

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.

Part 3: Internal Committee meeting

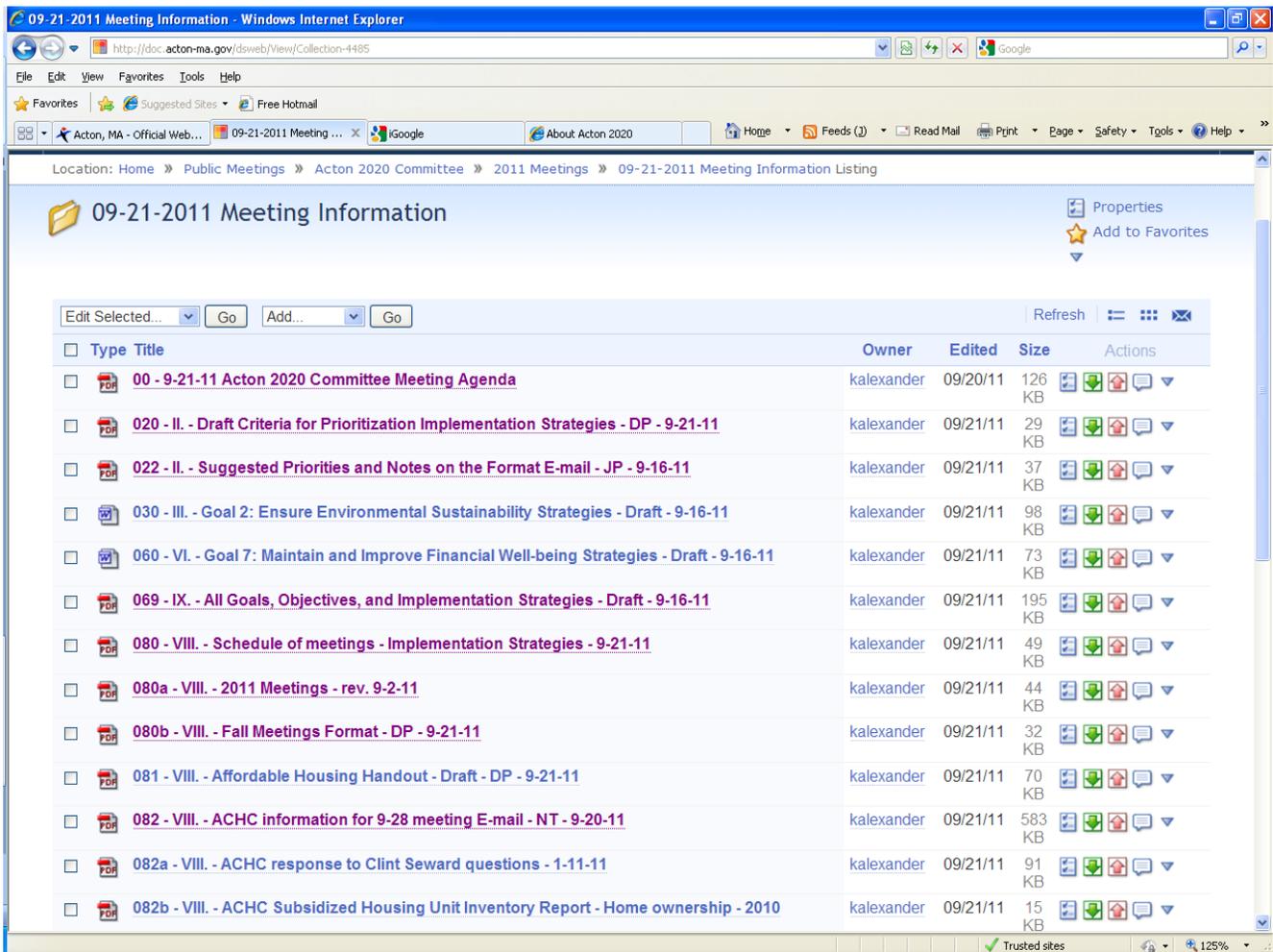
We postponed approval of minutes to next meeting

We should remind committees that if multiple members attend our meeting then they may have a

quorum, so they should post the meeting. If they email Margaret, she can provide them with an agenda.

