities and facilities. They were then asked to suggest action items and to prioritize these.

Following the small group discussions the group reconvened to share priorities and to outline next steps. The forum was well attended and was characterized by a high energy level and productive dialogue. Approximately forty (40) people were in attendance.



Key Themes:

The following are some key themes that emerged from the discussion with the “large group” of participants as well as in the small group discussions (See appendices for detailed notes).

UNDERLYING THEME: There seemed to be general consensus regarding a desire to focus on meeting Acton’s specific housing needs rather than 40B requirements (especially not in one large development) and that small, scattered and integrated sites of “affordable” housing is more in keeping with the town’s character and attitudes. Many thought that infill in and around village centers was a desirable and appropriate location for smaller, more affordable housing units.

- ❖ **Important to differentiate between meeting Acton’s needs and meeting 40B requirements.**
 - Even if met 40B would not meet all of the town’s housing needs
 - Even if build one large development will not solve the “problem” as additional growth will continue regardless
 - If can demonstrate commitment to a housing production plan of 35 units per year, get two years of 40B relief – this is preferable to focusing on the 40B 10% threshold and allows the Town to focus on its own housing needs
- ❖ **Small, scattered sites integrated** into the surrounding neighborhoods for smaller, “affordable” housing units is preferable and more in keeping with Acton’s physical and social fabric.
 - Concentrating people of any kind in one place is isolating and stigmatizing
 - Integration of low- and moderate-income families in many Acton neighborhoods is good for everyone
 - Locate where can walk to school, to shops, to public transport
 - Infill in West and South Acton and Kelley’s Corner
- ❖ **Focus on meeting Acton’s housing needs.** Acton’s housing needs include:
 - Low income rental
 - Moderate income ownership
 - Rental for elderly (below market)
 - Below market home ownership
 - Housing for people with disabilities
 - Emergency housing (for those with sudden unemployment, divorce)
- ❖ **Consider using existing housing stock for providing “affordable” units.**
 - Convert to two-family homes
 - Explore ways of making existing housing affordable by deed restriction
 - Condo buy down program began in 2007; eligible buyers prefer townhouses or single family homes, but these are too expensive for buy down program
 - Condo units in complexes with lots of rentals not eligible for mortgages, therefore opportunities for funding units that qualify is small
- ❖ Currently affordable housing issue is being addressed by **an all-volunteer effort.**
- ❖ **Key concerns regarding additional housing development** include impact on school enrollments (and related impact to quality of education and facility needs), loss of open space, impact on water supply, wastewater, and town character.
 - 37% of Acton households have school-aged children, this has been steady and town falls just under state average for per pupil cost
 - Outdoor water usage
 - LEED doesn’t give much weight to treating waste
 - Design reviews need to be mandatory

Priority Action Steps

If you could do one thing to address housing issues in Acton what would it be?

Action	Comments	# of groups¹	# of dots²
<i>Mixed use pedestrian village</i>	<i>Cluster housing & commercial activity in W. Acton, S. Acton & Kelley's Corner</i>	3	27
<i>Sewers to villages</i>		1	9
<i>Increase density</i>		1	9
<i>Lower property tax</i>		2	9
<i>Mandatory design review</i>	<i>For housing</i>	1	8
<i>Connect housing to transportation</i>	<i>Improve infrastructure</i>	1	6
<i>Housing moratorium</i>		1	6
<i>Reuse already built space</i>	<i>Identify green space for protection and protect it</i>	1	6
<i>More houses at average price</i>		2	5
<i>Get rid of 40B</i>		1	5
<i>Cap the population</i>		1	4
<i>Program to fund energy efficiency in older houses</i>		1	2
<i>55+ housing (ownership)</i>		1	2
<i>Allow 2nd detached unit on a lot</i>	<i>Allow houses to be subdivided</i>	1	2
<i>Limit housing size</i>		1	2
<i>Emergency housing</i>	<i>For use for less than 1 year e.g. for recent divorcees</i>	1	

Main Ideas regarding implementation:

- **CREATE MIXED USE PEDESTRIAN VILLAGES (36)** includes:
 - Cluster housing and commercial activities (27)
 - Increase density (9)

- **INVEST IN INFRASTRUCTURE (15)** includes:
 - Sewers to villages (9)
 - Connect housing to transportation (6)

- **CONTROL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT (15)** includes:
 - Get rid of 40B (5)
 - Cap the population (4)
 - Housing moratorium (6)

¹ Out of a total of three (3)

² After all participants added their thoughts to a list, each was given five (5) dots with which to prioritize. They were instructed to use all five (5), but no more than three (3) on any one item.

Acton 2020

- **PROVIDE VARIETY OF HOUSING TYPES (11)** includes:
 - More houses at average price (5)
 - 55+ housing (2)
 - Allow subdivision of existing housing (2)
 - Provide emergency housing
 - Limit housing size (2)
- **GUIDE DEVELOPMENT (10)** includes:
 - Mandatory design review (8)
 - Program to fund energy efficiency in older homes (2)
- **USE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK (8)** includes:
 - Allow subdivision of existing housing (2)
 - Reuse already built space (6)



When the small children present at the workshop were asked what kind of housing Acton needs one of them drew this picture and said “old houses with trees”.

Small Group Exercise: Summary

In addition to the action steps that participants were asked to suggest and prioritize (summarized on the previous page), participants were asked a couple of questions and invited to participate in a mapping exercise.

Questions

1. Who do you think would like to live in Acton/stay in Acton but have a hard time doing so?

- People who cannot drive
- Retirees and elderly on a fixed income
- Town employees
- Crowded Nest Syndrome (elderly parents or in-laws moving in with their adult children) and Boomerang Generation (young adults moving back in with parents)
- Housing for seniors: should be low maintenance and near village services (e.g. condo with a small yard)
- Low-to moderate-income families
- Teachers: give them a tax break to encourage them to live in Acton
- Adult children who grew up in Acton

2. What would you say are the characteristics of the kind of housing that these people would like/meet their needs?

- Need housing options with lower property taxes. Rising property taxes makes living in Acton unaffordable for many low wage town workers and low or fixed-income individuals and families.
- Need smaller apartments to accommodate family members moving back to town in times of financial or physical need in order to be closer to their Acton relatives.
- Need better infrastructure support throughout the community. E.g. better maintenance of roads, especially re-stripping center line and travel lane edge markings for better visibility by elderly residents who drive. And better connectivity between residences and commercial establishments for those who don't drive.
- Development for persons over 55 years of age with all amenities (e.g. theater, gym, etc.)

3. Does this kind of housing exist in Acton? If yes, is there enough of it? Is it located well?

- Permit single family housing to be modified to include in-law apartments on the premises. This could alleviate the crowded nest and boomerang needs described above, and hopefully add to the value of the property.
- Redo outdated housing stock to produce more modern developments, specifically ones that appeal to young adults. Young adults are not drawn to the town now because Acton lacks the social environment to support them. I.e. there is nowhere to go and nothing to do in town to socially connect with

Acton 2020

- other young adults.
- Route 2A area is overdeveloped.

Mapping Participants were asked: **“Where do you think the different kinds of housing types would best be located?”** They were instructed to use color-coded legos with which to indicate locations on the map. Post-it notes were available for making comments on the map.

(Types of housing available on the key were: Single-family attached, single-family detached (e.g. townhouses), multi-family complex (e.g. multiple buildings), apartment building (e.g. garden apartments), mixed use (e.g. housing over retail), Other __).

- All three groups focused housing around West and South Acton villages and Kelley’s Corner. In all of these cases apartments and mixed use (retail with housing above) were the most popular type of housing used, with some townhouse options as well.
- Single-family homes were included only by one group – in East Acton and west of West Acton.
- Only one group put any multi-family complexes on the map (in this case, two in North Acton Village and one at Kelley’s Corner).
- Senior housing was designated by two groups – townhouses on Main Street between Acton Center and Great Road, and apartments in West Acton Village.





APPENDICES



APPENDIX A: NOTES FROM LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Worry about loss of open space
- Increased need (including emergency need) among current town residents
- Concern increases when a new house/ development is next to one's own house
- Impact on water supply and demand

Hypothetical Scenario:

- Make them luxury condos ←→ lower income, less environmental impact
- Can protect other areas of town from future 40Bs
- Avalon location appropriate, satisfied customers – this type of housing is good for divorcees; well-managed
- Design and visual impact can be considered
- Criterion: doesn't need to hide it, because of the good design; screen parking, make it pedestrian oriented
- Can 40B be limited to certain areas of town? State suggests that town designate appropriate area for this housing type and density
- Examples of well-sited and –designed housing?
- Need minimum number to support rental housing
- But, one 40B doesn't solve all the town's housing issues – Need more affordable units as total housing stock increases
- Avalon has been a good neighbor, (commenter via email) – police reports concentrated in apartments
- Concentrating people (of any kind) in one place is ludicrous – scattered smaller development is preferable for town character as well as social character
- Use of rental to take advantage of 40B loophole is not good for the overall housing needs
- Integration of low and moderate income families in many Acton neighborhoods has been good for everyone
- Agree with idea of integration and mainstreaming rather than concentrating affordable housing in a lump
- Should be in walkable locations, permit walking to schools
- More recent residents may see the town differently than long time residents
- Both lost and gain with growth

Acton 2020

- 37% of households with school children has been steady and Acton is just under state average for per pupil cost
- On 2A Springhill 12 unit building closed after fire
- 42% of households have school age children
- Agree with scattered sites for affordable housing
- Should get creative design for housing – paths, playground, fitness training – open to whole community
- Would oppose this project – haven't addressed need, but market rentals not really needed – only 60 affordable units in Avalon
- Don't use trickery to achieve 10% goal
- If committed to a housing production plan of 35 units per year, get 2 years of 40B relief
- Putting people in concentrated development at the corner of town is a failed strategy
- Need: low income rental, moderate income ownership, rental for elderly below market, below market ownership (between market and moderate income), housing for people with disabilities
- To address all 40B in one place doesn't get the human dimension – integration of tolerant people together. Her street has both owners and renters and she likes that
- Should ask people what they want
- Town could be proactive, not reactive – *improve* town character through new development, e.g. Kelley's Corner; also infill in West and South Acton would be positive
- LEED at lower levels (e.g. silver) “sort of a joke”
- Site is on brownfield not Greenfield
- Walk to school, close to community routes
- How does housing development affect real estate values?
- What ways are there to make existing housing stock affordable by deed restriction?
- Housing for older people – such as one's parents or grand parents – shouldn't be isolated and auto-dependent
- Actual projects have needed better design reviews – mandatory – and need follow-up to verify accountability through lifetime of project
- Even with one large development the other growth will happen anyway

Acton 2020

- Need to connect water resource and waste disposal issues – large projects can create unsustainable demand for water
- If reach 10%, doesn't mean diversity and affordable housing needs remain
- What's the break even point on local impacts? Brian Barber – probably around 2 BR
- Springhill Commons had wastewater problem
- LEED doesn't give much weight to waste
- Gal/capita/day is 30 gal higher than many projects – 2500 gal/day review threshold – easier for friendly 40B
- Believe that the perception of the supply problem is greater than the reality
- Have seen water use level out despite growth, outdoor use is a major concern
- Is this a 20th century housing development or a 21st century development? Housing growth in Acton took place when house prices were steadily rising.
- NE had biggest housing bubble of US, so it's a unique situation as prices drop
- Concord population stabilized, Acton's went up even after price drops
- Cheap oil is over – last master plan at stable \$20/gallon of crude oil, peak oil reached in 2000-2010 decade, now price going up
- 83% of tax dollars go to schools
- 2006 \$50 project to expand ABRSD High School – now on starvation diet Acton ranked 26th in Boston magazine
- Condo buy down program – began in 2007 – 1000 units worth \$175k or less (mostly \$150k to \$200k apartments); ACHC identified unit, makes offer contingent on funding base; DHCD approval. 1st was \$157k need to be \$100k plus condo fee; ACHC bought down to \$100k for qualified buyer → CPA funds – enough for 2 units per year
- Townhouse or single family home preferable but more expensive 00> \$250k for 2 bedroom – need to sell for \$150k
- Very hard to get a mortgage for a condo building
- Suburbs going bankrupt on a steady diet of single family homes
- Mortgage deduction gives the wrong incentive
- Plan must deal with survival of existing housing stock in Acton, e.g. convert to two family house

APPENDIX B: NOTES FROM SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Group 1 (Kathy Bagdonas):

QUESTIONS

1. Based on those you know, who do you think would like to live in Acton/stay in Acton but have a hard time doing so? (E.g. seniors, low and moderate income, town staff, teachers, fire fighters, adult children who grew up in Acton)

Group Responses:

- *People who cannot drive*
- *Retirees and elderly on fixed incomes*
- *Town workers*
- *Crowded Nest Syndrome (elderly parents or in-laws moving in with their adult children) & Boomerang generation (young adults moving back in with parents)*

2. What would you say are the characteristics of the kind of housing these people would like/meet their needs?

Physical form (*small, single family, apartment*)

Location (*access to public transportation, access to personal services, walk to shops, recreation, socializing*)

Price point (*"affordable", market*)

Other _____

Group Responses:

- *Need housing options with lower property taxes. Rising property taxes makes living in Acton unaffordable for many low wage town workers and low or fixed-income individuals and families.*
- *Need smaller apartments to accommodate family members moving back to town in times of financial or physical need in order to be closer to their Acton relatives.*
- *Need better infrastructure support throughout the community. E.g. better maintenance of roads, especially re-striping center line and travel lane edge markings for better visibility by elderly residents who drive. And better connectivity between residences and commercial establishments for those who don't drive.*

3. Does this kind of housing exist in Acton? If yes, is there enough of it? Is it located well?

Group Responses:

- *Permit single family housing to be modified to include in-law apartments on the premises. This could alleviate the crowded nest and boomerang needs described above, and hopefully add to the value of the property.*
- *Redo outdated housing stock to produce more modern developments, specifically ones that appeal to young adults. Young adults are not drawn to the town now because Acton lacks the social environment to support them. I.e. there is nowhere to go and nothing to do in town to socially connect with other young adults.*
- *Route 2A area is overdeveloped.*

PRIORITIZING ACTION STEPS

Group Responses (in descending order by number of votes received):

- *Mandatory design review for housing (8 votes)*
- *Improve infrastructure to connect housing to transportation (6 votes)*
- *Cluster housing and commercial activity in village centers, especially West Acton, South Acton, and Kelly's Corner (6 votes)*
- *Lower property taxes (6 votes)*
- *Housing moratorium (6 votes)*
- *Limit housing size (2 votes)*
- *More affordable housing (1 vote)*

Notes from Maps:

Location: Maynard border, near Assabet river trail

Note: in-law apartment access or b (?)

Location: Concord border, near Lawsbrook Rd

Note: A big commercial site: other business park or shopping center, down in the WR Grace site to offset taxes!

Location: north of Post Office Sq

Note: Senior housing

Location: Acton Center

Note: Acton Center is effectively built out and a historic district. New attached town houses are neither possible nor desirable. Ron R.

Group 2 (Jim Purdy & Celia Kent):

There were four people in the group who had spent from 6 months to 38 years in Acton. The group felt that all the categories of people mentioned in the first question (seniors, low and moderate income, town staff, teachers, fire fighters, adult children who grew up in Acton) as well as young families and divorced people have a hard time finding appropriate housing in Acton. The group felt that housing for seniors should be low maintenance and near village services, such as a condo with a small yard. Apparently there are 548 affordable units, only 148 of which are owner-occupied. For low- to moderate-income families, small single-family homes seemed appropriate, but there are none available. Some felt that adult children of Acton families could live in small condos or with parents. However, others in the group did not think that adult children would have much reason to want to stay in Acton. The group felt that some town staff would not want to live in Acton, while others, like teachers, should be given a break (tax break?) to encourage them to live in Acton.

The group identified three main priorities for Acton housing. The first priority is a sewer system for the villages. The second is mixed use pedestrian villages. And the third priority is a combination of repurposing existing built spaces and identifying and protecting existing open spaces. Other ideas included, having more houses of “average” price, allowing houses to be subdivided or allowing a second detached unit on a lot, a program to fund energy efficiency in older houses, 55+ housing (owner), and emergency housing (~ 1 year of occupancy, e.g., for recent divorcees).

Votes:

Sewers to villages = 9

Mixed use pedestrian village = 8

Identify green space for protections/ Reuse already built space; leave open space = 6

More houses at average price = 4

Program to fund energy efficiency in older houses = 2

55+ housing (owner) = 2

allow 2nd detached unit on a lot/ allow houses to be subdivided = 2

emergency housing (<1 year) = 0

Notes from Maps:

Location: below Mass Ave near Brucewood Rd

Note: add public transport

Location: South Acton

Note: not in historic district, already enough

Location: Kelley’s Corner

Acton 2020

Note: create a “center” around Kelley’s corner

Location: Mass Ave near Macpherson Field

Note: sustainable village – 2 & Piper – create a village – food, restaurant, doctor’s office, etc; cluster housing/ mixed use

Location: Acton-Boxborough Junior High

Note: West Acton village where there is shopping, restaurants and walkability and access to van to get to train – build to fit into character

Location: Acton Center

Note: No new housing in Acton Center

Location: Acton Center

Note: Don’t categorically exclude new housing proposals in Town Center. Could be site suitable, fit in, etc.

Location: 2A near Henley Rd

Note: No more cluster housing along 2A

Location: Intersection of 2A and Littleton border

Note: small cluster housing can go so many places if we add transportation

Group 3 (Kids)

Group 4–(Jim Snyder-Grant & Sahana Purohit):

1a) Town Employees

b) Seniors

c) Adult children who grew up in Acton.

2. Over 55 development with all amenities

theater, gym, etc.

3 a) Mixed use - Kelly's corner (13 dots)

b) Cap the population (4 dots)

c) more dense (9 dots)

d) get rid of 40B (5 dots)

e) lower taxes (3 dots)

Notes from Maps:

Location: Powdermill Rd

Note: good, need stormwater management

Acton 2020

Location: South Acton

Note: neighborhood input on design (Lauren)

Location: South Acton

Note: concern about breaky (?) pattern of ½ acre lot in South Acton (John)

Location: Prescott Rd

Note: for Elders

Location: West Acton

Note: small scale apartments ... fit in

Location: Concord

Note: redevelop brownfields not new stuff

Location: Great Road near border with Concord

Note: not convinced Acton needs more low income rentals (Matt)

Location: Davis Rd

Note: too much traffic already (Sahana), redevelop rather than develop

Location: near Whittier Forest and Nagog Hill

Note: proactive plan for undeveloped or unprotected lots

Location: Littleton

Note: good to isolate rental houses se (?) in 40B (like proposal) (John)

Location: Nagog Park, near Littleton border

Note: more shops, especially retail near Avalon

Summary of Public Input:

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ACTION ALTERNATIVES:

JUNE 23, 2011



CHOOSE YOUR OWN ACTON: PUBLIC WORKSHOP

Alternatives for Action

Thursday, June 23, 2011, 6:30 p.m.
Acton Town Hall, Room #204

Purpose: The purpose of this meeting was to present three alternative courses of action that would meet the previously developed planning goals in a variety of ways and to differing degrees. The main objective was to seek input on these alternatives as we move forward in the process of selecting a preferred course of action. This workshop represents a continuation of the community conversation that will result in formulating recommendations for a comprehensive community plan for the future of Acton.

Process

Prior to the discussion, the Consultants and committee members presented a PowerPoint slide show summarizing the process to date and the alternatives to be discussed at the meeting. Information in the slides was also summarized in handouts distributed to participants.

The presentation was followed by small break out groups, where among other things, attendees were invited to discuss the alternatives with an assigned partner. They were then asked to evaluate these using a worksheet as a guide. Finally facilitators led the small group discussions of the alternatives using a series of exercises designed to further understand people's thoughts and opinions regarding the alternatives.

Following the small group discussions the group reconvened and continued to discuss the alternative that was selected by the majority, including how to improve upon it, what concerned people about it, and how future trends may influence the Town's growth and development.

The forum was well attended and was characterized by a high energy level and productive dialogue. Over one hundred (100) people were in attendance. The discussion was lively and participants seemed very engaged. Their contributions to the process were productive and thoughtful.

There was general consensus regarding the overall direction people desired the Town to take, as well as a sense communicated that participants feel strongly that there is a need for additional opportunities to gather, to feel more connected as a community, and a desire to become more proactive in planning the Town's future.

