

XI

Land Use Element

Present Land use patterns and recent trends have been described in Chapter IV. This section pulls together material from previous sections, examines remaining options given existing patterns and strong environmental constraints, and recommends a future land use plan for Halifax.

It bases many recommendations on development constraints discussed earlier and shown on Figures III-1 and III-2.

A. Planning Areas

For these purposes town is divided into three Planning Areas:

A. The relatively high-density northeastern corner of the town with the Commercial Center and the Lakes Neighborhoods. This consists of the Buildout Analysis Study Areas 4 and 5; of the northern portions of Study Areas 2, 3, and 6; and of the northeastern third of area 2 from the Buildout Analysis.

B. The moderate density mixed-use belt along Rte. 106 and Elm St. including the southern edge of Study Areas 2, 3, and 6; the northern portions of Study Areas 7, 8, 13, and 14; Study Area 1 and the western half of Study Area 2.

C. The Rural / Suburbanizing southern end of the town below the junctions of Thompson / Pine and Franklin / South Sts.

The Plan recognizes the differences between these areas in terms of long-term and emerging character, potential for accommodating expected growth, environmental sensitivity, and local assets and resources.

B. Key Maps

Present land patterns can be seen on the Halifax Land Uses map in Chapter VI. They reflect historic development patterns as well as environmental constraints and the town's recent and present zoning as shown on Figures XI-1, VI-1, and XII-1, respectively. Zoning revisions to partially implement the plan's recommendation are shown on Figure XII-2 in the Implementation Chapter. The results of the recommendations made below are shown on the Proposed Land Uses map at the end of this chapter. The last understates areas of probable residential growth. It reflects acknowledgement that most such growth will occur on portions of the privately-owned upland forest labeled "Forest," hopefully in accord the recommended overall density patterns and community character.

C. Implications of Recent Trends for Alternate Futures

The town is continuing to evolve into a Suburban Residential Community, but with more open space than most due to extensive wetlands and remaining agricultural areas; and a relatively large commercial area due to the Wal-Mart and the proposed supermarket. Further major commercial growth (beyond that supported by the local market) is unlikely to make the town a Regional Commercial Center. Similarly, the slow absorption of space in the Industrial Park, the un-intensive use of nearby Industrially- zoned land, and the lack of good sites show Halifax's limited potential to become an Industrial Town. The increasing prices and sizes of new residential offerings, the strong response to the restored commuter rail service, and the recent major open space acquisitions support the potential to be an upscale Open Space-Oriented Community. Still, the market attraction of the coastal communities and the variety of Halifax's varied neighborhoods suggest that this will be an aspect of the future Halifax, but not its dominant character.

The town's probable future is as a predominantly residential community which tempers uniform suburban development patterns with a variety of existing neighborhoods, significant amounts of designated open space and undevelopable wetlands, and a continuing agricultural presence. The question is how to accommodate and guide the likely residential growth while keeping the best of the present Halifax, and meeting the varied needs of all of its citizens. These needs include access to complete retail stores and services, good schools, public safety services and other public services, and employment, while staying within a reasonable property tax burden.

D. Findings and Recommendations by Planning Area

1. Planning Area A

Area A contains most of the town's older high density housing around Monponsett Pond, along with the recent Twin Lake's Development, and the commuter rail station. It also includes an extensive mid-density neighborhood (by suburban/rural one-acre lot standards) on either side of Oak St. The largest unconstrained area in B shown on Figure XI-1 is the northern portion of the already developed Cranberry Road / Bosworth Farm subdivisions.

The former summer cottages in the Lakeside neighborhoods are commonly occupied year-round and accommodate a good portion of the town's population on groups of small lots ranging from 5000 to 10,000 square feet. Many houses occupy 2 or 3 of the original 5000 square foot lots and have been considerably upgraded and expanded.

As a result vacant flood plain or wetlands is totally excluded from use. In contrast some of the land which only has septic limitations might accommodate reduced development, depending on the actual soils and the disposal technologies used. However the high water tables and small lots make on-site disposal systems problematic, even where soils appear to be acceptable as along Lingam St.

The soils around the Lakes are less septicly limited than those in much of the southern and north central parts of town. However, the small lots and their proximity to the Lakes have led

Figure XI-1

Planning Areas



Moderate Density Housing with a High Degree of Lakeside Amenities

to much concern with surface water quality, and to proposals for local sewerage. While the neighborhood is more suitable for septic systems than much of town, portions of many privately-owned vacant parcels are in wetlands and FEMA floodplains, as shown on Figure III-1. This land could normally be included in the unused land required with higher density multi-unit development, or in the low-lying ends of lots in a large lot subdivision. However the Halifax Zoning bylaw has prohibited using FEMA land or protected wetlands even to meet minimum lot area requirements since 1997.

