

APPENDIX A COMMUNITY PROFILE

Community Profile

Population

In summary, the population of Acton is projected to increase by 10% over the period 2000 to 2020. The under 40

age group decreases in the first decade of this period, then remains steady, whereas the over 40 age group increases significantly throughout the two decades.

Between 1990 and 2000 Acton's population grew from almost 18,000 to just over 20,000 residents according to the U.S. census, this is an increase of 13.8%.

There are three sources of historical population data available. These are the U.S. Census of 2000, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research (MISER). These latter databases are also forward looking; however, they do not always agree in detail.

In this 1990 to 2000 period, the MAPC data agrees with the U.S. census showing an overall increase in population of 13.8%. It also shows increases of 37.7% and 28.4% for the 0-14 and 40+ age groups respectively and a reduction of 14% in the 15-39 age group.

The MISER data shows a lower total population in both 1990 (almost 17,000) and 2000 (almost 19,000). This is an overall increase of 10.7%. The changes for the 0-14 and 15-39 age groups are similar in each database (-8.4% and -5.8% in MISER). However, the MISER data shows only an increase of 8.1% for the over 40 age group.

Looking forward, MAPC predicts an increase of 6.6% from 2000 to 2010 (+1334) and a further increase of 4.0% (+823) from 2010 to 2020. MISER predicts a decrease of 3.2% (-593) and a further decrease of 6.6% (-1030) for the same periods.

Note: On the one hand we are predicting an increase in population over the 2000 to 2020 period of 10.6% and on the other a reduction of 8.7%. This gives rise to totals differing by 30% on the lower MISER 2020 forecast. In early 2003 the Acton Planning Department, in correspondence with MAPC, state that they believed that the MISER predictions were closer to their beliefs. However, the MISER figures quoted at that time were close to the MAPC figures which are presented here. Thus it may be that the MAPC figures could be closer to the truth.

Further examination of the MAPC forward looking data reveals that (1) the 0-14 age group decreases 8.7% by 2010 and then remains steady to 2020; (2) The 15-39 age group decreases 4.7% by 2010 and then remains steady to 2020 and (3) The over 40 age group increases 24.6% by 2010 and then increases a further 7.6% by 2020. Thus, by 2020, the over 40 group represents 47% of the population.

School Enrollment

A predicted increase from 4215 in 2000 to a plateau of approximately 4620 (+9.5%) in the years 2005 to 2010, falling to 4273 (-7.4%) in 2016.

Grade K-6 falls steadily over the period 2000 to 2016 (-10% on 2000 total).

Grades 7-12 increase by 6% in the period 2005 to 2010.

Grades 7-8 falls by 17% in the period 2010 to 2016, whereas Grades 9-12 remain steady.

Households

MAPC projects a 19% increase in Acton households by 2020, at the same time the population increases by 10.6%. This suggests more households with fewer residents per household.

In the year 2000, almost 15% of the population spoke a language other than English at home. For those languages with over 150 speakers in the town, the proportion of the town population speaking Chinese is 3.8%, Portuguese 1.6%, Spanish 1.3%, French 1.2%, with Hindi, Russian, and Korean all less than 1%.

This trend is expected to increase between now and 2010 and 2020. The Library is in the midst of the process of building a Chinese collection and needs to be aware of an increasing requirement for services to additional non-English speaking readers.

The majority of Acton residents who work fall into the categories of managers, professionals, sales, and office workers. In 2000, over 80% of Acton workers were salaried; over 11% were government workers, and just over 8% were self-employed.

In 2000, 69% of Acton citizens held a Bachelor's degree or higher. 8% of the population has minimal literary skills (Level 1).

2.9% of the citizens ranked in the poverty status in the year 1999.

There were 15 families that provided home schooling for their children.

No statistics are available on the number of households that have access to the internet, but it is reasonable to assume that an increasing number will have access each year.

Acton Industries

There were 862 business establishments with employees in Acton in 2004, although in 2005, there were a total of 1,208 businesses with the 01720 zip code and there were a total of 1,842 "active" business certificates. The Library currently provides services to the business community.

In 2005, there were 865 business establishments in Acton; of these 14.4% were in the Goods producing domain and 85.6% in the Service producing sector. The largest groups were the Professional and Business Service Group (231) and the Trade, Transportation and Utilities Group (185).

Disabilities

The 2000 U.S. Census showed a total of 1,610 citizens (17.9% of the population) with physical disabilities. The largest number (958) was between the ages of 21 to 64. There was a smaller group between the ages of 5 to 20 (314) and those over 65 (338).

The Library is designed to be fully accessible to citizens with physical disabilities, but increased services might be a potential consideration.