

# Telephone Survey of Acton Residents

## Taken May and June, 2008

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Draft: March 10, 2009

#### 1. Introduction

As part of the Acton Comprehensive Plan Outreach efforts, a random sample telephone survey of Acton residents, their attitudes, values and opinions about the future of Acton, was conducted in May and June, 2008. All town residents who had listed telephone numbers were candidates for the survey. A random sample of these names and phone numbers was selected from telephone listings in Acton. 1,100 phone numbers were selected from a total listing of about 7,500 phone numbers. In May, post cards were sent to those randomly selected people to inform them that they would be receiving a survey call. The survey form was developed from selected questions asked on the earlier mail-out residential survey, and from additional interests thought to be relevant to town decision making and planning.

About 1,400 phone calls were made by three callers located in the Acton Town Hall. This location was chosen to enable the message "Town of Acton" to appear on the phones of those receiving calls that had "Caller ID," a very common feature in telephone service. The 1,400 calls were made between the hours of 4:00pm and 8:00pm on weekdays over a four week period from May 27<sup>th</sup> to June 20<sup>th</sup>. The 300 calls made beyond the 1,100 randomly selected numbers were "call-backs" (within the 1,100 sample) to people who could not answer the questions (usually because of time problems) when an initial call was made, or where busy signals or automated voice-mail responses were encountered. From the 1,400 calls 366 were successfully completed. This represents a 5% return from the 7,500 phone numbers listed for all Acton residents. Publicity for the phone survey was done via newspapers, notices and meeting announcements to help increase the return rate.

Some people were eager to answer the phone survey, which consisted of 19 multi-part questions and took about 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Other people were simply not interested, even after being told that it was for the benefit of their Town Government and would help in making decisions about town facilities and services. Those called were also informed that the Town really wanted to hear their opinions and that the phone survey was part of a larger effort to reach out to as many town residents as possible. The fact that it took 1,400 calls to get 366 completed indicates that 3 out of every 4 people called could not take the time or effort to respond to a civic exercise.

The survey was developed through a process of determining topics for questioning from review of the resident mail-out survey done in March, April and May, from input received in public and committee meetings, then preparing a draft for review by a subcommittee of the entire outreach project. Four redrafts of the survey were prepared through review by the subcommittee resulting in a final five-page script for asking questions and recording answers to them. The scripts were

printed and given the phone interviewers. Experienced phone interviewers were recruited for the survey. A training session was held with them to prepare them for their calls.

The survey is comprised of 19 multi-part questions, which contain a mixture of multiple-choice responses and open-ended comment type responses. Forty-six separate items of information were asked for in the survey. A question about the age category of respondents was asked to allow checking with U. S. Census data, which admittedly is 8 years old, that allows comparison of survey results with the town as a whole (to determine how representative the survey is). The age category question also allows checking with the earlier mail-out resident survey to see how these two surveys match. Results are show below.

366 returns are associated with a statistical error rate of +/- 5.1%. This means the percent result reported for each item may vary by as much as +/- 5.1% if 366 answers were given. Because in most cases not all respondents answered all questions, fewer than 366 responses were received for many questions. It is therefore advisable to think in terms of about a +/-6% error rate, which is acceptable for a survey of this type. Very many of the answers given varied from each other by more than 12% (+/-6% error for two items being compared), indicating that the survey gives a significant and accurate accounting of how two items are valued.

A random number table was used to select the phone numbers from the Acton phone book. Randomness is defined as each member of a group being surveyed (residents in the Town of Acton) having an equal chance to be selected to receive a call and potentially provide a return.

The table below shows how the age categories reported in the Phone Survey match those reported by the U. S. Census Bureau in the 2000 Census of Population and those reported in the earlier mail-back resident survey.

**Phone Survey % Distribution of Age Groups Compared with Mail-Out Survey  
and the Town as a Whole**

Age Group	18-30	31-45	46-65	66-80	81+	Did Not Answer	Total
Phone Survey %	2.2	22.1	52.2	19.9	2.7	0.8	99.9
Mail-Out Survey %	2.4	29.5	45.2	12.8	3.0	7.2	100.1
Town %	12.4	38.5	37.1	9.1	2.9	- - -	100.0

*Source for Acton Town Data is the 2000 U. S. Census of Population*

The 18 to 30 age group is under-represented in both surveys. Perhaps this is because some people in this age group have not yet formed their own households and do not have listings in the land-line residential phone book. There was no attempt to contact people by cell phone in the phone survey. The 31 to 45 age group is quite under-represented in the phone survey and somewhat under-represented in the mail-out survey. Perhaps this is because this is the age group that was too busy or not yet vested enough in Acton to answer the survey. The 46 to 65 and 66

to 80 age groups are over-represented in both the phone and mail-out surveys. This may reflect the fact that these people have probably lived longer in Acton and are more interested in its civic affairs. They also are less likely to have had younger children at home which allowed them more time to answer the survey. The fact that the Town of Acton age group data are over 8 years old is another possible explanation for differences in the relative proportions between age groups in the Town, and those reported in the two surveys.

Another comparison between the phone survey and the mail-out/web site residential survey can be made between the questions about length of time living in Acton and length of time people intend to live in Acton. The results correspond quite well, providing one indication that the respondents to the mail-out/web site residential survey (a non-random sample) were similar to the respondents of the phone survey (whose sample was random). Results of this comparison are shown on the following tables.

