

1986

TOWN OF WEBSTER

MASTER PLAN

Final Draft

Prepared by:

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CHAPTER I

PURPOSE OF THE MASTER PLAN AND CITIZEN INPUT

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

1.1 General Definition of a Master Plan

Master plans are referred to by a number of different names, the most notable being "comprehensive" or "general" plans. All the various popular terms used to describe the process have one thing in common: such devices typically are long range and comprehensive in nature, examine past and present conditions and seek to project into the future how a community should be. This is accomplished through defining the community's goals and objectives, (both short and long term), examining past and present socio-economic trends, the quality of the local infrastructure (i.e., public water and sewer), transportation systems, and physical development, among other issues. A key ingredient to formulating the most in-depth and locally-acceptable plan is to encourage public input and support.

1.2 History and Legislative Authorization

The Standard City Planning Enabling Act, promulgated (i.e., made known to the public) by the U.S. Department of Commerce in 1928, was the first official action taken by the federal government aimed at assembling a legal definition of master planning, (and implicitly encouraging jurisdictions nationwide to adopt such plans). The act provided in part:

"It shall be the duty of the [municipality] to make and adopt a master plan...Such plan...shall show,...among other things, the general location, character, and extent of streets,...waterways, parkways, playgrounds, the general location of public buildings,...and the general location of public utilities...The plan shall be made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the municipality which will...best promote health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development..."

Massachusetts followed suit in 1947 by adding to the General Laws Section 81-D entitled "Master or Study Plan." The statute, reflective of the Standard City Planning Enabling Act, directs planning boards to "make a master or study plan...as said board may deem advisable and from time to time may extend or perfect such plan." Recommended plan components are similar to those referred to in the model act, and include discussion of "existing

and public ways,...public places,...playgrounds,...sites for public buildings,...water conduits and other public utilities," among other topics. Both the federal and the state provisions emphasize the physical aspects of planning rather than noting environmental, socio-economic, or growth management considerations. Since these federal and Massachusetts provisions were written, master planning has evolved to include these and other facets as well.

Traditional physically-oriented master plans have been the long range or "end state" type, and have sought to present a "picture" of what a particular town or city should look like 20-25 years into the future. Some planning theorists and professional planners, however, agree that few of these plans have had much influence on development patterns nationwide. Master plans produced during the 1960's and 1970's, when large amounts of federal (Department of Housing Urban Development [HUD]) monies were available to fund these projects, in most cases were of the long range, physically-oriented variety.

Following elimination of the HUD 701 program in the 1980's, states and local jurisdictions were hardpressed to come up with funding to offset costs of having consultants prepare master plans. Partly as a result of this funding shortfall, towns and cities were forced to abandon the comprehensive approach to local planning, or cut back considerably on such efforts. At about the same time, a movement was underway to redefine the validity and role of the master plan. Planning professionals continue to seek a "theory" of planning i.e., what is the proper means for a state, region, or locality to plan? In the meantime, master plans, as alluded to earlier, have undergone a transformation and the more innovative plans are viewed as those that set more short term goals and objectives, are less physically-oriented, emphasize environmental protection, need for affordable housing, and stress the importance of growth management to control future development patterns. Plan authors frequently suggest that various elements be updated regularly, say every five years.

1.3 Need for Master Plans

The best argument for planning is to look at many older U.S. cities, or for that matter, some Massachusetts small towns and suburbs. Allowing private enterprise free rein over growth considerations, with minimal input from the public sector, has resulted in deteriorating downtowns and disjointed residential development patterns. It can be argued that even the worst of all plans are better than none at all; better plans serve to revitalize depressed areas and assure that undeveloped areas do not become mirror images of the unplanned sections of a community or region.

1.4 What a Master Plan Is...and Is Not

Section 1.1 discussed in general terms the characteristics of most master plans. This section will deal more specifically with the pros and cons of these studies; in other words, how powerful a tool master plans really are.

The general public often feels confused when hearing that a plan is needed. Such misunderstandings may influence rejection of necessary appropriations to pay for preparation of the document. Or, once the plan is completed, it is rarely if ever referred to, or used, ultimately collecting dust in municipal offices. The possibility of the latter event occurring in Webster justifies a discussion of a typical master plan's traits.

Master plans are studies which attempt to present a "snapshot" of a community at a particular point in time. Incorporating narrative, tables, figure, maps and other illustrations, the authors rely upon information that is both current and also somewhat dated. For example, in this plan, sources used to define the Town's environmental features (Chapter III: "Environmental Analysis") for the most part are up-to-date (e.g., wetlands, floodplains, topography), whereas population, housing and income data presented in Chapter VI: "Socio-Economic and Housing Profile" is largely from the 1980 U.S. Census. Plans typically address community growth as a Town-wide issue, and not as just a concern for particular sections of the community. And, they normally encourage the broadest public involvement during both the preparation and implementation phases.

The above paragraph describes some of the attributes of master plans. One must be aware, however, of some common misconceptions attributed to these studies. Master plans do not have powers of enforcement, but are advisory only. Unlike zoning bylaws or subdivision regulations, they are not legally binding. Nevertheless, master plans are recognized as legitimate mechanisms by which a municipality may defend a local decision, e.g., the rejection of a large development proposal if not "in compliance" with the plan. Courts have time and again overruled private sector interests in cases where a town or city has cited potential conflict with the plan when a project has been denied.

A master plan is not a cure-all for all local problems, nor is it intended to be so rigid as to not allow change to occur. The plan should be seen as a tool by which to guide the future course of community growth. Various local officials and boards, and not just the Planning Board, should be participants in its formulation and subsequent implementation.

And finally, the plan is not a zoning bylaw nor zoning map, or vice versa. Zoning is but one of the many means (others include general Town bylaws and Board of Health bylaws) used to carry out the plan.

1.5 Updating the Plan

Chapter 81-D of the Mass. General Laws instructs planning boards to "...from time to time...extend or perfect [the master] plan." Although keeping the plan current is not mandatory (nor for that matter is master planning), the Town should heed the statute's wording so that obsolescence of the plan may be avoided or at least minimized.

A number of efforts concentrating on keeping the plan up-to-date may be considered. The Planning Board, as lead coordinator, could select one plan element each year in need of an update. Then, the Board would assign these tasks to various subcommittees of its own choosing, which could include Planning Board members, other municipal board members and officials, and lay citizens. Conformance with a capital facilities plan, if such a plan is devised, is a crucial element to ensuring the legitimacy and success of the plan.

In order that the Planning Board be successful in carrying out these revisions, the Town may want to consider hiring professional assistance, either through occasional hiring of consultants, or hiring a professional full-time planner (Webster hired a full-time Office of Community Development director/planner in July, 1989. However, 70% of her time will be devoted to OCD projects, primarily grantwriting, with the remaining 30% for consulting to the Planning Board. Therefore, the Town may want to consider hiring a full-time planning director). Master plans are recognized as having a lifespan of about ten years, so by the late 1990's, Town officials should look to undertake a comprehensive update of this document.

2.0 SUMMARY OF THE COMMUNITY SURVEY

2.1 Distribution and Sample Size

In February 1989, 1,000 surveys were mailed to households throughout Webster. Of this number, 880 were randomly chosen from the Town's 4 voting precincts, with the remainder sent to Webster's 120 representative Town Meeting members.

This section will summarize the responses to this survey, by comparing and contrasting the opinions and needs of the random sample versus the local legislators.

2.2 Survey Design

The purpose of the survey was to gauge public sentiment on a variety of issues, most of which are addressed in this Plan. More specifically, the survey asked for citizen input regarding opinions and desires concerning affordable housing, the Downtown, environmental quality, growth and development, infrastructure, industrial development, open space and recreation, and public schools. A general question attempted to poll local feelings

relative to the adequacy of police, fire and ambulance services, solid waste collection/disposal, and medical care and public transportation. Seven additional questions were included in a "demographic" category to assess residency patterns, employment and income. And, each participant was given the opportunity to attach written comments to expand on responses to survey questions or to discuss other issues of relevance not covered in the questionnaire. Appendix 1 shows percentage breakdowns of responses, first by Town Meeting members and second by random sample respondents. Also included is a summary of the written comments.

2.3 Rate of Response

Of the two groups, Town Meeting members and the random sample, the former had a higher rate of response. Nearly one-half of this group (57 or 47.5%) sent the surveys back, whereas 303 (34.4%) of the random sample responded. Of the Town Meeting member returns, 12 attached or wrote additional comments whereas 22 residents of the random group did the same.

2.4 Significant Findings

2.4.1 General

- a. Respondents in both groups were satisfied with a number of municipal services e.g., police, highway department, fire and ambulance services.
- b. The majority of random sample respondents (53%) felt Downtown parking is inadequate, while most Town Meeting members felt it to be adequate (61%).
- c. Solid waste collection/disposal, ability of the Town to control growth, environmental protection and supply of recreational facilities topped the list (in both groups) of items judged as "inadequate".
- d. Overall, respondents in both groups feel favorably about public schools, medical care, water supply and sewerage.

2.4.2 Affordable Housing

- a. Only 36% of the Town Meeting respondents believed that Webster should place a priority on pursuing ways to develop affordable housing. Conversely, 55% of the random group believed that this effort is important.
- b. A slight majority of both groups felt that accessory apartments should be permitted if properly regulated through zoning.

- c. A clear majority of respondents believed that the Town should pursue funding to provide more elderly housing, while only a slight majority agreed with the notion of applying for funds for family housing.
- d. By an overwhelming majority "vote", each group did not favor allowing cluster zoning (73/69%) for single family units, (86/74%) for multi-family dwellings.

2.4.3 The Downtown

- a. A majority in both groups (82/70%) felt that the Main Street business district does not satisfy their needs.
- b. The three most frequently cited improvements for upgrading the CBD were: better traffic circulation, more retail stores, and the need for parking improvements.

2.4.4 Environmental Quality

- a. Support or strong support was voiced for the protection and preservation of all types of open space listed on the survey, which included beaches, forest land, wetlands, flood-prone areas and agricultural lands.
- b. With regard to Webster Lake, nearly all respondents (99/88%) favored regulating high speed boats, while a clear majority saw the need to improve the lake through controlling weed growth (70/70%).

2.4.5 Growth and Development

- a. A slightly larger proportion of Town Meeting Members (39%) felt that Webster's population should increase, versus the random sample (26%).

But, more importantly, the majority in both groups felt that population should not increase.
- b. Overall, respondents favored development that provides jobs, increases number of retail stores and increases commercial tax base for revenues.
- c. Generally, respondents in both groups felt that the Town's volunteer boards are unable to deal effectively with growth issues. A larger number of persons in the random category had no opinion regarding this issue.
- d. The Town Meeting respondents reacted more favorably to the proposition that full-time professionals should be hired to assist various municipal boards and departments. The Planning Board and Building Inspector's Office are deemed most in need by the Town Meeting Representatives.

2.4.6 Infrastructure

- a. A slight majority of respondents (54/52%) believed that, in general, the safety and condition of public ways in Webster are adequate.
- b. Those who felt that Webster's streets are generally inadequate rated the following as the most deficient areas: Routes 16/12/193 intersection; Thompson Road/I-395 intersection; Lake Parkway; School Street/Klebart Street intersection; Route 12 in front of Wonder Food Warehouse; and East Main Street ("traffic problems").
- c. Only about one-fourth of all respondents believed truck traffic to be a problem on residential streets. Nevertheless, the majority of that group favored restricting truck traffic along these public ways.
- d. Town Meeting member respondents not connected to water and/or sewer were generally more willing to fund water and sewer extensions than were the random sample respondents. The same was true, although to a lesser extent, in the event that no funds were available from the federal or state governments.
- e. Recycling was chosen by both groups as the Town's best method for handling solid waste disposal. A transfer station placed second while landfills finished last in both categories.

2.4.7 Industrial Development

- a. Over three-fourths of both groups (84/77%) believed that the Town should encourage the development of industrial uses to balance residential growth.
- b. Research and development companies were cited as the most preferable type of industries for Webster to attract (71/59%), followed by wholesale distributors (54/46%).

2.4.8 Open Space and Recreation

- a. Among the areas identified in the Town's 1988 "Conservation and Recreation Plan" for recreational development and general upgrading, Webster Memorial Beach (both summer and winter recreation) scored the highest among both groups.
- b. A clear majority of respondents (64% in both groups) supported the implementation of user fees to finance the maintenance and operation of Town recreation facilities.

2.4.9 Public Schools

- a. Respondents generally believed (67/59%) that the Webster School system has adequate space capacity for its students.
- b. Should there be a need to provide increased space in Webster's schools, most respondents would prefer additions to existing schools.
- c. A majority (58/52%) favored spending more tax money for school-related expenses; most of the respondents believed that such funds should be geared to improving curriculum.

2.4.10 Demographics

- a. Nearly all respondents (86/87%) have lived in Webster over 20 years.
- b. The two most common sources of local information among respondents are the Webster Times and Worcester Telegram and Gazette. Only a small percentage of the random group (15%) attend meetings in the Town. Not too surprisingly, three-fourths (75%) of the Town Meeting respondents get their information about Webster from attending meetings.
- c. Annual household income levels of the Town Meeting members was substantially higher than the random sample.

CHAPTER II

LAND USE INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Changes in land use over a period of time signal the need for closer monitoring of these occurrences, and implementation of strategies to deal with development pressures. Like many Massachusetts communities, Webster has experienced a loss of open land in the wake of new construction. Natural, undeveloped land has given way to substantial residential growth in the form of single family subdivisions, multi-family developments and condominiums.

This chapter will provide an analysis of land use changes Town-wide between 1971 and 1985. The source for this information is Resource Mapping of the Department of Forestry and Wildlife Management - University of Massachusetts (in association with Mass. GIS) Resource Mapping. The group completed computerized mapping of Webster in May, 1989. The graphics are based on interpretations of aerial photos for flights conducted in the summers of 1985 and 1971 for the Massachusetts Agricultural Experiment Station, Forestry and Wildlife Department. The consultants also tabulated total acreage for 21 land use categories, noting changes between the two study years.

In addition, an examination of residential growth since 1985 will be presented. This will be based on building permit issuances since that time, and will include a tally of these numbers by development and a map illustrating the approximate location of these subdivisions and developments.

2.0 LAND USE: 1971 and 1985

2.1 Land Use Classifications

The Massachusetts Agricultural Experiment Station (UMass, Amherst) devised an intensive land use classification system in the early 1970's. This was done in order to compare land use changes and trends between 1951 and 1971 aerial photograph interpretations. In 1951, the University of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit assembled a statewide land use and vegetative cover mapping system. This was done primarily to map and measure land use and vegetation as wildlife habitat. The classification system employed, although limited, was widely used by professionals in a number of fields, including foresters, soil conservationists, landscape architects and planners at various levels.

The 1971 classification system (which was made compatible with the 1951 version) defined and improved upon the earlier system, enabling photo interpreters to eventually reinterpret the older aerials. The newer system attempted to describe the nature of the land itself, the vegetation on the landscape or the land

use. Separate land use and vegetative types were established, broken down into six generalized categories. For the 1985 maps and accompanying statistics, the process was streamlined so that the 104 categories were grouped into 21 land use and vegetative cover types. The idea was to simplify the methodology so that tabulations of acreage totals would become simplified and the maps easier for the reader to interpret. Nevertheless, the newest system remains compatible with the 1971 version, since the 104 land use and vegetative types "fit" into the 21 generalized categories. Appendix 2 identifies and defines 20 of the 21 land use type ("salt marshes" were excluded given that Webster is not a coastal community), broken down by 6 general categories of use.

2.2 Limitations of Classification System

Brief mention should be made of the potential shortfalls of this type of classification methodology. One should be aware that no system is immune from misinterpretations, and that no system can be all-inclusive with regard to clearly identifying all possible types of land use.

Aerial photo interpreters represent a variety of disciplines. Backgrounds include education in marine science, wildlife biology, natural resource planning, and forest ecology, among others. Thus, interpretations of land use and vegetative cover based on reference to the "language" of the classification systems devised may differ among the various professionals because of levels of skill and familiarity with aerial photography. Also, certain land uses are more easily recognized while others are difficult to discern for even the most experienced interpreter. For example, mining and waste disposal areas, agricultural land, outdoor recreation land and urban land are relatively easy to identify. Wetlands, however, and especially forests are much more difficult for an interpreter to recognize.

For the 1971 and the 1985 interpretations, uses such as apartment buildings, parking garages, hospitals and other public buildings in the "core" areas of towns and cities could not be consistently and accurately typed. Also, floodplains of rivers were not easily identified. Therefore, such land uses and natural systems were not included in the system. An additional limitation of the classification system are that publicly-owned and privately held vacant properties, with development potential, are not clearly identified.

2.3 Change in Land Use, 1971-1985

Analysis of the aerial photographs reveals that some drastic changes have occurred with the use of land in Webster between 1971 and 1985. Those categories of land use showing losses are Forestland (-327.452 ac.), Open Land (-40.875 ac.) and Pasture (-35.994 ac.). By contrast, 255.134 acres were developed into residential uses (which includes symbols R0, R1, R2 and R3), all

of this land formerly in one of the three use categories showing decreases. Other notable increases occurred with Urban Open or Public (47.363 ac.). Mining, (25.820 ac.) and perhaps more importantly, with Industrial (40.318 ac.). Table 1 displays these changes in acreage by land use types. Figures 1 illustrates the acreage tallies and numerical changes.

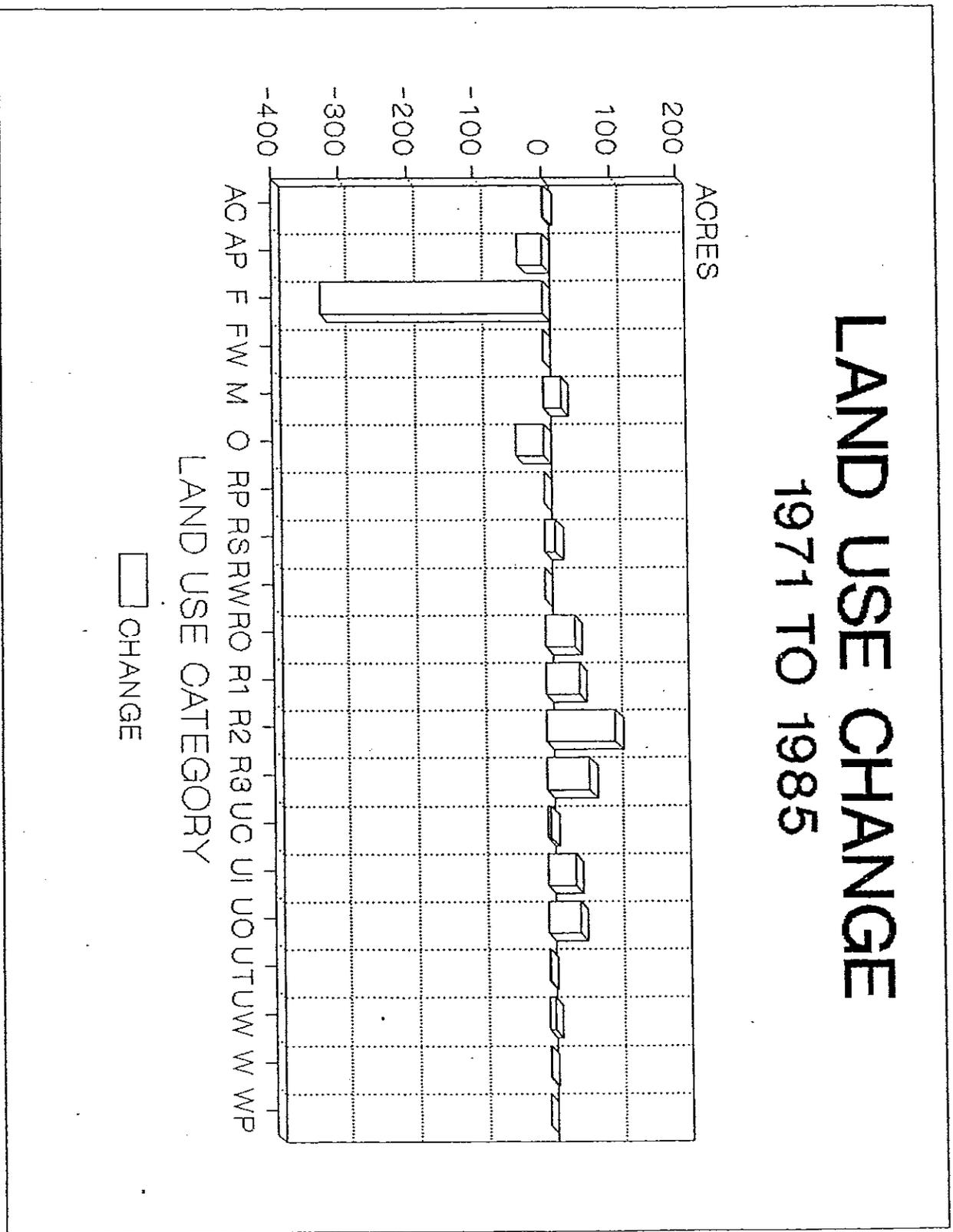
Table 1
Acreage of Land Use by
Type and Change, 1971-1985.

Type	Symbol	1971 Use	1985 Use	Change
Cropland	AC	50.100	52.602	2.502
Pasture	P	118.616	82.622	-35.994
Open Land	O	236.114	195.239	-40.875
Woody Perennial-Orchard	WP	7.836	7.836	0.000
Forestland	F	4,876.040	4,548.588	-327.452
Inland Wetland	FW	271.627	271.627	0.000
Water	W	1,263.366	1,261.308	2.058
Mining	M	64.036	89.856	25.820
Waste Disposal	UW	36.989	45.438	8.449
Multi-Family Residential	RO	23.556	66.209	42.653
High Density Residential	R1	919.989	968.659	48.670
Medium Density Residential	R2	486.221	587.238	101.017
Low Density Residential	R3	298.221	361.313	62.794
Commercial	C	164.159	169.317	5.158
Industrial	UI	81.557	121.875	40.318
Urban Open-or-Public	UO	160.300	207.663	47.363
Transportation	UT	172.978	174.824	1.846
Participant Recreation	RP	28.443	28.443	0.000
Spectator Recreation	RS	27.916	43.589	15.673
Water Based Recreation	RW	<u>45.406</u>	<u>45.406</u>	
Total		9,331.710	9,331.710	

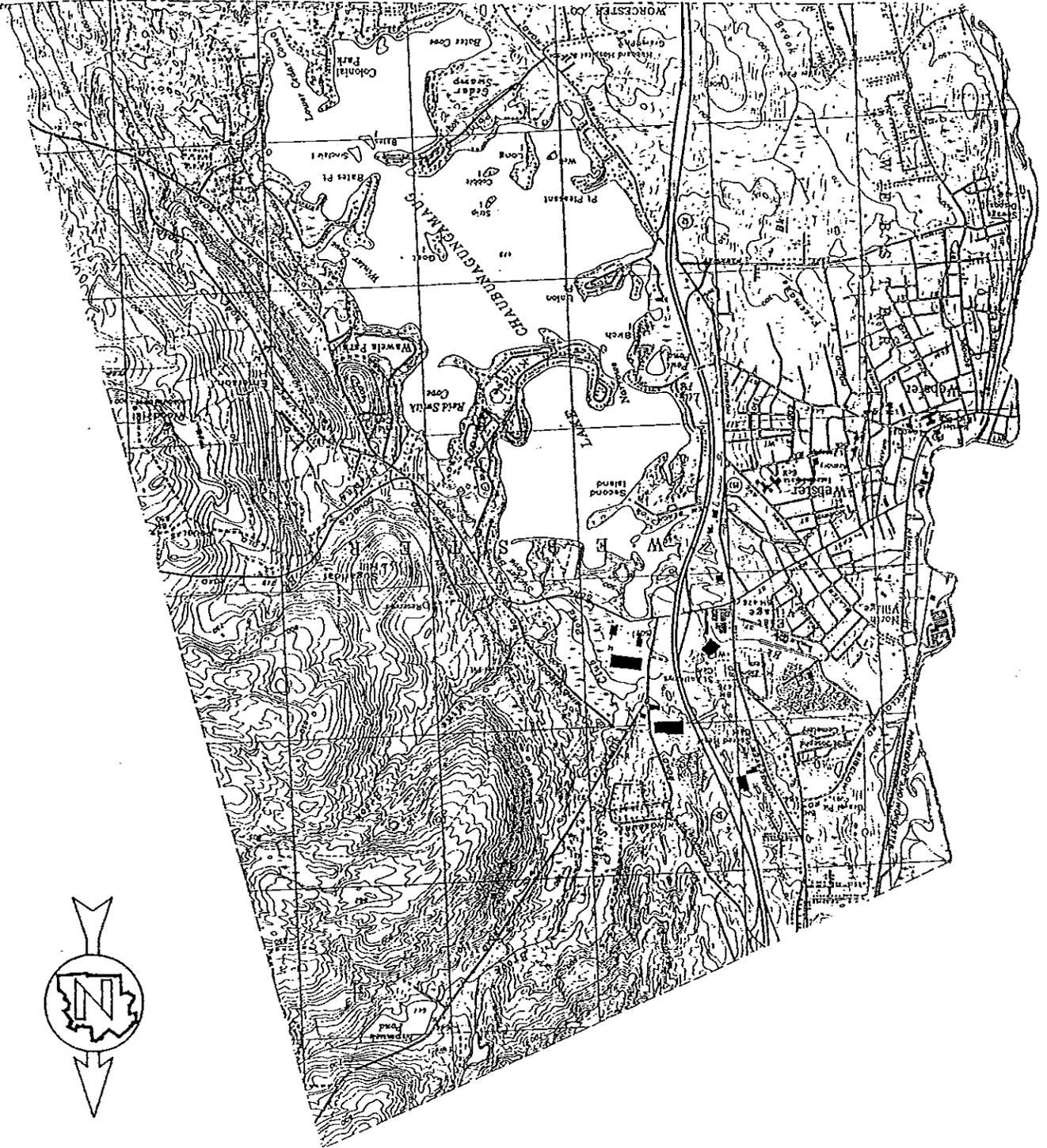
Maps 1 and 2, shown beside one another on the following pages, graphically illustrate the change in land use during this 14-year period. The maps are superimposed over U.S.G.S. topographic maps (at which scale the land use maps were drawn) so that road systems, water bodies, housing developments and other pertinent information not shown on the 1971 and 1985 maps is included. Note that many areas formerly identified as Forestland in 1971, in particular land west of I-395, were developed into residences of varying densities during the 1970's and early-mid 1980's.