Key Themes:

The following are the key themes that emerged from the discussion at the public workshop. Input was solicited in a number of ways (see appendices for more detailed notes and a summary of the alternatives):

Alternative 3 clearly preferred

What people seemed to appreciate most about this alternative:

- Community gathering, qualities including vibrant people-oriented villages with places to go and opportunities to gather and mingle, including opportunities for more theater and music
- Energy savings due to walkability
- Protection of open space in outer areas
- Efficient use of infrastructure

Overall seemed to want to **also focus on**:

- Open space preservation/acquisition
- Preservation of historic character through historic preservation efforts and strong design review
- Employment-oriented development
- Limiting growth and protecting rural characteristics
- Sidewalks/bikeways/public transport (Minuteman van), traffic calming/mitigation

What people seemed to want to pull in were their **CONCERNS** regarding:

- Preservation of open space
- Ensuring that Alt. 3 is feasible
 - Relying solely on zoning and incentives for Alt. 3 might not work
 - Feeling that more needs to be done to make it work (review the 1990 Master Plan emphasis on village development and why that didn't work)
 - Concern that Alt 3 will result in development in both the villages and other areas in town

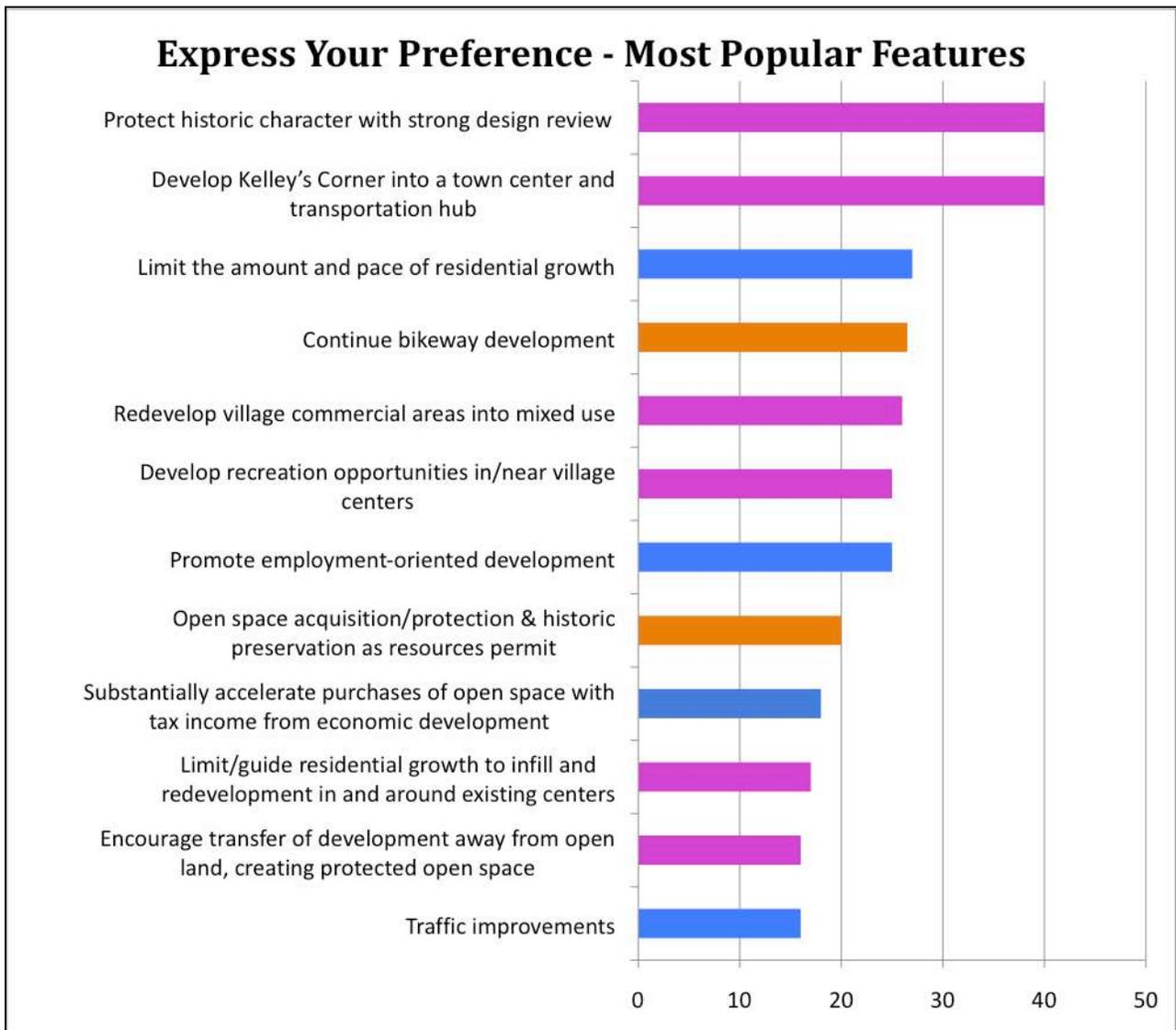
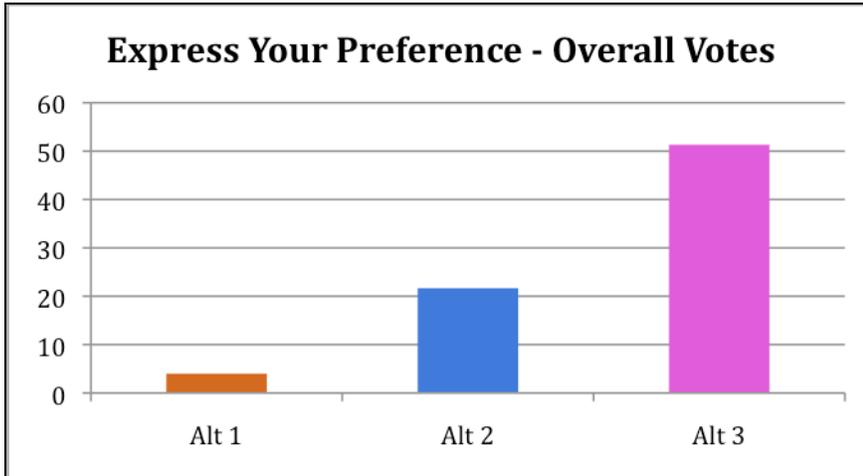
Additional Issues

- Most participants seem to support the creation of a joint community/senior center. Suggested locations include village center, NARA and K-mart.
- Not many participants responded to the question regarding emergency response to North Acton and of those, there was no clear majority opinion.
- In terms of additional service and facility needs participants called for gathering places and better maintenance of existing facilities.

EXPRESS YOUR PREFERENCE - TOTAL NUMBER OF "DOTS"¹

Alt 1	4
Continue bikeway development	26 1/2
Open space acquisition/protection & historic preservation as resources permit	20
Small-scale affordable housing	14
Small scale commercial development	10
Sidewalk extension at current rate	8 1/2
Extend MinuteVan shuttle	8
Clustered residential development	7
Alt 2	21 2/3
Limit the amount and pace of residential growth	27
Promote employment-oriented development	25
Substantially accelerate purchases of open space with tax income from economic development	18
Traffic improvements	16
Focus effort on traffic improvements	5
Limited sidewalk expansion	5
More detached, often large, single-family houses	3
Alt 3	51 1/3
Develop Kelley's Corner into a town center and transportation hub	40
Protect historic character with strong design review	40
Redevelop village commercial areas into mixed use	26
Develop recreation opportunities in/near village centers	25
Limit/guide residential growth to infill and redevelopment in and around existing centers	17
Encourage transfer of development away from open land, creating protected open space	16
Concentrate investments on sidewalks and traffic calming and expand MinuteVan shuttle system	0

¹ Participants were asked: "If you had to choose one alternative as the base or foundation to build on – which one would you choose? Use one large green dot to indicate your preferred alternative and five small yellow dots with which to highlight any key features you like best, regardless of which alternative they are listed under."



Additional Discussion

Following the small group discussions, participants were invited to reconvene as a large group and continue the discussion focusing primarily on the Alternative 3, the one the majority selected as their preferred general direction for the Town's future.

It is important to emphasize that:

- Participants seemed to bring up the concept of needing **places to gather** at every opportunity, that is -- no matter what the question was or how it was asked -- one of the most frequent responses was: “we want more places to gather as a community, both indoor and outdoor”
 - this is one of the main reasons that people seemed to prefer Alternative 3, in that it provided the most opportunities for such gathering
 - there was some discussion regarding the need for indoor gathering spaces (e.g. community/senior center received the most attention)
- While most people preferred Alternative 3, and very few preferred Alternative 1, there were several who either preferred Alternative 2 or felt certain features of this alternative were important and desirable; these included
 - **open space protection and acquisition**
 - Needing further clarification is whether people want the open space to be protected mostly for conservation land, passive or active recreation? Do they feel it is mostly to look at (and contributing to town character and/or would they like to use it in particular ways?)? Understanding this would help with prioritization of parcels to protect/acquire
 - **employment-oriented development**
 - people liked this feature because of the potential tax revenue it generated and because of the opportunities it could provide to reduce commuting time

In addition to wanting to bring in features of Alternative 2 and even some from Alternative 1, thus creating a “hybrid” alternative, several participants expressed concerns regarding the **feasibility** of Alternative 3 (even though they preferred it). The **main concerns** seem to be:

- Concern that relying solely on zoning and incentives might not work
- Feeling that more needs to be done to make it work (review the 1990 Master Plan emphasis on village development and why that didn't work)
- Concern that Alt 3 will result in development in both the villages but may fail to constrain development in other areas
- Concern regarding aesthetics (e.g. historic preservation & design review)

Additionally, when asked which alternative supports Acton's resilience for the next generation in terms of the natural environment, town character, economic viability, and social fabric (see Appendix), the majority chose Alternative 3 except in the case of the natural environment in which case the majority selected Alternative 2 as being more resilient, presumably because they felt that it was more effective in protecting open space.

Wild Cards

Participants were asked to list some potential sources of future change that are not easy to predict and that, if they came to be, would affect the Town's future growth and development. Concerns regarding unpredictable future forces seemed to cluster around a few main themes; these are:

- School population
 - o quality of schools falling
 - o classroom size way larger
 - o school enrollment
 - o quality of schools – special ed population going up
 - o school population keeps rising

- Economy
 - o drying up of jumbo mortgages
 - o protracted economic stagnation
 - o inflation
 - o government collapse (less money for towns, <>)
 - o falling house values

- Energy
 - o energy availability
 - o cost of gas increases

- Water
 - o contaminated water
 - o water supply issues
 - o water table

- Natural disaster
 - o Tornados
 - o climate change/weather extremes

- Other
 - o uncontrollable development
 - o Concord rotary bypass – traffic increase sprawl
 - o clustered living
 - o 40B – large (2)
 - o unintended consequences
 - o unfunded liabilities (e.g.: pensions)

Notes from Large Group Discussion

“What is best about Alternative 3?”

- most concerned about fostering communication and a sense of community
 - o answer may lie in creating more opportunities for community gathering aspects
- could create vibrant, diverse village from ground up
- like the village concept, connectivity, sidewalks
 - o how to solve aesthetic issue of densification
 - o need to include a community center and not simply rely on the schools for access to recreation. Center should be located in a location easily accessible by walking or biking
 - o need to relate together more

“How can we make Alternative 3 better?”

- need to incorporate urban design/placemaking
- Alt 3 depends on retail + housing, need to incorporate some economic development of Alt 2
- loved Kelley’s corner idea, but still needs to address open space
 - o need specific measures to preserve open space
- we’re part of a busier region – need to work w/ other towns – how Concord + Littleton develop will affect Acton
- the new train station development and improvements to Rt.2 will also affect Acton
- focus on open space, including open space in villages
 - o Stonefield farm, Pricilla Wood’s farm in West Acton, Mead land, Moritz land
 - o East Acton 32-acre Moritz property
- concern about the feasibility of relying on market prices and incentives. What about public development?
 - o Lincoln Crossroads – example of village development supported by public land trust
- could consider public subsidy/ municipality role in TDR? Taxes from commercial development in 2 could help with this
- need to look at what worked + didn’t work in 90s plan

“Which Village Centers go first?”

- Kelley’s Corner – already commercial use there – less potential conflict with Village character + open space
 - o Lease from Stop + Shop covers large portion of Kelley’s Corner
- West Acton – sees the increase in vibrancy + small businesses lately – easier to realize potential sooner than at Kelley’s Corner
 - o Like Concord center feel – most like West Acton Center
- South Acton – train + bike trail potential
- Rt. 2A in N. Acton – lot’s of people there
- Why not create a new village? Nagog – has commercial, retail, Avalon + Littleton development, already developed, view of pond

Back of the Agenda

Participants were asked a series of questions on the back of their agendas regarding capital expenditures. They were invited to submit these written answers. The following is a compilation of the responses.

Whether, how, and where to provide a new community center and/or senior center:

	# of responses	Comments
Yes	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like to see a combination of both • Community center w/ “senior areas” • Near town center if possible • North Acton seems to be in need of a covered community center. It is heavily populated by seniors, so this population should be supported. • Yes, probably higher taxes. Where = near or in a village center. • Senior center seems a good idea • Senior center with parking • Community center for adults with meeting space (media room, movies!), fitness center, lunchroom, small meeting room (for say, card games); a place for “formal” programs as well as casual gathering • Yes, debt exclusion, NARA park • Community pool, recreation center would be amazing asset. Maybe this needs to be at NARA but would be nice to have something elsewhere • Yes. West Acton but I don’t necessarily see a community as a priority. The school in many ways functions as community center. • Turn NARA into a pool or K-Mart into a pool/gym • There could be a representative, contact for receiving input, suggestions and feedback; there can e a small community center for this.
No	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No use buildings + parks we already have • I think we have to be better about multi-purpose facilities, like using the library, schools + other town buildings for other purposes. • No. Acton does not need a community/senior center; it doesn’t have an appropriate location • Let the private sector take care of it • Seem to already be a lot of resources for both

Acton 2020

Whether, how, and where to provide better emergency response to North Acton, including potential new Fire Station:

Whether or not	How	Where	Additional Comments
Yes - 6	Taxes bond	Near NARA 2A + 27 near to the highly populated North Acton At least an EMS station in N Acton	Ambulance service is more important
No – 5			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't build it only marginal improvement for high cost. • No money • I don't think we fully utilize the assets we have. Do we really need another fire truck? • No, focus on paramedics
Other - 2			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase Out center station slowly • I don't know enough about current needs/response time to make a sensible judgment

Do we want/need more recreation? If yes, what kind and where should it be located? Should NARA be further developed?

- **Golf course** – use as community center, already has buildings
- I would love to see more family friendly and diverse **large playgrounds** (2x)
- **NARA needs more trees.** Expand for more fields if possible – but don't take town trees or forest to do it
- **Senior recreation** + physical therapy facility could be purchased.
- **Rail trails** are highest priority; safe bicycle + walking connections; pitch and putt **golf course**
- How about some **pubs**?
- Yes we need **tennis courts** in N Acton; NARA Park would be a great area for that. **Pool** would be good too. (2x)
- No, **use buildings and parks we already have.**
- No **retain open space but recreation just adds traffic.**
- No – wrong location
- Yes – for adults – more **bike trails, walking trails**; NARA – no.
- Senior center should be more than that, great opportunity to bring generations together, make it **a community mixing center**
- Is current area effectively + consistently used? Instead more recreation areas are good, but **I don't know if we need more.**

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- **Improve biking + walking options**
- **YMCA**
- NARA is great as it is. Would love **more open space/park/field near Kelley's Corner**

Are there any other such service and/or service facility needs you feel should be addressed?

- Acton needs to find ways to “bind” the community so that families, elderly, children, have safe, entertaining **gathering places**.
- More **community gardens** (2)
- Plan for **town hall** growth
- Plan for more **meeting spaces**
- Improvements to **public transport** around town (3), bike lanes, sidewalks
- I would love to have a **central area** in town with mixed use – shops, apartments, and outdoor cafés or taverns – places where people can sit outside in the summer, have coffee or a glass or wine +listen to street musicians.
- Better maintenance of **existing facilities**
- **Roads** are a wreck, sand everywhere, flooding.
- Save buildings and **heritage**
- Acton is going to have trouble meeting needs of its **schools** in the future.
- Put resources into **library** before spending more to develop NARA
- Amazing, vibrant **theater** community in Acton would be great to find way for town to support this.

Additional Comments

- Enforce **sign bylaws**
- Create more **town center amenities**
- Improve **walkability** on South Acton – improve crosswalks, islands, large plots with flowers at halfway point or central street crossing
- Very **concerned** that tools to encourage concentrated growth will not work and that we will get **more growth** in both villages and outlying access.
- How do we **create more ways for people to find each other and connect** if we don't have children in schools, belong to a church or a town committee? I like the idea of Portland, ME. Time bank, so people can offer and receive services through this, discover + create new connections. Also – definitely places to walk + bike around town.
- **Loss of historic aesthetic = loss of property value** (2)
- **Development DOES NOT pay**
- Already **tried to concentrate growth in villages** and it did not work
- **Traffic mitigation** is important to me
- Feels like Framingham
- Not worth holding onto a house here!
- School age population and over 65 represent 1/3 of population but most town resources allocated into them, not the other 2/3. **More budget for town services we all use** – library, highway dept, town clerk's office,

Acton 2020

health dept, building dept, etc - Yes, at expense of schools. Many taxpayers consume few services yet pay for all. Empty nesters could become active town volunteers. Also would like incentives to change culture that the week your child graduates high school you sell your house – encourage people to stay and invest in the town.

- We need to **expand sewers** (3)
- We need to be **concerned about development** in Marlborough and Southborough that will put many more gallons of sewage into treatment plant thus **polluting Assabet** even more
- Add **trees**; preserve **historic character**. Be serious about **design and zoning**.
- **Quality of life** and **road safety**.
- **Garbage collection**
- **Kelley's Corner, town centers, sidewalks**

Other Great Ideas

Participants were given a note card on which to write “other great ideas.” The following ideas were contributed:

- Local, small-scale energy generation (geothermal, solar)
- Redevelopment of moribund commercial cities as potential food-production enterprises
- On-site electricity generation, with net metering
- Use of land site for municipal power generation
- New business + jobs connected with the above
- Take “Kmart” by eminent domain – we don’t need Kmart – we do need basketball courts
- Create a biotech park at WR Grace land – we need the tax revenue – and the jobs
- I’ve heard a lot of concern that the residents bear a heavy burden of tax for the schools. But I believe the schools are such a strength of Acton that they’ve become a part of Acton’s character. I would like to leverage that strength into a marketable commodity. For example, I’d like to see Acton start a school of citizenship, along the lines of Kennedy School of Government. Develop that such that Acton becomes a focal point for candidates seeking election. This way we draw taxes from a “business” as well as revenue from visitors who are drawn by the potential speakers.
- Make provisions for parks + playgrounds – recreation facilities must be emphasized
- More bike lanes + sidewalks!
- Slow growth!!
- Design = zoning + historic preservation must improve!!
- Make NARA a pool!
- Look at open space + contiguous space in adjacent towns
- Value open space purchases near town borders above ... near town center

APPENDICES



ALTERNATIVE 1 Disperse Growth: Extend Current Trends / Continue Present Planning Policies

Focus on:



Continuing use of cluster zoning to protect open space



Encouraging small scale commercial development, especially in villages



Continuing open space acquisition/protection

This alternative continues existing policies and practices governing the type and location of development, resulting in incremental changes that continue recent trends.

Key Features

Residential

- Encouragement of **clustering** when new residential development is proposed
- **Small-scale affordable housing** without a strong geographic focus*

Commercial

- **Small scale commercial** development in scattered locations.

Open Space and Historic

- Continued **open space** acquisition/protection and **historic preservation** as opportunities arise and resources permit.

Transportation/Circulation

- Continued extending of **sidewalks** at current rate of construction
- Continued **bikeway** development
- Extension of funding for **MinuteVan shuttle** at current level of service

*The Avalon 40B development was an exception to this trend.

ALTERNATIVE 1 Disperse Growth, continued

Positive Impacts

- Continued **encouragement of Planned Conservation Residential Communities** as the preferred method for residential development. (Over 600 acres of **open space** have been preserved to date with use of Acton's cluster zoning provisions).
- **No new legislation** or administrative support required.
- Town builds on its **existing dispersed pattern**.
- **Continues past and current practices** of effective planning and development regulation.
- Because of declining school enrollments and less need for capital investments, this alternative **increases fiscal capacity by \$5 million** compared to today.

Negative Impacts

- **Traffic** will become more of a problem than now.
- Development in villages and Kelley's Corner may not fit with or improve their **character**.
- Less efficient use of **public infrastructure and services**

Typical Outcomes

- **Villages** continue to look much as they do today.
- **Kelley's Corner** changes only incrementally.
- **School enrollments** decline gradually.
- **Home values** (adjusted for inflation) similar to today.
- **Large parcels of open land** likely to develop, potentially with protection of part of the parcel through cluster zoning.



ALTERNATIVE 2 Limit Growth: Limit Residential / Expand Commercial / Acquire Open Space

Focus on:



Limiting the residential growth rate; no change in type or size



Encouraging employment-oriented low-impact commercial development



Increasing open space acquisition

This alternative aims to retain the existing settlement pattern and avoids changing the existing physical character, and consequently the demographic character, of the Town. Its chief focus is to control residential growth in order to curb the demands on existing facilities and services. It also encourages employment-oriented commercial development to provide fiscal benefits and finance acquisition of open space and trail easements.

