

# **Acton's HOPE**

## **Health Outreach Planning Essentials**

**March 2009 – September 2010**

***What Will Make Acton a Healthier Community?***

**Results of an Eighteen-Month Town Study**

---

**Sheryl Ball, CEHT**

**Health Department, Town of Acton**

***Chairperson***

### **Steering Committee Members**

**Kristen Alexander, Assistant Planner, Town of Acton**

**Suzy Eppling, Occupational Therapist**

**Catherine Fochtman, Recreation Director, Town of Acton • Ally Li**

**Kirsten Nelson, Food Service Director, Acton Public Schools and**

**Acton-Boxborough Regional School District • Ruma Neogy • Ken Silva**

**Cheryl Petersen, Secretary, Executive Committee, Acton Medical Reserve Corps**

**Debra Simes, Leadership Board, Acton-Boxborough Farmers Market**

**Barbara Willson, Council on Aging, Town of Acton**

**Diane Yasgur, Human Resource Consultant**

**Jan Stewart, Consultant**

## Table of Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>I. Preface</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>II. HOPE Activities and Accomplishments</b>	<b>4-5</b>
<b>III. Sample Survey</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>IV. HOPE's Research</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>V. Survey Responses</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>VI. Survey Response Summary by Category</b>	
<b>1. Physical Wellness</b>	<b>9-10</b>
<b>2. Transportation</b>	<b>11-12</b>
<b>3. Environmental Awareness</b>	<b>13-14</b>
<b>4. Food and Nutrition</b>	<b>15-16</b>
<b>VII. Healthy Communities — Implementation Grant Proposals</b>	<b>17-26</b>
<b>VIII. Acton's Demographics</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>IX. Appendix A — HOPE Public Forum Roundtable Discussion Questions</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>X. Appendix B — Information from Chinese Language School Focus Group</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>XI. Appendix C — Summation of Survey Results</b>	<b>30-52</b>
<b>XII. Appendix D — Public Forum Results</b>	<b>53-55</b>
<b>XIII. Appendix E — Questions from Latino Family Network Focus Group</b>	<b>56-58</b>

## **I. Preface**

In January 2009, the Town of Acton applied for a Healthy Communities Planning Grant under the direction of Health Inspector Sheryl Ball, of the Acton Health Department, in cooperation with the Planning and Recreation departments. The grant proposed reaching out to all Acton residents to learn about the health needs of the community.

In March 2009, Acton was awarded a \$15,000 planning grant by the Healthy Communities Phase I Project. Funded through the Northwest Suburban Health Alliance CHNA 15/DoN funds from Lahey Clinic, the plan is titled, "Acton's HOPE" (Health Outreach Planning Essentials) and will incorporate the Healthy Communities Concepts. CHNA (Community Health Network Area) 15 is one of 27 coalitions in the state, comprising representatives from public, nonprofit, and private sectors. CHNA members work to build healthier communities through community-based prevention planning and health promotion.

The goal of the planning grant was to gather town residents' thoughts about what would make Acton a healthier community. Outreach was done to Town staff, community and neighborhood groups and committees, and residents, seeking volunteers to serve on a steering committee. A committee of interested residents and staff was formed and charged with developing a means to gather, and then assess, residents' input on the question, "What would make Acton a healthier community?" The committee was instructed to come to the planning process without preconceived ideas and with open minds, and to focus on what the community voiced.

Using a broad definition of "health," the committee developed a survey and distributed it, both digitally and in print, to as many Acton residents as possible. The survey offered nine categories of "health content" to which to respond, as well as space for respondents' own specific concerns. In addition to conducting the survey, the committee met with several community groups and held a public forum to further refine residents' ideas and concerns. Data from both efforts are reflected in this report.

Another grant stipulation was that a coordinator be hired to assist with facilitation and communication. Jan Stewart was hired as the consultant because of her expertise in the Healthy Communities principles and concepts. Jan has previously worked with a variety of nonprofits by facilitating their initiatives.

## II. HOPE Activities and Accomplishments

- **March 2009** Town of Acton awarded a planning grant focused on the promotion and implementation of a townwide Healthy Community concept. Grantor is the Healthy Communities Phase 1 Project that is funded through the Northwest Suburban Health Alliance CHNA 15/DoN funds from Lahey Clinic.
- **July 2009** Request for Proposal for consultant placed in the local newspaper. Consultant hired; committee chairperson and consultant begin planning next steps.
- **September 2009** Steering Committee, comprising members representing various constituencies, convenes for the first time. Group has expanded and met monthly since then to plan and conduct activities, review local data, and formulate “best practice” plans for a healthier local community. Currently, 14 members attend meetings and/or provide input via email.
- **October 21, 2009** Public forum, featuring keynote speaker David Weed, held at Council on Aging Center. Roundtable discussions followed. Questions posed: What brought you here today? What did you learn today? What questions would you like to see on a townwide survey? What is your vision of a healthy community? Excellent publicity for event in local media and *Boston Globe*.
- **November/December 2009** Steering committee develops survey and focus group questions on nine health topics, including Physical Wellness; Food and Nutrition; Transportation; Public Health Information and Education; Community Connections/Communication; Environmental Awareness; Mental Health and Wellness; Diversity; and Safety and Security, as well as the option for residents to register their own specific concerns. Respondents asked to indicate age (by range) to enable comparison of respondent to general-community demographics.
- **January/February 2010** Townwide survey posted via Town website, community group digital networks, and Town board/committee, and school networks. Full-page survey published in local tab publication (*Action Unlimited*), and hard copies (with accompanying drop-boxes) distributed to more than a dozen town locations.
- **February 2010** Focus group conducted with Chinese Language School. Please see Appendix B.

- **March 2010** Survey results from some 615 surveys tabulated and reviewed by committee; plans formulated for disseminating results. Please see Appendix C.
- **April 28, 2010** Public forum held: survey results presented and focus groups — designed to obtain more specificity on top four topics of interest as indicated by survey data — facilitated by committee members. Top four are Physical Wellness, Transportation, Environmental Awareness, and Food and Nutrition. Please see Appendices A and D.
- **May 22, 2010** Focus group held with Latino Family Network. Please see Appendix E.
- **May 2010–September 2010** Committee analyzes all data to discern trends. Submits implementation plan proposal to CHNA 15 with the hope of receiving additional funding.

### III. Sample Survey

## HEY ACTON, IT'S TIME FOR A CHECKUP!

### Acton H.O.P.E. / Healthy Communities Townwide Survey

The Town of Acton has received a planning grant funded through the Northwest Suburban Health Alliance/CHNA 15 DoN funds from Lahey Clinic to help determine what citizens consider most important in making Acton a healthier community. The grant is the product of collaboration between the Town's Health, Planning, and Recreation departments. The H.O.P.E. (Health Outreach Planning Essentials) planning process is being conducted by a Steering Committee comprising of citizens and Town staff. **This survey is an important community assessment tool — H.O.P.E.'s Steering Committee wants to hear from you!**

**Please let us know what you think are the most important health issues facing our community by completing the survey below.** We ask that you e-mail this survey to [sball@acton-ma.gov](mailto:sball@acton-ma.gov); bring the completed survey to the Acton Health Department, 472 Main Street, or place in one of the yellow drop boxes located throughout town. Alternately, you can complete this survey online at [www.acton-ma.gov](http://www.acton-ma.gov). For more information on this project, please contact Sheryl Ball at [sball@acton-ma.gov](mailto:sball@acton-ma.gov). Thank you!

#### H.O.P.E. SURVEY

1.	<b>Physical Wellness</b>	High Priority <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate Interest <input type="checkbox"/>	Not Interested <input type="checkbox"/>
	Examples: Community support for physical wellness; walking trails, winter fitness, bike trails, swimming pool, fitness facilities, town programs			
	Comments:			
2.	<b>Food and Nutrition</b>	High Priority <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate Interest <input type="checkbox"/>	Not Interested <input type="checkbox"/>
	Examples: accessibility and affordability of food choices that provide for your nutritional or food-tradition needs (from, e.g., grocery stores, restaurants, local farms, farmers markets); school lunch offerings; senior center lunch offerings,			
	Comments:			
3.	<b>Transportation</b>	High Priority <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate Interest <input type="checkbox"/>	Not Interested <input type="checkbox"/>
	Examples: unmet transportation needs; possible provision of public transportation around town; sidewalk issues; rail trails; bike lanes, commuter rail			
	Comments:			
4.	<b>Public Health Information and Education</b>	High Priority <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate Interest <input type="checkbox"/>	Not Interested <input type="checkbox"/>
	Examples: CPR/First Aid courses; availability of healthcare; nutrition information; emergency planning/strategies, medical conditions such as, chronic health, fall prevention, sunscreen, presentations on health topics.			
	Comments:			
5.	<b>Community Connections/Communication</b>	High Priority <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate Interest <input type="checkbox"/>	Not Interested <input type="checkbox"/>
	Examples: creation of a community center, town activities; ways for people to meet one another/gather; town's communication of information to citizens; creation of a community center			
	Comments:			
6.	<b>Environmental Awareness</b>	High Priority <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate Interest <input type="checkbox"/>	Not Interested <input type="checkbox"/>
	Examples: concerns about indoor air quality; outdoor air quality; water quality; other toxins and hazards; land use, community education			
	Comments:			
7.	<b>Mental Health and Wellness</b>	High Priority <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate Interest <input type="checkbox"/>	Not Interested <input type="checkbox"/>
	Examples: accessibility of support, caregiver support, new parents, crisis intervention, substance abuse, domestic violence			
	Comments:			
8.	<b>Safety and Security</b>	High Priority <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate Interest <input type="checkbox"/>	Not Interested <input type="checkbox"/>
	Examples: how safe you feel in Acton; walking, biking, driving, living at your home			
	Comments:			
9.	<b>Diversity</b>	High Priority <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate Interest <input type="checkbox"/>	Not Interested <input type="checkbox"/>
	Examples: cultural, racial, gender, age issues, lifestyle, religion, disability			
	Comments:			
10.	<b>Other _____?</b>	High Priority <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate Interest <input type="checkbox"/>	Not Interested <input type="checkbox"/>

## **IV. HOPE's Research**

Survey results indicated that many Town of Acton departments, and town organizations and informal groups already provide health services, study health topics, and/or take action to make Acton a healthier community. They include: the Acton-Boxborough Farmers Market; Acton Citizens for Environmental Safety; Acton Conservation Trust; Acton Food Pantry; Green Acton; Open Space Committee; Transportation Advisory Committee, et al.

Our research revealed that each group does important work, yet communication and potential collaboration are not coordinated so as to optimize community access. Further, there are many available resources available that promote health (broadly defined), but the majority of residents may not know about them.

We received some suggestions that could be implemented with little or no expense; others would require significant expenditures of funds; and still others (such as modifications to the commuter rail station, roadways, and/or sidewalks) would require collaboration between, for example, the Town and other governmental entities.