We should review the strategies within our goal and separate those that are in the low-cost and/or “low-hanging fruit” category from those that are high priority because they will have a high impact. We should also highlight which strategies are important because they are the first step in a multi-stage implementation.

We discussed the handouts for the affordable housing meeting next week and agreed to send the handouts and a series of questions to the invited guests in advance.



09-21-2011 Meeting Information - Windows Internet Explorer

http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-4485

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Acton, MA - Official Web... 09-21-2011 Meeting ... Google About Acton 2020

<input type="checkbox"/>		082c - VIII. - ACHC Condo buydown program information - 9-21-11	kalexander	09/21/11	232 KB					
<input type="checkbox"/>		082d - VIII. - 1 2BR units for sale in Acton 1-11-11 - ACHC	kalexander	09/21/11	312 KB					
<input type="checkbox"/>		082e - VIII. - Ch 40B Projects Acton 9-11 - ACHC	kalexander	09/21/11	17 KB					
<input type="checkbox"/>		083 - VIII. - Housing Information E-mail - NT - 9-20-11	kalexander	09/21/11	13 KB					
<input type="checkbox"/>		083a - VIII. - Housing Production Plan FAQs - DHCD - 9-21-11	kalexander	09/21/11	64 KB					
<input type="checkbox"/>		083b - VIII. - Housing Production Plan Certified Communities - DHCD - 9-21-11	kalexander	09/21/11	20 KB					
<input type="checkbox"/>		083c - VIII. - Affordable Housing in Acton - ACHC - 12-10	kalexander	09/21/11	21 KB					
<input type="checkbox"/>		083d - VIII. - Westford Flexible Development Bylaw	kalexander	09/21/11	2 MB					
<input type="checkbox"/>		083e - VIII. - Average House - Acton Income Needed - NT - 9-21-11	kalexander	09/23/11	16 KB					
<input type="checkbox"/>		083f - VIII. - MHP Inclusionary Zoning Resources	kalexander	09/23/11	199 KB					
<input type="checkbox"/>		090 - IX. - All Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies - Draft - KA Mark-up - 9-21-11	kalexander	09/21/11	209 KB					
<input type="checkbox"/>		100 - X. - TDR handout - Draft - JP - 9-14-11	kalexander	09/21/11	33 KB					

Explore

- Home
- Content Map
- What's New
- Help

Related Links

- About DocuShare
- Site Statistics
- Tutorials
- DocuShare Downloads
- DocuShare.xerox.com

My Links

- [Login \(As a Different User\)](#)
- My DocuShare
- Personal Collection
- Account Settings (kalexander)

History

- 09-21-2011 Meeting Information Listing
- 2011 Meetings Listing
- Acton 2020 Committee Listing
- Home

Trusted sites 125%

Strategy	Action Steps	Responsibility	Timing/Priority	Notes from September 21, 2011
GOAL 2 Ensure Environmental Sustainability				
Objective 2.1 Protect the quality and quantity of the water¹.				Stop irrigating lawns, or strengthen regulations. Annual meeting item for AWD. (Strengthen & Enforce watering bans).
Make specific plans to identify and address the limits to development implicit in our water systems that take our groundwater, stormwater, and surface water into account.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitor groundwater quantity (i.e. groundwater surface elevation and flow rates) and quality, and plan for necessary Acton Water District (AWD) service expansion, quality improvements, and well-head protection. 	AWD, BoS, WRAC	Highest	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete protective curbing and swales on rounds in Zones 1. 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider regulatory changes requiring EPA WaterSense fixtures in new construction and major renovations. 	AWD, BoS, WRAC		<u>Or, maybe consider incentives instead.</u>
Locate and design new development and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prioritize the development and redevelopment of 	See Objective 1.2	Highest	