LAND USE CHANGE 1971 TO 1985

FIGURE 1

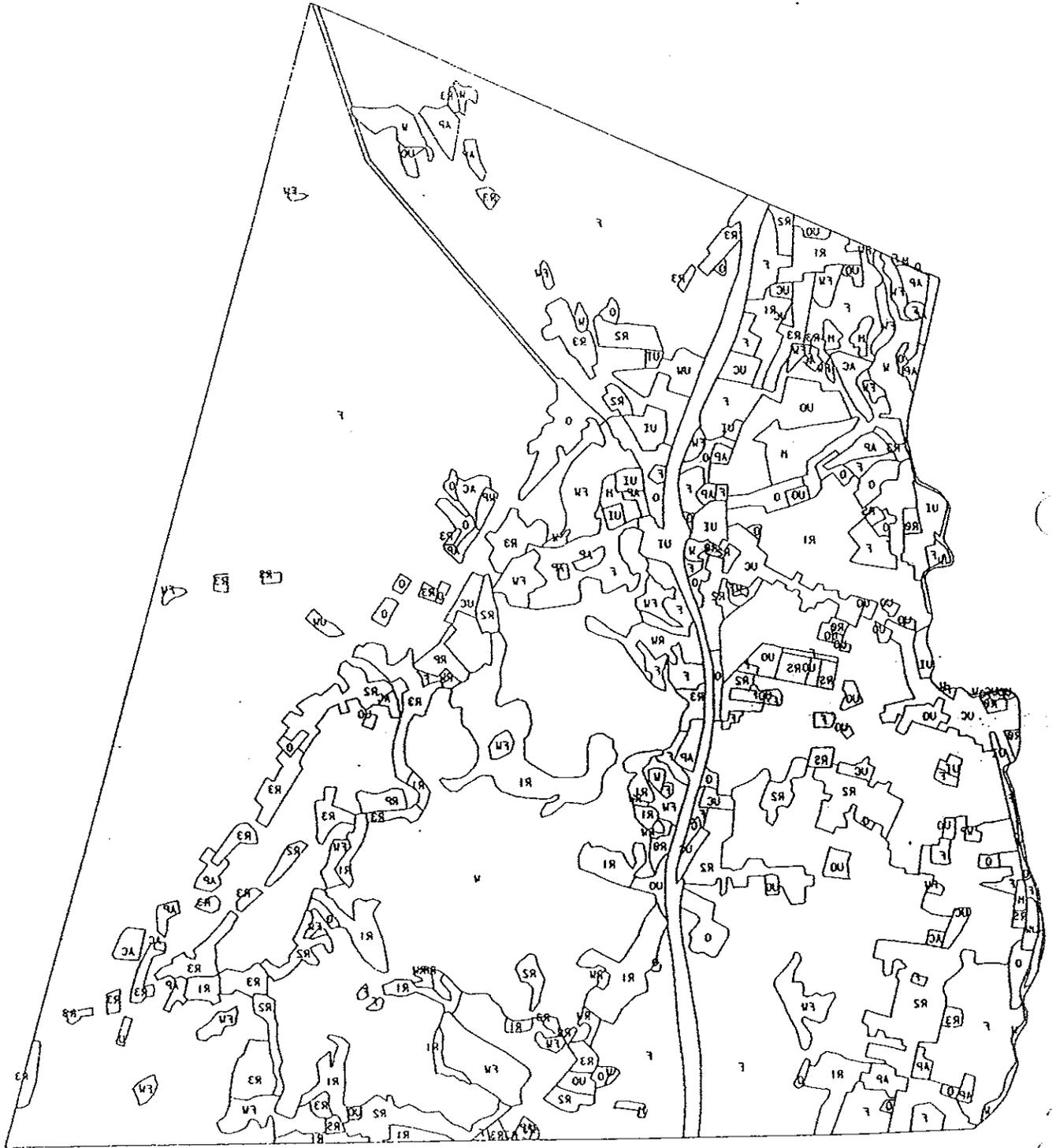


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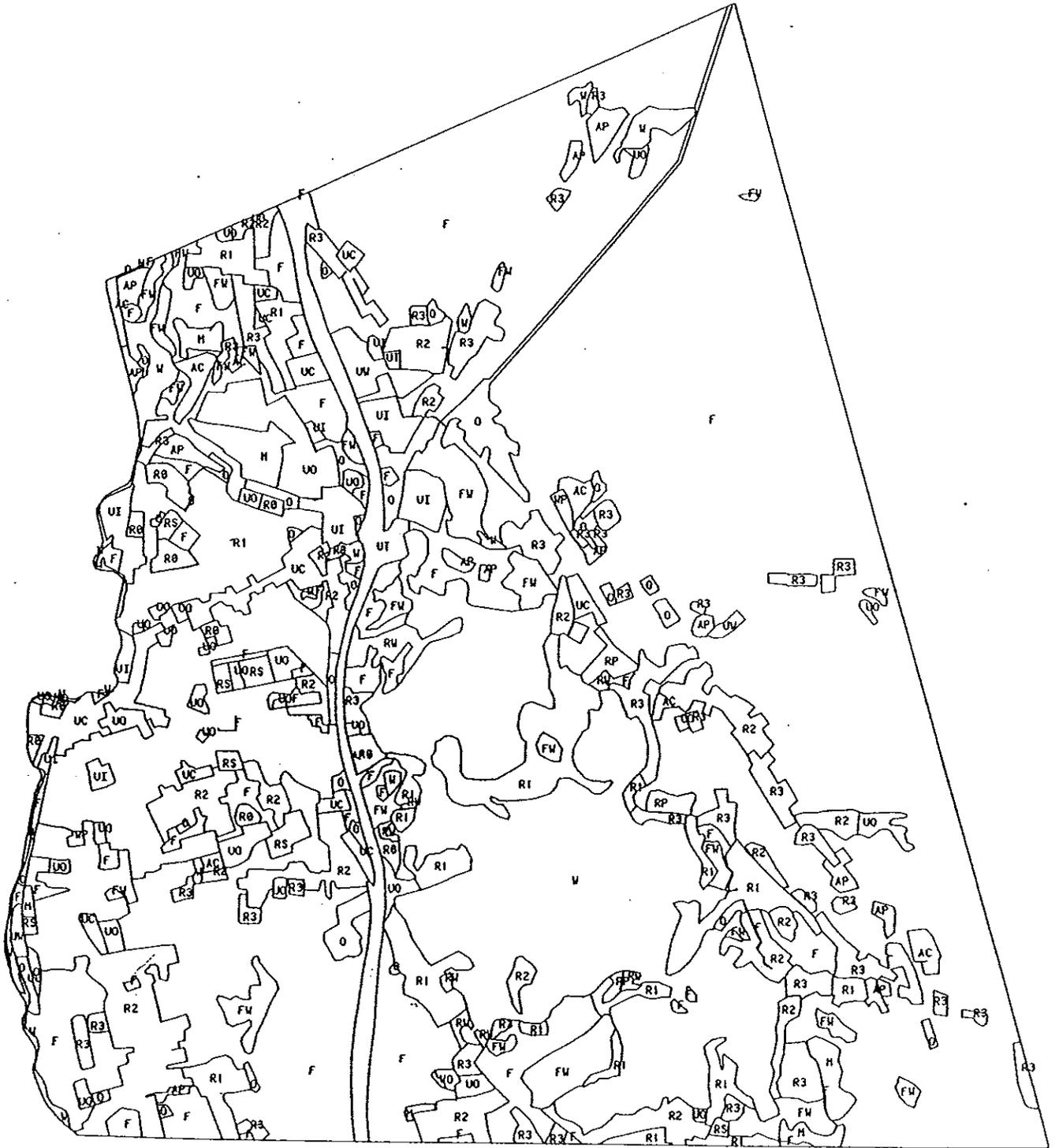


WEBSTER MASTER PLAN
USGS BASE MAP

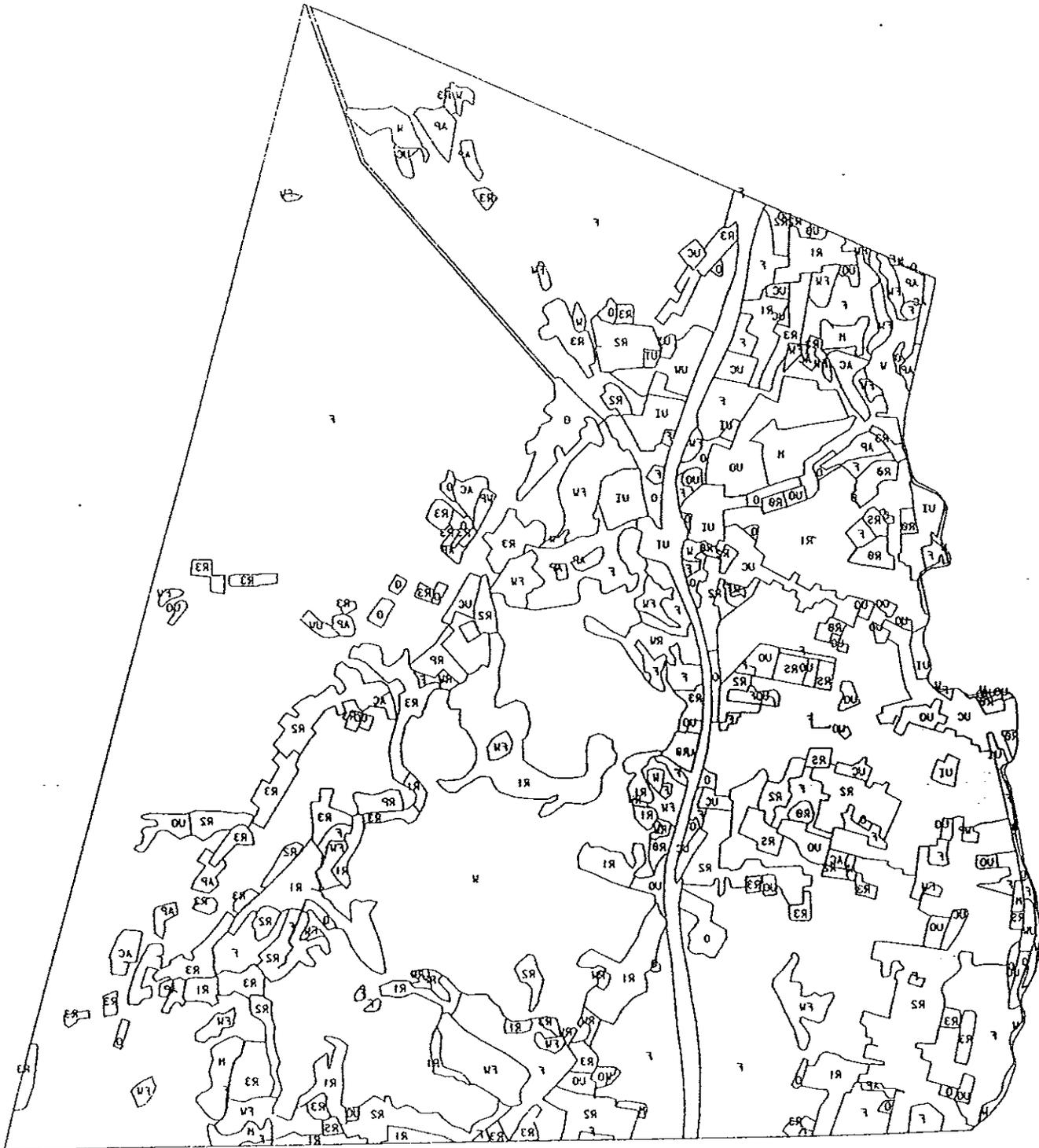
MAP 1: 1971 LAND USE



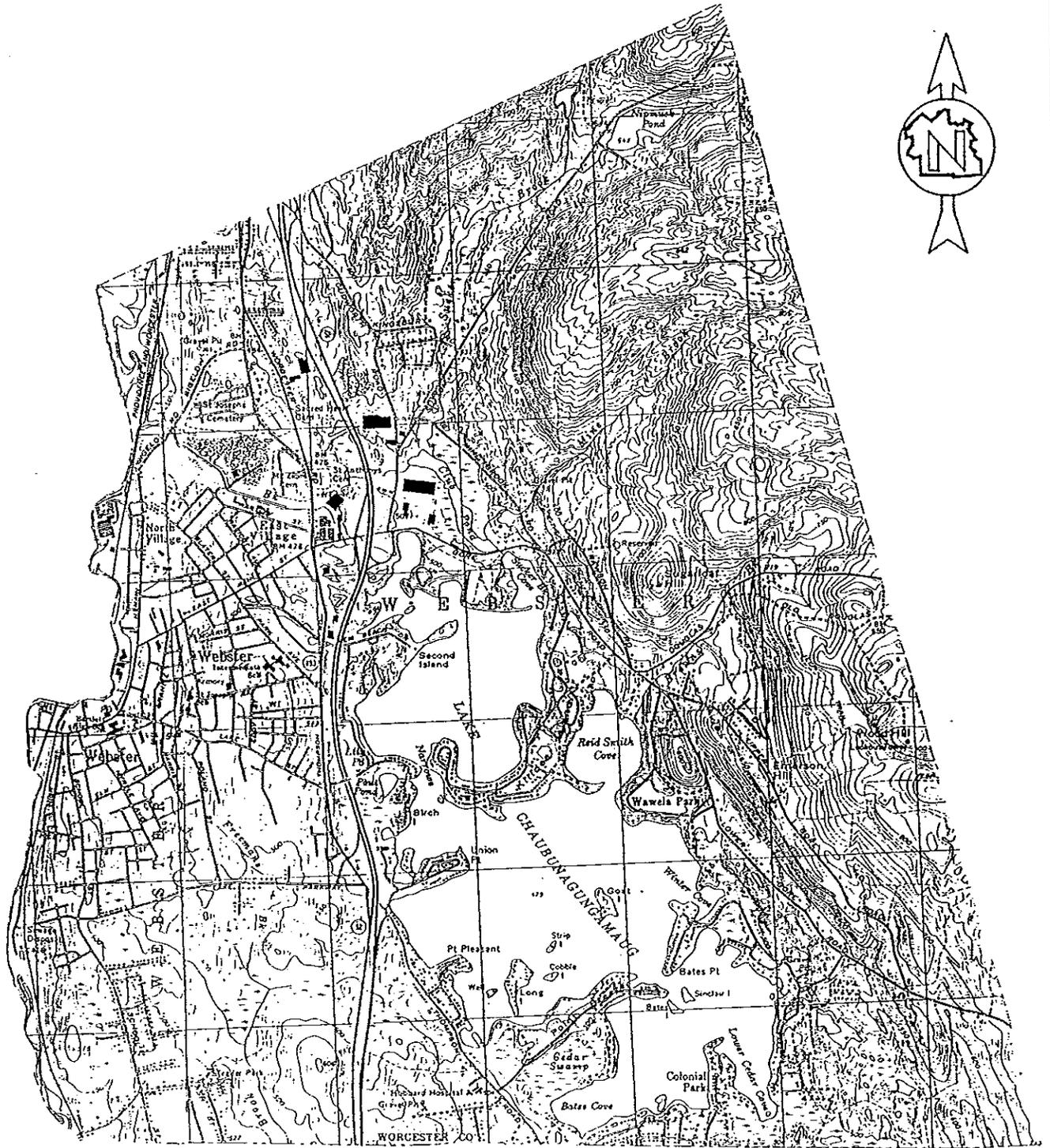
MAP 2: 1985 LAND USE



MAP S: 1985 LAND USE



WEBSTER MASTER PLAN USGS BASE MAP



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REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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3.0 RESIDENTIAL GROWTH SINCE 1985

Webster's zoning scheme plays a crucial role in determining land use changes in various sections of the Town. Table 1 showed development of undeveloped parcels between 1971-1985 was largely residential, which logically follows since the bulk of this land was within one of the Town's four residential zoning districts.

CMRPC staff has consulted with Webster Planning Board officials and the Building Inspector to assess the extent and the location of large scale residential projects from 1985 to the spring of 1989. (Roughly 175 permits have been issued for 1 or 2 lot developments since 1985. The construction of these units have been scattered throughout Town but because of the difficulty in tracking them, they were not included.) The Building Inspector has provided a list of building permits issued during this period by subdivision home or by street location. The Planning Board was able to identify the location, approximate size, number of units approved and average lot sizes for these developments. The Board also provided considerable information on approved developments not yet built (i.e., issued building permits) either approved prior to or after 1985. Table 2 lists the developments which have been issued building permits (by number) in addition to those approved but where occupancy of units has yet to take place. Map 3 shows the general location of these developments.

Table 2

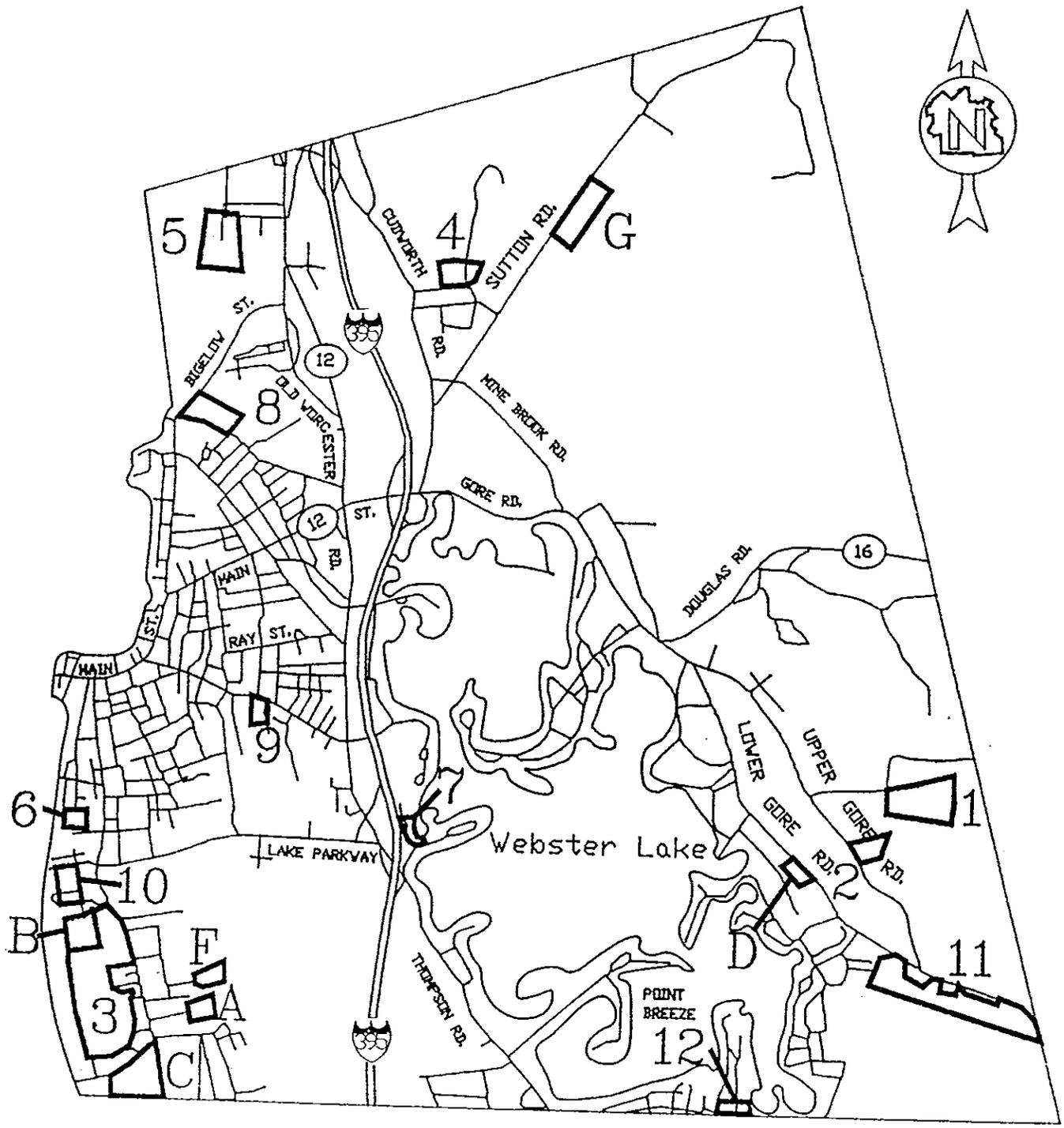
New Residential Developments

Reference #/Letter	Name or Location	# Units Approved	# Permits Issued	Average Lot Sizes
1	Blueberry Hill	?	73	1 acre
2	Mike's Way	16	10	1 acre
3	Westview	100	69	12,000 SF
4	Pineview	15	4	40,000 SF
5	Hugo Terrace	29	4	?
6	High Crest	40	25	-
7	Treasure Island*	?	100	-
8	Bigelow Road	22	15	12,000 SF
9	Stefaniak Avenue	12	12	16,000 SF
10	Kelly-Erin Lane	7	3	14,000 SF
11	Lower Gore Road	13	6	1-2 acres
12	Colonial Park	6	6	5,000 SF
A	Stephen Drive Extension	32	-	15,000 SF
B	Pelletier	24	-	15,000 SF
C	Harry-Leo	6	-	1 acre
D	David & Ronald McCann	21	-	1/2 acre
E	Irvin F. Piehler*	14	14**	-
F	Pine Grove Park	23	-	1/2 acre
G	Sutton Road	8	-	1 acre

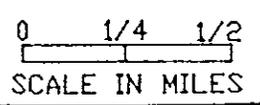
* Condominium developments

** Planning Board's records indicate that units already built; however, building permits may not yet have been issued.

WEBSTER MASTER PLAN MAP 3: LARGE SCALE RESIDENTIAL GROWTH AND APPROVED DEVELOPMENT PLANS SINCE 1985



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4.0 CONCLUSIONS

Most large scale residential development occurring in Webster within the past two decades has been primarily west of Interstate 395. Availability of municipal sewer and water, a superior road network, the absence of environmental constraints (which will be discussed at greater length in Chapter III) together determine the suitability of the land for development. Thus, the concentration and diversity of "active" land uses west of the interstate is much greater due to the existing infrastructure, a comprehensive circulation system and lack of slopes, wetlands and floodplains.

Resource Mapping and Mass GIS plan to update land use statewide, including Webster, in 1990. Flights will be conducted, and photo interpreters hope to have maps and data available to the public in either late 1990 or sometime in 1991. Webster officials are urged to acquire this information as soon as it is available in order to update this important element of the Master Plan.

CHAPTER III

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Physical characteristics of the landscape to a large extent dictate the type and the rate of growth in a community. The existence of slopes, wetlands, floodplains, rivers and brooks, lakes and ponds affect the land's suitability for development. Surface drainage, soil conditions, and groundwater are other important physical attributes controlling growth.

This chapter will discuss the presence of these environmental factors in Webster, and attempt to describe how they affect the capability of undeveloped land to support future growth. Town-wide maps illustrating these constraints (slopes, wetlands, and floodplains) will be compared to Maps 2 and 3 from Chapter II (1985 Land Use and Residential Development: 1985 - Present) to assess development potential of Webster's remaining open land. Discussions pertaining to other relevant environmental concerns; drainage patterns (which includes a map), groundwater and soils, will follow.

2.0 ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

2.1 Topography and Slope

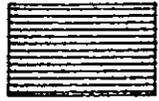
The topographic conditions of an available parcel of land can greatly influence its development potential. Hillside locations present scenic vistas many would consider an agreeable amenity. At the same time, development on steep slopes often necessitates excessive site improvements due to engineering and environmental concerns.

Webster's built environment for the most part respects the land's topography. As Map 4 reveals, areas east and north of Webster Lake, which are less developed than the more densely built-up sections west of I-395, are more constrained by steep (greater than 15%) and moderate (8-15%) slopes (although water and sewer lines, which will be discussed in Chapter IV, play a role in land development). It appears that a significant amount of this property is Forestland, which was defined in Chapter II as land predominated by various tree species. Vast tracts of Webster's Forestland, which includes tracts in the Sugarloaf Hill area, are in private ownership.

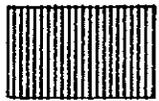
Steep slopes are considered a constraint for land development for a number of reasons. First, certain soil associations when found on steep slopes, present the danger of soil slippage by gravity or water erosion. Areas with steep slopes complicate placement of on-site septic disposal systems and can impede their proper functioning. Steep grades often require site improvements to

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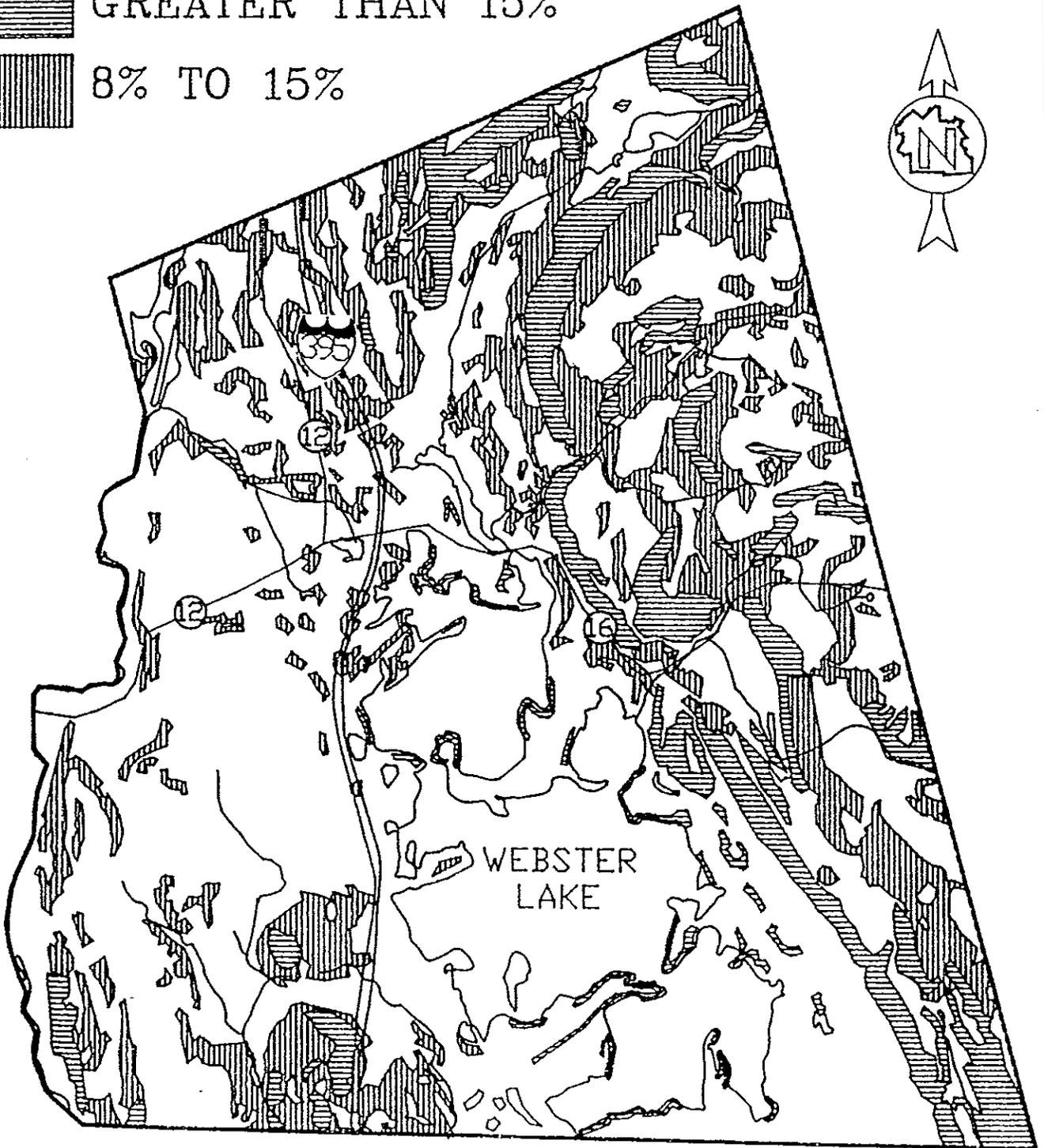
MAP 4: SLOPES



GREATER THAN 15%



8% TO 15%



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enable proper utility, roadway, and foundation placement. Finally, insensitive development can cause hillside erosion and sedimentation of nearby streams, affecting water quality and reducing flood storage capacity.

Moderate slopes do not preclude development, although careful site planning on these grades is required to avoid the adverse environmental consequences that could result should proper safeguards not be taken. Typically, such lands are best suited for low density residential development due to the high cost of construction and environmental safeguards that must be employed.

2.2 Wetlands

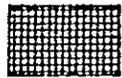
The State Wetlands Protection Act (M.G.L. Chapter 131, Section 40) defines freshwater wetlands as "swamps, bogs, meadows, and marshes where surface water or groundwater is at or near the surface for a duration sufficient to support the prevalence of vegetation adapted to reproduce in saturated or seasonally saturated soils." Wetlands act as natural flood-storage areas, preventing inundations of downstream areas. In some cases, wetlands provide a source of recharge for groundwater and aquifers. Furthermore, they act as natural water purifiers by providing a filtering system for suspended contaminants. Lastly, wildlife habitats and refuges are frequently found in wetland areas. Chapter 131, Section 40 was amended in 1987 to include wildlife habitats as coming under its protective language.