The land north of railroad has few septic limitations, but is all developed except for a about 7 or 8 acres along Oak Place east of Muddy Pond and 9 or 10 acres of small, mostly town-owned lots west of the Pond. As mapped, none of these front on the Pond. This land might well have new parcel lines drawn for housing. Access would be from Pembroke via Thompson St., since the extended Crystal Lake Road / Oak Place ends in a private house lot at the southern end of the pond. There appears to be no public access to the pond except for an apparent path between private lots just past the end of Crystal Lake Rd. Accordingly, any redrawn parcel lines and road building to sell lots should be combined with acquisition of a public access point, perhaps off of Spring St.

Other private vacant land includes about 67 acres west of Peterson's Swamp south of the Halifax Pound and north of Fieldstone Farm. It is largely flood plain and wetlands and might well become part of the state holdings. Similarly 12 acres of un-usable private land between the state land and town land, or between the state land and Holmes St. might well become public.

At the same time, 17 buildable acres (i.e., mapped with few or no constraints) across from Twin Lakes Drive could be left for private development. Given the adjacent open space and the nearby commuter rail station, this would best be in compact, land-saving townhouses. If permitted, four groups of 4 town houses could fit on 2-3 acres, with the required excess land (at one acre/unit) blending with the surrounding open space better than would individual house lots.

One large 11-acre upland lakeside parcel west of the end of Annawon Drive is mapped with one single-family house and no major septic limitations. If it is further developed with housing,

it would be good to keep the shoreline open and public rather than private, such as at the nearby beach at the end of the Drive.

The developable land west of the Monponsett Ponds is largely on the YMCA well recharge land and the active farm land at the north end of Hemlock Lane. The first is owned for water supply protection (and is recommended here for selective compatible recreation use), so it is not available for private development.

The 54 acres of active farm land are under Ch.61a and have poor access over a long dead-end road. They are surrounded by cranberry bogs and protected woodland at the Audubon Sanctuary. Most of the land is severely restricted for septic systems, potentially reducing the number of units allowed by 25% or more. Given the protected surroundings, the site could be appealing for low-density estate lots, at least given added tree cover. However this would meet no town goals or objectives unless the houses were so expensive as to produce significant net tax income.

Accordingly the land is recommended for continued farming through acquisition under Ch. 61A, lease to a farmer, and possible limited joint-development if necessary.

The remaining undeveloped lands are the scattered lakeside lots near Lingan St., Lake St. and the Monponsett neighborhood. Most are attached to adjacent houses. However individual separately-owned lots which predate the zoning maybe used if they met the state minimum standards of 5000 sq. ft. and 50 ft. of frontage - assuming that sewage disposal is available. If the area is eventually sewered, it would be appropriate to permit 10,000 sq. foot lots allowing new housing in character with these high-amenity lakeside neighborhoods.

The vacant land at the estimated 40-acre Halifax Garden Company site is largely wetland, (See discussion in Ch IX, under UPO-12) some of it open marsh. House lots are laid out along the wooded-swamp Holmes St. frontage. The MBTA reportedly has no plans to expand parking until passenger carrying capacity is increased, and would use its present holdings. The area could benefit from a discrete retail development, possibly within the station area, and from some housing if feasible, but most of the shrub swamp, wooded swamp, and marsh is better suited to open space. This could include habitat protection, informal open space, and possibly community gardens on the higher former Garden Company land. Such garden plots could provide gardening opportunities for people living on small, shaded lots.

Fire Stations

As discussed in Chapter V, any replacement of the present fire station would improve response times if done with 2 stations, perhaps one on Rte. 36 in the northeastern corner of the town and one near the junction of Rtes. 106 and 105.

Recommendations for Planning Area A

1. Redraw parcel lines of town-owned lots west of Crystal Lake for house lots, extend an existing road for access, and acquire a public access point and connecting ways for general neighborhood access.