Key Features

Residential

- **Limit the amount and pace** of residential growth without limiting the type and size of new housing units, resulting in **more detached, often large, single-family houses**

Commercial

- Promote **employment-oriented development** (e.g. high tech/ R&D offices) in areas that don't directly impact neighborhoods: Great Road, Nagog Park, Powdermill, and large commercial parcels on Rt. 2

Open Space

- Use tax income generated from economic development and higher Community Preservation Act surcharges to **substantially accelerate purchases of open space**

Transportation/Circulation

- Focus effort on **traffic improvements** and **limited sidewalk expansion**

ALTERNATIVE 2 Limit Growth, continued

Positive Impacts

- **Slower growth** based on substantial investment in acquisition of open space.
- Retention of key **open space** parcels.
- **Limited growth in traffic** in residential areas.
- Later and potentially lower **residential build-out**.
- Potential **local employment** opportunities which would reduce commuting time and carbon emissions related to commuter driving.
- Because of lower school enrollments, fewer new housing units and more commercial development, partially offset by open acquisition needed to limit growth this alternative **increases fiscal capacity** by **\$2.5 million**, compared to today

Negative Impacts

- **Market** for large scale office/R&D **is uncertain**
- **More vigilance and more staffing** required in reviewing development proposals and building permit limitations.
- **Less emphasis** on transportation measures (such as **sidewalks, bikeways, and shuttle** service) that would encourage less driving than today.
- Potential increases in **traffic** at some locations due to commercial development

Typical Outcomes

- **Villages** continue to look much as they do today.
- **Kelley's Corner** changes only incrementally.
- **School enrollments** decline more than other alternatives.
- **Home values** (adjusted for inflation) increase somewhat compared to today.
- Some **large parcels of open land** likely to develop, potentially with protection of part of the parcel through cluster zoning; other parcels protected by purchase.
- **Large office/R&D** built on south side of Rte 2 (Auto Auction and adjacent commercial parcels)



ALTERNATIVE 3 Concentrate Growth: Guide Growth to Key Town Centers

Focus on:



Directing residential growth to mixed use infill and redevelopment



Transforming existing commercial development to fit village character



Emphasizing walking, biking and public transportation

This alternative aims to guide growth to key town centers (such as Kelley's Corner, South Acton and West Acton) with strong design review to protect the Town's historic fabric and existing neighborhoods. It includes a variety of housing types including smaller units together with small scale commercial development in mixed-use village centers. It has more sidewalks and bike paths.

Key Features

Residential

- Limit and guide growth geographically through **infill and redevelopment** in and around existing centers (West Acton, South Acton and Kelley's Corner)

Commercial

- Develop **Kelley's Corner** into a **town center** and **transportation hub**
- Redevelop **village commercial** areas into **mixed use** that respects the existing village character

Open Space and Historic Preservation

- Use strong **design review** to protect **historic character**
- Develop opportunities for **recreation near village centers** and small vest pocket parks and tot lots in villages
- Encourage **transfer of development** away from open land to desired growth centers

Transportation

- Concentrate transportation investments such as **sidewalks** and **traffic calming** in and around the villages
- Build **MinuteVan shuttle** into a more comprehensive system

ALTERNATIVE 3 Concentrate Growth, continued

Positive Impacts

- Each **village** has its own distinct **identity** and new development is sited and designed to enhance and protect existing residential and **historic character**.
- More **efficient** in the use of Town facilities and services.
- More **sustainable** development pattern.
- **Utilizes existing sewer capacity** in South Acton and Kelley's Corner.
- The type and location of new residential development better **fits Acton's changing demographics** (i.e., stage in the life-cycle and socio-economic background).
- More **opportunities for public gathering**, communication, and walking will be provided.
- Because of lower school enrollments and smaller units, partially offset by needed infrastructure investments, this alternative **increases fiscal capacity** by **\$3.9 million**, compared to today.

Negative Impacts

- **Possible increased traffic** congestion, traffic safety and parking issues **in the centers** that receive new development.
- Potentially higher level of residential **buildout** because incentives will be needed to transfer development rights to centers.
- **More vigilance and more staffing required** to review development proposals and achieve adherence to new design standards.
- Significant **public infrastructure improvements** (such as sewers sidewalks and streetscape) **needed** in some of the centers.

Typical Outcomes

- **Villages** become denser with redevelopment of non-residential parcels; stronger design review preserves and enhances existing character.
- **Kelley's Corner** becomes a busy, walkable town center.
- **School enrollments** decline more than **Disperse Growth**, less than **Limit Growth**.
- **Home values** (adjusted for inflation) similar to today's outside villages; may increase relative to today's in villages.
- Some **large parcels of open land** likely to develop, potentially with protection of part of the parcel through cluster zoning; other parcels protected by transfer of development to key town centers.

Acton 2020

ACTON'S FUTURE RESILIENCE:

	<i>Alt. 1</i>	<i>Alt. 2</i>	<i>Alt. 3</i>
Natural environment?	4	40	27
Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Least bad - Limits commercial development - Open Space - Small scale housing - Not enough preservation of open space - Development w/ no sense of direction - Phenomenally consumptive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open Space - Fewer people + more open space - More open space, fewer people, sidewalks, less water use - Fewer people - Option to blend w/ Alt. 3 - Limits growth - Buy open space - Office park/commercial - out of view - Protect Rt. 2 entrance to town - Concentrates on open space preservation - What the town was like long ago - more rural/open - Fewest people - Most open space - Open space - Water - Population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open space - Less driving - More walking or biking - Reduced carbon footprint - Control of development outside of villages?? - Sewers?? - More people would walk/bike - Encourages public transit - Concentration of growth leads to land being left undeveloped - Best village possibility - Most pedestrian-friendly - Fewer cars - Condensed infrastructure - Increases likelihood of appreciating open space elsewhere in town - Concentrated utilities + infrastructure - Open space - Better carbon footprint

Acton 2020

Town character?	5	20*	32
Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - not this - stays the same (2x), good + bad - good for open space - town record of controlling growth - why people moved here - more of the same - 2A continues to be the business zone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - would not harm town character - retail would give back - rural feel, more the same - limits growth - most open space preserved (3x) - less traffic - park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - nicer villages for people to spend time - improve + develop town character + keeps trees - need to keep individual character of each village - design review - most potential for vibrant centers for create character - preserve rural - strongest historic preservations + design review - more walkable villages improve town center - economic diversity - can be done - wall with care - civic space - more traffic?
* + 6 votes for a 2/3 combination			
Economic viability?	4	26	34
Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more retail - money possible - continue what we know - no extra initial investment needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - potential for higher economic development - risky (depends on corporations) - blend w/ 3 - limits growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - potential for higher economic development - efficient use of infrastructure - best chance for economic growth/+tax revenue - fewer school age kids

Acton 2020

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increases value of housing - tax benefits of commercial developments - limits development to help w/ school costs - commercial buildings always pay taxes - limited growth - commercial viability - cheaper - diverse tax base 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - weak connections b/n economic development and only other alternative - smaller units might have fewer children? Fewer cars? - must convince to economic growth - walk to stores - redevelopment of existing areas - lower cost - promotes local commerce & therefore investment - better position for future mixed use --> character-retail health - diverse tax base
Social fabric?	5	1	57
Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cluster development is effective - we have become more diverse - schools attract diversity - build community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - open space can gather possibilities - can do all of these --> - cheaper here! + sooner - recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - village gathering - age diversity, economic diversity, places to hang out - difficult to get economic diversity - most volunteerism (Acton has a lot) - helps w/ personal connections/sense of community (4x) - cluster development might lead to more cultural activities - foster Acton being open - different cultures, ethnicities, etc (2x) - increase diversity of housing stock - more face to face interactions

Acton 2020

			- (more homeless?)
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Summary of Public Input:

FALL MEETINGS: INPUT FROM COMMITTEES, BOARDS

KELLEY'S CORNER: SEPTEMBER 14, 2011

SUSTAINABILITY, FINANCIAL WELL-BEING: SEPT. 21, 2011

AFFORDABLE HOUSING, INCLUSION/DIVERSITY: SEPT. 28, 2011

CONNECTIONS, COMMUNITY GATHERING: OCT. 12, 2011

TOWN CHARACTER, TOWN-OWNED ASSETS: OCT. 26, 2011

RECEIVED
OCT -5 2011

**Acton 2020 Committee
Meeting Minutes
Sep 14, 2011**

TOWN CLERK, ACTON
Committee members: Sahana Purohit, Celia Kent, Jim Snyder-Grant, Margaret Woolley Busse, Paulina Knibbe.

Consultants from the Collaborative: Daphne Politis, Jim Purdy

Town Staff: Kristin Alexander, Roland Bartl

Other Attendees: Lesley Dokos, Rosemary Nicholson, Vincent Cuttone, Nancy Dinkel, Joan Meyer, Margherita Santoro, Chris Starr.

Welcomes, agenda, and ground rules from Daphne and Margaret.

The special focus of this first part of the meeting is on Kelly's Corner, and most of the attendees are owners or managers of Kelly's Corner businesses, and their full participation is encouraged. The emerging 2020 plan identifies Kelly's Corner as the most likely place in Acton for a rich mix of pedestrian-accessible shops and residences that can serve as a town center.

First go-round – things you like and things you don't like about Kelly's Corner (KC)

Likes:

- ▲ Love the mix of businesses and the concentration of stores. Example: get ice cream, and then get wine.
- ▲ Like the mix of stores, (with room for improvement).
- ▲ Like the schools nearby – customers.
- ▲ Like that there is some good places to go for kids, like Sorrento's Pizza.
- ▲ Lots of different kinds of people, which is good for a business.
- ▲ Good concentration & variety of stores.
- ▲ Glad that kids can get there.
- ▲ Proximity to school campus makes it a natural community spot.
- ▲ Likes how connected it is to other areas – easy on/off Rte 2, straight shot to Concord, Maynard, Boxborough. This is a regional center.

Don't Likes:

- ▲ Hate the accessways, both cars and pedestrians have a hard time getting around.
- ▲ Don't like the esthetics and functioning of some of the common area space.
- ▲ Roadway is dangerous – lots of traffic, right of way unclear to drivers & pedestrians.
- ▲ Roadway crossing is bad for kids.
- ▲ Congested.
- ▲ Sad that McDonald's gone -a black hole, and a loss for the kids.
- ▲ Sad that kids are congregating at Starbucks – too much coffee for 12-year-olds.

- ^ Perhaps too many banks – certainly don't want more.
- ^ Pedestrian access is not safe, esp for kids.
- ^ No sidewalk on the Acton Dental side of 111 (south side)
- ^ Likes Roland & the planning department.

Other Wishes:

- ^ Wish there was parking on the street to slow down the traffic, and other more pedestrian-friendly things.
- ^ Wish there was another way for cars to get in & out.
- ^ Wish it was more accessible to pedestrian esp. the kids.

More intro by Daphne:

Back starting three years ago, the comprehensive community plan committee and the consultants started gathering data. Kelly's Corner kept coming up, as a place that people liked and cared about, AND as a place that they don't like. Strong feelings, high hopes.

Then Daphne elicited visions of 'what could Kelly's Corner be', which widened in too many topics about Kelly's Corner.

- ^ -Good mix of professional services & entertainment.
- ^ Vision: leave your kids somewhere safe & do your business in Kelly's corner.
- ^ -Better cross-walks or bridges.
- ^ -Some areas are a bit wild and unkempt – there is room for gardens and beautification.
- ^ -A hub for family activities. The bowling alley is a good example – all ages fun.
- ^ -Entertain your kids, get the chores done.
- ^ -A wider variety of retail activities.
- ^ -How can we coordinate the parking & pedestrian access?
- ^ -Remembering the Belmont / Cushing square transformation: zoning changes, business changes. (Chris S. noted that he had helped with that change)
- ^ -Dining out / eating. Acton Not Your Average Joe's has tons of families AND friends having a drink. One of the best units in the entire NYAJ chain.
- ^ -Good sales projections are needed for a restaurant to move in. Projections heavily depend on liquor license. Many restaurants would like to move in, but they can't get can't a liquor license. Businesses are asking – how can I get one? When do they become available? BYOB is an option, but it isn't good for profit the restaurant
- ^ -Lincoln center is nice. Concord center is nice. Both have a few licensed restaurants. Wine is popular.
- ^ -Hmm..some daytime restaurants don't need liquor licenses – McDonalds, etc.
- ^ -Open space is really nice, requires town money.
- ^ -Landscaping is important in tweaking the center.
- ^ -Long-term leases at the shopping center lock in some status quo that operators would

like to change, but existing leases require certain (non-)landscaping. So, we are a bit handcuffed a bit for now.

- ▲ -Casa Stone purchase, in process, is a possible way to expand the vision with a new flexible lease.
- ▲ -Outdoor eating at Starbucks is a great hit, and drives new customers. It's good that Acton dropped the ban a year and a half ago. Maybe the Casa Stone replacement, or other new tenants could also add outdoor dining options. Really helps with creating the “pedestrian” feel.
- ▲ -Parking is the biggest thing. Coordination between landowners could create opportunities for shared parking. Businesses want parking.
- ▲ -McDonalds is the only restaurant with a meeting room – wish there was one in Kelly's Corner. Unused office space in Kelly's Corner was offered as a temporary solution for some meeting space needs.
- ▲ -Bridges would be awesome in KC to connect the corners.
- ▲ -The lights are not effective. Pedestrians have to wait a long time. Please have the town consider adjusting the timing on the right-arrow. Esp. at high pedestrian times such as school closing.
- ▲ -Pedestrian access to Great Hill conservation area from Kelly's Corner:. It's tricky now, but possible. Could be much better.

Summary of some top and repeated themes, initiated by Daphne and reviewed by attendees:

- ▲ Uses and activities for all ages / family oriented.
- ▲ Provisions of daily life
- ▲ Want to see safe connectivity and access. (for pedestrians and parkers)

Bridges

(or)

Safer / wider crosswalks, rebuilt with “faux brick” material. (Ex: Linden Square in Wellesley)

(or)

Better signalization / timing improvements

- ▲ Liquor license issues.
- ▲ More and wider range of dining options.
- ▲ Open space / Landscaping
- ▲ Outdoor dining
- ▲ Adequacy of Parking
- ▲ Coordination between landowners
- ▲ Need for additional meeting space
- ▲ Small Village look. Example – West Acton.
- ▲ Walking access to Great Hill conservation area.
- ▲ Better street lighting. Aesthetic (village look) and functional. Lights in landscaping. Coordinated and cohesive look.

Next question for attendees: What can owners do / what can the town do:

- △ For older buildings: wish it was easier to make changes to exterior, without fear of tripping non-conformance issues. If it were easier, would change lighting and signs.
- △ Some dead spaces (inactive landowners / zones between buildings) should be landscaped, turned in to accessways. But sometimes the issue is zoning / building codes. Sometimes it's inactive land owners. How can we incent the landowners to work together.
- △ A bigger vision: a business improvement district. Cooperation between town & landowners, agreed on guidelines for the aesthetics and functionality we are all aiming for.
- △ Another issue: state owns the road. There are dead trees, for example, which no one is cutting down. And odd curb-cuts and driveway locations are mandated by the state that do not support pedestrian ease.
- △ Sharing of knowledge about temporary open space that can be used creatively for short-term use. A barrier is codes that disallows certain uses without certain improvements.
- △ Annual Lions Carnival – how about make it more of a Kelly's corner event?
- △ Sidewalk sales. Easter egg hunt? Hosmer house on Patriot's day could be coordinated with a bunch of retail activity.
- △ Best of category Mom+Pop stores. Tertiary destination means you are typically drawing smaller local businesses anyway.
- △ Not a lot of daytime pop here (yet!).
- △ EdensAndAvant.com to see sample of how a demographic description is done for a shopping area. Noted that those stats don't capture the big school population (kids, parents, teachers).
- △ Synergy between stores. Roche and TJ Maxx are big drivers, because they bring weekly traffic.
- △ A better mix of more businesses means that people will come from farther away and dwell there for longer.
- △ A sign “shopping area” on Rte 2.
- △ Capturing more of the through-traffic.
- △ Maynard example: downtown restaurant selection rivals entire Acton selection.

Next topic: The one big thing you would do:

(+'s indicate agreement by multiple people)

- △ On-street parking: Town and State.
- △ More outdoor dining – need business to do it, town to assist in licensing.
- △ Sign restrictions relaxed – town.
- △ Kelly's corner business association – model: West Acton. Town would work with them to share & expand on the vision.++
- △ Free up some liquor licenses+++ (Board of Selectmen. Consider Beer & Wine access?)
- △ Mass Ave curb cut to access Roche Bros.

- ▲ Walking access from NYAJ lot to Roche Bros lot.
 - ▲ Focus on traffic / pedestrian issues. A real big puzzle. Capture through traffic. Traffic management. +++
 - ▲ More pedestrian connection so that shoppers can realistically park in one place and shop in multiple stores.
 - ▲ A balance between open space & parking to attract businesses.
 - ▲ More restaurants/entertainment.
 - ▲ Slow the traffic down.
 - ▲ Parking & pedestrian plan. If you can park & walk to multiple businesses, then you have a PLACE.
 - ▲ Town and state cooperation on improving the roadways for the vision of a walkable place.
 - ▲ A tagline that expresses the vision, and a large sign that says welcome to Kelly's corner and has the tagline.
 - ▲ A large water fountain, or other big public/private water feature.
 - ▲ Improve the path and crosswalk from schools to opposite Dunkin Donuts through the Hosmer House property.
-

Acton 2020 Committee

Minutes

September 21, 2011 – 7:00 PM

Acton Senior Center

PART I: Discuss Goal 2 Draft Strategies: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Attendees

Committee members: Sahana Purohit, Celia Kent (minutes-taker), Jim Snyder-Grant, Margaret Woolley Busse.

Consultants from the Collaborative: Daphne Politis, Brian Barber

Town Staff: Kristin Alexander, Roland Bartl (arrive 7:35)

Other Attendees: David Clough (BoS), Clint Seward (Finance Ctee), Sally Edwards, Ann Chang (EDC), Tharak Rao, John Horne (resident)

Margaret described the purpose of the meeting and Daphne reviewed how the draft strategy document was structured. Everyone had a hand-out and the strategies under discussion were also projected. Jim took notes directly on the projected document in a column labeled “Notes from September 21, 2011”. (attached)

Discussion:

As we reviewed the material, Daphne requested feedback on the prioritization of strategies. She explained how the draft prioritizations were developed (highest priority can mean that a strategy address major goals and objectives or is relatively easy to accomplish – “low hanging fruit”). Margaret suggested we separated out those two criteria so that it becomes clearer what strategies are both relatively easy and meets major goals/objectives rather than just being easy. We also discussed the importance of strategies related to education since education about an issue must occur before or at least in parallel with the implementation of a strategy. We may organize all education strategies into one section.

Roland observed that there a lot of “Highest Priorities” and all agreed that there will need to be a winnowing process.

2.1 Protect the quality and quantity of the water.

Clint Seward suggested we consider limiting lawn watering, strengthen current regulations, and encourage lawn alternatives which require less irrigation. One attendee asked whether Acton has enough water. Jim explained that the issue is in part about how much can be drawn at any given time. If too many people try to draw water at the same time, the distribution system doesn’t work effectively. Acton is generally within the annual limits of our annual withdrawal rate, and that limit could potentially be renegotiated if we needed more water. It is important that enough water is available in the reserve wells for use by the fire department and the Water District will temporarily limit lawn watering to protect those reserves when necessary.

David Clough suggested rainwater harvesting incentives.

Ann Chang commented that West Acton won’t get sewers until Douglas and Gates can longer use their septic systems. If the schools and town can share the cost, the project may be financially feasible. Jim

suggested that we undertake a careful cost/benefit analysis when we consider sewers in West Acton.

2.2 Move toward a material economy in which there is no waste or accumulation of toxins.

Sally Edwards suggested we consider more ways to refuse the introduction of toxins in the first place. Many of our strategies deal with “Reduce” “Recycle” and “Reuse” but the 4th “R” for “Refuse” is important, too, and in many ways the most effective. The Town could start by implementing policies related to green cleaning (the schools have to follow state mandates related to green cleaning).

There was some discussion about how to garner support for a pay-as-you-go system at the transfer station. Although that option wasn’t supported in the past, community understanding of the issues may have changed. Tharak Rao commented that when he lived in Switzerland, recycling was free but you paid for your trash bags; the system worked.