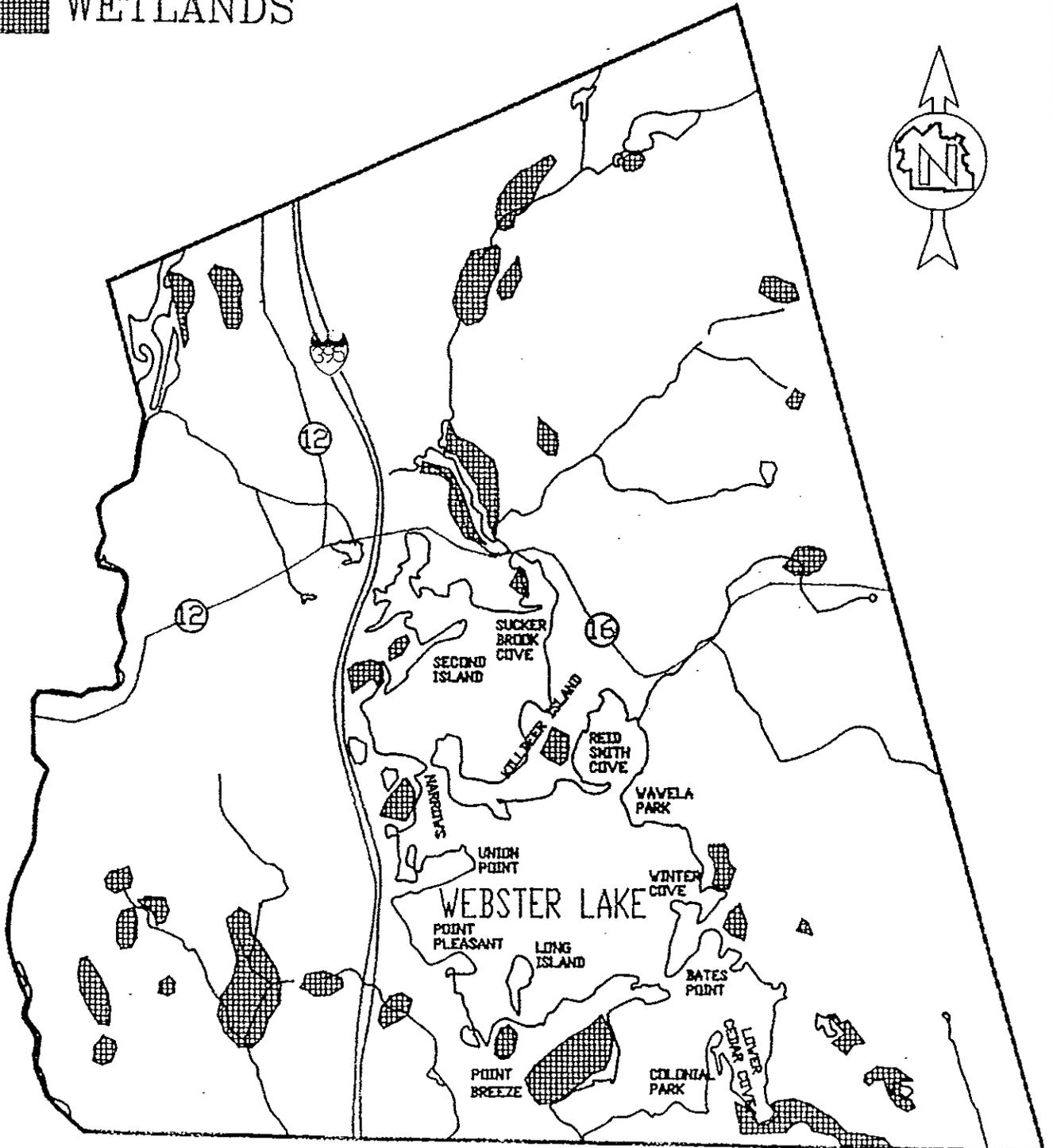
Wetlands, compared to moderate and severe slopes, are not commonplace in Webster, as illustrated in Map 5. This suggests that the Town has few level, low elevation areas capable of supporting wetland vegetation (although wetlands are known to exist on less than level terrain at high elevations). Webster's wetlands have formed in areas adjacent to Webster Lake (e.g., Cedar Swamp on Point Breeze) and surrounding the various brooks and rivers (e.g., Sucker, Long Branch and Freemans Brooks and the French River) around various ponds (e.g., Nipmuck and Club Ponds along with several unnamed smaller surface water resources).

Both Federal and State regulations have been enacted to protect sensitive wetland areas. Wholesale dredging or filling of freshwater wetlands is prohibited, and erosion and sediment control measures are required in certain areas bordering wetlands. The State Wetlands Protection Act requires a permit or "Order of Conditions" to be issued before any work is done within 100 feet of a wetland area. The Conservation Commission, which administers the Act, can require special design and/or mitigation measures to reduce adverse impacts on wetland areas.

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MAP 5: WETLANDS

 WETLANDS



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SCALE IN MILES

Such restrictions and regulations increase the costs of development in these areas. In addition, project development time is often increased due to permitting and public hearing requirements. For these reasons, wetland areas will not be considered as sites for future development, and should be preserved and protected whenever possible.

2.3 Floodplains

The proper management of flood-prone areas should be a high priority for local governments. To this end, an overall community program of preventative and corrective measures designed at reducing flood damages is essential. Such measures usually include zoning and subdivision regulations, building requirements, and special purpose floodplain encroachment statutes.

The National Flood Insurance Program was established by Congress in 1968. It provides coverage for homes and businesses located in flood-prone areas with subsidized insurance. In order to qualify, municipalities must first adopt floodplain management regulations to govern any new development in these areas. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administers the program, and is responsible for assembling the necessary Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) and accompanying literature. In March, 1989, FEMA announced that it will fund a detailed study of flood hazard areas in Webster, last mapped in 1982. An engineering firm will perform the study.

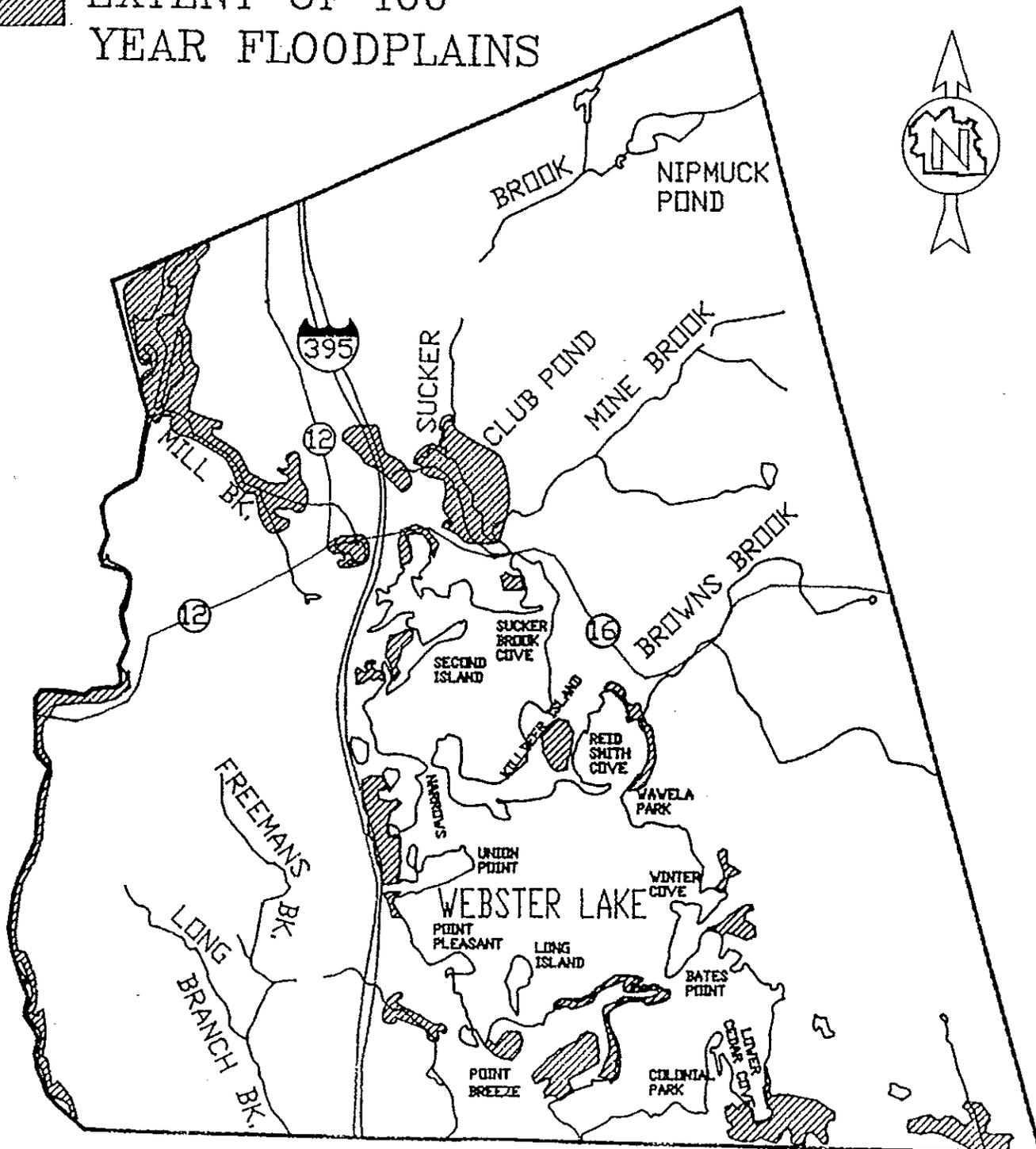
The floodplain is broken down into two components - the flood fringe and the floodway. The flood fringe is defined as level land that may be submerged by floodwaters and includes all land within reach of the one hundred-year flood or those areas having a one percent chance of being flooded in any given year. Development may be permitted in this area but special regulations are applied. The State Building Code requires that the lowest floor of residential buildings be elevated at or above the base flood (100-year storm). Non-residential buildings must be floodproofed up to the base flood level and/or elevated at or above this level. The floodway is a channel of a stream or a river which is found below the mean (or average) annual flood elevation. Alteration of the floodway increases the potential for flooding in downstream areas. All new development in this area should be prohibited.

Map 6 shows that most land subject to the 100-year flood surround or are proximal to surface water features, such as Mill Brook and Webster Lake. A comparison of Maps 5 and 6 indicate that some, but not all, of the Town's floodplains are also wetlands. The exceptions include low-lying areas running parallel to the French River to the west and south of the Downtown) and residential sections with beach frontage along Webster Lake at Reid Smith Cove.

WEBSTER MASTER PLAN

MAP 6: 100 YEAR FLOODPLAINS

 EXTENT OF 100 YEAR FLOODPLAINS



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Because of the added costs associated with development within the flood fringe, the additional restrictions that the presence of floodplains impose, and the potential for increased flooding downstream of the development, floodplain areas should not be considered as suitable locations for future development.

3.0 OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Drainage Patterns

Awareness of local drainage patterns can aid in safeguarding sensitive surface water bodies and public water supplies. Two topographical features - basins and watersheds - are considered in analyzing surface drainage. Map 7 displays these areas in Webster.

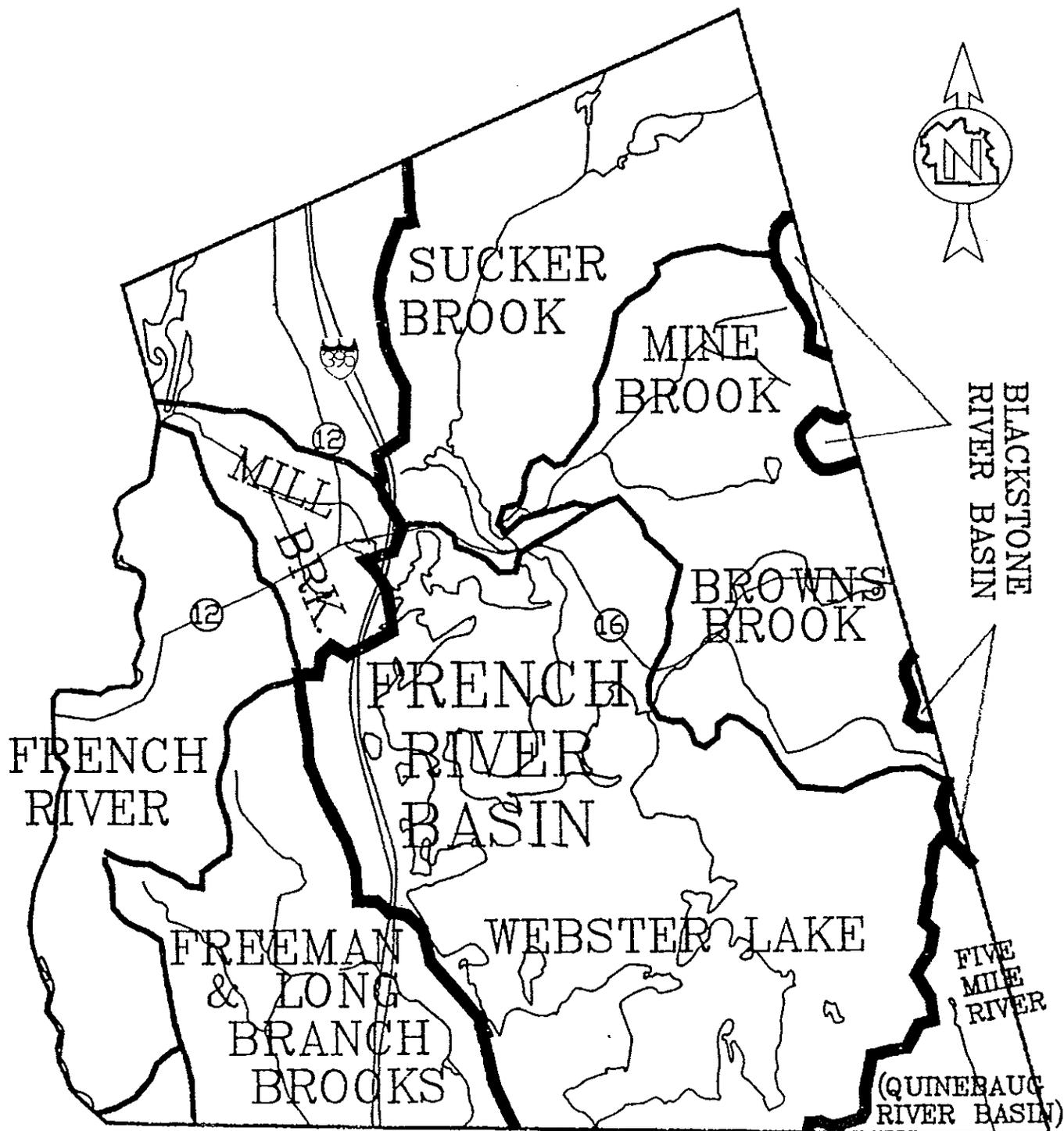
Basins are defined as large areas upon which surface water is able to drain to a river, lake, or reservoir. Watersheds, which are subdivisions of basins, normally surround river or stream systems and act as boundaries for surface and groundwater drainage.

Two major drainage basins surround the Town's waters and surface runoff. Most of Webster lies within the French River Basin while the southeast corner lies within the Quinabaug River Basin. As a large portion of the Town is drained by streams which eventually enter into Webster Lake, which provides induced recharge to two of the three municipal wells, protection of the Town's surface water resources is critical.

Many Massachusetts communities have adopted watershed protection zoning bylaws. These controls enable a town or city to regulate land uses and lot sizes through prohibiting or limiting certain uses and establishing larger minimum lot sizes for new development in a watershed. The district would overlay the zoning districts and any uses permitted in the "underlying" district would be subject to all the provisions of the watershed district, unless prohibited in this overlay zone. Examples of principal and accessory uses commonly not allowed or requiring special permit review include the manufacture or disposal of toxic or hazardous materials, junkyards, motor vehicle service stations and sanitary landfills.

Consultation from a professional engineer is advised so that the mapping of the overlay district accurately reflects surface hydrological conditions. The watershed district may be combined with an aquifer overlay zone, which would provide additional protection for the municipal water supply (See Chapter VIII for further discussion of aquifer protection or groundwater zoning).

WEBSTER MASTER PLAN MAP 7: DRAINAGE BASINS AND WATERSHEDS



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SCALE IN MILES

3.2 Soils

Soil characteristics are an important environmental variable which must be considered in evaluating the development potential of available land. Soil and subsoil conditions determine if on-site septic systems can allow development in unsewered areas. Soils with low permeability impede the downward flow of sewage, and seepage may appear at surface locations. Soils with too rapid permeability may allow sewage to pass through the soil at a rate which does not permit chemical and biological purification; well contamination and groundwater pollution may result.

Soil characteristics also determine bearing capacity. Bearing capacity must be sufficient to support construction activities and forestall shifting, slumping and settling of the land. Similarly, soil characteristics must be suitable for excavation, site preparation, and location of utility connections. Development on poor soils increases construction and maintenance costs and can, in addition, result in adverse effects on the local environment.

The U.S. Soil Conservation Service (SCS) is in the process of compiling soil maps for Webster, in addition to 25 other communities in southern Worcester County. Composite maps illustrating soil groupings will be shown on U.S.G.S. Topographical maps at the one-inch = 2,083 foot contour scale. However, the final published report, including maps and statistical data, will not be available until 1992. In the meantime, Town officials can refer to preliminary soil maps, which SCS soil scientists have compiled. SCS eventually plans to include generalized soil maps of the study area. These are colored maps showing in a more readable format broader categories of soil groupings. This will be part of the 1992 report.

An examination of the preliminary information reveals that all of Webster's soils offer severe limitations to effective septic absorption field performance. The ability of septic system absorption fields to function properly is determined primarily by the soil's ability to filter effluent. Distinctive to these soils are slow percolation rates, poor filtering capabilities (i.e., rapid percolation in sandy or gravelly soils), and wetness. Usually, special design considerations, increased construction costs, and additional maintenance are involved with septic system installation in these soil areas.

4.0 SUITABILITY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Environmental variables will determine, to a great extent, where significant new development in the Town will occur. Development in areas containing wetlands or within the 100-year floodplain of any stream, river or pond will be severely restricted due to federal, state and local regulations. Construction in areas where slopes exceed 15%, or in some instances where slopes are between 8% and 15%,

will be limited by the increased costs of construction and the special design and engineering measures necessary to allow development on such lands.

Overlaying the three environmentally sensitive areas maps (slopes, wetlands and floodplains) with the 1985 Land Use Map (and factoring in residential growth since 1985) suggests that most of Webster's undeveloped land is constrained by natural features. Much of the land "untouched" by slopes, wetlands, and floodplains is landlocked, i.e., inaccessible from existing public ways. This finding is critical in light of the proposed large-scale development in the Sugarloaf Hill area, where moderate and severe topography predominates. Of course, as previously mentioned in the discussion on topography and slope, grades of between 8-15% ("moderate" slopes) are generally developable, but require careful site planning and are best suited for low density development.

The above discussion considers only some of the variables that must be recognized when determining the suitability of the Town's land for future development. Other environmental factors should be regarded when determining the location, type and quantity of growth in the Town.

Drainage patterns should be respected to safeguard drinking water supplies and also to protect the recreational and aesthetic values of the Town's surface water bodies.

Similarly, areas which have a high potential for groundwater should be noted. Reliance on groundwater as the major source of the Town's present and future public water supply necessitates further protection of this resource.

Soil characteristics are a final determinant of the development suitability of an available land parcel. Soil characteristics determine the bearing capacity of the land; large scale development on soils of poor bearing capacity is, in most cases, impractical. Soils with hardpans near the surface, soils which are too permeable or conversely, not permeable enough, hinder proper functioning of on-site septic systems. Development on such soils in unsewered areas could present serious threats to public health and environmental quality.

The presence of constraining environmental variables does not wholly preclude development. These features have been identified in an effort to direct new development to environmentally capable lands. Only by attending to the presence of these environmental features and with careful planning and site-specific investigations, can new development occur with the assurance that environmental quality will be maintained and public resources safeguarded.

CHAPTER IV

INFRASTRUCTURE CAPABILITY.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A thorough examination of Webster's public water and sewer systems will be presented in this chapter. Such a discussion provides a key supplement to earlier chapters which focused on the Town's physical characteristics (land use) and natural development constraints (environmental features). Public water supply and sewerage systems greatly influence the intensity of human activity in Town, as does the transportation network, which will be examined exclusively in Chapter V.

For this analysis, no major effort was made in regard to improving these systems, which can only be accomplished with a detailed examination by specialists. But rather existing conditions and recent experiences can provide valuable insight into determining the optimum future land use pattern for the Town. There also needs to be a continual process of reassessing the directions in which the Town is growing to anticipate and direct that growth to suitable areas through carefully targeted improvements. An ongoing capital improvements program, which will also be discussed, can provide Town officials the proper guidance for the upkeep of existing infrastructure or replacement of obsolescent facilities.

2.0 PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY

2.1 Introduction

The availability of an ample quantity of high quality water is essential for the growth and development of any community. It is the responsibility of local officials to provide the necessary capital facilities to meet the demands of the system users for drinking water, fire protection, and commercial and industrial uses. If the Town is unable to meet the projected demand for water not only will it face the prospect of serious water shortages, it will also be unable to retain high volume users, such as industries, who must depend upon a reliable municipal supply to meet their needs.

This section is intended to address the adequacy of existing sources to meet future needs. Fortunately, CMRPC recently completed a regional report which analyzed relevant water supply and demand data, among other information, and projected demand based upon recent population trends to the year 2000. Additional information obtained and presented included water pricing policies, treatment practices, resource protection and conservation measures. These issues will be discussed in the plan as well; however, emphasis will be focused on supply and demand aspects of the system.

Transmission, distribution and storage facilities, other vital components of a water supply system, were not covered in the regional water supply study, nor will they be analyzed here. Although these elements are essential to providing an efficiently functioning system, they are primarily dependent upon an engineering analysis and therefore beyond the scope of this report.

2.2 Water Supply Agency and Supply Sources

The Webster Water Department, formed in 1893, is the sole supply agency in the Town. Webster is fortunate to be able to provide its water customers 100% of its water from local wells. Three sources - one wellfield consisting of several individual wells and two gravel packed wells - supply the Town. The Town has acquired land for a fourth well off Route 16. However, no timetable has been set as to when this well will come on-line, due primarily due to budgetary constraints of Proposition 2 1/2.

The driven tubular wells (#1 station) have a pumping capacity of 1,500 gallons per minute and are between 35-40 feet deep; this was the original pumping station when the Department was formed. Station or well #2 went on-line in 1952 and has a pumping capacity of 990 gallons per minute and is 48 feet deep. Station #3, opened in 1967, has a 1,450 gallon per minute capacity and goes to a depth of 95 feet. Webster Lake is the primary source of recharge for Stations #1 and #2.

Map 8 shows the location of these active wellsites, and the area of Town served by public water. The safe yield of the supply, or the amount of water which can be drawn safely from the supply over an extended period of time during a drought, is estimated at 3.5 million gallons per day (MGD).

Cranston Print Works relies heavily on its own well which draws its water via induced recharge from Webster Lake. Approximately 70-80% of the firm's supply comes from this source, with the remainder provided by the Water Department. An on-site well provides all of the water demanded by Anglo Fabrics, groundwater which is drawn via induced recharge from the French River.

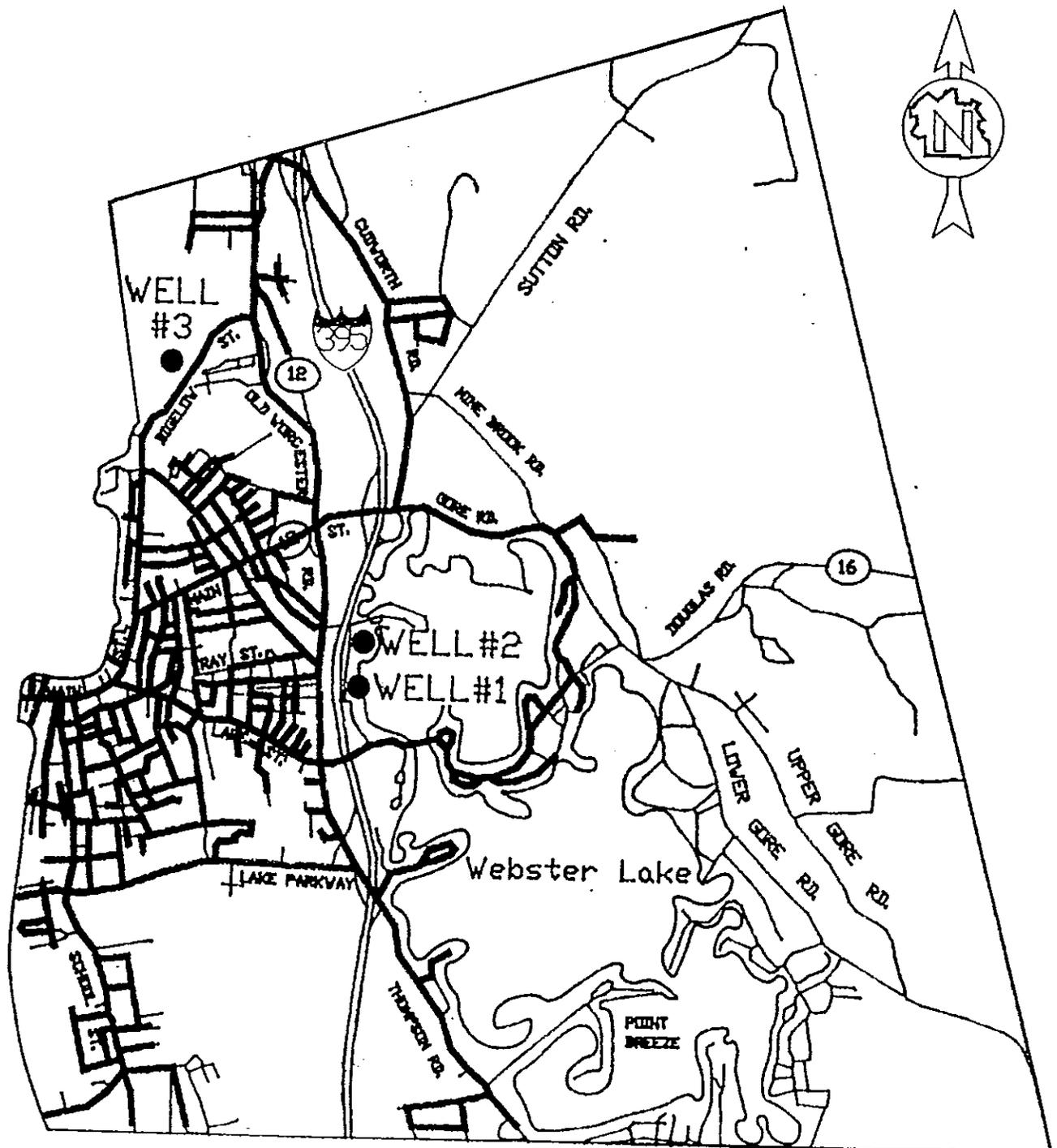
The Town's public supply is not interconnected with water distribution agencies in abutting or nearby communities. Therefore, the Water Department is unable to draw from other supplies in the event of a drought emergency, nor assist neighboring towns when their supplies are low.

2.3 Service Population Trends

The number of persons served by the public supply varies somewhat during the year. A larger population is served during the summer months due to seasonal cottage use, particularly in the vicinity of Webster Lake. The Water Department, in a document* filed with

* "Water Supply Statistics"

WEBSTER MASTER PLAN MAP 8: EXISTING WATER SYSTEM



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the Department of Environmental Quality Engineering (DEQE), reported a 1987 winter service population of 12,856, compared to a 13,884 estimate during the summer, an 8% difference. Assuming the U.S. Census Bureau's July, 1986 population estimate for Webster of 15,090 has not increased nor decreased substantially, the percentage of the permanent population served is 85%.

2.4 Current and Future Demand

The three wellsites pumped and distributed a total of 484,818,200 gallons in 1987. By comparison, 446 million gallons (MG) were pumped in 1986, 515 MG in 1985 and 476 MG in 1984. Records indicate that nearly one-half of the 1987 amount (222.8 million gallons) was drawn from the Thompson Road wellfield, located near the Webster Lake shore. Among user groups, residential consumption accounted for 72.4% of total demand in 1987, followed by industrial (9.7%), commercial (7.7%) and municipal (0.3%). "Unaccounted use" made up the remaining 9.9% of water pumped from the three wellsites. This may be explained by water which leaked from the distribution system, broken meters, water use for firefighting or firefighting demonstration purposes or a combination of these reasons. The findings of the regional water supply study show that Webster's unaccounted water consumption is lower than the norm. Nevertheless, the Water Department should remain vigilant in keeping this figure low, primarily through maintaining the distribution system while recognizing the quantities that will be used for the Fire Department for various purposes.

