

South Acton Open House Feedback | December 12, 2023

Goals and Action Items:

- How should we get there?
 - Action items are tangible steps to help achieve the vision. These action items will direct decision making moving forward, so your feedback is important. Please add one sticky dot to each action item you wanted pursued.
 - Diverse housing options for all ages and income levels
 - Modify dimensional and use standards for the South Acton Village (SAV) District to require mixed-use development (Combined Business and Dwelling), allows up to 3 stories and increases allowed floor area by Site Plan Review (Action 1.1).
 - 10 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Establish a new zoning district on the land between Main Street and the Commuter Rail Parking lot that requires mixed use development (Combined Business and Dwelling), allows up to 3.5 stories fronting main street and eliminates floor area requirements by Site Plan Review (Action 1.2).
 - 7 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Make it easier to convert existing single-family dwellings to multifamily dwellings in the SAV District by allowing conversion by right and removing the requirement for owner occupancy (Action 1.3).
 - 12 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Explore the adoption a town wide inclusionary zoning policy that requires at least 10% of units in a new development to be affordable to households earning at or below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI) (Action 1.4).
 - 8 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Study the economic feasibility of a new mixed-use development on the town owned land just south of the commuter rail station off Maple Street (Action 1.5).
 - 10 sticky dots places by this one.
 - Study the economic feasibility of a new mixed-use development on the town owned land over the commuter rail station parking lot (Action 1.6).
 - 7 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Improved traffic safety and calming
 - Use pain and plastic flex posts to narrow turning radius at the intersection of Main and School Streets, reduce the pedestrian crossing distance across School Street, and calm traffic (Action 3.1).
 - 0 sticky dots placed by this one.

- Upgrade the walk signal cycle to provide more time for pedestrians to cross School Street, reduce the wait time between walk signals, and make the walk signal automatic (no push button needed to get a walk signal) (Action 3.2).
 - 6 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Use paint and plastic flex posts or planter boxes to narrow the right-turning radius from Central Street onto Main Street and calm traffic (Action 3.3).
 - 2 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Explore intersection safety improvements for the Main and Central Streets intersection as a part of the Complete Streets process (Action 3.4).
 - 12 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Explore pedestrian safety improvements, including the creation of a new crosswalk, for the intersection of Central Street and the commuter rail parking entrance as part of the Complete Streets process (Action 3.5).
 - 10 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Study opportunities to remove or convert underutilized driveways along Railroad Street and Main Street into a street network. If a new street network is created, implement a one-way traffic circulation pattern from Railroad Street to Main Street to avoid traffic congestion and maintain space for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure (Action 3.6).
 - 10 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Consider the appropriateness of on-street parking on School and Main Streets to serve the small businesses and provide a buffer between moving vehicles and pedestrians on the sidewalk (Action 3.7).
 - 9 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Vibrant commercial uses
 - Work with owners of vacant or underutilized properties in South Acton Village to find temporary tenants to serve as “pop ups”, activating storefronts until longer term tenants can be found (Action 4.1).
 - 13 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Create a wayfinding program for South Acton Village that provides signage and relevant information connecting residents and visitors to various destinations, including commercial establishments, and nearby parking locations (Action 4.2).
 - 13 sticky dots placed by this one.

- Work with small business owners to relocate parking to underutilized parking lots just behind their buildings on Main Street (Action 4.3).
 - 11 sticky dots placed by this one.
- Enhanced pedestrian and bike connectivity
 - Paint fog lines along roadways where curbs are poorly defined or non-existent (School Street, Railroad Street, Central Street) to create visual separation between vehicular and pedestrian areas and to calm traffic (Action 2.1).
 - 7 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Add in street pedestrian delineators at non-signalized crosswalks to increase visibility during non-winter months (Action 2.2).
 - 6 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Evaluate options for on street parking throughout the South Acton Village District and methods to deter parking on sidewalk in front of businesses along Main Street, including temporary measures such as planters or painting (Action 2.3).
 - 7 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Invest in infrastructure for long term complete streets improvements recommended by the South Acton Village Complete Streets study (Action 2.4).
 - 5 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Invest in short term targeted infrastructure repairs identified by the DPW's asset management of existing stormwater, sidewalks and ramps including surface upgrades to concrete sidewalks (Action 2.5).
 - 9 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Implement a wayfinding system that helps user find available parking and navigate to destinations in South Acton Village including recreation facilities, commercial areas, rail trains and open space (Action 2.6).
 - 8 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Evaluation options to create pedestrian and bicycle connections from the west end of Rail Road Street to the commuter rail parking lot (Action 2.7).
 - 6 sticky dots placed by this one.
- Strengthen historic assets
 - Adopt specific design guidelines for the South Acton Historic District to ensure that new development and renovations complement the historic aesthetic of the mill village, while also providing a greater predictability for both residents and developers (Action 5.1).
 - 12 sticky dots placed by this one.