Should we receive implementation funding, we plan to address many of the low-cost, easily implemented initiatives to improve the health of our community. Additionally, we plan to create strategies to encourage health partnerships and initiatives, within the community, that will improve communication and broaden outreach and access to all community members.

The top four categories from our survey were Physical Wellness, Environmental Awareness, Transportation, and Food and Nutrition. We plan to address one or all of these four areas in our implementation plan, focusing on the top suggestions for each category. These could include, for example: enhancing existing walking trails, promoting greater utilization of NARA Park, supporting sidewalk expansion, improving recycling education, and/or supporting the Acton-Boxborough Farmers Market.

## V. Survey Responses

### Survey Responses

Number of total survey respondents	615
Number of total participants in focus groups	56

<b>Physical Wellness</b>	<b>#1 Priority on Survey</b>
High Priority	459
Moderate Interest	121
Low Interest	35

<b>Transportation</b>	<b>#2 Priority on Survey</b>
High Priority	383
Moderate Interest	170
Low Interest	64

<b>Environmental Awareness</b>	<b>#3 Priority on Survey</b>
High Priority	348
Moderate Interest	185
Low Interest	82

<b>Food and Nutrition</b>	<b>#4 Priority on Survey</b>
High Priority	349
Moderate Interest	184
Low Interest	81

Note: All survey respondents answered every question.



## **VI. Survey Response Summary by Category In Order of Interest**

### **1. Physical Wellness**

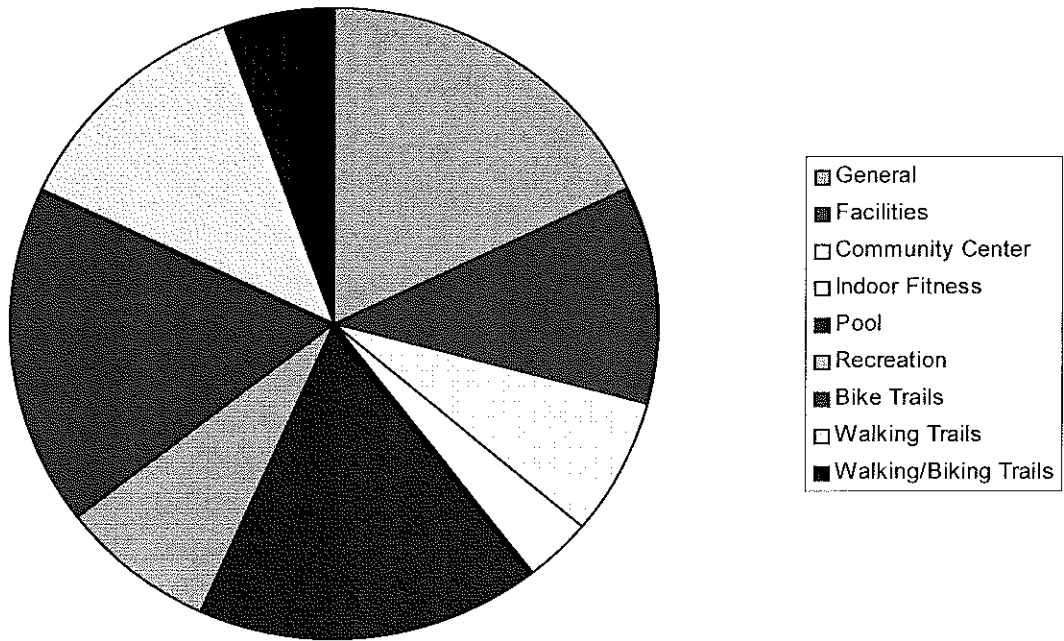
Comments supported the town's many walking trails, the Acton Arboretum, NARA Park, and rail trail construction (there are two rail trail project in process in Acton). Interest was expressed in having a community center, perhaps a multi-generational site, which could be accessed at different times of day by various members of the community. As one person commented, "It would be great to have a recreation center like Concord or Sudbury. Many of us are paying a lot of money to drive to the recreation center or sports clubs in Concord or Sudbury to exercise or swim year round."

Another respondent said, "The availability of facilities (natural and manmade) in town only make[s] the town a more attractive place to live — encouraging our citizens toward healthy habits is only beneficial."

#### **Suggestions:**

- Create a multi-use, multi-generational community center.
- Consider a town pool as part of a community center.
- Refresh/enhance existing walking trails and create new ones.
- Support the rail trails; interest in the completion of these projects is high.
- Boost utilization of NARA Park. It is considered a plus and a town asset that needs to be more widely known (some consider it underutilized).

### Physical Wellness



Physical Wellness		
<b>Total Survey Comments</b>	<b>121</b>	
<b>General</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>19.00%</b>
<b>Facilities</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11.57%</b>
<b>Community Center</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7.43%</b>
<b>Fitness Indoors</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3.30%</b>
<b>Pool</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>18.18%</b>
<b>Recreation</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8.26%</b>
<b>Bike Trails</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>18.18%</b>
<b>Walking Trails</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13.22%</b>
<b>Walking/Biking Trails</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5.78%</b>

## 2. Transportation

Respondents frequently commented that the rural character of the town can lead to the isolation of some residents (e.g., elderly people, those without cars). Walking is an option but concerns were noted about the safety of certain areas that have either no sidewalks or sidewalks in poor condition, particularly the areas around High Street and Taylor Street.

One respondent said, "It would reduce my whole family's stress tremendously to have better transportation options, particularly public transportation around town and commuter rail parking commensurate with the actual number of riders."

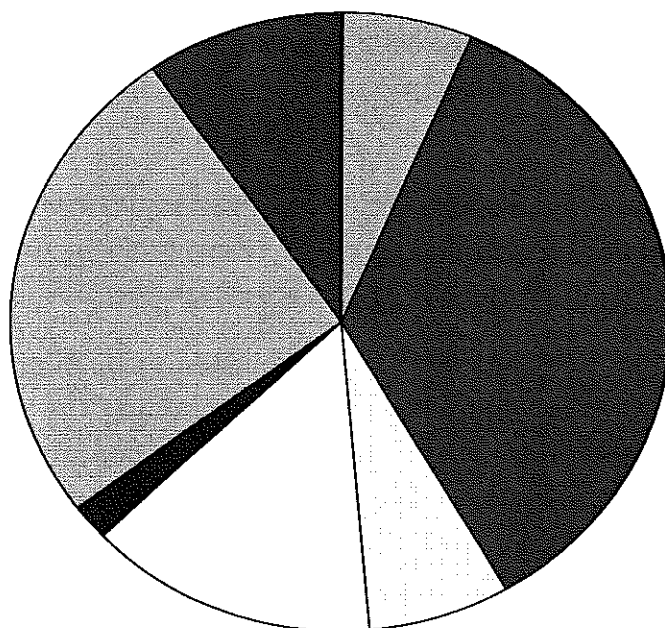
Sidewalks are of major interest to respondents. As one person said, "The sidewalk initiative in Acton has been transformative and needs to continue. The need to use a car to get anywhere in this town affects public health/fitness, our sense of community, and mental health (isolation). Safe bicycle paths and public transportation are also an important element of this overall plan to enable people to get outdoors, exercise, leave their cars behind, and connect with the community more directly."

Another suggested, "Hurray for the work on the shuttle! Let's support/expand that over time. Let's go for a 2-tiered parking structure at the train station in the section where the elevation makes it doable, with a living/green roof on top; got to get folks out of their cars! Back at regional transportation: what about commuter vans to Alewife station and back during rush hours?"

### Suggestions:

- Create more sidewalks, especially around schools and village areas. This would allow less dependence on cars for transportation, and (potentially) improve overall fitness because more people could choose to walk. Isolation could decrease as people feel a greater sense of community in their local village areas.
- Increase commuter rail parking and/or provide shuttle service to train.
- Provide shuttle service around town.

### Transportation



- General Comments
- Sidewalks
- Sidewalks/Bike Lane
- Shuttle
- Sidewalks to Train
- General Transportation
- Train/Commuter Rail

<b>Transportation</b>		
<b>Total Survey Comments</b>	<b>143</b>	
<b>General</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6.29%</b>
<b>Sidewalks</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>34.96%</b>
<b>Sidewalks/Bike lane</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6.99%</b>
<b>Shuttle</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>13.98%</b>
<b>Sidewalks to Train</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2.10%</b>
<b>General Transportation</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>25.17%</b>
<b>Train/Commuter Rail</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9.79%</b>

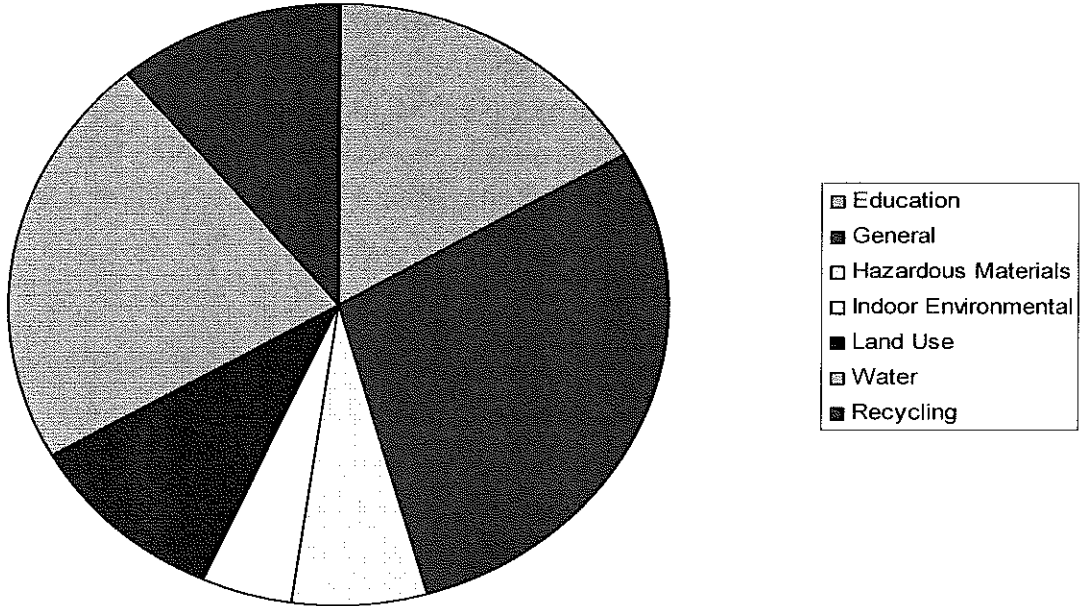
### 3. Environmental Awareness

Respondents expressed interest in more education on environmental issues (e.g., air quality, Lyme Disease, invasive plants). Topics receiving specific attention were water quality, land use, disposal of hazardous materials, and the indoor environment. As one respondent noted, "Environmental quality underlies all other issues." Another commented, "this topic should be number one on your list."