CMRPC, as previously mentioned, projected whether or not Webster will have sufficient water supplies to meet expected use in the year 2000. In fact, Webster should have adequate water supplies to meet the expected year 2000 demand. This was determined by comparing the present safe yield of 3.5 MGD (which is assumed to remain the same) to the projected average daily demand (or the total number of gallons drawn in one year divided by 365 days) of 1.40 MGD and the maximum daily demand (or highest 24-hour demand during one day in a calendar year) of 2.57 MGD, thereby concluding that future supplies will meet expected demand.

As previously mentioned, the Town has acquired land along Mine Brook Road for a future wellsite; the safe yield of the proposed source is not known at this time. When this well comes on line, the total yield of the public supply will of course increase. Coincidentally, developers are proposing to build a residential complex on a 600 acre parcel in this area, which could consist of over 1,000 housing units. Efforts must be made to protect the quality of groundwater within a large radius of the new well if its development coincides with this proposed large scale residential development.

2.5 Water Treatment Measures

The Webster Water Department, as of 1987, did not apply any chemicals to the municipal supply. Water treatment is commonly added to public supplies throughout the State to mitigate existing or anticipated water quality problems. Examples of treatment types include the application of chemicals to lower levels of "nuisance" contaminants such as iron and manganese, and fluoride to help reduce incidences of tooth decay and the bone disease osteoporosis among the general population.

2.6 Water Quality

Water quality evidently is excellent based not only on the lack of treatment but on readings taken annually and periodically by the State. The Department of Environmental Quality Engineering (DEQE) conducts coliform bacteria tests monthly, and performs extensive water quality testing once a year. According to DEQE, the coliform count historically has been within safe limits. The annual water quality quality tests, which measure amounts of various pollutants and nuisance substances in the supply (e.g., nitrates, pH, sodium, iron and manganese) have shown no readings exceeding federal or State standards or generally recognized thresholds.

2.7 Resource Protection

Communities are empowered under Massachusetts law to enact various regulatory controls aimed at or in some indirect way protecting surface and groundwater supplies. Under the police power provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 40A, municipalities may enact zoning bylaws, local or general bylaws under M.G.L. Ch. 40, Section 21 or Board of Health regulations. Of the three strategies, the latter does not require legislative approval at the local level but rather majority approval by the local health board.

Examples of commonly used zoning bylaws include floodplain, watershed and aquifer protection districts where certain uses that may prove harmful to a water source can be restricted or prohibited. General bylaws, such as an earth removal or hazardous waste provision, allow municipal officials to regulate activities town or city-wide that may prove to have an adverse effect on ground or surface water resources. Local Boards of Health, under M.G.L. Ch. 111, may adopt supplemental regulations exceeding those of the State Health Code (Title 5) for the design, installation and maintenance of septic systems. These additional provisions further decrease the likelihood of subsurface contamination of groundwater supplies in the event of system failure or poor soil conditions.

Webster voters have approved a Floodplain Protection District amendment to the Zoning By-Law. Otherwise, no other zoning bylaws, general bylaws or Board of Health provisions enhancing the quality of the Town's supply are on the books. The primary purpose of the floodplain measure is to regulate development within the 100-year floodplain, or areas prone to flooding due to topographical conditions, in order to protect the public health, safety and general welfare. Some of these low elevation areas may act as critical recharge zones to the Town wells, so restrictions placed upon development by this provision also serve to protect the quality of the public water supply. The Water Department has purchased land surrounding existing and future wellsites in an effort to protect the quality of these municipal supply sources, and of Webster Lake.

2.8 Conservation Practices

Water conservation is one method which, if properly carried out, helps stretch water supplies farther than ordinarily would be the case if no such measures were taken. Homeowners may participate voluntarily by installing water-saving devices in bathrooms (e.g., flow reducers in sinks and showers and water saving toilets); State law now requires these water conservation devices in new construction. Recycling of processed water by industries also helps to conserve the local supply.

The Water Department oversees a comprehensive water conservation program of its own. Primary components of this include an aggressive leak detection program, system rehabilitation (i.e., replacement of old hydrants and installing larger mains when warranted), meter replacement and repair, and continual maintenance of the entire distribution system. The Department, on occasion, informs homeowners, businesses and industries through the local media regarding proper water conservation practices. Voluntary bans on water use are encouraged during low water periods, but mandatory bans are imposed only during drought emergencies.

Another method of managing the demand for water and encouraging conservation of the supply is by establishing an effective water pricing policy. Water distribution agencies across the State use a variety of techniques for charging customers for water consumption. Some utilize a decreasing block rate, where the per unit price for water decreases as consumption increases. Obviously, this pricing structure does not encourage conservation of the supply. Communities with industries, or those seeking industry, often establish rates based upon this method in an effort to retain or entice commercial and industrial growth. Others do the opposite, i.e., charge more for water as consumption increases, otherwise known as the increasing block rate. Among the advantages of this structure are lower costs for the provision and delivery of water and conservation of supply sources.

The Webster Water Department takes the "middle ground" with regard to charging users by using the flat rate by volume method. This rate structure, although an improvement over the decreasing block rate for water conservation purposes, does little to discourage excessive use. Webster's water rate in 1987 was \$5.50 per 1,000 cubic feet consumed. This rate can be considered quite low in comparison to rates charged by other Massachusetts communities.*

2.9 Future Water System Expansion

The engineering firm Faye, Spofford and Thorndike, Inc. produced the Facility Plan for Expansion of Wastewater Collection Systems in May, 1982. Included in this report is a discussion of possible water supply system extensions.

In sum, the engineers mapped out an area primarily east of Webster Lake where service could be extended. Map 9 shows this proposed expansion, which extends as far east as Douglas Road and south along Colonial Park which parallels the Connecticut line. Densely populated residential sections along the Lake, such as Bates Point and Point Breeze, are included in this new service area. A 12-inch diameter loop main extending from the Sugarloaf Hill Reservoir constitutes the bulk of this extension which will service the "low service area", or areas of low elevation. Booster pumps would have to be installed to provide adequate water pressure to the "high service system" along Douglas and Upper Gore roads.

3.0 PUBLIC SEWERAGE

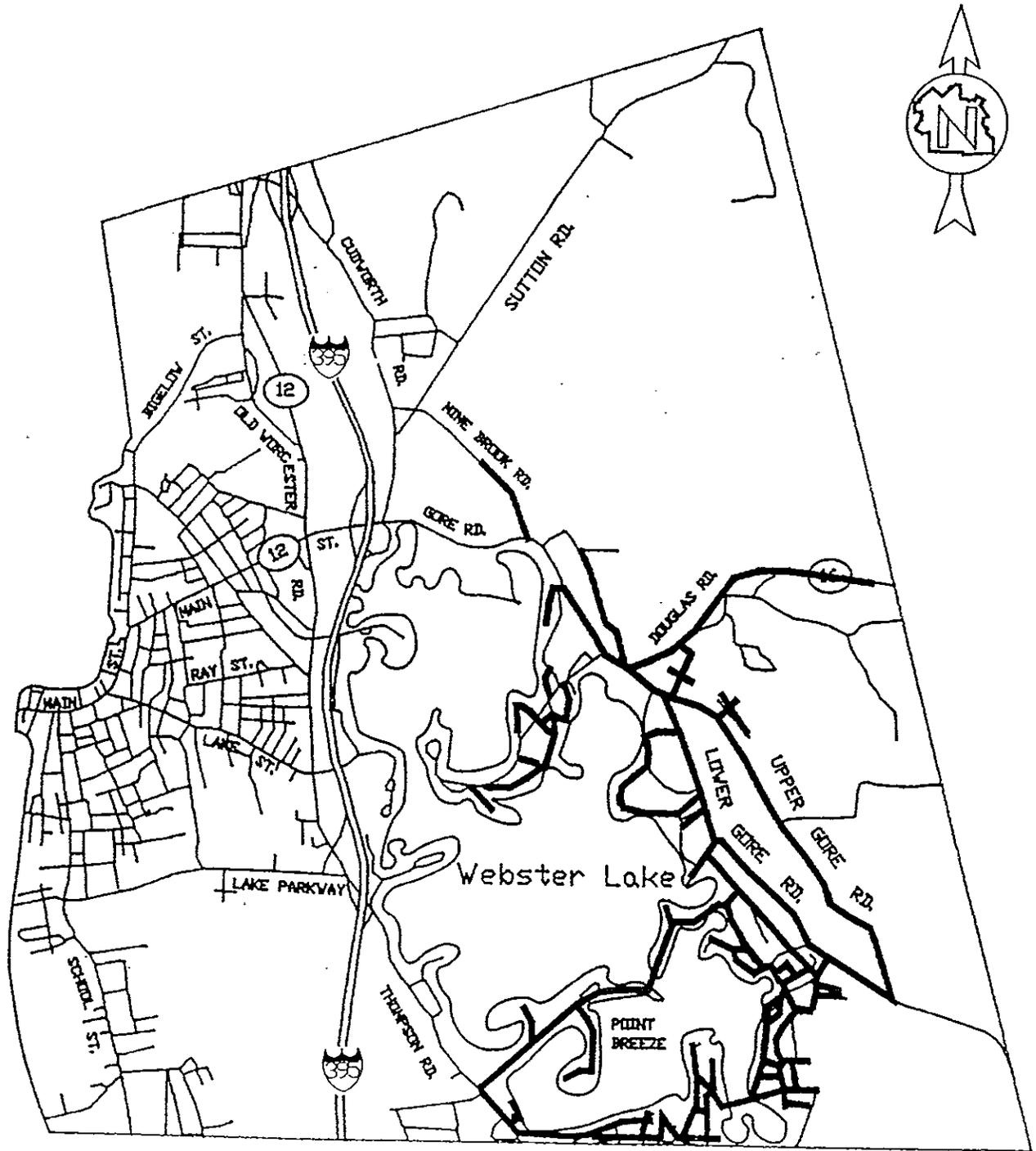
3.1 Introduction

The ability of a public sewerage system to handle waste generated from homes, businesses, industries and other uses determines to a large extent the future of community growth. If plant capacity is low, or the service lines are inadequate, then development may decrease, or stop altogether. State law vests significant power municipalities to prohibit sewer connections or extensions if in their judgment such tie-ins will overload the system.

This section will examine the sewage treatment system present in Webster, the new wastewater treatment plant, and the implications both have on the future land use pattern of the Town. Also included will be a discussion on septage or on-site waste disposal and recommendations on improving septage management practices in Webster.

*"Water: What Price Do We Pay? A survey of Water and Sewer Rates in Massachusetts" Mass. Dept. of Environmental Management, 1989.

WEBSTER MASTER PLAN MAP 9: FUTURE WATER SUPPLY EXTENSIONS



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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SCALE IN MILES

3.2 Existing Facilities

The Webster Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP), situated on the east bank of the French River, presently handles all waste products emptied into the Town's sewer mains; the facility provides secondary treatment to this effluent. All effluent is discharged into the French River. The existing secondary plant processes remove approximately 85 to 90 percent of the BOD5 and 70 to 80 percent of suspended solids.

The plant was originally a primary facility, and upgraded to a 6.0 million gallon per day (MGD) secondary plant in 1974. Cranston Print Works and Anglo Fabrics comprise the two largest industrial contributors to the wastewater treatment system. Industrial uses typically empty into the system larger concentrations of BOD5, suspended solids, phosphorus, nitrogen, heavy metals and other products than would commercial, residential and other uses, particularly when hydraulic flows are low. Improvements in pretreatment capabilities by industry could ameliorate this problem.

Although the existing facility is able to handle approximately 6 MGD of hydraulic flow, high "loadings" resulting from heavy concentrations of industrial chemicals may cause system overload. So, flows other than from "heavy" industry are known to be less harmful and therefore treatment plant operation becomes more effective.

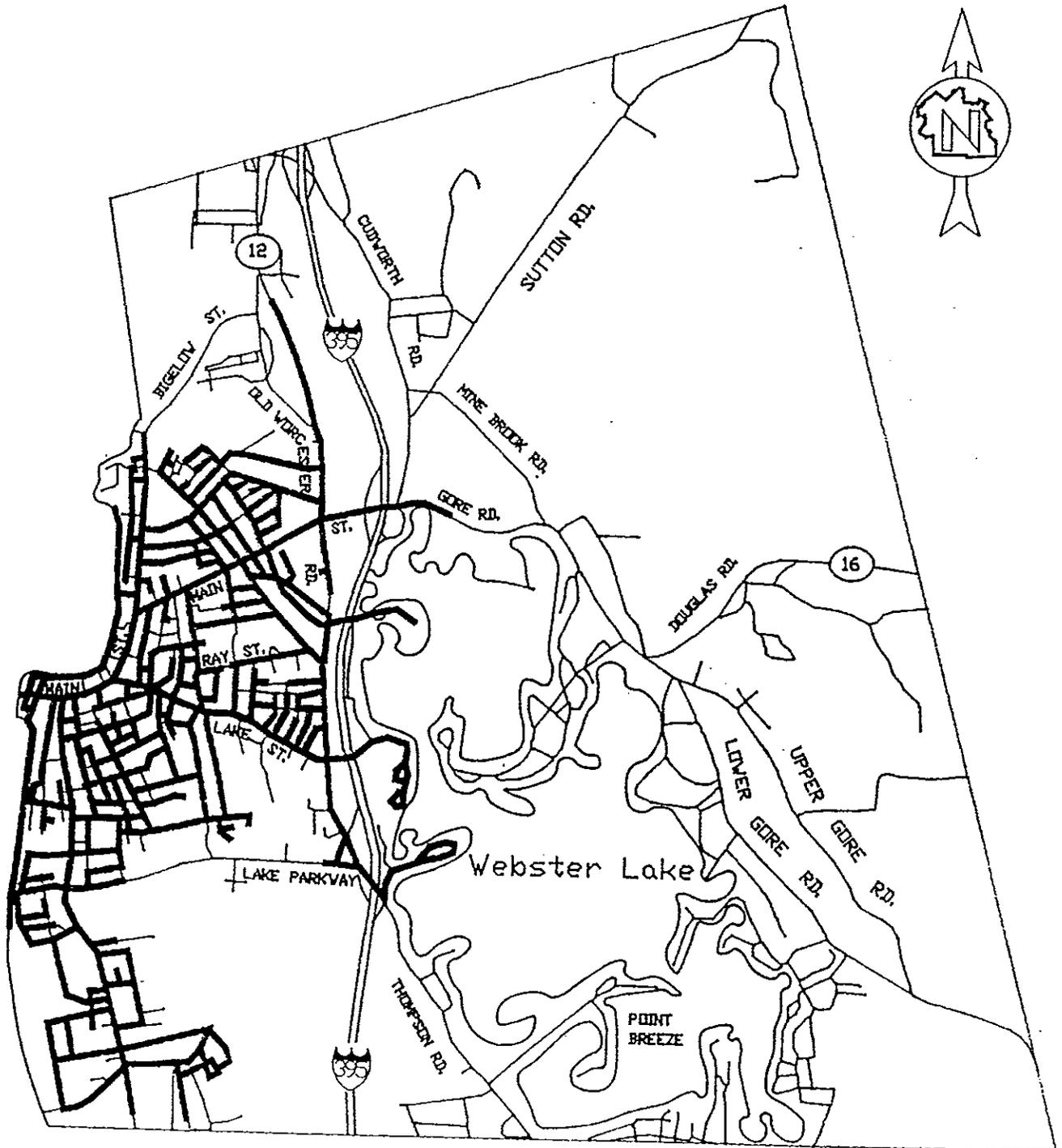
As Map 10 reveals, the wastewater collection and treatment system primarily serves the more heavily developed portions of Town west of Webster Lake. A point on Gore Road about 1,000 feet east of Interstate 395 marks the western terminus of the service area. The collection system also extends south of Ash Street to the Connecticut line, and north along Worcester Road east of Dragon Road. Several extensions have been made to the system in recent years to accommodate new residential development west of School Street and north of Perryville Road. Estimates made in 1985 indicate a sewered population of 10,525, or roughly 72 percent of the total Town population at that time. About 66 percent of average daily flow was domestic or residential, with the remainder divided between commercial and industrial uses, and infiltration flow and septage disposal.*

It is interesting to note that sewer lines do not service a large tract in the northern part of Town which is zoned for industry (Most of this land at present is undeveloped). The area is bounded by Cudworth Road to the west, the Oxford line to the north, Sutton Road to the east, Fort Hill Road to the northeast and Kingsbury Road to the south. This suggests that some uses normally associated with industrial activities, such as heavy manufacturing, would not be preferable in that area. Many of these industries, such as a Cranston Print Works-type of firm,

*Source: Faye, Spofford and Thorndike, Inc.

WEBSTER MASTER PLAN

MAP 10: EXISTING SEWER SYSTEM



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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SCALE IN MILES

use large amounts of water and process significant quantities of industrial wastes, resulting in heavy sewage flows. In such circumstances, on-site septic systems cannot adequately handle these types of discharges. To further complicate the situation, soils in this area are generally unsuitable for on-site systems. Warehousing and other light industrial activities, which have fewer employees per square foot of floor space and usually consume and process less water and waste by-products, would be preferable if development occurs in this industrial zone.

3.3 New Wastewater Treatment Plant

A new advanced wastewater treatment facility is presently under construction at the site of the existing plant. (The new plant in fact is an expansion of the present facility). The plant is due to come on line in June, 1990, followed by a one year "start up" period. All sewage from Dudley will flow into the advanced treatment plant as well. The existing Webster plant now handles only a portion of the sewage originating from Dudley, whereas the remainder is treated at the Dudley plant. The latter will be converted to a load equalization plant before the new Webster facility comes on line, which means that sewage coming from Dudley will first flow through a gravity sewer beneath the French River to the Webster WWTP. Then, the modified Dudley plant will act as a "back-up" facility whereby flows will be pumped back to alleviate strain at the Webster facility.

The expansion and upgrading of the Webster WWTP will involve a capacity decrease from the current 6 MGD to approximately 5.46 MGD. Nevertheless, the processes involved in advanced treatment result in more efficient removal of waste from effluent in the sewage. Specific improvements to the WWTP include the addition of two primary settling tanks, a final clarifier, an anaerobic digester and sludge pumping facilities, among other modifications.

In the face of new development pressures, Webster officials may find themselves in a bind with regard to allocating potential tie-ins to the WWTP. The new plant was designed to handle existing hydraulic flows and loadings plus additional sewage from housing on Webster Lake, or new residential developments located near a sewer line. State law governing sewer extensions and connections implicitly allows those developments able to tie-in to a sewerage system, providing capacity exists, to do so even if unsewered areas less capable of connecting have been promised service. In other words, sewer system tie-ins are on a "first come, first serve" basis. So theoretically, residents along Webster Lake with on-site disposal systems, having been promised sewerage over the years and who represent the reserved capacity built into the new WWTP, may lose out to new developments located closer to the Town's sewer lines. A possible solution to this dilemma is for local officials to devise a comprehensive capital facilities program or plan. Such a strategy, among other things, would establish a priority ranking for which areas of Webster

would receive sewer service before others. This concept is discussed in Section 4.0 of this chapter.

3.4 Plans for Municipal Sewer Expansion

The 1982 Facility Plan discussed at considerable length the prospect for new sewers in Webster in phases over the next twenty years. The consultants divided the unsewered portions of the Town into ten districts and four sub-districts and ranked by priority those in greatest need for sewer service. Without delving into the details of the methodology used, Fay, Spofford and Thorndike based their conclusions on results of a survey sent to residents and businesses in the unsewered areas (which asked among other things whether or not the resident/business was experiencing sewage disposal problems), Town records, laboratory analyses, Soil Conservation Service data and field investigations. The Town has since ranked by priority those unsewered districts into three phases. (The new ranking differs somewhat from the earlier ranking as political needs have changed since 1982). Table 3, an amended version of a table from the Facility Plan, depicts these districts and sub-districts and their respective rankings for future sewerage. Map 11 shows the location of these unsewered districts.

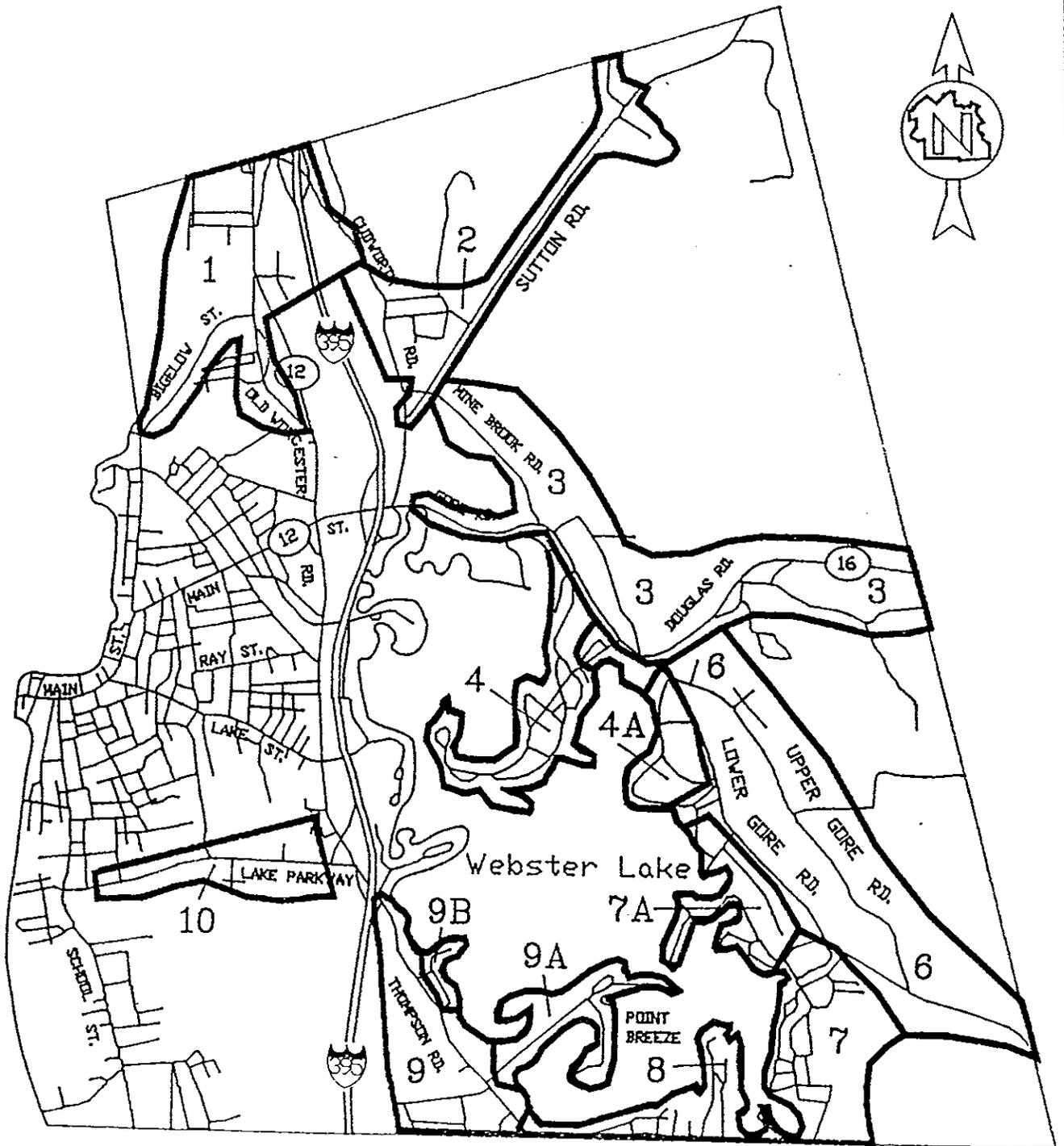
Table 3

Rank of Districts and Sub-Districts For Future Sewerage

<u>District or Sub-District</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Phase</u>
1	Worcester Road Area	1	I
2	Kingsbury Development Area	9	III
3	Gore Road Area	6	II
4 & 4A	Killdeer Island & LaVue DuLac	2	I
5	Wawela Park	13	III
6	Upper & Lower Gore Roads	4	II
7	Lake Side Area	5	II
7A	Bates Point	12	III
8	Colonial Park	7	II
9	Thompson Road Area	3	I
9A	Point Breeze	8	III
9B	Point Pleasant	11	I
10	Lake Parkway Area	10	III

Note that unsewered districts 1 (Worcester Road Area) and 9 (Thompson Road Area), proximal to the existing system and to the older, more developed sections of Webster ranked first and third respectively for system expansion. The Killdeer Island and LaVue DuLac areas (4 and 4A) ranked second in the evaluation. The latter conclusion is not too surprising when considering the densely populated character of this vicinity, and the requests from many residents (particularly Killdeer Island Road) over the

WEBSTER MASTER PLAN MAP 11: FUTURE SEWER EXPANSION DISTRICTS



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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SCALE IN MILES

years to connect to the municipal sewerage system. Town Meeting has already voted to extend service to Thompson Road and to Point Pleasant (The latter now included under Phase I, formerly ranked 11th). The consultants noted in 1982 that the total estimated flow from the entire unsewered area was 300 to 400,000 gallons per day. Such hydraulic flow increases were not expected to negatively affect the design capacity of the then secondary treatment plant. The design capacity of new advanced facility will also be able to accommodate projected flows from all those unsewered areas as well.

Federal grants channeled through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to fund capital expenditures for sewer facility expansion and improvements are now being phased out, and are in danger of being eliminated altogether. Low interest loans instead may be offered to municipalities for covering costs normally associated with sewerage extensions.

3.5 On-Site Disposal Systems

Domestic, commercial, industrial and other sewerage not collected for the treatment at a wastewater treatment facility is instead disposed of in private subsurface disposal systems. Common examples of these include cesspools and septic tanks, with the latter being most prevalent in Massachusetts (installation of cesspools is now illegal in the state). Title 5 of the State Sanitary Code sets forth guidelines for the design, installation, maintenance and servicing of subsurface disposal systems. Approximately 28% of the Town's residents rely upon on-site sewerage disposal. Periodically, the concentrated solids that accumulate in septic tanks, known as septage, must be pumped out by private septage haulers and taken to an authorized facility for disposal.

CMRPC completed the Central Massachusetts Septage Management Plan in February, 1986. The study focused primarily on septage disposal practices in the CMRPC region. Among the specific issues examined were inventories of haulers operating in communities, locations of septage disposal areas, monitoring of waste disposal by wastewater treatment plants and Boards of Health, and whether or not communities employed a health agent to oversee septage management.

As a result of this intensive investigation, CMRPC concluded that Webster was among five of the forty regional communities ranking "highest priority" for upgrading septage enforcement measures. Recommendations for improving local septage management included employing the services of a health agent and establishing an annual hauler permit process whereby septage haulers are required to obtain official Town authorization (from the Board of Health) to pump septage in Webster. Also, CMRPC proposed that the Webster WWTP accept septage from additional communities (Webster generated septage was the only waste permitted to be disposed at the time) and provide disposal receipts to each Board of Health

*SEPTAGE
SPUD COX
REPORT*

for communities with authorization for disposal. (However, a 1988 survey of wastewater treatment plants by CMRPC found that the Webster facility is no longer able to take anymore outside septage, other than Dudley's. This will continue to be the case with the new tertiary facility. Currently, an average of 9,000 gallons of septage per day is disposed of at the plant). Webster has a Septage By-Law requiring residents and businesses around the lake to have their septic tanks pumped regularly to mitigate potential pollution problems associated with leaking systems (For further discussion of this By-Law, see Chapters VIII and IX).

4.0 CAPITAL FACILITIES PLANNING

All communities face difficulties of providing adequate public facilities and services for their citizens. A Town's water supply, sewage treatment facilities, park and recreation areas, schools, and fire and police facilities constitute some of the important public facilities and services in a typical community. Responding to the need to make capital improvements can best be met by formulating and carrying out a capital improvements program. Such a program enables municipalities to plan for capital improvements, say over a 6-10 year period, based on established priorities set forth in the plan. A capital improvements program is even more meaningful when it is based on long range planning i.e., a Master Plan. The Town of Webster does not have a capital improvements plan, although discussions have taken place regarding formulation of such a strategy in the future.

Capital planning typically is broken down into four components:

1. Capital expenditure: allocation of funds for a major nonrecurring project or facility expected to provide service beyond the annual budget cycle period. Examples might include a sewage treatment plant, a fire station, or street lights.
2. Capital program: a plan for capital expenditures to be incurred over a fixed period of time, and the projected resources to finance it. The time period may be adjusted to coincide with the development schedule.
3. Capital budget: a more detailed plan of specific projects and financing to be adopted with the annual operating budget.
4. Capital improvements: are major projects requiring the expenditure of public funds over and above annual operating expenses. Expenditures may be for the purchase, construction or replacement of the physical assets of the community. The purchase of land needed for community use is a capital improvement, as is acquisition or construction of facilities such as parks and libraries.