2. Encourage town houses on the 17-acre across from Twin Lakes Drive with grounds designed to blend into the surrounding open space.
3. Anticipate acquiring the 61A Hemlock Lane farmland for continued farming and possible limited joint development (combining open space and selected development) if it comes onto the market.
4. Find ways to acknowledge and build on the moderate-high density communities around the Lakes. Continue studying local sewerage, and if implemented, rezone the neighborhoods to 10,000 square foot lots allowing new development at comparable densities.
5. Rezone land around T station from Industrial to Conservancy and possibly a small amount of CB to allow open space / community gardens, housing along Holmes Street if feasible, and possibly a small amount of station-oriented retail space.
6. Examine ways to pave and improve local roads in the Lakeside communities, e.g., along the Ocean Avenue, Langan St. Lake St. etc. areas.
7. Investigate potential sites for a Northeast fire station, perhaps as near as the town-owned land across from the boat launching ramp, or as far as the commercial property next to the railroad tracks, and consider early acquisition if necessary.
8. If needed despite the town's probable slow growth, (See Page V-12) seek a northeast elementary school site, possibly on Holmes St. across from Twin Lakes Drive

2. Planning Area B

Area B is the mixed-use spine of the community. It contains most of the town's civic, commercial and industrial development along Rte. 106 and a modest amount on Elm St.

As with Area A, the greatest amount of unconstrained land contains the already developed Cranberry Road / Bosworth Farm subdivisions and adjacent residential / commercial uses along Rte. 106 along with the landfill and power-lines south of Rte. 106.

Commercial Development Issues

Commercial uses are mixed with sound housing along much of Rte. 106 to the detriment of both. New businesses, allowed by strip commercial zoning, lower the desirability of the adjacent housing and lead to the unresolved townscape noted in the Open Space Plan. (The townscape impacts are heightened by the heavy commercial uses in the Industrially-zoned at the entrance to Halifax as is discussed below). At the same time, the new strip development prevents a useful commercial concentration where one could park once and do many errands. Even the evolving commercial center is unnecessarily weak because firms often put up free-standing highway-style individual buildings with their own on-site parking and curb cuts, thereby further scattering commercial destinations and diluting the Commercial Center.

Along Rte. 106 the Center, defined as ending one lot before the Country Club, has 6 acres in vacant lots on Plymouth Street and Samuel Way, and 12 acres of backland recently rezoned for a proposed grocery store, along with 3 house lots surrounded by businesses. This land alone could accommodate considerable business expansion, particularly if regulations reduced yard requirements, and encouraged contiguous development and shared parking,

Since the Commercial and Business (CB) zoning allows both business and housing, mixed uses could well increase. Such mixtures can work well in more urban centers when housing occupies upper floors of contiguous business buildings. At Halifax's suburban densities mixed uses on adjacent parcels can lead to a weaker pattern. Commercial development leapfrogs housing and the new businesses abut houses rather than other businesses. This preserves the intervening housing temporarily, but the uncertain character will weaken the area as a neighborhood.

At the same time, the intervening housing can constrain business activities and fragment business districts. The present extensive strip CB zoning gives businesses many potentially workable locations along major roads, but at the cost of destabilizing neighborhoods, degrading the historic streetscape, and precluding a compact, pedestrian-friendly commercial center.



Low-intensity Highway-Oriented Commercial Development and Underused Land in the Present CB-Zoned Commercial Center

This trend is likely to continue since the present CB zoning along Rte. 106 includes much housing and vacant land in basically residential areas. See fig. IV-1. On the North side of Rte. 106 CB zoning extends past 5 houses and perhaps 6 lots all the way to Indian Path Road. On the south side it stops at the Country Club and then resumes at the strip bracketing the Jordan Wellness Center across from Indian Path Road. Yet even having CB zoning across the street leaves these houses on the north side in an uncertain setting.

CB zoning picks up again just west of South St. running on the north side to Thompson St. and on the south side to just past Cranberry Drive. This section has several businesses, including two gas stations, an equipment company, and a new garden supply center, along with 15 residential lots.

Other CB land is found on either side of Rte. 106 south of Old Plymouth St. and north of Circuit St. This scenic area has a large auto repair garage on Old Plymouth St., a restaurant and 2 other small businesses on Plymouth St. and one or two vestigial commercial buildings among about 28 residential lots. There are 3 vacant parcels totaling about 2.5 acres. There may also be some minor businesses in barns or other accessory buildings.

Clearly there is too much CB land for foreseeable needs and it is too scattered to strengthen the Center or protect other neighborhoods. This pattern partly reflects the 1964 Plan's recommendation to save farm land around Rtes. 58 and 106 and complement the Town Hall/Elementary School Civic Center area by focusing businesses roughly between South St. and Thompson St. (See Figure I-2) The later commercial zoning of the area around Rtes. 106 and 58 should have supplanted the CB areas at South St./Thompson St., and in the earlier Old Plymouth St / Plymouth St. commercial area, west of Elm St. Instead they have been retained leading to the present emerging commercial strip.