Acton 2020 Recommended Implementation Program

Working Draft

Strategy	Action Steps	Responsibility	Timing/Priority	Notes from September 21, 2011
supporting infrastructure to limit and mitigate impacts on groundwater quality	Kelley's Corner, which has sewer service.			
	<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>.ⁱⁱ 	Planning, Health, WANT, BoS,	Highest	<u>May need to be timed with respect to schools needs. May need to distribute betterment fees differently – needs a town share.</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Where possible utilize advanced package wastewater treatment with groundwater recharge for other concentrations of residential and commercial development. 	Health	2 nd Highest	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhance the quality of all discharges into the ground (both stormwater & wastewater) in current and new sources.ⁱⁱⁱ 	Health, WRAC		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider zoning and incentives to slowly move industrial activity from rivers & wellfield recharge areas. 	Planning, PIBd, WRAC		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that AWD land and buffer zone on Mass Ave in West Acton is not targeted for development. 	Planning, PIBd, AWD, WRAC		
Manage stormwater to reduce impacts on streams and to recharge groundwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use a proactive approach to existing stormwater issues in Kelly's Corner and West Acton, and use planning and development review to address these issues. 	Health	Highest	<u>Make sure this is consistent with wider concentrated development plan.</u> <u>Maybe find a way to make links between the items that impact the concentrated</u>

Acton 2020 Recommended Implementation Program

Working Draft

Strategy	Action Steps	Responsibility	Timing/Priority	Notes from September 21, 2011
				development plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In reviewing development, consider incentives and infrastructure to create better managed runoff recharge by limiting impervious surfaces. 	Planning, PIBd, BoS, Health	Highest	
Inform the public and encourage private action to conserve water and reduce impacts to groundwater quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide broad-based education on how our water systems work; where our water resources are located, and how water flows through withdrawal, use, and disposal of wastewater; and promote sustainable use by residents and businesses. 	AWD, WRAC	Higher or highest for all educational items.	Encourage Rainwater harvesting,
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue and expand on AWD water conservation encouragement programs. 	AWD, WRAC	2 nd Highest	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create better incentives and systems to ensure private well owners also monitor and report on their wells. 	Health		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and encourage the replacement of all or part of home lawns with low-maintenance perennials or gardens.^{iv} 	AWD, WRAC		And other lawn education efforts: how to have low-water lawns (soil, watering strategy, etc.)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the Revivale of the Acton Stream Teams to have citizens periodically monitor and report on the state of streams in Acton - so the Town can track changes and identify and resolve issues. 	Citizen Initiative		
Objective 2.2 Move toward a material economy in which there is no waste or accumulation of toxins.				How to refuse the introduction of toxins in the first place. Needs

Acton 2020 Recommended Implementation Program

Working Draft

Strategy	Action Steps	Responsibility	Timing/Priority	Notes from September 21, 2011
				<p><u>Educated consumers. Think about the products we are bringing in to town. Town leading by example with environment all-preferable strategies.</u></p>
Reduce Size of the Waste Stream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distribute information to residents on how they can reduce unwanted items and make items no longer needed available for use by others.^v 	GAB		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage the public to reduce the use of throw-away plastic (bottled water, single-use bags). Provide water pitchers and washable cups for Town board and committee meetings (especially for high-profile public meetings such as Town Meeting) 	GAB		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage local stores to implement packaging reduction incentives.^{vi} 	GAB		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the state initiative to expand beverage container deposits 	GAB, BoS		