As previously mentioned, capital planning is more effective when carried out in concert with an approved comprehensive or master plan. Primary objectives of capital improvement plans, as with this study, are to identify and analyze the major forces that

might influence the growth and change of the community; to set realistic goals for the future development of the community; and to establish requirements for public facilities. Like zoning and subdivision control, a capital improvements program is a means of implementing the Master Plan.

Citizen involvement in preparing a capital improvements plan is essential in order to gain public support for the effort. A citizens advisory group, representing the Town as a whole, may be established to assist in developing the overall program.

Once a proposed capital improvements program is drafted, it must be formally adopted by the legislative body, together with recommendations from the Town's chief executive officer. A copy of the proposed program should also be presented to the Planning Board if that Board does not prepare the plan. This is done to keep the capital improvements program and the Master Plan in harmony with one another. Public approval should be solicited at public hearings, followed by adoption of the final version at a Town Meeting. The program should be reviewed, revised and extended on an annual basis.

5.0 SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

5.1 Public Water Supply

- o Approximately 85% of the Town's permanent population is serviced by the Webster Water Department.
- o The water service area is primarily west of Webster Lake. however, public water is available as far east as Killdeer Island Road and along a portion of Rawson Road.
- o Absent any large-scale development (e.g., Sugarloaf Hill), Webster should have sufficient water supplies to meet expected use through the year 2000. Bringing a new well on-line should provide an adequate margin of safety to service future growth.
- o Aside from a Floodplain Protection By-Law, Webster has no controls for ensuring protection of the public supply.

5.2 Public Sewerage

- o Similar to the public water supply system, the municipal sewer system primarily serves the older, more developed area west of Webster Lake.
- o In 1985, approximately 72% of the Town's population was connected to the sewerage system.

- o Sewers do not extend into the largest tract of industrially zoned land in Town, which is mostly vacant. This has implications for the intensity of future development within this tract.

- o Limited reserve capacity included in the design capacity of the upgraded treatment plant does not account for any large-scale growth in Webster.

CHAPTER V

TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Webster has experienced growth pressures in recent years resulting in the generation of additional automobile traffic on local and state roads. Other "elements" of the transportation network, namely public transportation (regular public and private bus service and elderly-handicapped paratransit operations) and increased truck service to an extent affect traffic flows and patterns in Webster. To a lesser degree, rail traffic impacts circulation in Town, at times acting as an impediment to efficient flows when a train crosses a public way, stopping vehicular traffic.

The primary intent of this chapter is to inventory the existing transportation network in Webster, focus on traffic trends where information is available, and propose ameliorative measures to offset existing and anticipated traffic-related problems. Public and private transit service and railway operations represent secondary transportation issues and needs, and will also be addressed.

2.0 MAJOR TRANSPORTATION ROUTES

2.1 Interstate 395

Formerly state Route 52, Interstate 395 provides a direct link from I-290 south to the Connecticut state line, whereupon I-395 continues southward. Route 52 was upgraded in the late 1960's as a limited access highway from the state line north to Oxford, and was eventually extended during the mid-1970's to connect with I-290 in Auburn. The new highway was completed in 1978. Before then, Route 52 ended north of the Webster-Oxford line, where motorists accessed Route 12 to reach points north.

Interstate-395 is a four-lane divided highway, and provides a vital link between Worcester and the State of Connecticut. The highway also serves local traffic within Webster, with three exits (Cudworth Road, Route 16 and Route 193) allowing vehicles a shortcut to bypass local traffic. Geographically, I-395 is an artificial dividing line between the older, well-developed western portion of Webster and the less developed and more rural eastern two-thirds of Town.

2.2 Routes 12 and 16

Route 12 was the major north-south road before the completion of I-395. The route is known by several locally designated names - Main Street, East Main Street and Worcester Road - as it traverses easterly from the Dudley line, through the Downtown, then north to Oxford. A two lane route, Route 12 is the scene of high traffic volumes, much of it heading to and from the Downtown

commercial area where retail stores, service establishments and professional offices predominate.

Route 16 joins Route 12 at the intersection of Thompson Road (at Cranston Print Works); this represents the western terminus of Route 16. Otherwise referred to as Gore Road and Douglas Road, Route 16 provides an important link to the Town of Douglas, especially Douglas Center and East Douglas. Otherwise, motorists would have to utilize less direct local roads, such as Lower Gore Road, to travel to points east. This two lane secondary route sometimes experiences high traffic volumes in certain areas, as described further in section 4.0.

2.3 Route 193

Thompson Road is the local name of this stretch of Route 193 in Webster. The northern terminus of the route, similar to Route 16, is at Route 12. As with the other two state-numbered routes, Route 193 is a two lane, two way secondary road which is the scene of moderate to heavy traffic volumes in some areas. The intersection of Thompson Road and Lake Street, characterized by fast-food, entertainment, and service establishments (e.g., gasoline stations) is an area of frequent traffic congestion.

3.0 TOWN CIRCULATION SYSTEM

There are over 300 local roads in Webster, when discounting the three state routes and I-395. The majority of these are Town ways rather than privately-owned. Many streets now handling heavy flows were built before the recent growth spurt, and are incapable of accommodating present volumes. Examples of these include Lower Gore Road and Bigelow Road.

Several Town roads appear in need of upgrading based upon field inspection, particularly if Webster grows considerably within the next 10-20 years. Those in the higher priority category are: Mine Brook Road (paving and widening); the southern "end" of Rawson Road (paving and widening), and the intersection of Gore Road and Killdeer Road (intersection improvements e.g., signalization).

Cudworth and particularly Sutton Roads, which form the western and eastern boundaries, respectively, of a largely undeveloped industrially-zoned area, could warrant improvements to service possible future expansion of industrial uses there. In this case, new access roads would likely be built to serve these businesses, which would ultimately change the classification of one or both of these roads. A well-designed capital improvements program should address the issue of capacity improvements for these and other local ways in order to mitigate present and future safety and traffic-related difficulties.

4.0 TRAFFIC CONDITIONS

4.1 Trends in Traffic Volumes

Traffic movement in Webster generally is unencumbered east of I-395, but to the west of the interstate, volumes typically are higher. Peak A.M. and P.M. traffic in the Downtown area results in frequent tie-ups and slowdowns. Adding to these difficulties is the consistently heavy traffic along Main, South Main and East Main Streets (Route 12) during off-peak hours and weekends as shoppers visit the Downtown retail outlets.

CMRPC conducts traffic counts intermittently in Webster. Table 4 illustrates the changes in volumes at selected locations based on 24-hour traffic counts, or the total traffic that traveled along the road recorded by a traffic counter during a 24-hour period. Note that data are scarce for counts taken more than once at specific locations in recent years. Unfortunately, none of these "two time" counts were taken on some of the less-traveled local roads. Traffic count data showing marginal or even significant traffic increases over time could identify roads being used as shortcuts which were not in previous years, or suggest overall traffic increases Town-wide.

Table 4

24-Hour Traffic Counts

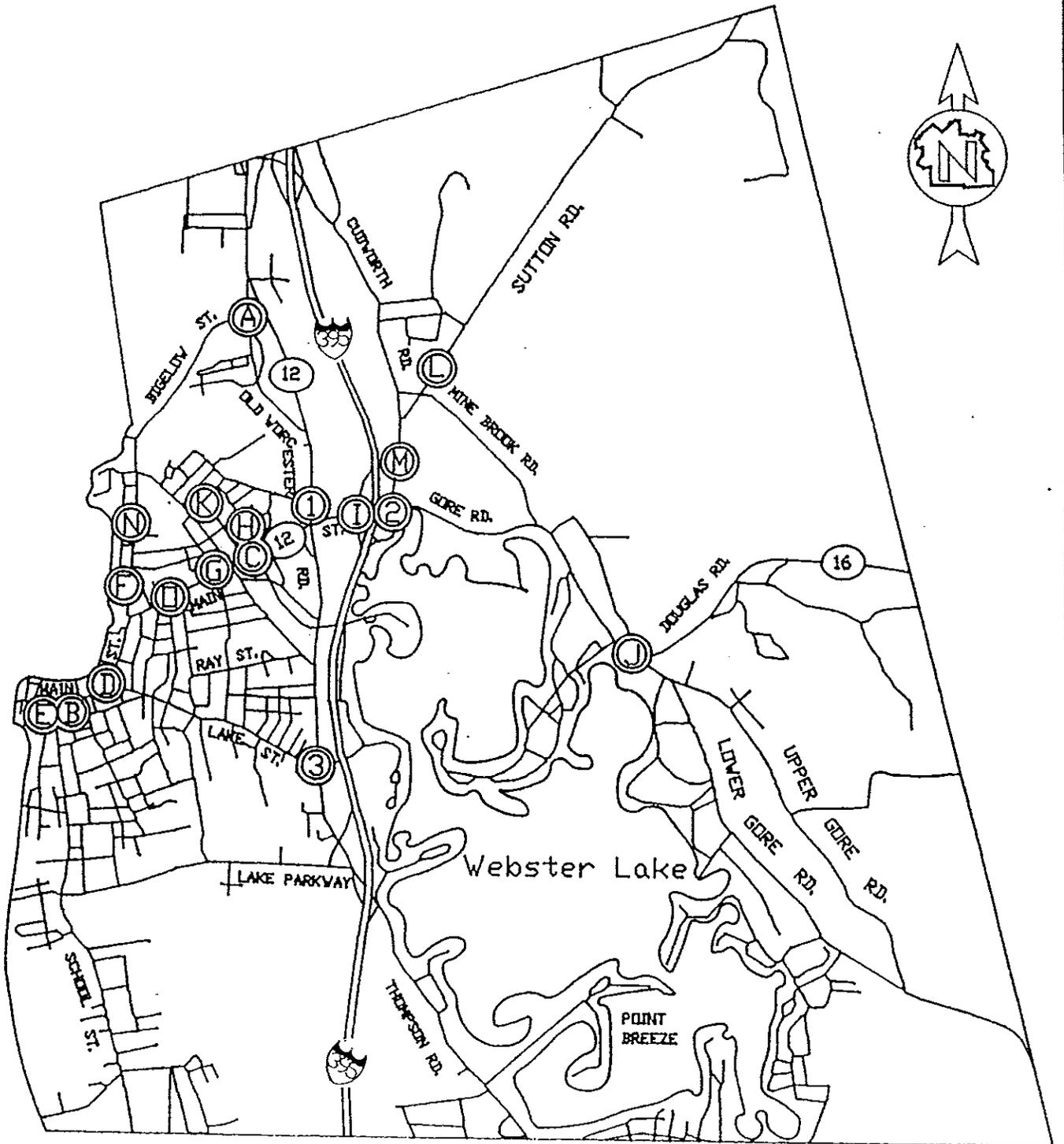
Map Reference #	Location	"First" Year	"Second" Year	Change
1	Rte. 12 N of Rte. 16	9,216 (1984)	10,434 (1987)	+1,218
2	Rte. 16 E of I-395	10,676 (1984)	11,308 (1987)	+632
3	Rte. 193 S of Lake St.	11,803 (1984)	11,863 (1987)	+60

Table 4 generally shows fairly considerable increases at two of the three count sites between 1984-1987. Location #'s 1 and 2 are close to one another distance-wise, and show the greatest increases during the three year period. The third site is the scene of heavier volumes, but showed the slightest increase. This may be explained by an increasing reliance by motorists to use Exit 2 off I-395 to access Webster, especially the Downtown, since many are coming from Worcester and points north.

Table 5 displays individual counts taken by CMRPC between 1986 and 1988. This table was included to give a sense of volumes at key intersections of local roads as well as at state-numbered and local road intersections. Although limited, Table 5 effectively illustrates where in Webster volumes are heaviest based on the 24-hour count method. Map 12 shows the count locations for this table and for Table 4.

WEBSTER MASTER PLAN

MAP 12: 24 HOUR TRAFFIC COUNTS



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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SCALE IN MILES

Table 5

Recent "One-Time" 24-Hour Traffic Counts (1986 - 1988)

<u>Map Reference</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Volume</u>	<u>Date</u>
A	Bigelow St. W of Old Worcester Rd.	3,341	8/20/87
B	Church St. S of Main St.	2,923	4/10/86
C	Hillside Ave. S of Rte. 12	1,268	8/18/87
D	Lake St. E of Main St.	7,889	4/10/86
E	Main St. E of Pleasant St.	19,497	4/10/86
F	Main St. N of Rte. 12	4,825	8/20/86
G	Park Ave. S of Rte. 12	3,098	8/18/87
H	Rte. 12 W of Park Ave.	20,891	8/25/87
I	Rte. 16 E of Rte. 12	17,327	8/20/87
J	Rte. 16 W of Lower Gore Rd.	8,696	10/15/87
K	Slater St. N of Rte. 12	5,181	8/18/87
L	Sutton Rd. N of Mine Brook Rd.	1,462	8/27/87
M	Sutton Rd. N of Rte. 16	4,594	8/24/87
N	Upland St. E of Main St.	774	8/20/87
O	Rte. 12 W of Lincoln St.	18,789	4/12/88

The table shows that Route 12, which is evident to anyone who has driven this road, is the heaviest volume traffic bearer in Webster. Count sites E, H and O, all located within or near the Downtown, recorded 24-hour volumes well above the norm.

4.2 Hazardous Roadways and Intersections

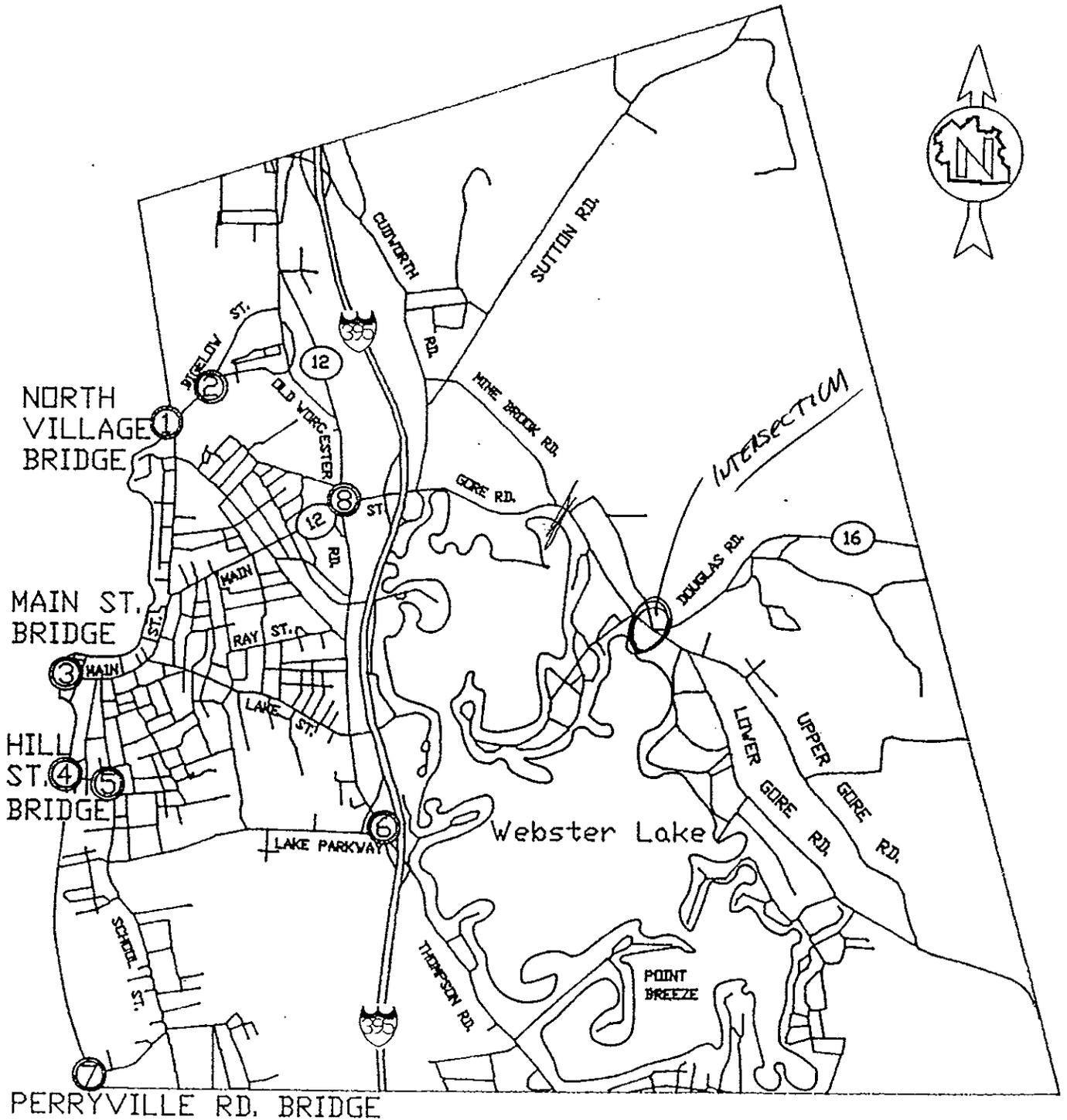
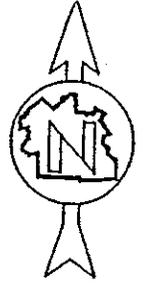
A quick glance at a map of Webster reveals that the spatial distribution of land uses is lopsided. Land west of Webster Lake is more developed and hence, has the greater concentration of roads and highways in Town. Because of this multitude of public ways, roadway intersections are commonplace, translating into higher accident potential involving motor vehicle collisions, single car accidents, or automobile and pedestrian accidents. Also, a more active road network means higher levels of traffic congestion.

The Town's Public Safety Committee is comprised of the Police Chief, Fire Chief (or their designated alternates) in addition to the five members appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The Committee's responsibility is to study and make recommendations to the Selectmen on matters pertinent to the safety of Webster's citizens, which include traffic and parking-related issues.

The Committee has identified a number of locations, mostly west of the Lake, which pose threats to efficient traffic flow, public safety or both. (Map 13 shows the general location of these areas) These include four bridges crossing the French River to Dudley along with streets in their general vicinity.

BRIDGES AND TURNING RATING

WEBSTER MASTER PLAN MAP 13: HAZARDOUS ROADS AND INTERSECTIONS



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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SCALE IN MILES

The North Village bridge (Site 1), a one-lane bridge at the intersection of North Main and Bigelow Streets, is soon to be replaced by a new two-lane span. (See Section 4.3 for further discussion of this project). The Committee feels that Bigelow Road northwest of the bridge (Site 2) is in disrepair and in need of resurfacing and realignment.

The Main Street bridge (Site 3) is one of three bridges linking the Downtown to Dudley, but is considered the only span providing practical east-west access. Staff has determined (from visual examination only) that surface conditions and road width appear adequate insofar as handling existing capacity. Nevertheless, increases in traffic volumes would negatively impact traffic flow in the Downtown and threaten the safety of the driving public.

The Hill Street bridge (Site 4) is the third of these Downtown connections. A field check of the bridge indicated that a bottleneck situation exists there. Hill Street narrows by approximately 3 to 5 feet on the bridge, making it difficult for vehicles traveling in opposite directions to safely cross the span. Pedestrians are at risk as no sidewalks exist on either side of the bridge.

The Committee has identified two intersections as a hazard to public safety. The first is Hill Street/School Street intersection (Site 5). Sight distances, especially for motorists on Hill Street about to access School Street, appear difficult to judge. The other is Thompson Road and Lake Parkway (Site 6); the Committee recommends installation of a traffic light at that intersection.

The Perryville Road bridge (Site 7) is the fourth span crossing the French River. Although surface conditions are judged as adequate on the Webster side, the Committee believes road improvements are warranted in Dudley.

Because of the Lake's centrality and partly due to the concentration of development in the western part of Town, north-south and especially east-west vehicular access is lacking. The Committee has expressed this issue as a serious public safety matter. Other concerns are with the absence of wide streets and few off-street parking areas in the Lake Street area to accommodate the high concentration of multi-family homes in that area.

Map 13 also shows the Route 12/16/193 intersection (Site 8) as an impediment to efficient traffic flow and to public safety. This meeting of three arterial roads has earned a reputation, albeit a notorious one, for its frequent traffic jams and confusing road signage, among other problems. Although not included in the Public Safety Committee's list of substandard intersections and roads, the Town's Department of Public Works felt that this location should be cited in the Master Plan.

4.3 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

CMRPC, in cooperation with the Massachusetts Department of Public Works (MDPW), conducts an annual review of road improvement project proposals. CMRPC solicits proposals from individual communities, and consults with MDPW on road improvement priorities in the region. In the event that a municipality does not respond to CMRPC's solicitation, or MDPW does not concur with the town or city's road improvement proposals, then the state recommendations take precedence.

Each TIP is a three year program, with the more critical component being the "annual element", or the project given the highest priority. CMRPC's role is to evaluate potential air quality impacts of the proposed first year projects. The agency then submits the results of this study to MDPW.

* Webster's latest TIP is comprised of two projects. The annual element concerns replacement of the North Village bridge. The existing bridge will remain, and a new span constructed north of the present structure. The French River Saloon (located at the intersection of North Main Street and Bigelow Road) will be demolished so that Bigelow Road may be realigned to connect the new Bridge. North Main Street will connect Bigelow Road at a 90° angle which will eliminate the narrow curved section of the latter way.

Resurfacing of I-395 from the Oxford Town line south to to the Connecticut line is proposed for FY 1990 - 91. MDPW plans to advertise for bids in September or October of 1989. The project is expected to take two years to complete.

5.0 TRANSIT SERVICES

Webster is fortunate in that a variety of private and public service providers operate in the Town. Fixed-route and dial-a-ride agencies respond to a growing specialized transit demand for such groups as the physically disabled and the elderly. Bus service is provided to and from Webster, offering stops at selected locations and also allowing for non-scheduled stops as well.

This section will discuss the different types of transit services offered, and illustrate some relevant statistical information where available. The evaluation will focus on the names of these providers, the type of services they offer and ridership trends in recent years.

5.1 South Central Massachusetts Elderbus, Inc.

Elderbus provides transit service to the elderly and handicapped in thirteen communities, most of them in Worcester County. Three vans, two of which are lift-equipped, serve elderly and

handicapped clients in the Towns of Dudley and Webster. The vehicles do not follow predetermined routes but rather operate on an incremental group and individual demand schedule. In other words, the vans will pick up and drop off clients anywhere within the service area provided arrangements are made in advance to do so.

CMRPC retains passenger trip data for Elderbus, Inc. and other public and private non-profit service providers operating in the region. Table 6 below illustrates the number of monthly and annual passenger trips between fiscal years 1985-1988 for Elderbus. Note that ridership has increased significantly during this four year period, particularly between FY '86 and FY '87.

Table 6

Monthly Operating Statistics

<u>Month</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>Average Monthly</u>
July	870	835	996	1,174	969
August	915	943	1,044	1,063	991
September	899	880	1,159	1,164	1,026
October	1,012	1,069	1,138	1,305	1,131
November	994	842	1,101	1,153	1,023
December	810	933	1,182	1,148	1,018
January	870	1,009	935	1,105	980
February	52	780	1,129	1,079	935
March	996	885	1,327	1,287	1,124
April	1,058	1,215	1,360	1,118	1,188
May	946	1,120	1,310	1,328	1,176
June	<u>842</u>	<u>970</u>	<u>1,389</u>	<u>1,316</u>	1,129
Total	10,964	11,481	14,070	14,240	

5.2 Fixed Route Service

The Weagle Bus Company of Shrewsbury, Mass. offers fixed route service Monday through Saturday between Webster and Worcester via Oxford and Auburn along Route 12. This service is offered to the public at large, and is not a specialized paratransit operation. The Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) subcontracts these services to the company.

Local stops in Webster include the Dunkin' Donuts restaurant on Main Street and several other locations on Route 12 northbound to Oxford. Weagle provides five round trips daily, and will make unscheduled stops along Route 12 if "flagged down" by potential riders. Average summer weekday ridership during the summer, 1988 was 66 riders and passengers. For the fall 1988 season, average ridership was 78 persons.

6.0 TAXI CAB SERVICES

Vets Cab, Inc. of Southbridge, Mass. operates five taxis serving the Towns of Webster, Southbridge, Sturbridge, Charlton, Holland and the Brookfields. City Cab, operating out of Webster, serves primarily Webster, Dudley and Southbridge but will provide trips to other towns in Central Massachusetts. Both Vets Cab, Inc. and City Cab accept medicaid passengers.

7.0 RAIL SERVICE

No passenger rail service exists in Webster; the Providence and Worcester Railroad runs freight trains through Town, however. The line runs parallel east of the French River, and cuts across Main Street in the Downtown and across the river to Dudley. Traffic circulation is stopped in this area for several minutes when a train is crossing this street, which normally occurs several times daily.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Poorly designed intersections pose a danger to motorists and pedestrians, increasing the prospect for accidents, personal injuries, and in some instances, loss of life. Substandard road surfaces, aside from threatening public safety, degrade the appearance of an area and may damage automobiles. This section presents a listing of the twelve highest priority intersections and roadways in need of upgrading (see Map 14 for general locations identified by ranking numbers), and offers solutions aimed at mitigating present or anticipated problems.

The identification of these dozen sites was based on a combination of findings and input from a number of sources: Webster's Public Safety Committee, the Master Plan Committee, the Town's Department of Public Works, the general public (i.e., community survey opinions) and CMRPC. Note that this ranking is purely subjective, and not based on a point allocation methodology, but is merely the opinion of CMRPC as to which sites warrant consideration over others.

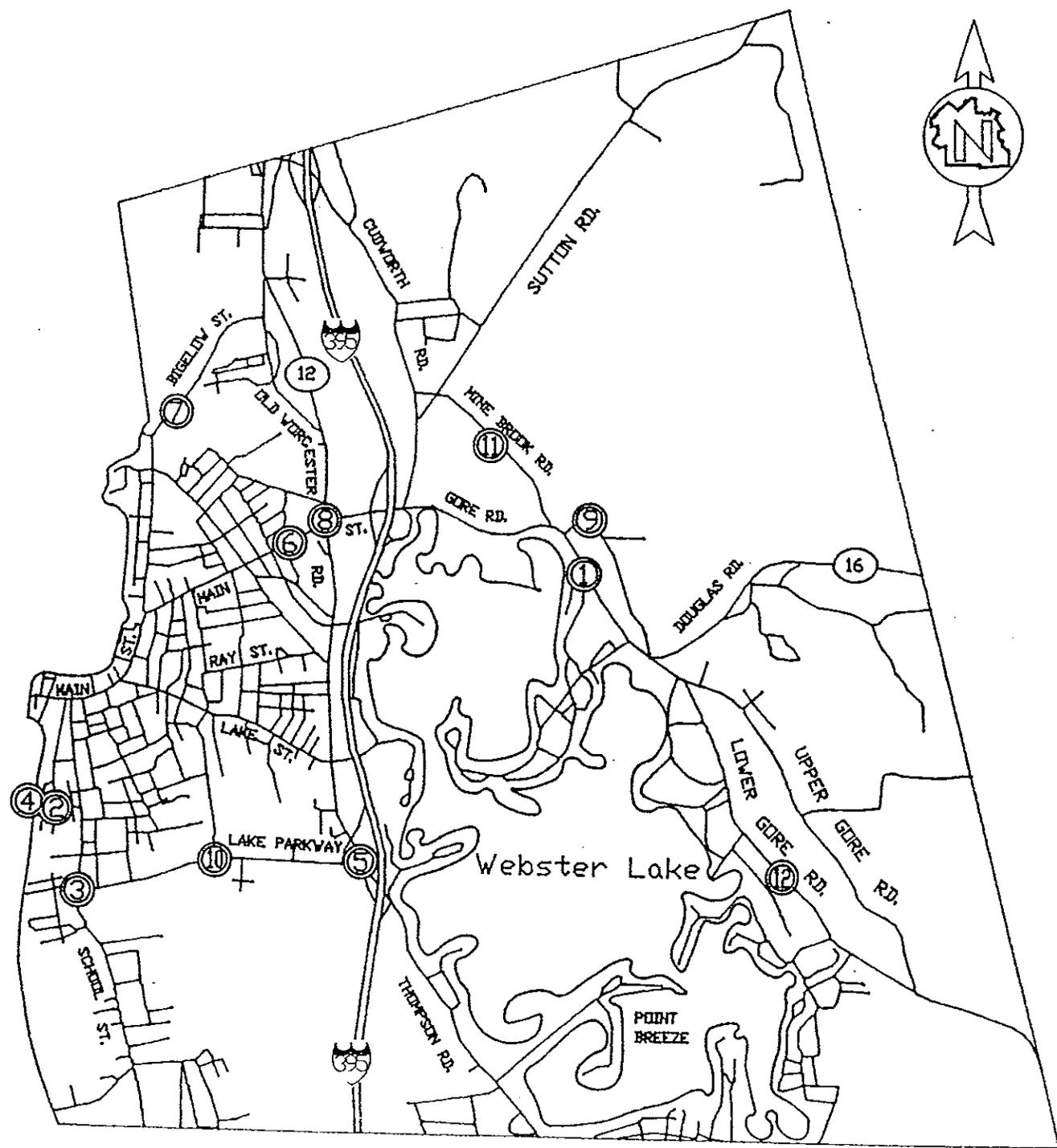
I. Intersection of Gore Road (Route 16)/Killdeer Island Road

This appears to be one of the more hazardous intersections in the Town, and some improvements need to be considered as soon as possible. The most dangerous movement is that of left turns onto Route 16 from Killdeer Island Road. CMRPC recommends that the following actions be taken:

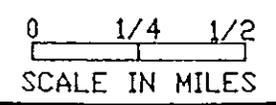
1. The stop sign needs to be moved further toward Route 16;
2. Two traffic islands might be needed to separate left turns from right turns out of Killdeer/Fairfield Road onto Route 16; and

WEBSTER MASTER PLAN

MAP 14: PROPOSED ROADWAY AND INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION



3. The three (3) parking spaces (belonging to The Lodge) should be eliminated to provide adequate sight distance for left turns onto Route 16.

