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# Community Benefits Through Government Policy

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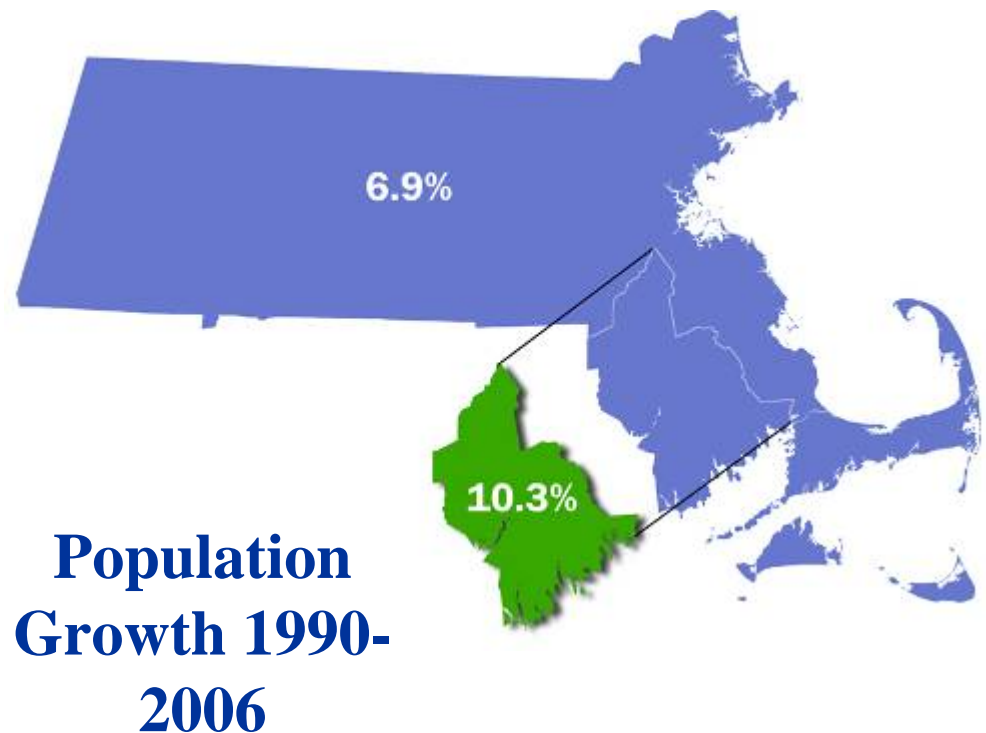
## Two Massachusetts examples

- Community benefits through commuter rail corridor planning in southeastern Massachusetts
- Community benefits through zoning and permitting processes in Cambridge, MA