Acton 2020 Recommended Implementation Program

Working Draft

Strategy	Action Steps	Responsibility	Timing/Priority	Notes from September 21, 2011
Increase Recycling and Reuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transfer Station <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create a permanent 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>(See also Objective 6.3)</p>	GAB, Highway, Health	2 nd Highest	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Private Waste Haulers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Require larger residential developments to provide a recycling strategy for residents. ○ Require that trash contractors report annually to the town on numbers of households they serve, and trash and recycling amounts, as a first step toward creating trash policies that include the curbside providers. 	GAB, BoS	2 nd Highest	<u>LHF?</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 develop a food composting program, starting at the central campus. 	GAB, Schools	2 nd Highest	

Acton 2020 Recommended Implementation Program

Working Draft

Strategy	Action Steps	Responsibility	Timing/Priority	Notes from September 21, 2011
Manage Hazardous Waste Appropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct e-waste education, and support events where cost effective certified e-waste specialist services are easily available. 	GAB	2 nd Highest	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have more hazardous waste days at the transfer station. 	Highway, Health, GAB	2 nd Highest	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider joining the Devens Hazardous Waste Collection Consortium, or a similar regional program elsewhere. 	BoS		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Acton branded water bottles to replace plastic disposable lastic water use.</u> 			<p><u>Undercarriage wash available at town to support the safe washing of trucj company.</u></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Create Acton “Zero Waste committee” to research, advocate, and help implement reduction strategies.</u> 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Where there are garbage cans, there should be recycling.</u> 			
Objective 2.3 Reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.				
Encourage use of cleaner energy sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Turn part of the transfer station into a renewable energy power plant.^{vii} <p>(See also Objective 6.3)</p>	Highway, Health, GAB	Highest	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advocate for extensions of natural gas lines where this would provide options for homeowners to switch away from oil or electric heat. 	Planning, BoS		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Permit and provide incentives where applicable for the use of multi-building ground-source heating systems (“district heating”) for new dense development and redevelopment, and the use of geo-thermal heat pumps in new construction. 	Planning, Building, BoS		

Acton 2020 Recommended Implementation Program

Working Draft

Strategy	Action Steps	Responsibility	Timing/Priority	Notes from September 21, 2011
Reduce Energy Use in New and Renovated Buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide tax incentives and advice to home-owners, businesses and contractors to undertake new building and renovation projects that reduce energy use.^{viii} 	GAB, Finance, BoS	2 nd Highest	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adopt a policy that new public buildings are to be LEED certified Gold or better. 	Planning, Municipal Facilities, BoS	2 nd Highest	
Reduce Energy Use in Existing Buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Create a full-time position for a Sustainability Coordinator.</u>^{ix} <u>New Staff Position</u> 	Town Manager, Schools, Municipal Facilities	Highest	<u>Maybe rephrase as staff increases to look for</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) legislation.^x Implement this program if it becomes available for Acton. 	BoS, GAB		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to retrofit existing public buildings to increase energy efficiency. Establish a policy on the minimum pay-back period for these investments. 	Municipal Facilities, Schools	2 nd Highest	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage or require the use of white or light-colored shingling for roofing replacements. Allow white roofing in historic districts.^{xi} 	Planning, Building, HDC, AHC, Design Review Board		
Reduce transportation-related CO2 emissions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organize web-based car pooling and ride sharing. 	TAC, GAB	2 nd Highest	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Encourage the growth of local businesses that can provide local shopping opportunities and employment.</u> 	See Objectives 1.1, 1.2, and 7.2		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educate the public and enforce anti-idling laws, especially at schools and the train station. 	GAB, Police		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Continue to support alternate methods of transportation (shuttle, train, bike trails, sidewalks)</u> 	See Objectives 3.1 and 3.2		