- Work with Iron Work Farm and other private landowners in South Acton Village to obtain funding for building renovations that allow historic sites to expand their programming and community offerings (Action 5.2).
 - 10 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Work with Iron Work Farm and other private landowners to activate outdoor spaces to create informal gathering spaces and walking paths (Action 5.3).
 - 13 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - High-quality, sustainable development
 - Monitor impacts of the Commonwealth's Municipal Fossil Fuel-free Building Construction and Renovation Demonstration Program, of which Acton has been selected as a prioritized community (Action 6.1).
 - 3 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Create a guide to encourage sustainable renovations of historic buildings (Action 6.2).
 - 5 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Encourage developers to implement water conservation tactics in new and renovated buildings (Action 6.3).
 - 7 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Institute parking maximums to encourage developers to limit parking to what the market demands, reducing the amount of asphalt on a property and encouraging sustainable modes of transportation (Action 6.4).
 - 2 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Adequate infrastructure to support new development
 - Study options for expansion of Acton's sewer supply system to better accommodate desired commercial uses in South Acton Village (Action 7.1).
 - 13 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Utilize new development in South Acton Village as an opportunity to upgrade outdated infrastructure and utility systems on a parcel-by-parcel basis (Action 7.2).
 - 7 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Evaluate the cost and potential opportunities associated with burying the power lines at the center of South Acton Village (Action 7.3).
 - 9 sticky dots placed by this one.
 - Investment in public spaces
 - Continue to invest in the maintenance of existing facilities and conservation land throughout South Acton (Action 8.1).
 - 14 sticky dots placed by this one.

- Continue to seek funding for the creation of a landscaped park at the 53 River Street dam (Action 8.2).
 - 13 sticky dots placed by this one.
- Explore the utilization of town-owned land in South Acton for new opportunities that activate the area and encourage community connections (Action 8.3).
 - 10 sticky dots placed by this one.

Share Your Thoughts: Creation of a New District – Main Street North and Rail Road Street Proposed Zoning Changes

- Do you support increased floor area to encourage village scale commercial development (restaurant, retail, etc)?
 - 13 yes
 - 1 no
- Do you like the idea of increased height to encourage more commercial uses (restaurant, retail, etc) on the ground floor?
 - 13 yes
 - 1 no
- Do you support the idea of setting a maximum parking standard for residential uses to reduce the land area used for parking?
 - 10 yes
 - 1 no

Share Your Thoughts: South Acton Village District

- Do you support the idea of creating an incentive for village scale commercial development on the ground floor by allowing more floor area?
 - 11 yes
 - 1 no
- Do you like the idea of allowing 3 instead of 2.5 stories to encourage more commercial uses (restaurant, retail, etc) on the ground floor?
 - 11 yes
 - 1 no
- Do you like the idea of creating specific design guidelines for South Acton Village's Historic District to create greater predictability for new and redevelopment?
 - 11 yes
 - 0 no

Additional Thoughts: Please share any additional thoughts by writing them down on a sticky note below

- What was written on the sticky notes:
 - We need more parking 2 plus spaces per residential unit. No one wants to live or run a business without parking.
 - Solar panels over commuter rail lot.
 - Solar canopies over commuter lot.
 - Better enforcement of current traffic regulations (stop signs) might help.
 - Must prohibit demolition by neglect of owner occupancy requirement (two additional words not able to read).
 - Agree, must prohibit demo by neglect – reduce registered parking. Do not incentivize baring down culture resources.
 - Work with landowners or maple to create both truck parking and safe biking.
 - Would like subject of parking revisited. Specifically, the lot next to the church that is often vacant. Could certainly support MF development.
 - Vision statement add: South Acton draws in visitors to shop, dine, admire the many historic and cultural features. . .
 - Enacting a demolition by neglect bylaw for the town would be key for allowing the removal of the owner occupancy requirement for multi family units.
 - Improve bike access across Boyle to Central
 - Fix meter section of Central and Main, see if you can do a (drawing) rather than a (drawing) where you can't. See cars come down Main Street.