Part 2: Discuss Goal 7: Maintain and Improve Financial Well-being of the Town

Attendees:

Committee members: Sahana Purohit, Celia Kent (minutes-taker), Jim Snyder-Grant, Margaret Woolley Busse, Charlie Mercier

Consultants from the Collaborative: Daphne Politis, Brian Barber

Town Staff: Kristin Alexander, Roland Bartl (arrive 7:35)

Other Attendees: Kim Montella (PB, DRB), Tharak Rao, John Sonner (BoS), Steve Noone (Fin Ctee), Bob Evans (Fin Ctee), Pat Clifford (Fin Ctee), Ann Chang (EDC), Dave Clough (BoS), Clint Seward (Fin Ctee), Derek Chin (PB)

Roland suggested that as we prioritize and fine-tune the strategies, we should meet again with the Finance Committee to review cost estimates and get advice. Margaret commented that one goal of the master planning process is to help us understand what costs are also worthwhile investments. Phasing will matter – if we can make the town more attractive to empty nesters, then ideally we can increase tax revenues (because school costs may become a lower percentage of total costs with fewer students) which then may provide the funds to take on other objectives.

Jim projected the strategies document and recorded comments in the column called “Notes from 9/21 meeting”. Details of the discussion are captured more fully in that document. (attached)

There was some discussion about what is meant by a long-range plan, and the wording was adjusted to clarify that it is a rolling multi-year capital plan which is updated annually to plan for major expenditures. There was also discussion about what we meant by “Enhance the level of services that the Town can provide by continually seeking operational efficiencies” under the general category “Work to do more with less”. The questions helped us realize that the strategies as written don’t necessarily explain how or why the recommended action addresses the broader objectives and that we will need to make those connections clearer.



**Acton 2020 Committee
Minutes
September 28, 2011 – 7:00 PM
Acton Town Hall, Room 204**

7:00pm Discussion about affordable housing with invited guests

- I. Welcome and introductions (10 min)
Committee members: Margaret Woolley Busse, Celia Kent, Sahana Purohit, Paulina Knibbe, Jim Snyder-Grant, Charlie Mercier
Other meeting attendees: John Sonner (BoS liaison), Marge Kennedy, Roland Bartl (staff), Kristin Alexander (staff), Kelley Cronin, Mark Racicot, Senator Jamie Eldridge, Nancy Tavernier, Jim Stockard, Jim Purdy (the Collaborative), Daphne Politis (Community Circle), Bob Van Meter, Janet Adachi (BoS), Wayne Friedrichs, David Clough (BoS), Bernice Baran, Brian Barber (the Collaborative)

- II. **Review purpose of meeting (10 min) [7:15]**
Margaret reviews the meeting

- III. **Review strategies in Goal 5, Objective 2 (5 min) [7:20]**
 - Margaret reviews the goals

- IV. **Open discussion of questions, including:**
 - a. **Review housing needs in Acton—who needs housing and what types? (15 min) [7:30]**

 - b. **Discuss meeting housing needs in Acton and grappling with 40B, including the following questions: (80 min)**
 - i. **What are examples of communities successfully dealing with 40B as well as meeting housing needs?**
 - ii. **What are examples of successful housing production plans?**
 - iii. **Explain condo buydown program in Acton. Are there examples of successful buydown/conversion programs in other communities?**
 - iv. **What legislative changes regarding 40B/housing/zoning are afoot?**
 - v. **Are there any unintended consequences that we should be aware of in our planning efforts?**
 - vi. **How can we effectively fit our housing goals in with our “concentrate growth” strategy?**
 - vii. **What would you recommend be our highest priority in pursuing housing to meet our communities’ needs?**

- **Start of 40B conversation: [7:35]**
 - Large drop in people getting affordable housing in the last few years. (Primarily because of difficulty in getting financing.)
 - <Bob VanMeter> Acton’s affordable housing is much higher cost then other towns. Deed restriction is less attractive because of potential lack of long term financial gain.
 - <Kelly Cronin> Related to ACHC:
 - of their clients, 200 are local residents (currently renting in Acton, or being evicted, etc)

- Some folks are coming in because their rentals are being foreclosed on.
- Of the units under management: 141 units are rental. Of the rentals, 91 are single units, and of the single units 86.5% of them are used by the elderly, (the rest of the 91 are used by the disabled)
- They also manage 155 Housing vouchers for folk to use to rent anywhere (section 8). Of the 155 vouchers, 90 of them are used within action
- They also have an additional 12 vouchers specifically for people with disabilities.
- They see a lot of adult disabled people who are moving out of their elder parents homes
- There is no emergency housing in action. Laura (from Community Resources) is the primary person who can help people during a crisis. (ie: loss of housing), but the only real emergency option for homeless is to homeless shelter.
- It takes between 6 months to 2 years to get into a rental unit from them
- When someone gets assistance from them, 30% of the rent comes from renter, 30% from them, and federal government pays the rest.
- As far as what kind of unit someone could get assistance on, HUD sets fair market costs (fair market rent), and there is a cap of \$1000 (for single tenant), so rent high apartments would not be included.
- The housing pool is so limited that some people stay at the Concordian Hotel/motel and pay by the month.
- Seniors try and age “in place”, but at some point, they need low-income assisted-living facilities.
- Some of the current units have stairs, which is difficult for the seniors that are trying to use them
- Funding
 - section 8 by HUD
 - Alt vouchers by state
 - State public housing (with ACHC paying for excess utility costs)
 - CPC helps with capital and new units
- <Bernice Baran> points out that the needs for housing changes with the economy, and that it’s difficult to predict what the need will be.
- <Nancy Tavernier> points out that single mother with children is the highest need, but this year, they have seen a jump in full family’s needing assistance.
- <Bryan Barber, (planners coll.)> Single headed households with children grew by 50% over the prev. FY. (no data yet for this year though)
- <Nancy Tavernier /Bob VanMeter>
 - Total subsidy per unit was on, ave. was about \$200k
 - Condo buy down is much more difficult than building new.
 - New housing is more flexible for older/disabled
 - (Kelly points out) we need *more* housing as there is not enough, so while buy down is a good tool, it is only a small one compared to the other options.
- <Ronald> Condo buy downs are less attractive because you are converting a low cost “affordable” house, and removing that unit which someone could have afforded to purchase on their own, and removing their options to only affordable housing.
- < Jim Stockard >

- The putting a cost of the management overhead of low income housing in Cambridge would be difficult because of the complexity. They is a lot of work though, including:
 - Prep new home buyers,
 - Managing sales of homes, and finding new buyers
- <Ryan Bettez> Buyer has 3 choices when looking for low cost housing
 - Low cost house
 - Deed-restricted condo (lenders don't want to give mortgages for these)
 - Bigger, newer, deed-restricted house
- <Jamie Eldridge>
 - Lower income mothers with multiple children: it's impossible to find any available housing. For example, there is one woman who has been waiting for more than 2 years.
 - We don't have enough units with more than 1 bedroom.
- <Mark Racicot>
 - Our 2 unit condos are really apartments, and not really condos. They are too small.
 - We should provide housing that is of "standard" quality. Just because they are low income, does not mean the housing should be low quality.
- <Bob VanMeter>
 - The State is less generous for new housing, and is focusing moneys mostly on rentals.
- < Jim Stockard >
 - Mass has the strictest town zoning laws in the US:
 - On average across the state, new houses are zoned with 1.54 acres
 - Price in our state is high as supply is throttled because of our zoning rules. 30B helps increasing housing stock and providing more, lower cost units.
 - There are no zoning in our state for new multi-family housing
 - Lincoln story:
 - Battle road farm: The town purchased the land, and put a RFP out to build new homes on it. They were able to control the zoning, the design of the new buildings and they came up with 3 affordable units that are really nice.
 - 40R (40b but controlled by the town): This is when the town manages the building process. When the town moves forward with one of these, the state will assist the town to deploy these, and they will also seriously give you a break from other 40B projects.
 - Housing production plan: The state has made it clear that
 - You must have your housing needs assessed.
 - You must have a commitment to get the planned housing put in place
 - Oregon has a 10% affordable housing system too: they require towns to zone enough multi-family housing area.
- <Ronald> Only 6 towns in the state have a "housing production plan"
 - If we had one, then the 40B (safe harbor) is "waved" by the state
 - It would take around \$25K to put together a really good, workable housing production plan
- < Nancy Tavernier >
 - We would need 42 units per year to get safe harbor

- Inclusionary zoning is where the town tells builders that they should provide a specific percentage of new units as low income. This is done through incentives as the builder cannot be forced into this.
 - <Ronald> Points out that inclusionary zoning needs to provide more carrots to prevent developers from simply suing.
 - < Jim Stockard >
 - In Cambridge, for every 10 units, you need 1.5 affordable, but you get density bonuses.
 - It's ok to have design conditions within a Housing Production Plan, as long as it does not make the development uneconomical.
 - <Jamie Eldridge> things that the state are working on:
 - Because of the current financial situation, the effort now is to just keep the current funding in place
 - When it comes to state monies, there is a tension between smaller towns wanting to build in their communities, vs. big city's; where larger facilities with better economies of scale win out.
 - 40 b reforms:
 - Supports 40b
 - Voters had the chance to get rid of it, and they voted to keep it. Because of this most representatives would not want to go against it.
 - Issue is what "counts as affordable". Rental: if 25% is affordable, 100% is counted as affordable, but for housing it's only 1-1. Jamie is trying to make non-rentals more attractive.
 - Another point pro 40B, th state's goal is to increase housing, and 40b is a very good tool to do this.
 - <Mark Racicot> Related to 40B, and having enough units to prevent developers from building against the wishes of the town:
 - We currently have 519 rental units, and would need 875 to get to our 10%
 - To get to the 10% mark (safe-harbor), we would need to do one of the three:
 - Build 1-2 new Avalon-like properties
 - Build 42 new units per year
 - Buy down around 800 units.
 - To put that in perspective, Acton had 30 building permits *total* last year.
 - <Ronald> propose CPA surcharge to provide more \$ for housing projects
- Concentrate growth: [9:25]
 - <Roland> reviews the plan
 - < Jim Stockard >
 - He favors the plan of smart growth. And seen that work well
 - Cambridge big issue with growth is that they are lacking resources for middle class families. The rich are ok because they can afford housing. The poor are also ok, because there are supporting resources and programs, but the middle class are left out.
 - In Cambridge, 60% students in school (K-12) live in public housing They are challenged to solve how to build 2-4 bedroom units for the "middleclass" (teachers, fireman, police, etc).

- Whatever the problem though, careful planning, and, thoughtfulness is key. If your town does not have a plan, then things will go poorly.
- <Nancy Tavernier>
 - Our current Zoning bylaws are much like “40b with zoning”
 - It does not seem to work.
 - One reason it does not work is because we didn’t want to appear to give developers too much, and land pricing went up too high.
 - We need to focus on reworking the current zoning bylaws.
- <kelly cronin >
 - We simply need more affordable rental units
 - Re: Chelmsford has created a nonprofit (housing developer) to help with the planning. Sharing a solution like this could pay off, but being able to show yearly budgetary return on investment might be difficult.
- <Jim Stockard>
 - We have as many people waiting for affordable housing as we have total “n-use” units.

Acton 2020 Committee and Board of Selectman meeting with the Commission on Disabilities (CoD), Sidewalk Committee, Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), South Acton Train Station Advisory Committee (SATSAC), Council on Aging (COA) Board, Cultural Council, Senior Center Building Committee, and Recreation Commission

Minutes

October 12, 2011 - 7:00 PM

Room 204, Acton Town Hall

Attendees

Acton 2020 Committee members:

Margaret Woolley Busse, Celia Kent, Paulina Knibbe, Jim Snyder-Grant, Charlie Mercier, Sahana Purohit

Selectmen:

John Sonner, Janet Adachi

Town Staff assigned from Planning Department:

Kristin Alexander, Roland Bartl

Consultants from the Collaborative:

Jim Purdy, Daphne Politis

Members of the public, mostly from the town boards and committees listed above:

David Martin, Kurt Marden, Bettina Abe, Bengte Muten, Cathy Fochtman, Barb Tallone, Stephen Leo, Maya Minkin, Ann Corcoran, Steve Baran, Karen Jarsky, Barbara Willson, Lynne Osborn, Sharon Mercurio, Dean Charter, Laura Ducharme, Lisa Franklin, Franny Osman

Meeting opened at 7:05 PM with introductions and a review of the 2020 process.

Discussion about Goal 4: Provide more opportunities for Community Gathering and Recreation

A detailed review and comment period that involved many of the attendees. Raw notes are here:

<http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/Get/Document-34400/NotesOnGoal4.doc> (attached)

Discussion about Goal 5: Support Inclusion and Diversity (NOT including discussion on affordable housing/housing for low to moderate income folks as this was discussed on 9-28-11)

A detailed review and comment period that involved many of the attendees. Raw notes are here:

<http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/Get/Document-34401/NotesOnGoal5.doc> (attached)

Discussion about Goal 3: Improve Connections

A detailed review and comment period that involved many of the attendees. Raw notes are here:

<http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/Get/Document-34402/NotesOnGoal3.doc> (attached)

10:30 PM or so: meeting adjourned

Acton 2020 Committee 10/21/2011 – Notes on Goal 4 discussion

Margaret Woolley Busse reviewed Goal 4 strategies. Daphne reviewed the themes of the vision and subsequent feedback, and reviewed what sort of feedback we are looking for in particular.

Reviewed history of the senior center expansion / replacement project. 4 Years ago one committee looked at options & decided that building new is the best strategy – reconstruction would be expensive and not meet needs.

2010 census of seniors is higher than expansion committee predicted. Folks are staying in town more than expected.

17.4% seniors (60+) in 2010 federal census. 3900 seniors at last town census. Seniors are the fastest growing population in Acton.

Reviewed value of senior center: Creating connection reduces isolation, and depression. Building is packed first thing in the morning, but only two rooms. Multiple activities scheduled for large rooms, chaotic or noisy. More and smaller rooms would help to meet more needs. No place to sit and visit.

Offices are in back, so new visitors aren't greeted.

Query from Daphne: Can we conceive of a shared mixed-use facility?

Mike reminded us: The facility ideas at NARA park is a multi-use multi-age facility. A focus on recreation will bring in the younger seniors, and the male seniors. Recreation also will fill an unmet need among adults.

Parents with toddlers have no place to meet. No public pool. No indoor space for gathering. NARA park lake is only three feet deep, and gathers bacteria. Single-parent head of households are also a rapidly growing population in Acton. Seems like there's a way to combine those needs with those of seniors.

Some CoA discussion has focused on understanding good hours for senior activities and good hours for other activities. Their experience is that the morning hours are the key hours for seniors. After 2 or 4 PM looks best for other age groups.

Another way to mix the hours is to have mixed-age activities for those interested: chances for mentoring, mixed-age group education, etc.

There is certainly a block of seniors who would prefer that there be senior-only space and time. But don't overgeneralize. Many seniors also feel unwillingly isolated from the younger set.

History: before 1994 CoA was in corner of Acton Congregational Church. Having a real center really allowed the program to grow, and the sense of connection to grow. But now: the main constraint in planning is “do we have the space to do it”. The most popular event by far is the Exercise class. They all fill up, quickly. Exercises classes alone could fill the existing center.

“Pre-school PTA” could start in some existing space, such as a church basement. Maybe a toddler

space in the abandoned senior center after the new center is built?

Parents with toddlers are often in their first few years in Acton. It's the time in their lives when they are first getting to know Acton.

A town pool would be a big win for parents with kids.

The 2009 Senior center expansion plan was at the heart of a recent CoA vote in favor of a senior center.

That vote: "The Acton CoA board supports a new Senior Center based on the senior center expansion report completed in January 2009, and currently being updated. The center will be focused on the needs of seniors and available for the wider community use outside of the hours of senior center programs."

Part of the drive to have a combined facility is a financial one. Some is social / connecting.

Objective 4.2: Unmet needs for playgrounds used to be toddlers. More recently 5-12 age is higher priority.

Little League inclusion with kids for disabilities. Miracle Field is awesome, but lets not forget the need for inclusion.

Goward playground renovation is being driven by private fundraising. It does show up in the capital funding requests, but tends to get crowded out. Pent-up demand for playgrounds. CPA funds can no longer be used for renovation of existing facilities. Legislative struggle going on to fix that.

In the past, playgrounds have often been a mix of private funds, and some public funds, but rarely more than 50%. In 1990s, upgrades were done from 1940s - 1950s equipment.

Remember to think about shade trees in gathering areas.

No action steps related to NARA park: improvements & maintenance. Maybe in Goal 6??, but add a link back to this goal 4.

Maybe we need a funding system for playground maintenance. Town Meeting historically is more excited about capital expenses that create new shiny things, rather than maintenance of existing things.

A plan to create new things, such as parks, needs a plan and commitment for maintenance.

Maybe a citizen-led playground maintenance initiative to get energy in to maintaining our playground.

Objective 4.4

Report from Paulina talking with ABCC.

Appreciative of money from state and town(s) A+B. Space is an issue. Don't want to run a movie series.

ABCC doesn't have a lot of requests for the 2020 plan – Council is already at the edge of their

organizational capacity.

Remember -a bunch of cultural events happen at NARA.

Remember: cultural events have town staff time impact, which creates costs.

At every BoS meeting, donations for Rec & NARA programs – lots of external funding for rec is part of the basic plan.

Acton 2020 Committee 10/21/2011 – Notes on Goal 5 discussion

(will NOT include discussion on affordable housing/housing for low to moderate income folks as this was discussed on 9-28-11)

Link together the transport items (teens, disabled, senior) & objective 3.2.

Link to Kelly's corner strategy from all ages section, with respect to kids.

Lisa noting her experience of anti-Chinese sentiment in town, and how depressing that is. What can be done?

Ages – link to playground.

Link between item re: new older folks who don't speak English as a native language and supporting all ages.

And many more links & glue between these sections and all other goals, esp. 3,4,5.

Make sure we include pre-school kids as an underserved population in the 'serve all ages' section.

Town Social Worker: Poor Singles are often isolated. Rent and transport costs are so high, that they are typically spending most time on meeting economic necessities. “Agencies”? Not so much. There's a town social worker. Assistance for poor folks is NOT in Acton – folks have to go to Lowell for one thing, Worcester for another, Framingham for others. We are at the edges (or outside) of most catchment areas. More stuff in to town mailings. Maybe stuff on cable? Info going out via churches, and library. More public awareness or funding on “Safety Net” a new growing and cohesive group of staff and volunteers and committee members and citizen groups to deal with unmet needs of town. Third Thursday of each month. More info on the town website.

Link to the goal about consolidating and simplifying

Inclusive community space? Maybe free or cost reduced for those that need it.

Add CoA to responsibility list.

Reminder: folks don't want to see themselves as 'needy'. We all need connections.

Dispatchers of vans and the drivers also serve as an informal communicator about individual needs.

Fixed route public transit also helps end isolation.

How to counter-act prejudice? Education. No Place For Hate committee. Some of it caused by lack of interaction. Some of this is made stronger in economic hard times. Reminder: in Phase I, we found many folks who were proud of the diversity in town, and new residents of various backgrounds reporting that they felt welcome.

Encourage: cultural activities that connect people of different cultures.

Educational values difference? Concerns about pressure-cooker education, and the perception that Asian families are reinforcing that or making it worse? School committee is wrestling with this now.

Education in the schools. Facing History and Ourselves in the High School. 8Th grade has a good educational stuff on China and India. But how to address the specific differences (or perceptions of differences) in communities living in Acton now.

Indian community does gather for festivals, but it's in paid space, and space for large crowds is expensive. Community Center fits in here.

We have lost our "ADA compliance transition plan". We used to be required to do this for federal requirements. Find it or recreate it. Municipal Properties? Spaces for public meetings. Time for open Meeting records request for ADA transition plan to move the issue along?

Biggest problem is in schools. Elementary schools.

Making town kid leagues be inclusive. Little League uses town facilities, so town could require that leagues using fields have an inclusion policy.

Model: open Door theater is explicitly exclusive. And not all theaters do that. So maybe we encourage the creation of a league that explicitly encourages wide participation. There might be legal requirements.

Accessibility for playgrounds.

Acton 2020 Committee 10/21/2011 – Notes on Goal 3 discussion

Sidewalk committee history: reviewed the history and thinking behind the priority list.

Money comes from appropriations, and from developers.

CPA funds probably can't be used for sidewalks. Some towns do, but so far the Town's CPC has not gone that way.

An exception: sidewalks built at the same time as part of a larger project that is CPC eligible.

Add action item to explore the possibility of doing more with CPC and sidewalks.

Maybe we need to increase the sidewalk contributions from developers?

TAC definitely is responsible for biking and biking issues. TAC needs some bike fans on their committee to help move this forward.

Connect the two rail trails with a good bikeable route.

Prioritize paths that connect neighborhoods.

Betterment fees to pay for sidewalks? Challenging politically. Bicycle-friendly requirements for developments and businesses – bike racks? – zoning changes. Accessibility issue to get from sidewalks to businesses – usually requires going over the same route as cars, not safe.

No little lane to get to Goward field or the library – bikers and walkers go through the parking lot – scary & not safe.