Acton 2020 Recommended Implementation Program

Working Draft

Strategy	Action Steps	Responsibility	Timing/Priority	Notes from September 21, 2011
Inform and educate Acton residents and businesses regarding energy efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educate and increase people’s awareness of the need to reduce their carbon footprint. 	GAB		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Help promote utility and/or state sponsored energy-efficiency upgrade programs for appliances, lighting, and weatherization. 	BoS, GAB	2 nd Highest	<p><u>Include MassSave program in Footnotes. Also get builders and providers to educate.</u></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage air-drying of clothing, and advocate for the removal of any home-owner association restrictions on outdoor line-drying. 	Planning, GAB		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support and expand on existing energy-saving 'barn raisings.'^{xii} 	GAB, Volunteer Coordinating Cmte		
Continue planning for reducing Acton’s carbon footprint.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to leverage Green Community grants for energy-reduction activities. 	GAB, BoS		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand the role of the Green Advisory Board to include researching and advocating for energy savings in residential, commercial, and industrial sectors. 	GAB, BoS	2 nd Highest	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct town-wide carbon footprint tracking and prepare and implement an energy reduction plan^{xiii}. 	Planning, GAB	2 nd Highest	

Acton 2020 Recommended Implementation Program

Working Draft

Strategy	Action Steps	Responsibility	Timing/Priority	Notes from September 21, 2011
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluate starting a “Transition Initiative” toward local resilience and energy autonomy.^{xiv} 	GAB	2 nd -Highest	<u>Add more words.</u>
<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>				
Adopt land use strategies that reduce the development of open land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guide growth to designated centers like Kelley’s Corner and use both acquisition and zoning provisions to protect open land from development. 	See Objectives 1.1 and 1.2	Highest	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement transportation improvements to promote the success of compact growth centers. See also Objectives 1.1 and 1.2 regarding compact mixed use development. 	See Objectives 3.1 and 3.2	Highest	
Maintain and increase biodiversity on Town conservation land and private land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organize efforts to remove invasive plant species from public and private land.^{xv} 	Conservation		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discourage property owners and landscape contractors from planting invasive plant species. 	Conservation		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and implement a public education program on the role of native plants in supporting Acton’s biodiversity. 	Conservation		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft and pass at town meeting a tree-clearing bylaw, which would require notice and justification from landowners for certain large tree clearing operations on private parcels. <p>(See also Objective 1.1)</p>	Conservation, BoS	2 nd -Highest	<u>Very split discussion on this. Maybe a strategy to incent keeping mature</u>

Acton 2020 Recommended Implementation Program

Working Draft

Strategy	Action Steps	Responsibility	Timing/Priority	Notes from September 21, 2011
				trees?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the public and private planting and protection of large, long-lasting, carbon-sequestering trees.^{xvi} 	Tree Warden		Change from 'support' to more specific words throughout.
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. See Objective 1.1. 	Planning	Highest	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support new and expanded farming, including organic farming, Community Supported Agriculture, and community gardening on Town-owned land. 	Conservation	2 nd Highest	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the plans of the Morrison Farm Committee 	Conservation, Morrison Farm Cmte		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change zoning to encourage the use of cluster development common space for gardening and agriculture; consider density bonuses. 	Planning, PIBd		

Blue type indicates a reference to a strategy/action described under another objective.

ⁱ The full objective states: **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.

ⁱⁱ These locations are addressed in the Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan. These issues should be included in planning for development of West Acton Village and other designated growth centers; see Objectives 1.4 and 1.5.

ⁱⁱⁱ Focus especially on reducing phosphorus discharges for surface water and nitrogen discharges for ground water {maybe move this whole clause in to a note]

^{iv} Lawns: advocate for removing any home-owner association restrictions against replacing lawns with other vegetation that needs little or no irrigation and chemical applications.

^v Examples of unwanted items include catalogs and junk mail; ways of making items available for re-use include Freecycle and tag sales.