II. Intersection of School Street/Hill Street

The following problems are evident at this location:

1. Turning radii are too short; cars must negotiate the turns without going over the curb and/or cutting into the opposite traffic lane.
2. Sight distance (for traffic out of Hill Street) is blocked by bushes and cement wall on the right.
3. Pavement markings are lacking.

The following improvement measures need to be considered:

1. Accident records need to be examined to determine the dominant accident type.
2. Parking policy along School Street (in the immediate vicinity of this intersection) might need to be re-evaluated.
3. The need for a flashing light should be investigated.

III. Intersection of School Street/Klebart Avenue

This intersection reportedly was the scene of several fatal accidents prior to the placing of a stop sign at the Klebart Avenue approach. Nevertheless, the intersection is still deficient in the following areas:

1. Sight distance for the Klebart Avenue traffic;
2. Lane striping; and
3. Stop lines for the Klebart Avenue approaches

In addition, a "dangerous intersection" warning sign might be needed along the School Street northbound approach. Further analysis is needed to determine if a flashing light is warranted.

IV. Hill Street (between School Street and bridge)

The entire length of Hill Street (between School Street and the bridge) needs to be redesigned to improve driving conditions. This would include geometric and pavement design. Also, reflectors are needed on both approaches to the bridge. Depending on traffic volumes and future projections of development, the Town might need to consider widening the bridge.

V. Intersection of Thompson Road/Lake Parkway/Exit 1, I-395

Traffic counts and accident data should be consulted to determine if a traffic signal is warranted at this intersection. Sight distance measurements should be taken for the Thompson Road approaches. Lane striping and proper pavement marking are needed. Adequate lighting should be verified (accident records may help in determining whether a lighting problem exists at this intersection).

VI. Route 12 in front of Wonder Food Warehouse

A number of survey respondents identified this location as a hazardous exit/entrance way, and that improvements are warranted. Unless a traffic signal is warranted and deemed necessary, the Town might consider providing a middle lane for left turns only. However, safety implications of this option need to be evaluated.

VII. Bigelow Road

Staff agrees with the Public Safety Committee's assessment that this Town road is in need of upgrading, and offers the following suggestions:

1. Installation of advisory signs and reflective posts especially along horizontal curvatures;
2. Pavement needs to be maintained;
3. Lanes need to be striped; and
4. Depending on the growth potential in the immediate area, the Town might need to consider realigning and/or widening the road.

VIII. Intersection of Route 12, 16 and 193

As mentioned earlier, the Webster DPW believes that this intersection is one of the Town's worst. Many survey respondents agreed, rating the intersection as being the least adequate Town-wide for handling existing traffic volumes. Several staff drive-throughs of this area appeared to verify these conclusions.

However, an observation by CMRPC staff of the intersection revealed no major problems concerning the traffic operations; no major delays were observed, and the wait period seemed to be reasonable. The signal seems to operate as fully-actuated with an average cycle length of 70 seconds (i.e., the time the signal takes to make one full cycle to serve all vehicular movements in the intersection). Beyond some fine-tuning of the signal to optimize the intersection operations, this location seems to be working fine.

Accident records need to be examined for this location to form a complete picture of the overall intersection performance. Major geometric and timing changes should be considered only if major safety problems are revealed upon accident records examination.

IX. Rawson Road

Rawson Road is one of the two roads (Sutton Road being the other one) which are suggested for vehicular access to the Sugarloaf Hill development. Whether a "conventional" subdivision, or a large scale "cluster" type of development is ultimately built, the Town should consider some or all of the following improvements some or all paid for by the developer:

1. Depending on the scale of development, the road might be widened and proper signage provided;
2. The Town should consider whether a traffic signal will be needed (upon buildout) at the Route 16/Rawson Road intersection (at the westernmost access); and
3. In light of the development scale, the above intersection needs to be studied for some geometric redesign.

X. Lake Parkway (between Thompson Road and Brandes Street

Road surface along this segment is generally in poor condition. Pavement maintenance and/or resurfacing should be considered. Full-depth pavement design might be needed for some sections of this road. Shoulders should be provided along with sidewalks, and where they exist they need to be maintained.

XI. Mine Brook Road

With the potential for large-scale residential development in this area (i.e., Sugarloaf Hill) being very real, Town officials should consider the following improvements:

1. Paving the road, in particular the western two-thirds, which is now a gravel surface;
2. Install proper signs and pavement markings; and
3. Depending upon development potential, the road might need to be widened.

XII. Lower Gore Road

Even though Lower Gore Road passes through a primarily low-density, rural residential area, the Town may want to consider upgrading the road in light of existing development and poor driving conditions.

CMRPC recommends the following:

1. Pavement surface needs to be serviced;
2. Shoulders need to be provided;
3. Sidewalks need to be provided. This is particularly important because of the existing residential development; and
4. Proper signage should be provided

CHAPTER VI

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND HOUSING PROFILE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A discussion of relevant statistical data on population, housing, income and employment characteristics and trends is an important ingredient in helping to determine future land use trends for Webster. Combined with the previous analyses on public needs and aspirations (i.e., citizen survey), land use characteristics, environmental constraints, water and sewer systems, and transportation needs, this chapter provides a quantitative angle to these earlier discussions. By doing so, local officials and the general public hopefully will find it easier to gauge the validity of recommendations for Zoning By-Law and Map changes presented in the final chapter.

Section 2 of this chapter will begin with an evaluation of the population by groups (e.g., absolute numbers, census tract characteristics, age groups). The section will also examine past population trends and characteristics, and provide some comparative projections of Webster's future population broken down by age groups.

Section 3 looks at housing trends, past and present. Among the data presented and examined will include housing unit growth over time, household populations, renter vs. owner households, and existing market conditions, among other information. The fourth and fifth sections provide an analysis of income trends and an economic profile of current businesses and employment in Webster, respectively.

The source of the most recent data presented is 1980 U.S. Census information. Therefore, the reader should be cautious not to construe this chapter's findings as being based on up-to-date statistics, as the U.S. Census Bureau does not break down population, housing and income data during non-decennial census years. Unfortunately, results of the 1990 Census will not be available until late 1991, well after the Master Plan's completion. However, the Town is encouraged to update this document as often as possible. So following the publication of the 1990 Census, officials may want to consider updating this element of the Plan.

2.0 POPULATION STUDIES

As mentioned above, the 1980 U.S. Census provides the most recent comprehensive population information for the Town of Webster. Consequently, the 1980 Census figures will be used to identify past and present population characteristics. In a few cases, where available, state and local census data are included to update some of the 1980 statistics.

2.1 Past Trends and Characteristics

Since the onset of the second World War, Webster's population has grown, but at a relatively slow pace. Between 1940 and 1980, net growth was only 1,294 persons, a 9.8 percent increase. Population actually decreased between 1970 and 1980, not an unusual occurrence in Central Massachusetts during this period. Table 7 shows decennial population figures for this time span, along with absolute and percentage changes.

Table 7
Population Trends: 1940 - 1980

<u>Year</u>	<u>Change In Population</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>% Increase/Decrease</u>
1940	13,186	-	-
1950	13,194	8	.06
1960	13,680	486	3.7
1970	14,917	1,237	9.0
1980	14,480	-437	-3.0

Table 8 shows to what extent past population trends have been affected by people moving into and out of Webster. The net migration statistics reflect past population trends to some degree. Note that only for the 1960-1970 period, the time of the highest population increase, the net migration was positive, whereas more people left Webster than moved to the Town during the other two decades.

Table 8
Population Change Vs. Net Migration
(1950 - 1980)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population Change</u>	<u>Net Migration</u>
1950-1960	486	-771
1960-1970	1,237	239
1970-1980	-437	-726

2.2 Recent Population Characteristics (1970 and 1980)

Much census data is available comparing population composition and features for decennial years 1970 and 1980. In previous Census years, information was not dissected to the degree it was in these two recent periods. Comparing and contrasting trends within this decade is important not only because this information represents the most recent comprehensive data available but also to estimate possible changes that may have occurred between 1980 and 1990, assuming the 1970-1980 trends continued.

Four Census Tracts (CT's) "cover" the Town of Webster. As Map 15 reveals, CT 7541 covers nearly the entire eastern two-thirds of the Town and has an area of 12.58 square miles. CT's 7543 and 7544 cover most of the Downtown area, a combined total of only 1.02 square miles.

Table 9 shows the change in population by CT between 1970-1980, along with the total area (including water) each of these tracts comprises. The population density of the tracts varies, although overall populations remain fairly equal. Interestingly, CT 7541, which is the least densely populated, saw a substantial increase during the decade, while all other tracts experienced net declines. This was probably due in large part to the regional shift from "urban" to "suburban" living environments during this period, and the amount of developable land available in this tract during the 1970's.

Table 9

Population by Census Tract: 1970 and 1980

Census Tract	Total Area (in sq. miles)	Population		Change	% Change
		1970	1980	1970 - 1980	1970 - 1980
7541	12.58	3,431	4,215	784	22.9
7542	0.90	3,653	3,574	-79	-2.2
7543	0.23	4,076	3,245	-831	-2.04
7544	<u>0.79</u>	<u>3,757</u>	<u>3,446</u>	<u>-311</u>	<u>-8.3</u>
Total	14.50	14,917	14,480	-437	-2.9

Table 10 depicts age breakdowns of the 1970 and 1980 populations. The elderly population (65 and over), which was and continues to be the trend nationwide, increased by 517 or 27.9%.

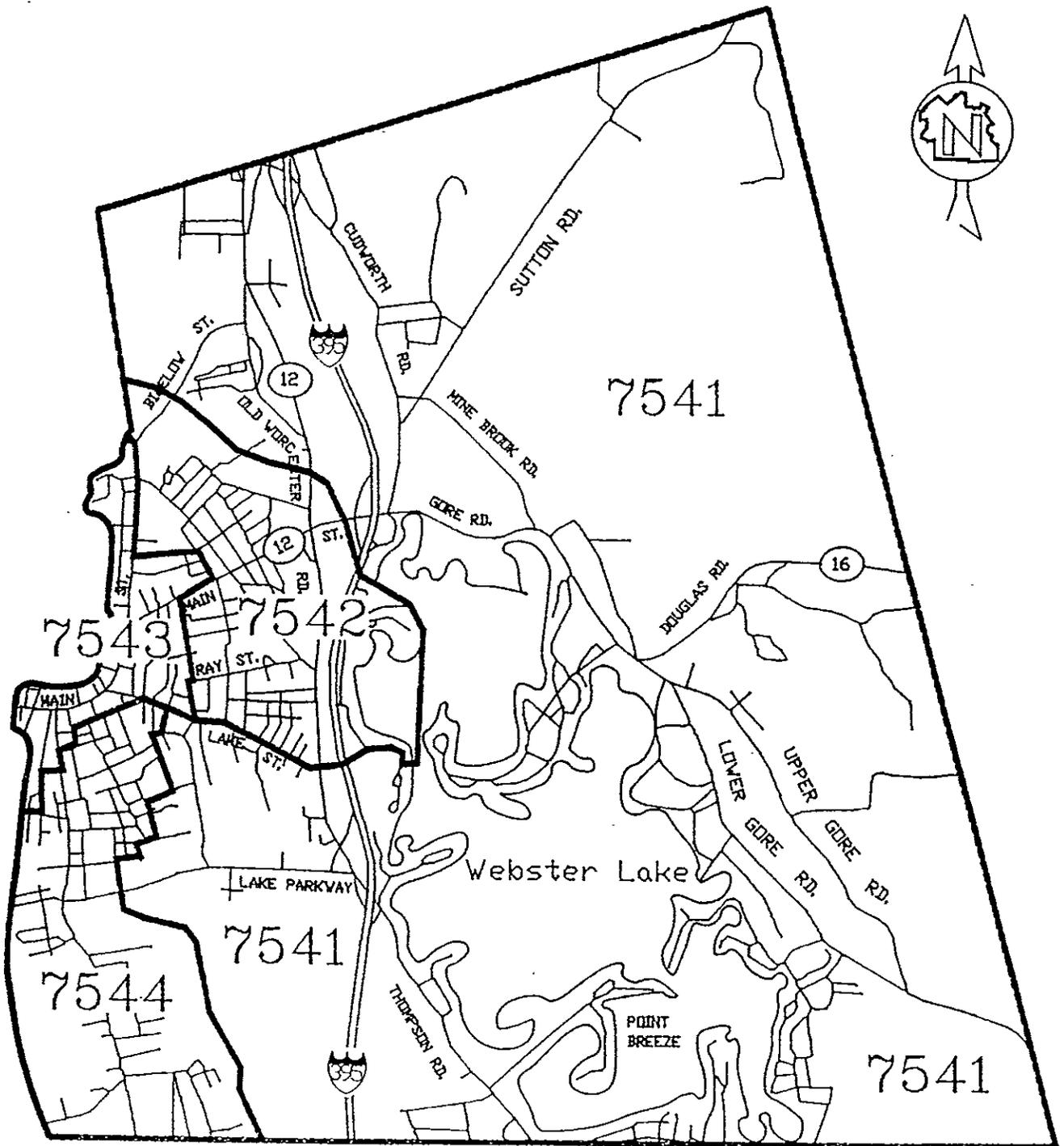
In contrast, the aggregate decrease for the Under 5 and 5-14 cohorts was 863 persons or a 28.8% decline. This change suggests a greater shift in the population to the elderly in future years. Recognizing this trend, it would be prudent for Webster Town officials to look further toward providing adequate housing and services for its senior citizens. Strategies may include continuing to apply for federal and state discretionary funds for affordable housing and amending the Zoning By-Law to encourage innovative housing options (e.g., accessory apartments and retirement communities).

Table 10

Age of the Population: 1970 and 1980

Year	Total	Under 5	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
1970:	14,917	1,248	2,615	2,206	1,531	1,535	2,061	1,868	1,853
1980:	14,480	841	2,159	2,360	1,986	1,416	1,409	1,939	2,370
#Change:	-437	-407	-456	154	455	-119	652	71	517
%Change:	-3	-48.4	-21.1	7	29.7	-8.4	-46.3	3.8	27.9

WEBSTER MASTER PLAN MAP 15: CENSUS TRACTS



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

0 1/4 1/2
SCALE IN MILES

2.3 Population Projections

The following two tables depict population estimates for 1990, 1995, and 2000 based on assessments for future residential building activity. This projection technique is often referred to as the "building trend method," in which assumptions are made relative to the amount of residential development anticipated in coming years.

The Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research (MISER) of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst recently published population projections for all of the municipalities in the Commonwealth. The projections are at five year intervals from 1985 to 1995 and provide information for total population figures, male/female divisions, age distribution groupings, and broad ethnic categories. Although the MISER projections are not included in this report, the data used for percentage of age distributions (for 1990 and 1995) were utilized here. A "step" in their methodology requires that town populations by age, sex, and race move in the same direction as the respective county in which they are a part of. For the year 2000, staff "straightlined" then MISER population changes between 1990 and 1995 (i.e., assumed that numerical changes by age group would remain constant through 2000) and used age cohort percentages for the projections.

Table 11 illustrates Webster's population change presuming a modest rate of building activity. During 1989, we have assumed that the Town will issue 75 residential building permits, added to the 6,261 occupied units.* This was multiplied by the estimated number of persons per household for Webster (2.41), which is assumed to decrease 0.01 persons through the year 2000 based on past trends. (Present zoning favors single family home development so the bulk of residential growth will be of this type).

Considering that this trend continues unimpeded through the year 2000 and that the average household size continues to decline, Webster can expect 1,332 new inhabitants (added to the 1989 Town Census figure of 15,209) by the turn of the century.

Table 12 shows another version of the same method, assuming a lower number of building permit issuances for the period 1989-2000. As with Table 11, the number of persons per household declines 0.01 persons per year. Appendix 3 describes the building trend methodology devised for these projections and the assumptions tied into this forecasting technique.

* 1980 occupied households (5,626) plus new units (635) based on building permits issued, 1980-1988.

Table 11

Future Trends In
Population Age Distribution: 1990, 1995, 2000
 (High Estimate)

Age Distribution	1990		1995		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5	1,035	6.7	1,073	6.7	1,108	6.7
5-14	2,086	13.5	2,306	14.4	2,547	15.4
15-24	2,132	13.8	1,858	11.6	1,571	9.5
25-34	2,333	15.1	2,354	14.7	2,349	14.2
35-44	2,009	13.0	2,210	13.8	2,415	14.6
45-54	1,421	9.2	1,809	11.3	2,217	13.4
55-64	1,452	9.4	1,313	8.2	1,158	7.0
65 and Over	<u>2,982</u>	<u>19.3</u>	<u>3,091</u>	<u>19.3</u>	<u>3,176</u>	<u>19.2</u>
Total	15,450	100.0	16,014	100.0	16,541	100.0

Table 12

Future Trends In
Population Age Distribution: 1990, 1995, 2000
 (Low Estimate)

Age Distribution	1990		1995		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5	1,027	6.7	1,045	6.7	1,062	6.7
5-14	2,070	13.5	2,247	14.4	2,441	15.4
15-24	2,115	13.8	1,810	11.6	1,506	9.5
25-34	2,315	15.1	2,294	14.7	2,250	14.2
35-44	1,993	13.0	2,153	13.8	2,314	14.6
45-54	1,410	9.2	1,763	11.3	2,124	13.4
55-64	1,441	9.4	1,279	8.2	1,109	7.0
65 and Over	<u>2,959</u>	<u>19.3</u>	<u>3,011</u>	<u>19.3</u>	<u>3,043</u>	<u>19.2</u>
Total	15,330	100.0	15,602	100.0	15,849	100.0

3.0 HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

3.1 Housing Background

Webster is a community of diverse housing types, ranging from densely-packed, multi-family dwellings west of Webster Lake to single family homes on larger lots to the east. Since 1960, Town-wide housing units have increased substantially although population growth has not kept pace, as the number of persons per household gradually has decreased during the last few decades.

Table 13 shows U.S. Census figures for housing units taken for the last three decennial years. Also, an estimate of 1986 total housing units is included based upon net housing growth (the number of building permits approved less demolitions since the beginning of 1980, added to that year's base figure).

Table 13

Housing Unit Trends: 1960-1986

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Housing Units</u>	<u># Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
1960	5,231	---	---
1970	5,439	208	4.0
1980	6,364	885	16.3
1986 (*Est.)	6,673	349	5.5

*Source: Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research (University of Mass., Amherst)

Characteristics of housing by census tracts is a viable indicator of what parts of Webster have been growing, and which sections have been in decline, during recent times. Table 6 compares the housing unit count by census tract for 1970 and 1980; the table also notes numerical and percentage changes for each tract. CT 7541, corresponding to population growth, experienced the highest rate of housing growth during this period. Total units declined in CT 7543 as demolitions evidently exceeded unit construction during the 1970's.

Table 14

Housing Units by Census Tract: 1970 and 1980

<u>Census Tract</u>	<u>Housing Units</u>		<u>Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1970 - 1980</u>	<u>1970 - 1980</u>
7541	1,156	1,854	689	59.1
7542	1,267	1,504	237	18.7
7543	1,667	1,623	-44	-2.6
7544	<u>1,340</u>	<u>1,383</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>3.2</u>
Total	5,439	6,364	925	

Ownership patterns distinguish turnover potential for housing units Town-wide. Rental housing is generally occupied for shorter periods than mortgage units, as some renters eventually move upscale to owner-occupied housing, thus vacating apartment dwellings for new renters, or those moving from other rental units. Table 15 shows nearly an even split between owner vs. renter-occupied units in Webster for 1970 and 1980. Vacant and seasonal housing constitutes a much smaller proportion of the supply.

Table 15

Housing Characteristics: 1970 and 1980

<u>Total Units (1970)*</u>	<u>Owner Occupied Units</u>	<u>Renter Occupied Units</u>	<u>Vacant Units</u>
5,439	2,658	2,569	302
<u>(1980)</u> 6,059	2,860	2,766	425

*Total year-round housing units which does not include vacant seasonal and migratory units.

Table 16 takes this analysis one step further by examining the distribution of owner occupied and renter occupied units by census tract. Note that between 1970 and 1980, CT's 7541 and 7544 showed renter unit decreases as a percent of total units, while CT 7542 experienced the largest owner-occupied unit decrease during this period. (This tally does not include vacant units depicted in Table 7)

Table 16

Renter and Owner-Occupied Housing Units by Census Tract
(1970 and 1980)

<u>Census Tract</u>	<u>Total Occupied Units</u>		<u>Renter Occupied Units</u>		<u>Owner Occupied Units</u>	
	<u>#</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>
7541	1,092	1,490	21.5	19.3	78.5	80.7
7542	1,225	1,448	43.5	54.1	56.5	45.9
7543	1,564	1,414	74.6	75.7	25.4	24.3
7544	<u>1,256</u>	<u>1,274</u>	50.5	49.1	49.5	50.9
Total	5,137	5,626				

Single family detached homes, commonly perceived as the standard dwelling of choice among suburbanites, is not the prevalent dwelling type in Webster. Duplex, triplex, quadplex and apartment complexes are instead the norm, although they are found primarily west of the lake. However, the number of one-unit structures, i.e., single family detached homes, increased between 1970 and 19890. Table 17 provides a breakdown of housing types, and the extent to which those units increased or declined during the 1970's.

Table 17

Housing Units by Structure: 1970 and 1980

<u>Total Units</u> *	<u>2 or More 1 - Unit Structure</u>	<u>Unit Structure</u>	<u>Mobile Homes or Trailers</u> *
(1970)			
5,439	2,159	3,290	59
(1980)			
6,051	<u>2,620</u>	<u>3,431</u>	<u>61</u>
# Change	461	141	3

* Total year-round units

One way of cross-tabulating population and housing data is to determine the average number of persons living in occupied households (owner-occupied and renter occupied units) Town-wide. Table 18 shows population in households for 1970 and 1980, which does not include vacant buildings or mobile homes. As suggested earlier, a trend towards a decrease in the average household size has begun, as is apparent in the table.

Table 18

Population in Households: 1970 and 1980

<u>Year</u>	<u>Occupied, Households</u>	<u>Household Population</u>	<u>Persons Per Household</u>
(1970)	5,137	14,724	2.87
(1980)	5,626	14,333	2.55

The elderly and minority populations comprise two special groups growing in numbers throughout many Massachusetts communities. Tables 19 and 20 display selected characteristics for these groups living in occupied units for 1980.

Table 19

Householders Age 65 and Over: 1980

<u>Total Occupied Units</u>	<u>Renter Occupied Units</u>	<u>Owner Occupied Units</u>
1,540	708	832

Table 20

Occupied Housing Units by Census Tract: 1980

<u>Census Tract</u>	<u>Total Population</u>	<u>American Black Pop.</u>	<u>Indian Pop.</u>	<u>Spanish/ Asian Pop.</u>	<u>Origin Pop.</u>
7541	1,490	0	8	7	8
7542	1,448	0	0	7	8
7543	1,414	0	6	7	9
7544	<u>1,274</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	5,626	0	23	21	25

3.2 Housing Authority Managed Units

The Webster Public Housing Authority (PHA) manages a large number of units subsidized by both the federal and state governments. These include units for low and moderate income families, the elderly and the physically handicapped. The low per capita, median household, and family incomes for Webster as illustrated in the 1980 U.S. Census (see Section 4.2) account to a large degree for this significant amount of public housing in Webster.

At present, the PHA is responsible for managing a total of 134 family housing units. One rental development, situated on Second Island Road, is funded through the state's Chapter 200-1 program. The program was originally conceived to provide affordable housing for veterans and their families. Chapter 200-1 is now geared primarily to any family of low-moderate income. However, preference still is given to families whose head-of-household is a veteran of the armed forces. Other rent-subsidized units managed by the PHA for families include units scattered throughout Webster funded through the state Chapter 707 program (8 units), the federal Section 8 program (35 units), and 61 HUD Section 123 units, all located at the Slater Street/North Main Street Housing Authority Site.

Twelve units were recently approved under the state's Chapter 705 program, which enables housing authorities to construct mortgage-assisted family housing. Communities are urged to

donate one or more sites to accommodate a minimum of 12 units. The state had initially approved a site off the George Street extension to construct 12 units, but ultimately reneged on that decision. The PHA is now seeking an alternate location.

The PHA also manages rental apartments for the elderly and special needs persons at the Slater Street/North Main Street site. The state Chapter 667 program provides funds to PHA's to develop housing for low-income elderly and handicapped persons. Seventy-two of these units are found at this site, with 30 new units recently approved. Eight units have been approved under Chapter 689, which provides grants to PHA's for construction or acquisition of small scale housing for people with disabilities. However, no sites can be secured for the 667 and 689 units until a suitable parcel is found for the Chapter 705 family housing previously mentioned.

The average waiting period to get into the PHA housing is 2-5 years for families and 2 years for the elderly and the disabled. Roughly seventy-five percent of applicants at any given time are Webster residents.

3.3 Other Subsidized Housing

Rural Housing Improvements, Inc. of Winchendon, MA administers rental subsidies for a total of 209 scattered-site 1-4 bedroom apartments in Webster. Of these, 180 are federal Section 8 dwellings and the remaining 31 are funded through the state Chapter 707 program. A developer is proposing to construct 72 low-income elderly units on property abutting the Housing Authority units. If funded, monies for rental subsidies, administered by RHI, will be channeled through the federal HUD Section 202 program.

The North Village Apartments is a privately-owned subsidized development housing 134 families in one, two and three-bedroom units, funded through the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA). The Richards Apartments (also private) houses 54 federally-subsidized family units through the Section 236 program. The Golden Heights apartment complex provides 133 units of low income housing for the elderly. And, 62 units of low cost senior citizen housing is being proposed on High Street by a private group.

3.4 Massachusetts Small Cities Program

The Town of Webster applies annually for funds from the Massachusetts Small Cities Program (MSCP). The state Executive Office of Communities and Development (EOCD), through federal Community Development block funds, disburses monies to eligible towns and cities with populations of less than 50,000. Funds can be used for a variety of improvements, such as housing rehabilitation, commercial renovation, infrastructure improvements and

social service programs. Generally, activities funded must principally benefit low and moderate income people.

The Webster Office of Community Development (OCD) has been responsible in past years for applying for Small Cities Funds. The Town's Redevelopment Authority has been instrumental in targeting improvements throughout Webster, in particular the Downtown and North Village neighborhood."

3.5 Webster Housing Partnership

The Webster Housing Partnership was formed in 1985 in an effort to encourage the development of affordable housing in Town. The Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) encourages the formation of local housing partnerships, which develop locally-appropriate solutions to their housing needs. Partnerships include public, private, civic and non-profit group members, whose purpose is to determine local housing needs and shape their own affordable housing solutions through multiple resources and through MHP if necessary.