Length of Time Living in Action.		1 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	11 to 15 years	16 years or more	Did Not Answer	Total
Phone Survey %		18.9	15.2	16.9	48.6	0.5	100.1
Mail-Out Survey %		19.9	18.6	13.9	40.8	6.7	99.9

Intended Time to Continue Living in Action.		1 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	11 to 15 years	16 years or more	Did Not Answer	Total
Phone Survey %		13.4	13.7	37.3	34.7	0.8	99.9
Mail-Out Survey %		10.8	14.4	27.9	35.0	11.8	99.9

The telephone script for the phone survey is shown on the following pages, and the results of the phone survey are given on pages following that.

2. Script for Phone Interviewers: Number Called \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Good Afternoon (Evening). My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm calling from the Town of Acton to get your responses and opinions about important issues facing the town. You have been selected randomly to provide us with information important for planning the future of Acton. The call will take about 10 to 15 minutes and will ask you to tell us your opinions regarding what you like about Acton, and what you think should be changed in Acton. We will address a variety of topics, including schools, transportation, town services and facilities, energy saving and town character. The phone survey is part of an overall program of community outreach to Acton residents to use in preparing a plan for the Town's future.

Thank you for your interest and participation. Results will be posted on the Town Website and discussed at public meetings.

Your answers will contribute to the outreach effort of the Comprehensive Community Plan. If you have a few minutes I would like to ask you a few questions about the Town.

1. Have you heard about this process yet? (visioning sessions, surveys, outreach meetings, etc.). Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Not sure \_\_\_
2. The lack of a plan for sustainable development in Acton has been expressed as a major concern among some residents. Do you agree? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ No Opinion \_\_\_\_  
Care to make a comment?" \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A large number of respondents to the earlier survey supported the idea that the Town should take actions to reduce greenhouse gases. Do you agree that the Town should take such actions? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ No Opinion \_\_\_

If yes, which actions do you favor? Increase Recycling \_\_\_ More Walking/Biking facilities \_\_\_ Building and Retrofitting Energy Efficient Public Buildings \_\_\_ Providing Incentives for Homes and Businesses to Become More Energy Efficient \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_

What Other? \_\_\_\_\_

3. A survey conducted earlier this year indicated that three important challenges facing Acton residents included the High cost of living, Lack of walking facilities and Traffic. Do you agree that these are the top three challenges, and if not what in your opinion should be on this list? Agree? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Other important challenges to add

to the list? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. At a town-wide visioning session held in March, many participants suggested making Acton more accessible to walkers and bikers by providing sidewalks, walking facilities such as trails, and bikeways. How would you rank each type of facility in relation to each other?

Sidewalks \_\_\_\_\_ Other Walkways such as Trails \_\_\_\_\_ Bikeways \_\_\_\_\_

5. A significant number of the people responding to the mail survey indicated there are enough social services available in Acton. Do you agree? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ If you don't agree, which social services are lacking?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you ever use the Senior Center ? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ (If no, why not?)

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you envision using it in the future? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Don't Know \_\_\_\_\_

Can you think of any ways in which the Senior Center can be improved? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
If yes, How?

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you think the senior center should be expanded? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ No Opinion \_\_\_

7. If the Town builds a new building to hold a larger senior center, should portions of that building be available for other community needs, or should the building be dedicated solely to the use of Acton seniors? Community \_\_\_\_\_ Seniors Only \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

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8. Are you satisfied with the level of cultural activities in Acton? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
No Opinion \_\_\_\_\_

If not, which cultural activities would you like to see more of? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. In the earlier survey a majority of respondents identified Acton's schools as one of the Town's top three assets. The other assets in this list were diversity of activities and conservation land. Do you agree with this list? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_. If you don't agree, which assets would you include in the top three?

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If you do agree that schools should be in the top three, what is it about the schools that you feel merits its top ranking?

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10. If the Town were to provide a town-wide shuttle bus connecting various high traffic areas (e.g. train station, village centers, center of town, etc.) how often do you imagine that people in your household would use it?

\_\_\_ at least once a day

\_\_\_ at least once a week

\_\_\_ at least once a month

\_\_\_ infrequently

\_\_\_ never

11 . Resident input has consistently suggested the need for more activities for teens and adults. What kinds of activities would you be interested in the Town developing and/or supporting?

Community center, restaurants (what kind?), \_\_\_\_\_

cultural activities (what kind?) \_\_\_\_\_

movie theater,

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

12 . Do you use the train station? Yes\_\_\_ No \_\_\_ If yes, what do you feel would be the most important improvement to make?

\_\_\_ more parking

\_\_\_ provide train station building

\_\_\_ More overhang on the canopy to protect from rain and snow

\_\_\_ shuttle bus to and from station

other: \_\_\_\_\_

13. About 13 percent of Acton's 20 square miles are protected open land, compared with Boxboro's 25%. Do you think the town should acquire or by other means preserve (e.g., with conservation restrictions, for example) more open space?"