#### Suggestions:

- Provide more education about recycling, especially polystyrene recycling.
- Ensure that safe drinking water is maintained.
- Consider purchasing more conservation land.
- Educate residents about the hazards of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides/herbicides in lawns and gardens, and their impact on groundwater.

### Environmental Awareness



Environmental Awareness		
<b>Total Survey Comments</b>	<b>90</b>	
<b>Education</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16.66%</b>
<b>General</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>28.88%</b>
<b>Hazardous Materials</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6.66%</b>
<b>Indoor Environment</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.44%</b>
<b>Land Use</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10.00%</b>
<b>Water</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22.22%</b>
<b>Recycling</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11.11%</b>

#### **4. Food and Nutrition**

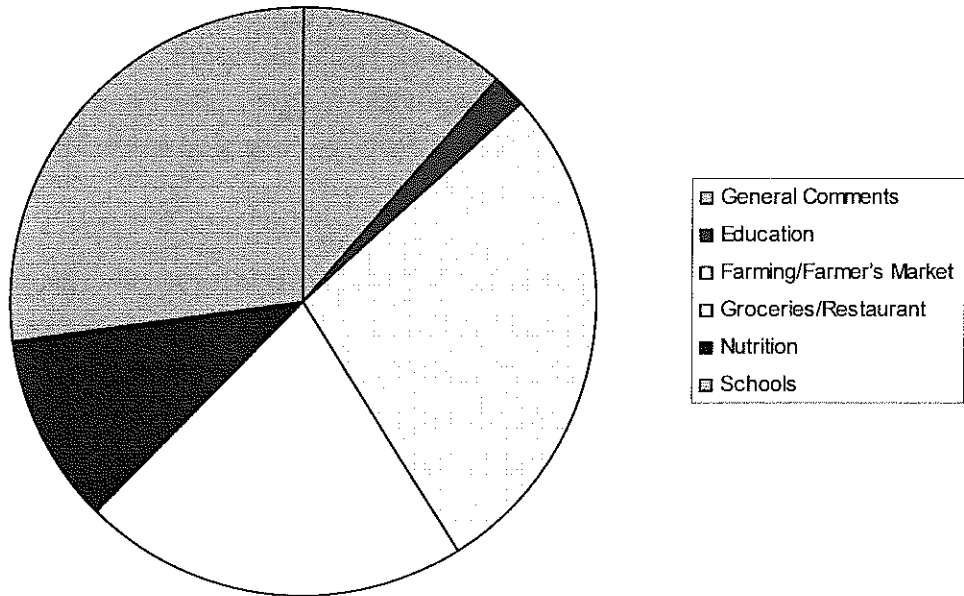
Survey respondents generally felt the town does a good job providing options for food purchase at a variety of locations. There is a high level of interest in locally grown, affordable food. The Acton-Boxborough Farmers Market is widely regarded as a great addition to the town. School lunches were noted and many felt that steps are being taken to provide healthier alternatives. The Food Service Department of the town's school districts was encouraged to continue with that initiative.

One respondent said, "Strong interest in fostering a local small farm option for getting food; this would support the growing national interest in local food, a continuation of Acton's history as a farming community, opportunities for learning about small-scale agriculture, and also providing affordable fresh food for schools, seniors and those of moderate income. I am thinking about a town-supported farm, in particular."

##### **Suggestions:**

- Encourage restaurants to offer more choices, and healthier choices.
- Extend the season of operation for the Acton-Boxborough Farmers Market.
- Support creation of more ethnically diverse restaurants.
- Continue attention to school lunches and senior citizen meals to ensure that they are of the highest nutritional quality possible.
- Consider linking school lunches to more local growers/providers.

# Food and Nutrition



<b>Food and Nutrition</b>		
<b>Total Survey Comments</b>	<b>151</b>	
<b>General</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11.25%</b>
<b>Education</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1.98%</b>
<b>Farming/Farmers Market</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>27.81%</b>
<b>Groceries/Restaurants</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>21.19%</b>
<b>Nutrition</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10.59%</b>
<b>Schools</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>27.15%</b>



## VII. Healthy Communities – Implementation Grant Proposals

### Planning Process Summary Report

Acton is a community with diverse perspectives and many residents willingly share their points of view. Some of the population groups include: people with children in the schools, young professionals, empty nesters and senior citizens. Some residents are involved in organizations that support the work already undertaken to build a healthier community. Others don't participate in town activities but the voice of these residents is equally valuable in learning about the overall health of the community and how to improve it.

Acton is experiencing a shift in its cultural diversity. There is a growing Asian/Pacific Islander population that reflects over 25% of the school population. Our work tried to ensure that this growing population was included in our process.

An ongoing goal of the Planning Grant was to involve as many voices as possible. The following outreach was conducted:

- Email to partnering departments – specifically Planning and Recreation, encouraging them to spread the word among their constituents about the grant and the need for Steering Committee members.
- Contact with two email distribution lists that are well connected to residents i.e. Acton Community News and Acton Forum. The administrators of these lists sent out information to their LISTSERVs and to any other groups known to them about the grant and suggested that they contact the grant chairperson for more information.
- Participation at Acton Board of Selectman's meeting that produced visibility and press coverage about the grant, the need for committee members and upcoming events.
- October Forum – this was our kick-off meeting. We received a great deal of press coverage including the Boston Globe. Mailings were sent to all the email distribution lists previously mentioned and word of mouth networking was encouraged.

The October forum had excellent representation from a diverse group of people representing the various ages and stages of life as well ethnicities. Residents' comments were integral in shaping how the committee developed the health categories to be evaluated in the Healthy Communities Survey.

## **Planning Process Summary Report (cont.)**

Continuing that diverse connection at our monthly steering committee meetings was a challenge due to scheduling difficulties with work and family commitments. However, there were about a half dozen residents representing ethnic minorities who participated in committee work by reading minutes of meetings and responding to the committee chair directly. Those inputs were shared at committee meetings.

When we conducted a town-wide survey, we included a question about the age range of the respondents so we could compare those figures to the community's demographics. We feel the percentage of survey respondents by age was closely proportional to the age range of town residents.

To ensure that we encompassed an ethnically diverse voice, the steering committee reached out personally to the Chinese Language School and the Latino Family Network throughout the Planning Grant process. Steering Committee members attended their meetings. We also had excellent representation from the Asian community at our forum in April. The comments gathered at these events helped us decide what areas to focus on for the Implementation Grant proposal.

We wished more voices could have been heard but know this is a challenge for other groups as well, especially schools. At the focus group meetings we learned that while some people have interest, they are so busy working one or possibly two jobs and staying engaged with their families and ethnic communities they have little time to become involved in issues of the larger community. We will continue to strive for greater outreach in implementation phase.

Early on in the discovery portion of our work we reviewed three studies already completed by the town. "Emerging Vision and Goals for Acton's Future" was begun in 2008. The study focused on developing a comprehensive community plan and there was considerable information about how building a healthier community would play a part in that plan.

Additionally, two studies conducted by summer interns – one completed in August, 2004 and the other in the summer of 2007 provided insight into the health status of the community.

Our first event, the Healthy Communities Forum, held in October 2009, was an excellent kick-off meeting that announced the Healthy Communities Planning Grant, engaged interested residents in the work of the grant and helped us to understand how we would define and identify the assets and challenges of a healthy community.

## **Planning Process Summary Report (cont.)**

David Weed from Fall River was the guest speaker at this event. He explained how his city got started with their healthy community study and subsequent action. We incorporated many of his suggestions for assessing community needs and assets into our strategies. He helped us to broaden our scope and be expansive in what we considered community assets and needs.

The forum concluded with roundtable discussions that helped us learn about residents' concerns and helped us consider how we would gather additional input. Based on data collected we created health categories – Physical Wellness; Food and Nutrition; Transportation; Public Health Information and Education; Community Connections/Communication; Environmental Awareness, Mental Health and Wellness; Diversity; Safety and Security and Other – in case we missed anything.

In early 2010 we conducted a town-wide survey in order to reach out to as many residents as possible and get their input. The survey was posted on the town web-site, was printed in its entirety in the local tab newspaper and was emailed to specific town distribution groups i.e. neighborhood groups, school, groups and committees.

Hard copies of the survey and drop boxes for responses were placed in various locations around town such as local supermarkets, libraries, child care programs, senior center, recreational centers, and town offices. We received close to 700 survey responses.

We tabulated the priorities and were able to narrow the priorities to four – Physical Wellness; Transportation; Environmental Awareness; and Food and Nutrition. We compiled all survey comments, assembled like remarks and looked for trends and similarities in comments.

We held another forum in April with small group discussions that focused on the top four priorities and helped flesh out ideas pertaining to those specific areas. This meeting had the most diverse representation of community members compared to any of the previous gatherings.

Multiple Steering Committee meetings followed where committee members sorted and combed through the data to ensure that the recommendations for the Implementation Grant represented the comments and concerns of the community.

Steering Committee members discussed what was realistic and achievable. Some of our committee members are seasoned members of the community who have served on a number of boards and committees, some are newer residents with children in early grades who have a vision for how they want the community to look in the next ten years

## **Planning Process Summary Report (cont.)**

and others are department members – Health, Recreation, Planning and Schools who had knowledge of town government and what processes and initiatives had been followed in the past and what was being considered for the future.

We divided the list of suggestions into short term or “quick fixes” usually not requiring much if any funding and those that would take more long-term planning and consideration i.e. transportation and shuttle service, even bigger parking for commuter rail, improved sidewalks.

The broad range of experience of committee members helped us to understand, analyze and project what resources might already be available and what are needed. This is where the biggest learning developed. There are so many resources already in place but are not known to a broad range of community members. The committee realized early on that identifying existing resources, publicizing them and ensuring that the larger community has access to them would be an integral part of the implementation phase. Additionally our implementation phase will include funding some projects that support the four top priorities as expressed by the community. Determining what projects will be funded will be the work of the steering Committee as it expands its membership going forward.

We were very heartened by the return on the town-wide survey. The number of responses and the thoughtful comments were very helpful in planning future work. We learned that ensuring there was general input from a more diverse voice and representation on the Steering Committee required intentional effort and outreach. Attendance at our two general meetings was good but not as large as we had hoped. We had terrific publicity for the first event and attracted about 30 people. We added door prizes to the second event as an added incentive and we still did not have many more than 30 in attendance. While we made connections with some community groups, organizations and individuals that focus on health, we realized that there are many more that we have not yet partnered and that is why the identification and engaging with other groups and individuals focused on health will continue into the implementation phase.

The Coalition Assessment reaffirmed that our Steering Committee was of a like mind on most things. We needed to be more intentional about including diverse voices on the committee and making sure that committee members knew the efforts that the committee chair had undertaken to try and achieve that goal. We appreciated the strengths of committee members and how their skill sets complemented each other.

