

City and Town Centers

A Program for Growth

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The Massachusetts Growth Policy Report

Prepared by
The Massachusetts Office of State Planning

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This report is the product of the deliberations of literally thousands of citizens and officials throughout Massachusetts. Local Growth Policy Committees in over three hundred communities each discussed, prepared, reviewed, revised, and then submitted a Local Growth Policy Statement. Similarly, the Commonwealth's thirteen regional planning agencies each prepared a Regional Growth Policy Report, based in large part on the Local Statements. (For a listing of the local and regional documents, see *Sources*, page 85.) Much credit for this document then must go to those Local Growth Policy Committees and to the regional planning agencies. They have set a high standard that we have tried to match.

The Office of State Planning had much help at the statewide level as well. Over 240 individuals from business, labor, environmental, academic, and civic groups volunteered to assist as "readers" in reviewing the Local Statements.

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Massachusetts Growth Policy Process Chronology

July 1975	The Special Commission on "The Effects of Growth Patterns on the Quality of Life in Massachusetts" submits its first Interim Report with draft Growth Policy legislation.
October 1975	The Office of State Planning publishes <i>Towards A Growth Policy for Massachusetts</i> .
December 22, 1975	Governor Dukakis signs the <i>Massachusetts Growth Policy Development Act</i> into law, as Chapter 807 of the Acts of 1975.
January-February 1976	Local Growth Policy Committees are established in 330 communities throughout the State.
February 1976	The <i>Questionnaire</i> and <i>Handbook</i> are distributed to Local Growth Policy Committees by the Office of State Planning.
January-April 1976	Conferences and workshops on the Growth Policy Act are sponsored by MIT, Tufts University, Berkshire Community College, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Massachusetts Tomorrow, and others.
March 1976	Local Growth Policy Committees hold their initial hearings.
April 1976	The Office of State Planning announces the availability of Bicentennial grants to Local Growth Policy Committees.
May 1976	Local Growth Policy Committees hold second hearings on their tentative (draft) Local Growth Policy Statements.
July 1976	The Office of State Planning awards Bicentennial grants to 128 Local Growth Policy Committees.
June-September 1976	The majority of Local Growth Policy Committees complete their Local Growth Policy Statements and submit them to the Office of State Planning, to their regional planning agency, and to others.
September 1976	The Office of State Planning distributes the Local Growth Policy Statements to volunteer "readers" for review.
August-October 1976	Regional planning agencies develop draft Regional Growth Policy Reports and hold hearings to solicit comments.
November 1976	Additional Bicentennial grants are made to 40 Local Growth Policy Committees to follow up on their recommendations.
November-December 1976	Regional planning agencies complete their Regional Growth Policy Reports and submit them to the Office of State Planning and to the Special Commission.
January 1977	The Office of State Planning publishes <i>Perspectives on Growth: Excerpts from Local Growth Policy Statements</i> .
February-August 1977	The Office of State Planning prepares the State Growth Policy Report and develops recommendations for inclusion in that report.
May 1977	Statewide photo contest is held to solicit photographs for the State Report.
September 1977	The Office of State Planning publishes and distributes the <i>Massachusetts Growth Policy Report</i> .

Introduction

This response to a need for more and better housing and to the opening of new opportunities in nearby communities has been, to an extent, natural and appropriate. But today, we have come to recognize the problems that flow from having too much of a good thing.

For there have been costs associated with the excessive scattering of population and employment. Over 1.3 million acres of farmland have been lost since World War II and the number of farms has fallen from 35,000 to 6,000. Other critical natural resources have been damaged irreparably, such as the thousands of acres of wetlands, so critical for local water supplies, which have been filled in and tarred over. Over \$120 million in unnecessary service and facility costs have been borne by local taxpayers due to large lot, low density residential development in the last decade alone. And the extra public costs for dispersed development extend far beyond this, perhaps into the billions of dollars, since low density developments are themselves dispersed within communities and since large scale development frequently leap frogs from community to community, under-utilizing existing public facilities and failing to take full advantage of possible economies of scale. Our social lives have been affected immeasurably by the distances that have been made greater between home, work, schools, and stores; between rich and poor; and between black and white. And the distinctive character of so many communities and regions has been undermined as the cities at the center of each region have had their community pride and commercial promise threatened and as the centers of each town are lost in an endless stretch of gas stations, fast-food chains, and car dealerships.

The overall purpose of the growth policy process has been to prepare the people of Massachusetts for the difficult choices that must be made if the benefits of continued growth and development are to be enjoyed. While Massachusetts continues to pursue the American Dream for all of its people, the growth policy process is intended to avoid its becoming a nightmare.

And Massachusetts still has time. Almost 85 percent of the state's population lives in the urbanized areas of the Commonwealth. Over 148 communities still have fewer than 5,000 people. Remarkable diversity and rich tradition still characterize our communities and regions. And, for the first time in a generation, new initiatives are underway to preserve and promote the role of town centers and central cities in our communities and regions.

But time is running out. And the stakes for continued inaction are high. The thousands of participants in the growth policy process have realized this, as demonstrated by their seriousness of purpose and the high quality of their policy statements.

The title, *Cities and Centers: A Program for Growth*, is intended to convey a primary, though not the only, theme in this report. Certainly, all future growth could not and should not be

The publication of the Massachusetts Growth Policy Report, *Cities and Centers: A Program for Growth*, marks both an ending and a beginning. It is the end of 20 months of extraordinary, volunteer effort by over 5,000 members of Local Growth Policy Committees in 330 of the state's 351 communities, by the commissioners and staff of the 13 regional planning agencies, and by the hundreds of interested persons and organized groups that sponsored conferences and submitted comments on the vital issues arising from the process.

But it also marks the beginning of discussion and debate on the conclusions of this report, which should lead to the affirmation and modification of the proposed policies and recommendations for action. The Legislature will sponsor formal hearings during the Fall in every region, and numerous conferences and meetings will be held. Thus, the state's policy-making process will continue to remain open, as the Legislature and the Governor seek the direct involvement of local officials and community residents in the evaluation of the Massachusetts Growth Policy Report before final action is taken.

But action cannot be delayed indefinitely, for we in Massachusetts are at a crossroads.

Either we stand by and continue to tolerate the loss of decent homes and jobs in our city and town centers, the random dispersal of sprawl development, the waste of existing public facilities and the exorbitant costs of providing new public facilities, the loss of thousands of acres of prime farmland every year, and the needless degradation of fragile natural resources and of the unique character of individual regions and communities, *or* we come to grips with the fundamental choices that must be made if this state of affairs is to be changed.

Between 1950 and 1970, the character of Massachusetts was transformed. While population increased by 21 percent, the amount of urbanized land increased by 85 percent. Thus, the urbanization of land increased more than four times faster than our population. In 1950, only 8 percent (420,000 acres) of the state's land area was urbanized. But by 1970, urbanization had consumed more than 15 percent (780,000 acres) of the state. If this continues over the next 20 years in a manner consistent with the state's increasing rate of family formation, then close to 30 percent of the state's land area will be urbanized. While urbanization stretched to so many new communities between 1950 and 1970, the population of 12 of the state's largest cities fell by 279,732 and employment was reduced by 101,657.

This dispersal of people and jobs has occurred not without cause. In the context of the baby boom generation of large families (1946 to 1965) it is understandable why many people had no choice but to leave urban neighborhoods which had little room for so many new, growing families. And inexpensive home financing and improved highways made the transition more convenient.

channeled into existing cities and centers. But after a careful reading and analysis of all growth policy statements, it is clear that if Massachusetts is to retain and revive community and regional character and if the negative fiscal, environmental, and social impacts of sprawl are to be avoided, a major emphasis must be placed at all levels of government on the encouragement of new growth and development in our city and town centers.

On the surface, a dilemma emerges from the growth policy process. On the one hand, communities know that the state will and must continue to grow if sufficient employment and housing are to be available for an expanding population. And yet, on the other hand, many communities want to remain the same. This desire to preserve and protect the distinctive character of communities and regions is expressed consistently and compellingly in growth policy statements. Villages don't want to be suburbs; suburbs don't want to be cities; and cities don't want to be wastelands. And in this general desire we have the resolution to the apparent dilemma. By revitalizing the major regional centers and by facilitating the expansion of jobs and housing in central cities we can sustain the character of these communities as employment and population centers. And by encouraging most of the increase in people and jobs in suburban and rural towns to locate in or adjacent to their centers, the identity of these communities will remain separate and distinct from their neighbors and the role of their centers in the life of the community will be enhanced.

Thus, the goal of revitalizing city and town centers is seen as a direct response to an overwhelming desire to preserve the character of the Commonwealth's communities and regions. Perhaps more importantly it is an appropriate response to the often expressed concerns about the loss of farmland, the deterioration of the environment, exorbitant local and state taxes, the needless waste of limited energy resources, the anticipated demands for decent housing by an unprecedented number of new households, and the nagging problem of chronic unemployment.

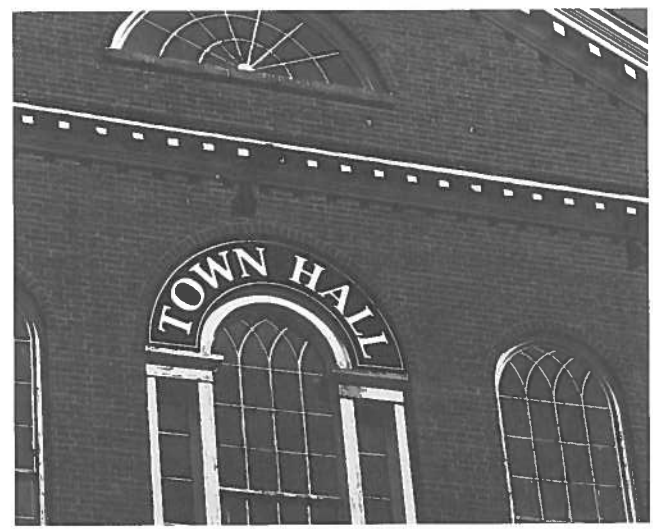
Because this report has evolved directly from the work of literally thousands of people, its recommendations may enjoy the special status of being understood and supported by a broad cross-section of people in Massachusetts. Unlike previous efforts to establish a state land use policy from the "top-down," Massachusetts has chosen to rely upon its own communities' vision of what we as a statewide community can make of our future. It is hoped that this report has correctly identified and interpreted a mandate for action by all levels of government toward more and better growth for Massachusetts.

City and Town Centers

A Program for Growth

Chapter One Local Perspectives on Growth

1



Over 330 communities participated in Massachusetts' Growth Policy process — each with its own values and perceptions, conscious of its own individuality and committed to the preservation of its distinctive characteristics. This first chapter of the State Growth Policy Report attempts to establish a commonality of interests among Massachusetts' communities and to set out those recurring themes which are basic to an understanding of the local perspective on growth. As such, it represents an aggregation of the unique perspectives of more than 300 communities. Although a summation of this sort will never do justice to the diversity of opinion contained in the local statements, nor serve as a substitute for the full statement of a particular community, it does provide a means of highlighting those concerns which were stressed most often by participating communities. Although each of these concerns was approached from a multitude of perspectives and with varying degrees of emphasis and agreement, certain basic similarities have suggested their use as a kind of thread upon which the most important local growth and development issues can be woven.

Communities which submitted Local Growth Policy Statements



Community Character

While difficult to define, the preservation of *community character* is the foremost concern of most Local Growth Policy Committees. It is the community asset most commonly discussed as a priority to preserve and enhance. To many communities, community character is closely associated with the *quality of life* — a focal point of the Growth Policy process. But what does community character mean? While a reading of the Local Growth Policy Statements makes it abundantly clear that it means different things to different communities, it seems possible to describe it in a general way as consisting of several distinct facets: physical, social, cultural, and political.

The *physical* aspects of a community's character are easily the most manifest: narrow, winding roads; panoramic vistas; historic buildings; plentiful open space; traditional town centers; an attractive and vital downtown; a rural atmosphere — these features combine in each community in a distinctive way, and often account for its residents' feelings of pride and identity.

The *social* and *cultural* aspects of community character, while less obvious to the casual observer, were found by many committees to be equally important. Social and ethnic diversity, community pride, closely-knit neighborhoods, traditional New England settlement patterns, and shared values form a firm foundation for most of the assets identified by communities. To preserve this heritage, to learn from it, and to build upon it are clear goals of an overwhelming number of communities.

The *political* aspect of community character consists largely of the structure of local government in our state. This structure is characterized by a large number of relatively small jurisdictions, a strong tradition of home rule, and a reliance upon the town meeting form of government in all but the largest communities — a style of

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The vast majority of cities and towns place the greater part of the responsibility for Massachusetts' poor economic performance squarely on the shoulders of state government.

government which is heavily dependent upon part-time local officials and a high level of citizen participation. Virtually all committees indicate their complete support of this political structure, and note the importance of home rule and local participation as crucial ingredients in the preservation of community character.

What do communities see as threats to this character? Among the most frequently cited trends are:

- rapid and ill-accommodated growth;
- environmental degradation;
- the loss of agricultural activity and land;
- the suburbanization of outlying communities and the urbanization of existing suburbs;
- the loss of open space and historic assets;
- the deterioration of traditional town centers and neighborhoods;
- unattractive or poorly planned commercial development; and
- state or federal intrusion in local affairs, and a concomitant loss of local control.

To preserve and enhance community character, Local Growth Policy Committees make a number of recommendations:

- Ensure that state statutes and regulations are sensitive to community differences.
- Improve the administration of the state's existing environmental laws and regulations.
- Ensure the preservation of agricultural land through such means as allowing for the purchase or transfer of development rights, amending the state's inheritance tax laws, and providing incentives — such as sales tax exemptions and tax credits — for agricultural activities.
- Increase the level of funding for open space acquisition, neighborhood improvement, and downtown revitalization.
- Provide adequate funding for all state-mandated programs.
- Improve and expand enabling statutes.
- Require that local government be consulted whenever a state action or investment will affect the community.
- Improve and expand technical assistance to cities and towns.

Economic Development

Although a discussion of economic issues is prominent in all Local Growth Policy Statements, few communities are optimistic about their ability to provide the number of jobs necessary to employ a growing labor force. The spiraling costs of government, the loss or stagnation of local industry, the deterioration of downtown areas, a declining local tax base, and a poor economic climate are all thought to contribute to the considerable difficulties faced by a community seeking to attract new economic activity.

The stagnation of Massachusetts' existing industrial base is viewed as the principal cause of the state's unemployment problem. A lack of industrial growth and, in some cases, the loss of local industry, is frequently cited as having had a negative effect on a community's vitality. In addition to its impact on local employment, many communities note that the erosion of a community's tax base which results from the loss of industry places a severe strain on local government's ability to maintain its existing level of services. Some communities consider this problem to be aggravated by widespread competition among communities seeking new or expanding industry.

In addition, many communities refer to the state's "anti-business climate" — the cumulative effect of taxes, government regulation, and the absence of a coherent strategy for stimulating private investment. A declining tax base and an over-dependence on the property tax for the provision of municipal services are cited by

nearly all communities. There appears to be a near unanimous support for reducing local government's reliance on the property tax, as well as a lesser but still significant degree of support for comprehensive tax reform. Many committees recommend a streamlining of the state's permitting and regulatory processes: the administration of state licenses, permits, and environmental laws are said to impede new industrial and commercial development. Those communities adjacent to other states often call for a repeal of the state's blue laws, finding them a severe handicap to the competitive position of local retailers; more frequent is the suggestion that the question of Sunday openings be decided by each community's own residents.

Many statements include a wide ranging discussion of the role and effectiveness of both state and local government in dealing with economic issues. Some communities note the frustrations which accompanied their attempts to attract and maintain industry within their boundaries. Many have had only mixed success in attracting industry to new industrial parks. Most communities state that these efforts are motivated by a desire to expand local tax bases while providing new jobs. Others see one or the other of these objectives as predominant. For example, more than one community found that while certain forms of industrial development had increased its tax base, they had done so without providing a significant number of new jobs for the community's own residents. State manpower training programs receive only mixed reviews. Despite frequent references to such external economic factors as inflation, the high cost of energy, a lack of federal action, and the role of the private sector, the vast majority of cities and towns seem to place the greater part of the responsibility for Massachusetts' poor economic performance squarely on the shoulders of state government.

A final and pervasive concern is the deterioration of downtown shopping areas. Many communities feel that the vitality of their commercial centers has been seriously undercut by the competition provided by suburban shopping centers. Even communities lacking a clearly defined business center, including many rural and suburban towns, find it important to protect the vitality of downtown areas. In fact, many communities see their own economic recovery as being closely tied to the fate of a downtown business area or town commercial center.

There is substantial agreement that state government should pursue a comprehensive economic development program to reduce the costs of doing business in Massachusetts. Most communities consider the role of state government to be more important than their own efforts in promoting economic development, though the prescribed role of the state differs greatly from community to community. Some communities feel that the state should engage in a more aggressive campaign to attract out-of-state industry to Massachusetts. Several call for the more vigorous promotion of tourism, while others are more concerned about the low wage level of tourist-related jobs. Many recommendations are more specific:

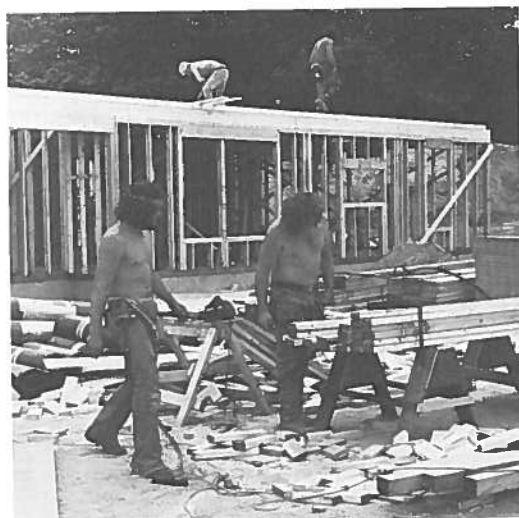
- Improve the management of the state's regulatory process, and streamline permits and licenses.
- Develop a more aggressive approach to attract federal public works programs.
- Develop new, innovative programs to revitalize downtown business areas and town centers.
- Provide the public facilities and infrastructure necessary to attract industry.
- Improve manpower training programs to better meet the need for skilled labor in new industries.
- Expand small business assistance programs.

It is interesting that economic development is one area where communities are actively seeking an increased level of state involvement. In essence, their recommendations call for the state to improve Massachusetts' economic climate and attract the industry which will create new jobs and expand the local tax base — all in a manner consistent with the character and identity of each community.

"There is a strong concern that the state, in particular through the legislature and tax structure, fosters an anti-business climate which hurts the entire state and, thus, the community."

Quincy Growth Policy Statement





"In sum, we feel that racial and economic integration in the region cannot be accomplished until moderate-priced and subsidized housing is located so as to give low and moderate income households a greater choice from which to choose."
Boston Growth Policy Statement

"The price of buildable land has risen greatly due to the premium cost of land and high taxes; increasingly, the moderate to wealthy have been primarily those able to afford to move and own homes here."
Concord Growth Policy Statement

Housing and Residential Growth

The Local Growth Policy Committees' discussion of housing and residential growth is shaped, in large part, by three common concerns:

- the need for a wider range of affordable housing opportunities;
- the need for a more equitable distribution of low and moderate income housing among communities; and
- the need to ensure that future residential growth is consistent with a community's ability to absorb it.

The cost of housing in nearly all communities has risen far in excess of other living costs. Statewide, the average price of a new single-family home is now \$52,000, or twice what it was in 1970. Recent increases in the cost of repairs, routine maintenance, fuel bills, property taxes, land and interest rates have forced an increasing number of middle income families out of the new housing market. Some committees note that young families and the elderly frequently find it difficult or impossible to remain in their home communities. Simultaneously, the number of new housing starts has fallen below the level necessary to accommodate the natural increase of our existing population.

Many communities point out that housing problems in urban areas frequently originate in housing markets and practices prevalent in adjacent communities. Because these practices impose artificial restrictions in more affluent communities, cities are typically required to house a disproportionate share of the metropolitan community's low income residents. In response, a large number of communities advocate the pursuit of a *scattered-site* housing strategy which targets housing subsidies in such a way as to allow for a greater freedom of choice in one's place of residence. Nearly all communities oppose further *concentration* of low income housing in project developments.

In concert with these two objectives, many communities call for increased attention to the rehabilitation of existing neighborhoods. Some communities, pointing out that past residential growth has had a deleterious effect on their community's character, tax rate, and service costs, see neighborhood revitalization as a means of lessening these impacts. A few urban communities note the emergence of a "new," less costly housing market as young families move to reclaim vacant or dilapidated dwellings in older neighborhoods. Substantially more of these communities cite problems which they attribute to a loss of middle income families: rising property taxes, crime, and a general deterioration in the quality of neighborhood life.

Among those communities which have experienced rapid residential growth, many find that the ensuing demand for services has far outstripped the revenue generated by this development. They stress that future residential growth must be more carefully controlled and balanced with tax-producing commercial and industrial development. In these communities, if new residential growth is to occur, it will be only on local terms.

Many committees define what seem to be the most important causes of these housing problems. Among the most frequently cited impediments to increased housing construction are a dwindling supply of developable land (aggravated by a variety of state-imposed environmental programs), a lack of financial and institutional mechanisms to promote sound moderate income housing, and the rapidly rising cost of labor, materials, and land associated with the housing industry. It is interesting to note that while local subdivision and zoning regulations are mentioned as adding to housing costs (and thereby reducing production), they are not cited as being a major impediment to housing growth.

Finally, in their criticism of housing inadequacies, local committees do not leave out the contribution of state government. The lack of effective public programs to deal with housing needs is often expressed, and Chapter 774, the Department of Community Affairs, and the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency are all found lacking.

Communities recommend:

- Increase the availability of affordable housing opportunities through more flexible and locally-sensitive environmental regulations.

- Facilitate housing rehabilitation through an amendment of the state building code.
- Provide an increased level of technical and financial assistance to communities to offset the costs associated with low and moderate income housing.
- Increase the availability of scattered-site housing subsidies.
- Provide positive incentives for communities to accept subsidized housing.

Taxation

If a single most important lesson were to be drawn from the Growth Policy process, it would be that state/local fiscal relations are not what they should be. Nearly all communities describe the present system of state and local taxation as regressive and a deterrent to economic development, the overall level of taxation as excessive, and personal property tax payments as both onerous and burdensome.

The perception of an excessive level of overall taxation is still more pronounced in those communities where the local property tax rate exceeds the statewide average. These communities feel that the present tax structure places them in a particular bind — high taxes not only burden residents, they impede economic growth, thereby limiting the expansion of their tax base and ultimately threatening still higher taxes.

Many communities point out that property holdings are not necessarily related to one's ability to pay. Others express concern about the impact of the property tax on growth and development, finding that it often discourages desirable economic development, adds to the already high cost of housing, encourages the conversion of agricultural land and open space to developed uses, and discourages rehabilitation and reinvestment. Furthermore, high property taxes make the fiscal consequences of local land use decisions *the* preeminent consideration — thereby forcing communities to attempt to capture increased tax revenues in a manner which may be contrary to optimum land use and local development objectives.

In addition to the undesirability of the property tax itself, many communities express frustration over what they perceive as a lack of control over the level of local taxation. City Councils and Town Meetings are increasingly asked to approve budgets over which they have little control. The autonomy of the local school committee, binding arbitration for municipal employees, and state requirements for local programs often consume as much as 75 to 90 percent of local expenditures, leaving little room for local impact on the budgetary process.

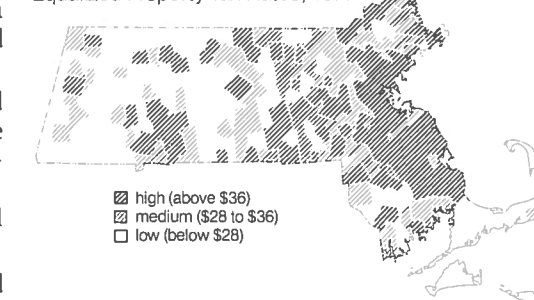
Many communities ascribe causes to these problems and dilemmas of taxation:

- inadequate and inequitable state aid to communities;
- unreasonable assessments on communities (such as the costs of county government);
- an unnecessarily high level of state and local public spending;
- school committee autonomy;
- rapid growth which outstripped the local capacity to accommodate it, thus generating more costs than revenues;
- newer residents who expect a higher level of local services;
- 100 percent valuation and its implications for residential neighborhoods; and
- bureaucratic mismanagement and civil service at the state level.

Based on these perceptions, Massachusetts' communities propose a variety of recommendations:

- Reduce state spending through better management and efficiency in state government.
- Limit binding arbitration for municipal employees.
- Stabilize or increase the level of state aid to communities.
- Institute a system of state revenue sharing whereby a portion of state revenues would be returned to local government.

Equalized Property Tax Rates, 1977



"Wow! If you think you're an irate citizen, just listen to this irate citizen!"

- Reduce local government's dependence on the property tax.
- Require adequate funding for all state-mandated programs.
- Make state assistance programs more flexible and sensitive to local issues.

Growth-Related Facilities

Major public investments exert a tremendous influence on the timing, character, and location of growth. The presence of a new highway, for example, often tends to stimulate new commercial and industrial development at major interchanges. The placement and sizing of a sewer line may accelerate new development as well as alter an existing pattern of growth by allowing for higher density. The fact that all of these facilities have either direct or indirect effects on the rate, character, and location of new growth suggests a need for careful planning in order to minimize the potential for adverse or undesirable impacts on community character.

In their Growth Policy Statements, many communities pay particular attention to effects of public facility investments. Some communities feel the impact of these facilities to have been largely favorable; others find the growth and development made possible by these facilities to have had a deleterious effect on their community's character. Those citing favorable experiences generally attribute their success to an ability to plan for anticipated growth, and thereby shape its impact on their community.

Transportation

Most communities are acutely aware of how transportation facilities can lead to new growth and development. Many refer to the development stimulated by large highway projects and how it has altered their communities' character — sometimes for the worse.

The inability of local government to seriously affect state transportation decisions is another popular concern, as is the failure of transportation agencies to recognize community differences. Many communities feel that they are receiving less than their fair share of transportation investments. Still others complain of the noise and traffic problems generated by airport expansion.

But the central thrust of the communities' transportation recommendations is towards increasing the ability of cities and towns to affect state transportation investment decisions. Although a participatory mechanism — the so-called "3C" process — has been in place for the last four years, communities are still unsatisfied with their role and level of influence.

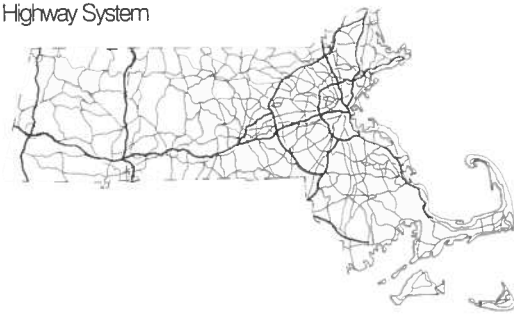
Communities recommend:

- Improve and expand public transit to bring more balance to our transportation system.
- Increase non-local funding for public transportation.
- Facilitate access to downtown shopping areas.
- Continue highway maintenance and safety improvements, but refrain from undertaking major new construction projects.
- Accelerate completion of highway projects already committed.
- Reform the MBTA assessment formula.
- Revitalize commuter and freight rail service.
- Increase the flexibility of the Chapter 90 Highway Aid Program governing the standards for road improvement and construction.

Wastewater Treatment

The accelerated growth experienced by many communities over the past 20 years has resulted in the rapid deterioration of surface and groundwaters in both urban and rural areas. Strict new state and federal water quality standards are aimed at reestablishing the multi-purpose use of surface waters. To comply with these standards, many communities must now undertake the construction costs of these expensive

Highway System



Regional Transit Authorities



treatment facilities. Despite the fact that 90 percent of the construction costs of the systems are borne by the state and federal governments, the sheer magnitude of these projects often means that this 10 percent cost is a burden to a local government which is additionally required to finance the cost of the facility's operation and maintenance. Some communities have sought to make the cost of these facilities less burdensome by increasing the number of individual hook-ups to the system, thereby facilitating or stimulating new and higher density residential growth.

There are broad differences of opinion among communities concerning the need for such facilities and the impact they will have on future growth and development. Some communities neither recognize a need for treatment facilities nor are willing to accept the financial burden they imply. Others view sewers as a welcome stimulus to industrial development and feel that their lack of sewers has inhibited growth. Surprisingly, only a few communities discuss the federally funded "208" areawide water quality planning program.

Most communities appear troubled by the complexity of issues surrounding the improvement and maintenance of water quality — health and water pollution problems resulting from failing septic systems; the need to rehabilitate or construct new collection and treatment facilities; the complex funding arrangements made in support of wastewater disposal; choosing between less costly management techniques and more traditional collection and treatment facilities; and gauging the fiscal and land use impact of sewage facilities.

Communities recommend:

- Increase state and federal funding for facility planning, design, construction, and operation.
- Evaluate and, where applicable, fund all potential wastewater treatment solutions (including non-traditional management alternatives).
- Relax state water quality standards for smaller communities.

Water Supply

Roughly 80 percent of the Local Growth Policy Committees state that water supply has had (or will have) a significant impact on their community. The vast majority of these communities also state that their water supply is failing to keep pace with their rate of growth. Underlying these concerns is a more fundamental desire to protect the integrity of water resources and prevent the pollution of water supplies. In virtually all statements, this water *quality* issue is closely tied to a discussion of water *supply*. Communities identify many sources of water pollution: industrial and municipal discharge, storm water runoff, groundwater contamination, and road salt.

Water supply concerns are also commonly associated with *access* and *availability*. Water-rich communities express a reluctance to export their water resources, while water-poor communities focus on the need to improve existing regional supply systems and identify new sources. Rural communities often find it inequitable that they are required to clean up or protect those native water resources which supply urban areas.

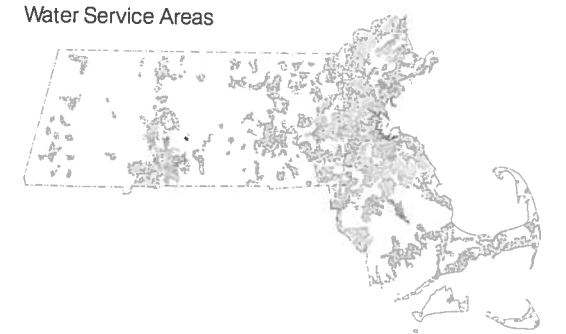
Communities recommend:

- Provide more stringent protection for existing water supplies.
- Investigate new sources and regional arrangements for water supply.
- Increase state funding to pay for the development of improved delivery systems.
- Require state agencies (such as the Department of Environmental Quality Engineering) to be more sensitive to community character and differences.
- Give a higher statewide priority to water quality in general.

Solid Waste

A persistent problem for nearly all communities is the disposal of an ever-increasing volume of solid waste. Most communities feel that their present facilities are inadequate to meet their future needs. Existing sites are nearing capacity and alternative

Water Service Areas



Sewer Service Areas



disposal methods are often costly or in violation of state or federal standards. Many rural communities criticize the state open burning law.

As it is a common problem which is shared by municipalities, most communities see solid waste disposal as a problem best dealt with on a regional basis. Not surprisingly, however, no community appears eager to play host to a "regional dump."

Communities recommend:

- Investigate alternative disposal techniques (including resource recovery and recycling).
- Expand and intensify long-range planning for solid waste disposal.
- Render state standards and regulations more sensitive to the fiscal limitations of local government.