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ No Opinion \_\_\_

14. Are you willing to increase taxes to pay for?

\_\_\_ a new senior center

\_\_\_ acquiring open space

\_\_\_ greenhouse gas reduction

\_\_\_ shuttle bus

\_\_\_ cultural activities

\_\_\_ sidewalks

\_\_\_ walking facilities

\_\_\_ biking facilities

COMING TO A CLOSE....

15. How long have you lived in Acton? 1 – 5 Years 6 – 10 Years 11 - 15 Years 16+ Years

16. How long do you plan on living in Acton? 1 – 5 Years 6 – 10 Years 11+ Years  
Don't Know

17. What is your age category? 18– 30 Years 31–45 Years 46–65 Years  
66–80 Years 81+ Years

Gender (Don't ask; determine from voice pitch) Male \_\_\_ Female \_\_\_

18. Do you have any minor children? (Under the age of 18) Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ If yes,  
How many?\_\_\_\_\_ How old?\_\_\_\_\_

19. Have you participated in this Community Outreach Process yet? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
If not, why not?

-----haven't heard about it

\_\_\_ no time to go to meetings

\_\_\_ meant to fill out survey but didn't get around to it

\_\_\_ other

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THANK YOU. A summary of the answers to these questions will be published in the newspaper and posted on the Town of Acton Website after it is compiled. HANG UP

■ Successfully completed? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Any special problems or comments.

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### 3. Results of Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Have you heard about this outreach process yet?		
<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	253	69.1
No	107	29.2
Not Sure	5	1.4
Did Not Answer	1	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>100.0</b>

2. The lack of a plan for sustainable development in Acton has been expressed as a major concern among some residents? Do you agree that this is a major concern?		
<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	265	72.4
No	44	12.0
No Opinion	57	15.6
Did Not Answer	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>100.0</b>

3. Do you agree the Town should take actions to reduce greenhouse gases?		
<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	288	78.7
No	48	13.1
No Opinion	29	7.9
Did Not Answer	1	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>100.0</b>

4. If Yes for Question 3 which actions do you favor?						
<u>Answer</u>					<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Increase recycling of wastes					266	92.4
More walking/biking facilities					248	86.1
Building and retrofitting energy efficient buildings					254	88.2
Providing incentives for homes and businesses to become energy efficient					246	85.4
Other					56	19.4

Note: Percentages calculated from the total number of respondents answering Yes to Question 4 (288), not the total number of responses given (1,070). Respondents could choose more than 1 answer.

5. Do you agree that the three most important challenges facing Acton residents are:		
The high cost of living; Lack of walking facilities; and Traffic?		
<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	210	57.4
No	142	38.8
Did Not Answer	<u>14</u>	<u>3.8</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>100.0</b>

6. How would you rank each type of walking/biking facilities in relation to each other?		
<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Sidewalks No. 1	270	73.8
Sidewalks No. 2	57	15.6
Sidewalks No. 3	39	10.7
Other walkways such as trails No. 1	89	24.3
Other walkways such as trails No. 2	100	27.3
Other walkways such as trails No. 3	178	48.6
Bikeways No. 1	110	30.1
Bikeways No. 2	158	43.1
Bikeways No. 3	98	26.7

Note: The percentages are calculated from a base of 366 total responses, within the ranking of each type of facility; sidewalks, other walkways and bikeways. 51 respondents answered that all three types of walking/biking facilities were their 1<sup>st</sup> choice. These are included in the data.

7. Do you agree that there are enough social services available in Acton?		
<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	196	53.6
No	55	15.0
Did Not Answer	<u>115</u>	<u>31.4</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>100.0</b>

8. Do you ever use the Senior Center?		
<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	62	16.9
No	303	82.8
Did Not Answer	<u>1</u>	<u>0.3</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>100.0</b>

9. Do you envision using the Senior Center in the future?		
<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	160	43.7
No	62	16.9
Don't Know	82	22.4
Did Not Answer	<u>62</u>	<u>16.9</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>99.9</b>

9. Can you think of ways the Senior Center can be improved?		
<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	50	13.7
No	141	38.5
Did Not Answer	<u>175</u>	<u>47.8</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>100.0</b>

10. Do you think the Senior Center should be expanded?		
<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	91	24.9
No	26	7.1
No Opinion	243	66.4
Did Not Answer	<u>6</u>	<u>1.6</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>100.0</b>

11. If the Town builds a larger Senior Center should portions of it be available for other community needs, or should it be reserved exclusively for the use of Acton Seniors?		
<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Community-wide needs	200	54.6
Reserved for seniors	44	12.0
Did Not Answer	<u>122</u>	<u>33.3</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>99.9</b>

12. Are you satisfied with the level of cultural activities in Acton?		
<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	279	76.2
No	53	14.5
No Opinion	34	9.3
Did Not Answer	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>100.0</b>

13. Do you agree that Acton's top three assets are Schools, Diversity of Activities and Conservation Land?		
<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	281	76.8
No	71	19.4
Did Not Answer	14	3.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>100.0</b>

14. How often would people in your household use a town-wide shuttle connecting various high traffic area (train station, village centers, town center, etc.)?		
<u>Answers</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
At least once a day	36	9.8
At least once a week	100	27.3
At least once a month	32	8.7
Infrequently	85	23.2
Never	95	26.0
Did Not Answer	<u>18</u>	<u>4.9</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>99.9</b>

15. What kinds of activities would you be interested in the Town developing and/or supporting?		
<u>Answers</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Community center , restaurants	171	46.7
Cultural activities	194	53.0
Movie theater	68	18.6
Other	230	62.8

Note: Percentages calculated from the total number of respondents (366), not the total number of responses given (663). Respondents could choose more than 1 answer.