A greater awareness of ALL the components that comprise a Healthy Community model was the first learning that occurred. Also, knowing how much attention has already been

focused on making Acton a healthy community was enlightening. The need for better communication and collaboration between groups working on these initiatives is critical to the success of sustaining resources in the future.

**Note: Submitted to CHNA 15 as part of the Implementation Grant Proposal**

## **Implementation Plan – Recommendations**

The overall priority of the implementation phase of this grant is to provide a comprehensive approach that enhances collaboration, coordination, communication and education in the town of Acton for the health benefit of its residents. We want to enhance the collaboration and coordination of health activities, programs and services in an effort to make the best use of resources, reduce duplication of effort and discover where gaps exist. We will continue to convene the Health Outreach Planning Essentials (HOPE) Steering Committee, to be renamed “Active Acton” at the time of the Implementation Grant funding and expand membership to include *all* departments, organizations and individuals concerned with the health of the Acton community so that these entities can learn from each other and understand their mission, services, challenges and needs.

The first meeting of all health constituents will be a public program that presents the data collected during the eighteen month Planning Grant. Copies of the 50+ page document that reports on the committee’s work will be available for review at this meeting. Copies will be available later at the town library and health department office. The forum will be held within six weeks of the Implementation Grant award and will provide an opportunity for all interested parties to meet and make plans for an upcoming “Active Acton” Steering Committee meeting. We will provide a call to action for participation in this event and on our Steering Committee through the local media – newspaper, cable television; town website; as well as local email groups that are connected to various interest groups and neighborhoods in the community.

The expanded Steering Committee will hold its first working meeting within a month of the public meeting. Our intention is that the expanded committee will meet every two months initially and then quarterly for the foreseeable future in order to provide a platform for sharing of health activities and reviewing health needs within the community.

Our survey and focus group data shows that Acton residents are most interested in the following areas: Physical Wellness; Transportation; Environmental Awareness; and Food and Nutrition, so we will concentrate our initiatives related to these topics. This focus will give the Steering Committee a clear direction for discovering where there are opportunities for groups to work together and strengthen programming and action in these four specific areas. We intend that by gathering more residents together we will initiate a new coalition that will continue into the future.

“Active Acton” plans to expand communication with town residents about existing health resources and increase their education by providing information and programs especially

### **Implementation Plan – Recommendations (cont.)**

in the four focus areas. The first activity of the Steering Committee will be to identify and catalogue existing programming and activities and put them in one data collection document that will be transferred to a website we create. Dissemination of the data broadens communication and education to town residents by publicizing existing health resources.

This community website will provide links to all health activities that have been identified. We are very interested in the website that the city of Weymouth created (Healthy Wey Website) and plan to contact them for information and guidance. The website will include a blog or some other vehicle that allows a forum for feedback and dialogue from community members. The website will be updated monthly to ensure that information is as current and relevant as possible. Website development will begin within a month following the first meeting of the expanded Steering Committee and will continue in an ongoing manner. The website launch will occur by late spring of 2011. We will use Google analytics to learn how actively the website is used.

Another form of community outreach will provide print materials in a central location. A host of materials already exist but we hear from some of our current Steering Committee members that much is not utilized i.e. information about recycling, conservation land, hiking trails, etc. By assembling all materials in a permanent site that is well publicized, our intention is that residents will frequent the locale and make better use of the literature. As the Steering Committee continues its work, additional materials may be created as they pertain to our four focus areas. We envision providing information about the most pertinent town needs such as the town shuttle (currently an underused service); Lyme Disease (a growing concern); seasonal information such as flu shot availability; Farmer's Market information and NARA Park activities; and events such as Wellness University to cite a few examples. Materials will be reviewed quarterly and will be part of the Steering Committee's mission to ensure that information is current and available. This display may be housed in a new location for the Recreation Department that is currently in negotiation. Once this option is known, plans for the permanent display will be formalized.

In our continuing effort to reach out to all members of the community we plan to provide materials, whether web-based or print, in English, Chinese, Spanish and Portuguese. We plan to use student and community volunteers to assist with this part of the project

## **Implementation Plan – Recommendations (cont.)**

and will continue to focus on the diverse needs of the community and remain aware of the change in population demographics.

Programs that educate residents about Physical Wellness; Transportation; Environmental Awareness and Food and Nutrition will be an integral part of the Implementation Grant. We will work closely with our coalition partners particularly the Health, Recreation and Community Education departments to ensure that we are enhancing their plans and not duplicating efforts. We will advertise existing programs and sponsor new ones based on suggestions from our data collection. i.e. cooking healthier on a budget, keeping fit in winter, etc. Promotion of existing programs will begin in the spring of 2011 and new program plans will launch in the summer, 2011 and continue in an ongoing manner.

Acton is facing the same challenges as are most communities with shrinking resources and increasing need to improve community health. HOPE Steering Committee members believe that the health of the community will strengthen through improving collaboration, sharing resources and developing new ways of providing opportunities in the future. Expanding the HOPE coalition is essential to that effort. Enhanced publicity and education is also key. Additionally, funding a Project Coordinator to oversee activities will ensure that the outlined proposals will be carried out and deliverables will be provided in a timely manner.

Many of our Steering Committee members plan to remain with the committee during the implementation phase. We are very fortunate to have such dedicated and talented people serve on the committee. They represent town departments and various constituencies in the Acton. We will continue to rely on the Health Department team to provide guidance and assist with the administrative details of the grant. We will employ the services of a local web developer, Janice Ward, who has created numerous web sites for Acton schools and community organizations including Green Acton and Healthcare Management Systems. To assist with the activity of the planning grant we hired a consultant, Jan Stewart. She has been present at each of the steering committee meetings and our events. She is interested in remaining involved in the Implementation Grant and would be appointed as the grant coordinator. Jan has been a health coordinator for a local school system, is a trained professional coach and has outstanding strengths in bringing teams together and motivating them to produce results.



## **Implementation Plan – Recommendations (cont.)**

We hope that other health groups will see the value in joining the Steering Committee. We want to engage as many people as possible so that the committee represents all voices concerned with health.

We remain attentive to having the Steering Committee membership reflect the diversity of the Acton community. The challenge is getting people involved and committed to continuous participation.

We have set aside some funding for each of the focus areas to support special, one-time projects pertaining to Physical Wellness; Transportation; Environmental Awareness; and Food and Nutrition. The current Steering Committee has many ideas based on input received from the community as to how this funding would be used. We would fund projects that would link several of the key focus areas with one project i.e. fund a school garden that would provide produce for school lunches and help educate students about nutrition and promote environmental awareness; create a Safe Routes to School program similar to the town of Bedford and/or walking school buses to escort elementary students to nearby schools thereby promoting physical wellness and reducing carbon emissions caused by buses and cars; extend hours of the shuttle van on Sunday and provide transportation to the Farmer's Market and provide display racks for the shuttle van that would contain pertinent health information. We want to consult with the other groups already working on health initiatives that join our newly expanded Steering Committee to vet these ideas and obtain additional suggestions before we allocate the funds. The possibility of funding a special project might also increase interest and participation in our "Active Acton" Steering Committee.

We want to honor our overarching goal of filling gaps and avoiding duplication of effort. We also want to feel that the funding from the Implementation Grant is a collaboration of as many health entities as possible. Challenges may arise making committee decisions about what projects to support but we plan to have the Steering Committee establish a list of criteria for proposals and use a democratic "majority rules" process to make selections.

There are many organizations, town departments and individuals already doing wonderful work to make Acton a healthier community. In addition to the town departments previously mentioned (Health, Recreation, Community Education) some organizations that directly relate to our four focus areas include: Acton Boxborough Farmer's Market, Acton Conservation Trust, Acton Food Pantry, Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Citizens for Environmental Safety, Green Acton, Open Space Committee and the

## **Implementation Plan – Recommendations (cont.)**

Transportation Advisory Committee. Our Implementation Grant work will strengthen each of these groups by building coalitions, spreading the word about each group's mission and getting more people involved. Awareness about what constitutes a healthy community will increase, enthusiasm will grow with shared partnerships and we expect that there will be a continued stream of grass roots person power that will sustain the Healthy Communities Project into the future.

We will meet with the Town Manager, Board of Selectmen and Master Planning Committee to inform them about our committee's work and brainstorm about ways that building a healthier community can be incorporated into the town's long range goals.

During the implementation phase of the Healthy Communities Project we plan to approach local businesses that have a focus on health such as fitness centers and health food stores as well as medical and dental offices and our community hospital to see if they will contribute funds to support our initiatives in the future. We will also explore foundations and other sources for grant funding.

We hope that the energy and hours put into the Healthy Communities Planning and Implementation grant will yield stronger communication, heightened support and long lasting effects that will result in a healthier town of Acton.

**Note: Submitted to CHNA 15 as part of the Implementation Grant Proposal**

## VIII. Acton's Demographics

Ages of Acton Residents			
<b>Total Population</b>		<b>21622</b>	
Ages	16-25	3483	16%
Ages	26-24	1238	6%
Ages	35-44	2320	11%
Ages	44-54	4697	22%
Ages	55-64	2969	14%
Ages	65-74	1377	6%
Ages	75+	1048	5%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>* 79%</b>
* Remaining population under the age of 16			

Survey Results by Age		
<b>Total</b>		<b>615</b>
Ages	16-25	1 %
Ages	26-24	3.67%
Ages	35-44	23 %
Ages	44-54	33.71%
Ages	55-64	15.81%
Ages	65-74	14.22%
Ages	75+	8.31%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100 %</b>

## **IX. Appendix A**

### **HOPE Public Forum Roundtable Discussion Questions, April 28, 2010**

#### **Physical Wellness**

Examples: Accessibility and availability of walking trails, winter fitness options, bike trails, swimming pools, fitness facilities, town programs, other

1. What opportunities would you like to see Acton offer?
2. What health facilities would you use that are not available?

#### **Transportation**

Examples: Public transportation around town; sidewalks, rail trail, bike lane or commuter rail issues, other

1. In what ways does Acton meet your transportation needs?
2. What would you like to see added?

#### **Environmental Awareness**

Examples: indoor air quality, outdoor air quality, water quality, other toxin and hazards, land use, other

1. Would you like to know more about the environmental health of your community?
2. What would you like the community to pay more attention to?

#### **Food and Nutrition**

Examples: Accessibility and affordability of foods that provide for your nutritional or food-tradition needs (i.e., grocery stores, restaurants, local farms, farmer's markets); school lunch programs; senior center lunch offerings, other

1. What are the biggest challenges you face in providing a healthy meal?
  - o For Adults?
  - o For Children?

## **X. Appendix B**

### **Information from Chinese Language School Focus Group, 2/28/10**

Thank you for inviting us. Our mission today is to tell you about a project we are working on and to get you excited about this project so you pass this information on to all your friends and family. We are Cathy Fochtman and Barbara Willson, members of the HOPE steering committee. HOPE stands for Health Outreach Planning Essentials.