Conclusion Given the abundant land in the CB-zoned strips, business development will continue to scatter. The District would be more effective in purposefully shaping the Halifax's commercial area if it:

- Were limited to the immediate Rtes. 106/58 area (and present major uses like the Jordan's Center).
- Contained just slightly more land than required in the near future - with no expansion to the west supported until existing vacant land is filled.
- Had reduced side yard and front yard requirements. (Why should a business be 50 ' back from the street?).
- Had more moderate parking requirements and encouraged shared parking by allowing spaces to be more than 300 away and by acknowledging different hours of demand.

Implications of Potentially Developable Land

The study area's vacant privately-owned upland (i.e., excluding the adjacent cranberry bog land) east of Rte. 58 and north of Plymouth St. consists of about 3 acres zoned AR on the southeastern corner of East Monponsett Pond and 8 lots totaling 7.2 acres of AR land with frontage on Plymouth St., and Paradise Lane, along with about 2 acres behind the veterinary office on Plymouth St. Other vacant buildable AR land along Plymouth St. east of Monponsett St. is a 3-acre meadow just east of the Cumberland Farms complex followed by a single house on 3.4 acres. There are also about 20 acres of unusable AR- zoned wooded swamp owned by the mobile home park and 3.8 acres of similar town land just east of the park.

Most of this appears suitable for housing, but the 40,000 sq fl. lot between the strip mall at the corner of Rte. 58 and the veterinary office might be used to extend commercial uses to the east. Such growth between the heart of the present commercial center and a transitional use like the low-impact veterinary office would be preferable to isolated commercial development

elsewhere on Rte. 106. On the other hand, the proposed extension of CB zoning east to allow expansion of the Cumberland Farms complex goes only to the extended edge of the strip mall, and housing could go next to the residentially compatible veterinary office. Thus most commercial growth would be in the larger quadrants north-west and south-west of the intersection.

Other vacant land east of Monponsett St. includes 2 parcels totaling 12.3 acres behind an apparent house and just north of the Halifax Housing Authority development. These are about 2/3 AR-zoned open farmland and about 1/3 Conservancy-zoned wetlands. South of and behind the Authority land there is 23.3 acres of partially-wooded AR upland and wetland backing onto town-owned swamp. This land seems suitable for housing or agriculture.

As noted above, the land between Rte. 58 and the Country Club has 6 acres in vacant lots on Plymouth Street and Samuel Way, 12 acres of backland recently rezoned for a grocery store, and 3 house lots surrounded by businesses. This CB land could accommodate considerable expansion, particularly if regulations reduced yard requirements, and encouraged contiguous development and shared parking.

Further east along the Rte. 106 corridor has 28.9 acres of vacant CB-zoned land:

- 10.8 acres of upland and 1.8 acres of wooded swamp mixed with 4 houses and 2 businesses on the north side of Rte. 106 between the County Club and Indian Path Road
- 13.8 acres in the CB-zoned strip from just west of South St. to just west of Thompson St. These consist of 13.4 acres in 2 deep lots on either side of the Post Office woodlands (TOS-2) (See Chapter X) and .4 acres across from the Post Office.* (The two big lots back on to 44.1 acres of town-owned land.) and,
- 2.5 acres in the Plymouth St./ Old Plymouth St. west of Elm St.

These scattered vacant CB lots have the potential for further adding visual clutter to Plymouth St., without creating any one strong center. Even where there are few vacant lots, as near Old Plymouth St., the CB zoning leaves the existing neighborhood subject to the uncertainty of possible demolition or conversion of existing houses.

Vacant Industrially- zoned land in Planning Area total approximately 90.8 acres. These consist of:

- The 11 remaining lots totaling about 26.8 acres out of the 16-lot / 35.38-acre Halifax Industrial Park
- The six 2.75-acre to 3-acre lots between Rte. 106 and the BFI gas reclamation facility; and,

* The Post Office seems mis-located. Here. It is accessible as any highway-oriented business is, and like such uses it requires a separate trip. Thus its community-focus nature is diluted by its distance from any major concentration of commercial and civic activities, notwithstanding the new Police Station and 2 businesses across the street. Any needed new facility would better be sited close to the Rtes 58 and 106.

- The approximately 50 acres remaining south of the BFI landfill after most of the landlocked Industrial land there was remapped AR (The Highland Woods subdivision). See Page VIII-8.

One or two of the Rte. 106 lots next to the powerline have been developed with 2 “self-storage” buildings facility, and adjacent land is proposed for a truck and trailer storage garage. This leaves 3 to 4 lots available, given acceptable access to the gas plant.