Recreation

Compared with other growth-related facilities, there is relatively little discussion of recreational facilities. Some communities interested in preserving their natural resources from development pressures suggest that this might occur through the public acquisition of open space. Such problems as the rising cost of land, the limitations of local expenditure, the loss of property tax revenue which results from the public recreational use of land, and a lack of equal access to recreational facilities are also discussed. Many communities view their recreational facilities as forming an integral part of their community character. More densely populated communities often call for more neighborhood parks. There are diverse comments on what is considered an inequitable distribution of state recreational funds.

Communities recommend:

- Increase non-local funding for open space acquisition and for the creation of recreational facilities.
- Provide a state payment in lieu of taxes for communities affected by state recreation investments.
- Allow communities to take part in major investment and management decisions concerning state parks and forests.

The Growth Management Process

Although the strains and pressures of rapid growth have been experienced by nearly all of the communities participating in the Growth Policy process, very few had ever had occasion to step back from the consideration of day-to-day issues and take a hard look at their community's future. The Growth Policy process itself and the self-examination it inspires has made all communities more keenly aware of the importance of managing future growth. Although certain communities were initially skeptical of the value or intentions of the process, the fact that 330 of the state's 351 cities and towns chose to participate strongly suggests an intense concern about the implications of future growth.

A number of communities find their capacity to plan for and reasonably accommodate growth is less than they desire, and go on to identify such problems as strip development, sprawl, and the loss of farmland and open space. Most communities appear to feel that they have coped as well as possible with recent growth.

Although the need to preserve home rule and local control is a frequent sentiment to emerge from this process, many committees complain of a lack of substantive citizen participation and an inability to persuade their community to modernize even the most basic planning tools (such as zoning by-laws). Other communities find that local zoning and subdivision regulations have been poorly administered, and that local master plans are rarely used as a guide to community development.

Other communities frequently discuss such special concerns as downtown revitalization, neighborhood preservation, local economic development, and public

transit. Many of these communities state that they have already begun major revitalization efforts; others express the need for such programs in their community's future, and in this context, note the importance of supportive state actions to the success of their efforts.

Throughout the Commonwealth, there is widespread apprehension concerning the role of regional planning agencies and other similar institutional arrangements. The overall merits of regionalization are frequently questioned, as are, to a lesser extent, the existing boundaries of regional planning commissions. In general, many communities recognize that developments of regional significance do exist, but these same communities are adamant about the need to maintain local control over such development. Nevertheless, there is a clear recognition that certain problems, such as solid waste and water supply, can be effectively addressed only through some form of inter-municipal cooperation. Although most communities cite a need to make existing regional entities more effective, the nature and specifics of their recommendations vary greatly. For example, while some communities in Western Massachusetts and on the Cape seek the modernization of county government, many communities call for its outright abolition.

Less controversial is a common concern to maintain the ability of a community to control its own growth and ensure the continuity of its own unique character and values. To this end, many communities call for an overall increase in state aid to allow them to free up funds which could then be used to develop more effective economic development and growth management programs.

There are also numerous recommendations concerning the improvement of the state's planning activities and the expansion of existing state programs. Some communities, however, recommend that planning responsibilities be left exclusively to local government.

Communities recommend for *local* action:

- Update zoning by-laws and subdivision controls.
- Establish an industrial development commission, redevelopment authority, industrial development finance authority, or economic development and industrial corporation.
- Initiate a local economic development program.
- Develop a participatory planning process.
- Continue the Growth Policy Committee or institute a similar comprehensive policy group.
- Institute a design review program for new commercial, industrial, and apartment development.

Communities recommend for *state* action:

- Increase state funding to cities and towns to relieve fiscal strain and support the development of effective growth management and planning programs on the local level.
- Improve the effectiveness of regional planning agencies.
- Modernize or eliminate county government.
- Promote inter-municipal planning and cooperation in such areas as solid waste and water supply.
- Improve the overall effectiveness and coordination of state planning programs.

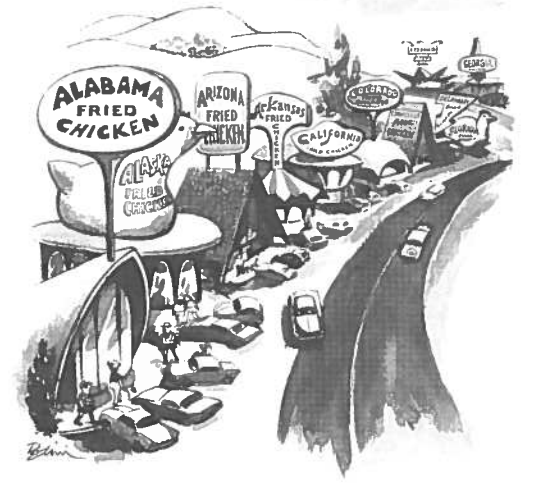
Local Growth Policies

All of the concerns which each community expressed — concerns about local character, jobs, taxes, and so on — add up to a desired *growth policy* for that community. Although the rationale for such policies varies from one community to the next as a result of differing local conditions and priorities, these policies can nevertheless be summarized in a fairly simple way: How much and what kind of future growth does each community want?



"Long-time residents have seen the town alter drastically, beginning with the widening of Main Street in the early 50's, thereby increasing the speed and volume of traffic . . . For long-time residents these uncontrollable events are ugly scars which encourage a feeling of defeat in a once beautiful town."

Bolton Growth Policy Statement



"Many of the problems which confront the city are ones to which there is an answer — the solution is in the hands and within the power of local government, if the council, the boards, and staff could work toward one end. Many tasks are done but few planning goals are achieved. The future is ours alone if we will take it."

Gloucester Growth Policy Statement

Residential Growth Policies

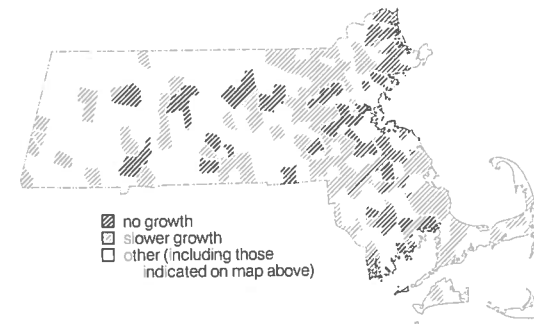
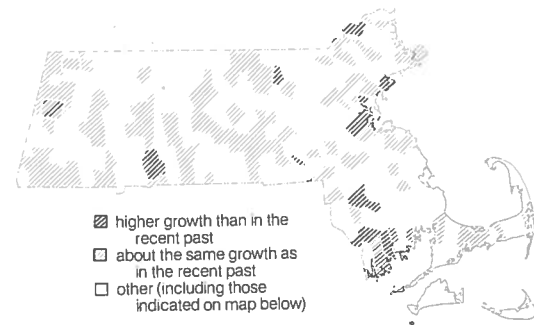
Perhaps because *growth* is often perceived as being synonymous with *population growth*, residential growth receives by far the most sustained attention in the Local Growth Policy Statements. The impact which housing growth has on a community is substantial: new people, new school children, new and greater demands for services, new taxpayers, new voters. The attitudes of communities toward residential growth in general reflect a desire for a slower and more controlled rate of future growth. This is, of course, a generalization, and a desire for more control does *not* necessarily imply a desire for less growth.

All of the Local Growth Policy Statements were carefully read and analyzed to summarize local attitudes toward future residential growth. The results of that analysis are indicated on the accompanying maps and in the table below:

Desired Future Residential Growth	Number of Communities
<input type="checkbox"/> higher growth than in the recent past	14
<input type="checkbox"/> about the same growth as in the recent past	99
<input type="checkbox"/> slower growth than in the recent past	103
<input type="checkbox"/> no growth (including those communities not <i>expecting</i> to grow)	52
<input type="checkbox"/> hard to say, not indicated, or not participating in the Growth Policy process	83

From the maps, one can see that those communities wanting a slower rate of growth or no growth form a distinct pattern — by and large, they are either those communities which have already seen substantial population growth in recent years (such as those suburban communities whose growth was facilitated by the construction of Route 128) or those coastal communities whose critical resource areas have been seriously threatened by uncontrolled growth in the recent past (such as the North Shore and Cape communities). It is interesting to note in this context that more than 75 percent of the population growth of the last ten years occurred in those communities now wanting slower growth. Conversely, those communities seeking a higher level of residential growth and investment are largely those older cities whose departing population fueled the suburban growth of the fifties and sixties: Boston, Haverhill, Salem, Taunton, Fall River, Chicopee, Pittsfield, and North Adams. Other older cities, such as Lowell, Worcester, and Chelsea, call for residential growth in more specific areas.

Local Residential Growth Policies



Industrial Growth Policies

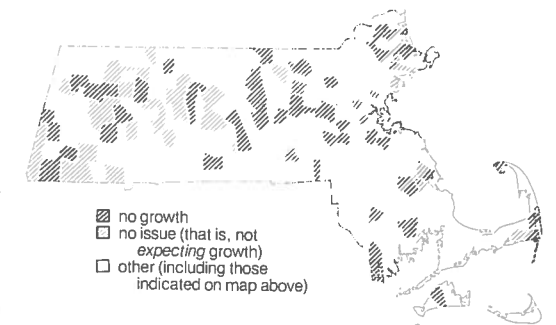
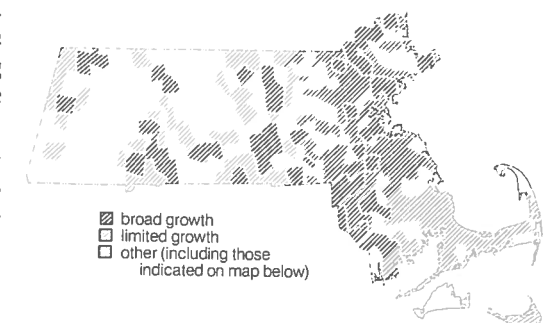
Attitudes toward future industrial growth are somewhat more complex. Most typically, desires for improved job opportunities and an expanded tax base, coupled with concerns about the likely impacts of industry, lead most communities to espouse a policy favoring the “right” kind of industry in the “right” areas — thus, defying any simple categorization. In the accompanying maps and the table below, these attitudes are summarized as *limited* growth.

Despite the conditions they would impose, most communities appear favorably disposed toward future industrial growth. A substantial number of communities have few if any reservations and express policies favoring broad industrial growth. In other communities, industrial growth is seen as unlikely and, therefore, is not an issue.

Desired Future Industrial Growth	Number of Committees
<input type="checkbox"/> broad growth	53
<input type="checkbox"/> limited growth	132
<input type="checkbox"/> no growth	52
<input type="checkbox"/> no issue (that is, unlikely)	50
<input type="checkbox"/> hard to say, not indicated, or not participating in the Growth Policy process	65

Although the pattern formed by those communities seeking either broad or targeted industrial growth is less obvious, there are nevertheless certain similarities. The older cities of the state — Pittsfield, North Adams, Springfield, Chicopee, Holyoke, Northampton, Lowell, Haverhill, Fitchburg, Worcester, Fall River, New Bedford, Brockton, Lynn, Cambridge, and Chelsea — are all *actively* seeking an increased level of industrial growth. Other communities, having had what they consider to be favorable experiences with industrial growth (such as Westboro and Waltham), also desire further industrial growth, as do those communities which seek to fill or expand their existing industrial parks. Those communities in predominantly rural or environmentally sensitive areas generally oppose further industrial growth. Many Growth Policy Committees in the Route 128 area find that their communities had mixed experiences with rapid industrial growth and, therefore, recommend that further industrial growth be encouraged only on a limited basis.

Local Industrial Growth Policies



“Although residents realize the impossibility of doing so, each newcomer (as well as longtime residents) generally wants to ‘pull the drawbridge up behind him’ and prevent any further growth, development and change in the town.”

Carlisle Growth Policy Statement



How much and what kind of future growth does each community want?



Chapter Two Regional Perspectives on Growth

2

For a small state, Massachusetts harbors remarkable diversity. One of the most enjoyable aspects of compiling this report was the opportunity to survey the richness of differences in assets, needs, and values among the communities of the Commonwealth. To recount those differences in all their fullness would not only require an unduly cumbersome report; it would run contrary to the chief mission of this document, which is to summarize and to synthesize. It is useful, however, to examine the growth implications of diversity at the intermediate level of the state's 13 regional planning agencies. For one thing, these agencies have themselves distilled the statements of their member communities into regional reports. Their conclusions reflect the special insights of proximity and daily involvement, and are, therefore, important to this report. More importantly, regional boundaries mean something. As social, economic, and environmental issues take on an increasingly inter-municipal character, the regions — organized around metropolitan concentrations, transportation corridors, and geographic linkages — allow us to simplify a complex puzzle of 351 pieces into one whose pieces are still very different but number only 13.

This by no means implies that most regions enjoy either a strong internal consensus on growth policy choices or a general acceptance of regional growth management institutions. In many cases, quite the opposite is true. But a synthesis of the regional reports and their constituent local statements reveals a substantial degree of intra-regional consensus on the *agenda* of growth policy issues. And the 13 regional agendas are different in many respects.

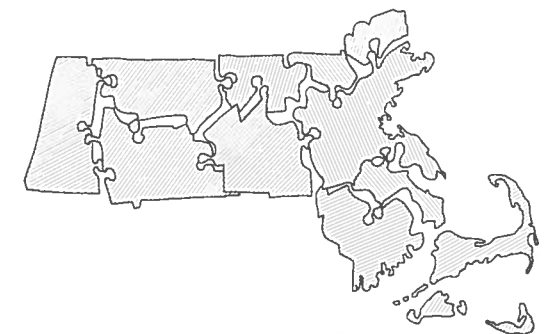
This chapter has two parts. The first will briefly compare and contrast all 13 regions, seeking what is common and what is distinct in:

- the scale of regional development and the climate of regional decision-making;
- areas of consensus and conflict in the regional growth agendas; and
- the acceptability of regional growth management institutions.

The second, and longer, part of this chapter will summarize, in some detail, the agenda of growth policy issues for each of the 13 regions.

The Regions

None of the differences among the outlying regions is as striking or important as the difference between all of them and metropolitan Boston. The latter, represented by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, houses over 60 percent of the state's population and includes 101 cities and towns. Since 1950, the edge of rapid growth has traveled from Boston to Route 128 to Route 495, enveloping not only a core of dense, urban communities and a wide band of outer suburbs, but several satellite areas which themselves combine a central city or town and a number of suburbs. Two of these satellite areas — on the North Shore and in Middlesex County — are included in the metropolitan Boston region. Three others form separate regions (Northern Middlesex, Merrimack Valley, and Old Colony) which are being slowly drawn into an eastern Massachusetts super-region.



Metropolitan Boston differs from other regions not only in scale, but in the degree of pressure inherent in its growth policy choices. Other regions still *have* choices. In metropolitan Boston, land is already so scarce and expensive, service demands already so intense, property taxes already so burdensome, that the stakes riding on most growth decisions appear almost uniformly high.

At the other end of the development scale are five regions — Berkshire, Franklin, Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket — in which the regional quality of life, while still unspoiled, is perceived to be in great danger. Here the choices to be made are seen as fundamental, with the whole direction of future growth still at stake. And here, too, the stakes are high.

In between are those regions which exhibit more "typical" development patterns — a central core, a ring of suburbs, and some rural towns. In the Lower Pioneer Valley, Central Massachusetts, Montachusett, Northern Middlesex, Merrimack Valley, Old Colony, and Southeastern Massachusetts, growth policy issues are important and well-articulated, but these regions appear to have more time than the state's other regions to make critical choices on growth policy issues.



Regional Growth Issues

Housing and Residential Growth: Housing lies at the heart of community growth and decline, and virtually all local statements cite either a shortage or overpricing of some type of housing as a major community problem. At the regional level, we find a reinforcement of these local concerns: The escalating cost of single-family homes, the shortage of elderly housing, and the deterioration of older neighborhood housing stock are mentioned everywhere. There is one major regional difference — this overall shortage is gravest in metropolitan Boston — and several interesting minor ones. The rural regions, particularly Franklin County, cite a scarcity of apartments, while some Boston suburbs are surfeited with them. The Berkshires, the Cape, and the Islands have a unique and a growing problem in seasonal second homes.

The metropolitan regions, especially metropolitan Boston, display consistent differences among the goals and perceptions of the regions, the cities, and many suburbs. There is a growing disparity between suburban and inner-city areas in the provision of low income and subsidized housing, and a common call in most urban and regional reports for the diversification of housing densities, types, and prices across all metropolitan communities. Not all suburbs reject this goal explicitly, but many wish to pursue either of two contradictory goals: a decrease in the growth rate and a curtailment of residential development *or* the continued encouragement of single-family homes or market rent apartments (both increasingly beyond the reach of the urban family). Most regions advocate the "fair sharing" of regional housing needs, and have prepared community-by-community guidelines. The only authoritative mechanism, however, is Chapter 774, the so-called anti-snob zoning law, which is found crude, arbitrary, and insensitive to legitimate planning concerns.

□

Industrial Development: All regions consider jobs a top priority, and all of them either include or are allied with regional industrial development units. Many of the regional goals reflect common local themes: the "light" and "clean" technology industries receive universal support, and the obligation of state government to make Massachusetts more attractive to private investment is regularly cited. Except on the Islands, industrial growth is desired in all regions, with special concern for the future of regionally dominant pursuits, such as the coastal industries.

Two patterns emerge from the regional and local reports. Rural regions — Berkshire and Franklin Counties, the Cape, and the fringes of Central Massachusetts — are typically dependent on a handful of regional industries. Aside from preserving these key employers, the regional watchword is "diversification" — but without an undue sacrifice of the rural life-style.

On the other hand, certain regions are undergoing unchecked competition for industrial park development among neighboring communities. Montachusett,

Southeastern Massachusetts, Old Colony, and the I-495 fringes of metropolitan Boston are key examples. While the local statements do not advocate duplication and competition, only the regional reports sense the possible negative consequences — in wasted space and resources, and in factory reuse opportunities foregone. There is not a local call for cooperation and restraint.

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Center Revitalization: Although the goal of revitalizing the centers of Massachusetts — villages, towns, and cities — is almost universally articulated in the Local Growth Policy Statements, only in the regional reports, the city statements, and a handful of town statements do we find the argument that the older, larger downtowns are the most appropriate regional and subregional commercial centers, and that some shopping center and strip development must be sacrificed to maintain and rejuvenate them.

The rehabilitation of existing buildings is a common theme in the center revitalization proposals, and many regional, city, and large town statements advocate comprehensive downtown strategies — including street scape and traffic improvements, transportation terminals, open space amenities, elderly housing, and the in-town location of state offices.

Metropolitan Boston differs from all other regions in the scale of its multiple, subregional centers, but other regions, particularly Lower Pioneer, Merrimack Valley, and Southeastern Massachusetts, have qualitatively similar situations, with several major centers within each region.

The trade-off between downtown and fringe commercial development is particularly prone to inter-municipal conflict, but in at least two regions — Berkshire County and Old Colony — the regional growth policy report as well as those from the central city and some of the key suburbs are mutually supportive in advocating a downtown-centered regional growth strategy. It is also noteworthy that two non-metropolitan regions — Franklin County and Cape Cod — advocate commercial centralization in their major town centers in arguments suggestive of those raised in more urban regions.

□

Transportation: The local cries for greater input, more flexibility, and increased state funding are echoed in the regional reports, but the latter go much further. They articulate regional transportation goals, and reinforce the local recognition that transportation investments and programs are major determinants of region-wide economic, social, and environmental decisions.

Some transportation goals are universally-held. There is general agreement that our transportation system must become more balanced. The preservation and upgrading of the rail freight network, and the rebuilding of the commuter and inter-city passenger rail systems are common priorities. The expansion of publicly-subsidized bus systems through the MBTA and regional transit authorities is also widely supported, although local willingness to share in the financing of such authorities is by no means universal.

Within metropolitan Boston, there is near consensus on the cessation of major highway building, while in the outlying regions there is wide-spread agreement on the need to move forward with the state's few remaining commitments to major new highways, as long as the state helps the affected regions anticipate and accommodate the growth impacts these investments imply.

Obviously, transportation controversies are more apt to involve *proposed* investments. In metropolitan Boston, there is lingering conflict over at least one of the planned transit extensions, and the potential for considerable disagreement over proposed future additions to the system. Outside metropolitan Boston, where fixed-rail transit construction is not under consideration, conflicts still involve highway construction. Particularly in central and western Massachusetts, these disputed investments are not typically proposed by state and regional bodies; rather, communities request interchanges on existing highways, bypasses of town centers,



capacity increases on older primary highways, or completely new highways through rural areas which the state and the regions are inclined to question.

Finally, there is inter-regional disagreement over the alleged diversion of resources from outlying parts of the state into the MBTA system.

□

Environmental Issues: Broadly taken, all growth and community character issues are environmental. Certain concerns are more narrowly so, however, and on some there is both inter-regional similarity and some degree of intra-regional consensus.

Solid waste disposal evokes, in virtually every region, a consensus on the need for regional solutions, some local willingness to enter into cooperative planning which could result in a community's selection as a facility site, and a lingering preference for voluntary participation and state leniency in regulating existing landfills.

The importance of preserving farmland is a preoccupation for the rural regions, but is recognized even by the most urban regions. There is agreement on the need for more aggressive state involvement through tax incentives and development rights legislation, and for enhanced regional planning.

Other elements of the environmental agenda differ by region. Water quality is a regional planning responsibility for several regions under the federal 208 program, which has already exhibited the potential for tension between region and community. The 201 sewage treatment construction program is viewed quite differently by urban and rural regions. In the former, the slanting of 201 priorities toward new plant construction and away from the improvement of existing systems has been a major complaint and a tax on the ingenuity of local, regional, and state officials. In the latter, the program's bias toward elaborate structural solutions which may induce new cycles of unwanted growth has evoked the concern, and sometimes the disagreement, of regions and municipalities.

Real or potential shortages of drinking water are cited in most regional reports; major intra-regional concerns involve the formation of cooperative supply systems and the growth impacts which may result from system expansions. Among regions, there is tension over possible diversions from water-rich to water-poor areas; Franklin County and Lower Pioneer's opposition to MDC encroachment on the Connecticut River is a prime example.

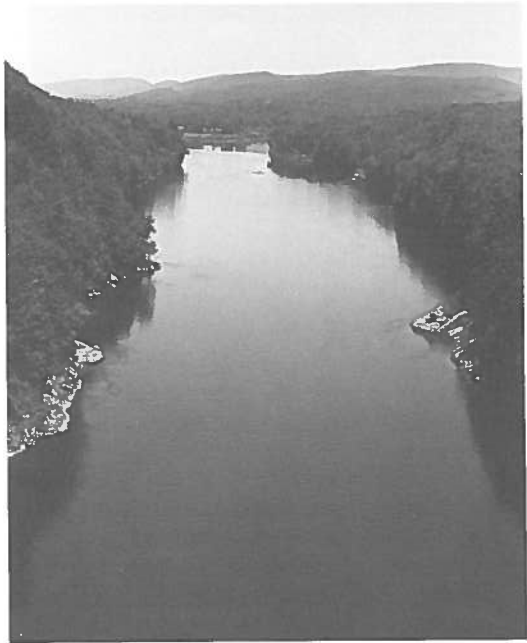
The evolution of the Coastal Zone Management program, and its relationship to both local and regional institutions, is of critical interest to the seven coastal regions.

Finally, a few unique environmental issues are of interest to entire regions: major state park proposals in metropolitan Boston, Northern Middlesex, and Cape Cod; key energy facility siting decisions in Old Colony and Franklin County; and controversial flood control planning in Montachusett and Berkshire.

Regional Institutions

There is a healthy tension between the growing regional awareness one finds across the Commonwealth and the traditional values of home rule. Virtually every region reports some significant attempt at region-level problem solving, and most local statements acknowledge that while municipal authority is not to be compromised, both spill-overs and the limits on local capacity require regional planning and, in some cases, regional institutions.

In the seven regional districts which encompass the medium-sized metropolitan areas, the regions' assigned planning functions in transportation, economic development, and water quality give them plenty to do. Beyond planning, the major service-delivery breakthroughs involve voluntary, single-purpose regional bodies. Many of these represent very important regional growth partnerships. Transit authorities in Lower Pioneer and Central Massachusetts are providing regional service to those communities which have *chosen* to join. In the Northern Middlesex-



Merrimack Valley area, and in Central Massachusetts, regional solid waste committees are making decisions on complex technologies and host-community designations; in addition, several regional sewage districts are on the verge of implementation.

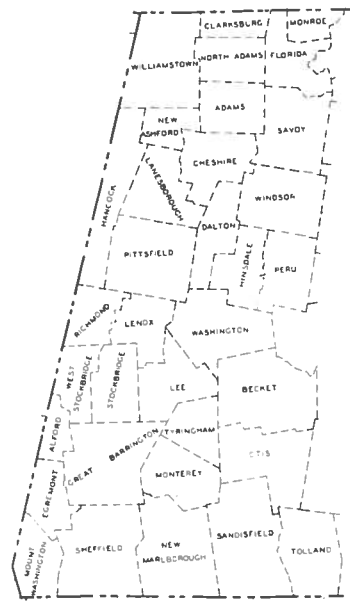
In the more rural regions, "regionalism" is more easily accepted as a legitimate framework through which to identify problems and to cooperate toward finding solutions. First of all, county lines and regional boundaries, for historical reasons, coincide — to the institutional advantage of the regions. Moreover, physical and psychological distance from Boston is great, while urban/suburban/rural diversity among area communities is narrow. While home rule sentiment may be strong in these areas, the limits of local capacity are more readily conceded, and the region is found a more acceptable policy-making umbrella than the state.

Although only the Martha's Vineyard Commission has been granted regional land use powers, in Berkshire, Franklin, and Cape Cod, the involvement of county officials in a broad range of regional decision-making is taken for granted. Berkshire County is directing a regional transportation study; Cape Cod/Barnstable County is an Economic Development District; Franklin County has formed a regional housing authority and an Economic Development Task Force, and is seeking Vineyard-like land use legislation. All three regions played catalytic roles in the formation of regional transit systems.

In metropolitan Boston, the state's two strongest regional institutions are already in place — the MBTA and the MDC. Almost no local statement denies the legitimacy of regional management in transportation and environmental areas, but criticism of both agencies is nevertheless wide-spread — in terms which suggest that the MBTA and MDC are seen as state institutions. Aside from the involuntary nature of local membership, the high ratio of property taxes assessed to services provided, especially in outlying areas, is a major complaint. Another is "bigness." Particularly with regard to the MBTA, many local statements argue for the division of the district into subregions, within which planning and implementation of internal service would be voluntary, locally financed, and more sensitive to local needs. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council and its transportation planning staff already base their work on such subregions. These mini-districts are also the sites of numerous small-scale examples of inter-municipal cooperation. If there is a *locally-felt* regionalism in Greater Boston, it may be directed toward these smaller, more familiar areas.



Berkshire County



"Since the industrial revolution, the economic base of Berkshire County has been and remains manufacturing. The incredible natural beauty of the region, its pastoral ambiance, its world famous institutions and world famous residents who have chosen to live here, its reputation as a mecca for tourists and second home owners, has created the false impression with many casual visitors that Berkshire County has a rural and service oriented economy. Although, the service industries, such as tourism, education, and government, are a vital component, they are clearly of secondary importance to manufacturing, by a wide margin."

Berkshire County Regional Growth Policy Report

Berkshire County

Past growth in the Berkshires has been profoundly influenced by the region's topography. Two north-south mountain ranges flank the Hoosic and Housatonic river valleys, and though the mountains have made tourism a staple of the regional economy, they have also forced a concentration of recent settlement in the valleys, exposing the county's housing and economic bases to flooding and its rivers to severe pollution.

In many ways, the Berkshires have avoided *sprawl* by avoiding growth. The county population of 150,000 has grown 6 percent since 1960. The central cities of Pittsfield and North Adams have lost population, the rural fringe areas have grown only slightly, and the region's suburbs have been among the slowest-growing in Massachusetts. The Berkshires want moderate commercial and industrial growth — enough to accommodate the natural increase of the region's existing population — and generally feel that this growth should be channeled into Pittsfield and North Adams — not only to revitalize those communities, but to enable less developed areas to avoid the random, haphazard development which would undermine the region's tourist industry. One aspect of that industry — the rapid growth of seasonal homes — is beginning to cost many communities more in public facility expenditures than it generates in new revenues.

Industrial Development: The manufacturing base of the county economy rests on a relatively small number of electrical supply and paper firms. The diversification of this base is considered crucial to the continued vitality of the region. The Downing Industrial Park in Pittsfield and a proposed series of smaller parks in North Adams are prime industrial siting targets.

Center Revitalization: In North Adams, a private corporation, the city, and the state are pursuing the restoration of the Historic Windsor Mill District. More problematic is a vacant downtown renewal parcel, where a fourth attempt to develop a commercial center is now underway. In Pittsfield, a large-scale renewal project has been successfully completed, except for a single parcel identified by both city and county as the region's prime location for a central shopping facility. Pittsfield is also attempting to stimulate an added level of private investment by rehabilitating significant public buildings in the downtown.

Transportation: Improved north-south vehicular movement is one of the most widely-articulated desires in the county. The key proposal, a Route 7 bypass of downtown Pittsfield, is now in environmental review. A joint county/state study will evaluate several other proposals, including bypasses of smaller town centers and an upgrading of Route 8 from Pittsfield to North Adams. A regional transit authority is operating in the central Berkshires, with plans to increase its Pittsfield area coverage and some regional interest in expanding to North Adams. There is county-wide consensus on the need to preserve ConRail freight service to the north-south corridor, and mainline status for the B&M east-west line, which crosses the north Berkshires.

Environmental Issues: The trade-off between economic and environmental needs is felt acutely in a region where a key component of the economy — tourism — ultimately rests on environmental quality. Three federal and state environmental programs are cited in either local or regional statements as threatening to impose an economic hardship on the region:

- clean air requirements, felt to reinforce the Berkshire's high fuel costs;
- programs to remove billboards and signs from highway rights-of-way, seen as a threat to smaller businesses; and
- advanced pollution abatement requirements for the Housatonic River, felt to impose excessive costs on municipal governments.

Franklin County

Franklin County is best known for its rural, small town atmosphere. Greenfield, the regional hub, has only 18,000 people. Rapid growth has not yet occurred, but strong pressures are coming from two directions — the trend towards increased second-home development and the northward expansion of Hampshire County settlement, particularly the UMass/Amherst community. The smaller, more isolated towns emphatically advocate "staying the same," while both the larger towns and the county favor moderate economic growth in developed areas.

Although volunteerism in government and a strong belief in home rule are cherished values, a strong regional identity and a fear of outside controls by state government create a powerful force for regionalism. The county has already formed a regional housing authority — the only one in the state — which has paid particular attention to the scarcity of elderly housing and affordable family apartments in the largely rural Franklin setting. The county planning board has proposed more sweeping regional legislation — a County Land Use Bill modeled on the Martha's Vineyard Commission. There is not yet a regional consensus on this bill, but that it can be a serious item on the regional agenda is itself significant.

Industrial Development: The large towns already house most of Franklin County's major employers, and it is widely agreed that future industrial growth should be concentrated in these locations. Greenfield and Deerfield have formed Economic Development Industrial Commissions, and Orange and Athol share a joint Industrial Development Commission with hopes for the industrial use of Orange Airport.

Center Revitalization: The preservation and enhancement of Greenfield as the regional commercial center is being actively pursued by both the town and county. Long discussed but far from resolved is a proposal to construct a new crosstown street with state and federal support. A comprehensive downtown plan involving a bus terminal, housing, open space, parking, and a variety of public facilities is in the early planning stage.