16. Do you use the train station?		
<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	199	54.4
No	162	44.3
Did Not Answer	<u>5</u>	<u>1.4</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>100.1</b>

17. If you do use the train station what do you feel would be the most important improvement to make?		
<u>Answers</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
More parking	117	58.8
Provide station building	4	2.0
More overhang on the canopy to protect from rain and snow	19	9.5
Shuttle bus to and from the station	42	21.1
Other	9	4.5
Did Not Answer	<u>8</u>	<u>4.0</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>99.9</b>

Percentages are computed from a base of 199 people who answered Yes to Question 16

18. Do you think the Town should acquire or by other means preserve more open space?		
<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	220	60.1
No	84	23.0
No Opinion	58	15.8
Did Not Answer	<u>4</u>	<u>1.1</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>100.0</b>

19. Are you willing to pay taxes to pay for the following?		
<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
A new senior center	102	27.9
Acquiring open space	138	37.7
Greenhouse gas reduction	152	41.5
Shuttle bus	156	42.6
Cultural activities	79	21.6
Sidewalks	148	40.3
Other walking facilities	146	39.9
Biking facilities	164	44.8

Note: Percentages calculated from the total number of respondents (366), not the total number of responses given (1,085). Respondents could choose more than 1 answer.

20. How long have you lived in Acton?		
<u>Answers</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1 to 5 years	69	18.9
6 to 10 years	55	15.2
11 to 15 years	62	16.9
16 years or more	178	48.6
Did Not Answer	<u>2</u>	<u>0.5</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>100.1</b>

21. How long do you plan to remain in Acton?		
<u>Answers</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1 to 5 years	49	13.4
6 to 10 years	50	13.7
11 years or more	137	37.3
Don't know	127	34.7
Did Not Answer	<u>3</u>	<u>0.8</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>99.9</b>

22. What is your age category?		
<u>Answers</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
18 to 30 years	8	2.2
31 to 45 years	81	22.1
46 to 65 years	191	52.2
66 to 80 years	73	19.9
81 years or more	10	2.7
Did Not Answer	<u>3</u>	<u>0.8</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>99.9</b>

23. Gender		
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Male	121	33.1
Female	238	65.0
Could Not Tell from Voice	<u>7</u>	<u>1.9</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>100.0</b>

24. Do you have any children under the age of 18 years?		
<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	155	42.3
No	205	56.0
Did Not Answer	<u>6</u>	<u>1.6</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>99.9</b>

25. How many children do you have under the age of 18 years?		
<u>Answers</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1 child	60	16.4
2 children	65	17.8
3 children	28	7.7
4 children	5	1.4
5 children	0	0.0
6 children	1	0.3
Did Not Answer	<u>207</u>	<u>56.6</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>100.2</b>

26. What are the ages of your children under the age of 18 years?		
<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
0 to 4 years	23	6.3
5 and 6 years	25	6.8
7 to 11 years	112	30.6
12 to 14 years	67	18.3
15 to 17 years	53	14.5
Did Not Answer	<u>86</u>	<u>23.5</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The total number of children reported by age group (280) does not equal the total number of children reported that are less than 18 years of age (300) in Question 25 because some respondents did not reveal the exact ages of their children.

27. Have you participated in this community outreach process yet?		
<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	129	35.2
No	231	63.1
Did Not Answer	<u>6</u>	<u>1.6</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>99.9</b>

28. If you have not participated in the community outreach process, why not?		
<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Haven't heard about it	61	16.7
No time to go to meetings	88	24.0
Meant to fill out the survey, but didn't get around to it.	23	6.3
Other	34	9.3
Did Not Answer	<u>160</u>	<u>43.7</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### 4. Frequency of Mentions in Open-Ended Questions

<i>88 Answered</i> <i>278 Did Not Answer</i>		<i>57 Answered</i> <i>309 Did Not Answer</i>		<i>110 Answered</i> <i>256 Did Not Answer</i>	
<b>Comment on lack of a plan for sustainable development.</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>What other actions do you favor to reduce greenhouse gases?</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>What are Acton's other top three challenges?</b>	<b>Mentions</b>
1. Town is over-developed	18	1. Public transportation	14	1. Taxes	23
2. Plan is important	9	2. Trash removal	7	2. Funding schools	15
3. Have poor planning	3	3. Recycling of wastes	4	3. Public transportation	9
3. Taxes too high	3	3. Monitor price of gasoline	4	4. Providing services for seniors and the elderly	6
3. Need sidewalks	3	3. Prevent idling cars	4	5. Traffic lights	5
3. Town needs more character	3	4. Light bulb programs	3	6. Affordable housing	3
4. Fix Kelly's Corner	2	5. Hybrid cars	2	6. Over-development	3
4. Provide for teens	2	5. Wind farms	2	6. Planning	3