These lots and any possible lots south of the landfill have the advantage of being less visually intrusive than the present park which dominates the entrance to the town and distracts from the compelling and characteristic open water and bog landscape.

The western third of the 50-acre site is wooded swamp according to the Massachusetts Wetlands Inventory and needs improved access. The edge of the adjacent powerline right of way may be able to accommodate an adequate roadway if the various interests could be resolved, but this has not been studied. The park would need water service, perhaps through the Highland Woods Subdivision, or through a new line looping Rte. 106 to Highland Woods. There is no nearby gas service unless it is extended from River St. to Highland Woods (See Fig. V-1), but that also applies to the present park. If feasible, the site could provide a facility of comparable size to the present Halifax Industrial Park.

With no highway visibility it would be suited only to firms which do not need such exposure. This seems to apply to the present park since none of those firms have prominent signs or other identification.

The remaining unbuilt-upon land is zoned AR or Conservancy and much of it is Cranberry Bogs or is in protected wetlands (See Land Use, Zoning and Development Constraints Maps.) Though they are extensive, these wetlands are based on USGS maps and (like those on the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs’ Buildout maps) may be understated compared to the wetlands on the Massachusetts Wetlands inventory map.

Given cranberry bogs, bog reservoirs and extensive irregular areas of wooded swamp, the land along Elm St. north of Rte. 106 has no major areas of developable privately-owned upland. The potentially developable land totals perhaps 150 acres. They include some 61A land north and south of Pond St., some wooded upland sloping to wetlands north of Pond St., 2 large parcels of very low density residential land on either side of Elm St., north of Furnace Pond, some upland south of Old Farm Road, some possibly usable bog upland southwest of Spencer Dr. / Autumn Lane, and a fringe of upland, some with severe septic limitations, around irregular wooded swamp between Elm St. and Hudson St. near the Hanson line. The strip south of Rte. 106 includes extensive cranberry bogs, generally under Ch. 61A, east of the landfill, between Thompson St. and South St., and south of the Mobil Home Park; and the 205.9-acre Country Club under Ch. 61B. Much of this is in severely limited wetlands.



Under-Used Industrially Zoned Land – Self-Storage Units South of Rte. 106 between the Powerlines and BFI Landfill to Right. View along Suggested Access Road to Rear Industrial Land



Needed Tax Base Obscuring Scenic View – Halifax Industrial Park Buildings to Left; Unsold Lots between Town Gateway on Rte. 106 and View of Woods/Bog Reservoirs to Right

This area is generally suitable for low-density housing consistent with the zoning; hopefully sited to give access to nearby permanent open land. However, much of the Country Club is usable upland and only the southern fringe along Palmer Mill Brook is Flood Plain.

Fire Stations

As discussed above and in Chapter V, any future replacement of the present fire station would lead to better response times if done with 2 stations, perhaps one on Rte. 36 in the northeastern corner of the town and one near the junction of Rtes. 106 and 105 in Area B.

Recommendations for Planning Area B

1. Continue to use the Site Plan Review process to improve sitting and appearance of new buildings as was done with the Wal*Mart store, e.g.

- Require any expansion at the Cumberland Farms site to visually enclose the commercial area and to provide a visually compatible landscaped buffer to the adjacent AR areas.
 - Require integrated access and internal circulation between the Wal*Mart store and the proposed grocery store.
2. Redesign the intersection of Rtes. 58 and 106 for safer / more inviting foot crossing
 3. Revise/reduce CB zoning as per the conclusions above and the recommendations in Chapters VIII and XII. These would involve:
 - Basically limiting the CB District to the immediate Rtes. 106/58 area (and present major uses like the Jordan Hospital's Wellness Center)
 - Including just slightly more land than that required in the near future.
 - Allowing with no CB expansion to the west until the existing vacant land is filled.
 4. Reduce side yard and front yard requirements to allow closer spacing.
 5. Reduce parking requirements by;
 - Encouraging rear parking
 - Encouraging shared parking by allowing spaces to be more than 300 away and by acknowledging different hours of demand.
 6. Consider seeking gas service to the Industrial Park.
 7. Study access, wetlands, and utility issues affecting the approximately 50 Industrially-zoned acres south of closed landfill; if needed, seek access the powerline r.o.w.
 8. Examine the recreation and/or windpower potential of the closed BFI landfill
 9. Examine the buildability of bog uplands with/without continued cultivation, and draft policies for possible Ch. 61A acquisitions
 10. Identify any needed Board of Health regulations for housing next to operating bogs
 11. Acquire or protect a fringe of walkable upland around wooded swamps in new subdivisions in order to give new residents access for seasonal recreation use.
 12. Extend the Rte. 105 designation to Pine and Elm Sts. and improve the roadway.
 13. Do a preliminary search for a fire station site. Possibilities range from as close to Rte. 106 as the town-owned land across from the Cemetery (also proposed for elderly housing), to as far down Thompson St. as junction of Pine and Thompson Sts.