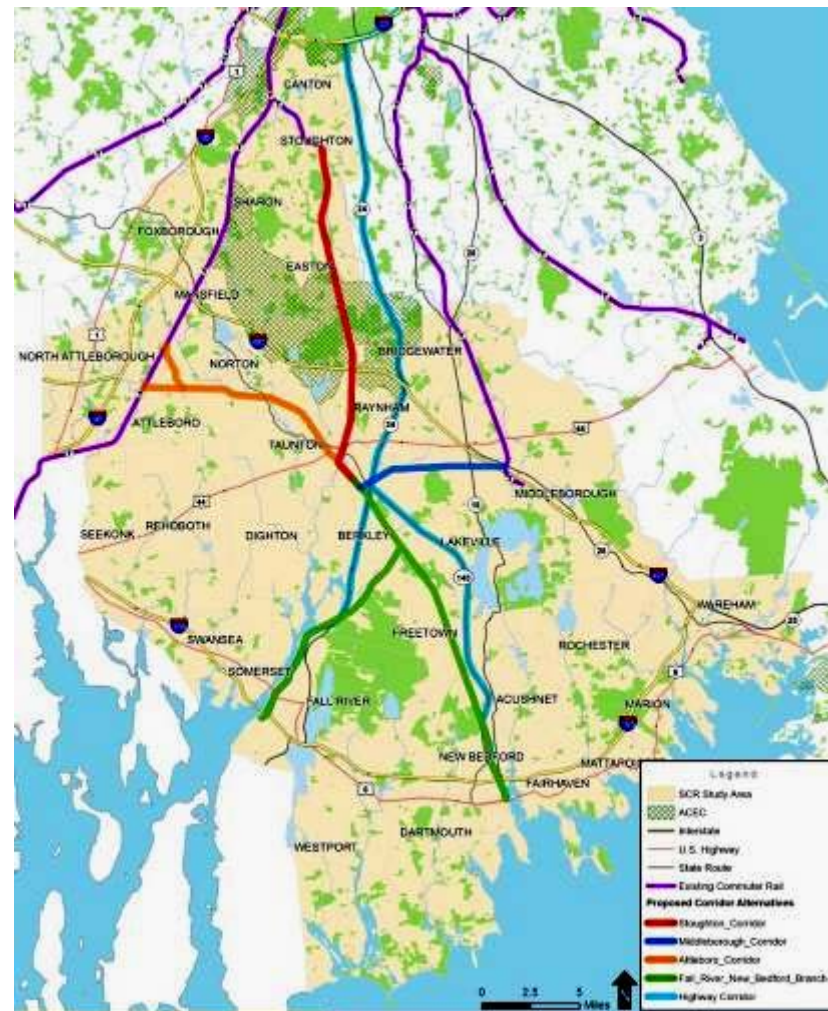
## Extending commuter rail to a fast-growing region

- Sprawling growth, both residential and commercial
- Uneven economic development
- Limited networking of environmental resources
- Loss of working landscapes
- Threats to historic and landscape character



### Planning for 31 cities and towns

- State, region and communities plan for growth and preservation *in advance* of investment in commuter rail
  - TOD and compact development
  - Economic development opportunities
  - Open space and agricultural preservation



## Partnership – State, Regional Commission, Communities

- Identify:
  - Suitable locations for compact development
  - Solutions to infrastructure deficits
  - Improvements to enhance market competitiveness
- Amend regulations to permit compact development
- Align state programs to support smart development and preservation
- Promote state-level reforms to enhance efficient land use



# Opportunities

- Help revitalize economically challenged historic cities
  - Attract a more economically and educationally diverse population
  - Broaden access to jobs, higher education, cultural opportunities along the line and in Boston.
- Focus growth in compact development near train stations, town and village centers
- Preserve regional landscape character and rural activities as an economic asset to the region



## Cambridge, MA: Zoning-based project review and community benefits

- Zoning Article 19 Project Review
- Developed to manage impacts and make sure projects fit into neighborhoods
- Establishes traffic and urban design standards
- Special permit required for new construction
  - 50,000 sf or more
  - Less than 50,000 sf if a use threshold is met for a traffic study
- Urban design objectives establish guidelines
- Large Project Review procedures for staff, abutters and public to review and comment on proposed projects

## Elements included in review

- Traffic study
- Tree study
- Sewer and water service infrastructure
- Noise mitigation
- Urban design narrative



# Urban design policy criteria

- Responsive to existing or anticipated pattern of development
- Pedestrian and bike friendliness with positive relationship to surroundings
- Mitigation of adverse impacts on neighbors (mechanicals, trash, loading, etc.)
- Infrastructure impacts
- Reinforcement and enhancement of historic patterns
- Expansion of housing inventory
- Expansion and enhancement of open space



## The NorthPoint example

- 45-acre former railyard: redevelopment into new mixed use neighborhood
- New multi-modal transit station paid for by developer in public-private partnership with transit agency
  - Developer pays for cleaning and maintenance for 10 years
  - Bicycle end-of-trip facilities



## The NorthPoint example

- 10 acre park
- Multi-use trail connecting to Charles River and regional trail
- Multiple architects for buildings through an international competition



## Using government policy to achieve benefits

- Develop policy criteria with public process
- Give developers clear direction on requirements
- Provide for public review and comment
- Align government actions with desired outcomes