<i>49 Answered</i>		<i>317 Did Not Answer</i>		<i>140 Answered</i>		<i>226 Did Not Answer</i>		<i>45 Answered</i>		<i>321 Did Not Answer</i>	
<b>What social services are lacking?</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>Why don't you use the Senior Center?</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>How can the Senior Center be improved?</b>	<b>Mentions</b>						
1. Social worker	14	1. Too young	89	1. Make it larger	10						
2. Senior services	7	2. No need	14	2. Provide transportation	8						
3. Outreach	3	3. Too busy	12	2. More parking	8						
3. Low income services	3			3. Make it more accessible	6						
3. Doctors for public health	3										
4. Financial aid	2										

<i>22 Answered</i>	<i>344 Did Not Answer</i>	<i>50 Answered</i>	<i>316 Did Not Answer</i>	<i>57 Answered</i>	<i>309 Did Not Answer</i>
<b>Comment on other uses for the Senior Center.</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>Desired cultural activities? (Part of Question 8 on current activities.)</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>What are Acton's other top three assets?</b>	<b>Mentions</b>
1. It depends on size and cost	6	1. Music	13	1. Location	8
2. Rent it out	3	2. Concerts	11	2. Rail/train	7
3. No other uses are needed or desirable	2	3. Movies	5	3. It is safe	5
		4. Theater	4	3. Police and fire services	5
		4. Lectures	4	4. Its diverse population	4
		5. Cultural diversity events	3	5. The library	3
				5. Neighborhoods	3
				6. Its people in general	2

<i>259 Answered</i>	<i>107 Did Not Answer</i>		<i>54 Answered</i>	<i>312 Did Not Answer</i>	
<b>Why do schools deserve top three asset ranking?</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>Why do schools deserve top three asset ranking? (continued)</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>What other cultural activities are desired? (Part of Question 11 on suggested needs for teens and adults.)</b>	<b>Mentions</b>
1. Teachers	47	6. Reputation by word-of-mouth	7	1. Music	16
2. College prep.	16	6. Students	7	2. Concerts	7
3. Choice	12	6. Curriculum	7	2. Theater	7
4. Test results	9	6. Top ranking	7	3. Symphony	3
5. MCAS	8	7. Attraction value	6	3. Cultural diversity events	3
5. Good education	8	8. Academics	5	4. Asian Indian events	2
		9. Programs	4	4. Festivals	2
				4. Opera	2
				4. Art	2
				4. Speakers/Lecturers	2

169 Answered 197 Did Not Answer

54 Answered 312 Did Not Answer

<b>Desired restaurant types.</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>Desired restaurant types (continued)</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>What other activities should the Town support or develop for teens and adults?</b>	<b>Mentions</b>
1. Family	33	9. Seafood	3	1. Swimming pool	10
2. Chinese	10	9. Bistro	3	2. Sports	9
3. Italian	9	9. Panera	3	3. Retail shops	6
3. High end	9	9. Casual	3	3. Teen center	4
3. Ethnic	9	10. Asian	2	4. More library programs	3
4. Cafe	7	10. Greek	2	4. Recreational activities	3
4. Mid-priced	7	10. Steak	2	4. Bus services	3
5. Upscale	6	10. Wine bar	2	5. Outdoor activities	2
6. No fast-foods	6			5. Bike trails	2
7. Mexican	5			5. Church related activities	2
8. Non-chain	4			5. Adult education	2

357 Did

Not

Answer

29 Answered

337 Did

Not Answer

9 Answered

<b>What other improvements should be made at the train station?</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>What are your other reasons for not participating in this community outreach process yet?</b>	<b>Mentions</b>
1. Walkways	2	1. Not interested	7
1. None	2	2. No reason	3
		3. Didn't know about it	2

**5. Phone Survey Unsummarized Results for Open-Ended Questions**  
(A complete listing of written responses)

*88 Answered 278 Did Not Answer*

<b>Question: Comments on lack of a plan for sustainable development.</b>		
somewhat skeptical	poor planning	fix Kelly's Corner
very proactive	overdevelopment	affordable housing
too much development	vital to plan	relief plan
no coherent development	stores, not condos	town character
too much construction	town character	sidewalks important
perfect town	overdevelopment	classroom size
public transportation	poor planning	plan is important
bigger issues other than town	elderly affected	plan is important
not enough info	vote	help lower income
good to make plans	overdevelopment	overdevelopment
not enough info	plan is important	teen activities
monitor growth	look to future	sewage support
high taxes	sidewalks important	multilevel business
types of buildings coming	tax base problems	higher retail
don't go overboard	overdevelopment	overdevelopment
overdevelopment	overdevelopment	overdevelopment
cop facility not thought out	overdevelopment	tax base problems
traffic	need parking	long term plans
train parking	plan is important	plan is important
who does the planning?	taxes	overdevelopment
overdevelopment	inconsistency	region decisions
prioritize	town character	commercial development
save open spaces	overdevelopment	overdevelopment
plan is important	overdevelopment	plan is important
budget	everything ok	stuff for young people
not enough info	poor planning	sidewalks important
overdevelopment	property taxes	urban sprawl
fix Kelly's Corner	zoning plan	plan is important
affordable housing	economic outlook	
overdevelopment	overdevelopment	