Transportation: East-west movement of people and goods is vital not only to the retention of the region's few major industries, but to the viability of Greenfield as a commercial and cultural center. The upgrading of Route 2, along the Millers River in Erving and Wendell and the Connecticut River in Gill and Greenfield, is now under environmental review. There is also widespread support for the ongoing improvement of the B&M's east-west freight line, and for retention of this corridor's mainline status. Finally, the county has initiated, in its central areas, a modest system of public transportation.

Environmental Issues: The preservation of farmland is a preeminent concern in Franklin County. In addition to regionwide support for the recently-filed *purchase of development rights* legislation, Sunderland, the town most threatened by UMass residential growth, has instituted a more complex local system of *transferable development rights*.

Two major decisions to be made at higher levels of government are of vital interest to the region. Franklin County vigorously opposes the diversion of Connecticut River water to the Metropolitan District Commission (the pipeline would originate in the county, at Northfield) and is divided over the proposed nuclear power plant at Montague, with tax and employment benefits being weighed against the visual and safety implications of the facility.

Franklin County



"Almost every town in Franklin County has a similar desire for the future — they would like to stay the same, preserving their rural character but have a strengthened tax base by encouraging small scale industry or commerce."

Franklin County Growth Policy Report



Lower Pioneer Valley

This is the most diverse region in the Commonwealth. The Springfield-Chicopee-Holyoke metropolitan core is the state's second largest and second densest. The region's minority populations are concentrated in the three central cities, where neighborhood revitalization is an urgent priority. Each of these cities has, in the classic metropolitan pattern, lost population since 1960, while suburban areas have grown by about 20 percent.

At the fringes of the region's suburbs are two rather large satellite centers, Northampton and Westfield. Beyond the suburbs lies the Commonwealth's largest and most fertile agricultural region. It is also one of the state's fastest-growing rural areas, with growth pressures coming from two sources — the metropolitan core and the expanding five college educational community in Hampshire County. Northampton, South Hadley, and Amherst are generating a population of students and staff which has turned to previously rural settings in search of housing.

Industrial Development: The Lower Pioneer Valley Regional Planning Commission proposes a deliberate concentration of new industrial growth in the region's cities and larger towns, and tax-sharing as an incentive for neighboring communities to develop a single park cooperatively. Four ongoing industrial development efforts are consistent with these objectives:

- the industrial conversion of the abandoned portions of Westover Air Force Base;
- the successful marketing of five industrial parks in the city of Springfield;
- the attempt by Holyoke and West Springfield to develop jointly the intersection of I-91 and the Massachusetts Turnpike; and
- the effort to diversify the traditional mill town economies of Palmer and Ware.

Center Revitalization: Downtown Springfield, the Valley's commercial and cultural center, has greatly benefitted from a joint public-private renewal effort over the last decade. A second phase of this effort is now underway, involving housing rehabilitation, street improvements, and the possible rehabilitation of a downtown high school complex.

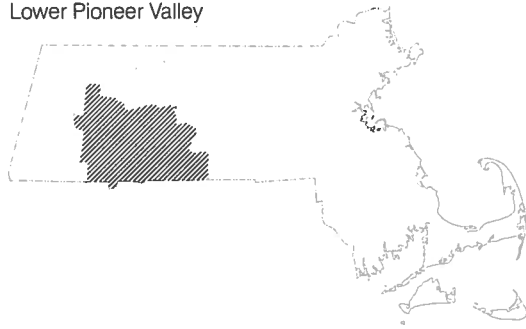
Downtown Holyoke is also fundamentally sound. State and federal commitments have been obtained for the beautification of the main street, major new construction in the government district, a connector to I-391, and the development of elderly housing and a park in an adjacent renewal area. Chicopee is a city of separate neighborhoods, each with a small business district, and the city has revitalization plans for three of them. Northampton has undertaken a joint public-private program for downtown restoration, while Amherst and Westfield have small downtown urban renewal projects tailored to their special characters and needs.

Transportation: The Lower Pioneer Valley Transit Authority is the state's largest, most successful and innovative. Its presence has proven a key to downtown revitalization, industrial growth, air quality maintenance, and the avoidance of the new, sprawl-generating highway construction which might otherwise be necessary.

The major regional highway commitment is I-391, the business spur linking the three core downtowns. Construction will begin this year.

Environmental Issues: With most needed sewage abatement projects on the Connecticut and its tributaries already operational or committed, the Valley's major river-related concern is an intense opposition to the proposed diversion of Connecticut water to eastern Massachusetts. The regional planning agency is also a major advocate of protecting farmland through purchase of development rights legislation.

Lower Pioneer Valley



"The qualities of rural living, the advantages of suburban life, and the strengths of city neighborhoods are all aspects of community character which people do not want to sacrifice."

Lower Pioneer Valley Growth Policy Report

Montachusett

The Montachusett region is, at first glance, a typical mixture of urban core, suburbs, and rural fringe. Its population and growth patterns are unusual, however. Fitchburg and Gardner have remained stable in population, while Leominster has grown by 30 percent in the last 15 years. The suburbs are growing slowly, and, most untypically, are smaller in total population than their core cities. Growth pressures do exist, however, on the eastern and southern fringes, where sprawl from the Boston and Worcester metropolitan areas has sharply increased the region's population. In response, many Montachusett towns take no growth positions in their local statements, and the regional planning commission argues that growth should be limited to the natural increase of the region's existing population.

Industrial Development: The region's cities are each economically dependent on a traditional local industry — Fitchburg on paper, Leominster on plastics, and Gardner on furniture. A fundamental problem facing the region as it attempts to diversify its economy is the uncoordinated development of ten public and private industrial parks in the three cities. All of them cannot be successfully marketed, and regional cooperation in setting priorities is needed.

Although the immediate threat to Fort Devens, the region's largest employer, has been removed, the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission and the towns of Ayer and Shirley advocate an in-depth study of the Fort's ripple effects on the Montachusett economy as a defense against future phase-out attempts.

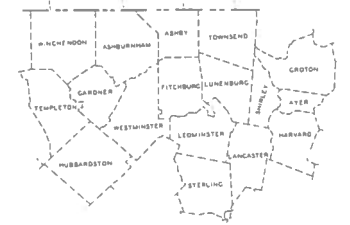
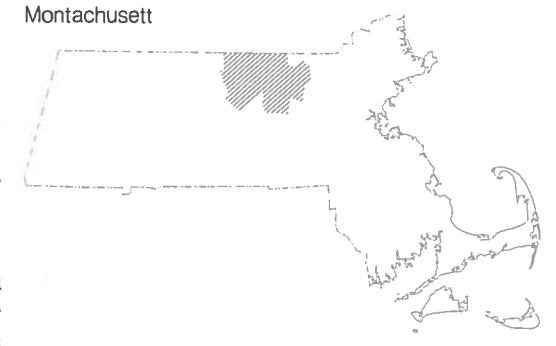
Center Revitalization: The development of Searstown on the outskirts of Leominster was a key event in the gradual exodus of commercial activity from the downtowns of Leominster and Fitchburg. Fitchburg has the larger, denser business district, and has drafted a revitalization strategy emphasizing traffic improvements, parking, and pedestrian amenities. Fitchburg and the state are also working to revitalize the so-called college neighborhood adjacent to the downtown through a series of housing rehabilitation and construction projects.

Transportation: I-190, the Worcester-Leominster expressway, is designed to end the historic isolation of the Montachusett economy from the raw materials and markets of central Massachusetts, southern New England, and beyond. With the highway under construction, the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission and the towns in the I-190 corridor have begun to concern themselves with the sprawl implications of the new interchanges. The state and the regional planning commission have helped Sterling, the town most threatened by sprawl development, to replan and rezone. Other key highway improvements to which the region, the communities, and the state are committed include the upgrading of Route 2 and the construction of a Gardner bypass. The federally-funded rehabilitation of the B&M's main freight line is strongly supported, as is the restoration of passenger service to Boston. The regional planning commission is also likely to recommend the establishment of a regional transit authority.

Environmental Issues: The Nashua River dominates the region's environmental agenda.

- The Nashua River Watershed Association and 15 communities are cooperating on a long-range greenway plan, with both rural and downtown components.
- Approval of an economically critical flood control plan involving Fitchburg, Westminster, and the Army Corps of Engineers is currently being debated in the affected communities.
- With five sewage treatment plants in the region and two more planned, Fitchburg and Leominster are concerned with underutilized capacity and high operating costs. The regional 208 planning study stresses non-structural solutions for towns not yet committed to treatment facilities.

Montachusett

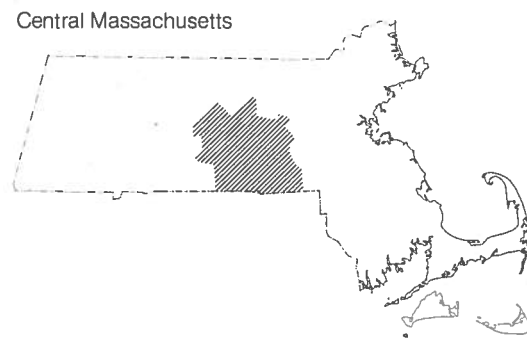


"With westward growth of the Boston region and northward growth of the Worcester region, there is a real possibility that the increase in this region's population will far outstrip the increase in jobs."

Montachusett Growth Policy Report



Central Massachusetts



At the core of this diverse region is the state's third largest metropolitan area — Greater Worcester. The central city has been losing population steadily and houses most of the area's low income population. Housing improvement and neighborhood revitalization are strong local priorities.

The Worcester suburbs face continued rapid growth, fueled by highway construction on three fronts. Only the western fringes of the region are unaffected by the sprawl of Greater Worcester. These towns are part of a larger rural area extending into contiguous sections of all the neighboring regions, whose no growth and agricultural preservation values they share.

In the southeast quadrant of the region, the Blackstone Valley is an area of economically depressed mill towns and farms, just beginning to feel the advantages and the problems of the suburbanization which is encroaching from three directions — Worcester, Boston, and Providence.

Industrial Development: With I-290, I-495, and the Massachusetts Turnpike creating a transportation crossroads, industrial park development is being conceded to Westboro, Northboro, and their immediate metropolitan Boston neighbors. A number of long-time Worcester manufacturers have been drawn out of the city.

Worcester itself hopes to create an industrial park of regional significance at its airport, intending not only to compete more favorably with suburban sites, but to ease the city's dependence on the Norton Company.

Several fringe areas of Central Massachusetts are also over-dependent on a handful of employers — textile mills in the western towns, American Optical (Southbridge) in the southwest, and Draper-Rockwell (Hopedale) in the Blackstone Valley.

Many of the Blackstone Valley's textile mills have already closed, and the reuse of their vacant factories is a common topic in the local and regional reports. Simultaneously, and perhaps inconsistently, there has been rapid, uncoordinated zoning of industrial parks throughout the Valley, with access to I-495 a recurrent local demand.

Center Revitalization: The privately-built Worcester Center complex has eclipsed the older stores downtown as a regional commercial center, and competes strongly with suburban malls. Worcester has long recognized the economic benefits of locating state offices in the downtown, and has successfully lobbied for a new regional Registry Office to be built downtown. Worcester, with six colleges, the UMass Medical School, and two museums, has the resources to be one of New England's major cultural centers. A civic center, which proponents argue would catalyze this emergence, has been debated without resolution for several years.

Millbury, one of Worcester's older suburbs, and Southbridge, an outlying subregional center, have developed modest, tailored downtown revitalization plans, demonstrating the equal relevance of this concept to major town centers.

Transportation: A history of isolation from markets to the north and south will end when I-190 (to Leominster) and Route 52 (to the Connecticut Turnpike) are complete. Controlling the sprawl impacts of these new roads and channeling beneficial growth into Worcester are advocated by the city and the regional planning commission, but mechanisms for doing so remain to be developed.

Two transportation improvements are considered essential to the revitalization of the Blackstone Valley: the upgrading of Route 146, now in environmental review, and the improvement of freight service on the Providence and Worcester Railroad, now in progress.

Environmental Issues: In Greater Worcester, a solid waste planning committee is mandated to work with the state in the development of a regional resource recovery facility.

On the Blackstone, pollution abatement is being approached through an Upper Blackstone District, potentially the state's most comprehensive and institutionally sound regional sewage body.



"There certainly is an awareness and a concern in the region that agricultural activities should be maintained if not stimulated. The realities of the situation are that many farmers are simply holding out for the right moment when their price can be obtained."

Central Massachusetts Growth Policy Report

Northern Middlesex

Greater Lowell is the most compact of the regional planning districts, consisting of the central city and eight surrounding towns. The compactness is misleading, however, because the region's economic and growth patterns overlap those of Greater Boston to the south and the Merrimack Valley district to the east. This overlap has helped to make Greater Lowell the fastest growing metropolitan area in the state. A southern ring of suburbs (Westford, Chelmsford, Billerica, Tewksbury) straddles Routes 495 and 3, and their rapid expansion in population and industrial capacity is due as much to the sprawl of Greater Boston as to the suburbanization of Lowell. The region's other towns have also grown significantly, and Lowell itself has actually gained population since 1960.

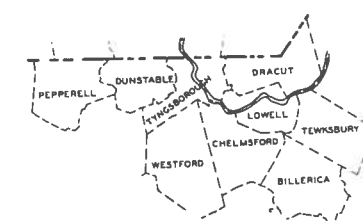
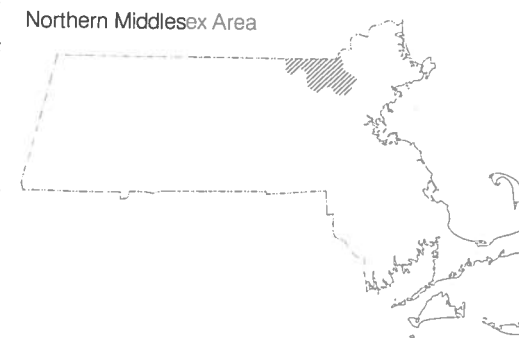
Industrial Development: Like all areas on the I-495 fringes of Eastern Massachusetts, Northern Middlesex has undergone extensive industrial park development in the suburbs; simultaneously, the textile base of Lowell's economy was eroding. More recently, however, a number of firms have decided to stay in Lowell, expand in Lowell, or move in from the outside, diversifying the Lowell economy and slowing the trend towards a suburbanization of industry.

Center Revitalization: Lowell has set the standard for those Massachusetts cities which seek to revitalize their downtowns through a comprehensive strategy emphasizing preservation rather than traditional urban renewal. In addition to the city's state-funded Heritage Park, the publicly-financed components of the Lowell plan include: pedestrian amenities, mass transit, traffic and parking improvements, the rehabilitation of key public buildings, the conversion of historic mill buildings to elderly housing, and a museum. These improvements have induced the private sector to undertake new industrial commercial, cultural, and housing projects, many of them in recycled buildings.

Transportation: The Northern Middlesex transportation system must be viewed from two perspectives — as a metropolitan network in its own right, and as a commuter channel to Boston. Within the region, only one major highway project is at issue, a long-discussed Route 213 river crossing north and west of downtown Lowell. Several traffic and parking projects now underway in Lowell are important to the city's revitalization. Regional mass transit is just getting off the ground. A plan now under discussion would involve the regional transit authority, the city, and the state in the creation of a Lowell transportation terminal, potentially a key urban revitalization project at which the improved regional and commuter transportation services would intersect.

Environmental Issues: The Lowell Heritage State Park, built around the city's canal system and integrated into the downtown, was conceived within the city and is now a major state project. Congressional legislation has been filed to envelop the state park and the downtown area in a National Cultural Park.

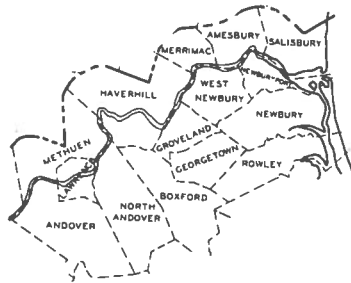
Cleanup of the Merrimack River will soon be assisted by a massive program of regional sewage collection and treatment facilities, centered in Lowell. A second regional effort involves the participation of most Northern Middlesex communities in the Northeast Solid Waste Committee, a body centered in the neighboring Merrimack Valley district.



"The most common technique employed by area towns that leads to a pattern of sprawl is large lot zoning. Traditional zoning such as this assumes that density is the best measure of the character of a community. . . . This, in fact, rarely happens. Once zoned for large lots, scattered residential development occurs, and before long the entire countryside is dotted with large lot development."

Northern Middlesex Regional Growth Policy Report

Merrimack Valley



"Through poor location of development, both water quality and water supply can be impaired not only in the community in which the development takes place, but also in surrounding communities."

Merrimack Valley Growth Policy Report



Merrimack Valley

This region encompasses the cities of Lawrence, Haverhill, and Newburyport, and their suburbs. The latter vary in density from heavily-developed Methuen to several rural towns in the eastern end of the region, but all are growing rapidly in a pattern suggestive of nearby Greater Lowell. Growth pressures from Boston are plainly as much a factor as the suburbanization process originating in the Valley's own cities.

Industrial Development: The proximity of New Hampshire, with its lower business costs, places extra pressure on the region's economic development officials. Nonetheless, the larger towns in the Valley — Methuen, the Andovers, and Amesbury — have attracted significant industrial investment along I-93 and I-495. And so, with unusual success, have the region's cities. Lawrence has located several firms in recycled mill buildings along the river; Haverhill has two industrial parks on Ward Hill Peninsula; and Newburyport has a large industrial park on I-95. These sites, while enjoying the excellent interstate access normally associated with fringe locations, lie within city boundaries and could provide significant city tax relief.

Center Revitalization: All three cities consider this a top priority, as does the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission. The three downtown plans have common themes — all are preservationist, all include visual and recreational amenities, and all emphasize the river — but they have different components and are at different stages of implementation. Newburyport, a pioneer in the field, has largely finished its main commercial district and is turning to the nearby riverfront, where a park and sea wall, an icing plant for the fish fleet, and a maritime museum are on the agenda. Haverhill, in the early implementation stage, has already secured several private commitments for housing, commercial, and restaurant development in historic downtown buildings. Planned public amenities include off-street parking, street beautification, and a river-front promenade. Lawrence's downtown plan, recently released, emphasizes traffic access and movement. The city still lacks arterial access to I-495. The Canal Street project, the city's top priority, is intended to create both a downtown connector and a scenic walkway along the North Canal, the city's old industrial core.

Transportation: The Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority presently serves only Haverhill; the Regional Planning Commission and several communities favor its expansion, and the downtown Lawrence plan may require it.

Two B&M commuter rail lines — one serving the Andovers, Lawrence, and Haverhill, and the other serving Newburyport — were recently discontinued by the communities. Their restoration, with improved service, higher state subsidy levels, and perhaps regional transit authority sponsorship, is now being sought.

Environment: The Northeast Solid Waste Committee, the Commonwealth's most advanced effort toward regional solid waste disposal and resource recovery, originated in the Merrimack Valley district, and its activities are still centered here. A privately-financed, publicly-supported facility, costing \$100 million and serving the entire Northeast quadrant of the state, will generate electricity for commercial distribution. Haverhill was originally the designated site, but local political conflict resulted in its withdrawal. Of four subsequent finalist communities, three are in the Merrimack Valley district and one, North Andover, has been selected.

Old Colony

This region contains two pockets of extremely rapid growth — Greater Brockton and the Plymouth area. The former, located not far south of Route 128, has grown nearly 40 percent since 1960, chiefly as an extension of Greater Boston. Brockton itself has grown dramatically and uniquely among the Commonwealth's older core cities. Its fringes along Route 24 have mushroomed with apartments and shopping malls, while its downtown has deteriorated. The growing but still rural towns south and east of Brockton expect to be the next growth targets as the population spread shifts toward Plymouth.

Greater Plymouth has nearly doubled in population since 1960 as South Shore sprawl making its way down Route 3 has been reinforced by a southeasterly trend in Brockton-area growth, and by a back-up of second-home development from the Lower Cape.

Industrial Development: Brockton has never recovered from the erosion of the shoe industry. Although the regional economy has diversified, Brockton's share of the regional economy has dwindled. The entire Old Colony region is one of the state's clearest examples of what results from uncoordinated competition for industrial park development among area communities. The numerous parks now being planned in more rural, remote locations would, if marketed, have to compete not only with several Old Colony parks more favorably located on Routes 3 and 24, but with the southern 128 belt and nearby parks in Mansfield, Taunton, Fall River, New Bedford, and Wareham.

Center Revitalization: Because growth in Greater Brockton has been oriented so distinctly *away* from the regional center, downtown revitalization is both more urgently needed and more difficult to implement than in some other core cities. Brockton's two renewal projects are in the commercial district and an adjacent mixed-use area. The public site-preparation phase of these projects is proceeding, but the attraction of private investment is still to be accomplished. The Brockton plan emphasizes transportation and the building and rehabilitation of elderly housing in the downtown.

Plymouth has a modest town center revitalization plan, but strip development along Routes 3A and 44 has deferred center revitalization as a priority.

Transportation: In Greater Brockton, east-west movement through the region, and any movement through the central city, has been historically difficult. The completion of I-495 southwest of Greater Brockton will alleviate the problem of Cape-bound through traffic on the area's two-lane east-west roads. The city, meanwhile, has identified a north-south artery between the two renewal areas as its key downtown highway need.

Although Brockton Area Transit is one of the most successful and innovative "regional" transit authorities in the nation, no suburban town has yet been persuaded to join. Truly regional bus service would contribute greatly to the economic resurgence of downtown Brockton.

Finally, the city and the regional planning commission strongly support the proposed restoration of rail passenger service from Boston to Brockton, through either a Red Line extension or an upgraded commuter rail line.

Environmental Issues: Brockton and several towns are already served by a private regional solid waste disposal facility in East Bridgewater. Regionalization of sewage treatment is proving more difficult as the proposed Old Colony Water Pollution Control District is questioned by two of its members and by the regional planning commission's 208 Water Quality Study. The issue is important not only to the future of regionalism in the area, but to the level and location of future growth in the Brockton suburbs.

An additional issue of wider-than-regional concern is the likely construction of the Pilgrim II nuclear power plant in Plymouth.

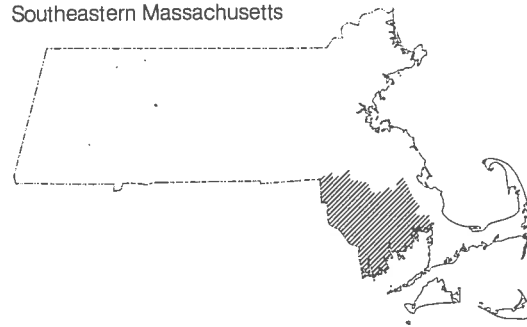
Old Colony



"To accomplish the objective of increasing housing opportunities for low and moderate income households, the Council promotes the adoption by communities of land use controls that do not unnecessarily restrict the construction of low cost housing. . . . This policy is seen by most area communities (the City of Brockton being a major exception) as being contrary to local objectives of limited growth and preservation of community character."

Old Colony Regional Growth Policy Report

Southeastern Massachusetts



"Major conflicts with regional policies include situations where shopping malls are directly competing with older established commercial districts. Specifically, this is occurring between New Bedford and Dartmouth, Taunton and Raynham."

Southeastern Massachusetts Growth Policy Report

Southeastern Massachusetts

This is the only urbanized region in eastern Massachusetts substantially free of overlap with sprawling Greater Boston, and for diversity it is matched only by the Lower Pioneer Valley. The Southeast has multiple centers, led by Fall River and New Bedford, each of which has stabilized in population at 100,000. They contain most of the region's low income and minority persons, although one minority group, the Cape Verdeans, is more widely dispersed. New Bedford is a city of identifiable neighborhoods, with neighborhood renewal a top priority. In all four of the region's cities, the rehabilitation of family housing, the construction of elderly housing, and the more basic improvement of the residential environment are important goals. Taunton is a smaller city, similar in function and population characteristics to New Bedford and Fall River. Attleboro, on the suburban fringes of both Boston and Providence, is still growing.

Industrial Development: Although the shoe and apparel industries have eroded and the entire Southeast has suffered disproportionate unemployment in recent years, the region is fortunate in that two traditional area industries — fishing in New Bedford-Fairhaven, and jewelry in Attleboro — are as strong as ever. With passage of the 200-mile fishing limit, and the pending sale of off-shore oil leases, the full exploitation of the New Bedford-Fairhaven and Fall River-Somerset port facilities is the region's clearest economic priority. Some diversification of land-based industries has already occurred, with such high-technology firms as Texas Instruments in Attleboro and Polaroid in New Bedford and Fall River. Much more will be sought. Three city industrial parks with excellent highway locations are prime targets in New Bedford, Fall River, and Taunton. Competing parks in nearby towns pose a challenge for regional coordination.

Center Revitalization: New Bedford and Fall River have both undertaken extensive urban renewal projects, which left each with a large, undeveloped parcel intended for major commercial investment. Each of the downtown programs is aided by a unique attraction — a new government center in Fall River, and the historic whaling district, a pedestrian mall and a proposed waterfront park in New Bedford. Taunton, with two downtown renewal projects now underway, has an apparently healthy central business district, but expresses growing concern for its outlying "village center" business districts.

Attleboro has the most severe symptoms of downtown decay, and fears that its smallness will deprive it of federal and state resources. Recently, three downtown projects — a small government center, a rehabilitated train station, and an elderly housing complex — have been proposed.

Transportation: The completion of I-495 across the northern edge of the region will both alleviate local traffic problems and open Taunton to economic expansion. Possible sprawl impacts are of concern to the regional planning agency and the corridor towns. A new Route 6 bridge is considered vital to the revitalization of the New Bedford-Fairhaven waterfront.

The Southeast has two authorized regional transit authorities. The Southeast Authority (SRTA) serves Greater Fall River-New Bedford, enjoying both success and local support. A Greater Attleboro-Taunton Authority has recently been formed.

Environmental Issues: In several Southeastern issues, economic and environmental interests — each vital to the region's future quality of life — come into conflict:

- the difficulty in finding an environmentally acceptable site for the spoils expected from long-range dredging of the two harbors;
- stringent federal air quality standards, which recently forced the closing of the Fall River incinerator;
- the lack of an environmentally acceptable disposal site for hazardous industrial wastes affecting several key firms in the New Bedford and Attleboro areas; and
- federal and state wastewater treatment priorities mandating suburban systems felt in some cases to be excessive, while impeding the expansion of city systems.

Cape Cod

With the exception of the Islands, Cape Cod is the fastest-growing region in Massachusetts in percentage terms. Since 1970, an increase in the year-round population of nearly 40 percent has brought 6,000 new residents annually. The local response to this rate of growth is mixed, with the employment and tax base benefits of growth still finding some appeal. Increasingly, however, two additional considerations are coming to dominate the local and regional perspective. First, the region's economic future is ultimately dependent on the preservation of its natural environment and the character of its villages. Second, the rapid growth of second homes and other seasonal development has forced towns to provide costly peak-level services which cannot be utilized efficiently the rest of the year. As a result, property taxes, while low by urban standards, have begun to escalate beyond traditional Cape levels.

Two conflicting attitudes, common to all of the Commonwealth's rural regions, are especially pronounced in the way Cape municipalities approach the management of growth. Although the need for some manner of constraint is widely recognized, the development rights of the property owner are not readily compromised. And although there is a strong regional consciousness, and a clear distaste for state intervention, regional institutions are preferred to remain voluntary, with local capacity augmented by regional planning assistance.

Industrial Development: There is virtually no heavy industry on the Cape and none is desired. There is extensive light manufacturing in the lower and mid-Cape regions, however, with a light industrial park in Hyannis. The tourism industry seeks, in addition to increased state aid, the reuse of Otis Air Force Base as a tourism-related attraction, and the expeditious development of South Cape Beach State Park in Mashpee.

Center Revitalization: The improvement of the Falmouth, Woods Hole, Hyannis, Barnstable, Chatham and Provincetown village centers is supported by the towns and the regional planning agency. The importance of a "centers strategy" for the containment of unwanted development in more rural areas does not receive the same degree of recognition on the Cape as it does in the Berkshires.

Transportation: The same geographic isolation that makes the Cape a tourist and second-home attraction restricts vehicle access to its narrow gateway. Transportation is a prominent item on the Cape's growth policy agenda, with two needs expressed in virtually all statements: better multi-modal access to the region, and better multi-modal circulation within it. For access, the Cape strongly supports three projects:

- restoration of passenger rail service from New York (AMTRAK) and Boston (MBTA);
- completion of the I-495 "missing link" in Bristol County and construction of the Route 25 Bypass in Wareham and Bourne; and
- retention and upgrading of the rail freight lines abandoned by ConRail, preventing radically increased truck travel to the Cape.

For local circulation, the towns and the regional planning agency strongly support the new regional transit authority and rural demonstration bus program.

Environmental Issues: All Cape issues are in some sense environmental, but several stand out. With all 15 towns in the defined Coastal Zone, the evolution of the Coastal Zone Management program, and the local and regional planning agency roles in it, are watched with interest. Offshore oil development, so critical in the economic plans of nearby New Bedford, Fall River, and Boston, is feared on the Cape — and would have been even without an Argo Merchant disaster.

The proper scope of sewage collection, the need for structural treatment solutions, and the level of water quality management authority are important questions on the Cape, with implications not only for handling the growth which has already occurred, but for inviting more growth.

Cape Cod

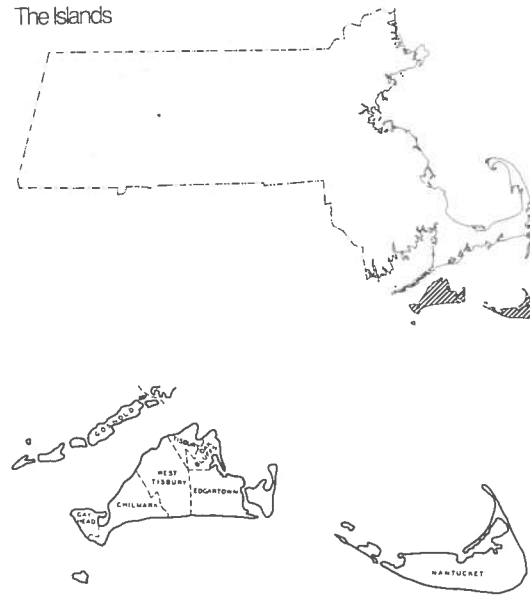


"As more open space is consumed with wide-spread residential development, and as strip commercial development envelops once scenic roadways, the Cape's fragile landscape is irrevocably scarred. In fact, the effects of the Cape's tourist-related economy threaten the very attractions that sustain the industry."

Cape Cod Growth Policy Report

The Islands

The Islands



"Such all-island groups as the Selectmen, Planning Boards, Health Boards, Conservation Commissions, County Commissioners and the Martha's Vineyard Commission must cooperate more continuously, extensively and intensively to identify issues common to the Island as a whole and work more effectively to resolve them. In particular the MVC must be helped to take a lead in such matters, even to the point of protecting Island businesses from the worst effects of off-island competition so that the economic base of the Vineyard may be strengthened."