#### **Background**

Acton is one of two local towns recently awarded a Healthy Communities Planning Grant by CHNA 15; the other town is Lincoln. CHNA 15 has been active in the following communities it serves: Acton, Bedford, Boxborough, Burlington, Carlisle, Concord, Lexington, Lincoln, Littleton, Wilmington, Winchester, and Woburn), and is one of 27 Community Health Network Areas.

CHNA 15 was created by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health in 1992. CHNA's mission is to build healthier communities in Massachusetts through community-based prevention planning and health promotion.

The Acton Health Department, in collaboration with the Planning Department and the Recreation Department, received \$15,000 in order to begin this planning process.

A steering committee has been established and we have been meeting monthly since September. We would love to have a representative from your group join our committee. We usually meet on a Wednesday afternoon at Town Hall. Our next meeting is Wednesday, March 24.

It is important to note that one of the conditions of the grant requires that there be no specific agenda to start. As steering committee members, we are impartial collectors and conveyors of information.

Our goal is to receive as much input from as many people as possible so that the steering committee can develop an implementation plan that responds to the needs of the whole community. That's why we are delighted to be here to get some input from all of you.

With your information and the data we collect from other people in the town, we will develop an implementation plan, and hope to receive more funds from CHNA to put our ideas into action.

#### **Survey (pass out the survey and review it)**

One of the ways we are gathering information is by conducting a survey. Our committee worked together to create this survey that we are passing out now. Our committee is committed to attending monthly meetings and if anyone is interested in joining our committee please speak to one of us after this meeting or contact Sheryl Ball at the Town Health Department.

The definition of Health is broad, so the committee chose the following categories:

- Physical Wellness
- Food and Nutrition
- Transportation
- Public Health Information and Education
- Community Connections/Communication
- Environmental Awareness
- Mental Health and Wellness
- Diversity
- Other topics that you might suggest

Does anyone have any questions?

We'd like to have you take a moment to complete the survey now and return it to us. (Explain that there are three choices for rating each category and then a place for comments.) Thank you for your time and attention.

## XI. Appendix C — Summation of Survey Results

TRANSPORTATION	
<b>Examples:</b>	Public transportation around town; sidewalks, rail trail, bike lane or commuter rail issues
<b>Comments</b>	
<b>General Comments</b>	
	Efforts that get people out of cars and propelling themselves independently will also increase the level of health in the community.
	A waste of money not presently available.
	We have no money to waste at this time. Wake up.
	These are significant issues facing our town and need to be high on the priority list.
	Not a health issue and low priority given current economic conditions.
	Extra High Priority
	Kelly's Corner congestion at rush hour — leveled intersection.
	Intersection of Concord Road and 27 — dangerous
	Link transportation with healthy exercise, ie, teaching that we can perform local errands on a bike.
	<b>Sidewalks</b>
	More sidewalks should be a high priority!
	More sidewalks!
	Sidewalks really need improvement.
	Sidewalks would also help!
	Sidewalks — more and smoother.
	More sidewalks or bike lanes.
	High Street from 27 to 62 needs sidewalks before someone is killed. PLEASE!!!! I see commuters walking in sticks and snow. DESPERATE NEED!!!
	We walk every day. But we do not need the entire town sidewalked, only the main roads. Neighborhoods streets do not need sidewalks.
	Sidewalks are the most important, as they allow regular walks to nearby stores and just to get some sunshine (at least for 8 months of the year).
	Especially sidewalks
	Most interested in rail trail, combined sidewalk/bikeways to important areas of town. Widen sidewalks along RT 111, where many children walk and bike to school.
	More sidewalks are very important.
	Sidewalks, we need to increase sidewalks on places like Willow Street where people have to walk in the road.

Appendix C [cont'd.]

I believe that the Town should continue to build sidewalks working from the center of town outwards. Newtown Road often has walkers three abreast from early morning to evening. In addition, high school students can only walk a portion of Arlington safely home.
Sidewalks
Sidewalk
Continuation of sidewalks on Willow Street --- a very busy street.
Most important. More sidewalks the better! Keep us all healthy.
Sidewalk
Acton prides itself on its rural nature. Rural areas don't have sidewalks. I have never encountered a traffic jam in conservation land.
Sidewalks would be great although difficult in some parts of town (Arlington St by the Church of Good Shepherd.
More sidewalks would make this town more walkable.
Sidewalks = please keep expanding on major roads (rt 2A, 27, 111 Central St, Newtown Road).
As someone who likes to walk I would like to see more sidewalks in Acton.
Sidewalks are needed. If they were in better condition you wouldn't need public transportation. Not that we can afford it anyway. We're a small town when it comes to that kind of expense. Get real! And a bike lane? There's room for that or a sidewalk --- you choose. Our streets aren't big enough, homeowners won't give up their property for both nor can we afford funding for both.
Sidewalks desperately needed on High St. from 27-62.
Especially around the Conant School. There should not be a school that isn't accessible by sidewalks on all sides!
Paved paths for connectivity between contiguous areas otherwise reachable only by long car rides.
No lighting, e.g. on Prospect Street for walking from commuter rail.
Paved areas of connectivity --- Overlook Drive area through Heath Hen Meadow to cemetery and West Acton.
High school to Hosmer house/commercial area
Idylwild area to Boxborough
More sidewalks (exercise --- not driving) 2A/27 northward on 27).
Put in sidewalks where necessary.
More Sidewalks would help
More/better walkways and safe bikeways that are connected to community assets is very important.
Sidewalks on High Street are high for me. Need a connection between the shopping mall and the train station.
Sidewalks throughout town and bike lanes would be appreciated.
I'd love a sidewalk from Acorn park area to Veteran's field. My kids would love to ride their bikes but there isn't a sidewalk the whole way, plus they'd have to cross Rt. 2 a few times.
We have plenty of options. Just need to add/improve sidewalks on busy streets.

**Appendix C [cont'd.]**

I'd like to see sidewalks or bike lanes along all critical/busy streets.
Sidewalks please.
Sidewalks are very important.
Sidewalks!
More sidewalks on busy streets.
Some sidewalks are not needed for safe walking. Walking trails and bike trails is a better option! Commuter options still need improved.
Need sidewalks so that children have the option of walking or biking to school safely.
Yes to more sidewalks.
South Acton needs road and sidewalk maintenance.
Even sidewalks throughout town would help. Bike lanes on the roads would be a bonus.
<b>Sidewalks and Bike Lanes</b>
Bike lanes might be of interest. I'm afraid to ride my bike on main roads but don't know if designated lanes alone would make it safe.
We need to make this town more walkable and bikeable. Get people out of cars.
Very important to improve biking/walking access to schools and around main school campus.
Bike trails and safe sidewalks would be great.
Bike lanes or trails that get to useful locations and sidewalks throughout town would be appreciated.
The sidewalk initiative in Acton has been transformative and needs to continue. The need to use a car to get anywhere in this town affects public health/fitness, our sense of community, and mental health (isolation). Safe bicycle paths and public transportation are also an important element of this overall plan to enable people to get outdoors, exercise, leave their cars behind, and connect with the community more directly.
Sidewalks and rail trail
Sidewalk and bike lane
Sidewalks and rail trail to encourage walking and bikes for local trips.
<b>Town Shuttle Bus</b>
Shuttle bus to South Acton Station from a satellite parking lot.
Give me a break. Bus system for Acton? Do you not live in today's economy?
Sr. van does this?
Town should continue exploring some type of shuttle service.
It is good to have a bus deliver people to commuter rail.
I would love to see townwide van service for citizens who use commuter rail.
Fully support shuttle bus option around town.



Appendix C [cont'd.]

Local taxi service needed.
Public transportation around town.
Shuttle van project should go forward.
Town to town along route 27.
Shuttle — a help to seniors and others who can't/prefer not to drive at night (i.e., transportation to Town Meeting).
Shuttle
If Shuttle went to Concord "The Ride" could be accessed.
Concern about underutilization of new shuttle — perhaps offer an incentive to get folks to try it.
Some need for rides to Boston (esp. medical).
COA Van — program drivers not allowed to assist riders (website or person to coordinate list of volunteers to assist riders).
Bus services to promote sociability/quality of life.
I think the van project must go through.
A local van service would be so helpful for those who do not drive and might also cut down on emissions if more people used a van instead of their cars.
Public transportation around town. Support townwide shuttle service.
<b>Sidewalks to Train</b>
Piper Road is a death trap. Every time I drive on it (2-4 times a day) I see people walking along the side of the road. It needs a sidewalk. People walk to the Roche Bros./CVS shopping center via Piper Road in addition to walking their dogs, children, running, biking. I would too if it wasn't so dangerous. Also serious concern about the MBTA's proposal to build a platform at South Acton Train Station — with no regard for the historic nature of the area.
Sidewalks on main streets (i.e., Stow Street, Martin Street, Main Street) and better access to the train station from the south (i.e. from Maple Street).
All of High Street should have a sidewalk for better access to the train station.
<b>General Transportation</b>
Public transportation would make Acton much more welcoming to seniors and workers without cars.
I like the ideas of public transportation — especially for JH and HS kids who need to get home from after school activities.
It would reduce my whole family's stress tremendously to have better transportation options, particularly public transportation around town and commuter rail parking commensurate with the actual number of riders.
In town public transportation can help those that cannot drive.
Encourage more taxi services.

## Appendix C [cont'd.]

Hurray for the work on the shuttle! Let's support/expand that over time. Let's go for a 2-tiered parking structure at the train station in the section where the elevation makes it doable, with a living/green roof on top; got to get folks out of their cars! Back at regional transportation: What about commuter vans to Alewife station and back during rush hours?
Our home in North Acton is very isolated unless you have a car so it restricts how much freedom teens can have due to how narrow Route 27 is.
Feel a transportation system like Lexington has is a good means of getting around town.
Need way more options in the way of public transportation and bike lanes for commuting.
Public transportation greatly needed.
We don't need public transportation at this time but maybe in the future.
I have macular degeneration. I will at some point be unable to drive.
Not public transportation; cannot see how it would work for my family.
There are so many transportation issues, it would be nice to target the population
Absolutely critical — we need to be able to get around town and into Boston and other communities.
Public transportation around town is important.
We have to figure out solutions to getting around Acton that are an alternative
Public transportation in and around town would contribute to community connection.
As a senior citizen I discover one friend after another who is unable to drive.
Public transportation — important for the elderly that don't drive.
Handicap accessibility
For now I have a car, this can change.
Anyone without a car is stuck in this area
As one who can no longer drive, I am desperate for more transportation options for nights and weekends.
With aging population, public transportation is more important than ever — also limits traffic.
Public transportation around town.
Public transportation — yes.
Area malls
Saturday traffic too heavy mid day.
Widen roads
More public transportation — busses.
Better bike opportunities in town.
Main School Campus should be more pedestrian and bike accessible/friendly, safe - separation of bike/auto/pedestrian traffic for Safety — Taylor Road especially unsafe.