*57 Answered 309 Did Not Answer*

<b>Question: What other actions do you favor to reduce greenhouse gases?</b>		
electric buses	efficient town vehicles	emissions
shuttle to train	watch the price	trash removal
public transportation	don't use plastic	safer biking

light bulb programs	public transportation	wind farms
offer efficient lights	public transportation	trash removal
idling cars	watch the price	attract green businesses
trash incinerating credits	light bulb programs	reduce recycled material @ schools
trash on sidewalks	shuttle bus	control 40B
hybrid cars	light bulb programs	trash removal
rail to trail route	wind farms	overdevelopment
hybrid cars	senior transportation	yard waste
conserve water	recycle large items	water management
public transportation	public transportation	parking @ train
public transportation	curbside recycle	curbside recycle
watch the price	styrofoam usage	bus
watch the price	public transportation	disabled access to public buildings.
public transportation	public transportation	trash removal
mandatory recycling	education	public transportation
idling cars	idling cars	idling cars

110 Answered 256 Did Not Answer

**Question: What other challenges should be included in the top three (besides high cost of living, lack of walking facilities and traffic)?**

rotary	resident longevity	taxes
poor development planning	neighborhood schools	affordable housing
more polls	school class size	taxes
property taxes	taxes	taxes
reducing taxes	overdevelopment	public transportation
Rt. 2 traffic	property taxes	traffic lights
taxes	taxes	economic growth
concord rotary	taxes	quality of schools
school funding thru taxes	overrides	school class size
diversify tax base	speeding cars	sewage
driving out the elderly	overdevelopment	cost of education
sewer and trash services	fiscal mgmt	shopping
Rt. 27 traffic	schools crowded	dogs @ NARA park
more turning lanes	taxes	ethnic diversity
affordable housing	public transportation	public transportation
public transportation	retail outlets	consistent plan for development
increase of industry	old schools need improvement	zoning
taxes	old schools need improvement	school class size
school budget	big box businesses	school services
school budget	new senior center	increase of population
40B	mixed population	age incentives
public transportation	recycling	street lights
public transportation	public transportation	taxes

community care for kids	public transportation	affordable housing
small town feel	teen activities	taxes
trash	high education	energy efficient
locally owned places	sewage	overdevelopment
rural town feel	special ed.	taxes
taxes	consistent plan for development	stop lights
school budget	elderly transportation	public transportation
open spaces	sewage	walking/biking
big houses	elderly transportation	schools crowded
budget	taxes	help elderly
taxes	taxes	senior expenses
school class size	taxes	traffic lights
attract biotech	property taxes	fiscal mgmt
commuter rail facilities	taxes	

49 Answered 317 Did Not Answer

<b>Question: Which social services are lacking in Acton?</b>		
elderly transportation	senior services	elderly
financial aid	referral system	health center
they are renters	social worker	social worker
social worker	outreach	social worker
social worker	elderly	just more
social worker	social worker	low income
senior services	autism	free doctor care
outreach	social worker	adult services
social worker	social worker	special needs kids
senior services	social worker	teen programs
elderly	social worker	low income
grade school programs	outreach	childcare
disabled services	community events	council on aging
social worker	crisis services	elderly
elderly	financial aid	low income
senior services	social worker	doctor services
senior services		

140 Answered 226 Did Not Answer

<b>Question: Why don't you use the Senior Center?</b>			
too independent	too young	not publicized	too young
too young	too young	too young	too young
too young	too active	no need	too young
too young	too young	no need	too young
too busy	too young	too busy	too young
too young	too young	too young	no time

too young	too young	too young	too busy
too young	too young	too young	too young
too young	not aware	too young	too young
too young	no need	too young	too young
too young	too young	too young	too young
too young	not sure	too young	too young
too young	age eligible unknown	too young	too young
too young	too busy	too young	too young
too young	too young	no time	too young
too young	too young	no car	not comfortable there
too busy	too young	too young	no time
too young	too young	too young	too young
not needed	not here enough	too young	no need
too busy	not interested	too busy	too young
too young	too young	too young	too young
no reason	too young	too young	denial
too young	too young	too young	too young
no need	too young	too young	too young
no time	too young	high price of gas	not aware
too young	too young	not interested	not aware
no need	too young	too busy	too young
too young	too young	too young	too young
too young	too young	no need	too busy
too young	just becoming eligible	too young	too young
no need	too young	location	too busy
no need	too young	no need	too young
too young	no need	no time	too busy
too young	too young	no need	not bored enough
no need	too busy	location	too young

45 Answered 321 Did Not Answer

<b>Question: How can the Senior Center be Improved?</b>		
more transportation	parking	volunteers need praise
more programs	parking	larger
larger	transportation	expanded
larger classes	more accessible	location
expand it	larger	get kids involved
parking	larger	transportation
elevator if more floors added	more accessible	meal program
more sports	great job	transportation
parking	parking	affordable access
larger	transportation	parking
more space	larger	larger

transportation	shuttle bus	non-English activities
transportation	parking	parking
larger	more accessible	more integrated
more accessible	private meeting areas	carpets

22 Answered 344 Did Not Answer

<b>Question: Comments on the use of a larger Senior Center.</b>		
rent to other towns	depends on size	use library instead
rent space	depends	no need
if time available	evening classes	no need
multiuse library	depends on cost	depends how its done
depends on use	space to youth programs	need to feel vital w/community
as needed	big building not needed	more access
depends	rent to other towns	senior priority
evening classes		