Complete streets & complete design that includes pedestrians/bikes/strollers/wheelchairs.

Sometimes banks have community investment funds, that might be used for pedestrian and bike improvements.

2001 report – most intersections were already at level F. 80% of the traffic at rush hour does NOT originate in Acton.

Reducing traffic through Acton. How about using right of ways in unused railways as actual trains again. ARRT and BFRT as multi-use corridors, to have both a train system AND a bike path. Or put fixed rail on 495? The issue is the circumferential transport. Action for town would be to approach the MPO, and get the conversation started now before BFRT goes further

Take control of Rte 2A and slow it down so that more through-drivers use Rte 2 / Rte 495 instead?

Reuse existing transportation corridors to connect (especially) circumferential towns, to help reduce the big through-car-travel.

Encourage carpooling would help

Increasing the parking for Acton residents at the train station would encourage more people to ride the rail. But road structure there doesn't support the traffic for more people. How about incentives for carpooling like cheaper parking?

Engaging developers and businesses in helping to fund transport to & from train station.

Is rail Shuttle in there? Make it more explicit. In first item under 3.2?

Consider forming a new RTA – neighboring towns agree we are underserved by existing RTAs – we are at the edges of all of their service areas.

3.4 make links to business communication stuff under goal 7.

Acton 2020 Committee
Minutes
October 26, 2011 7:00 pm
Town Hall Rm 204

Attending:

Acton2020: Kristen Alexander, Daphne Politis and Jim Purdy (consultants), Sahana Purohit, Paulina Knibbe, Celia Kent (minutes-taker), Jim Snyder-Grant, Margaret Woolley Busse, John Sonner (BoS liaison)

Guests for Goal 6 Discussion: Ron Rose (HDC), David Barrat (HDC, HC), Mike Gowing (BoS), Dave Clough (BoS), Doug Tindal (FinCom), Dean Charter (Municipal Properties), Ann Chang (Library Trustee), Wayne Friedrichs, Dore Hunter, Ann Sussman (DRB), Janet Adachi (BoS), Pam Harting-Barrat (BoS), Jane Ceraso (OSC), Ryan Bettez (PB), Kim Montella (PB), Susan Mitchell Hardt (ACT), Bob Whittlesey (AHA)

Additional Guests for Goal 1 Discussion (join group ~ 8:00): Derrick Chin (PB), Jim Chiarelli (HC), Jeff Clymer (PB), Holly Ben-Joseph (DRB), Victoria Beyer (HC/CPC)

Goal 6: Preserve and Enhance Town-Owned Assets

- I. Introductions – Margaret summarize purpose of meeting, overall timeline, and Nov. 9th public meeting
- III. Discussion of Implementation strategies
Jim Snyder-Grant added notes and suggestions from the discussion directly on the Goal 6 chart projected on screen. Comments/discussion included:

6.1 Protect Town-owned open space

*Add link to Morrison Farm Committee site.

*Dean Charter – there’s a lot of town-owned conservation land that could be enhanced with logging and timber farm activities that are a form of agriculture. That could improve the biodiversity and mitigate risk of forest fires. And provide a revenue stream. Ann Chang – Brewster Conant logs his property. Dean - we have two town forests purchased in 40’s for source of timber. Suggest add “agriculture *and forestry*”. Jim Snyder-Grant – forest management recommendations are being developed now by a consultant.

*Jane – the Open Space Committee has suggested that the Town consider conservation restrictions on its conservation lands – only a small amount of our lands have a cr. Jim S-G – most of our land was bought with state funds which require a cr in perpetuity, but the hurdle on maintaining passive recreation is somewhat low.

*Should reference town-owned active recreation lands here so people know it’s not missing. (discussed in goal 4).

*Jane – suggest implementing an agriculture commission in Acton.

6.2 Support excellence in schools

* Remove reference to commercial development in first bullet-too confusing out of context.

Doug – there will be no increased fiscal capacity from commercial development in the life of this master plan so the first bullet is irrelevant.

* Add Fin Com, School ctee, BoS to first two bullets.

* Ann Chang - should mention general support of Minuteman Technical at least in footnotes (3rd bullet). Dore Hunter (Acton rep to Minuteman) cautioned that Acton currently only one of 16 communities that share the school and the towns don't all agree on scope/scale of facility renovation/capital maintenance. Ann Chang – add Superintendent to the responsibility column.

6.3 Manage the Town's Facilities Efficiently

* Dean – have to tie the tasks to the budget implications. Preventive maintenance work over \$25,000 is considered a capital investment in Acton which blurs the distinction between operating maintenance and capital projects; and recommended maintenance often isn't funded (i.e. replacing 40 + year old heating systems). Daphne –preventive maintenance was meant for situations where ongoing maintenance spending reduces future capital expenditures.

*Doug Tindal – we should allude to the importance of developing and maintaining a long-term capital plan that includes the life cycle costs of all town assets. Fin Com is working on that. He added that the Town should not take on assets for which we don't have a use and for which we haven't developed a capital plan.

* Ann Chang suggested that we borrow from Fodor's use of \$, \$\$, \$\$\$ symbols to tasks that cost money. Daphne indicated that they are doing that for big ticket items.

* Dave Clough - use word "consider" rather than "create" for senior center reference.

* Dean– the one stop mechanism for reserving space needs to be encouraged politically. School space is controlled by Commun Educ after 6 pm. Other space booked by Dean or Library, etc. Call it a first priority. It's not easy to do but it would have a lot of benefits.

6.4 Continue to provide high quality services that are responsive to Town needs

*Ann Chang – can remove the reference to additional library staff box.

* 3rd bullet should substitute "current" for "more recent".

* Pam – what about regionalizing around a community center? Esp useful for facility like a pool. Other regionalization possibilities – senior centers and other services, building inspection and electrical inspection, nursing, and other town services. Provide more examples.

Mike Gowing – we already do ambulance service regionally (that mentioned in 6.5). We should make the distinction between regional cooperation and regionalization. Both are worth mentioning. Pam – but we do have regional cooperation...thinks we cooperate very well. So add "explore further options for regionalization...".

6.5 Provide excellent public health and safety services

*Evaluating the nursing service is a critical activity but their budget problems will have to be resolved before Town meeting. Leave it in this document.

Goal I Preserve and Enhance Town Character

1.1 Strengthen tools to manage growth pro-actively

* Doug Tindal – add EDC to Responsibility column throughout. Mike Gowing – Indicate more clearly lead owner and other owners. Kim suggests just bold the lead.

* Doug – word “criticality” should be kept in reserve for the key strategy. Ann Sussman- review current zoning should be CRITICAL, should come first.

* Ann Sussman – worried about financial consequences. How do we compete with towns that aren’t growing beyond their infrastructure? We can’t have all that is in the plan and grow in population. As a counter example, Lexington has been 30,000 pop since 1965 so they are more stable and have the infrastructure in place to support that population. Daphne replied that Lexington is experiencing population growth trends. Acton2020 is calling out the infrastructure needs to support the goals. Ann S – designing post-housing bust is a more challenging financial task. She’s concerned that the master plan will read as if it’s just a wish list. Daphne replied that the strategies may not be achievable right now, but that we have to remember the plan is for the next 20 years. We can plan now so we’re poised for the opportunities when they arise and so that we recognize them.

* Ann Sussman - can we look at how we could have planned better in the past? We haven’t attached population growth to school needs in past plans. Acton pursued aggressive residential development unlike its neighbors and Ann suggests that is the reason it has the highest tax rate of those towns. There was some discussion about what are the current projections for population growth under current zoning and given the recommendations of the master plan.

* Margaret - the plan has to be written up in a way that acknowledges our current economic reality. Daphne – the plan should be framed in a way that shows expected population growth.

*Paulina – she is hesitant to extend design review of village center residential beyond what is already in the HDC scope. We should re-write the first bullet so that it is clear we are not recommending design review of single family residences.

*Janet – DRB authority has to be reviewed by BoS. We need to agree on the role of the DRB before we can talk about design guidelines. So: Re-write 2nd bullet to say “improve” rather than “strengthen”. The design review process (currently 2nd bullet) should be figured out before we refine or expand guidelines (currently 1st bullet). Ann Sussman suggested that it may be more effective if Planning Board reviews commercial development. In some towns it is the ZBA. So it doesn’t have to be DRB per se. Maybe Planning Board should be elected. Paulina suggest we should be vague – consider ways to improve the design review process (as it is currently written). Doug agrees that vagueness can be good. Suggests “Consider ways to strengthen the design review process and enhance coordination between the Planning Board and DRB. Ron – but we don’t want to make it so vague that it disappears entirely. In the town where he grew up, authority rested in an elected board (or staff?) which helped to deal with the politics of

saying 'no'. Daphne - we will work on wording, perhaps use word "explore" and provide examples of how design review is handled in other towns.

* Review all current zoning. Ann Sussman – re-writing zoning bylaw will require consultant fees. Pam – this should be the first priority. Then we should support legislation re 40 B. Doug – also mentioned the need to repeal or modify the Dover amendment (with respect to fight over the daycare development plan). We should support legislation that enables Town to control its own development. (He explained that the Dover amendment was developed to mitigate communities uniting against religious groups and crushing perfectly legitimate developments. Universities found it hard to meet their needs, so went to the legislature for protection. And simultaneously, there was an increase in daycare service needs as more women joined the work force. At the time, most daycare providers were Mom&Pop enterprises and Towns were zoning them out. Now daycares are commercialized and don't need that kind of protection. Acton's battle over the large daycare development in a sensitive part of town (major crossroads, difficult traffic, not geared to serve Acton needs) was an unintended consequence of the Dover amendment's good intentions. Wayne Friedrichs – zoning changes can lead to unintended consequences. And it's really hard to change zoning after the fact. Daphne commented that there is pending legislation that zoning should be aligned to master plans. Maybe split the bullet into two. Reviewing zoning and determining what zoning need to support plan goals.

* Remove the regionalization comment. It's in other places.

1.2 Complete a village centers plan.

*Paulina – is concerned that completing a Village Centers plan will slow us down since already have we have a series of village plans. She agrees we need to update plans for West Acton and South Acton. Jim SG – the value of a Village Centers plan is that it helps us understand the potential for TDR – to assess where and whether there is really a match for the density we need in order to make TDR work. Maybe it should be re-worded as a TDR plan so that the value is clear.

Wayne – the village plan needs a traffic study (agreed – that's in the footnote). Ann Sussman – use South Acton as a case study – understand what didn't work. Pam HB commented she and Dore were both on South Acton revitalization ctee in the 70's. She said we had wonderful ideas but no parking. You can't have a successful business without parking.

Jim P– These are the kind of issues we imagine the village centers plan will address. He pointed out that the strategy includes review of the existing Village Plans and outcomes.

*Doug – ideally want to buy the land, then can control what happens. Mike - How should we foster cooperation between town and developer – purchase of purchase of development rights is one way. Doug - TDR to some extent means you've failed. Mike – if Kelly's corner is important to us, then the Town needs more of an investment than zoning gives us. Holly – but what is the vehicle to get the funding? Mike – there are options, but we can only purchase land with a 2/3rds vote at town meeting. Doug – make an Acton Land Corporation – then can bond it. Wayne – that's the EDIC, but problem is that there is no structure in place to fund it.

Problem is moving quickly. Daphne – we'll ask at November 9th meeting about what people are willing to pay for.

* Ron – Agrees that you can't design by relying on zoning. Design studies are important to test ideas. Need to test all the village plans through design studies. Can be done economically if can link to educational institutions who use the opportunities as training for their grad students. By doing this you identify which parcels are particularly important (strategic possibilities in making a village place). Planning and design studies need to be feedback loops. Also a competition is a great way to do it (architects always looking for work). In the process, you identify the kind of buildings and uses which bring village vitality. For instance, a Senior Center would be a great way to populate the village all times of day. What about looking at the next phase of WAVE for a senior center, which would be a long-term lease opportunity rather than capital outlay.

1.3 Preserve rural characteristics and open space

* Dean- the scenic roads bylaw is a state law and very specific. It's not the best vehicle to link the first bullet to as you are often dealing with private property. Add Municipal Properties in Responsibility column.

* Margaret – how do you know if walls are historic? She's wary of putting too many restrictions on private property. Maybe we need to define the criteria better for those rural characteristics that should be protected and highlight Acton's interest in the preservation of these elements.

* Are there incentives to discourage clear-cutting?

* Dean – he works as a consultant for a developer in another town. That town recently passed a tree protection bylaw but Dean thinks it will be hard to enforce. Is the Town liable if it makes value judgements about trees on private property, esp on the long-term health of a tree, which then are proved wrong? It is not an exact science and the Town won't fund the effort properly. An alternative approach may be requiring re-planting. Daphne – they'll look at some precedents. Ann mention Tree canopy bylaw in Boxborough. Holly – in Dunstable they have tree protection bylaws in place for larger subdivisions that seems to work and which don't put the town at risk.

1.4 Preserve historic buildings and landscapes

* Daphne acknowledged that there have been suggestions to organize strategies for landscape preservation and improvement into its own section which isn't reflected in the documents yet.

* Paulina – asks what does a "historic landscape" mean and how do we preserve it if not town owned?

* David B – we should consider ways to expand HD purview over individual historic properties which are currently not part of the district. A starting point might be the cultural resources list.
Ron – the HD designation option would have to be assessed on a property by property basis.

1.5 Foster an understanding and appreciation for what makes Acton unique, including its history

Doug – an EDO will be consumed by planning dept needs [note an EDO is referenced in the Responsibility column for the strategy of developing tourist support infrastructure for certain key sites]. EDO role may make no sense until economy improves. Paulina – could hire a consultant to put together the plan to define the EDO and planner job/scope; that approach is cheaper, more efficient and will help make case for the FTE.

Summary of Public Input:

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN/PRIORITIZATION:

NOVEMBER 9, 2011



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 stations (they are listed in the order of how many dots they received)¹.” Please see per goal tables for a complete list. The top priority strategies are as follows:

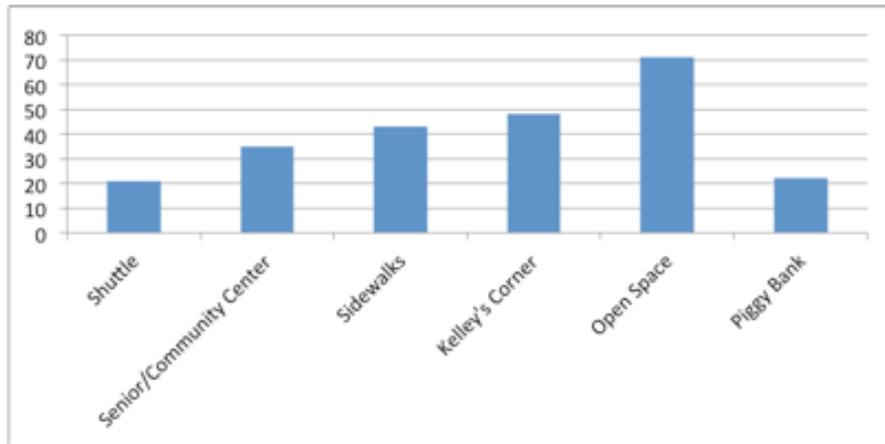
- Create a building that can accommodate the Senior Center & the larger community
- Support the implementation of the Open Space and Recreation Plan.
- Continue to support & achieve the high educational standards of Acton’s schools.
- Preserve historically significant buildings, landscapes & other historic 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

Detailed Documentation of Participant Priorities and Comments 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>
Other or General	9	
		<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

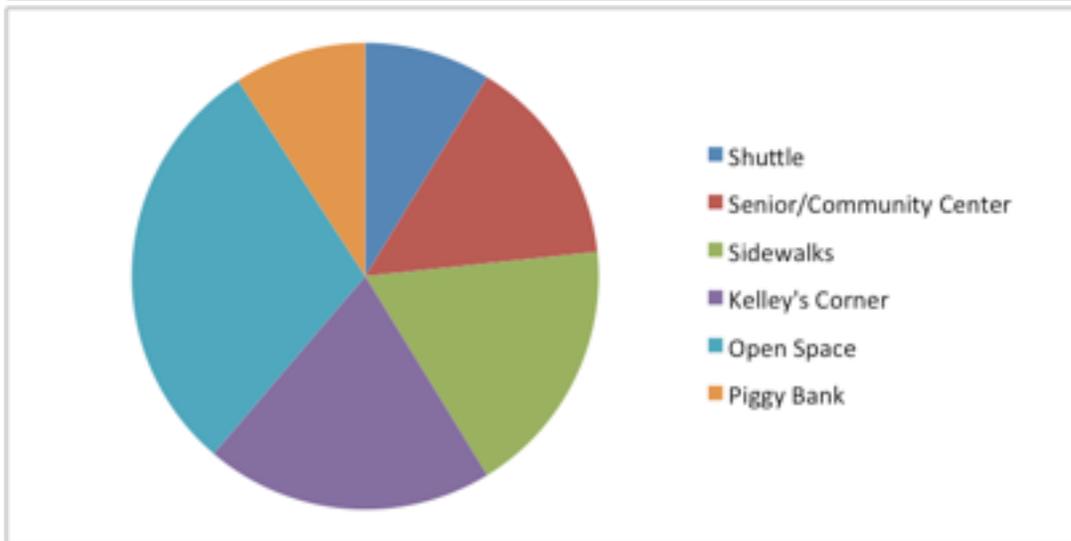
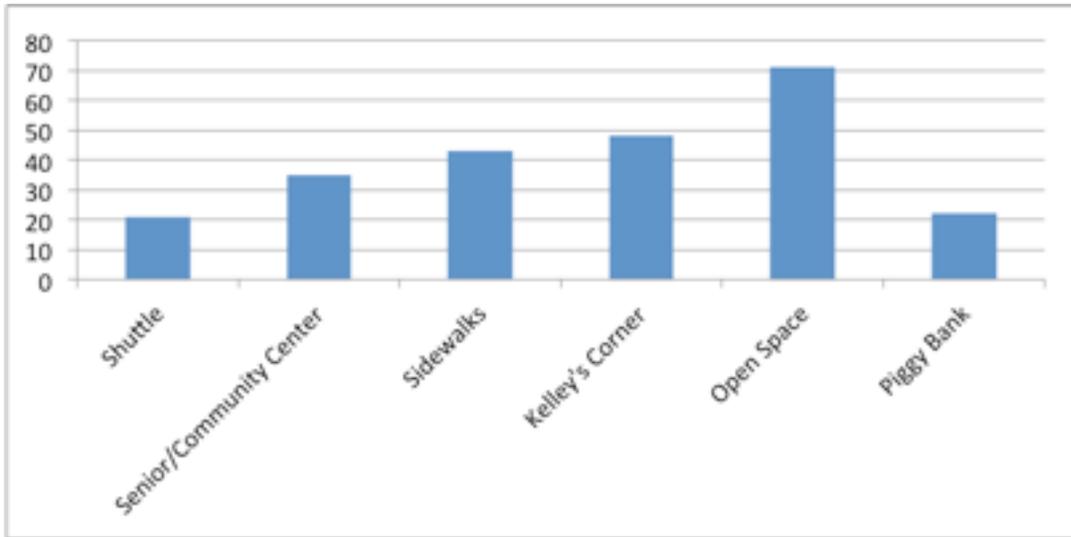
Approach	Comments	Total
	<p><i>"Agreed."</i></p> <p><i>"NOT if it means offering tax and other incentives."</i></p>	
Other	<p><i>"How do we compete with Devens and surrounding towns?"</i></p> <p><i>"We want to attract businesses but also be <u>selective</u> in terms of clean and green and employment/job 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."

1 December 2011

“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 pro-active 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 *

Summary of Public Input:

**PRESENTATION OF
FINAL PLAN:**

MARCH 6, 2012

PRESENTING... THE PLAN:

Public Meeting

A Public Meeting to Present the Comprehensive Community Plan for Acton's Future



Tuesday, March 6, 2012, 7:00 p.m.

Acton Town Hall, Room #204

Purpose: The purpose of this meeting was to present the Comprehensive Community Plan. The presentation was followed by a discussion and question and answer session with the public. The now completed Plan will help guide Acton towards the desired future expressed by the vision, goals and objectives developed with extensive input from the community at large.

Process

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Acton 2020 Committee presented a PowerPoint slide show summarizing the process to date, research findings, results of the extensive public input and resultant recommendations. They explained the underlying themes upon which the Plan was developed and presented the implementation plan, which includes the steps recommended to attain the goals and objectives the Committee developed to reflect the public's input.

The slides were followed by a presentation of certificates to the winners of the Acton 2020 Art Youth Contest. Participants in the contest were asked to illustrate one of the seven planning goals. Winning entries were exhibited at the meeting.