Appendix C [cont'd.]

Favor public transportation. Commuter rail has issues.
Not enough density to make public trans work. We need better pedestrian and bicycle connectivity.
Would love to have public transportation and it would be nice to see more sidewalks, especially to commuter rail.
<b>Train</b>
The train station parking lot should be big enough that there are always some empty spaces.
Parking structure at the rail station should be designed to fit into neighborhood.
Train/parking access very important.
Hope the South Acton station redo gets straightened out.
The commuter rail station improvements on schedule will not help our health, but more parking would.
Commuter Rail station updating and parking.
More parking for cars at the Acton Railway Station.
Need more parking spaces at the train station, both resident-sticker and metered.
Commuter rail — stations need to be strengthened in other towns — traffic is coming from people driving here from other towns.
Public transportation around town would be good.
Commuter Rail Issues — current plan will not be helpful to mothers with children in tow, handicapped or seniors.
Commuter rails needs more parking and shelter from rain and snow.
Alewife station
Light at exit from commuter rail stations/traffic control.
More parking at commuter rail station.

**Total Town Survey Comments = 118 Total Forum Comments = 25**  
**AG=General Comments (9) ; S=Sidewalks (50), SB = Sidewalks, Bike Lanes (10); SH = Shuttle (20);**  
**ST = Sidewalks to train (3); TG = General Transportation (36) TR = Train/commuter rail (14)**

**ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS**

**Examples: indoor air quality, outdoor air quality, water quality, other toxin and hazards, land use**

**General Comments**

Important, but probably more effective at the state level.

Feel we already receive this information.

Should be number one on your list!

Use Town communication network.

I am fully aware of the environment thank you. There are too many progressives and socialists using up good Oxygen and exhaling Carbon Dioxide! Get out of my private life — I don't want my tax \$\$ being spent on socialist oozy-goohy stuff like this!

We have no money to waste at this time. Wake up.

The low hanging fruit here is gone — most people in our town are fairly good stewards of the environment. No need to beat ourselves on the head constantly about this.

Only because think current status is good

Keep after W.R Grace.

Town government covers this.

40B locations

Environmental quality underlies almost all other issues — without a healthy environment (indoors and out)

I consider these issues to be standard public mandates.

I think post-W.R. Grace contamination, Acton is vigilant.

Is there anyone in town unaware??? We've already debated light pollution at Town Meeting and the water department is very forthcoming with their reports.

We all need to protect our environment — very important.

Top priority after all these years with W.R. Grace. You'll have to deal with EPA federal and state mandates.

Sewers — Yes if Town maintains these and community uses them. Community needs to be made aware of toxins in them.

Link whatever is done to schools.

Comprehensive Town planning to decide how big town should be.

Ensure that businesses are good town citizens.

Appendix C [cont'd.]

Starting clubs - not a quick fix but could put on emails/ads to see who is interested in leading. Could start with walking club. S.E. would lead 2 days a week.
Study how other towns manage growth.
Outdoor air harder to do something about.
All 4 issues are intertwined.
Lots of residents leave after kids are in school — so they don't have a long-term commitment.
<b>Education</b>
Nature programs for kids and their families, guided tours of properties, more Tom Tidman tours. (repeat of above): can Town, in connex with ABFM, Comm. Ed., Morrison, etc., do public ed programming on food/ag/enviro issues? Topics: (1) avoiding toxins in the home, and toxic lawn & garden products — what are the safe alternatives? (2) do you know what's in your food supply? how to choose safe foods; (3) water: conserving it, keeping it pure; what are the threats? Many more where those came from!
Action does okay with this but continuing education is helpful.
Deer tick and Lyme disease
Focus on invasive plants that overrun native plants and leads to loss of native birds and animals.
Again, in particular, the problem of Lyme disease. It becomes harder and harder to enjoy the outdoors and backyards here. Please be proactive now.
Increase awareness of conservation lands through guided tours on weekends.
Yes connect human health to the health of the planet. Keep our air and water clean.
Imagine understanding the environmental impact of the change of use! Wow...
This information is readily available on websites — misinformation can be passed along.
Need more public outreach and information.
I think education/awareness raising efforts around indoor and outdoor air quality.
Would like to be informed via townwide phone call as we do with school system notifications if there is reason for concern with local environment issues (i.e. air quality, toxins, etc.).
Constant ongoing education — most important.
Educate kids and they take it home.
<b>Hazardous Materials</b>
Storage of hazardous chemicals in occupied structures and their potential impact on indoor air quality and health. Make community aware of new MassDEP requirements for upgrading oil tanks to prevent sub-slab leakage, could be done through the fire department who issues the permits!

## Appendix C [cont'd.]

Town should have additional Hazardous Waste days. I'm sure people just throw things out when they can't get to the days designated by the Town.
Household chemicals — more education about disposal.
Hazardous Waste day is very useful.
Indoors is the homeowner's responsibility. Outdoors there is nothing you can do outside of putting up a big fan to blow the pollution back to New Jersey. I will grant that Hazardous Waste Day is a good idea. Cramping sewers down the town's throat is wrong!
<b>Indoor Environment</b>
Indoor air quality — get rid of cigarette smoke in senior housing and other places.
Especially schools, libraries, for indoor environmental hazards. Promote environment.
I believe we all need to go in this direction.
Air quality — open windows at the schools, instead of A/C.
<b>Land Use</b>
Land use: make sure conservation areas are preserved and properly maintained, and that land use is appropriate for the Town's vision.
Land use is always important... minimizing/restricting development.
Other examples are encouraging native plants to strengthen local ecology.
Especially protecting (or creating) more forests and grasslands.
Mandate zero pesticide use until impact is evaluated (why are there no more fireflies?).
More purchasing of conservation land and contiguous parcels.
Create a sustainable land use plan.
Land use drives everything.
Concern about Lyme disease, strongly connected with the increasing deer population, needs support of our town! Outdoor play, gardening, walking our trails becomes a threat to many who enjoy Acton.
<b>Recycling</b>
Minimize waste, save money.
Decrease packaging.
Styrofoam recycling
Styrofoam/microwave
More recycling at transfer station — can fee be lowered or released?
Sell recycle bins.
Use implementation money to get rid of Styrofoam plates

Appendix C [cont'd.]

Composting
Reusable bottles to replace juice boxes.
Concord is banning water bottles. We may want to see how they are marketing this goal.
<b>Water Quality</b>
Water quality especially.
Water quality — (high dissolved particle count; hard water).
I think water quality is a very important topic to address.
Especially interested in water quality since we have our own Water Supply District and are drinking the water from wells right here in town.
Water quality!!
Quality water maintenance at a reasonable price is important.
Water quality
We need to maintain the quality of the drinking water supply. The water supply capacity is an issue the town ignores while chasing places for sewers.
Especially public water supply.
I am still suspect of our "brown" water from time to time.
The town water is AWFUL. The manganese level is 10 times higher than what is recommended!
Without clean air and water, what's the point?
Our drinking water is always important.
Thanks Water Dept., very informative, but they should go paperless with their reports online.
Water quality, other toxins and hazards in town are always important.
I've heard people stop drinking the tap water (permanently) because of concerns about contaminants in the water supply.
Water conservation
Educate regarding fertilizer on lawns and how it affects groundwater.
Decrease use of bottled water - not as good as tap water minerals have been taken out.
Water fountains at playing fields.

Environmental Awareness Comments

Appendix C [cont'd.]

Town Forum Environmental comments: 28

Total Town Survey Environmental comments: 62

E= education (15); G= general (26); HM = hazardous materials (6); IE = indoor environment (4); LU= land use (9); W = water(20)

R= Recycling(10)



PHYSICAL WELLNESS

<p><b>Examples: Accessibility and availability of walking trails, winter fitness options, bike trails, swimming pools, fitness facilities, town programs</b></p>
<p><b>General Comments</b></p>
<p>Health and wellness is a priority across all ages. Schools and public buildings should be open and accessible to more activities and programs.</p>
<p>Do not spend any money to expand these facilities.</p>
<p>We have no money to waste at this time. Wake up.</p>
<p>Acton has plenty of areas and programs for physical wellness.</p>
<p>I think we are doing well and need to maintain what we've got.</p>
<p>In this technology-driven age, and with childhood (and adult) obesity at crisis levels, it's important to the overall health and well being (socially, emotionally and physically) to highlight these options — many of which we already have, one of the reasons Acton is such a great town to live in.</p>
<p>We are 79 and 80 at a younger age we did all.</p>
<p>Already well handled by Town of Acton.</p>
<p>COA programs, NARA should be eliminated, recreation can be decreased.</p>
<p>Move it or lose it!</p>
<p>Current resources adequate.</p>
<p>This is something the town could do without high cost that could really add to the value of the community.</p>
<p>Good already</p>
<p>Accessibility for all ages, physical condition.</p>
<p>Safety Issue</p>
<p>Fundraising activities — raise funds to build community center.</p>
<p>Fund? Town Fund? Fee base charges?</p>
<p>Town has a lot but it is fragmented.</p>
<p>Sr. center does some of this?</p>
<p>Preventive care such as H1N1 flu shots</p>
<p>This entire area has all these things. There is no need for anything new.</p>
<p>No waiting in conservation land.</p>
<p>I am mostly satisfied with available options.</p>

Appendix C [cont'd.]

<b>Facilities</b>
Love NARA park as an option.
Winter fitness options — use Acton pool and gym facilities more often.
Better parks for our children.
Make space available for youth and adult athletic activities.
Additional tennis courts, or publicly posted Rules of Etiquette and appropriate periods for singles or doubles play, so that new residents, often from countries don't bring families and monopolize courts for several hours at a time.
The availability of facilities (natural and manmade) in town only make the town a more attractive place to live — encouraging our citizens toward healthy habits is only beneficial.
Link accessibility of facilities with the need for regular exercise.
Nara Park, Team Works, the Arboretum, and multiple parks provide plenty of physical activity.
Activities that require new buildings (swimming pools, fitness centers) are NOT of interest to me.
Handicap accessibility
Mandate playgrounds in new housing areas.
NARA park — need publicity, misconception around cost, clear the myths, some people think you must join to use the park for any reason.
Playgrounds are only for little kids — add equipment for big kids/adults.
<b>Community Center</b>
Would love to have a decently priced community center/Boys & Girls Club with an indoor swimming pool.
Need affordable options like a Y.? Need to provide more services such as swimming and basketball to kids who do not get in line first at community ed. All should be served.
A YMCA type facility would be most helpful.
Community gathering place is needed.
It would be awesome if we had a recreation center like Concord or Sudbury. Many of us are paying a lot of money to drive to the recreation center or sports clubs in Concord or Sudbury to exercise/swim year round.
It would be great to have a YMCA in town or nearby.
Need a fitness center, e.g., YMCA.
Fitness facility (e.g., senior center, community ed, recreation center, not currently meeting the need — need more space/instructors/programs.
A fitness center available during the day for adults would be nice. When Senior Center expansion gets underway, include a pool for water aerobics and water physical therapy exercises.
YMCA

Appendix C [cont'd.]

