

Acton 2020
13 July 2011

DRAFT Goals and Objectives and Strategies: DRAFT 4

The following is a draft of the Revised Goals and Objective with associated proposed strategies. The strategies are based on input from the public, the Committee and Town Staff, and the Consultant Team.

NEXT STEPS... The next step will be for us to begin finalizing the strategies associated with the objectives in order to develop an implementation plan.

In general, I'm confused about what level of detail a strategy should include. Many of these strategies seem more like objectives rather than clear action items. For some strategies, I suspect that other committees are already doing them, and undertaking them with more precision than is expressed here. Should we be acknowledging which strategies are already underway?

Acton 2020
13 July 2011

GOAL 2: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

As Acton residents, we recognize that our health and well-being depend on protecting the web of life of which we are a part. Therefore, it is vital that we live and work here in a manner that supports that web and the well-being of people everywhere, including future Acton citizens.

Objective 2.1: To protect the quality and quantity of the water that cycles through our ground water, surface water, drinking water, waste water, and storm water systems, and to ensure that future development fits within the constraints of these local water cycles.

Ideas for Strategies

- Include groundwater, stormwater, and surface water; and specifics on how planning can identify and address the limits to development implicit in our water systems. [do you mean "Taking groundwater, stormwater, and surface water into account, make specific plans to identify and address the limits to development implicit in our water systems." ?]
- Prioritize Kelley's Corner development, which has sewer service.
- Consider extension of sewer to West Acton Village to serve redevelopment of the commercial area north of Massachusetts Ave and can also serve existing high priority neighborhoods identified in the Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan.
- Utilize advanced package wastewater treatment with groundwater recharge for other concentrations of residential and commercial development.
- Monitor groundwater quantitative quantity and quality and plan for necessary Water District service expansion, quality improvements, and well-head protection. [is this already being done?]
- Include broad-based education on sustainability and actively support approaches toward business and citizen participation. [this is too vague. Maybe more education on how our water systems work; where our water is and how it flows. Most people don't know how much water is covered in Kelly's Corner for instance]

Objective 2.2: To move toward a material economy in which there is no waste or accumulation of toxins.

Ideas for Strategies

- Conduct research with the goal of making the transfer station a 100% recycling center [I'm not sure what a 100% recycling center is]
- Develop policies that discourage the use of plastic (bottled water, single-use bags)
- Implement trash reduction programs
- Institute single-stream recycling at the transfer center.
- Conduct e-waste education and provide opportunities for safe recycling of electronic equipment and components.

Acton 2020

13 July 2011

- Expand drop/swap and hazardous waste day events

Objective 2.3: To reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from residential, commercial, industrial, and municipal uses.

Ideas for Strategies

- Increase the use of safer and renewable energy sources
- Provide incentives to home-owners and businesses to build green and save energy [perhaps explain what build green means. So "to undertake new building and renovation projects which promote sustainability both in the construction process (site development, choice of materials) and in its design, promoting water savings, energy efficiency, and a healthy indoor environment.]
- Retrofit public buildings to be energy efficient
- Eliminate idling vehicles [where?, how?]
- Organize web-based car pooling
- Start a "Transitional Town Project" [what does this mean?] toward self-sufficiency and energy autonomy
- Turn the transfer station into a renewable energy power plant (also use yard waste)
- Use the transfer station as a model for sustainable development, including exhibiting trash as art [can you be more specific? Seems like a good idea, but I'd like more explanation or examples.]

Objective 2.4: To move toward patterns of land use and land protection that support broad biodiversity, soil preservation, and healthy local agriculture

Ideas for Strategies

- Provide expanded public transportation/walking/biking facilities linking the villages and Kelley's Corner
- Encourage denser zoning close to South Acton train station
- Relate land use planning to transportation planning [too broad – can you suggest specific examples or areas in town to focus on?]
- include planting and protecting large, long-lasting, carbon-sequestering trees
- Organize efforts to remove invasive plant species from public and private land [for info see: <http://www.newfs.org/protect/invasive-plants/index>] [this would be building on work Jim has already done on garlic mustard eradication on Acton property]. Discourage nurseries from selling invasive plants and property owners and landscape contractors from planting them.
- Education program on the role of native plants in supporting Acton's biodiversity.
- support new and expanded farming
- Involve Acton's ethnic communities; many come from cultures that have a history and tradition of sustainability
- Increase awareness and educate people on the need to be more sustainable
 - Provide education in schools [I'm sure we are doing this already – so need more specific suggestions that go beyond what is already in place]
 - Promote greater public awareness town-wide [also need more specific suggestions]
 - Develop massive energy conservation drives [not sure what this means]

Formatted: Bullets and Numbering

GOAL 3: Improve Connections

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 3.1: Improve walking and biking experience