The majority of the meeting was focused on soliciting feedback from attendees who were asked the following questions:

- Which features of the Plan do you most appreciate?
- What concerns you most about the Plan?
- What do you find difficult to understand about the Plan?
- Other Comments

The discussion took place in a large group format. There were also additional opportunities provided for participants to give their feedback in written form, mainly on the back of their agendas as well as on large comment pads to which they could adhere post-it notes.

The forum was well attended and was characterized by positive energy with constructive questions and productive dialogue. Over one hundred (100) people were in attendance. The participants were almost equally divided into three categories, those who have been following and participating in the process since Phase I, those who joined during Phase II, and those for whom this meeting was their first introduction to the Plan.



Key Themes:

The following are the key themes that emerged from the questions and comments at the public meeting. Input was solicited in a number of ways (see pages which follow for more detailed notes):

Need for better **UNDERSTANDING/EXPLANATION** regarding the following:

- **School enrollment projections** – what does this mean about the school system, the population, the fiscal capacity, and what if it doesn't happen?
- Why is **employment-oriented development** important in Acton?
- How exactly will **Kelley's Corner** be improved? Traffic? Density? Parking? What about opposition from surrounding residents (as in the past)?
- What is being proposed for **West Acton**? It is quite attractive/successful the way it is... does the Plan propose to change it?
- Why does the Plan promote **smaller housing units**? What is the main idea because won't this result in there not being enough housing for people growing up in Acton to live here with their children?
- Will **TDR** result in more development? How do we measure growth?
- What about **North Acton**?
- More about **implementation phase**: progress, participation, etc.

Participants were most **APPRECIATIVE** of the following regarding the Plan:

PROCESS

- **Participation process** (opportunities to comment and be involved in planning for the Town's future, the variety of forums, the fact that the input gathered in Phase I is reflected in Phase II).
- The **report** – is beautiful, would like to purchase it.
- Large **amount of work** which is evident when looking at report and web.

CONTENT

- The **Roadmap**, especially making improvements to Kelley's Corner and the emphasis on increased walkability, biking and public transportation.
- The provision of **options for wide range of people** (including young people, empty nesters, etc.)
- Use of **Transfer of Development Rights** as a tool
- Emphasis on **environmental sustainability**
- Celebration of **cultural diversity**

Participants were most **CONCERNED** and/or found **DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND** the following about the Plan:

PROCESS

- Make it explicit that **goals** are **not** listed **in order of importance**.
- Would like to know that there will be **opportunities for participation** in next phase
- How will we know **progress** is being made **on implementation**?
- Should be careful not to **generalize** from the relatively **small number of participants at public meetings** and should write a disclaimer expressing an understanding that this may not reflect the entire town.
- Need to **solicit input from groups** whose needs are **not as well represented**, e.g. high school students and young adults.

CONTENT

- **School enrollments**
 - What if the projected decrease doesn't happen?
 - What does this mean about the quality of our schools/education? Is the school district becoming less desirable/competitive?
 - Isn't there too much expectation that there will be more money from this than is realistic given current needs at the schools?
 - Believe that there will be a reduction in ratio of students to the population at large, but not

in the absolute number of students

- **Transfer of Development Rights**
 - How can we ensure that Town doesn't inadvertently provide a blank check to developers to motivate them to use TDR, the Town has been taken advantage of in the past
 - Concentrating more development in W. Acton village could be a disaster, how can we be sure to control where and what it looks like?
 - In Phase I people expressed a desire to control development, Plan seems to promote it
 - How does one define increased vitality? Most businesses in the center will provide relatively low wage jobs.
- **Kelley's Corner**
 - Traffic already congested, won't additional development worsen this?
 - Already some high density housing in the area that attendee doesn't consider to be an asset to the area
 - Need to improve traffic flow
- **North Acton**
 - Not enough about North Acton Village in the Plan

- Not enough emphasis on need for fire station in North Acton
- **How is this plan different from previous?**
 - Why will this plan work when the others didn't?
 - Should consider a mechanism for village-level governance
 - Should form an Economic Development Corporation
 - How can we prevent "non-plan-friendly development"? Will the Town have the authority to prevent it?
- **Would like to see more:**
 - Discussion of active recreation. Why is there so much emphasis on preserving open space?
 - The Town should publicize the MinuteVan more in order to increase ridership
 - Promotion of the arts – theater, dance, music, etc.
 - Attention on young people and their needs



Notes from Large Group Discussion

Which features of the Plan do you most appreciate?

I like to walk and bike and appreciate that plan addressing this.

Appreciate the work that was done and the large amount of public input that was gathered.

Hats off to the Acton 2020 Committee – the input gathered in Phase I is reflected in the Phase II Plan.

Is glad to see that Transfer of Development Rights and environmental sustainability are included in the plan.

Appreciates the Plan addressing walking and biking and options for lower income people (e.g. people in their 20s) to stay in town.

Kudos to the Committee and Consultants for their staying power. Was involved in Phase I. Impressed at how far the Plan has come and can see the continuity from Phase I.

Just moved to Acton because of its great schools and stable housing prices. Appreciate the opportunity to comment and get involved in planning for the Town's future.

Looking forward to be able to bike around Town.

The participation process was amazing. Hopes it will continue during implementation.

Is a life-long resident; his parents left because they couldn't afford to stay in Town so appreciates emphasis on supporting empty-nesters ability to stay in town.

Very much appreciates the hard work of the Committee; it's a very talented group.

The Plan is a beautiful. Urges that copies made available for sale; suggests \$20 cost.

Thanks for all the workshops. Appreciates the Roadmap.

Vibrancy, connections, more sidewalks and bike paths appreciated

Thanks for all the work! Everyone should attend the Town Meeting, especially younger folks.

Agree that it would be nice to buy a copy of the report.

Applauds the outstanding efforts. It's great to see more about the arts in Acton – theater, dance, music, etc. The arts need more support.

What concerns you most/ you find difficult to understand about the Plan?

How will the Town Meeting presentation work? It's limited to 20 minutes.

What if school enrollments don't decline?

What about recreation for Acton's youth?

The Plan should make clear that the goals are not listed in order of importance.

Will the absolute number of school students decrease or just the ratio of students to population? Don't believe the absolute number will decline for long.

Suggest that the Town form an Economic Development Corporation.

What opportunities will there be to engage with the 2020 process in the future?

Should consider a mechanism for village-level governance.

Need more amenities in villages, particularly North Acton Village.

A concern: how is the 2020 Plan different from past plans; haven't seen results from those plans.

The report doesn't give enough emphasis to the need for a fire station in North Acton, and there's not much in the Plan about North Acton generally.

Kelley's Corner traffic is already congested – how will development be accommodated? Need to improve traffic flow.

How will we know progress is being made on implementation?

Questions Kelley's Corner Plans because traffic is heavy and there's already some high density housing that he does not consider an asset to the area.

Don't provide a blank check to developers to motivate use of TDR; caution is needed; the Town has been taken advantage of in the past.

Concerned about school enrollments going down. Where are we headed as a school system?

Why is there so much emphasis on preserving open space? It could be developed for active recreation. Would be concerned about negative qualities of preserving stagnant water. [Explained that recreation is a possible use of open space.]

The Town should publicize the MinuteVan more; usage is not what it could be.

Has some discomfort as a younger resident – does the plan express my concerns?

Acton schools didn't always meet her particular needs. Excited to see programs on yoga and acupuncture, sustainability, etc. Looking for a way to connect with her vision.

Acton 2020 Community Comprehensive Plan

Although the bulk of the Town seems to be represented at this meeting, need to solicit input from groups whose needs are not well represented, e.g., high schoolers. Want to engage in different ways of thinking and living. His appreciation for the plan far outweighs his concerns, however.

Concern: although public outreach was phenomenal compared to the past, doesn't think we should generalize from the relatively small number of people who attended the November 9, 2011 workshop.

In Phase I there was a survey of Town residents – a majority said we should control development, but this Plan seems to promote it.

TDR is scary. Concentrating more development in West Acton Village could be a disaster. E.g., doesn't like the new condo units at the corner of Spruce and +Arlington.

Traffic is a major problem in Kelley's Corner, which in the previous plan it was proposed to upzone from FAR 0.7 to FAR 2.0; that's why the previous proposal was rejected by Town Meeting.

How does one define "increased vitality?" Is in favor of economic development, but most business in the centers is retail, with relatively low wage jobs.

Written Comments: Back of the Agenda

Participants were invited to submit written responses to the same questions discussed in the large group. The following is a compilation of the responses.

Which features of the Plan do you most appreciate?

- The Roadmap (5)
 - Making the Town center more vibrant with good walkability, connections and accessibility
 - Sidewalks
 - Walkable neighborhoods – sidewalks
 - Kelley’s Corner being improved
 - Very holistic view – how everything interacts, really like ___ fluidity and input
- The inclusion of public transportation (2)
 - despite the young “age” of the MinuteVan.
 - Reducing dependence on cars by having public transportation/bike paths around town – great news to empty nesters
- Cultural Diversity Celebration via a Committee (2)
- Promotion of economic development locally. Great for increasing town revenues and reducing/eliminating traffic.
- Clustering of housing in villages, saving open space
- [the] encouraging of economic diversity

What concerns you most about the Plan?

- Will we as a Town have the authority to prevent non-plan-friendly development? For example, did we need another bank where it is going in and will we be able to affect this type of decision? How can we prevent piecemeal, anti-plan projects?
- Also will we be able to make zoning changes to allow cutting big houses up into apartments? I would like that.
- I often cringe when I see the conclusions of charts from small numbers of meetings (same comment as Wayne Frederichs). Report those lightly.

- Can we get town-owned or cooperatively owned businesses in Kelley's Corner?
- [The difficulty] of passing zoning rules that preserve open space so that "sprawl" doesn't fill up the countryside.
- How to ensure we have top-tier educational programs, which is my big, draw to Acton?
- Kelley's Corner is already congested. How to fit more development in such tight space? Will there be any road improvements/traffic flow improvements?
- School enrollments going down, more seniors in town, more empty nesters. This makes me wonder if the adult age in town is going up. Is Acton school district becoming less desirable (considering the absolute numbers are going down)?
- Keep TDR from becoming "wrong side of the tracks" (less desirable places to live in areas with commercial)
- Smaller housing prevents young people of Acton from staying with their kids.

What do you find difficult to understand about the Plan?

- Employment-oriented development: what is that? How is it important in Acton?
- Why do we want to preserve so much open space? We could have developed recreational areas and actually develop some scenic areas around Nagog Hill/Nagog Pond. Stagnant water bodies are an insect infestation hazard - shouldn't we clean up some of these open areas?

OTHER:

- Please put an arrow (on that flow chart) directly from the shuttle to economic growth (bottom left corner) – not just to vibrant centers. Having public transportation allows companies, office parks and potential employees to grow in number and use.
- Winning drawing should get on T-shirts
- Would like to see some way to control building of accessible housing



Acton 2020 Comprehensive Community Plan

How can we preserve what we most appreciate about Acton, make changes and improvements where needed, while addressing key concerns regarding the future?

By developing a Comprehensive Community Plan.

“What will Acton be like in 5 years? 10 years? 20 years? If we do nothing to change the Town... will it stay the same? What would change? What would we like to change? How shall we go about making Acton an even better place to live, work and play? What shall we do to protect what we most appreciate about our Town and prepare for future contingencies?”

Acton 2020, a planning process with extensive public involvement, is about to unveil the results of almost four years worth of work that included efforts to understand resident desires and concerns, document existing conditions, analyze trends and develop an action plan with specific strategies to achieve the vision and goals developed with significant public input.

The planning process offers each of us an opportunity to participate in our community's self-government. The process has allowed us to step back and make sure that we continue to create a community that supports and expresses us while ensuring its continuation for future generations. Today, with rapid change happening all around us, it is important to continue to take steps to guide Acton's future in sustainable ways that meet the needs of all who live and work in our ever-evolving community.

We have reached out to residents and business owners in Town and asked them: "What is important to you?" What do you care about the most? What do you feel the Town needs to do now to prepare for the future? The community conversation was sustained throughout the process; connections made between Town government and residents and business owners, and amongst residents are intended to be long lasting and continuous. We hope to move forward together to ensure that Acton evolves the way its residents wish.

PLEASE COME TO:

Plan Premier: March 6, 2012
(to view the unveiling of the full plan) **Town Hall**

Town Meeting: Week of
(to support the Plan) **April 2, 2012**

Underlying Themes

The following are key themes that emerged from the community conversation with Acton residents through public meetings, surveys, focus groups, workshops, internet forums and other venues. Over 2,000 residents replied to surveys or attended meetings. Detailed documentation of these responses can be found at <http://acton2020.info/>. The Plan makes a concerted effort to address these themes.

An increased 'sense of community'

- **Community gathering:** desire for indoor and outdoor places and events to meet and interact casually, spontaneously as well as in a planned, more formal fashion.
- **Town character:** desire to preserve and enhance features, physical and other, including a commitment to excellence in education, rural and historic characteristics, and small town feeling, which make Acton unique and contribute to its sense of community.
- **Connectivity:** desire for walking, biking, public transportation, traffic calming and improvements, and increased opportunities for social networks and connections.

The 'future resilience' of the Town

- **Environmental sustainability:** concern regarding the survivability of the environment due to overuse, abuse, and neglect.
- **Social and economic diversity:** concern regarding ability to accommodate a range of socio-economic levels as well as the ability to age in place.
- **Financial viability:** concern regarding the ability of the Town to protect its assets and maintain a viable balance between taxes and services provided.

Can I still Comment on the Plan?

The period for public input will extend to 3.12.12. Public comments are always welcome. The entire plan may be found at: <http://acton2020.info/> and at Town Hall and the Memorial Library.

What does the Comprehensive Community Plan include?

- ▶ **A Roadmap to Guiding Growth.** Acton can't avoid all future growth, but it can guide the expected growth in ways that are more compatible with the town's goals. The recommended **Roadmap** is comprised of three major strategies:
 - **Guide growth to Kelley's Corner and key village centers** (e.g. West and South Acton) and encourage smaller residential units to provide more options for seniors and young people. Mixed-use small-scale development could provide desired additional restaurants and retail choices.
 - **Preserve open space** by purchasing priority parcels and using regulatory tools to guide growth away from the large tracts of land and to the centers resulting in preserving the rural characteristics and open space so appreciated by Acton residents.
 - **Actively promote employment-oriented economic development** that will increase the tax base and also create more local jobs and reduce commuting time for some residents.
- ▶ **And More...** The plan also addresses how we define our quality of life, and focuses on our needs for water, waste disposal, senior services, excellence in education, transportation, health, recreation, and safety, among others; it also identifies ways to build community, including supporting diversity (ethnic, age, etc.). Mindful of costs, the plan sets priorities for how we deliver services efficiently and phase improvements, capital expenditures and regulatory and managerial changes.

What the Plan Is and What it Can Do. The Plan is a **proactive approach to shaping the town's future.** It sets the direction and articulates a set of shared goals and objectives; it identifies what town staff and volunteers should be working on. The Plan is both a roadmap that points us in a certain direction and a decision-making tool that helps us recognize when we're on the right path. The Plan can help to guide our Town's future growth and development.

What the Plan Is Not. The Plan does not require the Town to move forward on any of the initiatives it lists. As always, any zoning change or major expenditure is the decision of Town Meeting. Instead it is a recommendation of the desired general direction based on what the majority of those who participated

in the process expressed as their vision of the future. It is a tool to help steer the course and make decisions as opportunities and challenges arise. The Plan is also not a wish list; careful attention has been paid to priorities, feasibility, and fiscal capacity.

Is the Plan better than "doing nothing"? Doing "nothing" doesn't mean that nothing changes. The continuation of current trends will most likely result in maintaining the existing dispersed pattern of development with the majority of building occurring in outlying areas. It is likely that large parcels of land will develop (reducing the open space and thus negatively impacting town character) and Kelley's Corner and the villages will most likely change only slightly (and not necessarily in desired ways). Public infrastructure and services will not experience increased efficiencies and traffic will most likely become more of a problem.

When is this all going to happen? The Plan sets the general direction and identifies projects, studies, changes in management and/or regulatory practices recommended to meet the desired vision. **Many of these items will need individual Town Meeting approval** (especially if they require capital and/or operating costs) while other low or no cost items may be implemented sooner. The process is slow and deliberate; there will be multiple opportunities to review and refine recommendations. The Plan is intended to help guide decision-making over the next 20 years.

Isn't this all going to cost money that we just don't have? While some of the implementation strategies cost money, many involve policy, administrative and other changes with little or no cost associated with them (e.g. establishing web-based car-pooling and ride sharing). It should be noted that the Plan also includes measures to help increase the Town's fiscal capacity, some of which can be used for paying for capital items. In terms of the items that cost money, they are of two sorts:

a) investments with expected fiscal dividends in the future (e.g. fiscal savings and efficiencies, such as upgrading technology for more efficient provision of town services) and **b) expenditures on improvements to quality of life**—specific features that residents expressed a strong interest in—with expected future returns in direct benefits, such as an expanded shuttle service, as well as indirect ones, such as a stronger sense of community. The plan articulates the Town's priorities so that it is poised for when opportunities arise and investments can be made.

Summary of Public Input:

YOUTH ART CONTEST

ART CONTEST WINNERS

We reached out to Acton’s youth to help us to illustrate and therefore-- to imagine through their renderings -- each of the seven planning goals. Entries exceeded our expectations both in their artistic quality as well as in their conceptual representation of the goals.

- There was representation from all of Acton’s schools
- Every goal was represented
- The Selection Committee judged entries within each goal and within the designated age groups. The names of the artists were not revealed to the Selection Committee until after the winners were selected.

There was also one “**all around Acton2020 winner**” – an entry that impressed the Selection Committee both with the artistic talent it exhibited but also with an understanding of the core plan concept. This entry, with the artist’s permission, will be framed, courtesy of Powers Gallery in Acton, and hung in Town Hall.



The entry is a snow globe or even crystal ball of West Acton village, is a beautiful depiction of town character and emphasizes the positive features of guiding growth to village centers.

The artist is: Mackenzie Abernethy.

For photographs of all the winning entries please visit: <http://acton2020.info/>

Acton 2020 Youth Art Contest: Winners

GOAL	Item Letter	Age Group	Name
GOAL 1			
First Place	R	12-15	Mackenzie Abernethy
First Place	Q	6-11	Alex Zhang
GOAL 2			
First Place	P	6-11	Sanjana Krishna
2 nd Place	D	6-11	Hannah Keenan
	J	6-11	Iniyana C.K.
<i>Honorable Mention</i>	F	6-11	Lucas Escobedo
GOAL 3			
First Place	N	12-15	Luka Ilic
First Place	H	6-11	Meghna Sundaram
	B	6-11	Peter Busse
Second Place	I	6-11	Emily Gouveia – Vigeant
<i>Honorable Mention</i>	C	6-11	Emily Streeter
GOAL 4			
First Place	M	6-11	Joy Wang
Second Place	K	6-11	Vanessa Pare
	A	6-11	Vivian Shen
<i>Honorable Mention</i>	O	6-11	Maria Redmond
GOAL 5			
First Place	L	6-11	Carrie Yu
GOAL 6			
First Place	E	6-11	Jyo Pari

Acton 2020 Community Comprehensive Plan

GOAL 7			
First Place	G	6-11	Gretel Busse



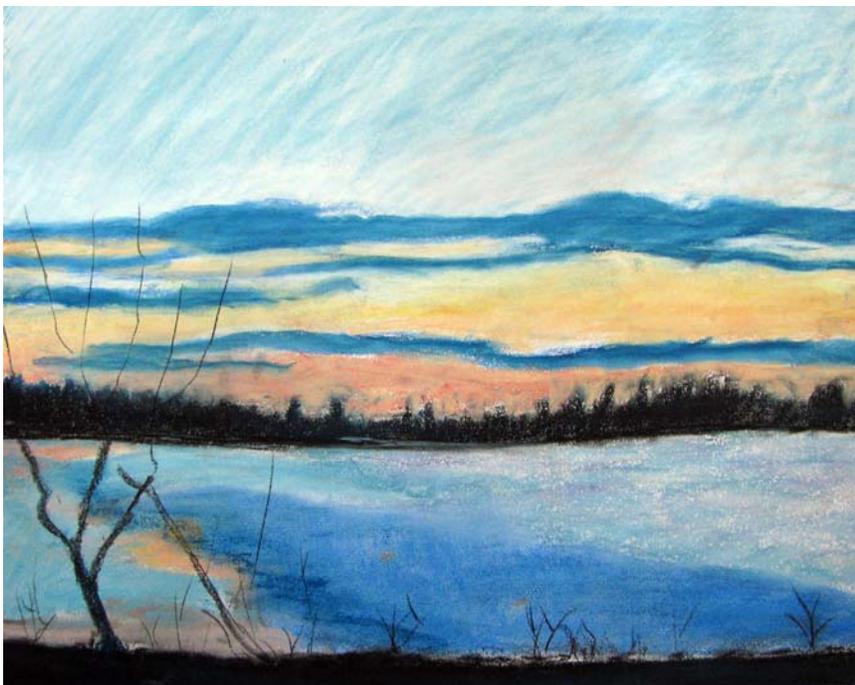
GOAL 1

First Place (Ages 12-15): Mackenzie Abernethy



“Goal 1: My artwork specifically portrays objective 1.2. In my opinion, Acton should preserve and enhance village centers because it’s what makes Acton Unique.”