West Tisbury Growth Policy Report

Nowhere else in the Commonwealth is there such a fierce sense of individuality and uniqueness as on the islands of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. Their physical isolation from the mainland, their bucolic natural beauty, and their historic dependence on the sea have combined to maintain a nineteenth century atmosphere which has only recently come under increasing pressures for change. While Martha's Vineyard experienced little growth from 1940 to 1970, the period from 1970 to 1975 saw a year-round population increase of approximately 30%. Much of this increase consists of retired people, as indicated by the fact that the island has almost twice the percentage of people over 65 that is found in the rest of the Commonwealth. Nantucket is also experiencing intense growth pressures, and is growing at a rate seven times greater than the statewide average, with 300 to 400 new building lots being subdivided each year. The majority of new housing on the Islands is being built not for existing year-round residents but for seasonal and retired residents. On the Vineyard, for example, approximately two thirds of the building permits issued in the past four years went to off-Islanders for the construction of seasonal or retirement homes.

There is a general feeling on both islands that this accelerated rate of growth must be moderated and that new development must be phased to take into account the demands placed upon community services and the need to protect environmental amenities.

Since the island economies are heavily dependent on the seasonal tourist industry, the preservation and protection of their unique environmental assets is widely recognized. The Martha's Vineyard Commission, created in 1974, is empowered to regulate large-scale development and the use of critical areas as a way of protecting the island's unique character and environmental resources. The Commission has the authority to overrule local decisions in favor of larger island interests for those developments which come under its jurisdiction. While there has been some criticism of the manner in which the Commission has dealt with separate communities, the regional concept behind the formation of the Commission is still widely supported.

Industrial Development: The diversification of the Islands' economic base is seen as a necessary prerequisite to lowering the rate of seasonal unemployment. Currently, efforts are being made to encourage a revitalization of such traditional pursuits as fishing, farming and local crafts. The extension of the fishing limit to 200 miles is seen as a great opportunity for the Islands if it can be properly exploited.

Transportation: The Islands are experiencing increasing congestion of their narrow roads due to the large number of automobiles coming from the mainland. Both islands would like to see greater use of public transit and non-motorized transport. The Islands are also concerned over their lack of control over the policies of the independent steamship authority.

Environmental Issues: Rapid growth and development have made Islanders extremely aware of the need to protect a water supply which comes entirely from aquifers. Both islands are currently examining ways to protect the integrity of their water supply resources. In addition, on both islands there are controversial sewer projects which could have significant and far-reaching impacts on water quality, the fiscal capacity of individual towns and the stimulation of new growth.

Both islands would like to see a more rigorous and extensive preservation of their remaining agricultural lands. They feel that the issue demands increased state attention and resources.

The Argo Merchant disaster has raised serious concerns about the desirability of offshore oil development. Both islands are extremely apprehensive, for though they stand to gain few of the economic benefits of offshore oil development, they could easily sustain environmental damage which could negatively affect their recreation and fishing industries.

Metropolitan Boston — Inner Core

Boston and the cities and towns to its immediate north and west constitute the densest, most intensely developed, and most heavily taxed area in Massachusetts. The central city and its industrialized neighbors have lost population in recent decades, and the revitalization of urban neighborhoods as viable places to live is an urgent priority. The quest for more family and elderly housing is universal. Federal community development funds are directed in unusually high proportions to housing rehabilitation, street repairs, neighborhood parks, human services, and the retention of neighborhood businesses.

Other communities — like Medford and Malden, Arlington and Belmont, Newton and Brookline — have stabilized in population, the advancing edge of metropolitan growth having long since passed them by. Here, too, neighborhood revitalization is a common, if less intense, concern.

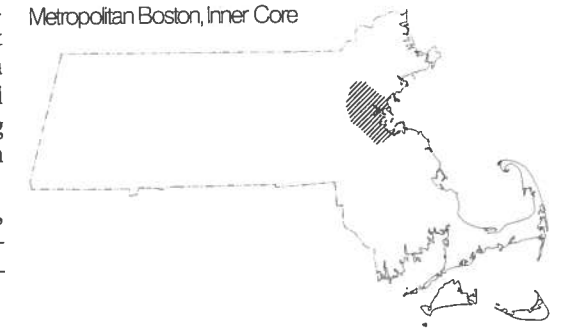
The magnetism of Boston and its immediate neighbors as a cultural, educational, governmental, and medical center is in little jeopardy. Indeed, some of Boston's inner neighborhoods have begun to attract substantial upper-income residential conversion and construction activity. But the continuing attractiveness of these same communities for the people who have grown up in them, and wonder about staying, is a fundamental concern of every city and town which participated in the growth policy process.



Industrial Development: All of the communities in this subregion have substantial industry, and all are looking for more. Most agree that certain centralized, high-density sites are priorities for future expansion. Urban renewal has created large industrial areas in Chelsea and Malden, and two dramatic additions are on the horizon in Boston — the Southwest Corridor and the Naval Annex. The Mystic River and I-93 make the Somerville-Everett-Medford waterfront a prime industrial target. The departure of earlier manufacturing firms and the availability of good highway and rail access are opening up some less central locations as well — for example, the Alewife section of Cambridge and Readville section of Boston.

Boston and the state possess two dominant regional economic assets — the harbor and Logan Airport. While there is disagreement over the proper mix of shipping, fishing, and manufacturing activities in the former, and the ideal accommodation between economic and neighborhood needs in the latter, the importance of these two gateway facilities is understood throughout the region.

Metropolitan Boston, Inner Core



"A consensus may be developing between urban and suburban/rural communities that a major proportion of future economic growth should be directed to urban areas, and those areas with existing access, utilities, services, and the willingness to accept such growth. Such an objective could obviate rapid economic growth in suburban and outlying communities not wishing more development than needed locally."

Metropolitan Boston Growth Policy Report



Center Revitalization: The rebirth of Boston's central commercial, financial, and government district has been a local and state priority for almost two decades, with visible and exciting results in both the public and private sectors. This effort has more recently spread toward the waterfront, South Station, Park Square, and Copley Square-Prudential areas on the fringes of the larger downtown.

Central Boston is surrounded by more than a dozen smaller, commercial districts. Some are in the city's own neighborhoods, such as Blue Hill Avenue and Roslindale Square. The city has come to recognize that revitalization of these neighborhood business districts is an essential step in saving the neighborhoods themselves.

Outside of Boston, some older commercial districts — such as Malden Center and Brookline Village — have already undergone major physical renewal programs, and now seek the private investments which will determine their long-term prosperity. Medford and Arlington are considering center revitalization programs which would rely heavily on the rehabilitation of existing buildings. Chelsea is embarking simultaneously on an extensive preservation program in its existing downtown *and* the construction of an adjacent shopping mall.

Transportation: Nowhere is the effect of transportation decisions on land use more widely understood than in the inner metropolitan core. The decision to abandon the Inner Belt and several planned radial highways stemmed, in part, from this understanding, as do the lingering disputes surrounding the implementation of the MBTA expansion program designed to replace those highways.

One transit extension — the Orange Line to Oak Grove — is completed. The project has not only advanced the revitalization of Malden Center, but has, in effect, created one of the last major development sites in the core area, the Wellington section of Medford. The Red Line extension from Harvard Square to Arlington will create additional revitalization opportunities, and a likely tightening of private locational decisions, around every station. The Wonderland Connector and garage would enhance the proposed mixed-use development at Revere Beach, itself a high local and regional priority. The region's most elaborate and exhaustively planned transit project — the Southwest Corridor — is designed to create new residential, recreational, commercial, educational, and industrial activity in some of Boston's poorest neighborhoods.

The agenda of future regional transit decisions includes a replacement for the present Orange Line in the South End and Roxbury, and expansions of the fixed transit network to additional neighborhoods in Boston, Somerville, and Chelsea. Expansion of feeder bus service is sought by virtually every community.

Environmental Issues: The core communities share three pressing environmental concerns, all related to the intense development of the area. Two of these concerns — air quality and the pollution of the Charles and the harbor — are seen negatively, as "problems" to which "solutions" must be found. The solutions are often controversial — involving transit versus highway choices on the one hand, and the location of the MDC's proposed regional sewage treatment facilities on the other.

The third environmental priority, the retention of open space in an urban setting, presents more opportunity for creativity. Public parks at strategic locations are now viewed with more sophistication. Not only are they important amenities for urban residents (particularly when located at transit nodes), they can also serve to trigger needed private investments. Several plans for new, mixed-use development in the core region envision new parks as magnets for private capital — at Revere Beach, at Chelsea Naval Hospital, at the Charlestown Navy Yard, at Harvard Square, at Wellington Circle, and at the Watertown Arsenal.

The MDC is viewed both as a valuable partner in these development opportunities, and as a remote body which, like the MBTA, swells the local tax rate for what is almost universally perceived as inadequate day-to-day services in the management of the regional environment.

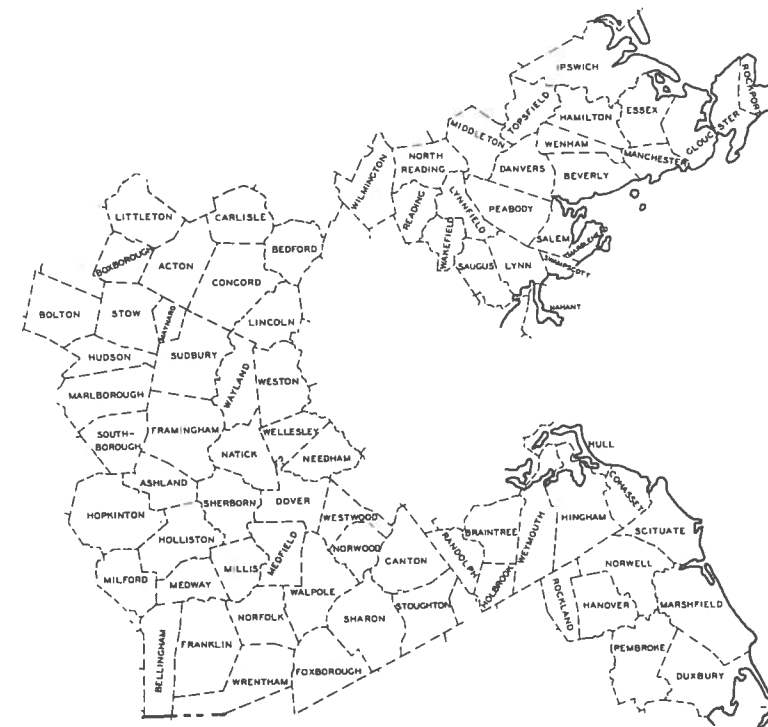
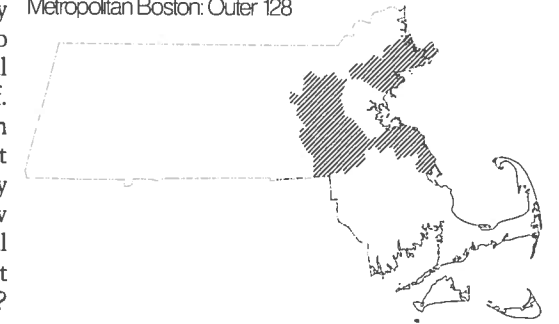
Metropolitan Boston — Outer Suburbs

The outer ring of metropolitan Boston is still in the process of becoming suburbanized — that is, more densely populated, more closely linked to the inner core by commuting patterns, and more involved in the provision of jobs and services to residents of the inner core. The cities and towns of this outer ring share several common growth-related issues, the most controversial usually being growth itself. When does "preserving the character of a community" become incompatible with accepting a "fair share" of the inner core's ill-housed population? When does the cost of expanded environmental management services outstrip the tax revenues added by new development? When does shopping mall or strip development begin to draw business away not only from the inner core, but from a town's *own* commercial center? Underlying all these issues is a question of identity: When does a place that used to be a distinct community *near* Boston become just another adjunct of Boston?

It is important, in this context, to understand how diverse and multi-centered the outer ring of suburbs actually is. The North Shore, for example is not merely a sub-region on the map; nor is it merely a name for the commuter corridor which has sprung up on Routes 1 and 95. Lynn and Salem would still be core cities for their *own* suburbs if the sprawl of the larger metropolis had not enveloped the area. Quincy still serves a part of the central city function for a South Shore hinterland that now extends far down Route 3. Similarly, Waltham and Dedham stand as historic centers of business, employment, and entertainment for the towns lying northwest and southwest of the inner core. These historic centers — and some denser adjacent towns — have stable or falling populations.

Two satellite areas on the outer edge of the metropolitan region are still most usefully viewed as distinct, quasi-metropolitan areas of their own. The Cape Ann district is small, not densely populated. While included in the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Cape Ann is *not* included in the Boston SMSA, the MBTA, or the MDC. The other satellite area, the Framingham-Natick region due west of Boston, *is* included in all of the metropolitan district definitions, and herein lies a problem articulated by the towns and by the region. By *not* recognizing this area as a distinct regional entity, the state has contributed to a collective incapacity to understand, anticipate, manage, or control the wave of residential and commercial growth which has engulfed and forever changed these communities.

Metropolitan Boston: Outer 128



"The slow to moderate rate of growth desired by virtually all communities may not be sufficient to meet the region's need for new housing. The strengthened zoning and open space preservation desired by many communities may also conflict in some cases with the provision of new housing. Nevertheless, from a regional perspective, new housing is needed, and it does not solve the problem for each community to prefer that the housing be built in other communities."

Metropolitan Boston Growth Policy Report

"We have stood by idly, observing with dismay, the erosion of the city's commercial and industrial economic base. This economic damage was further compounded by the construction of nearby shopping centers which may well have sealed the fate of the city's central business district as a retail core."

Beverly Growth Policy Statement

Industrial Development: Routes 128 and 495 are a natural breeding ground for the industrial growth of eastern Massachusetts, and local statements from outer suburban communities strongly advocate such growth. Indeed, an important reason for the rapid population growth of these towns is that so many professional and managerial jobs have become rooted beyond the old inner core in these circumferential corridors. Industrial park development is particularly appealing where the circumferential highways intersect the radial corridors — in towns like Burlington, Marlboro, and Foxboro. The state's two largest technological employers — Digital Equipment and Data General — are headquartered and have major plants in the western arc of I-495.

Some local statements recognize that there could someday be too many industrial parks on the outer highways. Not only would they compete counterproductively with each other, there is a finite limit to the number of access ramps an interstate highway can safely accommodate, and truck traffic through residential streets is as unwelcome in the outer suburbs as it is in the core. Equally important, the erosion of traditional industries in some areas has left a wealth of reusable factory space in communities which are aggressively seeking an added level of economic growth. An over-reliance on highway corridors for industrial siting could waste these reuse opportunities.

Several communities report an overdependence on a single firm — Lynn on General Electric, Quincy on General Dynamics, Framingham on General Motors. Diversification is an obvious goal. Finally, Lynn and Gloucester place heavy emphasis on the full economic exploitation of their harbors.

Center Revitalization: Despite the numerous shopping malls which characterize the commercial life of the outer suburbs, the older downtowns are still alive, in some cases well, and in all cases a local development priority. Salem has made significant progress on a downtown revitalization program blending the conventional and preservationist themes of urban renewal. Nearby Lynn and Gloucester have similar plans, with special emphasis on integrating the commercial and harbor districts (adjacent to each other in both cities) in a manner appealing to shoppers, workers and tourists alike. Quincy, with the first of the peripheral transit extensions in place, has begun to revitalize its downtown around the Red Line station and parking facility.

An especially interesting situation exists on the western fringe, where downtown Framingham and Natick are acknowledged to be in serious need of revitalization — while local government continues to support intense commercial development along the primary highway corridors which run through these same towns.

Transportation: Suburban communities understand that new radial highways are unlikely to be built, and that future decision-making in and for the outer suburbs will involve trade-offs among alternative modes of travel — capacity upgrades on existing commuter highways, full transit extensions, and commuter rail improvements. These choices will affect not only the manner in which one commutes to the inner core, but patterns of land use and local travel and shopping within the various suburban areas.

The Red Line extension from Quincy Center to South Braintree is already under construction. Only one other extension — the Blue Line from Wonderland to Lynn Center — has advanced beyond the initial feasibility stage of review. Both Lynn and the MBTA hope to repeat the Quincy Center experience by using the transit extension and terminus to refocus the flow of people on the North Shore into a historic and depressed downtown.

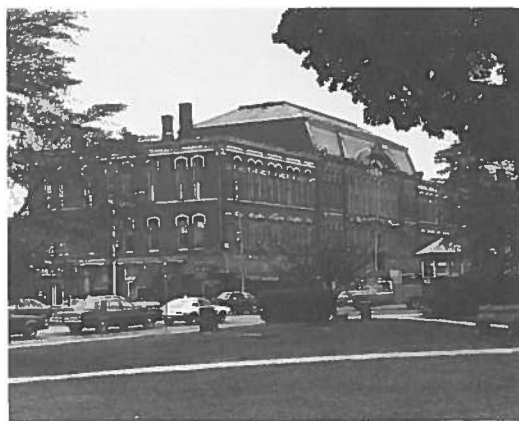
The next round of decision-making for all outer suburban corridors will involve how (and whether) rail transit is to be extended past the termini which will be in place when the current MBTA expansions have been completed. While virtually every community on or near a commuter rail line wants service upgraded (or restored), only a few statements ask: Will it be most cost-effective, in a particular corridor, to extend the transit line to Route 128, to run an upgraded rail shuttle from the outer stations to the transit terminus, to run upgraded commuter rail service all the way into Boston, or to do nothing?

The farther one gets from Boston, the stronger the feeling that the MBTA is charging something for nothing. Fringe communities within the MBTA district receive little or no service for their assessments, and non-members which lie on commuter rail lines regularly complain that the quality of service barely justifies (if at all) the contract payments they are required to make. Many fringe towns suggest the creation of sub-districts to provide local service and to contract jointly for commuter rail usage. One of the two satellite areas discussed earlier — Cape Ann — has a fledgling regional transit authority, but the Framingham-Natick area, long characterized by easy access to Boston and a seriously deficient local transportation network, feels both cheated and stymied by its inclusion in the MBTA district.

Environment: Most outer suburban towns have experienced the growth constraints of limited water supply and sewage capacity. Communities are typically divided between those who hope to correct present limitations to *accommodate* existing growth in an environmentally satisfactory way, and those who hope to expand local water and sewer capacity to *encourage* new growth. Along with these policy disagreements comes local uncertainty over the value of MDC affiliation, and the MDC's own shift in policy away from a readiness to expand its services.

Although solid waste management is a universal problem, the outer suburbs are already involved in three regional resource recovery projects — the private RESCO operation on the North Shore, the planned Northeast Regional project centered in the Merrimack Valley, and the fledgling "128 West" planning process.

Finally, most outer suburbs have conservation commissions dedicated to at least some degree of open space preservation, and the desire for increased state *Self-Help* funding is widespread.





Chapter Three

The State Perspective on Growth

3

Preceding sections of this report describe the *local* and *regional* perspectives on growth which have emerged from the Growth Policy process. This section presents the perspective of Massachusetts' *state* government. Prepared by the Office of State Planning, it is intended as a straightforward account of state government's current growth policies and practices. It is *not* intended as a state response to the Local and Regional Growth Policy Statements. Rather, it is a description of existing attitudes and activities against which the local and regional perspectives may be compared.

Prior to the passage of the Growth Policy Development Act and during the months when local committees and regional planning agencies were preparing Growth Policy Statements, the Office of State Planning, in collaboration with the Governor's Development Cabinet, was implementing a variety of action-oriented strategies which have significantly altered the nature and extent of state government's role in the entire development process. These strategies, aimed at improving the performance of state government in the promotion of economic development consistent with sound locational criteria, were expressed in two documents prepared by the Office of State Planning: *Towards a Growth Policy for Massachusetts* and *An Economic Development Program for Massachusetts*. This section is an attempt to summarize these documents.

Taken together, the local, regional, and state sections of this report provide the foundation necessary to develop a broadly-based State Growth Policy. The task of identifying areas of consensus and conflict, and of making appropriate recommendations, is taken up in Chapters 4 and 5 of this report.

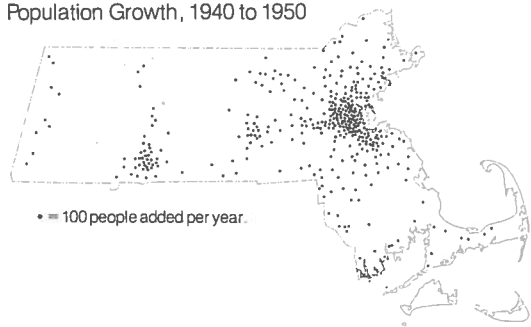
Growth in the Commonwealth: Problems and Issues

Just 50 years ago, virtually all of Massachusetts' residential, commercial, and industrial development was tightly-bound in about a dozen major population centers, with an additional score of densely-settled mill towns scattered throughout the state. Each of these centers possessed special characteristics which created fertile settings for indigenous economic activity — characteristics such as port facilities, rivers for water and hydroelectric power, or previously settled, native labor supplies. Tightly-knit communities grew up around many of these industrial activities as people migrated in search of employment and improved living standards. Within these centers, retail shopping and municipal services developed to serve the needs of the new *urban* population. In these early settlements, walking was the primary mode of personal transport. Beginning in the 1890's, the electric trolley began to appear in some Massachusetts cities, and with it came the beginning of population dispersal and the emergence of the first "bedroom communities," such as Roxbury, Medford, Holbrook, Chelmsford, and others.

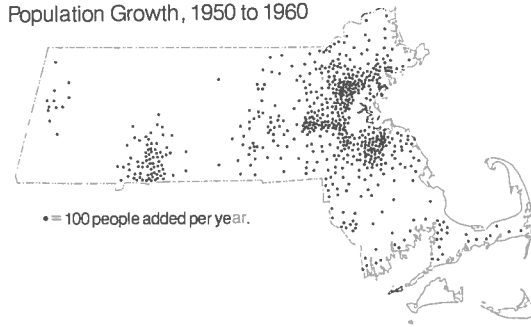
It was the automobile, however, which created the most powerful force for dispersal, as more and more households were freed from the requirement to locate within walking distance of their workplace. No longer were industries bound to existing population centers, or to existing rail or port facilities; nor did retailers look

Traditionally, the Commonwealth has maintained a fragmented approach to the development and implementation of growth policy.

Population Growth, 1940 to 1950



Population Growth, 1950 to 1960



Population Growth, 1960 to 1970



Population Growth, 1970 to 1976



only to neighborhoods for their immediate markets, but rather to the whole community or region as their potential market area.

While the automobile enabled an increasing percentage of the population to enjoy a greater mobility over an ever-widening area of the country, it also provided the central impetus for dispersal of growth and development. Other forces have tended to reinforce this trend: increased prosperity and a desire for more spacious living; modern production technology and industry's resulting quest for larger land parcels (also needed, in part, to accommodate parking requirements); and the demise of railroads and an increased reliance on trucking. This dispersal of our population was induced by a changing technology developed and applied by the private sector, but government at all levels responded to, and in many cases, fostered further dispersal through its investment and regulatory programs. Neither private technology and production nor public policy and programs alone could have created the extraordinarily diffuse growth patterns which have characterized Massachusetts since the 1920's. But in concert, public and private investments have combined to create incentives for suburbanization which have outweighed the traditional locational benefits of older centers and have caused the resultant dispersal of growth.

State and federal tax laws have provided further incentives for dispersal. Massachusetts' heavy reliance on the local property tax has discouraged investment in older urban communities, and made the development of suburban communities with lower tax rates more attractive. In addition, federal tax laws have historically favored investment in new structures over investment in the repair, maintenance, preservation and upgrading of old structures. This has helped to tip the scales of economic competition in favor of new development by making it harder to sustain demand for existing buildings in older city and town centers, and therefore, indirectly promoting their effective obsolescence.

In the future, population growth and development are sure to continue in Massachusetts for the next several decades. Because of the post-war *baby boom*, over the next 20 years the number of persons annually reaching the age of 30 (the typical "family settlement age") will be almost double the rate for previous decades. A large number of these families will have young children, and will be seeking appropriate housing for young families. (The recent decline in fertility has affected the size and timing of families, but the proportion of baby boom children who expect to have children of their own is as high as ever.) It seems certain that these baby boom families will stimulate an unprecedented demand for housing, although it is by no means clear how and where this demand (and its associated costs and benefits) will be satisfied and distributed. The unprecedented apartment construction of the last decade was, in part, a response to the demand generated by an abnormally high proportion of people in their 20's. As these people move to the family settlement stage of their lives, the critical questions will be how their housing needs will change and where their demands for new housing will be exhibited.

The dispersal of growth we have witnessed over the last half-century is, in large part, an expression of, and in some ways, a cause of prosperity and mobility in American society. But in Massachusetts, as well as in many other states, this pattern of growth and development has also created problems, among which are:

1. **The inefficient use of land, and unnecessary public and private costs ensuing from that inefficiency.** Land is a fixed resource, and its inefficient use has often been encouraged through unnecessary new public facility investments which trigger growth in undeveloped areas. Moreover, in cases where growth can be accommodated only in undeveloped areas, development often has occurred in random leap-frog patterns rather than in contiguous areas — leading to unforeseen and costly new public expenditures.

2. **The deterioration of older centers, in each case the site of substantial prior social and financial investment, and an increase in associated costs, burdens, and inequities.** Many of Massachusetts' growth and development problems stem from a systematic neglect of our town and city centers. Placing the vast majority of public investments in new facilities in outlying areas not only fosters the kind of inefficient development patterns which consume valuable open space and require expensive new services, it undermines the ability of our older cities and

towns to attract and retain private investment. More importantly, it imposes a tremendous social and financial cost on the Commonwealth and those people who depend on these centers for their livelihood and place of residence.

3. **Inequities among households and communities resulting from unequal access to jobs, housing, open space, and quality municipal services.** Development patterns have an enormous impact on the level of choice and equity among communities, households, and workers in Massachusetts. The continuing investment of public and private resources outside of existing centers has contributed to major fiscal disparities among communities and gross inequities in residential, recreational, and public service opportunities among households. The rapid suburbanization of better-paying employment opportunities has led to the increasingly limited access of many workers to new employment centers.

4. **An inadequate overall level of economic growth and residential investment.** The problems associated with the *distribution* of growth have been greatly compounded by an inadequate *level* of overall economic and residential investment. Limited job and housing opportunities still present major obstacles to an improved quality of life for many of the Commonwealth's citizens. Expanded opportunities will ultimately depend in large part upon higher overall levels of growth.

For the most part, these issues have long been recognized as undesirable effects of current growth and development trends. But at the same time the treatment of these issues has posed nearly insurmountable problems for existing institutions at all levels of government — a predicament reflecting both the complexity of the issues and the inadequacy of the institutions.

Traditionally, the Commonwealth has maintained a fragmented approach to the development and implementation of growth policy. Over the years, functional planning and project development in such areas as transportation, housing, and water quality were supplemented by the analysis and application of new capital budgeting techniques, innovative land use regulation, and other related policy tools. But these initiatives were carried out by a variety of state agencies with little regard for the need to develop a comprehensive, internally consistent policy.

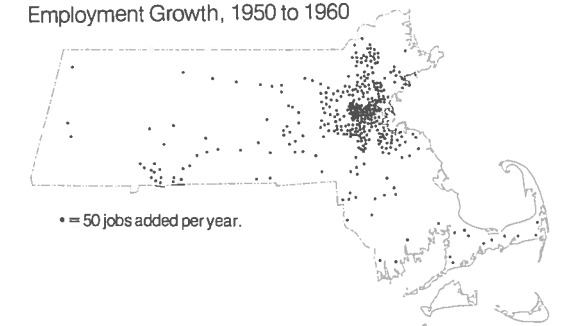
Shortly after his inauguration in January of 1975, Governor Dukakis established an Office of State Planning to begin work on a *state* growth policy and to superintend the integration and coordination of *state* planning and development activities. In order to provide the necessary guidance for decisions relating to the problems of growth, the following goals were established according to which state government could better manage its own regulatory and investment programs:

- Promote a more efficient use of our physical and natural resources.
- Promote the revitalization of city and town centers.
- Promote greater freedom of choice and equity among communities, households, and workers.
- Promote higher levels of economic growth and residential development.

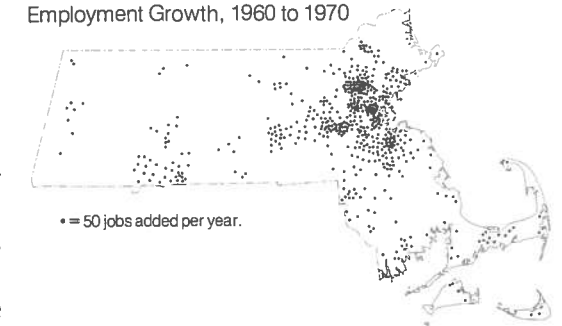
To a significant degree, these goals are mutually consistent and supportive; they represent an attempt to reconcile certain fundamental value conflicts implicit in many growth and development decisions. The most obvious of these conflicts is that between preserving our natural environment and achieving the growth required to support our residential, employment, and institutional needs. Government's traditional response to this basic tension is the *environmental impact statement*, which attempts to weigh the relative merits of a development against its environmental consequences on a case-by-case basis. Such an incremental approach often fails to lead to a more fundamental and long-range reconciliation of our environmental and developmental needs.

In contrast, the emphasis of these goals — on the efficient use and reuse of land and existing facilities in city and town centers — constitutes a direct and comprehensive approach to fostering growth in areas which already are equipped to support it, thereby reducing unnecessary costs, the destructive intrusion of development into the open spaces of our communities, and the despoliation of major regional and state-wide resources. Thus, while not proposing any overall limitation on growth, they do

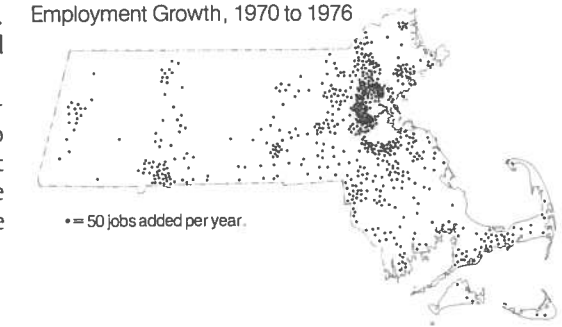
Employment Growth, 1950 to 1960



Employment Growth, 1960 to 1970



Employment Growth, 1970 to 1976



Neither private technology and production nor public policy and programs alone could have created the extraordinarily diffuse growth patterns which have characterized Massachusetts since the 1920's.



suggest ways of accommodating growth while revitalizing our existing man-made environment and preserving our natural environment.

A second major tension which these goals seek to address is the competitive relationship between our urban centers and suburban communities. Often this tension is fostered by state and federally-financed investments in major public facility projects. All too often, these investments in industrial parks, sewage treatment facilities, and schools far exceed the capacity needed to accommodate any imminent growth. Yet owing to the maintenance costs of these facilities, tax-producing development becomes all the more essential to defray the public expense of these facilities. As a result, many communities which often would prefer to preserve their suburban or rural character are forced to lure new development away from existing centers. Greater utilization of our existing facilities and the creation of new facilities whose capacity does not require major dislocations of growth and development can serve to relax this tension between existing urban centers and suburban and rural communities.

A third conflict is that between the need to put a lid on public expenditures and the need to underwrite major public investments to spur and maintain growth and development. As in the case of the two previous conflicts, the pursuit of our proposed goals offers only a degree of reconciliation, not an absolute harmony between the need to spend less and the need to spend more. A fundamental premise of the state's growth policy is that an improved quality of life can be attained from the same rate of public spending through the more efficient use of past investments. The revitalization of city and town centers will generate new jobs, expand the tax revenue of cities, and better enable cities to provide an adequate level of services to their residents. Achieving and maintaining a better physical environment will constitute a significant public savings as well. The inefficient development patterns described previously have led to many substantial, although sometimes delayed and subtle, public costs. The deterioration of existing neighborhoods and commercial centers eventually requires urban renewal expenditures, unemployment insurance and public assistance. Further instances of unnecessary public expense occur in many communities which overinvest in costly public facilities or fail to organize expected development in order to make the best use of existing public resources. By avoiding investment in inefficient development patterns, the Commonwealth can expect to support higher levels of growth at existing expenditure levels.