The Massachusetts Housing Partnership Board recently voted to redesignate Webster as a housing partnership community for a two year period expiring December 31, 1990. Since the partnership's inception no units have been built under their auspices, primarily due to organizational problems with the partnership. On the positive side, the partnership has plans to submit a grant application for \$7,500 under the state's Municipal Advance Program (MAP) to assist with organizational and administrative issues.

4.0 INCOME

4.1 Income Characteristics

Income levels are another important determinant of the local economy. Income statistics, as with population and housing data are gathered and analyzed every ten years. (For income, 1979 and 1969 are listed instead of even calendar years as the U.S. Census requested income received in those years for the decennial census.) Nevertheless, these data provide a reasonable base of knowledge suggesting changes in both individual and group economic situations over time.

Table 21 shows per capita income in actual dollars for 1969, 1979 and 1986. The near doubling of the 1969 statistic in 1979 belies real income gain given ten year inflation rates.

Table 21

Per Capita Income: 1969, 1979 and 1986

<u>1969</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>% Change</u>	<u>1986*</u>	<u>% Change</u>
\$ 3,247	\$ 6,443	98.4	\$10,516	63.2

*Source: National Planning Data Corporation, 1986 estimates

Webster ranked thirty-ninth, followed only by Southbridge, in 1979 median household income among all CMRPC communities. The U.S. Census defines household income as income "received by (a) all household members 15 years old and over, not just those related to the householder, and by (b) persons living alone and in other non-family house-holds."

Table 22 illustrates by census tract changes in median household income between 1969 and 1979. Percentage-wise, CT 7544, encompassing a portion of the Downtown area, saw the most extreme income increases, CT 7541, west of Webster Lake, was another area where income growth was evident.

Table 22

Median Household Income: 1979 and 1969

<u>Census Tract</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>% Change</u>
7541	\$ 19,358	\$ 10,208	90
7542	11,832	8,881	33
7543	9,194	6,081	51
7544	<u>16,152</u>	<u>7,827</u>	<u>106</u>
Average	\$ 13,944	\$ 7,860	77%

The U.S. Census tabulated comparable information for families in those two decennial years. Family income is money received by all family members 15 years old and over, but excludes (unlike household income) income received by household members not related to the householder, persons living alone, and others in non-family households. Thus, median family income amounts tend to be higher than median household income statistics.

Table 23, similar to the previous table, shows median family income, or the total income received in calendar years 1969 and 1979, by families as previously defined. Like Table 22, CT's 7544 and 7541 experienced sharp increases in these income indicators. A 10-year increase - 59% is shown for CT 7542 compared to median household income during the same period.

Table 23

Median Family Income: 1979 and 1969

<u>Census Tract</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>% Change</u>
7541	\$ 21,470	\$ 11,037	95
7542	15,428	9,693	59
7543	13,472	8,245	63
7544	<u>18,824</u>	<u>8,872</u>	<u>112</u>
Average	\$ 17,740	\$ 9,418	88%

Levels of income reflect labor force characteristics, as well as spending capabilities of local residents. Families with higher yearly incomes generally have more "disposable income," or money left over after regular expenses are paid, such as food expenses, mortgage or rent, and utility bills.

Table 24 breaks down 1979 family income by ranges of income. Of the Town's 3,993 "families", nearly 58 percent reported incomes less than \$20,000 in 1979 suggesting that less than half of Webster's families had the financial means to purchase goods and services allowing them to live a "higher lifestyle."

Table 24

Total Families by Income: 1979

<u>Less than \$5,000</u>	\$5,000 - <u>7,499</u>	\$7,500 - <u>9,999</u>	\$10,000 - <u>14,499</u>	\$15,000 - <u>19,999</u>
273	354	313	663	699
\$20,000 - <u>24,999</u>	\$25,000 - <u>34,999</u>	\$35,000 - <u>49,999</u>	\$50,000 <u>or more</u>	
616	693	314	68	

Poverty level numbers were gathered for the 1970 and 1980 census. The U.S. Census defines "below poverty level" as "families or persons whose total income was less than the poverty threshold specified for the applicable family size, age of householder, and number of related children under 18 present."

Table 25 includes poverty level data for families in 1979 and 1969. Unfortunately, the number of families whose income places them in poverty status rose during the 1970's, even though total "families" remained stable.

Table 25

Families Below the Poverty Level: 1979 and 1969

<u>Total Families</u>	<u>1979</u>		<u>Total Families</u>	<u>1969</u>	
	<u>Families Below Poverty Level</u>	<u>Percent Below Poverty Level</u>		<u>Families Below Poverty Level</u>	<u>Percent Below Poverty Level</u>
3,993	336	8.4	3,993	240	6.0

An indication of where in Webster families living below the poverty level reside helps define strategies for dealing with this problem. Federal, state, and local funds are available for rental and mortgage assistance and neighborhood rehabilitation and revitalization.

Table 26 shows by the number and percent of families below the poverty level as reported in 1979 by census tracts. CT's 7543 and 7544, encompassing Webster's Downtown, show the highest percentages of families in this group, although fewer families reported income in these CT's compared to CT's 7541 and 7542.

Table 26

Families Below The Poverty Level: 1979 (by CT)

<u>Census Tract</u>	<u>Total Families</u>	<u>Families Below Poverty Level</u>	<u>Percent of Families Below Poverty Level</u>
7541	1,224	49	4.0
7542	1,037	72	6.9
7543	818	114	13.9
7544	<u>914</u>	<u>101</u>	11.1
	3,993	336	

5.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Employment Base and Trends

Webster is a community with a diverse economic base, employing a large number of persons in varied professions. The top three occupations of those employed in the Town, both residents and non-residents, include those in manufacturing, followed by employment in services and in wholesale and retail trade.

The Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training (DET) publishes annual and monthly employment data for all the state's towns and cities. The U.S. Census accumulates income statistics for individuals, families, households, and those below the poverty level each decennial year.

DET has been collecting detailed information on employment characteristics in the Commonwealth since 1979. Employees eligible for unemployment compensation benefits, working for private companies and the public sector, represent those tallied by DET.

Table 27 shows labor distribution statistics for persons working in Webster between 1979 and 1987. Note the gradual decrease in total employment from the base year through 1982, followed by an increase and stabilization in later years. The table clearly indicates an initial decrease in the manufacturing base in 1979-1982, then a slight resurgence in 1983, followed by a decline since that time. Employment in the wholesale and retail trade and service sectors has undergone a corresponding increase since the late 1970's, however.

Table 27

Covered Employment by Year: 1979 - 1987

	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1987</u>
Total Employment	5,639	5,466	5,436	5,268	5,755	6,119	6,332	6,324	6,488
Agriculture, Forestry, Mining	13	15	6	8	7	5	6	7	12
Contract Construction	156	116	113	113	123	137	164	179	187
Manufacturing	2,645	2,357	2,364	2,129	2,423	2,422	2,382	2,094	1,911
Transportation, Utilities, Communication, etc.	129	128	141	153	151	143	144	124	116
Wholesale, Retail Trade	998	1,064	1,081	1,115	1,175	1,468	1,570	1,627	1,686
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate, etc.	222	235	253	267	288	383	484	663	837
Services	1,021	1,074	1,015	1,049	1,149	1,112	1,144	1,177	1,264
Government or Public Administration	455	477	463	434	439	449	438	453	465

DET collects monthly labor force statistics for all the state's municipalities. These data display trends in the local labor force i.e., the number of persons residing in a community who are employed and monthly unemployment rates. Table 28 shows these statistics from January, 1988 to October, 1988, and from January to March, 1989 (DET, as of this writing, has not published labor force statistics for November and December, 1988).

Table 28
Labor Force Statistics: 1988 - 1989

<u>Year</u> <u>Month</u>	<u>Labor</u> <u>Force</u>	<u>Employment</u>	<u>Unemployment</u>	<u>Unemployment</u> <u>Rate</u>
<u>1988</u>				
January	7,823	7,409	414	5.3
February	7,814	7,415	399	5.1
March	7,982	7,571	411	5.1
April	7,850	7,552	298	3.8
May	7,754	7,484	270	3.5
June	8,035	7,636	399	5.0
July	8,088	7,570	518	6.4
August	7,915	7,551	364	4.6
September	7,872	7,520	352	4.5
October	8,032	7,707	325	4.0
<u>1989</u>				
January	8,139	7,665	474	5.8
February	8,169	7,732	437	5.3
March	8,135	7,689	446	5.5

5.2 Inventory of Current Businesses in Webster

"The Webster-Dudley-Oxford Chamber of Commerce reports that approximately 138 Webster-based businesses, (which includes industries and institutions) most of which are owned and operated by Webster residents, are members of the Chamber. An additional 40-50 enterprises, i.e., "Mom & Pop" variety stores or new businesses are not members but are located in Town. The three largest Town employers are Commerce Bank and Trust (800+ employees), Cranston Print Works (700+) and Anglo Fabrics (200+). Most established businesses, such as these three companies, are members of the Chamber of Commerce. Appendix 4 lists those enterprises, by generalized land use classifications, belonging to the local Chamber.

6.0 SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

Population

- o Total population began to decrease following the 1970 Census, which is reflective of both outmigration from Webster as well as decreases in the number of persons per household.
- o Population east of Webster Lake (CT 7541) increased between 1970 and 1980, while decreasing elsewhere in Town. The trend suggests that new housing starts in this more undeveloped portion of Webster have been more prevalent than in the densely-populated areas west of the lake.
- o The number of persons 55 and older increased between 1970 and 1980, whereas those in the kindergarten to junior high school age group (5-14) decreased.
- o Webster's population will continue to increase through the year 2000, although the absence of developable land, infrastructure limitations, and shrinking household sizes will have an effect on thwarting growth into the next century.

Housing

- o Webster's 1980 housing stock consisted of a nearly 50-50 split between owner-occupied and renter-occupied units.
- o The percent of total owner-occupied units in Webster's Downtown area (CT's 7542 and 7543) declined between 1970 and 1980.
- o Persons per household fell from 2.87 in 1970 to 2.55 in 1980.
- o The Webster Housing Authority manages a total of 206 subsidized housing units for families, the elderly and the disabled. This total represents one of the higher tallies among public housing authorities in the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning District.

Income

- o Webster's 1979 median household income of \$13,944 was the second lowest of the CMRPC's 40 communities.
- o Median family income in actual rather than real dollars rose considerably between 1969 and 1979 in areas outside of the older developed central business district. (i.e., in CT's 7544 and 7541)
- o The percentage of families below poverty level increased from 6.0% in 1969 to 8.4% in 1979.

Employment

- o Between 1979 and 1987, the number of persons employed in manufacturing decreased by 734 persons, or 38% (2,645 in 1979, and 1,911 in 1987).
- o Employment in wholesale and retail trade grew from 998 in 1979 to 1,686 in 1987, a 41% increase. The number employed in financial institutions rose 277% during the same period.
- o Webster's average unemployment rate between January - August of 1988 was 4.85%.

CHAPTER VII

MAIN STREET BUSINESS DISTRICT ANALYSIS

1.0 PURPOSE

The Main Street Business District, being the hub of commerce for the Town, warrants special attention in planning for the future use of land in Webster. Intensive concentrations of office, retail, industrial and residential uses in this "corridor" call attention for the need to more closely analyze patterns of growth there. A number of studies written during the 1970's and early to mid-1980's addressing Webster's Downtown had a common theme - the parking and traffic problems in this area of Town. The most recent of these was the Webster Downtown Business District Parking/Traffic Study, completed in September 1986 by CMRPC. The study looked at, among other things, such issues as parking usage (i.e., occupancy and turnover rates), parking demand and parking management. The other reports were the Downtown Plan (1979), the Webster Parking Study (1980), and the Tracy Court Traffic Study (1981).

This report examines the Central Business District, or CBD from a slightly different angle. Instead of focusing primarily on the issues of traffic and safety, this analysis concentrates on consistencies, or lack thereof, with zoning and existing land use in the CBD and identifies impediments to revitalization to help determine the future character of this area. As such, this chapter can be described as a "mini-plan" for the CBD.

Maps illustrating zoning districts, land use, non-conforming uses and revitalization proposals for the CBD are included, along with an block-by-block analysis of different land use characteristics. Map and data information source utilized in the study is the Town Assessors. (Staff field-checked the entire CBD in order to verify the accuracy of the Assessors data).

1.1 Definition of the Study Area

For the purposes of this study, Webster's CBD was defined as a corridor extending along South Main Street at the East Main Street intersection, southwest to Main Street to the Dudley line. The French River provides the northern boundary, and a combination of Town ways (e.g., Prospect Street and Negus Street) comprise the southern boundary. (See Map 16)

The study area's size is similar to the one defined for CMRPC's Webster Downtown Business District Parking/Traffic Study, although the territory covered here is somewhat larger. Seven blocks, all west of the New Haven and Hartford Railroad tracks, were "added" because of the commercial/residential character of the area, and the large amount of commercially-zoned vacant land present.

Also, it was felt that two large blocks, one northeast of Peter Street and the other northeast of Bartlett Street, should be included even though both tracts are beyond the more "commercialized" parts of the CBD. Residences, ranging from single family houses to the more predominant multiple family structures such as duplexes and apartment buildings, are commonplace in these latter two blocks.

1.2 Land Use and Zoning

Following a field check of the entire CBD, staff produced a land use map of the study area. (See Map 17) The emphasis with the methodology devised for land use classifications was to identify uses through a generalized coding system. Judgements were made as to the dominant use of each parcel. For example, residences exist in the top floors or several commercial buildings. However, staff identified the primary land use as commercial since the bulk of interior floor space is occupied by retail and professional businesses.

As might be expected, commercial uses dominate the corridor followed closely by residential uses and vacant land. Figure 2 and Table 29 show the percentage breakdown of CBD land uses by seven land use categories, and by the eighteen blocks individually analyzed in Section 3.1. Note that all but three blocks (1D, 1U and 1V) show some acreage is commercial use. Residential use as a principal land use is absent in four blocks (1A, 1E, 1F and 1V).

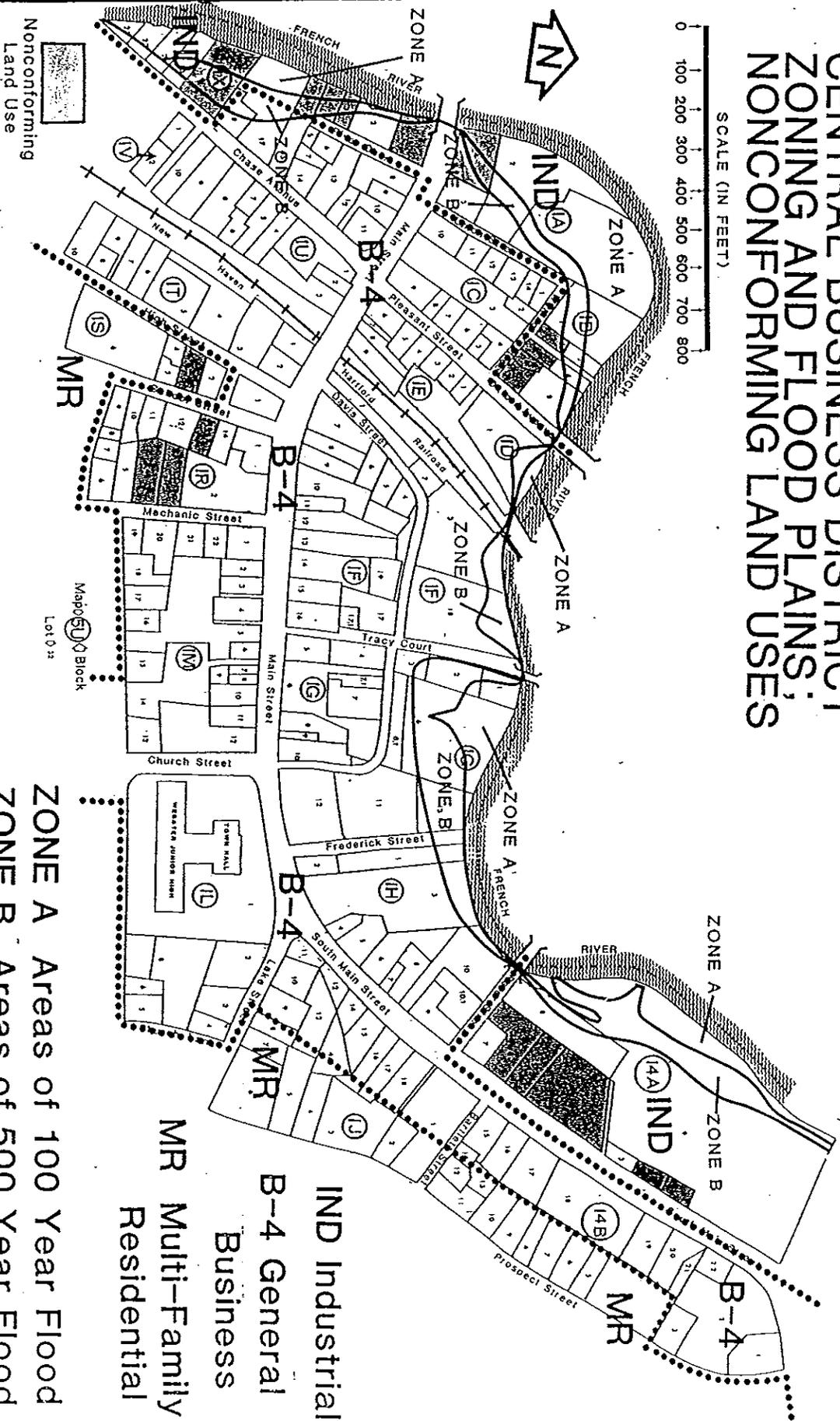
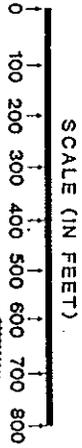
The most interesting finding is the amount of vacant land and buildings present, comprising roughly one-fourth of all land uses, identified in the land use survey. This suggests that a tremendous potential exists for the renovation and rehabilitation of abandoned buildings, and also infill development on vacant lots. Privately-held undeveloped property also presents an opportunity for expansion off-street public parking facilities, preferably of the multi-tiered (garage) variety.

2.0 CBD ISSUES

This section will introduce the reader to some relevant issues concerning CBDs. The common plight of downtown business areas will be discussed, and compared to other forms of commercial growth. Also, an attempt to define the importance of preserving the Downtown "core" area is included.

MAP 17

TOWN OF WEBSTER 1989 CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT ZONING AND FLOOD PLAINS; NONCONFORMING LAND USES



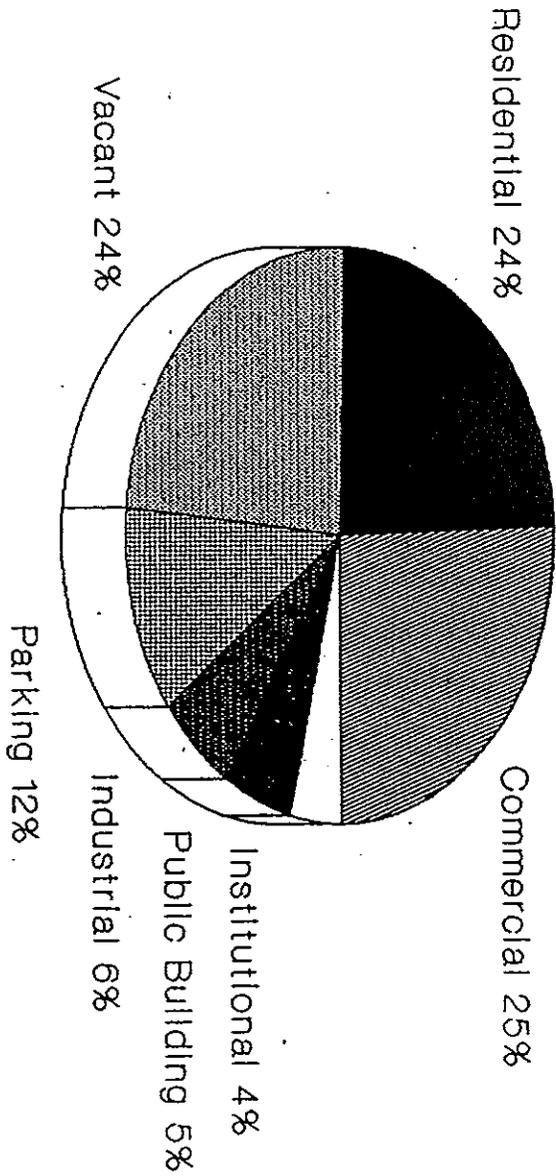
IND Industrial
B-4 General Business
MR Multi-Family Residential

Zone A Areas of 100 Year Flood
Zone B Areas of 500 Year Flood

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

FIGURE 2

Webster CBD Land Use Analysis Percentage Breakdowns



OMRPO

TABLE 29: Webster Central Business District Land Use
Percentage Breakdown

Map/Lot	Residential	Commercial	Vacant	Public Building	Parking	Institutional	Industrial
1/A		17					83
1/B	20	42	38				
1/C	25	53.5	16.5		5		
1/D	54				46		
1/E		28	72				
1/F		36.5	2		61.5		
1/G	2	44	30.5	11.5	12		
1/H	38	11	42		9		
1/J	63	20	4	10	2	11	
1/L	11	2		76	9	2	
1/M	7	33			49	11	
1/R	33	38	8				21
1/S	4	25			13	58	
1/T	36	13	35		16		
1/U	43		57				
1/V			100				
1/X	50	22	28				
14/A	18	74					8
14/B	52.5	24	23.5				
	24.4%	25.17%	23.2%	8.14%	9.36%	3.95%	5.78%

2.1 Characteristics of CBDs and Why Many Have Deteriorated

Webster's CBD is in fact not a geographical Town "center" at all, but is an outgrowth of a manufacturing mill town. Most of these mills were located along the banks of the French River, and the principal industries were textile and shoe manufacturers. The Downtown underwent a transformation over the years from an industrial base to a retail and service economy.

Typically CBDs, aside from being more centrally located, generally have a number of other common traits. Many have evolved around local government centers and to serve a population growth resulting from the location of industries based upon proximity to natural resources. CBD's are usually located in an area with the best accessibility to the whole community (which is probably no longer true in Webster).

The usual CBD tends to have available standard goods and services for the captive market. Examples include eating and drinking places, miscellaneous retail, drug stores, and an occasional apparel and furnishing outlet. Auto dealerships are seldom found, except for the older service stations; auto dealers usually are located outside the CBD proper. A CBD may have a hardware shop or variety store but seldom is the center for general merchandise outlets or building materials.

CBDs often have items which appeal to a particular population segment. In Webster's case, such special groups may be defined in terms of income (i.e., lower-priced lines of clothing, food, gifts and household items). The previous chapter showed that the entire Webster CBD falls within Census Tract 7543. The 1980 U.S. Census indicated that median household, median family, and per capita incomes reported for 1979 and 1969 in this tract were the lowest in Webster. In addition, the percent of families below the poverty level was highest in Census Tract 7543. Turnover of items is generally too low to warrant location within a higher rent suburban shopping mall.

The advent of the automobile has led to a deterioration of many downtown areas. This has resulted in development pattern changes - from compact urban centers to widely dispersed and scattered suburban neighborhoods. The influx of automobile traffic in many cases has overwhelmed local governments, which have been unable to cope with increasing traffic and parking problems. In addition, aging buildings, neglect, and absentee landlords in these centers led to loss of customer appeal and convenience.

The decline of a manufacturing base and increase in automobile traffic has "spun-off" strip development, (primarily along state-numbered routes) and suburban shopping centers. The reduction of travel time brought about by the automobile has attracted consumers to these newer forms of retail centers. Typically these commercial areas offer more customer parking and for shopping centers in particular, a more pleasing environment, both visually and comfort-wise (i.e., climate controlled).

The end result of the shift from downtown business to highway-related development in many instances is a loss in business in the CBD. Vacant buildings lead to structural deterioration, lack of maintenance and general neglect. Reinvestment in the downtown ultimately becomes less of a priority as emphasis shifts to other areas where the market for retail goods and services has now been "captured".

2.2 The Importance of Preserving the CBD

Downtown business areas have been undergoing a recovery of sorts within the last decade. Communities have become troubled by the increase in residential and commercial sprawl, often resulting in great difficulty and cost in providing utilities and services to the local population. Local officials and citizen groups have responded by initiating redevelopment efforts aimed at restoring the CBD to its once vital economic and social role. Another reason for this shift includes the disappearance of local landmarks, and the resultant desire to maintain local history and preserve cultural heritage.

Many CBDs, like Webster's, have advantages and strengths that shopping centers or highway business developments do not have, and may be worth preserving. As a center for business, the CBD provides accessibility to non-drivers, such as those who simply like to walk, and to the young and the elderly. And, the CBD often is a place where personal relationships ensue between customers and merchants, which is less likely along highway business areas and in malls.

As a community center, the CBD is where many locally-oriented services are located, such as a Post Office, banks and a library. The downtown in its role as a community center is also an area where many community activities occur, such as political, institutional, and informal daily contacts. The CBD also acts as a civic symbol, evoking a sense of place, of character, and of history. And, it provide a nucleus for compact neighborhoods for higher-density dwellings.

Finally, CBDs provide an economic role, as the channeling of operating expenses beyond fire and police protection and traffic and parking control is within a smaller geographic area. Another valuable economic function is that CBDs are a source of local jobs, not only for full-time employees but also for single parent mothers and teenagers in the area.

3.0 BLOCK BY BLOCK ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Introduction

Perhaps the best way to analyze land use characteristics in the CBD is to examine each block separately. In this way, one can determine whether or not existing land uses are in conformance

with zoning; project development potential through the identification of the supply of vacant buildings or lots; highlight impediments to revitalization; and set forth recommendations which may encourage appropriate future development in that section of the CBD.

The reader should be cautioned that this evaluation is not an exhaustive one. For example, primary emphasis is given to land use characteristics and general aesthetic quality of the area rather than to downtown parking, traffic and architectural characteristics (from a professional perspective). This is due both to funding limitations for this element of the Master Plan and the fact that previous studies, as mentioned earlier, have addressed these concerns, at least for the CBD's "core" blocks.

This evaluation will begin with Block 1A of Assessor Map 1, and proceed alphabetically to Block 1X. Assessor Map 14, Blocks A and B, will be analyzed last.