First Place (Ages 6-11): Alex Zhang



“I drew this piece of art because I think it’s a good example of some natural habitat for Acton to have in the future. I decided to draw the Nagog Pond at sunset. Drew with pastel.”

GOAL 2

First Place (Ages 6-11): Sanjana Krishna



- “Solar powered car – less emissions of gases
- Solar powered town bus
- Solar powered houses (powered by solar panels on roof)
- Composter in a home
- Rain water collector in town hall and in one of the homes so people don’t waste water
- Fresh water pond to support biodiversity of water animals
- Less cars on road = less gas
- A bike path to encourage healthy recreation
- Vegetable garden to grow healthy locally produced food”

Second Place (Ages 6-11): Hannah Keenan



“With land protection these animals teach their babies how to hunt for food, because our soil, water and air will be clean enough to live on.”

GOAL 2 cont.

Second Place (Ages 6-11): Iniyan Chandrasekaran Kalaivanan



"Keep Acton clean by throwing trash in a recycle bin, no auto pollution."

Honorable Mention (Ages 6-11): Lucas Escobedo



"Goal 2.4 Ensure Environmental Sustainability through Biodiversity. A nature scene depicting biodiversity with many animals – deer, woodpecker, rabbit, hedgehog, bald eagle, mouse, and swan family."

GOAL 3

First Place (Ages 12-15): Luka Ilic



“My artwork is a drawing of me (at bottom) thinking of 4 ways to improve transportation and connections around town.”

First Place (Ages 6-11): Meghna Sundaram



*“Goal 3.2. & 3.3.: Improve Transportation around town using existing resources and improve communication
Goal 6 & 7: Manage Town facilities efficiently by reusing buses. Promote fiscal responsibility - lesser town vehicles to maintain.”*

GOAL 3 cont.

First Place (Ages 6-11): Peter Busse



"Picture of a boy on a bike."

Second Place (Ages 6-11): Emily Gouveia – Vigeant



"I have the most realistic picture that shows what Acton will be like in 8 years. It shows that the town will be a little bit safer."

GOAL 3 cont.

Honorable Mention (Ages 6-11): Emily Streeter



"My picture represents a vision of Acton with extended sidewalks and roads while preserving space for wildlife."

GOAL 4

First Place (Ages 6-11): Joy Wang



“The nature of Acton is well protected. People and animals live in harmony. The beautiful environment attracts more people and more animals to live in Acton.”

Second Place (Ages 6-11): Vanessa Pare



“Playground with water sprinklers and slides in the summer.”

GOAL 4 cont.

Second Place (Ages 6-11): Vivian Shen



"This is my dream park in Acton. There are many big trees. They are taller than clouds. Each tree has a beautiful tree house. There is a playground where kids can play and slide down the tunnel slide. Also animals can play. A squirrel is chatting to a bunny while eating her nut. The park is wonderful."

Honorable Mention (Ages 6-11): Maria Redmond



"Walk in the park."

GOAL 5

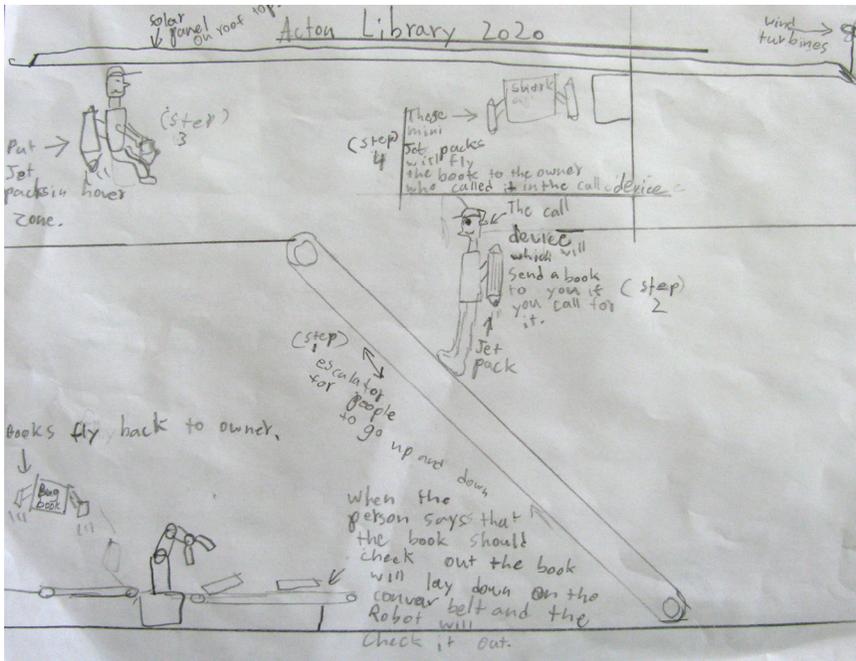
First Place (Ages 6-11): Carrie Yu



“My little brother plays soccer with Acton-Boxboro Youth Soccer. As in the enclosed picture, his teammates are from all different backgrounds. This is the kind of diversity in Acton, which is exemplary.”

GOAL 6

First Place (Ages 6-11): Jyo Pari



“I sketched a picture of the Acton Library in 2020. I want to find books and check out books faster without much human interventions.”

GOAL 7

First Place (Ages 6-11): Gretel Busse



“\$100 bill saying “Money” at the top.”

Summary of Public Input:

TOWN MEETING MATERIALS:

APRIL 3, 2012



Today. Tomorrow. Together.

WHEN AND WHERE?

Second night of
Town Meeting

Tuesday

April 3, 2012

Starting at 7:00pm

Acton-Boxborough
Regional High School
Auditorium,
36 Charter Road

GOAL 1:

- Objective 1.1: Strengthen planning tools to manage growth pro-actively
- Objective 1.2: Preserve and enhance key centers
- Objective 1.3: Preserve rural characteristics and open space
- Objective 1.4: Preserve historic buildings and landscapes
- Objective 1.5: Foster an understanding and appreciation for what makes Acton unique, including its history

GOAL 2:

- Objective 2.1: Protect the quality and quantity of Acton's water
- Objective 2.2: Reduce waste and the accumulation of toxins
- Objective 2.3: Reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases
- Objective 2.4: Move toward patterns of land use and land protection that support broad biodiversity, soil preservation, and healthy local agriculture

Acton 2020 Comprehensive Community Plan Town Meeting

What happens once in a generation?

Our Town develops a Comprehensive Community Plan

The Plan includes a vision describing our shared sense of a desired future and outlines the steps necessary to achieve it.

Come to Town Meeting to vote on the Goals and Objectives that provide the foundation for the Acton 2020 Comprehensive Community Plan. A "Yes" vote means that we as a community agree to make a good faith effort to use these goals and objectives to guide decision making regarding Acton's future.

Any specific items in the Plan that require funding and/or regulatory (e.g. zoning) changes will be discussed and reviewed at future Town Meetings. Voting to adopt the Goals and Objectives does not in any way imply voting on specific action items contained in the Plan.

Please note that the numbering of the Goals and Objectives does not reflect any prioritization of the Goals and Objectives.

Goals and Objectives:

Preserve and Enhance Town Character

Ensure Environmental Sustainability

GOAL 3:

Improve Connections

- Objective 3.1:** Make walking and biking easier and safer
- Objective 3.2:** Improve transportation around town
- Objective 3.3:** Promote communication among town government, citizens, schools, and the business community
- Objective 3.4:** Support and strengthen neighborhoods

GOAL 4:

Provide More Opportunities for Community Gathering & Recreation

- Objective 4.1:** Create new gathering spaces and make better use of existing ones
- Objective 4.2:** Provide more playgrounds, fields for team sports, parks, and conservation lands
- Objective 4.3:** Support additional cultural activities

GOAL 5:

Support Inclusion and Diversity

- Objective 5.1:** Support residents of all ages
- Objective 5.2:** Support households of all income levels
- Objective 5.3:** Embrace cultural diversity
- Objective 5.4:** Support citizens with disabilities in participating fully in the life of the community

GOAL 6:

Preserve and Enhance Town-owned Assets & Services

- Objective 6.1:** Protect Town-owned open space
- Objective 6.2:** Support excellence in schools
- Objective 6.3:** Manage the Town's facilities efficiently
- Objective 6.4:** Provide high quality services that are responsive to community needs
- Objective 6.5:** Provide excellent public health and safety services

GOAL 7:

Maintain and Improve Financial Well-being of the Town

- Objective 7.1:** Promote fiscal responsibility
- Objective 7.2:** Promote economic development that supports other Acton 2020 planning goals
- Objective 7.3:** Improve existing commercial areas
- Objective 7.4:** Support the financial ability of all residents to stay in Acton for a lifetime



Acton 2020

Today. Tomorrow. Together.

艾克顿2020社区综合规划 镇务会议

时间和地点

镇务会议第二夜

2012年4月3日
星期二 晚7:00

艾克顿-博思宝路高中礼堂
36 Charter Road

我们这代人的机遇

艾克顿镇的社区综合规划

此规划包括我们对未来的共同愿景和为达此目标的必要步骤。

请参加镇务会议，评选做为艾克顿2020社区综合计划基础的目标和项目。如果通过，它将作为一项共识，让我们更有信心，努力以这些目标和项目为指引，共同创造艾克顿的美好未来。

规划中的任何具体项目，如果需要资金或牵涉现有镇规章制度的改动(比如区域划分)，尚需在以后的镇务会议上商讨决定。表决通过此“目标和项目”，并不意味着规划中的任何具体项目被通过。

请注意：目标和项目的顺序和编号不包含任何优先级的区分

目标和项目

目标 1:

保持和加强本镇的特色

- 项目 1.1: 加强规划工具以便于主动地管理增长
- 项目 1.2: 维护和加强关键区域
- 项目 1.3: 保持乡村特色和绿色空间
- 项目 1.4: 保护历史建筑和景观
- 项目 1.5: 促进对艾克顿特色和历史的理解和欣赏

目标 2:

确保绿色环境

- 项目 2.1: 保护艾克顿的水质和水量
- 项目 2.2: 减少垃圾和毒物的积累
- 项目 2.3: 减少二氧化碳和其他温室气体的排放
- 项目 2.4: 发展新的土地利用和保护模式，支持生物多样性、土壤保护和健康的本地农业发展

目标 3: 加强交通与交流

- 项目 3.1: 促进步行和骑自行车的方便度和安全感
- 项目 3.2: 改善镇内交通
- 项目 3.3: 提升政府、居民、学校和社区商业之间的沟通
- 项目 3.4: 支持和加强邻里关系

目标 4: 为社团聚会和娱乐提供更多的机会

- 项目 4.1: 创建新的聚会场所和更好地利用现有空间
- 项目 4.2: 提供更多的游乐场所、运动场地、公园和自然保护区
- 项目 4.3: 支持更多的文化活动

目标 5: 支持包容性和多元化

- 项目 5.1: 支持各年龄段的居民
- 项目 5.2: 支持不同收入水平的家庭
- 项目 5.3: 包容多元文化
- 项目 5.4: 支持残疾居民充分参与社区生活

目标 6: 维护和加强镇有资产和服务

- 项目 6.1: 保护镇有的公共空地
- 项目 6.2: 保持优秀学区的优势
- 项目 6.3: 有效地管理镇有设施
- 项目 6.4: 提供高品质的社区服务
- 项目 6.5: 提供优良的公共健康和安全管理服务

目标 7: 维护和改善艾克顿镇的财政状况

- 项目 7.1: 促进财政责任
- 项目 7.2: 促进有利于其它艾克顿2020规划目标的经济的发展
- 项目 7.3: 改善现有商业区
- 项目 7.4: 保持所有居民永居艾克顿的经济能力



Hoy. Manana. Juntos.

Plan de la Comunidad Acton 2020

Asamblea de la Comunidad de Acton

? CUANDO Y DONDE?

Segunda noche
de la Asamblea de la
comunidad

Martes
3 de Abril 2012
Empezando a
las 7 pm

Acton-Boxborough Regional
High School Auditorium,
36 Charter Road

? Que pasa en una generacion?

Nuestra Comunidad Desarrolla un plan de la comunidad

El plan incluye la descripcion de nuestra vision por compartir el futuro deseado y como llevarlo acabo.

Vengan a la Asamblea de la Comunidad para votar por las metas y objetivos que provee la fundacion de la Comunidad de Acton 2020. Un "Si" en tu voto significa que nosotros como comunidad acordamos en hacer con Buena fe y con esfuerzo los objetivos acordados para el future de Acton.

Cualquier especifico tema en el Plan que requiera fondos monetarios o regulaciones, sera discutido y revisado en una proxima Asamblea. Votar para adoptar los Objetivos y Metas no impica de ninguna manera votar por algun tema especifico contenido en el Plan.

Metas y Objetivos:

Preserva y Realizar las Caracteristicas de la Comunidad de Acton

- Objetivo 1.1: Fortalecer las herramientas de planeacion para administrar el incremento pro-activo
- Objetivo 1.2: Preservar y realzar los centros de la Comunidad
- Objetivo 1.3: Preservar las caracteristicas rurales y espacios abiertos
- Objetivo 1.4: Preservar los edificios historicos y las areas verdes
- Objetivo 1.5: Fomentar y apreciar lo que hace a Acton unico, incluyendo su historia

META 2:

Garantizar la Sostenibilidad del Medio Ambiente

- Objetivo 2.1: Protejer la calidad y cantidad del agua de Acton
- Objetivo 2.2: Reducir los desechos y acumulacion de toxinas
- Objetivo 2.3: Reducir la explulsion de dioxide de carbon y otros gases de invernadero
- Objetivo 2.4: Cambiar y mejorar patrones de tierra, protejer la tierra que soporta la biodiversidad la preservacion de la tierra y la agricultura local saludable

Visite <http://acton2020.info/> para ver el informe completo.

META 3:

Mejorar Conexiones

Objetivo 3.1:

Hacer los caminos para peatones y personas que se transportan en bicicleta facil y seguro

Objetivo 3.2:

Mejorar la transportation en la Comunidad

Objetivo 3.3:

Promover la comunicacion entre los governantes, ciudadanos, escuelas y negocios de nuestra Comunidad

Objetivo 3.4:

Mejorar las relaciones con nuestros vecinos, asi como con las ciudades vecinas

META 4:

Proveer mas Oportunidades a la Comunidad para hacer Reuniones y Recreacion

Objetivo 4.1:

Crear nuevos espacios de reunión y hacer un mejor uso de los ya existentes

Objetivo 4.2:

Proveer mas parques, campos de deporte, areas verdes y con servarlos

Objetivo 4.3:

Apoyar adicionales actividades culturales

META 5:

Apoyar lo inclusion y diversidad

Objetivo 5.1:

Apoyar a residents de todas edades

Objetivo 5.2:

Apoyar a familias de todo tipo de ingresos

Objetivo 5.3:

Aceptar la diversidad cultural

Objetivo 5.4:

Apoyar a ciudadanos con discapacidad y hacerlos participe de nuestra comunidad

META 6:

Preservar y Realzar los Bientes y Servicios que Acton posee

Objetivo 6.1:

Protejer los espacios abiertos que Acton posee

Objetivo 6.2:

Apoyar la excelencia en las escuelas

Objetivo 6.3:

Administrar eficientemente las dependencias e instalaciones

Objetivo 6.4:

Proveer altos servicios de calidad a la comunidad

Objetivo 6.5:

Proveer excelente salud publica y servicios seguros

META 7:

Mantener y Mejorar la Finanzas de la Comunidad

Objetivo 7.1:

Promover la responsabilidad fiscal

Objetivo 7.2:

Promover el desarrollo economico que ayudara otras metas planeadas de Acton 2020

Objetivo 7.3:

Mejorar las areas comerciales existentes

Objetivo 7.4:

Respaldar financieramente a todos los residents para que permanezcan en Acton toda su vida

Reuniao da Cidade



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O que acontece uma vez a cada Geração ?

Nossa Cidade desenvolve um Plano Comunitário Global

O Plano inclui uma visão que descreve o nosso senso comum em relação ao futuro desejado e também aos passos necessários para alcançá-lo.

Venha para a Reunião Geral com o intuito de votar nas metas e objetivos que fornecerão a base para o Plano Global da Comunidade de Acton 2020. Ao votar no "Sim" significa que nós, como comunidade, concordamos em fazer um esforço de boa vontade na utilização dessas metas e objetivos como um guia de orientação na tomada das decisões sobre o futuro de Acton.

Todos os itens especificados no Plano que requeiram financiamento e / ou regulamento (por exemplo, Zoneamento) terão as possíveis alterações discutidas e revistas em futuras reuniões da cidade.

A votação para aprovar as metas e objetivos não implica de modo algum na votação de itens de ações específicas contidas no Plano.

Por favor, note que a numeração das Metas e Objetivos não reflete qualquer priorização dos mesmos.

METAS E OBJETIVOS:

Meta 1: Preservar e valorizar as características da Cidade

Objetivo 1.1: Fortalecer ferramentas de planejamento para gerenciar um crescimento pró-ativo

Objetivo 1.2: Preservar e valorizar os principais centros

Objetivo 1.3: Preservar as características rurais e espaços abertos

Objetivo 1.4: Preservar prédios históricos e paisagens

Objetivo 1.5: Promover a compreensão e apreço por aquilo que faz Acton única, incluindo a sua história

Meta 2: Garantir a Sustentabilidade Ambiental

Objetivo 2.1: Proteger a qualidade e quantidade da água de Acton

Objetivo 2.2: Reduzir o desperdício e o acúmulo de toxinas

Objetivo 2.3: Reduzir as emissões de dióxido de carbono e outros gases de efeito estufa

Objetivo 2.4: Mudar para padrões de utilização e proteção da terra que apoiem a biodiversidade em sentido amplo, a preservação do solo e uma agricultura local saudável.

Meta 3: Melhorar as Conexões

Objetivo 3.1: Fazer da caminhada e o ciclismo atividades mais fáceis e seguras

Objetivo 3.2: Melhorar o transporte na cidade

Objetivo 3.3: Promover a comunicação entre os líderes políticos da cidade, os cidadãos, escolas e da comunidade comercial

Objetivo 3.4: Apoiar e fortalecer bairros locais

Meta 4: Oferecer mais oportunidades para recreação e reuniões da Comunidade

Objetivo 4.1: Criar novos espaços de encontro e fazer melhor uso dos já existentes

Objetivo 4.2: Fornecer mais parques infantis, campos para esportes coletivos, parques em geral e terras de conservação

Objetivo 4.3: Apoiar mais atividades culturais

Meta 5: Apoio a Inclusão e Diversidade

Objetivo 5.1: Apoiar os residentes de todas as idades

Objetivo 5.2: Apoiar famílias locais de todos os níveis de renda

Objetivo 5.3: Apoiar a diversidade cultural

Objetivo 5.4: Apoiar a participação plena na comunidade dos cidadãos com deficiência

Meta 6: Preservar e Valorizar os Ativos e Serviços pertencentes a Cidade

Objetivo 6.1: Proteger os espaços abertos pertencidos pela cidade

Objetivo 6.2: Apoiar a excelência nas escolas

Objetivo 6.3: Gerir as instalações da Cidade de modo mais eficiente

Objetivo 6.4: Fornecer serviços de alta qualidade que respondam às necessidades da comunidade

Objetivo 6.5: Fornecer excelentes serviços públicos de saúde e segurança

Meta 7: Manter e melhorar o bem-estar financeiro da Cidade

Objetivo 7.1: Promover a responsabilidade fiscal

Objetivo 7.2: Promover o desenvolvimento econômico necessário para sustentar outras metas de planejamento para Acton 2020

Objetivo 7.3: Melhorar as áreas comerciais já existentes

Objetivo 7.4: Apoiar a capacidade financeira de todos os moradores para que possam permanecer em Acton de modo definitivo.

APPENDIX 8:

Selected Press Coverage



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Appendix 8. Selected Press Coverage

The Acton 2020 process enjoyed a significant amount of press coverage primarily in Wicked Local (Acton Beacon) and the Acton Patch. For a complete listing of all related articles please see the following links. Note that some of the articles must be purchased. Also, articles are listed on multiple pages on both sites.

[http://acton.patch.com/search? utf8=%E2%98%83&keywords=acton+2020](http://acton.patch.com/search?utf8=%E2%98%83&keywords=acton+2020)

<http://goo.gl/yS4BM>

The following represent a selection of some of the press coverage. Since some of the articles include video, we have printed the links to the articles on the top of each first page.