<b>Indoor Facilities/Pool</b>
We should have our own hockey rink — not that dump called NVO.
Indoor fitness facilities can be used year-round and can be made cost-neutral. The others are nice to have, but take up too much real estate which will mean higher taxes for everyone even though only a small percentage will use them regularly.
Indoor town fitness facility available during school hours.
The high school fitness center, open to adults in the evening through Comm. Ed. is an under-advertised golden nugget of fitness opportunity!
Winter Fitness Options, fitness facilities, town-sponsored indoor gyms.
Too many private neighborhood pools! All the geese poop we encountered at Nara last year makes us not want to go back.
I would like to see a YMCA with pool.
A town swimming pool and gym are important to me.
Indoor Swimming Pool (heated) for seniors.
High School pool is not safe — water too cold/steps are steep, hard and slippery, stairwell need a guard rail, locker room filthy and unavailable.
I also believe that a town swimming pool along the lines of the one in Concord would be a great addition.
More neighborhood swimming pools, especially in Indian Village! A community center such as Beede in Concord would be great.
Swimming pools are important.
Interest in outdoor pool.
More swim time, fitness options.
Town pool like Atkinson in Sudbury would be ideal/ ABRHS pool is not adequate for the town's needs.
The High School Pool should be open more to the public — not just for lessons but for free swim and laps.
Town pool would really suit this area and make Acton as a community much more healthy, affordable and attractive. It would be terrific if there were a townwide swimming pool (instead of pools open only to a neighborhood).
Therapeutic water exercises in a warmed pool are not, I understand, available in Acton. Needed!
Swimming program for all ages can be managed by private business for training professional.
Central location for outdoor/indoor swimming pool.
Pools needed for renters or those without options in their neighborhood.
We could really use a public swimming pool in Acton. NARA is great, but not enough and is sometimes not clean enough for swimming.

Appendix C [cont'd.]

The pools in the area are always overcrowded — even if you can afford the Thoreau Club. Sidewalks would certainly help people get out and walk during the winter too.
Feel that a swimming pool, rather than pond, would be more desirable for swimming team especially given the excellence of our HS. It would allow all children a place to practice at a young age.
Indoor and outdoor swimming pools, ice skating rinks.
Indoor fitness oriented pool accessible to those with limitations.
<b>Recreational Activities</b>
I am especially interested in non-competitive programs for children. (Seems like the soccer program is particularly focused on travel, at the expense of options for less competitive players.)
Winter outdoor activities needed.
More classes for seniors to avoid waiting lists for classes.
Town programs for children as well as adults, like community ed, are best.
How do other towns handle fitness programs for seniors?
Fitness activities
Availability of different types of physical exercise opportunities is vital part.
Acton still needs more playing fields especially for kids age 12 and up.
Speed up process of bike trail.
Town programs offering sports and fitness options are appreciated as well as fitness facilities that are moderately priced. I think Acton already has an abundance of conservation land for hiking and our kids are mostly involved in team sports.
<b>Trails — Biking</b>
Multi-Modal Paths / Bike Trails are the highest priority.
Still hoping and waiting for our part of the bike trail.
Completion of the rail trail will be a huge impact on the town in this area.
Am very interested in bike lanes where that's possible, esp. leading to schools, conservation land, and village centers.
Bruce Freeman would be nice.
We need to build the Bruce Freeman trail and MANY MORE like it around town! It will make Acton more attractive and also healthier.
Bike trails for kids would be great. Family Trails.
Bruce Freeman Rail Trail
How many more of our trees does Paulina Knibbe want to cut down to avenge her dead relative? Get out of my private life — I don't want my tax \$\$ being spent on socialist oozy-goohy stuff like this!
Fund and build the rail trail!

Appendix C [cont'd.]

Finish rail trail, please!
A rail trail through Acton would be nice. I frequently drive to the Nashua River Rail Trail in Ayer.
Kids are not out enough — bike trail or not enough sidewalks.
Better parks for our children, bike trails for adults and children.
Bike trails would be nice!
Rail trail would be nice.
If they want a bike trail let them pay a fee to use it.
Bike lanes and bike trails must go through.
Would love more bike trail options and better bike lanes.
The highest priority should be to complete the Bruce Freeman bike trail segment.
We need better pedestrian and bicycle connectivity.
I would love there to be a bike trail — we use the new one in Westford.
Bruce Freeman rail trail should continue to be a high priority.
I think bike trails would be a huge benefit to the town, both for residents and merchants.
<b>Trails — Walking</b>
Maintaining the walking trails in the conservation land should be a priority too.
The town has great walking trails; I hope they continue to be maintained. I would love guided tours of trails on weekends, and XC ski lessons for beginners here in Acton on weekends. More bike trails please, rails to trails!
The Douglas-Gates boardwalk needs to be fixed to enable kids to walk to school.
Walking trails
There are sufficient walking trails now. No one is using the ones we have. I never see anyone when I use them.
Conservation land trails are great.
Walking trails — love the Arboretum.
Need to maintain open spaces where people can walk dogs such as at Morrison Farm.
I would like to have (human) walking trail guides available on weekends twice a year. I bought a book of mapped trails, but I need a guide to get started.
Walking trails high — others lower.
We need safer walking trails for elderly, single walkers, and students on campus at AB regional schools.
Walking trails are some of the highlights of our town and should be maintained ... more are always welcome! (e.g., Caouette land).
Most interested in walking trails.
Walkway between Douglas and Gates.

Appendix C [cont'd.]

Trail around Ice House Pond and connectivity with Morrison property.
Trails for snowshoeing, winter fitness options.
Walking trails are important.
<b>Trails — Walking and Biking</b>
I think walking trails, bike trails, and winter (affordable) community fitness are very important.
Increase options for adults — bike and walking trails, for example.
Walking trails, biking trails.
Walking and bike trails are very important.
Bike trail, X-country ski, walking trail of some length.
Walking trails and bike trails.
Interest in walking, biking club.

Total Town Survey Comments 103

Town Forum Comments 18

AG = General (23); F = Facilities (14); FCC = Community Center (9); FI = Fitness Indoor (4);  
 FP = Pool (22); R = Recreation (10); TB = Bike Trails (22); TW = Trails Walking (16);  
 TWB = Trails Walking Biking (7)

**FOOD AND NUTRITION**

**Examples: Accessibility and affordability of foods that provide for your nutritional or food-tradition needs (e.g., grocery stores, restaurants, local farms, farmers markets); school lunch programs; senior center lunch offerings**

**General Comments**

I already think that Acton is doing a good job — but it never hurts to keep thinking about how to improve this.

Individuals have to do this for themselves.

These are all here now. Look around.

Sr. Center does some of this?

I am satisfied with what is available.

Get out of my private life — I don't want my tax \$\$ being spent on socialist oozy-goohy stuff like this!

We have no money to waste at this time. Wake up.

Rated low since Acton has done a good job with this.

A little biased on this one, as I did some part time work at the Acton Meal Site, at the COA.

I think we do pretty well already (3 farm stands, farmer's market).

I think we are doing well and need to maintain what we've got.

Acton has these things.

Acton already has these programs in place.

I think we do a good job with this already.

Keep your nose out of refrigerator — no place for Town govt.

We have a lot of resources in this area — they are available for the choosing.

**Education**

Acton Reads Healthy Book a Month.

Doing Interactive Surveys.

We continue to need educational info re: nutrition.

**Farming/Farmer's Market**

More community gardening space.

## Appendix C [cont'd.]

Strong interest in fostering a local small farm option for getting food; this would support the growing national interest in local food, a continuation of Acton's history as a farming community, opportunities for learning about small-scale agriculture, and also providing affordable fresh food for schools, seniors and those of moderate income. I am thinking about a town-supported farm, in particular.
Larger farmer's market, more healthy restaurant choices.
Expand farmer's market to earlier/later in the season!
CSA and farmer's markets are a good thing.
More farmer's markets with convenient times.
Farmer's markets would be great and help bring the community together more.
The farmer's market in town is great, but expensive.
Acton's Farmer's market worked great and should be expanded.
Should promote development of further organic gardening, such as is being implemented at the Morrison Farm.
More people growing more of their own food will promote better health in several ways.
Support local farms; expand Farmers Market.
Morrison farm needs to be expanded as a community garden and education center.
Support our farmers market.
Farmers market was a great addition last year.
Availability of CSA memberships, farmers markets would help residents make good choices.
Esp. local farms and farmers markets.
Maintaining and supporting the links between Acton citizens and our local farms is critical.
Love the new farmers market in West Acton.
I'd love to see more healthy food options, expanding the farmers market, organic farming.
We have good produce stores and farmers' market already. We should continue this.
We like increased support for Farmers' market.
Farmers Market — extend season.
Donation box at Farmers Market.
Consumer outlets are less important to me. I think it's crucial, however, to encourage the new farmers market.
A bigger space for the farmer's market would be great.
Local farms, farmers market.
I love the farmers market.
West Acton Farmers Market is excellent!
Love the farmers' market in West Acton.



Appendix C [cont'd.]

We have a lot of organic choices already in town plus the new farmers market.
Local and organic. Glad about the farmers market.
The farmer's market last summer was phenomenal! It was a great place to get food.
The farmer's market last summer and fall was a great addition to Acton.
The prices at the farmers markets are rip offs.
Farmers market is too expensive.
Farmers market is great addition to town.
Keep the farmers markets — make it year round.
Local farms and farmers market.
Local farms, farmers markets, more local produce and healthy options.
Love the farmer's market. School lunch and farmers connections?
Pizza Gardens
Want a Town commission to help restore potential ag land to farming.
Yay for AB Farmers Market; want continued town support.
<b>Grocery Stores/Restaurants</b>
We like increased support for a variety of restaurants (we have made a good start with this).
Need more restaurants. Need restaurants open later in the evening.
I find the choices in this area to be adequate.
Thanks Acton, good job. If only Trader Joe's sold wine and beer...
We already have that ... let market decide.
We have good access to these.
I feel that between Idylwilde, Trader Joe's, local farms and the new West Acton Farmers Market, Acton already has a decent food selection. Keep it up!
Acton needs more "natural foods" restaurants.
More restaurants but less publicly funded programs.
Acton has adequate and numerous access to very diverse food and nutritional programs.
Gluten-free foods are very expensive and difficult to find.
Compared to other parts of the country, we have very good choices here as far as food selection. We are very lucky.

Appendix C [cont'd.]