50 Answered 316 Did Not Answer

<b>Question: If not satisfied with cultural activities in Acton, which ones would you like to see more of?</b>		
1/4 held in each center	geared for seniors	movies
authors/speakers	lectures	movies
movies	diversity programs	classical music
music	classical music	movies
playhouse	concerts	muslim culture
music	arts/crafts	no orchestra
infant to age 3	concerts	concerts
coffee house	intro to other cultures	music
concerts	concerts	music
concerts	town center	music
public speakers	music	movies
concerts	lectures	concerts
music	theater	music
performance	classical music	concerts
music	music	tennis courts
theater	town festival	concerts
theater	concerts	

57 Answered 309 Did Not Answer

<b>Question: What are Acton's other top three assets (besides schools, diversity of activities and conservation land)?</b>		
commuter rail	environment	town character
more conservative	location	town government
diverse people	arboretum	access to train

location	community garden	property value
townspeople	access to train	safe community
commuter train	sociable neighbors	the people
kids facilities	shopping	library
sense of community	safe community	more arts
town character	strong community	location
diverse people	diverse people	police/fire
nice place to live	police/fire	safe community
neighborhoods	train	police/fire
location	access to train	environment
quality of life	town employees	transportation
location	trails	neighborhoods
overdevelopment	library	safe community
safe community	police/fire	police/fire
green space	location	library
location	diverse people	location

259 Answered 107 Did Not Answer

<b>Question: What is it about Acton's schools that you feel merits its selection as one of the top three assets in town?</b>		
quality of education	high priority	excellent
nurturing elementary level	valued	excellent education
faculty	SATS	test results
school choice, ranking	n/a, school employee	high rating
quality of teachers	good teachers	choice
test score results	performance	successful
test score results	quality teachers	MCAS
academics, sports	philosophy	college prep
dedicated faculty	quality education	word of mouth
state ranking	good education	word of mouth
academics, sports	quality teachers	attraction
choice	many programs	teachers
enthusiastic students	good academics	accommodating
successful	school choice	sports
parental involvement	town supported	class size
parental involvement	MCAS	college prep
quality of education	choice	college prep
range of offerings	college prep	adaptive
graduating class	good education	educational budget
good experience	commitment	too much focus
good teachers	attraction	teachers
school choice	test results	teachers
top ranking	top ranking	MCAS

passionate teachers	good support	teachers
teachers	high rating	competitive
MCAS	quality teachers	parental involvement
reputation	good education	college prep
quality of teachers	good students	MCAS
good rating	teachers	experienced teachers
good teachers	small class size	reputation
community participation	teachers	good teachers
teachers	excellent teachers	money put into it
impressive building	high academics	college prep
quality of education	just great	choice
test scores	high standards	quality students
quality of teachers	teachers	college prep
parental involvement	good turnout	great life prep
many people with kids	education level	good education
good education	town grows because of it	choice
reputation	science, math	good teachers
academic status	reputation	quality
word of mouth	accomplishments	academics
excellent teachers	good leadership	quality
good teachers	more for non-college bound students	ESL
smart kids	top ranking	teachers
programs	quality of education	just great
grads go to college	excellent schools	quality teachers
population	MCAS	competitive
well prepared	high education	teachers
town supported	curriculum	teachers
qualified teachers	community participation	disability programs
top ranking	staff	community involvement
challenging	college prep	quality teachers
successful	town focus	teachers
top ranking	choice	diversity
good results	test results	meets needs of students
experienced teachers	results	quality
academic level	academic achievement	teachers
test scores	reputation	teachers
teachers	good education	high value
open enrollment	college prep	quality education
college prep	attention	choice
test scores	attention	choice
school choice	attraction	word of mouth
curriculum	attraction	quality

curriculum	test results	curriculum
high standards	MCAS	good students
teachers	good results	diversity
high standards	high education	management
reason to move here	quality teachers	staff
top ranking	good teachers	good overall
reputation	cut budget	parental involvement
students	curriculum	encouragement
parental involvement	quality teachers	well managed
good teachers	college prep	quality
word of mouth	quality faculty	competitive
college prep	quality faculty	parental involvement
good education	small class size	town focus
good quality	parental involvement	diversity
good education	teachers	attraction
respected	athletics	word of mouth
word of mouth	attraction	MCAS
college prep	community participation	town priority
facilities	curriculum	just excellent
college prep	great education	college prep
top ranking	reputation	
college prep	curriculum	

169 Answered 197 Did Not Answer

<b>Question: What kinds of restaurants would you like to see more of in Acton?</b>		
asian	no fast food	sit down, family
moderate priced	high end	café
italian, steakhouse	no fast food	family oriented
family oriented	café	ethnic diversity
italian	family oriented	like Average Joes
family oriented	Bertucci's	organic
ethnic diversity	family oriented	high end
more delivery	family oriented	family oriented
good food/wine	sit down, family	better pizza
good quality	seafood	takeout
mexican,indian	high end	fine dining
chinese	mid-priced	family oriented
café, dog friendly	no fast food	high end
high end	café	italian
independent	café	average priced
diversity	upscale	bistros
sit down, family	dances	mid-priced
deli, greek	quality	steak house