Link to Article:

<http://acton.patch.com/articles/acton-2020-launches-community-blog>

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Acton 2020 Launches Community Blog

The Acton 2020 Committee wants your input on the future of Acton. They recently launched a new blog called "Burning Issues" where people from the community can engage in discussion about planning the town's future.

By [Margaret Wooley Busse](#) and [Jim Snyder-Grant](#) | [Email the authors](#) | January 24, 2011

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The Acton 2020 committee is posting a series of questions on their blog designed to get citizen feedback on some "burning issues" in our town, to help in the creation of a comprehensive community plan.

[Burning Issues blog.](#)

As the committee sorted through the goals and objectives expressed by Acton citizens as well as reviewed input from the Acton 2020 Oct. 20th workshop and other sources, they have found many issues that need to be discussed and resolved before they can move forward with the next steps of crafting a comprehensive community plan.

So, here is your chance to tell everyone your thoughts on these issues. They are starting off this week with four issues, and plan to follow up each week for the next several weeks with more "burning issues."

Here are this week's four questions:

[--Are Actonians here to stay?](#)

This question highlights the issues around our population demographic with regard to age/life stage and whether or not people move here primarily for the schools and then move out, and the social cohesion that results from residents staying for the "long haul."

[--Where are YOU in Acton's water cycle?](#)

This question ask residents how much they really know about Acton's unique water cycle as well as the direction residents envision for its water in the future.

[--Where and how should we gather?](#)

This question explores how we can improve our community gathering places and experiences.

--Where do you and where WOULD you like to eat?

Tell us what restaurants you'd like to have in Acton!

Your feedback on these issues and the others that will be posted will help the committee select six key issues that will be discussed at three public meetings in March, taking two issues at each meeting. These meetings will be held on Thursday, March 3rd, Wednesday, March 9th, and Saturday, March 12th. More information on those is forthcoming.

The committee looks forward to hearing your comments and ideas.

Email me updates about this story.



Jim Snyder-Grant

3:57 pm on Sunday, January 30, 2011

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We just added two new burning issue posts to the Acton 2020 blog.

One is about sidewalks: <http://acton2020.info/blog/2011/01/29/what-good-are-sidewalks> and the other is about traffic: <http://acton2020.info/blog/2011/01/29/how-does-traffic-impact-you-and-what-can-be-done>

Please come join us at the Acton 2020 blog at <http://acton2020.info/blog> and add your thoughts and questions.

Leave a comment

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Link to Article:

<http://acton.patch.com/articles/announcement-acton-2020-has-film-premier-approaching>



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Announcement: Acton 2020 Has Film Premier Approaching

This is a press release from the local organization Acton 2020, responsible for bringing the community together to plan a better future for the town.

June 3, 2011

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Related Topics: [Acton 2020](#) and [The future planning of Acton ma](#)



The Town of Acton, in collaboration with the Acton 2020 committee, has commissioned a professionally-produced short film, *"It's a Wonderful Acton"*, to further inspire its citizens to become involved in the planning and future of their town. The world premier film screening will occur Monday, June 6, 2011, hosted by Acton's historic Theatre III located at 250 Central Street in West Acton. This event is free to the public – all are welcome!

This entertaining program will run continuously from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. The evening events will include an introduction to the work and goals of Acton 2020, as well as beautiful live performances by Acton Colonial Spirits, an acappella ensemble, post-screening interviews and refreshments.

"We are extremely fortunate to have the creative talents of Christo Tsiaras, an Emmy-Award winning filmmaker, and Leigh Davis Honn, publicist and community engagement consultant, both Acton residents, leading the effort to make this film," said Margaret Woolley Busse, Chair, Acton 2020. "The Acton 2020 Committee is tasked with creating a Master Plan for Acton for the next 10-15 years."

The film is titled, "Choose Your Own Acton" and is occurring Thursday, June 23rd at 6:30pm in Acton's Town Hall, Room 204.

"This innovative approach is yet another public outreach strategy to gather input into our master plan," said Woolley Busse. "However, the June 23rd event "Choose Your Own Acton" is one that we are particularly eager to have a broad swath of the public attend as we will be presenting three different alternatives/scenarios for the future of Acton and the guidance we receive from the meeting is the direction the master plan will take. We are hoping the film will help us reach more people to tell them about the June 23rd event and will create enthusiasm in truly choosing Acton's future together."

Never Underestimate the Power of Participation!

=====

Some Background:

The [Acton 2020 Committee](#) is continuing to make progress on Acton's next Master Plan. The Master Plan is the primary planning document for the Town, setting the Town's course for the next 10-15 years.

Phase I of the Master Plan was completed in 2009. The result of this phase was a document describing six Goals and Objectives for the Master Plan. The Goals that the town has identified as critical for the Master Plan: Preserve Town Character, Ensure Environmental Sustainability, Improve

Connections, Provide More Opportunities for Community Gathering and Recreation, Support Inclusion and Diversity, Preserve and Enhance Town-owned Assets, Maintain and Improve Financial Well-being of the Town.

The 2020 Committee has been working on Phase II of this project since 2010. Throughout this process, the Acton 2020 Committee has solicited public input through public workshops, blogs, feedback on documents and articles in local media. The Committee plans to have the Master Plan on the agenda for Town Meeting in April 2012.

As part of Phase II, The Acton 2020 Committee has completed an inventory of existing conditions and the public has been invited to comment on the inventory. This inventory, with comments, is posted on [the Acton 2020 website](#).

The 2020 Committee has developed three possible directions for the Master Plan – each of which addresses the goals and objectives that the town expressed in the first phase of the master plan process.

On June 23rd, the 2020 Committee will host a public workshop where Acton residents will learn about the three different options for the town's future. Participants will provide feedback to the committee on which alternative they prefer and why. The committee will use this feedback to guide them as they flesh out the final proposed Master Plan for the consideration of Town Meeting.

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Jim Snyder-Grant

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8:25 am on Saturday, June 4, 2011

This world premiere is Monday at Theater III: You can RSVP on facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=178608082194918> or by email to WorldPremiere@acton2020.info, or just come on by! The film is being shown every 20 minutes, so come when you can.

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An Interview with Acton 2020 Member - Celia Kent

Acton 2020 Committee member, Celia Kent, talks about the important Acton 2020 meeting coming up on Thursday, June 23.

By [Patrick Clark](#) [Email the author](#) June 12, 2011

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Credit [Patrick Clark](#)

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Link to Article:

<http://acton.patch.com/articles/acton-2020-s-goals-and-objectives>

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Acton 2020's Goals and Objectives (VIDEO)

See if your future vision for Acton matches up with Acton 2020's vision.

By [Patrick Clark](#) | [Email the author](#) | January 22, 2012

3

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Related Topics: [Acton 2020](#)



The [Acton 2020 Committee](#), comprised of a group of local citizens tasked with developing a 20-year plan for a prosperous Acton, will present their master plan at Town Meeting on April 2. The committee has been reaching out to various town Boards and has held interactive workshops, gathering feedback on what the community would like to see Acton become.

The following information was gathered by Acton 2020's [Plan Executive Summary](#):

Acton 2020 Goals and Objectives:

Preserve and Enhance Town Character:

- Preserve and enhance village centers
- Preserve rural characteristics and open space
- Preserve historic buildings, town history and landscapes
- Foster an understanding and appreciation for what makes Acton unique, including its history

Ensure Environmental Sustainability:

- Protect the quality/quantity of Acton's water
- Reduce waste, carbon dioxide and greenhouse gasses
- Move toward patterns of land use and land protection that support broad biodiversity, soil preservation and healthy local agriculture

Improve Connections (Transportation):

- Promote safer walking/biking areas
- Improve overall transportation around town
- Promote better communication between town government, schools, citizens and businesses
- Support and strengthen neighborhoods

Provide More Opportunities for Community Gathering and Recreation:

- Provide a community center that accommodates various programs.
- Increase playgrounds and fields for team sports, parks and conservation land
- Create new gathering spaces and make better use of existing ones

Support Inclusion and Diversity:

- Support all citizens with disabilities, citizens of all ages, households of all incomes and cultural diversity

Preserve and Enhance Town-Owned Assets and Services:

- Protect town-owned open space
- Support excellence in schools
- Provide excellent public health and safety services

Maintain and Improve Acton's Financial Well-Being:

- Promote fiscal responsibility
- Promote economic development that supports other goals
- Promote the ability of all Acton residents to stay in Acton for a lifetime
- Improve existing commercial areas

See Acton 2020's [Implementation Plan](#) for a more in depth look at their plan.

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Acton 2020 - Youth Art Contest

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Acton 2020: Youth Art Contest

What will Acton be like in 5 years? 10 years? 20 years. What would we like to change? How shall we go about making Acton an even better place to live, work and play? What shall we do to protect what we most appreciate about our Town and prepare for the future?

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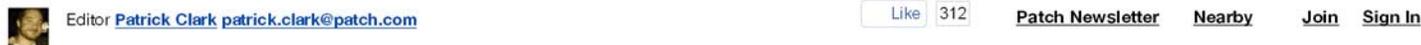
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Local Voices



[Jim Snyder-Grant](#)

Jim Snyder-Grant is an Acton resident

Presenting the Acton 2020 plan on Tuesday, March 6

Posted on March 5, 2012 at 11:08 am

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Government

Presenting the Acton 2020 plan

06

[Tuesday, March 6, 2012](#), 7:00 pm

[Acton Town Hall, 472 Main St, Acton, MA](#) | [Get Directions »](#)

FREE

March

Come hear about the comprehensive community plan for Acton in full detail.

The full Acton 2020 plan is now open for public comment at <http://acton2020.info>. The public comment period will close on March 12, 2012 so that the plan can be finalized in preparation for Town Meeting, where Acton citizens will have the opportunity to approve the goals and objectives of the plan. Any written comments on the plan can be submitted to the Planning Department at Town Hall.

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Event Details



Posted by: [Jim Snyder-Grant](#)

Where	Acton Town Hall 472 Main St, Acton, MA 01720 (Faulkner Meeting Room, 204)
Next on	This event is over.
Time	7:00 pm–9:30 pm
Website	http://acton2020.info
Phone	(978) 929-6631
Email	info@acton2020.info
Price	\$0

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Acton Town Hall

472 Main St, Acton, MA

978-929-6611

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Acton Town Hall houses the municipal administrative offices of the Town of Acton. The Town Hall is responsible for budgetary, financial and personnel administration. A variety of committees and citizens gather at Acton Town Hall to discuss the town's municipal properties, law enforcement issues, community resources, veteran services and recreational facilities and services. Acton Town Hall also houses community resource programs that help residents under the age of 60 with housing, food resources, counseling and legal services. Residents over the age of 60 are offered handyman help, local area van service, Medicare information and tax assistance.

OTHER EVENTS HERE

[Acton Historical Commission](#) Today, Apr 5, 5:00 pm–8:00 pm

- [Economic Development Committee Meeting](#) Today, Apr 5, 7:30 pm–10:30 pm
- [Open Space Committee Meeting](#) Tomorrow, Apr 6, 7:30 am–10:30 am
- [NARA Summer Camp Registration Opens for 2012](#) Weekly on Mondays,
- [Historic District Commission - Public Hearing](#) Tue, Apr 10, 8:00 pm–10:00 pm
- [Spirit of Acton 1775 - 1861](#) Mon, Apr 16, 1:00 pm–4:00 pm
- [Acton Historical Society Patriots Day "The Spirit of Acton 1775 & 1861"](#) Mon, Apr 16, 1:00 pm–4:00 pm

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By [Patrick Clark](#)

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Acton 2020 Wants Your Vote at Town Meeting [VIDEO]

April 3, 2012

What Happens Once in a Generation?

Our Town develops a Comprehensive Community Plan.

And now it's ALMOST complete...

We just need YOUR vote at **Town Meeting** - Tuesday, April 3rd, 2012, at 7:00pm [A-B Regional High School](#).



- **Vote** to support the Goals and Objectives of the Acton 2020 plan, so that our community will make a good faith effort to use these Goals and Objectives to guide decision-making about Acton's future (town warrant can be found [here](#)).
- **Review** the Goals and Objectives as well as the entire plan, including all 238 (!!) detailed implementation action steps at our website at www.acton2020.info
- **View** the winners of the Acton 2020 art contest (whose work will be published in the plan) [here](#).

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Announcement: Acton 2020 Has Film Premier Approaching

This is a press release from the local organization Acton 2020, responsible for bringing the community together to plan a better future for the town.

June 3, 2011

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Related Topics: [Acton 2020](#) and [The future planning of Acton ma](#)



The Town of Acton, in collaboration with the Acton 2020 committee, has commissioned a professionally-produced short film, *"It's a Wonderful Acton"*, to further inspire its citizens to become involved in the planning and future of their town. The world premier film screening will occur Monday, June 6, 2011, hosted by Acton's historic Theatre III located at 250 Central Street in West Acton. This event is free to the public – all are welcome!

This entertaining program will run continuously from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. The evening events will include an introduction to the work and goals of Acton 2020, as well as beautiful live performances by Acton Colonial Spirits, an acappella ensemble, post-screening interviews and refreshments.

"We are extremely fortunate to have the creative talents of Christo Tsiaras, an Emmy-Award winning filmmaker, and Leigh Davis Honn, publicist and community engagement consultant, both Acton residents, leading the effort to make this film," said Margaret Woolley Busse, Chair, Acton 2020. "The Acton 2020 Committee is tasked with creating a Master Plan for Acton for the next 10-15 years."

The film is titled, "Choose Your Own Acton" and is occurring Thursday, June 23rd at 6:30pm in Acton's Town Hall, Room 204.

"This innovative approach is yet another public outreach strategy to gather input into our master plan," said Woolley Busse. "However, the June 23rd event "Choose Your Own Acton" is one that we are particularly eager to have a broad swath of the public attend as we will be presenting three different alternatives/scenarios for the future of Acton and the guidance we receive from the meeting is the direction the master plan will take. We are hoping the film will help us reach more people to tell them about the June 23rd event and will create enthusiasm in truly choosing Acton's future together."

Never Underestimate the Power of Participation!

=====

Some Background:

The [Acton 2020 Committee](#) is continuing to make progress on Acton's next Master Plan. The Master Plan is the primary planning document for the Town, setting the Town's course for the next 10-15 years.

Phase I of the Master Plan was completed in 2009. The result of this phase was a document describing six Goals and Objectives for the Master Plan. The Goals that the town has identified as critical for the Master Plan: Preserve Town Character, Ensure Environmental Sustainability, Improve

Connections, Provide More Opportunities for Community Gathering and Recreation, Support Inclusion and Diversity, Preserve and Enhance Town-owned Assets, Maintain and Improve Financial Well-being of the Town.

The 2020 Committee has been working on Phase II of this project since 2010. Throughout this process, the Acton 2020 Committee has solicited public input through public workshops, blogs, feedback on documents and articles in local media. The Committee plans to have the Master Plan on the agenda for Town Meeting in April 2012.

As part of Phase II, The Acton 2020 Committee has completed an inventory of existing conditions and the public has been invited to comment on the inventory. This inventory, with comments, is posted on [the Acton 2020 website](#).

The 2020 Committee has developed three possible directions for the Master Plan – each of which addresses the goals and objectives that the town expressed in the first phase of the master plan process.

On June 23rd, the 2020 Committee will host a public workshop where Acton residents will learn about the three different options for the town's future. Participants will provide feedback to the committee on which alternative they prefer and why. The committee will use this feedback to guide them as they flesh out the final proposed Master Plan for the consideration of Town Meeting.

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Jim Snyder-Grant

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8:25 am on Saturday, June 4, 2011

This world premiere is Monday at Theater III: You can RSVP on facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=178608082194918> or by email to WorldPremiere@acton2020.info, or just come on by! The film is being shown every 20 minutes, so come when you can.

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An Interview with Acton 2020 Member - Celia Kent

Acton 2020 Committee member, Celia Kent, talks about the important Acton 2020 meeting coming up on Thursday, June 23.

By [Patrick Clark](#) [Email the author](#) June 12, 2011

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Acton 2020's Goals and Objectives (VIDEO)

See if your future vision for Acton matches up with Acton 2020's vision.

By [Patrick Clark](#) | [Email the author](#) | January 22, 2012

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The [Acton 2020 Committee](#), comprised of a group of local citizens tasked with developing a 20-year plan for a prosperous Acton, will present their master plan at Town Meeting on April 2. The committee has been reaching out to various town Boards and has held interactive workshops, gathering feedback on what the community would like to see Acton become.

The following information was gathered by Acton 2020's [Plan Executive Summary](#):

Acton 2020 Goals and Objectives:

Preserve and Enhance Town Character:

- Preserve and enhance village centers
- Preserve rural characteristics and open space
- Preserve historic buildings, town history and landscapes
- Foster an understanding and appreciation for what makes Acton unique, including its history

Ensure Environmental Sustainability:

- Protect the quality/quantity of Acton's water
- Reduce waste, carbon dioxide and greenhouse gasses
- Move toward patterns of land use and land protection that support broad biodiversity, soil preservation and healthy local agriculture

Improve Connections (Transportation):

- Promote safer walking/biking areas
- Improve overall transportation around town
- Promote better communication between town government, schools, citizens and businesses
- Support and strengthen neighborhoods

Provide More Opportunities for Community Gathering and Recreation:

- Provide a community center that accommodates various programs.
- Increase playgrounds and fields for team sports, parks and conservation land
- Create new gathering spaces and make better use of existing ones

Support Inclusion and Diversity:

- Support all citizens with disabilities, citizens of all ages, households of all incomes and cultural diversity

Preserve and Enhance Town-Owned Assets and Services:

- Protect town-owned open space
- Support excellence in schools
- Provide excellent public health and safety services

Maintain and Improve Acton's Financial Well-Being:

- Promote fiscal responsibility
- Promote economic development that supports other goals
- Promote the ability of all Acton residents to stay in Acton for a lifetime
- Improve existing commercial areas

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Posted on March 5, 2012 at 11:08 am

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Presenting the Acton 2020 plan

06

[Tuesday, March 6, 2012](#), 7:00 pm[Acton Town Hall, 472 Main St, Acton, MA](#) | [Get Directions »](#)

FREE

March

Come hear about the comprehensive community plan for Acton in full detail.

The full Acton 2020 plan is now open for public comment at <http://acton2020.info>. The public comment period will close on March 12, 2012 so that the plan can be finalized in preparation for Town Meeting, where Acton citizens will have the opportunity to approve the goals and objectives of the plan. Any written comments on the plan can be submitted to the Planning Department at Town Hall.

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[Export](#)[Email](#)[Share](#)[Tweet](#)**Event Details**Posted by: [Jim Snyder-Grant](#)

Where [Acton Town Hall](#) 472 Main St, Acton, MA 01720 (Faulkner Meeting Room, 204)

Next on This event is over.

Time 7:00 pm–9:30 pm

Website <http://acton2020.info>

Phone (978) 929-6631

Email info@acton2020.info

Price \$0

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472 Main St, Acton, MA

978-929-6611

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Acton Town Hall houses the municipal administrative offices of the Town of Acton. The Town Hall is responsible for budgetary, financial and personnel administration. A variety of committees and citizens gather at Acton Town Hall to discuss the town's municipal properties, law enforcement issues, community resources, veteran services and recreational facilities and services. Acton Town Hall also houses community resource programs that help residents under the age of 60 with housing, food resources, counseling and legal services. Residents over the age of 60 are offered handyman help, local area van service, Medicare information and tax assistance.

OTHER EVENTS HERE[Acton Historical Commission](#) Today, Apr 5, 5:00 pm–8:00 pm

- [Economic Development Committee Meeting](#) Today, Apr 5, 7:30 pm–10:30 pm
- [Open Space Committee Meeting](#) Tomorrow, Apr 6, 7:30 am–10:30 am
- [NARA Summer Camp Registration Opens for 2012](#) Weekly on Mondays,
- [Historic District Commission - Public Hearing](#) Tue, Apr 10, 8:00 pm–10:00 pm
- [Spirit of Acton 1775 - 1861](#) Mon, Apr 16, 1:00 pm–4:00 pm
- [Acton Historical Society Patriots Day "The Spirit of Acton 1775 & 1861"](#) Mon, Apr 16, 1:00 pm–4:00 pm

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Acton 2020 Wants Your Vote at Town Meeting [VIDEO]

April 3, 2012

What Happens Once in a Generation?

Our Town develops a Comprehensive Community Plan.

And now it's ALMOST complete...

We just need YOUR vote at **Town Meeting** - Tuesday, April 3rd, 2012, at 7:00pm [A-B Regional High School](#).



- **Vote** to support the Goals and Objectives of the Acton 2020 plan, so that our community will make a good faith effort to use these Goals and Objectives to guide decision-making about Acton's future (town warrant can be found [here](#)).
- **Review** the Goals and Objectives as well as the entire plan, including all 238 (!!) detailed implementation action steps at our website at www.acton2020.info
- **View** the winners of the Acton 2020 art contest (whose work will be published in the plan) [here](#).

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