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3. Planning Area C

Present Uses

This environmentally constrained area is in low-density agricultural/residential use. This is expected to continue except for where a major new facility is needed. Most housing here is grouped along existing roads where land was suitable, and is interspersed with woods and wetlands (particularly along the Winnetuxet River) major croplands below Wood Street, and small farms; but some is in conventional subdivisions. The area has a few cranberry bogs like those at South and Hayward Sts. and has been getting investment in new small horse farms like those across the line in Plympton.



Traditional Housing in a Rural Setting in South Halifax



New Suburban Housing in a Rural Setting

Available Land / Development Constraints

As the Figure XI-1 shows, nearly all of Area C is constrained by Flood Plain or Protected Wetlands, has severe limitations for septic systems a/o is limited by the 200' Rivers Act Buffer. The largest areas with no limitations have already been developed as with the Highland Woods and Orchard Circle subdivisions.

Based on this study's very generalized maps of constraints, there are approximately 177 acres of vacant land with no constraints and 322 acres of vacant upland which is buildable, but has severe limitations for septic systems. These figures may understate existing developed areas. In any case this is far less potentially-usable land than is suggested by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs maps of Absolute Development Constraints. The latter used a more limited mapping of potentially protected wetlands and did not show septicly limited soils.

Upland with severe septic limitations has been found to produce about 3/4 as many approvable lots as other land and would reduce the buildout accordingly. However septicly-limited



Cranberry Bog in South Halifax

land which is also in protected wetlands or FEMA floodplain would already be excluded from development by the zoning provision prohibiting use of such land even to meet lot area requirements.

One large area shown only as septicly limited upland land on Figure XI-1 is the western end of the cornfields and wet meadows enclosed by Wood St and River St. Yet the aerial photograph on page X-33 shows that this area is heavily ditched for drainage, and it might well be classified as wetlands under closer examination. Similarly, the eastern end of this holding is shown as flood plain with only scattered wetlands on the 1997 Wetlands Inventory map, but it has far more wetlands – wooded swamp - on the earlier USGS maps which preceded extensive land clearing for cornfields.



New Agricultural Investment along Wood St.



Cornfields along River St Perimeter of the Wood St. / River St. Wet Meadows

An overall concern of this plan is to encourage preservation / expansion of viable agriculture while allowing some housing growth in this attractive area.

One step towards this would be to establish an overall density standard and number of allowable units within which both individual houses and small farm or truck garden holdings

would be possible. Thus, with a one to two acre/unit standard, a given development could mix half acre to ¾ acre house lots near permanent open land, and 4-5 acre small farm holdings. By allowing varied lot sizes under the fixed total, it could respect the capacities of the land and accommodate both people needing less than an acre for a small retirement home and those seeking several acres for pasture or a truck garden. The resulting development might have no dedicated open space, but combined with nearby unbuildable land, it could continue much South Halifax's attractive varied rural landscape. A comparable provision in Plymouth allows one house for every 3 acres in rural areas, but reportedly does not require the actual house lots to be that large. Similarly, Halifax's present multi-family provisions require an acre for every unit, but allow the units to be grouped compactly leaving extensive areas open.

Major Facilities

Junior High School / Senior High School

The open 161A land south of Monponsett St. on the Plympton line has an estimated 18 acres of upland on the Halifax side of the line and appears to have another 10-12 acres on the Plympton side. As observed by Planning Board staff, this site has advantages for a prospective new junior high school which will be needed when Pembroke finishes leaving the Silver Lake School system. It will be particularly well-suited if Kingston eventually leaves the system too, since the site is central to the two remaining towns and is on the major road connecting them. If enough space is available this could also be a good site for the new high school which will be needed if Kingston leaves the system. (See Page IV-17 and the aerial photo on page IX-9.) [Note: Due to a high asking price and a high water-table suggesting difficult building conditions, the Tri-Town Committee has decided to forgo this site in favor of a JHS site next to the High School in Kingston.]