Broadly construed, these goals point to a legitimate concern on the part of state government for the location and level of growth. Locational concerns are at the heart of the need for the more efficient use of natural and man-made resources, the revitalization of urban centers, and increased choice and equity for the people of Massachusetts. And the overall level of economic growth in the Commonwealth is important to achieving the goal of increased welfare and opportunity.

The Location and Quality of Growth

Each of the following *state* policy objectives concerning the location of growth considers the real choices facing state government in guiding growth and development and suggests strategies which can be applied to achieve these objectives.

Objective 1: Stabilize the physical condition of residential neighborhoods. Residential neighborhoods are the basic building blocks of Massachusetts' cities and towns, and provide a framework for many of the fundamental social and institutional relationships established by their residents. Stabilizing the physical condition of residential neighborhoods, and maintaining and improving their livability must be a prime development objective of the Commonwealth. This is especially important in Massachusetts' urban centers, which house about half of the state's residents and where many neighborhoods are plagued by a deteriorating housing stock and declining facilities and public service support. Improving and preserving these neighborhoods will decelerate the middle-class flight to the suburbs and serve as a cornerstone in the entire urban revitalization process. It is important to point out in this context that urban revitalization does *not* mean attracting affluent suburbanites back into the city; rather, it means allowing those who already live in the city to enjoy the stable

neighborhoods, decent dwellings, and adequate level of services which attracted a previous generation of residents to the suburbs.

The Commonwealth's existing residential neighborhoods constitute an invaluable resource, a social and financial investment of phenomenal proportions. Ensuring access to mortgage and rehabilitation funds, protecting neighborhoods from the problems of speculation and exploitation, and providing technical assistance and service support will be necessary components of any plan to protect those investments.

Objective 2: Promote wider choice among residential environments.

Promoting a wider choice among residential environments is essential to our national goal of providing "a decent home and suitable living environment for every American family." Individuals whose housing choice is constrained by income or race should be able to choose from a variety of decent and suitable residential environments according to their needs and desires.

Wider choice among residential environments will help to alleviate enforced concentrations of low income and minority households, concentrations which undermine the fundamental values of our society, the physical stability of neighborhoods, and the economic opportunity of households. Massachusetts, one of the oldest and most intensively urbanized parts of the nation, has developed into a socially, ethnically, and racially pluralistic society. This pluralism can be ignored and abused or cultivated and appreciated. In order for pluralism to be a positive and creative force at the community and state levels, it must exist at the neighborhood level as well. If neighborhoods are building blocks for a tolerant and cooperative pluralistic society, they cannot be characterized by forced income and racial segregation.

It should be noted that our objective of promoting wider choice will impose constraints on our objective of stabilizing the physical condition of neighborhoods. Because the physical upgrading of neighborhoods may encourage a general rise in housing values and eventually costs, care must be taken in developing strategies to ensure social as well as physical stability for our neighborhoods.

Objective 3: Promote the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of existing residential, commercial, and industrial buildings.

Many deteriorating, underutilized, and vacant buildings which appear to have outlived their usefulness can be restored as attractive living and working spaces. Rehabilitation and adaptive reuse are increasingly cost-effective alternatives to demolition and new construction, and offer the additional benefit — in these times of high unemployment — of being more labor intensive. Moreover, the restoration of existing structures can preserve and enhance the context, scale, and character of surrounding neighborhoods and restore vitality to parts of many older cities where meaningful activity has long been missing. By themselves, efforts at rehabilitation will not be enough to effect a reversal of declining city and town situations, but taken in conjunction with other initiatives, they can make a valuable contribution to a community's efforts to recapture lost revenue and attract commercial, industrial, and residential activity to city and town centers.

Objective 4: Promote the location of new commerce and industry within or contiguous to existing population and employment centers.

During the past several decades, suburban areas have gained certain locational advantages over city and town centers in the relative price and availability of land, physical access, and public facilities support, proximity to skilled workers, and property taxes. Extensive strip development and the proliferation of suburban shopping centers and office and industrial parks are the results of this shift in relative locational advantages.

There are significant costs associated with the suburbanization of business and industry. A near-exclusive orientation toward the automobile only reinforces the public's dependence on that form of transportation and reduces the feasibility of public transportation and mobility for the transit-dependent. Suburbanization also leads to a less efficient use of public facilities. Water, sewer, and utility lines often must be extended along or beyond the periphery of well-developed, well-served areas, while existing facilities remain underutilized. Take, for example, a major suburban shop-



ping center which locates in such a way as to compete with the commercial vitality of an existing town or city center. As business is drawn away from the existing center, maintenance of the community's existing network of public facilities, usually capable of supporting an intense level of activity, becomes increasingly difficult as tax revenues follow business to the suburbs.

If the allocation of resources is to become more efficient in Massachusetts, then an increasing share of new commercial and industrial growth must go to the Commonwealth's city and town centers. Municipalities which have assembled core land and/or buildings with a view toward attracting new business must receive maximum assistance from the state in marketing those properties. In addition, all state capital expenditure programs must give high priority to investments in core areas which will support the growth and development of new commerce and industry, thus improving the locational advantages of town and city centers so that they can compete successfully for a larger share of new business in Massachusetts. For that development which does suburbanize, clustering in either community or regional-scale shopping centers, office and industrial parks should be encouraged over strip development.

Objective 5: Preserve critical resource areas, enhance the environmental quality and character of the Commonwealth, and promote the availability and accessibility of open space and recreation areas.

The integrity of Massachusetts' natural environment must be preserved not only for its own sake, but also because it is crucial to the future growth and development of the Commonwealth. Contrary to popular rhetoric, environmental enhancement and economic objectives are not fundamentally conflicting or mutually exclusive. Although Massachusetts is situated at the far end of the nation's transportation and energy supply lines, and therefore lacks some of the locational attributes which work to the advantage of other states in attracting commerce and industry, the Commonwealth's magnificent natural environment makes it an unusually attractive place to live and work. Even so, the *quality of life* side of the argument for preserving Massachusetts' environmental integrity is perhaps less critical than the need to ensure adequate supplies of such fundamental resources as water, without which any future growth and development in the Commonwealth becomes extremely problematic.

State government has reviewed its own public investment and regulatory programs and found that many were inconsistent with the objectives discussed above. In response, these programs were overhauled and redirected to become component parts of a comprehensive investment strategy for city and town centers. Examples of these initiatives are:

- **School Building Assistance.** The state's program of school building assistance has been substantially redirected to facilitate the rehabilitation of existing buildings and to encourage the intown location of school facilities.
- **Open Space and Recreation Investments.** First, priorities for the allocation of federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) grants have been revised to give greater support to projects in urban areas which can trigger private investment decisions. Second, urban areas have been given highest priority in the state's own *Self-Help* passive recreation program, and cities have been encouraged to combine BOR and *Self-Help* funds to lessen local acquisition costs. Third, significant progress has been made towards the establishment of a state Urban Heritage Park program (one such park, in Lowell, has already been funded).
- **Public Housing.** In the past two years, state agencies have made a greater commitment to urban housing problems. In particular, the recent bond issue for elderly housing will give priority to projects: (a) in urban areas; (b) in community centers and downtowns; and (c) involving rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.
- **Transportation Investments.** In the allocation of state and federal transportation investments, increased emphasis has been placed on expediting those projects which serve already developed areas.



Special attention has been given to mass transit projects. In addition, the use of transportation funds to upgrade and beautify city centers with trees, lighting, brick sidewalks, parking garages, and pedestrian amenities has received a strong commitment from the state.

- **Sewerage Facilities.** Several significant changes have been made in the state-federal program providing funding for wastewater treatment facilities. First, project eligibility criteria have been broadened to include collection systems and combined sewer separation projects. Second, the state has taken steps to expedite urban wastewater projects and to discourage costly structural systems on the fringes of urban areas and major interceptor sewers that run through undeveloped land. Third, the state has sought and received approval for communities to use their community development funds as the local matching share required by federal water quality grant programs.
- **State Offices and Facilities.** Executive Order 134 requires all state agencies contemplating an expansion or a relocation to fill their space needs in existing buildings in city centers. By locating state facilities in those areas which best enable them to serve the people who must use them — areas which are close to population centers, well-served by mass transit and convenient to other related facilities — state government can ensure that its capital expenditures serve to stimulate private sector investment in the urban areas of Massachusetts.

The Level of Growth: Economic Development

A fundamental premise underlying the preceding objectives is that an improved quality of life can be achieved at a lower public cost through the promotion of a more sensible pattern of public investment. To substantially achieve the preceding objectives will require more than a spatial redistribution of employment and residential opportunities and public and private investments — it will require substantial new capital outlays for upgrading existing and creating new residential and employment opportunities. Stabilizing existing neighborhoods and meeting new housing needs will require substantial investments for rehabilitation and new construction, and an increase in purchasing power to stimulate and sustain these investments. Promoting the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of existing public and private facilities will also require major new public and private expenditures. Preserving and enhancing environmental quality assumes substantial investments for pollution control, open space acquisition, and recreational development. Whether these investments issue from the private sector in response to market demand or from government in response to critical needs unmet by the private sector, the creation of new income and wealth must precede new investments in these areas. And the source of this new income and wealth must be increased employment and production. Thus, new economic growth is the first and foremost task facing business, labor, and government in Massachusetts.

High energy costs, a deteriorating state and regional rail system, and impediments to the supply and accessibility of capital have limited the growth of employment opportunities in Massachusetts. The state's economy also suffers from an excessive level of *structural* unemployment, a mismatch of jobs and skills, and a geographic disparity between labor surplus areas and areas of employment growth. A logical response to this problem suggests encouraging housing and access to public transportation in areas of growth and employment opportunities, while simultaneously encouraging new industrial development in or near urban areas with high unemployment rates. Improvements in vocational education and measures to upgrade the quality of a growing number of low-wage jobs are also needed.

Many observers point to the limited capacity of state government to improve its economic position. Before describing what a state can do, it is important to understand what it cannot do. Economic cycles, inflation, and long-term secular trends across the nation are beyond the capacity of state government to influence. Natural advantages and disadvantages, such as climate, geographic location, and natural re-

Contrary to popular rhetoric, environmental enhancement and economic objectives are not fundamentally conflicting or mutually exclusive.



"Mr. Semple, who wants to stimulate the economy, help the cities, and clean up the environment, I'd like you to meet Mr. Hobart, who wants to let the economy, the cities, and the environment take care of themselves. I'm sure you two will have a lot to talk about."



There are three essential roles that state government can play to improve the Massachusetts economy.

sources cannot be altered by state decision-makers. The federal government exercises the most significant policy options over money supply, interest rates, taxes, and public works programs, as well as exercising regulatory responsibilities over such things as energy prices and environmental standards. And finally, the vast majority of new jobs will be generated by the private sector, not by government.

In the past, an awareness of these limitations has discouraged state government from undertaking a broader economic development program. It is clear today, however, that a handful of tax incentives and an advertising campaign will not suffice as the only components of the Commonwealth's economic development effort. Since most of the major decisions made every day by state government have economic consequences, and since the structural obstacles to economic expansion are complex, a more comprehensive approach to the state's economic revitalization is warranted.

There are three essential roles that state government can play to improve the Massachusetts economy. First, as *protector* of the state's competitive position relative to other states, state government can encourage federal policies which do not adversely affect the state's economic position and which minimize the state's natural and locational disadvantages, and can provide incentives for sound growth and development comparable to other states. Second, as a *catalyst* to development, state government can offer tax incentives for new, growth-oriented industries, flexible financing options for new and expanding firms, public improvements to accommodate development in key locations, and well-developed education and manpower training programs that provide a ready and willing labor force for anticipated jobs. And third, as *manager* of its own service delivery, facility development, and regulatory responsibilities, state government can create a climate in which there is a reasonable degree of confidence on the part of the private sector and the public-at-large in the fiscal stability and administrative capacity of state government.

In this context, much can be done within the full scope of state government's activities to put Massachusetts back on a firm economic foundation.

The goals of the Commonwealth's economic development program are simple and straightforward: more jobs and higher incomes for the people of Massachusetts. The policies and initiatives set forth in this program are directed at three objectives:

- State government must assist in the stabilization and, where possible, the reduction of the costs, and the increase of convenience, of doing business relative to other states.
- State government must assist in the identification and encouragement of key investment opportunities in various areas and industries in the Commonwealth.
- State government must better manage its own activities and functions if an attractive climate for investment and expansion is to be provided.

Energy

Massachusetts' electrical energy costs are 50 percent higher than the national average. A primary cause of this disparity is the Commonwealth's heavy dependence on imported oil, the source of more than 80 percent of our energy. States in other regions of the country have a competitive advantage resulting from their proximity to natural gas supplies — the price of which is federally regulated at about one-third that of the fuel oil burned by industries and utilities in Massachusetts.

While state government cannot control the national and international forces at work in the energy market, it can help stabilize the Commonwealth's energy costs and bring them more into line with those of other states by practicing and promoting:

- energy conservation;
- equitable regulation of energy facilities, supplies, and rates at both the state and federal levels; and
- the development of a more diverse energy base in Massachusetts.

Energy savings can be achieved through the more efficient production and consumption of energy. In response to the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of

1975, Massachusetts recently submitted an energy conservation plan to the federal government calling for:

- insulation and lighting standards for all buildings;
- special thermal and lighting standards for all public buildings;
- peak load pricing mechanisms;
- creation of a Conservation Technology Extension Service to provide information on conservation techniques to homeowners and businessmen;
- tax incentives and technical information regarding the development and use of solar energy; and
- more energy-efficient transportation programs (such as car and van-pooling) and allowing right turns after stopping for red lights.

Massachusetts state government already has succeeded in cutting its own energy consumption by 20 percent in one year. The goal of the state's energy conservation plan is to reduce consumption 5 percent statewide by 1980. Reducing expenditures on imported fuels and reducing the need for new energy facilities will retain money within the state and free capital and income for other needs.

On the development side, state government is working to ensure that potential oil and gas reserves on Georges Bank are explored and developed in a responsible and environmentally sound manner. As mentioned above, incentives for the installation of solar units in new homes are being proposed, and state government is pursuing initiatives to attract and support the nascent solar industry.

Other factors may also contribute to the stabilization of Massachusetts' energy costs through a diversification of our energy base. The phased reregulation of natural gas is one important step proposed by the President's energy plan. The President's plan also calls for an increased reliance on the use of coal instead of oil and natural gas and a cost equalization tax on domestic oil which will also help to bring the overall energy costs in Massachusetts into line with those of other states across the country.

In addition, New England currently has a reserve generating capacity of approximately 46 percent, half of which is necessary to meet periods of peak demand. As a result of this excess capacity, New England will not have to add as much new generating equipment over the next decade as will other areas of the country. The escalating costs of new generating facilities and more expensive fuels will raise the cost of electricity for those other areas significantly, enhancing the ability of Massachusetts and the Northeast to attract and retain new industry.

Capital

The formation and expansion of business and industry in the Commonwealth is dependent on the plentiful supply and reasonable cost of capital to finance the construction or rehabilitation of buildings and the purchase of equipment. The expansion, maintenance, and rehabilitation of our housing supply similarly requires adequate financing for homebuilders and mortgages for homebuyers.

In recent years, as inflation and the borrowing requirements of government and large corporations have escalated, start-up capital has become more scarce and debt capital more expensive. This has served to diminish the formation and expansion of the innovative technological firms which have long flourished in Massachusetts, and to inhibit the expansion of the Commonwealth's more mature industries. Housing production and rehabilitation have also been limited due to high interest rates for construction financing.

Federal monetary policy and federal housing programs are the principal determinants of the cost and supply of private capital for business formation and expansion. The Commonwealth's economic development program proposes a comprehensive set of public financing mechanisms — developed by the Governor's Capital Formation Task Force — to complement private capital markets and stimulate the creation of jobs.

- The Community Development Finance Corporation has been enacted and is awaiting receipt of the \$10 million it has been allocated in the state's bonding program. The CDFC will make



New economic growth is the first and foremost task facing business, labor, and government in Massachusetts.



equity and debt investments in business ventures located in economically-depressed areas of the state, provided that these ventures are sponsored by local community development corporations.

- The Massachusetts Industrial Mortgage Insurance Agency has been established and has received a \$2 million insurance fund appropriation, which enables it to insure up to \$18 million of mortgages for Massachusetts businesses. Although its resources are small, by insuring portions of industrial mortgages MIMIA may stimulate far greater private investment and business expansion.
- To increase the supply of capital for expansion of existing businesses in Massachusetts, the Task Force recommended that MIMIA's scope be expanded to enable it to issue tax-exempt industrial revenue bonds which would pass on to expanding Massachusetts companies the federal subsidy of lower interest rates without risk or expense to the Commonwealth.
- To encourage the Massachusetts thrift industry to use its surplus funds in Massachusetts, the Task Force recommended that a central facility be established to permit thrift institutions and commercial banks to pool their resources for staff support in credit analysis and loan servicing of commercial and industrial loans.
- To encourage the formation and survival of new ventures in Massachusetts, particularly technology businesses, the Task Force recommended the establishment of a Massachusetts Technology Development Corporation to enable the state to make investments (in most instances, joint ventures with private lenders) in new business enterprises.

Legislation to enact the latter three proposals is being prepared and will be submitted to the Legislature in the near future. With a modest investment of the state's resources, these financing mechanisms will stimulate a far greater investment of private capital and lead to more jobs and higher incomes for the residents and businesses of the Commonwealth.

Transportation

Reliable, convenient, and cost-effective transportation is essential to the movement of goods and people on which our economy and, to a large extent, our quality of life depend. Fortunately, Massachusetts already enjoys the basic elements of a sound transportation system. Our interstate highway system is nearly complete, an extensive system of subways, trolleys, and buses serves metropolitan Boston, and state-assisted regional transportation authorities operate in ten other areas across the state. In addition, Boston's sea and air ports link Massachusetts' manufacturers to regional, national, and international markets. Rail transportation is the only systemic problem facing the Commonwealth and it can be addressed successfully through concerted state and federal action.

The goals of the state's economic development program with respect to the expansion and improvement of the existing transportation system are:

- the creation of badly-needed construction jobs through an accelerated construction contract award program;
- the development of transportation facilities that will attract and support new private investment in areas of high growth potential; and
- maintaining the safety and carrying capacity of existing investments and providing greater equity in service delivery and cost assessment.

The balanced transportation program being undertaken by the state includes more than \$300 million in annual construction contracts for highway and transit projects through 1980. The federally-funded high-speed Northeast Corridor project includes extensive track, bridge, and crossing improvements and will provide rapid rail service between Boston, New York and Washington for the first time. Extensions



and improvements to the Greater Boston transit lines will extend rapid transit service to Route 128. Seaport development in Massachusetts has been bolstered by the designation of Foreign Trade Zones in Boston and New Bedford, and the state is lobbying the State Department for *favoured port* status for Boston to open lucrative trade opportunities with the Soviet Union. MassPort is lobbying for equalized rail freight rates for containerized cargo shipped through Boston, which is now at a competitive disadvantage with all other major East Coast ports with respect to this increasingly important form of cargo shipping.

Unrealized Opportunities for Economic Growth

Proposals advanced in the areas of energy, capital, and transportation address the cost and convenience of doing business in Massachusetts. Although growth in certain sectors of our economy is limited by the relatively high cost of some of these production factors, the state's economic development program attempts to stimulate private investment in areas and industries that have unrealized growth potential through the successful coordination and use of state regulatory and investment programs.

Areas singled out for special attention include those in or near urban centers which possess the ingredients for new growth — a skilled labor force, public facilities and services, available land and building space. Among those areas in the state which possess many of the resources necessary to support new development are the Southwest Corridor, our port communities, abandoned military bases — Westover, South Boston, Charlestown, Chelsea — and areas of the state currently being opened by our expanding transportation systems — I-190 connecting Worcester and Fitchburg, the I-495 extension through Southeastern Massachusetts, I-95 north from Route 128.

Industries with growth potential are identified as those compatible with or dependent upon the special advantages and characteristics of the state's economy and environment. Typically, these industries relate to our technology or natural resource base — computers, medical instrumentation, fishing, wood products, tourism, the arts — or fall within the service sector — education, finance, insurance, medical, or business services — or represent substantial import substitution potential — food processing, metal fabrication, machinery production. In addition to providing technical assistance to firms wishing to take advantage of these growth opportunities, state government is seeking to encourage and accommodate these industrial expansions through its public investment and financing programs.

The Role of Government

The importance of strong, effective state and local government in the Commonwealth stems from the need to reconcile a variety of competing and sometimes conflicting social, economic, and environmental interests. In an urban state like Massachusetts, effective and responsible government can help to ensure that all of these disparate interests are encouraged and satisfied to the fullest possible extent.

Although the Massachusetts economy is part of a larger federal economic system, the Commonwealth's comparative performance within that system is determined, in part, by the attitudes and practices of state and local government regarding fiscal management, taxation, regulation, and public investment. By managing resources wisely, state and local government can maintain the Commonwealth's rich tradition of social and environmental responsibility by maximizing the opportunities for economic growth.

The Development Cabinet. In order to better streamline and coordinate the economic development efforts of the agencies involved, Governor Dukakis created a Development Cabinet whose members include the Lieutenant Governor, the Secretaries of Economic Affairs, Environmental Affairs, Transportation, Communities and Development, and Consumer Affairs, and the Director of State Planning, who serves as Chairman of the group. The Development Cabinet meets weekly to consider major policy and program issues that bear directly on the condition of the Massachusetts economy. State regulatory and investment decisions concerning





specific large-scale development projects are often brought before the Development Cabinet for resolution. Viewed from the top down, the Development Cabinet provides the Governor with a steady stream of balanced advice on the many economic programs and projects over which state government has control.

Public Investment: The state's public investment policies are key determinants of economic activity in Massachusetts. Many thousands of construction jobs are created as a direct result of state investments in highway and transit improvements, housing, wastewater treatment facilities, and state-owned and operated hospitals, schools, and office buildings. Additional employment opportunities are created as a result of an increased demand for services and supplies in support of state-sponsored construction projects. By coordinating the implementation of public investment programs with a sound locational policy, state government can stimulate millions of dollars of private investment in response to its public investments. One need only to look at the private development generated on the Boston Waterfront, along the Red Line extension to Quincy, and in several of the state's city and town centers to be assured of the value of this approach. In accord with this policy, state government has played a key role in developing major projects such as Lowell Heritage State Park, Westover Air Force Base, Revere Beach, Park Plaza, the Charlestown Naval Shipyard, and the extension of rapid transit service to Lynn.

At the same time, management considerations have given rise to annual Consolidated Construction Programs (CCP). These programs provide a public contract award schedule to which participating state agencies and the administration as a whole can be held accountable. As such, they are visible evidence of state government's effort to expedite the planning, design, and construction of all capital projects. Prior to the establishment of the first such program in 1975, the State Auditor reported that delays in the award of construction contracts were costing the Commonwealth \$20 million annually due to inflation and higher interest and carrying costs. The CCP approach to the Commonwealth's construction activities is designed to ensure that state contracts are awarded as quickly as possible, thereby saving the state money and providing jobs for the depressed construction industry.

Management: The basis for providing state services more efficiently and effectively is *A Management Plan for Massachusetts*, produced by the Governor's Management Task Force in May 1976. The Task Force, organized as a private, non-profit corporation and financed by contributions from Massachusetts business, conducted an intensive 12-week review of state government's operations, and made more than 800 specific recommendations for the improved management of Massachusetts state government. The Governor has instructed his Cabinet Secretaries to formulate specific, agency-by-agency implementation plans, drawing upon selected Task Force suggestions and incorporating them into a detailed plan for each Secretariat. The most recent projections indicate that over \$162 million in recurring annual benefits will be realized when current implementation projects are completed.

Development Permitting: The state's development permitting process is another area where government regulation directly affects not only the quality of growth, but the amount of private sector time and capital which must go toward supporting it. Approximately half of the state's development-related permits are administered by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Quality Engineering. A total administrative overhaul of all permits within DEQE was completed in 1976, and should soon result in a more streamlined and simplified permitting process within that agency.

Federal-State Relations: The Lieutenant Governor's Office of Federal-State Relations also plays an important part in Massachusetts' overall economic development program. Cooperating closely with the state's Congressional delegation, this office monitors the substance and status of federal legislation as it affects Massachusetts, and maintains close contact with those federal administrative agencies whose regulatory and investment decisions are of importance to the Commonwealth.

The Lieutenant Governor's office also is responsible for coordinating state



relations with other New England states. A growing recognition of the importance of regional economic strategies and coalitions is likely to make this effort more important and effective in the future.

Meeting the Commonwealth's social and environmental obligations while maximizing our state's opportunities for economic growth will require strong and effective leadership at all levels of government. Fiscal responsibility and a willingness to establish ceilings on state and local expenditures are among the greatest challenges now facing state and local government in Massachusetts. Certainly, they comprise a necessary step toward reforming the state's current system of taxation and stabilizing the overall tax burden on individuals and businesses in Massachusetts.

Conclusion

The major goals of state government as outlined in this section form a clear and coherent agenda:

- Provide an adequate income and a decent home and living environment for every resident of Massachusetts.
- Improve the overall climate for business and industry and increase the level of private investment and economic activity in the Commonwealth.
- Increase the ability of the state's older urban centers to attract and retain residential and commercial growth and development.
- Maintain and improve the Commonwealth's unique quality of life through wise management of its natural and social resources.

To achieve the locational objectives of the state's emerging growth policies, a multifaceted effort to coordinate state investment programs and ensure their efficient and equitable operation is underway.

To address the need for an increased level of economic activity in the Commonwealth, the state is pursuing a comprehensive economic development program coordinating public resources to stimulate and reinforce private investment and economic activity.

Both of these approaches recognize the importance of the Commonwealth's older urban centers in any future growth and development and represent a complementary and comprehensive perspective from which to focus and manage the resources of state government for the realization of Massachusetts' fullest potential.





Chapter Four

Consensus and Choice

4

Massachusetts today faces a number of critical issues:

- How do we provide housing and jobs for a growing population while protecting the unique assets that make Massachusetts an attractive place to live and work?
- How do we protect the vitality and diversity of community character in our state?
- How do we enable our city and town centers to retain the vital role which they have always played in Massachusetts' economic and social life?
- How do we protect our coastline — and other critical resource areas — from degradation?
- How do we preserve the productive use of agricultural lands?
- How do we encourage development to proceed in an orderly and efficient manner, and ensure that public funds are spent in a way which will promote quality economic growth?

In one way or another, choices regarding these critical issues will be made. But they may not be deliberate, thoughtful choices. That is the function of policy. In setting down a policy, we are making our choices explicit. Established policies can be used to hold decision-makers accountable. More importantly, they serve as a framework which ensures that the day-to-day decisions made by separate and distinct agencies complement each other and lead toward a common goal.

The Growth Policy process has been directed toward the establishment of a set of commonly agreed upon policies which will help guide the decisions made by local, regional, and state government regarding the future growth of the Commonwealth.

This chapter attempts to underscore the most important of these choices. It outlines those areas where agreement has emerged — a common perspective that runs through the local, regional and state growth policy statements — and it discusses some of the more controversial choices which have yet to be made.

Consensus

Many of the goals and objectives expressed in the local, regional and state growth policy perspectives reveal strong sentiments about the course of future growth and development in Massachusetts. Taken together, they suggest that future growth be managed in a more balanced fashion: harmonizing environmental objectives with economic needs; preserving local character and increasing housing opportunity; promoting growth in some communities while stabilizing it in others — in short, that government at all levels vigorously pursue a *quantity* of growth that will ensure the state's vitality, and a *quality* of growth that will complement the character of communities across the state.

"Until 15 to 20 years ago, actual development seemed linked to established growth centers in the region. Since that time, the expansion of utilities and highways has created opportunities for low-density residential development to gain a foothold in many suburbs. If this trend continues, the region will lose much of its rural and urban character and prospects for revitalization of the urban cores will be further diminished."

New Bedford Growth Policy Statement

These areas of broad agreement suggest the basis for a common perspective on growth:

- Increased Economic Development.** Massachusetts' level of economic activity must be adequate to meet the growing needs of the state's population. Economic growth is essential if we are to satisfy the state's need for jobs and housing, ensure the provision of quality public services, and promote sound state and local fiscal capacity.
- The Revitalization of City and Town Centers.** Urban sprawl and the dispersal of population and jobs away from our city and town centers has threatened the distinctive character and fiscal well-being of the state. The continued vitality of these centers is essential not only to the cities and towns of which they are a part, but to the ability of rural and suburban communities to effectively manage their future growth.
- The Maintenance of Environmental Quality.** Environmental quality must not be compromised by the pressures for growth. The beauty and range of natural environments in Massachusetts are important not only in themselves, but to our economy as well, for they help to define the special quality of life which makes Massachusetts such an attractive place in which to live and work.
- Property Tax Relief.** An overdependence on the property tax has contributed to the failure of cities and towns to consider the full range of implications inherent in local land use decisions. The property tax is seen as regressive and an impediment to private investment. There is also broad agreement that the influence of differential property tax rates on private development decisions has had an adverse impact on overall development patterns.
- Preservation of Farm Land.** The supply of agricultural land in our state is being increasingly eroded by growth pressures. Although a purely economic argument is often made for the retention of farmland — in terms of in-state food production and the demand for agricultural goods and services — there may be an equally important aesthetic argument: that in an essentially urban environment, the state's farmland provides diversity and contrast, and contributes to our unique quality of life.
- Improved Sensitivity to Differences in Community Character.** State and federal laws, programs, and regulations are too often insensitive to local growth policies and objectives. These laws, programs, and regulations are frequently unable to respond to specific opportunities, or to accommodate the diversity of communities in our state. Programs which are generally sensible and appropriate for larger communities may not be well-suited to rural communities. When they are mandated but unfunded, state programs can place a severe strain on local fiscal capacity.

In short, that government at all levels vigorously pursue a *quantity* of growth that will ensure the state's vitality, and a *quality* of growth that will complement the character of communities across the state.

Choices

Despite broad consensus on these major concerns, a number of critical choices must also be addressed if we are to devise an effective policy to guide future growth and development. For the most part, these remaining choices involve some controversy. In some cases, it is controversy borne out of the varying perspectives of different levels of government. In others, there is agreement as to the problem, but controversy as to the solution. But controversy does not relieve the need for making a choice. While there can be no easy choices, a failure to choose will inevitably result in a decision made by the force of circumstance, and an outcome which may not satisfy anyone.

- Choices:
- Growth/No Growth
 - Public Policy/Market Forces
 - Regionalism/Home Rule
 - Revenue Needs/Tax Reform

The remainder of this chapter deals with four of these areas of choice.

Growth/No Growth

A number of Local Growth Policy Statements indicate a local policy of no growth. Moreover, many communities appear to desire a slower, more moderate rate of growth. Yet a significant level of overall growth is both inevitable and desirable.

In short, we see two distinct phenomena headed in entirely different directions. On one hand, a majority of communities want slower, more moderate growth. On the other, it appears certain that the pressures for growth will increase. Thus, one can envision a situation in which the demand for growth will be frustrated, or, conversely, one in which the pressures for growth will lead to a level of development inconsistent with a community's own growth policy. Unless these trends are squarely addressed, the tensions between local desires and aggregate demand may well make it difficult for individual communities to effectively manage their future growth.