mexican	KFC	non-chain
Bertucci's	chinese	Panera
non-chain	family oriented	mexican
moderate priced	drive-thru	bistros
diversity	quality	sit down, family
italian	Panera	greek
ethnic diversity	italian	casual
asian	bbq ribs	café
chinese	family oriented	no fast food
family oriented	wine bar	sit down, family
café	bistros	no pizza
italian	chinese	upscale
family oriented	family oriented	ethnic
ethnic diversity	high end	bars
family oriented	chinese	ice cream
ethnic diversity	seafood	no fast food
non-chain	cheap prices	italian
new kinds	chinese	just more
family oriented	chinese	mom/pop type
family oriented	good ones	just more
high end	ice cream	diversity
italian	mid-priced	family oriented
family oriented	upscale	casual
better quality	variety	chinese
non-chain	mid-priced	high end
upscale	like Acton Jazz Club	family oriented
seafood	family oriented	family oriented
real mexican	fine dining	good ones
sit down, family	no fast food	ethnic
family oriented	vietnamese	just more
not pizza	family oriented	mid-priced
casual	increase amount	mid-priced
better chinese	family oriented	high end
ethnic diversity	Panera	mexican
not pizza	diversity	diversity
better chinese	quality	family oriented
family oriented	free market	ethnic
italian	upscale	
mid-priced	family oriented	

54 Answered 312 Did Not Answer

<b>Question: What other cultural activities should the Town support or develop to increase activities for teens and young adults?</b>		
theater	art exhibits	diversity program
concerts @ NARA	music	festival
music	opera	art exhibits
indian, asian activities	library	theater
concerts, symphony	classical music	music
use NARA more	coffee house	theater
music	music	orchestra
music	music	music
lecture series	indian, asian activities	junior band
music	opera	music
concerts	cultural awareness	speakers
theatre	symphony	music
music	concerts	theater
folk festival	concerts @ NARA	concerts
music	plays	free concerts
bio diversity	teen based	plays
music	music	plays
culture fair	bridge club	symphony

78 Answered 288 Did Not Answer

<b>Question: What other activities should the town support or develop to increase activities for teens and young adults?</b>		
marathon, sports	recreation center	evening activities
sports	bike trails	parents involved at Danny's Place
tennis, badminton	town pool	pub
adult comm. Ed.	teen center	shops
celebrate holidays more	church-related	sports
recreation events	crafts	civil service programs
town fair	shuttle bus	adult comm. Ed.
evening activities	McCarthy Bldg for classes	playing fields
SKIDS program	writers group	town pool
YMCA, pool	good plays	sports
drive thru restaurants	teen center	longer library hrs
non-school teen volunteer program	outdoor activities	forums/speakers
town pool	town pool	sports
town pool	consistently open center	more shopping
catering companies	library activities	sports
maintained movie theater	sports	town pool
retail, grocery	playing fields	sports

revamp Kelly's Corner	outdoor activities	gallery stores
boy's club	town pool	Target
community ed.	more retail	local shopping
teen center	more visibility	space for young people
night activities	shuttle bus	late night café
dog park	bus trips	church-related
new fire station	women voter group	town pool
bike trails	infrastructure	town center
teen center	library activities	town pool

9 Answered 357 Did Not Answer

<b>Question: What other improvements should be made at the train station?</b>		
vending machines	none	sidewalk on Prospect St.
none	bike trail to rail	it's ok
better rails	walks to it	more frequent service

29 Answered 337 Did Not Answer

<b>Question: What other reasons do you have for not participating in this Community Outreach Process yet?</b>		
no reason	not interested	not interested
not knowledgeable	disillusioned	need more info
no reason	not involved	overwhelmed
not interested	town meetings handled poorly	bad photo in Beacon
didn't know he could	not interested	no interest
been ill	no transportation	meetings too late
saw sign on road	not a citizen	new resident
not interested	not involved	not interested
not priority	no need	no reason
unsure of contribution	not active	

## Appendix: Statistical Reliability

If all 366 people that responded to the telephone survey answered a given question, the error rate for it would be +/- 5.1%. However, very few questions were answered by all the people responding. Typically for any given question, between 300 and 350 people would provide answers. The error rate associated with this level of response varies around +/-5 to 6%. Therefore it is useful to think in terms of an overall error rate of +/-5 to 6% for all the questions. A +/- 5 to 6% error range is within acceptable statistical limits and is commonly used. Some public opinion and attitude surveys take small samples of about 300 to 400 observations, yielding error rates of +/-5 to 6%. It means that if survey results for a given question vary by more than +/-5 or 6% the results are conclusive. For example, we observe in the phone survey that 59.7% of respondents agreed that Acton's top three challenges are the high cost of living, lack of walking facilities, and traffic, while 40.3% disagreed. The error rate is within the margin of difference of the two responses, so the survey results are conclusive. The table below shows error rates (rounded to the nearest full percent) for different size surveys.

Survey Sample Size	Margin of Error Percent*
2,000	2
1,500	3
1,000	3
900	3
800	3
700	4
600	4
500	4
400	5
300	6
200	7
100	10
50	14

\*Assumes a 95% level of confidence

Source: Pamela Hunter, "Margin of Error and Confidence Levels Made Simple," iSigmaSix, 2008, Website: <http://www.isixsigma.com/library/content/c040607a.asp#author>