Acton is in desperate need of healthy and diverse restaurant options, especially with the growing number of young families entering this area. A local restaurant with tasty quality food that comes from local farms would be a nice alternative to the multiple pizza/pasta restaurants in Acton.
I think we have a variety of grocery stores and Farmers Markets available to residents.
The market does this — not a government function.
We have affordable food at our stores. Look at the ads and buy what's on sale.
Residents travel to Westford for more affordable groceries.
I have to eat properly on about \$25 week. Can't eat out.
Would like to see more variety in restaurants offered locally — there is not much selection or variety in offerings.
Acton totally lacks good restaurant choices. We need a Panera bread at least in the town.
We'd love to see another restaurant or two.
More restaurants with healthy options, not enough restaurants at all. Bring more in!
Roche Bros. and Donelan's are traditional leaders in industry as is Stop and Shop and Shaw's located here or near.
If you want affordable food, go to Market Basket, which is mobbed by people in Acton.
Grocery stores are great.
Chinese grocery store — host classes.
Is there a distributor who offers more cultural diversity?
Fish bought locally.
Food distribution determines choices.
Good choice of food stores in Acton.
Local produce in grocery stores, restaurants.
We already have three grocery stores, specialty grocer, ethnic grocer, and a farmers market.
<b>Nutrition</b>
What is needed most is education about nutrition — namely, we need to switch from the current mania with low-fat (and the resulting high-carb) diet, to a low-carb (and moderate-to-high-fat) diet. The current food pyramid is contributing to the obesity epidemic rather than solving it.
Programs to target especially youth obesity and also adult obesity.
Low fat foods — not full — eat unhealthy foods.
Access to food/knowledge of what to do with it.
Organic or not . . . .
Chemicals in food

Appendix C [cont'd.]

Learning to make balanced meals.
Sell soup to raise money for healthy initiatives.
Food Pantry — lot of salt/give recipes.
Obesity in Children
Diabetes
Costs of health impairment
Eastern diet (some lactose intolerance)
More fish/less chicken.
Make recipe book.
Meet with Mambo Sprouts.
<b>Schools/School Lunches</b>
Bring back home economics into the school curriculum.
Though for prepared meals such as at school or the senior center, the importance of healthy choices is critical.
Make sure students and seniors have healthy and appealing lunch options.
Improved school lunches for the elementary schools.
Healthy school lunches.
Providing good nutritious food for our children at school.
School lunches have improved nutritionally.
Family responsibility except for school lunch program.
Fresh fruit and veggies in school lunches.
Good school and senior lunch offering.
Better school lunches.
School lunches need to get more healthy!
There are lots of ways to get this information if one is really interested. I do think there should be a focus on those programs the Town has ownership like lunch programs.
Very important! I wish the schools had better, healthier options. I wish they linked up with local farms more. Especially the meats!
School lunches are awful.
School lunch options seem to be improving, keep it up!
Better nutritional components in school lunches! Enough nuggets, yogurt with corn syrup, hydrogenated oils, etc.
School lunch program. More nutritional options, less (high fat, high calorie) junk foods, sodas. More fruits, veggies, etc.

**Appendix C [cont'd.]**

Senior center lunch offerings — some foods are not appropriate for seniors.
In particular, school lunch programs and senior center lunch offerings; also encourage local farmers markets.
Please work on school lunch programs — more whole wheat bread and fewer hot dogs and chicken nuggets.
Would like to see more locally grown produce available in schools — ideally with students.
Healthy choices for lunch.
Continue offering healthy food options in schools. Get rid of candy and other junk food in schools.
Healthy school lunch
Healthy book sections in schools.
School lunches
Cultural diversity of school lunches — send home recipes.
School gardens
Healthy birthday snacks.
National School Lunch Program — many more ideas.
Healthy eating in curriculum.
No soft drinks/salty snack bar in high school.
Bubblers at sports fields.
Fix water fountains at school.
Bring back home economics cooking classes.
Lack of microwave at school.
Ban white bread in schools.
Senior lunch offering.
Continued improvement of school food programs, esp. with focus on seasonal local/regional veggies and fruits.
Food job with Butterbrook; let's expand school connections with area farms and Mass Ag in the Classroom.

**Total Town Survey Comments 103; Total Town Forum Comments 48**

**AG = General Comments (17) ; E = Education (3); F = Farming/Farmer's Market (42) ;  
G/R = Groceries/Restaurants (32); N = Nutrition (16) S = Schools (41)**

## XII. Appendix D Public Forum Results, October 21, 2009

<b>What brought you here today?</b>
Interested in healthy community.
To learn more about the health environment.
Grant participant
Volunteer on Healthy Community Committee.
My own poor health.
Email from Sheryl
Want bike trail now, not in 10 years. Concerns about lack of ability to take walks in winter (ice). Lack of community center. Lack of community centered fitness area. Wish there was access to an outside swimming pool.
Curiosity — have worked with Green Acton and Economic Development Committee about future plans for Acton.
An interest in improving Acton.
I wanted to hear more about this process and provide input.
General interest in maintaining the health I have and possibly to improve the health of others.
<b>What did you learn?</b>
Basic health community.
"Leveraging what you have," "working with groups that are already doing it."
Challenges, plans, actions
An idea of how to start this project.
A healthy community can be achieved by doing the usual things — just better. And can be achieved at low cost.
Change can happen with community support.
Got a good understanding of what Fall River has done and how it might apply to Acton's efforts.
Concerned citizens can accomplish a lot.
Great presentation by the speaker from Fall River.
A lot about the power of alliances.

## Appendix D (con't) Public Forum Results, October 21, 2009

### What questions would you like to see on a townwide survey?

How to form and enjoy healthy habits.

Are you aware of your home indoor air quality?

What transformations would make Acton a healthier community?

Stress level of most working family. The sense of community of the population. The food quality in school lunches. The available recreation facility in the community.

What health concerns do you have? What would help you improve your health and/or quality of life?

Health issues of Acton residents relative to Massachusetts. Outline walking routes that are not on trails in woods. Healthier food services for students in Acton schools.

How can we diminish the isolation/lack of activity . . . during our long winters? How can we increase socialization? Who is responsible for salting icy sidewalks in areas that don't have houses near them?

What are major health issues in Acton? What facilities would you use for your health but are not available? What do you do to maintain your own health? (exercise, etc.)

1. Has anyone in your household been diagnosed with or suspected of having Lyme disease? 2. Do you feel safe walking in Acton? 3. Do you feel safe bicycling in Acton? 4. What are the 3 places in Acton you would most like to bicycle to?

### What is your vision of a healthy community?

Since in New England, much of our time is spent indoors. I would like to see better indoor environmental quality, especially (with) diseases like asthma, respiratory tract conditions.

Many of our buildings and homes are of considerable vintage, and we need to update materials, equipment, processes for better indoor environment for Town office users as well as residents.

Be active, healthy eating.

Educating community on existing outdoor exercise opportunities — conservation areas, parks.

Harmony, diversity, sense of community. Proud of community. More public accessible programs.

Town that makes, or has, resources available for its residents and is able to publicize their availability.

## Appendix D (con't) Public Forum Results, October 21, 2009

Folks in Acton thinking twice of how they approach their daily life, then actually doing it.

More low-cost fitness opportunities (Tai Chi in Arboretum every morning at 7 am). Opportunities to walk indoors during winter (in high school from 3–5 pm). More intergenerational projects, mentoring.

A community that mandates Green Building (LEEDS) for healthy environments inside buildings and provides sidewalks and safe access for walking to stores and other town facilities.

Intergenerational. All age groups, genders, ethnic groups respected. Walking and biking promoted.

### Other comments?

We need to get more people involved. Get the ideas into neighborhood and families. Look for leaders of neighborhood and local groups. Let kids lead parent or parent lead kids on healthy life.

Mental health needs to be a component.

Very interesting concepts were presented. I especially liked the air quality change by doing event outside — not at a keyboard or monitor.

This is a great project, thank you! I really think we need to address winter issues since winter is sooooo long here.

Healthy restaurants, no big box stores. Farmers markets promoting locally grown and organic produce. Intergenerational support for keeping elders in their homes. Public transit system of vans for moving people. Non-polluting industry. Promotes physical activity. Promotes value of education. Does not invite gambling, alcohol, drug, tobacco. Friendly place to WORSHIP all denominations. Protects conservation land. Healthier foods in schools — less trash/waste. Community gardens. Use cable channel to educate Action — High School programs to promote healthy eating.

### XIII. Appendix E Questions from Latino Family Network Focus Group, May 22, 2010

#### Physical Wellness

ABRSD English program costs \$ and 8 yrs ago not quality as Maynard and Hudson H. S. waiting list.
Contributes to low self esteem.
Language will continue to be a barrier for non-native speakers unless we improve our ESL offerings.
Cultural issues
Residents 50 yrs and older non-English speaking.
Create programs for these families (adults) — recreational programs, English speaking classes, this is first step.
Acton Medical doesn't have enough translation of information.
Racism at Acton Medical? Medical personnel not reaching out to whole community, language based!
Emerson may not prepare non-English-speaking moms; have Acton families go out of town.
Fear of ?? without Green cards.
Don't understand resources — go to Cambridge, better for non-English speakers.
Cross cultural issues — relate to suspected learning disabilities.
Critical time 2:30–6:00 p.m. need help for working Mon and Dad; children at home need more supervision.
Children forced to get older.
Get more parenting skills.
Must stay home (uncomfortable).
Natal care not good for non-English speaking families.
Drugs at junior high level in Acton.
Community connections — learn about one another, diversity, multi-culturalism.
Not enough facilities to entertain folks — Brazilian, Mexican.
Danny's Place good start but not for all ages.
Cost of recreation programs is high (\$200/wk; \$12–15/hr).
Marlborough rec department is cheaper.



## Appendix E (CON'T) Questions from Latino Family Network Focus Group, May 22, 2010

### Physical Wellness

After school mentoring programs — older teens with younger ones. Community Service hours especially the in-between hours 2:30–6:00 p.m.  
Have integrating programs for all ages.

### Transportation

Public transportation  
Some do not drive — no driver's license; cannot get to all functions in town.  
Use bus to travel around town.

### Food and Nutrition

Community Gardens  
Part of Community Service for high schoolers — maybe also teaching younger kids, perhaps an agricultural program in the schools.  
Teach kids about different foods not common here.  
Healthier foods, not so expensive.  
Maybe school lunches offer different meals representing different cultures.

### Environment

Recycling great but costly to use the transfer station.  
Why don't we have home service for trash and recycling?  
Maynard has free recycling — you just put it in the bin.  
Need to be clearly mark and have the bins side-by-side "Trash" "Re-cycle."  
Apartment buildings don't provide sufficient receptacles.

## Appendix E (CON'T) Questions from Latino Family Network Focus Group, May 22, 2010

### Physical Wellness

#### Schools

High School Special Ed classes — kids in class being told they have learning disabilities but they don't. They have difficulty learning due to lack of English speaking skills.

Not being put in Special Ed program, just class. If program, costs many dollars.

Parents don't understand, don't get involved as they have to go to work.

School needs to send all papers to parent in the language of the home.