Population Growth. In Massachusetts over the past 30 years, our population has grown at a rate of about 500,000 people per decade. Over the coming decades, this rate of growth is expected to slow to about 350,000 people per decade. Given the radically lower fertility rates of the last several years, many people have assumed that population growth is levelling off in Massachusetts. This is simply not the case, however, for the baby boom children are now having — or are about to have — children of their own. Even though fewer children are likely to be born into these households, an unprecedented number of new households will be producing children. As a result, our population will continue to grow into the next century. By 1990, the Commonwealth is likely to have a population of 6.4 million as compared to our 1975 population of 5.8 million.

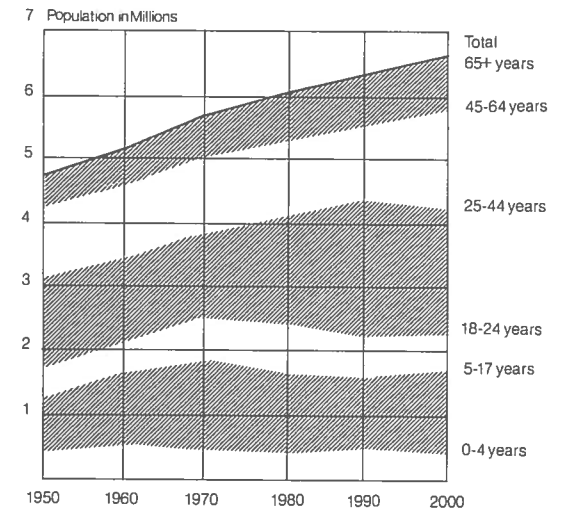
Housing Growth. Even though Massachusetts' rate of population growth may be slackening somewhat, the demand for housing is sure to increase. During successive five year periods since 1910, the number of Massachusetts residents reaching age 30 — the age at which they begin to search for and find housing suitable for raising a family — has fluctuated between 300,000 and 350,000. During the 1960's, this number fell to below 300,000. The resulting pause in suburban growth led many people to believe that the pressures for metropolitan growth were subsiding. In fact, the number of Massachusetts residents reaching age 30 will rise to almost 600,000 in the five-year period 1985 to 1990, or almost double the number of people reaching that age in any five-year period in the past 50 years.

The apartment boom of the early 1970's was in part the result of an unusually large number of people reaching their 20's. As these people move into their 30's, there is certain to be a greatly increased demand for housing suitable for young families, and a housing boom unparalleled since the early 1950's. In a sense, this growth is inevitable. It does not depend upon assumptions about fertility. These people are here now and their need for jobs and homes is expanding every day.

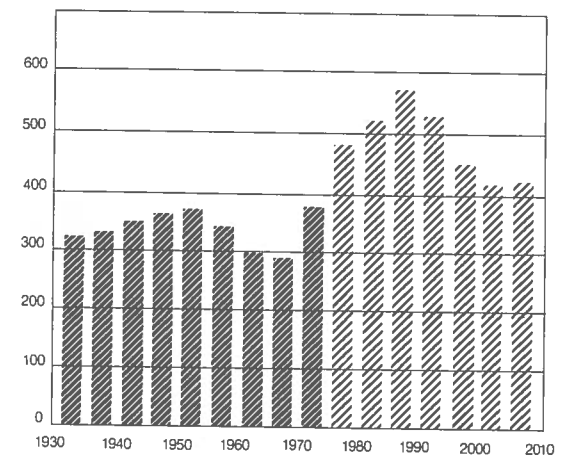
Job Growth. A higher rate of job growth is essential if there is to be an adequate number of jobs for our growing population. To ask for less would imply the acceptance of diminished opportunity, lower incomes, higher unemployment, and a reduced tax base to support needed services. A cessation or even a substantial abatement of economic growth would have its cruelest effects on precisely that segment of our population which suffers most from chronic poverty and structural unemployment. Conversely, an increased level of economic growth in the right locations would greatly aid in the eradication of poverty and the provision of well-paying employment opportunities for the full spectrum of Massachusetts' working population.

Local Growth Preferences. In developing their Local Growth Policy Statements, communities were asked to outline a desired future for their city or town. 52 communities indicated either that they do not expect to grow or that they desire a no growth future. Another 103 communities expressed a desire for slower, more moderate growth.

Massachusetts population, actual and projected, by age, 1950 through 2000.



Family Settlement Index
Number of people (in thousands) reaching age 30, in each five-year period 1930 through 2010.





Although the rationale underlying the desire for more moderate growth is complex, it often returns to a basic theme: that too rapid growth frequently has had an adverse impact on a community's physical character, tax rate, and ability to manage its own future.

By contrast, most of the state's older cities appear eager to accommodate and encourage future development. Increased investment in these areas is seen as essential to the retention of middle income residents, the improvement of residential environments, and the stabilization and enhancement of the distinctive character and quality of life that urban areas offer. Preserving the character of older urban areas will require a substantial increase in jobs and housing.

If all of the communities desiring little or no future growth were able to achieve their growth objectives, then an annual housing shortfall of 8,000 to 10,000 units might result — and certainly would result if existing urban communities were unable to absorb increased growth. Over 20 years, there could be a shortfall of as many as 200,000 units, resulting in overcrowding, increased housing costs, and substantial outmigration.

On the other hand, if past trends continue and the market is successful in exerting itself, then communities will experience growth well beyond what they would prefer. If this growth were to be spread evenly over all communities, then most would grow far in excess of their desires.

It is more likely, however, that without careful growth management, some communities would experience astronomical growth, while others would grow only slightly. Some growth would be frustrated, leading to diminished housing opportunities and soaring housing prices.

Yet this outcome need not occur. We are *not* faced with a simple choice between unbridled growth and frustrated opportunities. Communities are *not* committed to thwarting growth, but to ensuring that its adverse impacts are avoided, that community character is preserved, that community revenues remain adequate to carry the cost of necessary services, and that to the greatest extent possible growth is made to work to everyone's benefit — creating new jobs and housing in those areas where they are most urgently needed.

□

Accommodating Growth Pressures. From 1951 to 1970, urban land uses in Massachusetts grew from 420,000 to 780,000 acres, an increase of more than 85 percent. In the same period, our population increased by only 21 percent. In other words, the growth which occurred during that single 20 year period consumed *four* times the land (per capita) required by all previous development.

For the most part, this growth took place in those communities now desiring slower, more moderate growth — primarily the rural and suburban communities contiguous to the state's traditional centers of population and employment. And it occurred at the expense of those communities now desiring an increased level of growth and investment — primarily the state's older urban centers.

Massachusetts cannot choose between growth and no growth. What we *can* choose is *where* and *in what manner* growth should be accommodated. In other words, the issue is not the overall *quantity* of growth, but the *quality* of growth — that is, the distribution, the design, and the character of growth.

A logical response to the problem of accommodating future growth suggests the encouragement of growth in those areas where it will be consistent with a community's ability to absorb it. While nearly all communities must expect to participate to some degree in the accommodation of growth, by sensitively managing these pressures Massachusetts can largely avoid the deleterious impacts which rapid and haphazard growth has had in the past.

High quality growth in the right locations can lead to a resurgence of hope and optimism in the older cities of Massachusetts. More importantly, it can help to ensure that urban areas are able to provide the stable neighborhoods, decent dwellings and adequate level of services necessary to the retention and growth of their populations.

The channelling of growth into existing urban areas can enable suburban and rural communities to retain their character and diversity, and to accept that measure of growth which is consistent with sound planning.

Viewed in this context, the conflict between growth and no growth must be seen as something of a canard. Growth is clearly essential to the future vitality of our state. With proper growth management, rural and suburban communities can realize their own growth objectives. By pursuing a comprehensive growth strategy which emphasizes growth and development within or contiguous to city and town centers, Massachusetts can avoid the extravagant costs implied by the needless extension of public facilities to outlying areas while ensuring the full and productive use of existing facilities.

The sprawling development patterns of the past 20 years need not continue to shape the future of our cities and towns. With proper growth management, the growth pressures we face over the coming decades can be accommodated in a manner advantageous to city and suburb alike.

To achieve these objectives, however, communities must be given the tools necessary to effectively manage their future growth. Growth management has become increasingly difficult and complex, utilizing zoning and subdivision regulations which were originally designed in the 1920's in response to concerns much different from those we face today. We must now design new tools which are easily administered, which effectively deal with contemporary problems, and which give clear and direct signals to the private developers who must work with them. The task will not be an easy one, but it is the only alternative we have.

Public Policy/Market Forces

Many people believe that market forces alone determine the shape and location of growth. Others would prefer that public policies, by setting the conditions for growth, largely determine the course and extent of development.

Although private investment has traditionally played the major role in the growth and development of the Commonwealth, there is much that public policy *can* do, through the use of its investment and regulatory powers, to reduce costs and create new development opportunities in the older urban areas of the state.

Over the last few decades, the market forces at work in Massachusetts have undergone marked alteration in response to a variety of changing conditions: the composition of our population, the availability of developable land, local zoning and subdivision regulations, shifting consumer preferences, the availability of financing mechanisms, the extension of public sewerage, transportation investments, and other factors. There is little question that these forces have substantially shaped the type and location of development created by market forces. As these conditions evolve, market forces can be expected to change with them.

Among the many forces which influence the operation of the private market, three stand out as offering clear and important opportunities for the encouragement of growth in city and town centers.

First, the cost of energy will increasingly favor central locations for jobs and housing. As gasoline grows more scarce and expensive, it will become more desirable to establish homes, jobs, stores and community services in close proximity to one another.

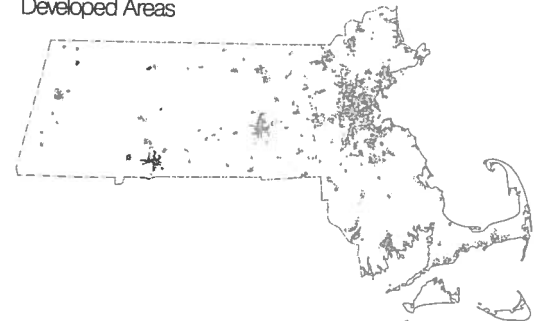
Second, the cost of new housing has grown so high that many families are now considering the rehabilitation of underutilized housing in existing neighborhoods. By the early 1980's, the price of a new single-family home in Massachusetts is expected to soar. At the same time, the number of people who will be looking for family housing will be increasing dramatically. Although it is not yet clear how the market will respond to this challenge, it is apparent that the more efficient use of existing housing will become more advantageous, as will the development of new housing on small lots with direct or easy access to existing public facilities.

Third, the rising cost of public services implied by the random and haphazard development patterns of the past 20 years has made the more efficient use of existing

"One of the suburban towns acting alone cannot by itself bring about the future we advocate. One town, however, can take the lead in urging the state through the Growth Policy process . . . to adopt fair and equitable housing and land use guidelines which will lead to increased opportunities in all suburbs throughout the region."

Needham Growth Policy Statement

Developed Areas



public facilities and services in urban areas and intown centers more desirable. The pattern of Massachusetts' future growth and development can have a major impact on public expenditures. Through the judicious use of existing public facilities, Massachusetts can save literally millions of dollars over the next few years alone.

All of these forces are likely to make future growth in existing population and employment centers increasingly attractive to the private market.

Properly coordinated and sensitively pursued, public policy can help to ensure that these market opportunities are realized. In this way, public policy and market forces can be made to work together towards a common set of growth and development objectives, consistent with the needs of the private market and supportive of a broader public agenda.

Regionalism/Home Rule

The *home rule* concept is a longstanding tradition in Massachusetts, and it has a large and legitimate following. The strength of this sentiment transcends simple parochialism; its foundation lies in a belief that government is best when it is kept close to the people it represents. The weaknesses inherent in our form of local government — loose organization, dispersed power, part-time officials — are also its greatest strengths, for they provide a style of government to which people can easily relate, and a practice of government which is both highly participatory and unusually responsive to local problems.

Nevertheless, local government does sometimes see advantages in regional solutions. Most communities seem to agree that voluntary regional associations are helpful in addressing certain common problems (such as water supply, transportation, vocational education, or health care). But many do not see the extension of these associations into powerful regional institutions as either necessary or desirable.

The functions agreed upon by communities as appropriate for regional bodies are those of providing technical assistance, planning expertise to improve the capability of local government, or special services such as education, water supply, or health care. This limited approach to regionalism is based on the belief that while communities may choose to engage in mutual cooperation to achieve regional benefits, local governments have a legitimate right to protect their individual interests as they see fit.

Unfortunately, the pursuit of local interests sometimes fails to produce a result which is desirable from a regional point of view. Because few communities are inclined to bear the expense of another's benefit, most have been unable to lessen the adverse effects of actions by adjacent communities.

Despite the legitimacy of local interests in the vast majority of situations, there are problems and conflicts of a regional nature which will simply not disappear. The principal issue which confronts both communities and the state is whether these issues of regional importance will continue to be addressed in an unstructured manner, or whether new mechanisms will create an opportunity for more orderly and equitable regional decision-making.

Locally-elected officials, city councils, and town meetings are responsible for making most growth-related decisions. In the past, their ability to resolve growth issues has often been impaired by the loose organization of local government, by its limited jurisdiction, by the growing complexity of growth issues, by "interference" from state and federal agencies, and by the fiscal and tax problems confronting government at all levels.

Although it may be true that the number and complexity of growth decisions is outstripping the ability of local government to address them sufficiently, the impacts of growth, and ultimately of growth decisions, are felt most closely at the local level. Local governments must therefore continue to represent local needs and desires. There is no more effective way to translate broad policies into constructive action than to ensure that these policies are capable of responding to the different needs and conditions of different locations.

"Public facilities (such as water, sewer, and solid waste) will be sufficient for some time to come for projects which are ongoing or completed at this time. Regional planning might be an advantage in some areas such as transportation and air and water quality planning."

Northampton Growth Policy Statement

This points clearly to the need to leave basic land use and growth management responsibility where it currently resides. At the same time, it argues for increasing the ability of local governments to carry out their management responsibilities satisfactorily. This can be done, in part, through improved enabling statutes, through increased financial assistance to communities so that they can obtain professional help, and through improved and expanded technical assistance. But much more needs to be done.

Communities can, in some cases, enhance their abilities to manage growth through regional mechanisms. But if communities are going to be able to take advantage of the opportunities which regional actions present, then the individual cities and towns of each region will have to first commit themselves to such solutions.

No clear consensus on the future of regionalism has emerged from the Growth Policy process. Not surprisingly, local government wants more local control over growth and development. Existing regional institutions seek more regional control. It is clear, however, that regionalism, if it is to realize its full potential, cannot be imposed from above. It must have the support and commitment of its constituent communities. The choice is one which each city and town will have to make.

Revenue Needs/Tax Reform

Perhaps the most substantial area of consensus to emerge from the Growth Policy process is the need to reduce the level of property taxation in Massachusetts. But while virtually all Local Growth Policy Committees rallied to the cause of property tax reform, few chose to address the many critical choices implied by a substantial revision of our system of state and local taxation.

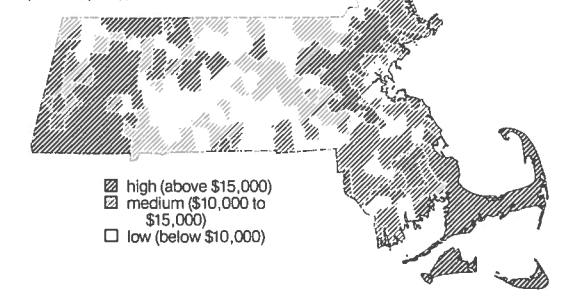
While communities are justifiably alarmed by the heavy reliance on the property tax in the Commonwealth, there is seldom a concomitant recognition that to reduce that reliance to any significant extent might require shifting our revenue needs to other taxes. Increasing other taxes to provide more local aid — either directly or through an assumption of local costs — is one obvious means of substantially reducing our level of property taxation. But there is little political mandate for this path to reform. There is, in fact, the opposite pressure: local communities are concerned about the high level of state taxation and wish to see its level and rate of growth curbed. Even if such a mandate did exist, however, hard choices would have to be made about the type of tax to which our revenue needs should be shifted. The state income tax, although it has many positive features as a property tax substitute, is already among the highest in the nation. The sales tax, while relatively under-used in this state, would be perceived by many as an unacceptably regressive tax.

An alternative view is that rather than increase other taxes, the state should allot more funds to local aid within our existing fiscal framework. This perspective would recommend that funds for other state programs be reduced in favor of more generous funding for local aid. This highlights another major area of choice: the competition between local aid needs and the revenue needs of other state programs. Should local aid programs necessarily receive higher funding priority than other state programs? Should, for example, the state reduce the level of its citizens' medicaid benefits in favor of increased local aid?

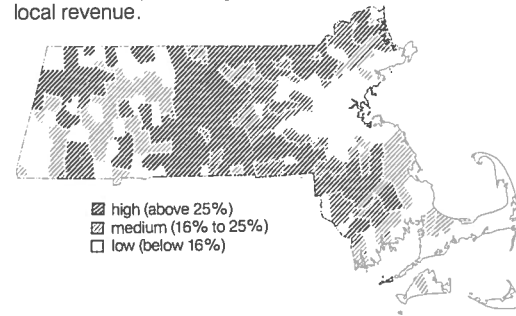
A third approach to reducing the level of property taxation in the Commonwealth would be to use new federal funds for property tax relief. In light of President Carter's welfare reform proposal, this approach may well be a realistic strategy.

In addition to these choices concerning the *level* of local aid, there are additional choices which relate to its *distribution*. While virtually all the Local Growth Policy Statements indicated a concern for a more equitable distribution of local aid, changes in distribution without increasing overall aid levels would inevitably mean that some communities would gain at the expense of others. As a result, a conflict emerges between the general need for more equitable distribution and certain communities' interest in maintaining the *status quo*. One practical response to this problem is to recommend that subsequent to a formula change no community receive less aid than it had in the year preceding the change — that is, communities would be "held

Property Tax Base (Equalized Valuation per Capita), 1976/77



Net state aid (including assessments) for 1977, as a percentage of total local revenue.



harmless." The hold harmless provision, however, is costly. Holding all communities harmless, while at the same time changing distribution formulae to increase local aid for certain communities, necessarily means that the overall level of local aid must increase. Given the built-in limits on the extent to which local aid can increase, the most needy communities may not receive as much as they should. Maintaining the level of local aid for all communities has the potential of compromising efforts at achieving equity.

Our present system of local taxation raises another conflict: unnecessary competition among communities for tax-lucrative development. In many communities, property tax considerations have become *the* deciding factor in growth decisions. The result is so-called fiscal zoning: development which is likely to generate more costs than revenues is prohibited. And development which is seen as tax profitable is sought after. All too often, the local property tax as an issue preempts balanced local decisions regarding a community's growth and development.

A final issue to be considered is the need and desire of communities to control local expenditures, but their lack of authority to do so adequately. A substantial portion of local expenditures can be generated by budget items over which communities exercise less than full control: the school budget, the salaries of public safety employees that result from compulsory and binding arbitration; county and special district assessments; and unfunded, state-mandated programs. If, in fact, it is required that localities control their expenditures as part of an overall tax reform program, the means for them to do so must be made available.

In summary, then, while there is broad agreement on the *need* for tax reform, as well as the need to reduce our overall dependence on the property tax, there are a number of constraints to achieving these objectives. Nevertheless, a reduction in their reliance on the property tax is essential if communities are to deal fairly and reasonably with growth-related issues, and to consider the full range of implications inherent in local land use decisions. It will require hard choices concerning the nature and extent of state-local fiscal relations. But here, as elsewhere, they are choices we cannot refuse to make.

Conclusion

In dealing with the critical issues confronting us, there seems to be much agreement on how to proceed. Taken together, the local, regional, and state perspectives illustrate the need for managing growth in a more balanced manner, so that:

- the overall level of economic growth and investment will be adequate to provide job and housing opportunities for a growing population;
- the continued dispersal of population and jobs will be avoided and our city and town centers will serve as focal points for new development;
- the character and environmental quality of the state will not be compromised;
- the supply of agricultural land will be protected from growth pressures; and
- state and federal programs will become more sensitive to and supportive of differences among communities.

At the same time, there are choices which involve controversy. In examining the different perspectives, there appeared to be conflict between growth and no growth, between public policy and market forces, between home rule and regionalism, and between revenue needs and tax reform. Yet choices here, even though they may be controversial, must be made as well. From the discussion on the preceding pages, several conclusions emerge:

- Continued growth in Massachusetts is both inevitable and necessary but it must be properly managed in its quality, nature and timing.
- Public policy should attempt to encourage growth in desirable locations, and to complement market forces in a positive and deliberate manner.

"The state should primarily be concerned with providing a good economic climate to prevent further deterioration of business and jobs. Growth should be directed at the redevelopment of older urban areas where services and an employment base are available."

Sherborn Growth Policy Statement

- While communities should retain principal responsibility for the exercise of land use controls, their capacity to manage growth should be enhanced, and state and federal governments should be more supportive of local policies. Regional solutions to areawide growth problems can only be meaningful and effective with the active endorsement and participation of communities working together to achieve common goals.
- A reduction in our reliance on the property tax is essential if we are to deal fairly and reasonably with growth-related issues.

By encouraging an increased level of growth and investment in our urban areas, we can help to create jobs and housing where they are most urgently needed. Simultaneously, we can relax the pressures for growth in those areas of the state where growth would undermine those diverse characteristics which serve to distinguish one community from another.





Chapter Five

5

Recommendations

The promise of the Massachusetts Growth Policy Act was that citizens across the state would not be wasting their time in idle policy speculation, but through the work of Local Growth Policy Committees, would affect their communities and the way in which state government served them. This chapter presents specific recommendations to fulfill that promise to the citizens of Massachusetts. These recommendations, if enacted, will be the benchmarks by which anyone can tell whether the promise of participation and "bottom-up" planning has been fulfilled.

This chapter includes both *policy* recommendations and *action* recommendations. The proposed policies are intentionally broad in scope, so that they can be used to guide the entire range of public decisions. The recommended actions identify those next steps necessary to ensure that our objectives are realized. In concert, these recommendations provide not only the general direction but also the specific means to address the needs and priorities identified by citizens and officials throughout the Commonwealth.

Policy Recommendations

The Growth Policy process, from which this document is borne, grew out of the labors of thousands of citizens and officials throughout the Commonwealth. One of the primary objectives of those labors was, and is, to develop statewide *policies* to guide future growth and development in Massachusetts.

It is crucial to understand from the outset that "statewide growth policies" do not mean increased or expanded state control. Statewide policies do mean agreeing on what it is we are attempting to accomplish — to ensure that public actions are in keeping with agreed-upon objectives, shared at the local, regional, and state levels.

Policies are important — they can affect the whole range of public activity. Policies provide clear and explicit statements, to the public and private sectors alike, of the framework within which future public actions will be decided. The process itself of articulating policies promotes public involvement in decisions which will affect the public-at-large.

Most importantly, policies provide the means for orchestrating the vast array of public programs which affect or are affected by growth. In the past, highway building, open space acquisition, sewerage construction, and school facility planning could each be based on *different* assumptions about the kind of future growth we wanted. The result was haphazard investment of public funds, and the ensuing problems, conflicts, and inefficiencies that have been documented by Local Growth Policy Committees.

The following policies are recommended for consideration, review, and adoption:

"Our major goal would be to encourage policies which lead to a revitalization of the older industrial cities, with an orientation toward diversification of the economic base. Federal and state agencies would place special emphasis in those program areas which stress rehabilitation of existing structures as a means to strengthen the core of the city."

Lynn Growth Policy Statement

The Location of Growth

It is the policy of the Commonwealth that growth should be channeled primarily into developed rather than outlying areas, especially into city and town centers, and discouraged in critical environmental areas, consistent with individual communities' willingness and ability to accommodate growth.

The growth of any specific area should be in keeping with its character and with its capacity for growth. The appropriate character for an area (whether developed or undeveloped) should be determined by the respective city or town in which it lies. The capacity of an area for growth should be based on: (a) the availability of public facilities (such as sewer, water, transportation, schools, etc.) either existing or planned; (b) the physical features and carrying capacity of the land and surrounding environs; and (c) the ability of government institutions to efficiently provide needed services.

On a regional level, growth should be favored in employment and population centers, particularly older urban centers, over outlying less-developed areas, as delineated in the accompanying map.

On a local level, growth should be promoted in city, town, and village centers, consistent with the character and the pattern of development of each community.

Growth should be strictly discouraged in *critical environmental areas*, which are those locations which meet all of the following criteria: (a) they contain unique, irreplaceable natural resources; (b) they form an integral part of the natural system which supports human life; and (c) their development would seriously jeopardize the quality of life for future generations. Examples include: coastal and inland wetlands, estuaries, shorelands (riverbanks and lakeshores), and prime agricultural land.

The Quality and Character of Growth

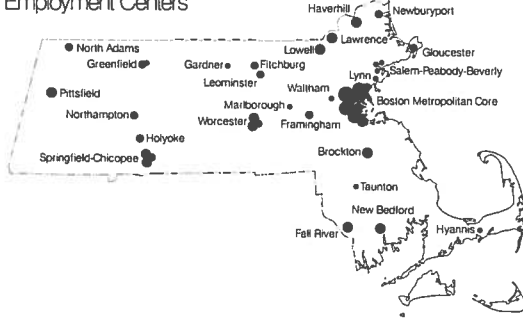
It is the policy of the Commonwealth that future growth and development shall be so designed as to complement both the natural and the man-made environments, and furthermore, that improving and enhancing existing living and working conditions shall be actively promoted.

The *quality* of future growth and development is central to the future of Massachusetts and to the "quality of life" its citizens will enjoy. An over-riding sentiment of those participating in the Growth Policy process is that future growth must be in keeping with the unique character of each community and should contribute to the overall character of each region and of the state as a whole.

Future growth and development should be sensitively designed, taking into consideration:

- the scale of the natural environment (tree height, topography, ridge lines, etc.) as well as the scale of existing development.
- the historical and cultural setting within which it will function.
- opportunities for the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of older structures, as a means of accommodating new growth and investment while maintaining continuity in the character of an area.
- the total physical, social, and economic "environment" of which it will play an integral part.
- the screening of unsightly areas (such as parking lots, open storage, etc.).
- the design and placement of signs, so as to provide maximum information with a minimum intrusion into the visual environment.

Major Population and Employment Centers



The Level of Growth

It is the policy of the Commonwealth to ensure that the overall level of future growth will be sufficient, in quantity, quality, and distribution, to provide job and housing opportunities for all of our citizens.

An adequate level of future growth must be assured, on a regional and statewide basis, commensurate with the needs and aspirations of our population. It is crucial to recognize that desirable growth, will frequently mean *better* as well as *more*. Substantial growth in the short run will be necessary to meet the needs of our existing population; current estimates indicate that more than 250,000 new or rehabilitated homes and 300,000 additional jobs may be needed over the coming decade.

The appropriate levels of growth for individual communities should be determined locally, and may vary substantially from community to community. Such diversity should be supported and encouraged, so long as the *overall* level of growth meets the economic and housing needs of Massachusetts' citizens.

The Timing of Growth

It is the policy of the Commonwealth that growth within each community shall be phased so that it will not unduly strain the community's ability to provide public facilities and services, so that it will not disrupt the social fabric of the community, and so that it will be in keeping with the community's desired rate of growth.

Each community's desire and ability to expand its public facilities (such as schools, streets, sewer and water lines, etc.) should be a major determinant in the community's future rate of growth. The overall pattern of growth should not impose an undue strain on any one city or town, by generating more growth in that community than it can reasonably absorb. To ensure that growth can be reasonably phased, local government's ability to directly manage their rates of growth will have to be significantly strengthened.

Growth Management

It is the policy of the Commonwealth to promote responsible and effective growth management which will ensure: consideration of all relevant impacts, participation by all affected parties, consistency with adopted growth policies, and timely decision-making.

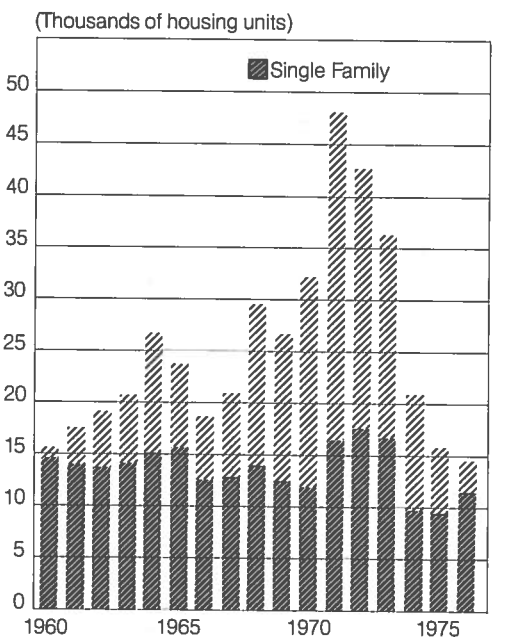
In dealing with the many growth-related issues we face, it is of paramount importance that we manage to confront decisions squarely and deal with them responsibly. To be effective, growth management will see that future growth and development is in keeping with adopted local, regional, and statewide growth policies.

To be responsible, growth management will provide clear, deliberate, and predictable guidance to potential developers, so that they will be assured of adequate fore-warning according to a sound and stable policy framework. This will depend in large part upon improving public decision-making, so that specific proposals are expeditiously and thoroughly reviewed and all necessary decisions made.

Rather than simply thwarting undesirable growth, responsible growth management should stress facilitating desirable growth. Public actions should complement market forces by minimizing risks and maximizing opportunities in desirable locations.



Net change in housing stock, by year, estimated on building permits issued.



The Local Role in Managing Growth

It is the policy of the Commonwealth that land use and growth decisions shall remain principally a local prerogative, and furthermore, that local decision-making shall be supported by, and not preempted by, higher levels of government.

Each city and town should be responsible for determining the appropriate location, quality, level, and timing of growth within its borders. In addition, each city and town should be responsible for considering the impacts of growth and development beyond its borders, and for working cooperatively with other communities to minimize adverse impacts.

The Regional Role in Managing Growth

It is the policy of the Commonwealth that the viewpoints of each region be given increased significance in decisions which affect the growth and development in those regions.

Regional planning agencies should be responsible for coordinating local growth decisions (in an advisory manner), for developing regional plans to assist communities in making those decisions, and for advocating the particular concerns of their region with state and federal governments. This role can be strengthened through the support of state and federal agencies; in particular, state and federal programs affecting growth should be sensitive to the differences among the various regions of the state.

Regional agencies should have a more active role in managing growth, but *only if* their member communities supported such a role. Local governments should be empowered to delegate some of their authority in growth-related matters to regional agencies, when they see regional action as more effective in promoting their best interests, and when it would improve their individual capacity to deal with growth issues.

The State Role in Managing Growth

It is the policy of the Commonwealth that state government shall ensure that all of its actions support the desires of its citizenry for the future growth and development of Massachusetts.

State government is currently involved, on a day-to-day basis, in a wide range of actions which can affect the future growth of the Commonwealth. All investment, regulatory, and fiscal decisions of state government should support and actively promote the adopted growth policies of the state, of the regions, and of each city and town.

The process of considering and adopting policies, based on thorough participation throughout the Commonwealth, should be continued on an ongoing basis. This will require the active support of all levels of government, but state government must take the lead role in assuring that statewide policy deliberations continue.

State government should be sensitive to the differences among communities throughout the various regions of the state. In some cases, this will require revisions to existing statutes or to administrative practices. It is most important to recognize that any one policy or program cannot work the same in all communities.