Ideas for Strategies

- Create and extend connections with a system of sidewalks, trails, bike paths, on-road bike accommodation
 - Extend sidewalks according to plan; wherever possible ensure that provision of sidewalks does not conflict with protecting town character (see Guidelines for Acton Sidewalk Design¹)
 - bike lanes and wider shared lanes and shoulders where appropriate
 - bike racks where feasible and where they will be utilized
 - increase awareness regarding sharing the road issues
 - Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety [this seems more like an objective than a strategy....How?]
 - consider planning issues for walking and biking facilities separately (they can potentially be in conflict)
 - consider paving “woodsy” shortcuts where appropriate so bikes, wheelchairs and strollers can use them
 - complete the development and construction of the Bruce Freeman Trail and Assabet River Trail
- Explore North American and European models and incorporate relevant elements and become a model for a walkable and bikeable community
- Improve communication regarding paths
 - Keep maps current showing sidewalks and bike paths

Objective 3.2: Improve circulation around town

Ideas for Strategies

- Support and explore ways of increasing ridership of the town-wide shuttle and expand the shuttle system
 - Build MinuteVan shuttle into a more comprehensive system, possibly incorporating the Council on Aging shuttle, that provides access between villages, Kelley’s Corner, commercial areas, and the MBTA commuter rail with better frequency, hours, and coverage than the current shuttle.
- Support the improvements to the train station

¹ <http://www.acton-ma.gov/DocumentView.aspx?DID=856>

Acton 2020

13 July 2011

- Provide more parking [More parking without a plan for traffic mitigation is a bad idea. Suggest: Develop a transportation and parking plan for South Acton, including the train station and commercial and recreational areas, which anticipates and supports the mixed-use development that we are trying to promote.]
- Build train station building [this isn't Acton's responsibility other than to review the design and encourage improvements. Mass DOT is building it. We need to develop a traffic/parking plan that takes the design and functioning of the new train station into account, however]
- Increase overhang on canopy for weather protection [? You mean encourage Mass DOT to include a more extensive canopy on the train station building to protect commuters from the weather? The design will be completed before we vote on the plan, right?]
- Provide safe bike lane to station
- Explore possibility of developing train station as mixed-use center with shops, more parking, etc., consistent with guiding growth to key centers.
- Address traffic congestion (e.g. enforce lower speed limits, plow wider shoulders in winter, speed humps, etc.)

Objective 3.3: Promote communication amongst town government, citizens, schools, and the business community.

Ideas for Strategies

- Improve communication and centralized information regarding existing resources and events and promote active engagement of citizens and the transparency of town government processes and decision-making
 - Use Acton TV or Radio Station for better town-wide communication
 - Improve town wide opt-in email communication system
 - Provide signs, website and written information in multiple languages
 - Create a community bulletin board
 - Keep town web site up-to-date
 - Use multiple languages (both staff and written materials should reflect the town's population)
- Improve communication and coordination between the Schools and the Town regarding future planning and use of resources
- Improve communication with businesses
 - Provide information regarding town processes (e.g. permitting, etc.) for business owners
 - Town Hall should work more closely with businesses [too vague]
 - Acknowledge business owners for their participation in Town (donations, etc.)
- Attract more volunteers in order to engage more citizens so as to strengthen the community
 - Publicize and promote more, use website
 - Provide information in multiple forums
 - Conduct broad-based outreach and recruit new volunteers
 - Provide incentives [examples?]
 - Provide flexibility in scheduling/timing
 - Provide and advertise opportunities for one time volunteering (as a trial)

Acton 2020

13 July 2011

Objective 3.4: Support and strengthen neighborhoods

Ideas for Strategies [should distinguish between strategies that the Town should take on as opposed to what neighborhoods themselves should be encouraged to undertake]

- Promote walkability with the provision of sidewalks, benches, etc.
- Provide facilities such as playground, neighborhood swimming pool, etc. and ensure resources to maintain them [I'm not sure that we should be promoting neighborhood swimming pools – or at least we should make sure that it's clear we're not suggesting that the Town provide neighborhood swimming pools, which I'm assuming is distinct from a town-wide resource]
- Ensure that physical environment is pleasing and compatible with Acton's character (e.g. aesthetically pleasing features including public art, open space, parking behind stores, architecture in keeping with town character, meandering sidewalks²)
- Support both formal and informal communication and interaction among neighbors
 - Block parties
 - Neighborhood newsletter, email lists
 - Create neighborhood email lists, create and maintain database of residents by neighborhood [again, are we just suggesting neighborhoods do this, or are we suggesting that there be some central database of neighborhood residents? I can imagine providing guidance for setting up neighborhood email lists and activities, but nothing more formal.]
 - Promote neighborhood book groups, walking groups, etc.
 - Organize competitions between neighborhoods
 - Establish community projects
 - Support and expand the Acton Newcomer's Club and provide additional opportunities for newcomers to connect

² except in the villages