-
- vi Examples: money off if you bring your own bags, sales of products in bulk, etc.
 - vii A Power Purchase Agreement with NStar is in progress; it would involve placing photovoltaic panels on unused Transfer Station property.
 - viii This includes both the construction process (site development, choice of materials) and their design – promoting energy efficiency (as well as water savings, and a healthy indoor environment in weather-tight buildings.)
 - ix This role would include the current part-time position of energy coordinator for the schools as well as other sustainability efforts.
 - x PACE allows home-owners to pay for energy upgrades over time with a line item on their local tax bill, with financial backing from the Commonwealth.
 - xi Guidelines are needed to address situations such as flat of pitched roofs, in and outside of historic districts.
 - xii “Barn raisings” refers to community-organized home energy audits followed by volunteer energy-reduction work: caulking, bulb changes, etc.
 - xiii This is part of the Town’s commitment to ICLEI.
 - xiv For more details on Transition Initiatives, see <http://transitionus.org/>)
 - xv For information on this topic see: <http://www.newfs.org/protect/invasive-plants/index>]. An example is the work that has been done on garlic mustard eradication on Acton property.
 - xvi Disease-resistant Elm and Chestnut trees are becoming available.

Acton 2020 Recommended Implementation Program

Working Draft

Strategy	Action Steps	Responsibility	Timing Priority	Notes from 9/21/meeting
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"> ▪ Promote economic development to enhance the commercial tax base in order to reduce the residential portion of the tax levy. (See also Objective 7.2 and Objective 7.3). 	EDC	Highest	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop policies that encourage seniors to stay in Acton in order to increase the taxpayer/student ratio.ⁱ (See also Objectives 1.5, 4.1, 5.1, and 7.4) 	Planning, ACHC, BoS	Highest	<p>How about a “Welcome to the empty nest” group, to help people find a new way to reweave their connections to town (add to Goal 4). [Newcomers and neighbors group may already be this group]</p> <p>Adopting the property tax town rebate for lower-income seniors that the state now allows.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support ongoing efforts to balance the financial requirements of the school system and other town resources. (See also Objective 6.1) 	(ALG), BoS, School Committee, FinCom	Ongoing	

Acton 2020 Recommended Implementation Program

Working Draft

Strategy	Action Steps	Responsibility	Timing Priority	Notes from 9/21/meeting
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a new revised long<u>multi-year</u> -range plan, <u>and a proces for keeping it going</u> for major capital expenditures such as remodeling town or school facilities or constructing new buildings. 	Town Manager, FinComm, Schools, Municipal Facilities, BoS	<u>Highest Ongoing?</u>	<u>Note: long-range plan at beginning of the year falls apart by town meeting time when money runs low. FinCom has committees starting in on this now.</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a long range plan<u>Find a way to cover to cover long term</u> obligations such as retiree health insurance, life insurance, and pensions. 	Town Manager, FinComm, Schools, BoS	Highest	<u>Fincom is starting the research, but the numbers are WAY big. Current State law removes pensions from this statement.</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to scrutinize all budget items to ensure town services are a "good deal" for taxes paid. 	Town Manager, FinComm, Schools, BoS	Ongoing	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate a strategy for supplementing current revenues with sources other than the property tax, e.g., grants and fees. 	Town Manager, FinComm, BoS	Ongoing	
Work to do more with less.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the level of services that the Town can provide by continually seeking operational efficiencies. 	Town Manager, BoS	Ongoing	<u>Note: need more specificity and clarity here.</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to seek federal, state, and private funding sources to supplement Town funds. 	Town Manager, BoS	Ongoing	<u>Narrative note: these are generally relatively small sources, but many of them. And sometimes staff time is not justified or available. Is there a way of exchanging more information within town hall to share info.</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Update the energy audit of town buildings and implement measures to increase energy efficiency and cost savings.</u> 	See Objective 2.3		