Action Recommendations

The intent of the Growth Policy Development process has been to establish a coherent set of policies to guide decision-makers in separate agencies and at different levels of government toward generally agreed upon ends. The preceding policy recommendations have, in large part, accomplished this objective.

But will this set of policies alone make a difference? This depends entirely upon whether the thousands of local officials and community residents who participated in this process actually use them in the day-to-day decisions that shape the character of their communities.

Policies are as good as what we make of them. In Massachusetts, we have hundreds of laws and many institutions that bear directly upon the character and vitality of our communities. We have a wetlands protection act and an environmental assessment program as well as development financing mechanisms and tax incentives. How these are used every day will determine over time whether we succeed at realizing the objectives of our growth policies, such as the revitalization of city and town centers and the preservation of community character.

Thus, the single most important recommendation that this report can make is to have the preceding growth policies serve as uniform guidelines to all public officials and private citizens involved in the development process in Massachusetts.

But frequently, a statement of policy, regardless of how clear and coherent, is not sufficient to trigger a significant change in the way things are done. More is needed. Policy tells us *what* we ought to be heading toward, but not always *how* to get there. Specific preliminary steps might be necessary, existing programs altered, or laws amended if we are to achieve our policy objectives. Consequently, a series of recommendations requiring specific *action* are set forth below to ensure the commitment to and momentum behind the implementation of the state's growth policies.

These recommendations are organized around ten basic themes:

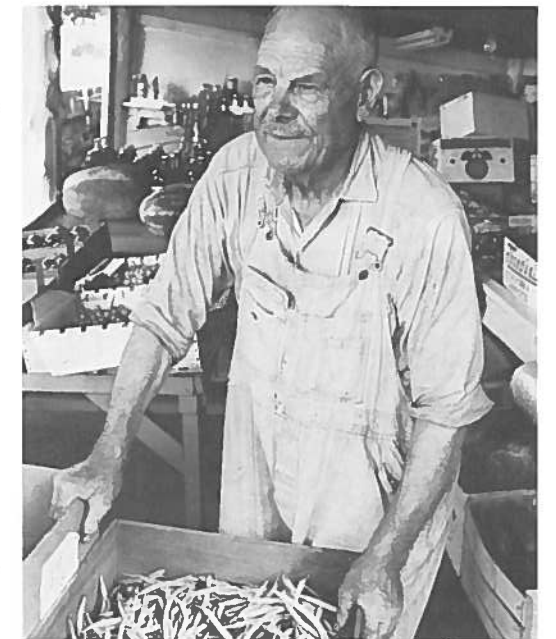
- Centers
- Neighborhoods
- Buildings
- Jobs
- Farms
- Wetlands/Scenic Rivers/The Coastline
- Water
- Growth Management
- Regions
- The Property Tax

In the most basic way, these ten themes represent areas of opportunity which we must address if we are to implement the state's growth policies. Taken together, they form a strategy for achieving the balance necessary to meet diverse goals — promoting that growth which is seen as desirable, preserving our critical environmental resources, and improving the procedures of public decision making.

Centers

Massachusetts communities want to preserve their special character and, overall, the character of the state. Villages don't want to be suburbs, suburbs don't want to be cities, and cities don't want to be wastelands. In each community, there is a growing recognition that its identity is tied inextricably to its center. As the center loses its vitality and its place in the life of the community, the community loses its special character and becomes part of an endless stretch of shopping centers, car dealerships, and fast food chains. What makes Haverhill and Hanover different from anywhere else is not shopping malls or subdivisions, but the unique combination of diverse activities, distinctive buildings, natural features, monuments, and landmarks found in their centers. We get a sense of a place — we sum it up — not from a community's outlying neighborhoods, but from its center.

That is why the stabilization and revitalization of community and regional



"Growth in Somerville has to be identified with rejuvenation . . . Growth must be concentrated on arresting decay and stabilizing neighborhoods, on modernization, on maximizing the use of open space and injecting new life to an old city."

Somerville Growth Policy Statement

centers is so important to the preservation of the unique character of our communities and of the Commonwealth as a whole. This is especially the case in our older urban centers — areas that have been beset by the ravages of economic decline, urban renewal, and misguided public investments that have fed suburban sprawl.

The following recommendations are made:

1

Ensure that state and federal public investment and construction grant programs give maximum priority to the revitalization of community centers, especially the centers of urban areas.

All state and federal grant programs — for roads, rapid transit, sewers, parks, schools, and housing — should give maximum priority to projects in community centers. State and federal grants have always set the stage for new economic development. Without the state and federally funded roads and sewers of the 1950's and 1960's, the wave of construction in sparsely developed areas during those two decades could not have taken place. State and federal construction grants should now set the stage for a new wave of development in the downtowns of Massachusetts' communities.

Since the publication of *Towards a Growth Policy* in 1975, state government has realigned many of its own public investment programs — programs that too often were insensitive to local desires and community character and that fostered sprawl development patterns to the detriment of city and town centers. State public investment programs have been overhauled, as described in Chapter 3, in order to do better service to our need to attract private investment and development back to our city and town centers.

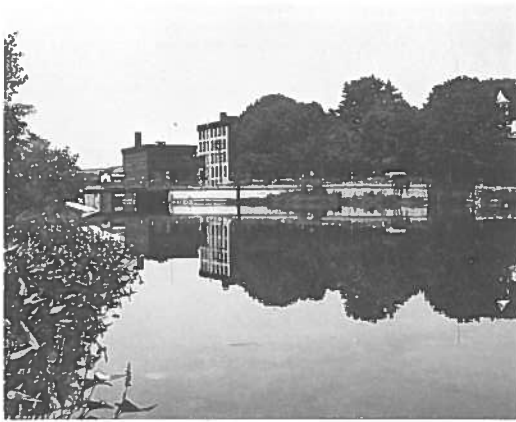
- Elderly housing is being located in downtown areas with preference for the adaptive reuse of existing buildings.
- Park funds are being spent in urban communities as part of neighborhood improvement programs and downtown projects.
- State buildings and offices are being located in downtown areas, and, where possible, in rehabilitated buildings.
- Schools in central locations and in rehabilitated buildings are now encouraged.
- State highway improvements in town and city centers are now given top priority.

Instead of perpetuating separate and distinct programs in response to narrowly defined needs, state government is attempting to make all public investment funds part of a center revitalization program. This program is based upon the recognition that we can no longer afford, as state and local taxpayers, to extend such public facilities as roads, sewers, schools and water lines across an ever-sprawling area of the Commonwealth, while allowing previous public investments in existing centers to go underutilized or to fall into disrepair. This program is also based upon the conviction that we can no longer tolerate the excessive and unnecessary consumption of our limited land resources, the economic and social dislocations caused by urban decline, and continuous threats to the character of the Commonwealth.

This reorientation and coordination of state and federal construction grants must proceed with the greatest possible speed.

But this program will be less than fully successful unless two further steps are taken:

First, local officials must take advantage of this new opportunity to adapt and combine state public investment programs into a local center revitalization program. The state's commitment to build a partnership with community leaders to spur development in existing centers requires a corresponding commitment at the local level. Only local officials can plan a development program that is appropriate and



acceptable for their communities. Only local officials can build consensus for an imaginative combination of traffic improvements, pedestrian amenities, historic buildings, park improvements, and housing in recycled buildings. State government in Massachusetts has eliminated rigidity in state construction programs so that they can be used in new ways for the revitalization of centers. But local officials must take responsibility for harnessing these resources and making them fit the specific conditions of each community.

Second, federal officials must cooperate with state government to guarantee that federal construction grants are used flexibly to spur the revitalization of community centers. Progress has been made, such as the creative use of highway improvement funds to up-grade the pedestrian environment in such places as downtown Haverhill and Boston's Fanueil Hall area. But much more needs to be done. Several federal construction grant programs are so narrowly conceived or have such rigid regulations and priorities that they either cannot be molded into a downtown revitalization program or indirectly undermine such efforts. These federal construction programs must be revised and redirected if a national urban policy is to have any meaning.

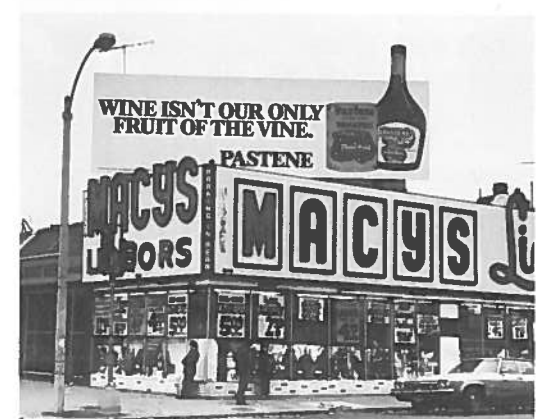
2

Encourage cities and towns to initiate center revitalization programs.

Communities must take a number of steps to help themselves renew their downtowns. Although state and federal construction projects can be a major factor in center revitalization, the success of a downtown revitalization effort is finally in the hands of cities and towns. The details of center revitalization — sign control, targeted clusters of buildings for rehabilitation, adequate mix of commercial and residential activities, improved lighting and street furniture — make the difference between success and failure. A community center revitalization program should:

- focus revitalization efforts on existing downtown resources, such as rivers, canals, waterfronts, older reusable buildings, commons, and greens.
- develop a unifying theme or concept for both the downtown and key neighborhoods. For example, Lowell's revitalization effort centers around its importance as the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution and the city's intricate canal system. Boston and New Bedford have emphasized their historic waterfront areas.
- form local development corporations to attract private investment to neighborhoods and to serve as local vehicles for Small Business Administration and Community Development Finance Corporation loans to local business people.
- establish an Historic District Commission to provide design review services and encourage private investment through the provisions of the 1976 Tax Reform Act.
- enact a sign ordinance to promote uniform, attractive, and informative commercial displays.
- create vest-pocket parks with trees, fountains and street furniture in heavily travelled areas.
- provide streetscape design services to merchants, homeowners, and industry.
- promote the downtown by locating public buildings, such as schools, elderly housing, and government offices there and by holding cultural events such as concerts, plays, and art shows in downtown parks and common spaces.
- eliminate strip commercial zoning on major arteries leading downtown and provide zoning ordinances which foster mixed downtown uses.

Pursued in concert, these and similar steps comprise by themselves a substantial downtown revitalization program. When combined with state and federal construction projects, the result can be an outstanding center renewal effort.



3

Establish a Massachusetts Heritage Trust Advisory Commission to foster the identification, preservation, and development of the unique and unusual resources in centers, both natural and man-made.

"Much of Boston's character comes from its well-designed and expertly crafted older buildings, its winding narrow streets, its beautiful open spaces and parks, and the inter-relationships of these in our downtown and neighborhoods. These are our irreplaceable heritage which we are determined to protect and enhance."

Boston Growth Policy Statement

In order to preserve the distinctive character of Massachusetts communities and to assist in the identification of a unifying theme for the revitalization of downtown areas, the Governor should appoint a Massachusetts Heritage Trust Advisory Commission to advise the Development Cabinet and the Office of State Planning in the use of state and federal programs for the preservation of local character. Members of the Advisory Commission would be prominent designers, historians, businessmen, a representative from the Massachusetts League of Cities and Towns, and key state officials. The Advisory Commission would invite communities to identify fully the key physical and cultural features which best embody their community character and the way in which those features might be displayed and made available for public enjoyment. Through the Commission communities would be invited to submit proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the unique character of community centers. The Advisory Commission would suggest to the Development Cabinet and various state agencies ways in which funds and programs could be combined to support the most meritorious proposals. Resources to be used would include:

- federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation grants allocated to the state for distribution by the Secretary of Environmental Affairs;
- the state's Self-Help fund for the acquisition and preservation of unique natural resources, administered by the Secretary of Environmental Affairs;
- state capital budget outlays to the Department of Environmental Management for the construction of state park facilities, such as the Lowell Heritage State Park and the Boston Harbor Islands State Park;
- the historic preservation grants channeled through the Massachusetts Historical Commission; and
- funds administered by the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities.

The coordination, combination, and expansion of these grant programs would serve to lend focus and direction to many community revitalization efforts now lacking a coherent purpose and theme.

Neighborhoods

Communities are made up of neighborhoods. Neighborhoods are hard to define because no two are alike. To many people, a neighborhood is the pattern of houses, shops, playgrounds, and personal relationships extending beyond their own homes with which they are most familiar and comfortable. As such, neighborhoods are the building blocks of any community. No community can survive if its neighborhoods are not vital and strong. So, too, neighborhoods will fail to attract permanent residents and instill long-term confidence if the community's center is blighted and deteriorated. But neighborhoods are always changing. Families come and go; friends grow up and go off to work or college. And, of course, there are physical changes — construction of new apartments or a new baseball field on the playground.

So the goal of neighborhood stabilization cannot possibly be to avoid all change. Rather, it must be to ensure that the character and pace of change is without negative consequences and sufficiently gradual to allow the neighborhood to adapt. It must be to guarantee that the underpinnings of a sound neighborhood are not shaken or destroyed by red-lining, block busting, unscrupulous absentee owners, poor maintenance, deficient public services, delinquent taxes, abandonment, and arson. And, it must be to ensure that, when an older area of distinctive dwellings is "discovered" by higher-income households, existing residents are not displaced wholesale.



Local governments frequently try three methods of maintaining the stability of neighborhoods in transition. First, the level and quality of public services — trash collection, park maintenance, etc. — are improved. Second, housing subsidies for the rehabilitation of existing housing and the construction of new housing are channeled into an area. And, third, and least effectively, the legal system is used to combat the unscrupulous minority of absentee landlords who are able to exploit the existing array of tax, real estate and insurance laws for substantial profits. All three of these methods must be employed at once if a neighborhood is to have a chance. All three methods, however, are in need of improvement.

The following recommendations are made:

4

Modify state housing programs to encourage neighborhood preservation by stimulating private investment through state-assisted programs of housing rehabilitation, rental assistance, mortgage and interest subsidies, and insurance.

Legislation should be enacted to broaden the governing board of the Massachusetts Home Mortgage Finance Agency (MHMFA), to establish its independence from the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) and increase the flexibility of its programs. The Department of Community Affairs proposes to channel some of its "705" funds to MHMFA's mortgage subsidy and insurance fund.

Legislation should be enacted to enable the Department of Community Affairs to initiate a program of grants to cities and towns for the purpose of creating revolving loan funds for housing rehabilitation. Loans under the program would be made through chief elected local officials for the rehabilitation of owner occupied structures of no more than six units owned or rented by low or moderate income households. Further flexibility might be added to this proposal by permitting contracts with non-profit housing or community development corporations to administer these revolving loan funds.

Legislation should be supported authorizing a \$50 million bond issue for the construction of elderly housing in central locations, and where possible, in rehabilitated structures.

5

Provide overall programs for neighborhood maintenance, improvement, and protection.

Neighborhood preservation is more than programs to promote home-ownership and structural rehabilitation. A neighborhood preservation program must include the total array of services and support programs which make a neighborhood a pleasant place to live. Federal funds and state enforcement powers should be used in a coordinated manner to achieve this goal. Two examples are as follows:

- In order to supplement local efforts to upgrade city services and amenities in neighborhoods, Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) funds should be used to provide on-the-job training in housing rehabilitation and maintenance and to establish permanent maintenance corps in designated neighborhoods. These funds could also be used to provide training for supplementary code inspection officers who would concentrate on providing technical assistance to owners in bringing property up to code standards.
- Chapter 59, section 59 should be amended to require that no tax abatement be given to any non-owner occupied property for any year in which major code violations remain uncorrected after repeated citations.





6

Prohibit geographic discrimination in lending decisions.

Legislation should be enacted which prohibits mortgage lending practices that discriminate against urban neighborhoods. The legislation would also enable the establishment of mortgage review boards in any city in the Commonwealth and provide a right of appeal by any aggrieved person to those boards. The boards would have the option, if they determined that discrimination had occurred, to return the disapproved mortgage application to the bank from which it originated for reconsideration, require punitive damages from the discriminating bank of up to \$1,000, or to refer the case to superior court for appropriate remedial action.

Appraisal and underwriting standards used by lending institutions in granting or denying home mortgages should be a matter of public information. Such disclosure has already been made voluntarily in several cities, including Philadelphia and Seattle, and is the best means of subjecting these standards to the scrutiny of those most affected by them.

The Commissioner of Banks should evaluate the appraisal and underwriting standards currently used by lending institutions on the basis of analyses of the risk actually experienced in mortgage lending.

The State Treasurer should exclude from eligibility for state deposits those banks determined to be engaged in geographically discriminatory lending practices.

7

Modify administrative procedures and file legislation to reduce arson.

Legislation should be enacted which would require that funds from the insurance industry be provided specifically to train, equip, and support additional skilled state enforcement personnel for increased arson investigation and prosecution.

Insurance is assured in high risk neighborhoods under the Fair Plan. The Commissioner of Insurance, with the cooperation of the Fair Plan, should adopt administrative procedures to help assure that Fair Plan properties are not over-insured (and thus subject to arson abuse). These would include the establishment of "fair market value" standards for maximum payment of all Fair Plan claims. The Commissioner should also establish specific underwriting criteria for the issuance and renewal of Fair Plan policies with the objective of screening out the most likely candidates for owner-induced arson. In addition, the Commissioner should require the Fair Plan to perform regular inspections of all Fair Plan properties to detect fire hazards and to assure that properties are not left vacant beyond the legal limit. If this program proves successful, the Commissioner should then file legislation necessary to extend such standards to all properties in the Commonwealth insured in the normal insurance markets.

Chapter 175, section 99 should be amended to provide the Commissioner of Insurance with greater flexibility to actually prescribe the forms for standard fire insurance policies, applications, and proof of loss statements. Use of detailed application forms to determine the value of property could help to reduce purposeful over-insurance. In addition, an extensive information requirement would give more teeth to the defense of material and intentional misrepresentation. All such forms should be clearly marked as completed under penalties of perjury. Such legislation could also include a provision which would reduce the permissible time period that property can remain vacant and insured.

Further, in order to reduce the incentive for arson of tax-delinquent or deteriorated buildings, legislation should be considered which would amend Chapter 175, section 99 to require:

- that insurers shall pay delinquent taxes on burned properties prior to other payment of insurance proceeds to mortgagees or owners;
- that insurers shall pay insurance proceeds to any receiver of property



in disrepair appointed pursuant to Chapter 111, Section 127H, and that the receivers shall have the option to use the proceeds to repair code violations and rehabilitate the building prior to any disbursement to the mortgagee and owner; and

- that insurance proceeds from a fire occurring after a tax taking shall be paid to the municipality, and that Chapter 60, section 53 be amended to provide that such insurance proceeds may be used for the repair or rehabilitation of the property prior to payment of the balance of the proceeds to the mortgagee or owner.

8

Expedite the transfer of tax-delinquent property to new productive use.

Under current law, property taken by a municipality for non-payment of taxes can be redeemed by the owner at any time until the property is formally foreclosed. Before foreclosure, the property is held in limbo with no incentive for anyone to repair or invest in the property until the foreclosure has been completed. In order to ensure that property that has been taken by a municipality is transferred to responsible ownership as quickly as possible, the following changes should be made in Chapter 60:

- The six-month waiting period prior to which anyone can institute foreclosure proceedings, should be changed to 30 days for all non-owner occupied property.
- Any title examination done by the Courts should be completed within 30 days after the date a petition for foreclosure is filed, with sanctions provided for missing that deadline.
- Chapter 60, section 62 should be amended to require that the opportunity given to a tax-delinquent owner to pay the taxes in installments be coupled with a scheduling of the repairs, if any, which are required to bring non-owner-occupied property up to code.
- Chapter 59, section 57 and Chapter 60, section 62 should be amended to change the current interest penalty on tax-delinquent property from 10 percent to 15 percent for non-owner-occupied property.

Buildings

Centers and neighborhoods are composed, in part, of buildings — the old, familiar buildings as well as the not so old. A critical period in the life of any center or neighborhood occurs when the original uses and users of its buildings have moved on. The character and vitality of developed areas can survive only if these buildings can be adapted for new uses and users.

A community can preserve its character and perpetuate visible ties to its past only if it develops a strong commitment to maintaining, rehabilitating and re-using its existing buildings, as well as its bona fide historic landmarks.

Opportunities for giving new life to old buildings have never been greater, as the costs of rehabilitation are frequently lower than new construction and as more and more public officials and private developers realize that investment opportunities exist in enhancing the distinctive characteristics of existing buildings. Our buildings are no longer a liability but a community asset — an asset which can be used to differentiate a community center or neighborhood from any of the thousands of shopping centers and subdivisions constructed in cookie-cutter fashion in recent years.

The following recommendations are made:

"We believe that preventing deterioration of the existing housing stock is vital to maintaining a stable community. Rehabilitation of housing will be a continuing process."

Weymouth Growth Policy Statement



9

Establish local building recycling programs.

Cities and towns should establish building rehabilitation and recycling programs for clusters of structures and individual buildings with architectural and historic interest. These programs should:

- Identify building clusters and individual structures which need moderate or substantial rehabilitation.
- Establish Historic Districts to preserve the exterior character of key older buildings and take advantage of recent changes in the U.S. Internal Revenue Code which encourage rehabilitation and penalize destruction of buildings in historic districts. Historic districts offer the possibility of placing all the significant buildings in a neighborhood or downtown on the National Register at a single time instead of through individual applications for each building.
- Provide design and technical services through community planning and development offices to individuals of modest means who are interested in rehabilitating single and multi-family homes or small commercial structures. The idea behind such municipal services is to enable people with modest amounts of capital to rehabilitate structures at minimum cost. Communities offering such counseling services should also provide cooperation from the municipal building department in the rehabilitation effort.

10

Revise the State Building Code to encourage the rehabilitation of existing buildings.

The State Building Code presently requires that when any building improvement costing over 25 percent of the building's assessed valuation is made, the entire building must be brought up to code standards for new construction. This requirement discourages owners of older buildings from making basic improvements to keep buildings structurally sound and reasonably modern. In addition, the present code requires that any building whose occupancy status or legal usage is changed must be made to comply with every standard for new construction. An amendment now pending before the State Building Code Commission would:

- create within the State Building Code an omnibus section establishing standards for existing and/or historic buildings;
- allow historic or totally preserved buildings to be restored, repaired or maintained without increased conformity with the basic building code so long as the building is consistent with certain life safety requirements; and
- permit a partially preserved historic building to change its legal usage without increased code compliance, except in those cases in which the new use would constitute a greater life-safety hazard (e.g., conversion of a residence to a restaurant).

This amendment should be approved as quickly as possible.

11

Amend Chapter 121A to provide greater flexibility and to encourage its use for building rehabilitation.

Two amendments should be made to Chapter 121A to allow for greater flexibility in the use of its provisions for building rehabilitation:

- Chapter 121A should be amended to encourage local governments



to provide a special incentive for rehabilitation of certain existing buildings — for example, mill buildings. For specific buildings *designated by local government* as structures with a high priority for rehabilitation, Chapter 121A should provide a specified level of taxation, which a developer can know *prior* to investing time and money in preparing a development proposal for those buildings.

- Chapter 121A should be amended to permit local government to agree to whatever level of taxation it chooses. The Department of Community Affairs' review of the final taxation provisions would, of course, continue. The existing statute does not allow payments in any one year to be less than the tax rate for that year times the assessed valuation of the property for the three years prior to designation as a 121A property. The present inflexible minimum precludes local governments from recognizing that conversion of a property from commercial to residential use, for example, often must yield lower property taxes if the conversion is to be economically feasible. Also, many properties driven to disrepair or abandonment by assessments in excess of their economic value can only be rehabilitated for productive use by a reduction of their tax burden.

Jobs

A strong industrial base with a multitude of employment opportunities for all who need and want work is part of our state's heritage — not always as an accomplished fact, but as a worthwhile aspiration. Massachusetts can not assume a neutral or negative posture toward jobs. The character of Massachusetts is not conveyed exclusively by its farms and villages, but just as importantly by its cities and its industries. The industrial revolution in America started here and it continues here, with the development of the high technology firms of the 50's and 60's. So the growth of our state's economy must be the highest item on the state's agenda — a point recognized and endorsed by all participants in the Growth Policy process.

A strong link exists between development of new jobs and the revitalization of existing centers. Beyond the obvious objective of creating as many jobs as possible within these centers, it is becoming clear that a community will fail to attract development even to its peripheral industrial parks if its center is blighted and lifeless. Industrial investors are sensitive to the image and identity of the communities in which they invest. And since the image of a community is derived from its center, communities with dying downtowns do not offer a good address for business, or an attractive identity to be associated with. Examples of the strength of this link are Newburyport and Lowell, where imaginative downtown revitalization programs have transformed previous negative images into positive attributes for attracting industry. Both Newburyport and Lowell are experiencing many industrial expansions and dramatically increased interest in their industrial parks. And these communities bear the full brunt of close competition from New Hampshire. Thus, a local downtown revitalization effort can serve as a key component to a local economic development effort.

The growth policy process revealed that local government looked to state government for leadership in turning the Massachusetts economy around. As described in Chapter 3, Massachusetts has made a start towards overcoming some of the impediments to economic expansion.

But more needs to be done to maximize the state's opportunities for more jobs.

The following recommendations are made:

12

Include expansions under the Urban Job Incentive program.

The state's Urban Job Incentive program reduces the disincentive for a company to locate its business facilities in areas with high property taxes by providing the





company with a credit against its state taxes equal to the difference between its property taxes in the high-tax area and what those taxes would be at the state-wide average. As currently in effect, the credit is only available for new facilities. The Urban Job Incentive should also be available for the expansions of business facilities already located in high-tax areas. By far the greatest number of new jobs in Massachusetts comes from the expansion of businesses already located in the state, and once a business has reached the threshold decision to abandon its existing plant and build a new facility, it is extremely difficult to entice it to stay in an urban, high-tax area. In addition, the Urban Job Incentive could become a more rational and effective program by substituting "equalized value" for "assessed value" to correct a technical error in the existing statute.

13

Coordinate the Urban Job Incentive and Chapter 121A programs.

Chapter 121A permits local government to set by contract before a development is undertaken the amount of property taxes to be paid by that development. This tool permits high-tax urban areas to attract industry by agreeing to forego property tax revenue in order to be competitive with lower tax locations. The Urban Job Incentive credit also attempts to equalize competition between local governments by reducing the effective property tax to the state-wide average. Chapter 121A operates at the expense of *local* government; the Urban Job Incentive operates at the expense of *state* government; and at present the two programs cannot be used together. Both programs should be amended to provide that *business facilities* that have qualified for the Urban Job Incentive should retain that credit down to the state-wide average rate at state expense, and that further tax reduction below that average rate pursuant to Chapter 121A should be at local expense. This would allow a community to compete for business development by offering an effective tax deal below the statewide average, while sharing a substantial portion of the costs of such a tax arrangement with state government.

14

Expand mortgage financing for urban revitalization projects.

The Massachusetts Industrial Mortgage Insurance Agency was established in 1976 in order to insure a portion of loans for *industrial* expansions. This agency is now being put into operation.

Due to the strong ties between the objectives of economic development and center revitalization and the rapid growth of non-manufacturing industries in the state, MIMIA should have its powers expanded to allow it to insure a portion of the loans for the rehabilitation of buildings deemed critical to the success of downtown revitalization projects. The purpose of this recommendation is to enhance investor confidence at the early stages of a community revitalization program. Wherever possible, the assistance of the Small Business Administration should be used for 90% insurance of the construction loans for the same revitalization projects.

15

Establish Comprehensive Review Councils to consolidate the local development permit process.

Too frequently sound and sensible development proposals become mired in a maze of red-tape and permit requirements. State government has streamlined its own system of environmental permits. In order to allow local government to streamline its permit



system and to consider development proposals in a comprehensive context, enabling legislation should be passed to allow communities in need of major job development throughout the Commonwealth to create Comprehensive Review Councils. These Councils would be created by vote of the city council or town meeting and would consist of representatives of all local development permit boards as well as members of the general public. The Council would be chaired by the local chief executive.

Any person proposing a *commercial* or *industrial* project which would employ at least 20 people would have the option of applying to the Council for all necessary local permits. The Council would be able to issue a composite development permit which would encompass all local permits and actions — zoning variances and special permits, conservation commission orders of conditions, board of health permits, local sewer tie-in permits, etc.

By eliminating overlapping, duplicative, and conflicting procedures and requirements, the Council would be able to streamline the local permitting process and expedite desired local projects. In addition, the quality of project review would be improved, because a project would be reviewed in its entirety, instead of as a series of independent, unconnected steps.

16

Enact measures to facilitate financing for new jobs.

Although in general Massachusetts has an ample supply of capital for its businesses, the supply to small and urban companies needs to be increased considerably. Several new development finance entities must be created in order to provide the capital to these companies for both start-up and expansion. The creation of development entities would include:

- The formation of a Massachusetts Technology Development Corporation to provide a \$10,000,000 fund for investment with private investors in start-ups of new businesses which can prosper from the Commonwealth's special advantage as a center of skilled labor and technological resources;
- The expansion of the Massachusetts Industrial Mortgage Insurance Agency into the Massachusetts Industrial Finance Agency with the power to issue industrial development revenue bonds at lower, federally subsidized interest rates to finance expansions of smaller industrial projects and pollution control equipment at no risk or expense to the state;
- The formation of a Massachusetts Lending Corporation to enable the Massachusetts thrift industry to participate at its own expense in a program to use its surplus funds (currently being lent out of the state) to expand its long term plant and equipment lending to commercial and industrial borrowers within Massachusetts;
- The formation of a technical assistance corporation to assist local community development corporations to produce better business proposals for consideration by the Massachusetts Community Development Finance Corporation and other financing sources;
- The formation of the Massachusetts Capital Resource Company and its funding by the life insurance companies chartered in the state with \$100,000,000 for unsecured loans to Massachusetts businesses, pursuant to pending legislation which will also replace the gross investment income tax on domestic life insurance companies with a lower tax on net earnings; and
- The establishment of a Massachusetts Communities and Industrial Development Agency to coordinate the activities of these and existing public and private financing entities and to focus their joint resources on projects in urban or distressed areas.





Farms

Farming constitutes an ever diminishing share of the state's economic activity. And farmland is rapidly disappearing from rural as well as suburban communities as developers put a premium on this cleared dry land for their subdivisions and shopping centers.

Without exception, Local Growth Policy Statements expressed alarm at these events. This alarm is based not on the belief that Massachusetts could be or should be a major food producing state or largely self-sufficient for its food supply. Rather, it is based on the view that limited resources such as prime farmland ought to be cultivated or preserved for a time when they may be needed. Increasing farming would help the Massachusetts economy. Every job saved or created now constitutes economic progress. And finally, Local Growth Policy Statements tied the protection and cultivation of farmland to the preservation of the rural character of the state and emphasized the importance of this as a complement and contrast to the urban character of its cities and suburbs.

The following recommendations are made:

17
 Establish an acquisition of development rights program.

Senate Bill 888, endorsed by the Wetmore-McKinnon Commission, is designed to protect and encourage Massachusetts agriculture by means of public acquisition of the development rights of farmland. The need for this bill is demonstrated by the continuing loss of agricultural land, estimated to exceed 12,000 acres or 100 farms per year. Past losses have been so severe that the farming industry is near a point beyond which further loss of farm businesses and support services could spell disaster for the whole industry.