Recommendations for Planning Area C

1. Try flexible development under an Aggregate Density zoning bylaw allowing a mix of lot sizes in an overall pattern
2. Acknowledge the one form of agricultural growth, small horse farms, and find ways to support/exploit them
3. Re-examine the usability of some of the Ind.-Zoned land at south end of Monponsett St.; Some of the backland on the east side is neither mapped flood plain nor protected wetlands and has few septic limitations
4. Work with the Department of Environmental Protection and owners to identify any 21E - related hazards or reuse constraints from the former munitions manufacturing on the Wood St. land
5. Rezone the Wood St. wet meadows from the inappropriate Industrial to AR or C

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6. Explore ways to acquire or otherwise protect the Wood Street wet meadows for an optimal mixture of open space / habitat / historic preservation (of the ancient cemetery) and continued farming, such as:
 - Town acquisition through Self Help or Land and Water Conservation Funds or future Community Preservation Act Funds if the town adopts the CPA
 - State purchase of an agricultural preservation restriction from the owners
 - More complex acquisitions offering the owners tax benefits through a trust such as the Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts or the Trust for Public Lands
 - Direct state acquisition, particularly by the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife/ Environmental Law Enforcement
 - Other public or non-profit acquisition/protection of the Wood Street wet meadows and management for open space / habitat possibly leasing the tilled perimeter for continued cultivation.
7. Pursue the East-West (Winnetuxet) Corridor and other streamside greenway proposals in the Open Space Chapter
8. Explore availability / suitability of Ch. 61A upland west of Monponsett St. at the Plympton town line for future junior high school site and/or possible senior high school site. {Though JHS is now planned next to the present High School in Kingston, this might still be a prospective High School site if one is needed.]
9. If a new elementary school is not built elsewhere, consider one off of Thompson St., north of the Winnetuxet River.

D. Town Wide Recommendations

Overall

1. Consider graduating density standards to reflect differing amenities, accessibility, existing uses, and development constraints. This would put the moderate densities (well under one unit / acre) in area A which has lakeside amenities, shopping, compact neighborhoods, major roads and the MBTA rail station, and potential sewerage; use low densities (about one unit /acre in area B, especially just south of Rte. 106; and the lowest overall densities (< one unit / acre) in area C, the southern tier with its remaining agriculture, extensive flood plain and wetlands, limited roads and rural development patterns.
2. Revise the Development Regulations to implement Master Plan recommendations, particularly strengthening one or two commercial centers and protecting sound housing and townscape along major roads from further strip commercial development as detailed in Chapter XII

3. Closely examine development potential of buildable land around cranberry bogs, distinguishing support land needed for continuing operations from surplus holdings
4. Develop a capacity to respond purposefully to Chs. 61, 61A, and 61B opportunities alone or in cooperation with a land trust or related non-profit entity or public agency.
5. In exploring opportunities under Chs. 61, 61A and 61B, consider mixed preservation and development, joint development, or agricultural land banking possibilities
6. Carefully relate future sewerage to appropriate densities in the service areas considering their amenities and accessibility, and to any nearby complementary lower-density development or protected open space

Environmental Issues

1. Examine the application of Ch. 131, S.40 the Wetlands Protection Act to the recent upland bogs which might revert to upland vegetation if abandoned.

Community Design Issues

1. Better relate the alignment and width of subdivision roads to their contexts
2. Designate scenic roads such as Thompson, Pratt, Hayward, River, and Wood Sts.
3. Develop provisions providing an incentive to build on non-agricultural backland rather than on Form A lots with very visible highway frontage.
4. Develop provisions encouraging building in woodlands rather than on visible open fields
5. Adopt minimal side yard and frontage requirements for the CB-mapped, land particularly around the commercial center at Rtes. 106 and 58.
6. Revise the zoning to encourage shared parking, rear parking, direct access between adjacent businesses, and reduced curb cuts, particularly in the commercial center.
7. Reduce parking requirements to that actually needed on all but the one or two busiest days.
8. Work with the recently formed Historic District Commission in reviewing proposals in the new Historic District.
9. Adopt the Community Preservation Act and draw on this Plan to establish objectives under the three action areas Open Space, Historic Preservation and Affordable Housing.
10. Draft and adopt estate lot provisions.

Circulation

1. Use the Subdivision Rules and Regulations or Official Map designations to require easements and development of pedestrian / bicycle paths connecting isolated neighborhoods to each other, and to varied activity centers.
2. Use an Official Map to adopt a binding, skeletal town-wide bicycle/pedestrian path system to which others can relate paths from local developments.
3. Extend Rte. 105 designation through Pine and Elm Streets to improve north - south movement, and make needed roadway improvements
4. Use Site Plan Review and any other powers to work with owners of adjacent retail properties in coordinating access to the Wal-Mart and the proposed adjacent supermarket.