Acton 2020 Recommended Implementation Program

Working Draft

Strategy	Action Steps	Responsibility	Timing Priority	Notes from 9/21/meeting
Evaluate and improve the efficiency of public safety and emergency services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider regionalizing public safety services including dispatch to reduce service costs. 	See Objective 6.5		<p><u>Coul be broadened to include, for example, health services.</u></p> <p><u>Generalize to say “town services”</u></p>
Consider fiscal impacts of new development when amending the Zoning Bylaw and reviewing special permit applications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ On an ongoing basis, ensure that all development is coordinated with and takes into account the impact on town services and facilities so that their costs don't balloon. <p>(See also Objectives 1.1 and 1.2)</p>	Planning, PIBd, BoS		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support legislation that would enable Massachusetts towns to charge impact fees on new development. 	Planning, BoS		
Objective 7.2 Promote economic development that supports other goals.				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hire an Economic Development Officer (EDO) to proactively recruit and retain desirable businesses and help to coordinate the business community.ⁱⁱ <p>New Staff Position</p>	Town Manager, EDC, FinComm	Highest	<p><u>Need to link this back to increase in business tax base.</u></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Actively promote employment-oriented development (e.g., high tech/R&D offices) in targeted areas.ⁱⁱⁱ 	EDO, EDC, Planning	Highest	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Actively recruit a small-scale movie theater to locate in Acton. (See also Objective 4.4) 	EDO	Highest	<p><u>New creative community-linked, school-linked business plan is required.</u></p>

Acton 2020 Recommended Implementation Program

Working Draft

Strategy	Action Steps	Responsibility	Timing Priority	Notes from 9/21/meeting
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively recruit restaurants to increase their number and variety.^{iv} (See also Objective 4.3) 	EDO	Highest	<u>Research whether there is a liquor license issue.</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redevelop village commercial areas and Kelley's corner into mixed use centers. 	See Objective 1.1		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate costs and benefits of connecting West Acton to the sewer system to support business growth. 	See Objectives 1.2 and 2.1		
Objective 7.3 Improve existing commercial areas.				
Be more business friendly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Rewrite and simplify sign bylaw to increase flexibility of standards while continuing to protect aesthetics. Improve the sign bylaw to increase flexibility of standards while continuing to protect aesthetics.</u> 	<u>Planning, PIBd, BoS, HDC, EDC, DRB</u> <u>Planning, PIBd, BoS</u>	<u>2nd Highest</u>	<u>One goal: reduce projected legal cost. Make it simple to understand.</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Support current efforts to Streamline the business permitting process, eg: permit tracking. (See also Objective 3.3) Streamline the business permitting process. (See also Objective 3.3)</u> 	<u>BoS, EDC, Town Manager, DRB</u> <u>BoS, EDC</u>	<u>2nd Highest</u>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make improvements to business access and transportation. 	See Objective 3.2		
Improve the aesthetics of shopping areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review new commercial development with design guidelines that improve aesthetics. 	See objectives 1.1 and 1.2		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with property owners to make improvements to existing commercial areas. 	Planning, EDO, <u>DRB</u>	Highest	

Strategy	Action Steps	Responsibility	Timing Priority	Notes from 9/21/meeting
Objective 7.4 Support the ability of all residents to stay in Acton for a lifetime				<u>Make sure we make explicit the connection between this objective and the overall goal. May need to weave this with the other goals explicitly.</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the creation of a wide range of housing types. 	See Objectives 1.1, 1.2, and 5.2		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider incentives to encourage seniors to stay in Acton such as tax relief. (See also Objective 5.1) 	BoS, FinComm	2 nd Highest	

Blue type indicates a reference to a strategy/action described under another objective.

- ⁱ Acton currently has a relatively high ratio of students to its total population, which results in a relatively high proportion of taxes needed to support the school.
- ⁱⁱ The EDO would be responsible for, among other things: welcoming new businesses, including business owners in events and notices, and expanding Acton Day
- ⁱⁱⁱ Targeted areas for commercial development include Great Road, Nagog Park, Powdermill, and large commercial parcels on Rt. 2.
- ^{iv} Desired restaurants include mid-level, family, casual, and additional ethnic restaurants.