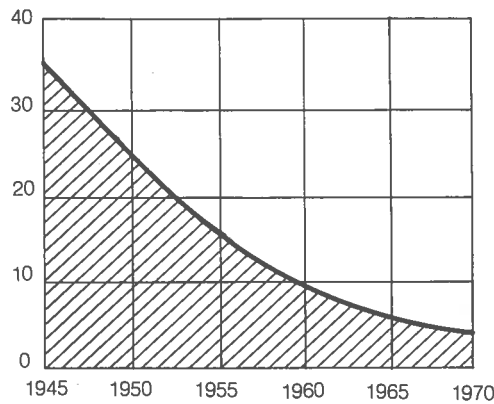
The method to save agricultural land proposed in S-888 is commonly referred to as the public purchase of development rights and is recommended to be funded at an initial level of \$5 million for the first year's pilot program. In return for the appraised development rights price, the farm property would not be developed in such a way as to preclude its continued suitability for farming.

18
 Authorize a transfer of development rights program.

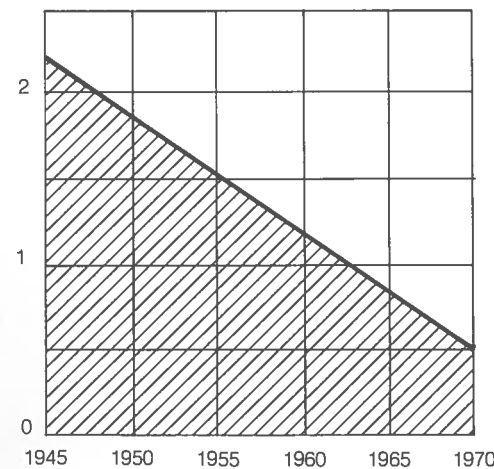
The state should support enabling legislation for the transfer of development rights from agricultural land to sections of the community where development already exists and where more intensive development could be permitted. Under this proposal, the community's zoning by-law could be amended to allow more intensive development in certain sections than is normally permitted, provided that development rights to agricultural land were applied to the proposed site. Thus farmers could sell their development rights to developers who would apply them to sites pre-designated by the community. Deed restrictions precluding future development would then be attached to the agricultural property.

Recent studies have indicated that public acquisition of development rights for agricultural land is better suited for rural communities and that *transfer* is more useful in suburban and urban settings where growth pressures are more intense and where the transfer of development to areas able to accommodate growth at higher densities is more appropriate. Consequently, both programs will be necessary to respond to differing needs throughout the Commonwealth.

Number of Farms (in thousands)



Farm Acreage (in millions)



Wetlands/Scenic Rivers/The Coastline

Virtually every suburban and rural community stressed the need to maintain the quality of their environment by preserving and protecting certain unique, fragile, or otherwise valuable natural features and resources. Most often, wetlands and lands related to water-based recreation were mentioned as the primary concerns. There is existing, but inadequately funded legislation to protect wetlands and the banks of certain rivers and streams. Additionally, coastal communities stressed the importance of protecting the beauty and public access to the coastline. Desirable uses of the coastline are being identified by the Coastal Zone Management program within the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, using a broad based citizen participation effort. Implementation of this program, anticipated in 1978, will be accomplished through the more effective coordination and utilization of existing legislation and permit granting powers at the state and local level.

Improving the effectiveness of these programs will: (1) aid the preservation of some of the Commonwealth's most critical and scenic environmental areas; (2) clarify for development interests those specific locations in which development is neither wanted nor permitted; and (3) increase recreational opportunities, an important factor in increasing the state's attractiveness for growth.

The following recommendations are made:

19
 Provide adequate funding to prepare a uniform mapping system for wetlands protection.

Funding should be provided to continue and expedite the implementation of the state's wetlands protection acts. In order for the state to produce a standard set of definitive wetlands maps, funding should be sufficient to provide adequate citizen participation, to detail locational and descriptive criteria, and to enable effective administration by local and district conservation commissions. To prepare comprehensive and uniform maps to serve as the foundation for all wetlands decisions at the local and state level may cost as much as \$2 to \$3 million. This cost can be justified, however, by the reduction in confusion and conflict, as well as in the delays and administrative costs caused by appeals of local decisions to state government.

20
 Implement the Scenic Rivers Act.

The Massachusetts Scenic Rivers Act, Chapter 21, Section 17B, empowers the Commissioner of Environmental Management, with the approval of the Natural Resources Board, to prohibit dredging, filling, altering and polluting of scenic and recreational rivers and streams and contiguous land up to 100 yards on either side of the natural bank of such rivers. This act should be fully implemented by the Commissioner and sufficient staff resources provided to accomplish designation of the many river sections in Massachusetts which qualify.

21
 Encourage coastal communities to revise local policies, zoning by-laws, subdivision controls, etc., to conform to the Coastal Zone Management program.

Since the Coastal Zone Management program is designed to rely exclusively on existing laws and on administrative arrangements to coordinate state level reviews and permits, it is vital to the success of the program that coastal communities revise local priorities, zoning by-laws, subdivision regulations, design controls, economic development efforts, ect., to conform to this re-combined process of the Coastal Zone Management Plan. The active leadership of local officials will determine the ultimate fate of the plan.



Water

After two years of public participation and intensive study, the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs has produced a report entitled the Massachusetts Water Supply Study which recommends strategies to preserve our water resources. Some of the more significant strategies are:

- that the state embark on a major water conservation program;
- that each city and town develop its own plan for water supply;
- that the state or federal government determine the minimum stream flow requirements which will assure the ecological integrity of tapped rivers;
- that repair and maintenance of existing water distribution systems be encouraged; and
- that all state agencies responsible for water supply be consolidated under a strengthened Water Resources Commission.

Building upon these strategies, the Commonwealth should take the following steps to ensure high quality and adequate quantity of present and future water supplies.

The following recommendations are made:

22

Continue implementation of the statewide water conservation program.

Through the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, state government has recently begun to develop and implement a statewide water conservation program. First, consideration should be given to repair and maintenance of the existing distribution system to avoid waste. Second, more efficient use of water through metering, industrial recycling, and the use of residential water-saving devices should be sought. To make these conservation measures effective, it may be necessary to increase the water costs and replace discount rates for large volume users with progressively higher costs for higher usage. Combining these methods with the expanded use of surface waters now being improved under the federal water quality program and with the intensified search for groundwater, should reduce water shortages in many communities.

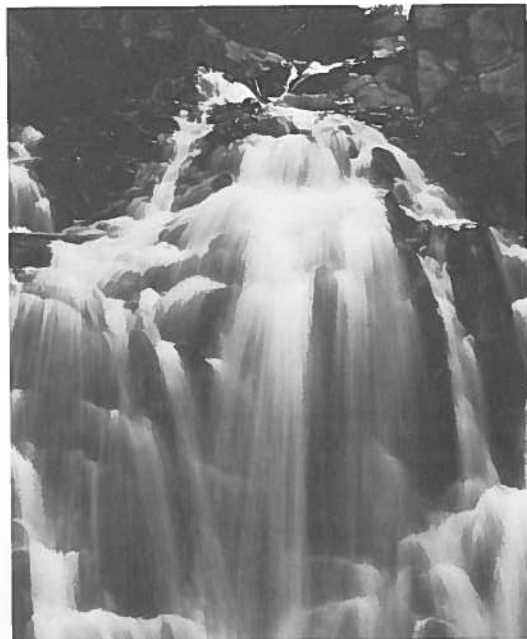
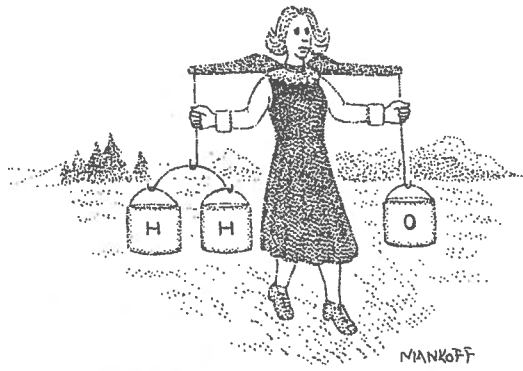
Equally important is public education to increase awareness that Massachusetts has significant water problems and that actions can and should be taken to decrease waste and increase judicious use. EOEA is taking steps to accomplish this. Also, state laws and regulations should be modified to promote water conservation. To date the State Environmental Code has been revised to permit waterless toilets with local board of health approval, and amendments to the State Building Code are being considered which would make plumbing codes more amenable to water conservation.

23

Encourage water supply self-sufficiency.

Local water supply plans should include an exhaustive search, both within the community and in adjacent communities, for additional supplies. This search could be partially funded by the state or aided by state technical resources.

The conditions for the award of state water search grants or technical assistance would be the community's agreement to use all discovered and existing supplies to the fullest degree possible, to conserve unneeded resources, and to preserve potential supply areas from development.



24

Provide state intervention as a "last resort."

The state, the only source for water supply funding other than locally generated revenues, should show flexibility and sensitivity to different water problems. In those cases where there is a proven need for more water and local supplies are inadequate or the economics are unreasonable, the state as a last resort should intervene and provide the appropriate facilities. If the state intervenes, issues relating to basin-wide as well as local water needs and to growth implications must be considered. The state should avoid inter-basin transfers, such as the transfer of Connecticut River water to the Quabbin system. Thus, the MDC should continue its present policy of caution in considering expansion to serve the water needs of new communities. Only after all alternatives are fully investigated, conservation measures utilized, and all feasible alternatives employed should exceptions be made.

25

Apply a total systems approach to water resources.

Unfortunately, there is very little federal money to aid local and state initiated water conservation efforts. On the other hand, vast sums have been spent by the federal government on water pollution control facilities and planning. There is a pronounced need, both at the federal and state levels, to adopt a total systems approach to water resources in which decisions on waste water treatment and water supply are fully integrated. A broad-based water conservation program could mean significant reductions in waste water, which would reduce the need for more and larger treatment facilities and the incidence of septic tank failures that often mean sewer extensions into areas where they are not wanted.

State government should take all necessary steps to consolidate state agencies responsible for water supply and waste water treatment under one coordinated administrative structure. Furthermore, the state Clean Waters Act should be amended to provide funding for water purification plants.

At the federal level, the Massachusetts Congressional delegation should file legislation for an Omnibus Clean Waters Act which would address both water supply and waste water treatment problems in an integrated, coordinated manner. Such legislation would provide funding for water supply planning and conservation programs and establish a construction fund for public water purification and distribution systems and, especially important for older cities, the rehabilitation of existing distribution systems.

Growth Management

The term 'growth management' can have negative connotations. "I'm the last one in, now pull up the drawbridge." Many believe that growth management is a fancy term for using every device available to stop growth. Certainly, this belief has been borne out in some communities, especially those that were inundated with unanticipated growth. But in these cases, so much growth in so little time meant that their growth management systems were overburdened and, in some cases, actually broke down. Property taxes increased without control as new facilities and services were needed all at once. The physical character of the community radically changed, too often for the worse, and natural resources were irretrievably lost.

All of this could have been avoided with advance planning, more widespread sharing in the accommodation of growth pressures, and more gradual growth in individual communities consonant with the capacity of the community to plan for and provide the facilities and services necessary for growth.

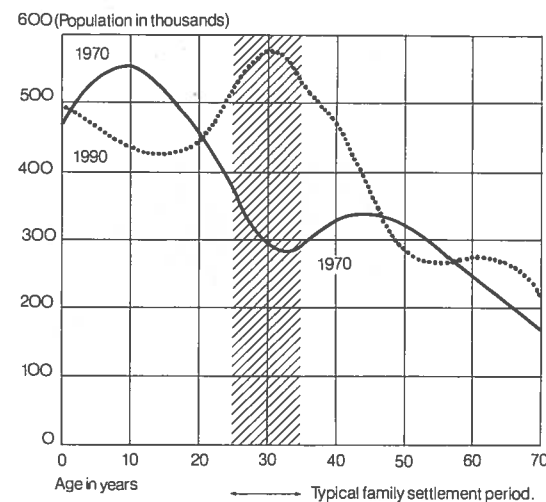


"On the positive side, the growth of the town has given it new life. There has been an increase in interest and participation in local affairs among newer residents. Those new residents who have put down roots in the community have brought a new perspective to the conduct of town affairs."

Milford Growth Policy Statement



Population distribution, by age 1970 and 1990



But panic often set in. Communities felt that it was too late to resort to better planning. Instead many decided to use every tool available to erect walls around their communities. A few initiated moratoria; others simply used all permit and approval powers in an extremely restrictive manner.

A more positive and responsible alternative is simply better growth management, especially as we embark upon an era in which there will be unprecedented demands for more housing and for good, stable jobs for the young families of the baby boom generation.

Most Local Growth Policy Committees were concerned not so much with the simple quantity of growth than with the quality of growth. As such, Local Growth Policy Statements called for a stronger local role in growth management. With this stronger role, communities would not be forced to *react* to growth pressures in arbitrary and negative ways. Instead, communities would be able to plan for growth calmly and comprehensively. Many communities would be willing to assume a fair share of regional growth, but in a manner and on timetables sensitive to local conditions. Local residents who live with growth impacts on a daily basis know best how to prepare a community to accept its fair share of growth.

If all communities accommodate a portion of the overall regional and statewide growth in accord with their fiscal and physical capabilities, then excessive growth spurts in a few isolated communities can be avoided. Certainly, the cities cannot accommodate all anticipated residential and employment growth, though they must receive a much greater share of this growth than in the recent past. Just as clearly, the communities on the fringes of our urban areas, especially those small towns between Routes 128 and 495, cannot be forced to accept all of this growth. For the costs to local and state taxpayers would be unendurable and our efforts to conserve energy, to limit the encroachment on unique natural resources, to protect the character of our communities and the Commonwealth, and to revitalize our urban areas would be set back dramatically.

The following recommendations are made:

26

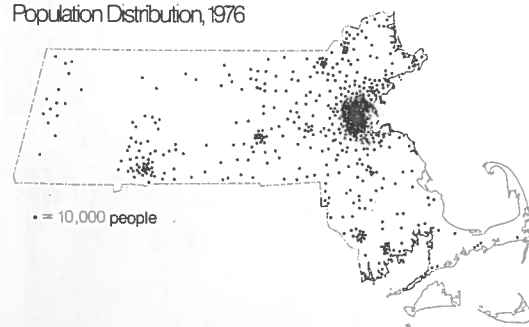
Encourage communities to establish a growth phasing and sharing program.

Cities and towns should be more directly empowered to regulate their rates of growth, in the context of locally-adopted growth programs. The principal thrust of this recommendation is to improve the ability of communities to manage their own growth. By setting two-year goals for housing, communities would have greater freedom in deciding how that housing growth might occur. They would be assured of only so much growth each year, and so, for example, decisions about lot sizes, apartments, and required subdivision improvements could be made on the merits of proposed developments without worrying about whether they encourage more growth. This recommendation is made all the more critical by the increase in housing demand expected in coming years.

A new enabling statute, appended to the existing zoning enabling law, would allow communities to establish a growth phasing system whereby:

- A Local Growth Program would be prepared, reviewed, and adopted by the community. The Program would be prepared by the Local Growth Policy Committee, or similarly constituted group, reporting through the local planning board, and it would be presented to the town meeting or city council for adoption, following public hearings.
- The Program would include: an analysis of how much growth the community could reasonably accommodate; the community's program for public facilities (schools, streets, sewer and water) for the coming five-year period; a statement of the expected demand for housing growth and proposed local actions to meet that goal. *Rea-*

Population Distribution, 1976



sonable growth would have to be justified on the basis of physical characteristics, existing or proposed public facilities, and historical growth patterns in relation to expected demand.

- The state would assemble and distribute data to be used by communities in preparing their Programs and in reviewing their neighbor's Programs, including particularly the expected demand for housing for each region/sub-region of the state. These figures would be revised annually, and as Programs were updated they would reflect these revisions.
- The Program would be reviewed by the state and by the community's neighbors. If after review, the Program is found to lack a serious commitment to regional growth demands, the state could find the Program unsatisfactory. If no one objects, then the Program would go into effect.
- Once in effect, the community could grant a special permit to any housing proposal in order to meet its goal, and could reject any proposal once its goal for the year had been met.
- Moderately-priced housing would be counted as *two* housing units toward meeting a community's goal; subsidized housing would count as *four*.
- Every two years a participating community would revise its Program and re-submit it for review and approval.
- At local option*, a participating community could prepare and adopt a Subsidized Housing Program identifying specific initiatives to promote the development of subsidized housing. Once such a Program went into effect, potential developers would apply under its provisions, rather than those of Chapter 774. That is, the community would be effectively exempt from Chapter 774 as long as its own Program was in effect.

Local Growth Programs would be a boom to the Massachusetts construction industry during this period of increased housing need. The Programs would allow the construction of housing at lower costs, since communities would no longer have to use tools such as large lot zoning and exorbitant street and sidewalk requirements to control local growth. Local Growth Programs would help both home buyers and home builders by:

- Allowing all communities to assume a reasonable share of regional housing needs, thereby broadening opportunities;
- Avoiding unnecessarily rapid growth, with its incumbent costs for public facilities and services, ultimately passed on to consumers;
- Stabilizing or reducing housing costs through the removal of unreasonable requirements;
- Reducing construction delays through the use of special permits; and
- Providing stronger incentives for the construction of low and moderate income housing, while allowing communities to initiate their own Programs for such housing.

27

Increase the capacity of communities to prepare and implement Local Growth Programs.

One of the beneficial results of the Growth Policy process is a conviction on the part of many cities and towns that professional planning and development staff were necessary if communities are to realize the goals that they had set out for themselves. The addition of professional staff would be especially helpful for those communities that feel themselves inundated by growth pressures. In such communities co-



"Regulating development through establishing annual growth ceilings, or limiting new growth by linking it to the timing and location of municipal services and the fiscal ability of the town to support such growth are suggested 'control' techniques."

Cape Cod Growth Policy Report



operative programs might be arranged in which several communities can share the cost of a quality planning staff.

This cooperation would lead to increased ability to guide growth in a way that enhances community character without the heavy salary burdens of fulltime staff.

To provide better coordination of local planning and development activities, legislation should be enacted which authorizes cities and towns to establish Departments of Community Development. Such departments could merge at local option all or some of the functions, powers, and duties of a redevelopment authority, a planning department and board, economic and industrial commission, and the construction activities of a housing authority.

28

Empower more effective local control over development around new highway interchanges.

Presently, transportation investments have enormous effects on the growth and development of the community, but communities do not have effective control over this growth. This recommendation would provide that an agency proposing to construct a new highway interchange would take by eminent domain development easements within 1,000 yards of the proposed interchange. The price paid would be based on the fair market value of the site before the interchange was constructed. The development easement would be sold only in compliance with a development plan prepared cooperatively by representatives of the chief elected official, the planning board, the conservation commission, the city or town planner, the Office of State Planning, the regional planning agency, the state Department of Public Works, and the Executive Office of Transportation and Construction.

The criteria for the development or redevelopment of the parcel must be consistent with local growth policies and must not encourage strip development or diminish the traffic service and safety standards of the highway. Development easements would be sold, transferred or otherwise committed only in accord with these criteria.

29

Require the state Division of Water Pollution Control to size and locate sewer facilities in compliance with local growth policies and plans.

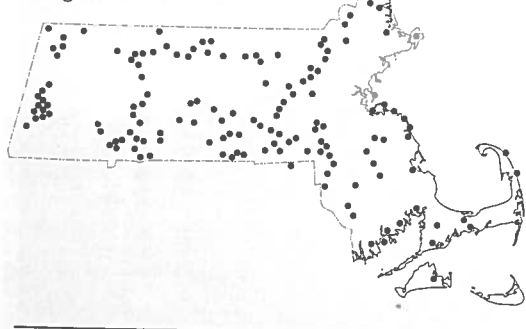
Recently, many communities have begun to realize that the construction of sewer projects has as much of an impact on community development as the construction of new transportation facilities. Present state and Environmental Protection Agency wastewater treatment policies encourage the erection of expensive wastewater treatment plants even in the smallest communities and thus the sewerage of many sparsely-settled sections of those communities in order to make the wastewater treatment plants economically viable.

The state Division of Water Pollution Control should take an entirely different approach in the planning and design of sewer and wastewater treatment facilities to make certain that local development policies are maintained. For example, smaller communities should be encouraged to use federal facilities planning money to evaluate community problems. The Step 1 facilities plan should be used as a true analysis of a community's water quality problems instead of a document for rough planning and justification of a previously agreed upon construction program.

Also, smaller communities should be encouraged to adopt non-structural solutions to water quality problems. Stricter local and state enforcement programs, a regular program of septic tank pump-out combined with a multi-community or local septic treatment facility, and increased efforts to combat erosion and other storm



Sewage Treatment Plants



water run-off pollutants are some of the non-structural solutions appropriate for smaller communities.

These are all eligible costs for water management paid in large part by federal construction funds. However, they must be promoted and the benefits explained by the Division of Water Pollution Control as part of its normal activities in setting the priorities for and spending the funds of the Environmental Protection Agency.

30

Revise design standards of Chapter 90 and other local highway assistance programs to allow communities to maintain and repair roadways consistent with local character.

State highway assistance programs, especially the Chapter 90 program, received considerable criticism in Local Growth Policy Statements. Smaller rural communities claimed that they were frequently compelled to adhere to arbitrary and unrealistic service and safety design standards established by the state. This lack of flexibility in the use of these funds causes communities to widen and straighten minor, rural roads in such a way as to conflict with community character and to attract large scale development.

State aid to communities to maintain and repair existing roadways should be awarded not on the basis of rigid design standards, but in accord with local needs, policies and conditions.

31

Clarify the definition of "cluster development" in the Zoning Enabling Act.

The definition of "cluster development" contained in Chapter 808 of the Acts of 1975, should be amended to clarify the fact that a municipality may, if it so chooses, allow for density bonuses in cluster developments. The present wording of this definition is somewhat confusing on this point, although the intent was to allow for such bonuses.

An amendment which clearly enabled municipalities to allow density bonuses in cluster developments would ensure that a municipality had maximum flexibility and developers maximum financial incentive in determining the most efficient use of land.

Regions

Growth-related problems frequently extend beyond municipal boundaries. And sometimes the solutions to these inter-municipal problems require cooperation, either informal or formal. Massachusetts communities have demonstrated that they are willing to work together on a regional basis to accomplish shared objectives — the provision of bus services and the disposal of solid waste and sewage. Great support was expressed for this kind of single purpose, voluntary regional association.

Regional planning to guide local actions on growth-related issues has been accepted by communities. But progress beyond this to act in concert as a region to regulate growth with regional impacts has only occurred on Martha's Vineyard, though other regions have considered this step and at least one region has submitted legislation to obtain these new powers.

In addition, the value of county government was extensively debated in Local Growth Policy Statements, as many of the functions of counties have been eliminated or transferred to other levels of government. A thorough reassessment of the role of county government would appear to be called for.

The following recommendations are made:

"Since the amount of undeveloped land is limited, we feel that many new techniques such as cluster zoning and planned unit development should be encouraged to develop multi-family dwellings and thereby help to preserve the open space characteristic of the town."

Needham Growth Policy Statement



32

Submit enabling legislation to allow regional planning agencies to exercise control over developments of regional impact and/or areas of critical environmental concern.

Enabling legislation should be submitted to allow the existing regional planning districts upon a vote of a majority of its constituent communities to exercise regional review and approval functions over developments of regional impact and areas of critical environmental concern.

State government is not interested in exercising zoning powers. Local officials are in the best position to evaluate the configuration of land uses within their communities and to make site-specific development decisions.

But frequently the local context in which local development decisions are made is not broad enough. There are good and bad impacts that spill over onto other communities which can best be evaluated by the people who live in those other communities. Frequently, however, these impacts are not so substantial or extensive as to warrant state involvement. Therefore, *regional* review may make the most sense.

33

Initiate a thorough evaluation of county government.

Some Local Growth Policy Committees voiced strong objections to the poor, inefficient, and in some cases total lack of county government services, while others praised county government for its responsiveness to their concerns. Assuming the basic validity of these statements, the disparity in the quality of county government services is made quite clear.

Historically, legislation has been submitted to strengthen or abolish county government by a variety of state legislators. Without exception these bills have been relegated to study committees where little if anything is ever heard about them again. Certainly, the lack of clear, broad-based public support is one of the reasons why these initiatives have been sidetracked. Another reason is that the Legislature has never had available a comprehensive evaluation of county government performance, including recommendations for its future.

Based on local growth policy concerns and the apparent need by the Legislature for a detailed evaluation of the adequacy and potential of county government, it is recommended that a special study committee be appointed by the Legislature to determine the usefulness and quality of services provided by county government and the potential for improvement with reasonable modification. The committee would study each county government and make recommendations specific to each as well as to the institutional form. All alternative futures, including abolition, should be fully explored. The study would also be of limited duration and a written report would be filed with the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate by a specific date.

The Property Tax

The case for tax reform, specifically as it relates to property taxes, has been strongly made throughout the body of this report. The level and growth rate of property taxes in Massachusetts is simply too high, and as a result, the negative characteristics of the tax are magnified: its undesirable effects on land use patterns; its regressive effects on households and individuals; its dampening effects on real estate investment; its unresponsiveness to economic growth without continual reassessments; and the disparities the tax fosters among communities' public service levels. Furthermore, unpredictable pressures are imposed on the property tax by certain expenditures over which localities exert limited control: school costs, unfunded state



mandated programs, regional assessments, for example. These concerns constitute a broad mandate for tax reform.

At the same time, however, the widely expressed resistance to any increase in state taxes and the competing needs of state programs are constraints that prevent a comprehensive tax reform program from being implemented in the short term. Nevertheless, the support for tax reform expressed in the statements was so deep and so pervasive that it is incumbent upon the state to address the problem.

The following recommendations are made:

34

Provide state assistance to communities in controlling and stabilizing local expenditures.

Local expenditures have been growing at a rate that has considerably exceeded inflation, and the level of property taxes resulting from this cost spiral is unacceptable to communities. The reasons for the increase in expenditures are complex, but in part they may be attributed to the following factors: the increase in costs that are subject to less than full municipal control (school costs and regional assessments, for example); the effects of certain unfunded state-mandated programs; and, in some communities, the lack of proper fiscal management. These points suggest that:

- The state should enable communities to impose a growth rate ceiling on their tax levies. This measure would enable communities to impose a statutorily defined growth rate limit upon their tax levies. Costs that should be excluded from the limit are past debt service costs; federal and state-mandated programs; pension costs; and categorical aid designed to stimulate certain expenditures. A "safety valve" should also be built in so that under extraordinary circumstances the growth rate limit may be exceeded. The "safety valve" should be sufficiently difficult to activate, however, so as not to render the growth rate limit meaningless in practice.
- The state should provide direct aid and technical assistance to municipalities in the area of fiscal management. It is in both the state and local interest that improved fiscal management be provided at the local level. Measures to improve local fiscal management, as recommended by the Department of Community Affairs, include providing incentives for professionalizing local government; upgrading the services and capacity of the Commonwealth's Bureau of Accounts; requiring that local management capacity be demonstrated as a prerequisite for obtaining certain state aid; and lobbying HUD and the U.S. Civil Service Commission for programs directed at improved local management.
- The state should provide funding for future state-mandated programs. The effects of unfunded state-mandated programs in undermining the stability of the local budgetary process have highlighted the need for insuring adequate funds for future state mandates. This would inject greater stability into local fiscal planning and would encourage the state to limit its mandates to essential programs. Since 1975, no state-mandated program has been enacted without funding. This should continue as a matter of policy.
- The state should require that the cost impact of proposed state legislation on local governments be considered at an early point in legislative deliberations. This measure — called a "fiscal note" — would help legislators make more informed decisions by requiring that they estimate the legal fiscal impact of bills under consideration. For the measure to be effective, cost estimates should be available prior to committee hearings. Nineteen states have enacted measures of this nature in recent years.



"Residents dislike higher local taxes yet much of the tax increases in the past years has been due to the unwillingness of the townspeople to settle for fewer services."

Carlisle Growth Policy Statement



- Gubernatorial oversight and control of county, Metropolitan District Commission, and regional transit costs should continue to be exercised. The costs imposed on localities by regional authorities are subject to limited municipal control. Like unfunded state-mandated programs, they represent costs which undermine localities' efforts to stabilize their expenditures. During the last fiscal year, the Governor effectively exercised control over county costs by refusing to approve county budgets that exceeded certain limits. Similar measures should be systematically taken with respect to other regional budgets.

35

Commit a substantial portion of increases in state revenues to local property tax assistance.

State tax revenues grow over time from the effects of economic growth and inflation. In addition, if the federal government enacts national welfare reform as much as \$100 million of Massachusetts' welfare costs could be assumed by the federal government. State government should consider ways to use a substantial portion of the increased state revenues from economic growth or federal welfare costs assumption to help equalize the ability of communities to provide an adequate level of services to their residents. Chelsea, for example, needs to tax its property owners at almost five times the rate of Weston to raise roughly the same amount of taxes per capita. To redress inequities of this nature, increased state revenues should be used in one or more of the following ways:

- The distribution of education aid could be revised as recommended in the report of the Governor's Task Force on Local Aid. Since approximately 80 cents of the state's local aid dollar is earmarked for educational aid, it is particularly important that such aid be distributed in an equitable manner. Revisions in educational aid programs could include consolidating Chapter 70, special education, vocational education, and bilingual education programs into a single aid package; changing the measure of local wealth so that communities that spend a greater proportion of revenues on non-educational functions — chiefly the cities — are treated more equitably; reducing the "expenditure-driven" aspects of current aid programs so that communities are no longer rewarded for high spending; changing the pro-ration mechanism so that in cases of program underfunding communities with lower fiscal ability are not penalized; and distributing aid on a "current funding" basis instead of a reimbursement basis.
- The level of general equalizing aid could be increased through a state revenue sharing program, distributed on the basis of the lottery formula. The bias in the state's aid structure toward education and the tendency of poorer communities to spend the largest fraction of their budget on non-educational items results in many cases of the state providing the wealthier communities with proportionately more aid than the poorer communities. To redress this imbalance and to allow local government a source of revenue which increases with the overall state economy, general aid to municipalities could be increased by returning to cities and towns through the lottery formula a portion of the increase in the state's income and sales tax revenues.
- The state could complete the assumption of administrative and financial responsibility of the county court system and consider the assumption of other appropriate local costs. This year the state began a phased assumption of county court costs as recommended by the Cox Commission. Over the next four years, the state plans to complete its assumption of the cost of the county court system, at

least \$70 million of increased state aid to localities. The state could also consider the assumption of other costs that should more appropriately be financed at the state level.

36

Share property taxes generated by new non-residential development among communities.

Inequities among communities are in part due to tax base differences attributable to non-residential development. The property tax revenues generated by major commercial and industrial development cannot reasonably be attributed solely to the community in which such development occurs. The service demands created by such development often extend far beyond municipal boundaries. Moreover, it is frequently a regional attraction (e.g., a major highway or regional economic forces) which created the opportunity for such development in the first place. Furthermore, the present system fosters unnecessary and counterproductive competition among communities for new commercial and industrial development. Therefore, a *tax-sharing* system should be enacted by the Legislature, whereby some portion of the increase in tax revenues of major commercial and industrial development is shared among communities within a statutorily defined region.

"Route 128 industrial and commercial development has hastened the decline of the central business and industrial districts."
Lynn Growth Policy Statement

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Errata

Page 19, paragraph 6, line 3, the eighth word should read "threatened." Page 60, fifth paragraph, line 2, the last word should read "irreplaceable." Page 74, fifth paragraph, the second word should read "method." Page 78, third paragraph, second line, the fifth word should read "as." Page 79, seventh paragraph, the seventh word should read "boon." Page 81, first paragraph, the seventh word should read "wastewater." Page 83, last paragraph, fifth line, third word should read "local."

Designed by Dennis O'Reilly
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