Housing

1. Take diverse efforts to protect and / or add affordable housing in the face of ever-increasing market costs. Examples discussed in Ch VI include:
 - Establishing a Housing Partnership Committee to work with the State Partnership, other town agencies, civic bodies, churches, and non-profit entities to preserve / increase affordable, and to broaden local housing opportunities generally.
 - Keeping local control while encouraging needed housing through local “friendly” comprehensive permits, particularly through the Local Incentive Program.
 - Reducing the multi-family housing area requirements from the actual 7.4 units/acre at Halifax Meadows or the estimated overall 1.4 units/acre at Twin Lakes to perhaps 4 units / acre, still giving each unit 1/4 acre while saving land.
2. Create further low-cost family and elderly housing, and acquire further Section 8 certificates and any available Massachusetts Rental Housing Vouchers
3. Encourage development on wooded rather than open portions of a subdivision, perhaps by adjusting lot area requirements, e.g. to need 1.2 acres / lot on open land and only 8 acre on a wooded lot, and adopting needed definitions and procedures.
4. Encourage development on rear land rather than on Form A lots by allowing the same number of units on a given parcel even if possible frontage lots are forgone.
5. Consider allowing 2-family house on 1.5 acre lots. Each family would have $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre while getting the construction and development economies of a two-family house and offering occupants either rental income or access to needed rental housing.

6. In the event of potential major land acquisition, consider doing a mixed development where a small portion of the land is used for housing to offset acquisition costs, and targeting this housing to meet local needs.
7. Draft and adopt Estate Lot provisions:
 - Reducing frontage requirements to enough for private drives, perhaps 15'-20'
 - Requiring oversize lots, e.g., 80,000 sq. ft..
 - Setting standards for private drives
 - Set standards for required curb-cuts
 - Prohibiting further subdivision or use of the drive to allow development access of adjacent property.
8. Examine use of selective sewerage or package treatment plants to allow mixed-income development at compact village densities on small, carefully chosen sites.
9. Work with non-profit entities like the Wildlands Trust of SE Massachusetts and the South Shore Housing Development Corp. to respond when Ch. 61, 61a and 61b land comes on to the market, particularly to pursue joint developments potentially combining mixed-income housing, needed public facilities, and open space / agriculture uses

Public Facilities

Fire Dept

1. Consider eventual replacement of the present fire station with two, one at the Rte. 36 corner of town, and one near or south of the junction of Rtes 105 and 106 – consider early acquisition if no town-owned site is suitable.

Schools

1. Possibly build any needed junior high school and/or future high school (needed if Kingston leaves the District) at the Monponsett St./ Plympton line site allowing shared facilities /resources
2. Consider expanding the depth and breadth of possible programs and facilities by joining with a third community to build a bigger high school if Kingston leaves the District.
3. Meet growing elementary school needs by expanding the present school, or by building a new neighborhood school off Holmes Street or off of lower Thompson St. .

Commerce

1. As discussed above and in the Economic Development and Implementation chapters, slightly expand and reconfigure the CB zoning in the Commercial Center and reduce

much of it along Rte. 106 in order to lessen strip commercial development and strengthen the emerging Commercial Center.

2. Identify suitable sites for small, walkable, neighborhood-serving retail areas and map them CB, or retain small amounts of CB zoning. Examples are the present store site on Holmes St. near Annawon Drive, Rte. 105 near Highland Drive. and one corner at Plymouth and Carver Streets, South and Hayward Streets, and Plymouth St. and Redwood Road.

Industry

1. Re-examine the usability of the backland west of Monponsett St. at the Plympton line and discuss possible access and development policies with the owner and the Town of Plympton.
2. Investigate the usability of the estimated 48-0 acres of Ind. land south of the closed BFI landfill, perhaps with an access road between the landfill and the powerline.

E. Proposed Land Uses Map

As noted earlier, the results of the proposed policies are suggested on the following map of Proposed Land Uses, except that it understates areas of probable new housing. Residential growth is possible on any of the town's unprotected, privately-owned upland, generally mapped as Forest. Such growth must be consistent with zoning, but the bylaw allows housing as of right or by Special Permit all but the Industrial District. Future growth is recommended to follow a broad overall density pattern reflecting the accessibility, amenities, environmental constraints, and historic neighborhood character of the three Planning Areas as discussed in the Implementation chapter.