3.2 Evaluations and Recommendations

Map 1

BLOCK A

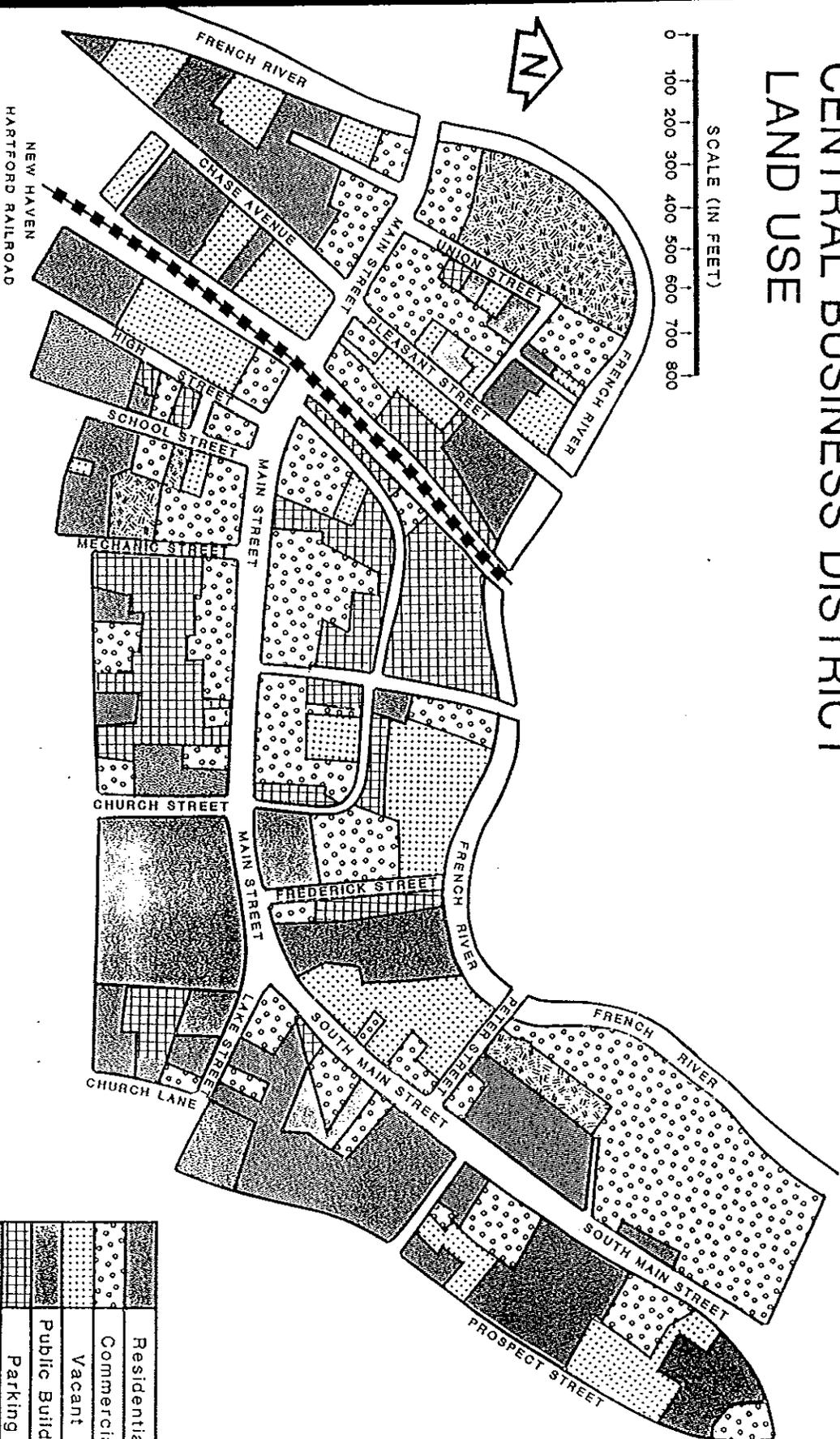
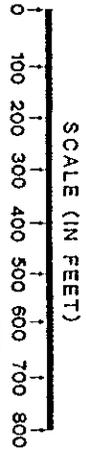
Utilities are the primary land use in this block, when considering percent of use to total square footage of the block. The local gas company operates out of the largest parcel to the rear (lot 1), and an electrical substation owned by the electric company is found in the sizeable middle lot (lot 2). Nevertheless, retail enterprises account for a sizeable percentage of "active" uses in this block. In fact, these businesses comprise all frontage along Main Street, with the exception of a small vacant lot east of a florist enterprise. In addition to the florist, an old commercial building (on a one acre lot) has two other tenants - a tax counselor and an advertising merchant. An eating and drinking establishment occupies the separate structure east of the vacant parcel. The building sits on a lot of less than one-quarter acre.

The Town's Zoning Map shows that the entire block is within the "Industrial" district. (See Map 18) Webster's Zoning By-Law, however does not permit by right any of the four commercial uses fronting Main Street. Permitted uses by right in the Industrial Zone include: any use permitted in an Agricultural Residential District. In turn, that zone does not permit any of those uses by right, but may allow through the special permit process a "Restaurant, Tea Room and Dairy Bar." Thus, three of the four retail establishments likely are not in conformance with zoning.

The two other uses located on the back lots are exempted from local zoning (However, the By-Law does explicitly permit such uses by right in all but the B-5 District or "General Business - Outside Sewer District). Chapter 40A, Section 3 of the Mass.

MAP 18

TOWN OF WEBSTER 1989 CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT LAND USE



LAND USE INFORMATION BASED ON ASSESSORS' INFORMATION AND CMRPC'S VISUAL INVENTORY

	Residential
	Commercial
	Vacant
	Public Building
	Parking
	Institutional
	Industrial/Utility

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

General Laws provides for a public service corporation exemption following a hearing before the state Department of Public Utilities.

Also, approximately one-third of this block lies within the 100-year floodplain. This includes a portion of the land area beneath the commercial building which abuts the French River. All structures within this zone must meet stringent floodproofing requirements set forth in the State Building Code.

Recommendations:

Rezoning from Industrial to Business (Within Sewer) (herein referred to as "B-4") appears warranted based upon the commercial character of this block and the exempted status of the utilities. Parking does not at present appear problematic as the existing on-street spaces (approximately 10 spaces in front of both buildings) evidently suffice. However, the vacant parcel could be put to better use as an off-street parking lot, particularly if a commercial ownership or use change results in higher traffic generation (e.g., a bank, theater). This would be particularly applicable if a zone change occurred.

Adoption and enforcement of sign controls would go a long way to improving the aesthetic appeal of this block. The inconsistency of sign types serves to discourage client interest and could lead to economic stagnation in this area. Signs should be more uniform and communicate the individual character of the business while being compatible with the building's architecture.

Vegetated buffering is recommended to shield the unsightly electrical substation/transformers from view. Plantings are especially needed behind the vacant lot from where the station is visible from Main Street.

BLOCK B

Set back from Main Street and "attached" to Block A, Block B is comprised of a mix of commercial, industrial, medium and high density residential, and vacant land uses. Roughly one-third of the block parallel to the French River is within the 100-year floodplain. As with Block A, the entire "tract" is zoned "Industrial". The residential structures are non-conforming, if in fact they are not detached single family dwellings, which judging from field observations appear not to be. Instead, they are in all likelihood multi-family dwellings.

An auto repair garage on the east portion of lot 1 is a likely non-conforming use, unless a characteristic of its use is that of an auto dismantling or auto parts yard, which is allowed by special permit in an industrial zone (the age of the building suggests that the use predates zoning in Webster). A chemistry lab on the western side of lot 1 evidently is a permitted use. The vacant lots behind the residences on lots 2 and 5 are

essentially landlocked and therefore undevelopable. Lots 7 and 8 are jointly owned according to the most recent Assessors records.

Recommendations:

Rezoning most of this block to business appears the logical solution given the extent of non-conformities here. Any use permitted in the Multiple Family Residential district (M-R) is also permitted in the B-4 District.

Block B should retain its predominantly residential flavor, considering its spatial distance from Main Street and a possible need for affordable housing accessible to the CBD.

BLOCK C

Bounded by Union Street to the west, Wellington Street to the north, Pleasant Street to the east and Main Street to the south, this block is a mixture of old and new commercial establishments, parking and vacant lots, and single family and apartment residences. Unlike Blocks A and B, Block C, as with most of the CBD, is zoned B-4.

A new structure (The Kalia Building) is found at the corner of Main and Union Streets. A photo shop and medical offices are located there. The structure is distinct from the two other buildings on this block fronting Main Street, which are considerably older and of a much different architectural styles. This presents a problem with scale given the considerable difference in height between the three-story tall Kalia Building and the other structures, both one story.

The other commercial uses located to the east of the Kalia Building are a liquor store, pizza shop and a drug store. A mixture of commercial (a pub), multi-family residential and vacant lots characterizes the Pleasant Street side of the block. The Wellington Street side is similar, although no commercial uses are evident. The residential units on the latter street, a combination of single family and multi-family dwellings, appear to be of high quality.

Recommendations:

No Zoning Map changes are warranted, although the single family residential units are non-conforming with respect to minimum lot size requirements. Improvements to Union Street e.g., addition of sidewalks would improve pedestrian safety, considering the residential flavor of the area. The vacant lots along both Union and Pleasant Streets could serve as future parking areas if vacant space in the Kalia Building is considerable. Otherwise, patrons and employees would be forced to vie for the scant

on-street spaces along Union, Main and Pleasant Streets.* The vacant parcels also present an opportunity to create affordable housing units for low-moderate income families.

Landscaping of the area between the parking lot and sidewalk in front of the liquor store/pizza shop is recommended. The planting of shrubbery or small trees undoubtedly would enhance the visual quality of this section of the block.

Two of the signs along the facade of the Kalia Building (e.g., the medical offices), although new, appear cluttered with too much information within too small a space. Replacement of these signs is recommended. The photo store to the east within the same building has a glut of signs (i.e., identical displays on both "ends"). The merchant should consider removing at least one of these signs.

BLOCK D

This block is unique for the CBD in that only one lot exists under single ownership (privately-held). This eight-unit apartment, roughly five years old, sits on a 28,700 square foot parcel, and conforms to zoning. Approximately one-half of the lot is within "Zone B", defined under FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program as areas between limits of the 100-year flood and 500-year flood. This should be a concern for the residents during high water periods, although Zone B areas are not regulated under zoning. A smaller area toward the parcel's rear away from the structure is designated "Zone A", or within the 100-year floodplain.

Recommendations:

Town officials may want to consider a zone change in this block - from B-4 to Multiple Family Residential (herein referred to as "M-R") - to truly reflect actual land use. However, given the structure of the present Zoning By-Law, all uses "permitted" in M-R districts are also permitted in B-4 zones, so this is not of great urgency.

BLOCK E

A mix of old and new commercial activities is evident along the Main Street portion of this block; retail sales and service merchants occupy all space fronting Route 12. These are: a TV and appliance store, a pub, a barbershop and a 24-hour small convenience store. A parking lot for Commerce Insurance Company employees is located behind a barber shop and small retail outlet.

*A winter parking ban, effective November 1 - March 31, restricts or prohibits on-street parking along many streets in the CBD area; including these three public ways.

Block E takes on a noticeably "blighted" appearance, however, i.e., the lots with frontage on Pleasant Street. All but one of these parcels is vacant of any structures, and heavily vegetated. A dilapidated three-story multiple family building, once home to 23 tenants and now slated for demolition, occupies the remaining lot. Road surface and sidewalk conditions along Pleasant Street are sub-par as well, which complicates the aesthetic problems on this block.

Above-ground electrical utilities on the Pleasant Street side compound this problem further. An additional "eyesore" is the building on lot 6; specifically the shingling on the Pleasant Street side next to the appliance store, which is in disrepair.

Otherwise, the building's facade is of fairly high quality.

Recommendations:

As no "active" residences exist, no Zoning Map changes are recommended. This block is part of Webster's Commercial Area Revitalization District (CARD). The Massachusetts Small Cities Program provides funding on an annual basis for competitive, rather than entitlement commercial improvements, in addition to monies for other projects (The state's Executive Office of Communities and Development did not approve the Town's most recent MSCP application which would have been for Fiscal Year '88-89). Revitalization of this block can best be served by channeling more funds to rehabilitate existing structures, and develop new commercial uses.

The Commerce Insurance Company had been negotiating to acquire the block's vacant lots in order to expand employee parking. However; nothing has been agreed upon between the company and property owners as of this writing.

The lots, which combined total roughly 18,000 square feet (nearly one-half acre) represent prime development space for future commercial development. Requests for commercial improvements monies for this block under the Small Cities Program should be a priority if and when the community development office becomes active, hopefully in the near future. Local funds could be used to upgrade sidewalks along Pleasant Street, and to repave this street as well.

A final issue concerning improving the visual appeal of Block E is for Town officials to look into the feasibility of relocating all utility wires in the CBD underground. This would apply only to the "outer" areas (telephone and electrical wires are all beneath the ground in the CBD's "core" area), where residences predominate. The expense of "burying" these utilities may be more than offset by an economic reinvigoration resulting from upgrading the visual quality of these neighborhoods. Small Cities monies, perhaps with a local match from the Town, could fund such a capital improvement.

BLOCK F

This is the first of nine blocks within the Main Street Business District "core" covered in this analysis. Block F is one of four blocks found along either side of Main Street accounting for the greatest number of both commercial establishments as well as public and private parking spaces in the CBD. (Blocks G, M, and R are the others)

Davis Street provides the primary access to the large number of parking spaces, the most of any block in the CBD. CMRPC's 1986 parking/traffic report counted a total of 94 off-street spaces for "private" use and another 198 spaces off-street spaces for the general public. Another 20 curbside spaces were counted on both Davis and Main Streets. The private spaces appear to be set aside for employees of the Commerce Insurance Company, Webster's largest employer.

Commercial uses along Main Street vary considerably. Included within the block are two insurance companies, clothing stores, a travel agency, jeweler, copier store, two large department stores and a day care area for the Commerce Insurance Company. A series of older buildings - namely the Eddy Building, the Racicot Building, the Tiffany Building and the Tracy Building, "house" these commercial establishments. Most of the floor area within the structure on lot 7 is vacant. The fire escapes, which can be seen from the Davis Street parking area (lot 1), are rusted and a hazard to public safety.

Recommendations:

A lack of consistency with regard to storefront signage and a need for additional off-street parking appear to be the primary obstacles toward achieving optimal use of Block F. Proper sign controls, uniformly enforced, would go a long way in providing for a more visually-pleasing retail environment. Such controls must address amortization of existing signage so that unattractive and obsolescent displays would be replaced within a specified period of time. The Commerce Insurance Building, with its impressive facade and overall architectural features, is a good example of positive sign displays in Webster's Downtown.

One recommendation in CMRPC's parking and traffic study was to extend Davis Street through to Frederick Street and beyond to Peter Street. Because such a reconfiguration would impact traffic along Route 12 (Main Street), approval by the Mass. Department of Public Works (MDPW) would be required. The Town of Webster's FY '88-'89 Small Cities Program General Fund Application proposed to acquire rights-of-way and a one-third acre parcel to allow for an access way and additional parking between Main Street and the French River from Peter Street to Tracy Court.

Directional signage would benefit drivers unfamiliar with Webster's Downtown to find existing off-street parking lots. A moderate-sized, well-placed sign at the intersection of Davis and Main Streets would direct patrons and businesspersons to these spaces.

The view from lots 15 and 16 (the day care center) toward the French River could be improved if lot 18 were more heavily vegetated. Plantings along the river on the Webster side would serve to upgrade sight distances to the north, in particular for pedestrian traffic along Main Street and Tracy Court.

All uses appear to conform to Webster's existing Zoning By-Law and Map. Portions of lots 3 and 18 are within the 500-year floodplain. If a flood were to occur, no structures would be threatened, although parked automobiles are susceptible to a substantial rise in the French River.

BLOCK G

A number of similarities are evident when comparing this block to Block 1-F. First, a series of older buildings, some interconnected, are located here. The Patneude, Holden and Dugan Buildings are examples of such structures.

Second, a diversity of commercial uses (more prevalent in this block than in Block 1F) provide shoppers with a number of retail sales and service choices. Examples include a delicatessen, hair stylist, video store, and a drug store. Third, storefront signage (in some but not all areas of the block) is inconsistent and appears not to properly convey the character of the buildings. Fourth, several structures provide upper floor housing for low to moderate income residents. The Dugan Building provides 2 rental units. The Patneude Building, a large structure, has 12 apartments. And, the Holden Building provides roughly 30 units of housing within its upper floors. (An abandoned theater, approximately three stories in height, is attached to the rear of this structure, with plans to rehabilitate the building for 30 additional residences). And fifth, to the rear of the commercial buildings are a number of off-street parking spaces. Ninety-eight public and 33 private spaces were inventoried in the 1986 CMRPC study. Fourteen curbside spaces, all along Main Street were tallied in the same report.

Block G differs in some respects from Block F, however. First, attractive "projecting" signs, all with gold lettering on black backgrounds, identify the street-level businesses occupying space in the Holden Building. Awnings of various sizes offer an additional amenity to these storefronts. And second, a single family dwelling is located amidst the parking areas within the rear portion of the block. A significant area of the parcel is within the Zone B flood hazard zone.

A sizeable portion of lot 6 (a vacant wooded area), and nearly the entire area of lots 2 (a moving company) and 13 (a tent rental company) fall within the same FEMA classification. Nearly all of lot 1 and sections of lots 6 and 13 are subject to the 100-year flood. (The building on lot 13, now abandoned, is slated for demolition due to its susceptibility to flooding and inaccessibility for fire and emergency vehicles. A portion of the parcel would have been set aside for additional parking under the FY '88-'89 Small Cities proposal).

Recommendations:

With the possible exception of the aforementioned single family residence, all uses appear in conformance to Webster's Zoning Map and By-Law. Extension of Davis Street to Peter Street undoubtedly would alleviate traffic flow along Main Street, and would open up some needed curbside spaces along this secondary bypass. (See Map 19) Storefront improvements, i.e., improved signage are recommended to upgrade the aesthetic character of the buildings on either side of the Holden Building. Town officials are preparing to consider the purchase of the northern section of lot 6 for public parking, in order to create a portion (shared with Block 1H) of a 1,000 foot long linear foot buffer or green space along the French River when Mass. Small Cities funds are once again available. CMRPC estimated that between 50 to 60 new off-street parking spaces could result from such an expansion.

Renovation of the building to the rear of the Holden Building would serve to further revitalization of Webster's Downtown. Traffic circulation through the parking areas would suffer if the Davis Street to Peter Street bypass was not built and if additional parking were not added.

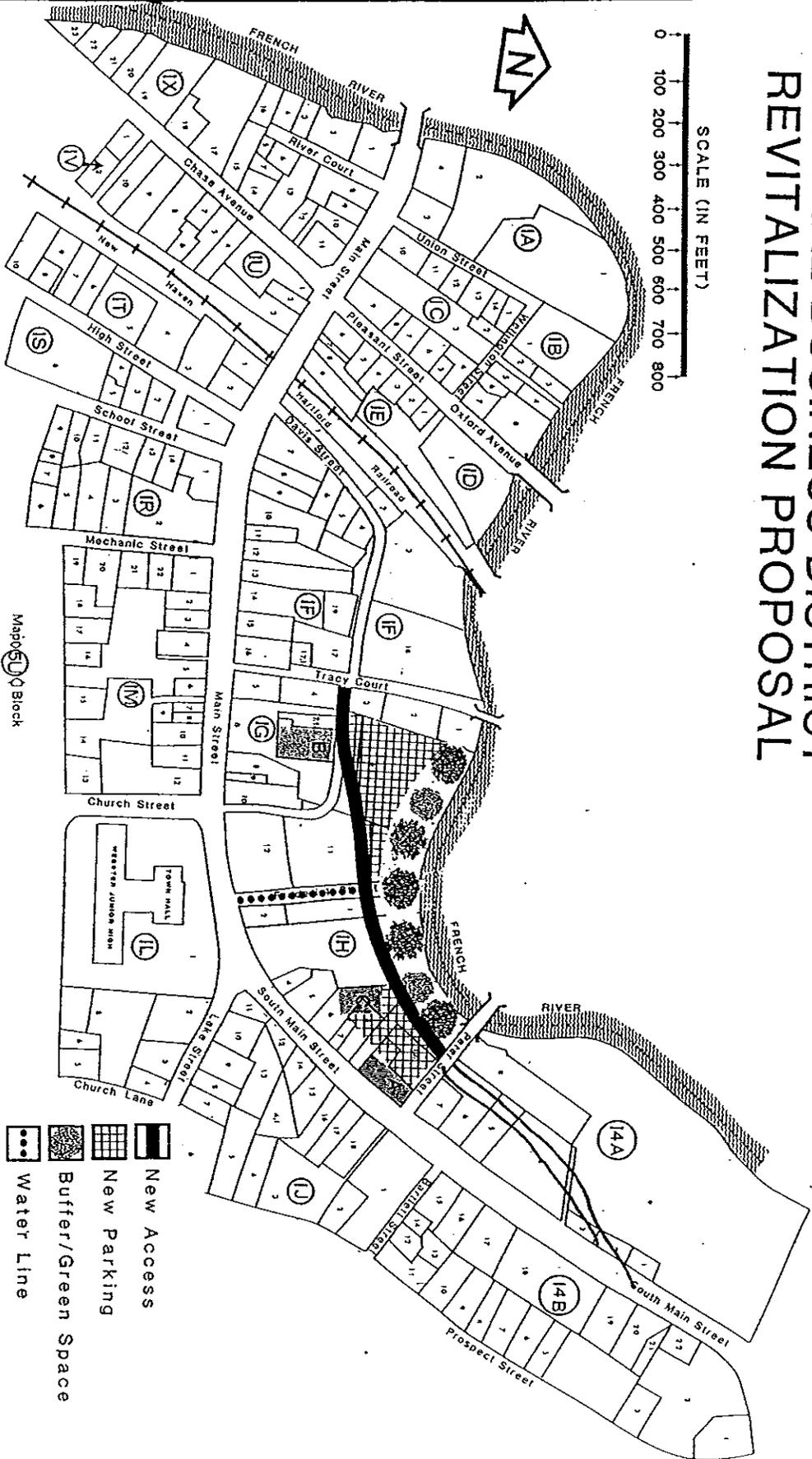
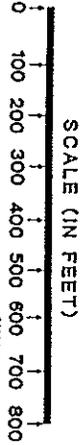
BLOCK H

This block features several different types of "active" commercial land uses. These consist of a men's clothing store, an eating and drinking establishment and an auto service shop. Nevertheless, vacant buildings are the norm within this section of the Downtown corridor. Most of the street-level tenant space in the Vito Building is abandoned. (Several occupied apartments remain atop these largely vacant stores).

A former combination gasoline station/convenience store remains boarded up and is now used as a parking lot, primarily for the restaurant/pub next door. The general appearance of Block H suggests that this area, once a vibrant commercial block, was unable to sustain itself. Several reasons account for the block's overall blighted appearance. A local newspaper moved out of the Vito Building, thus vacating a considerable amount of space there. Other former businesses occupying space in the building were marginal enterprises at best. Also the block, being on the Downtown's "fringe" attracts little pedestrian traffic. Scant parking is available east of the block. These

MAP 19

TOWN OF WEBSTER 1989 CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT REVITALIZATION PROPOSAL



Map of Block
Lot 22

- New Access
- New Parking
- Buffer/Green Space
- Water Line
- Commercial Renovations
- Residential Rehabilitations
- Mixed Use Renovations

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

latter factors combine to stagnate redevelopment and provided virtually no reason for shoppers to patronize this area as in the past.

All existing uses apparently conform to Webster's zoning. CMRPC counted 18 private off-street spaces, 9 curbside spaces on Main Street and 7 curbside spaces along Frederick Street.

Recommendations:

CMRPC supports all of the Town's proposals under Mass. Small Cities aimed at revitalization of this block. (See Map 19) The proposal to extend Davis Street to Peter Street could act as a catalyst towards future reinvestment. In addition, CMRPC had proposed the development of a public or private 40 to 50 space lot east of Frederick Street to improve the economic vitality of this block.

Webster's Office of Community Development (OCD), in the FY '88-'89 Mass. Small Cities application included a proposal to replace the 60 year old one-inch waterline beneath Frederick Street with a four-inch ductile iron water line. The application cited the inadequacy of a one-inch line for fire protection and sanitary purposes, and for future redevelopment of the area.

OCD also proposed a number of other improvements for this block. A structure is scheduled for rehabilitation into mixed low-moderate income residential and commercial use. A vacant lot located northeast of this building would be converted into paved parking under this proposal. Commercial renovations are planned for the existing auto repair facility at the corner of Peter and Main Streets. Additional off-street parking, reflective of CMRPC's recommendations, is planned. A new secondary bypass through this block would help to stem the economic decline in this area, and lead to further investment and reinvestment. And, the buffer/green space mentioned earlier will extend to Peter Street. It is hoped that this green space will provide recreational opportunities for residents of the area, enhance the overall natural environment of the area for the benefit of merchants and residents alike.

Lots 5 and 6 (site of the abandoned convenience store/self-service gas station) present a possible location for a multi-level parking garage. This could be an alternate location if efforts to construct a garage in a more centralized area of the CBD are not realized.

A final recommendation is to consider a different use for this area. One option is to concentrate on converting the block's off-street lots into a park, while retaining the Vito Building and some other existing structures (and improving their appearances). The planting of trees and shrubbery and other landscaping activities would be included in this effort.

BLOCK J

Although considered part of the CBD's "core" in past studies, Block 1J is made up primarily of residential buildings and some commercial establishments. The latter includes a discount store, a furniture shop, an insurance agency and an electrical contractor, among others. (Also, a rectory is located at the corner of Lake and Prospect Streets). The block is densely developed, with the lion's share of residential units (mostly converted apartments within old, large houses) located off Main Street along Prospect, Lake and Bartlett Streets.

The zoning scheme is confusing as the dividing line between B-4 and M-R zones nearly divides the block in half. (However, the zoning boundary does not appear to consistently follow property lines). Webster's Zoning By-Law does not expressly allow conversion of old, large homes to accessory apartments, although it appears to have been the practice on many occasions within this block. It is difficult to say with any certainty how often this has taken place as many of these uses probably predate zoning.

As with other blocks in the CBD, sign displays are rather inconsistent and generally substandard. The only exception is the insurance agency located at the intersection of Main and Lake Streets.

Recommendations:

Re-drawing the zoning lines is suggested since the existing boundary appears not to follow property lines but instead arbitrarily passes through properties. One obvious solution would be to relocate the line so that zoning reflects actual use of the land. Extending the B-4 district to include the entire block would be another option although such a proposal may not be politically acceptable to residents of the area. Since all uses permitted in the M-R district are presently also allowed in the B-4 zone, this would not present any use conflicts. And, any property-owners wishing to convert a portion of a residence (or the entire structure) to a commercial use would encounter fewer administrative obstacles than under the existing zoning regulations.

Sign controls are sorely needed, in particular for the merchants with store frontage on Main Street northeast of the previously identified insurance agency. And, the need for housing rehabilitation seems evident, especially for a three-story multi-family structure north of the discount outlet.

BLOCK L

A characteristic of CBDs is that it is often the location of the seat of government. Webster is no exception, with the municipal office building (and the attached junior high school) occupying

about two-thirds of the total block area. Other uses include the Town library, several multi-family structures, a veterans home and a 17-space public parking lot.

The Town of Webster had hoped to rehabilitate the Town Common through a grant from the state Department of Environmental Management under the City and Town Commons program. Unfortunately, Webster was not chosen although it remained eligible until the final selection round. Nevertheless, the Town Hall Committee is seeking to come up with a \$180,000 match required by the state and to reapply next year.

A local business has sponsored construction of a bandstand and local officials plan to continue fundraising efforts to rehabilitate other facilities e.g., sidewalks, benches, and lighting even if state assistance is not forthcoming. Also, the Town is seriously considering a plan to renovate the interior of the Town Hall, estimated at a cost of \$1.5 million. An architect is proposing to modernize and reorganize the building, constructed in 1928.

Recommendations:

Local officials should continue with efforts to raise funds for upgrading the Town Common, since an attractive municipal center would have a positive effect on CBD revitalization generally. No zoning map changes are recommended. The dwellings to the east of the Town Hall/Junior High School are compatible with the institutional uses which predominate this block.

BLOCK M

This block is second only to Block F with regard to off-street parking capacity. Block M has a total of 194 off-street spaces (compared to 292 in Block F). Broken down further, the block consists of 131 off-street private spaces and 63 public off-street spaces. (Fifteen additional on-street spaces are provided along Main Street and 5 along Mechanic Street).

Even though parking lots are a principal use of land, commercial uses are found in a variety of forms. These include three banks, a hair stylist (all with frontage along Main Street), an optometrist, a jeweler and a dentist (all having access along Negus Street). Other uses include a church, a single family home and an apartment building (also off Negus Street). Some apartments are evident in the upper floors of a few of the buildings, although their actual number could not be determined by street observation. Access to most of these units is from the parking lot behind the Main Street businesses. All uses evidently conform to zoning.

Signage appears to lack uniformity, although there are five separate "older buildings" within the block, each with its own unique architectural style. Most signs are of the "projected" type and overall appearance is adequate when considering form and design of signs in other blocks.

Recommendations:

Sign improvements should be considered within this block, even though sign conditions and appearances are generally superior to signs in other blocks. Because this block represents part of the CBD's "core", and the fact that the majority of establishments can be considered "up-scale", signage improvement would be a small sacrifice in an effort to inject more vitality to this section of the business district.

Plantings along either side of the alley between lots 6 and 7 would result in a more pleasing view of the parking lot from Main Street. Signage for identifying the location of the parking areas is needed, as none exist at this time. CMRPC recommended in the 1986 study that the Town negotiate with the block's three banks to open some, or all, of their parking to the public. This would help encourage more rapid turnover of parking spaces in the area, and provide additional off-street parking for patrons of the large number of establishments in Block R.

BLOCK R

Block R perhaps has the greatest density of commercial uses of any block in the CBD. The block is comprised of two "sub-blocks" i.e., two distinct clusters of buildings, characterized mainly by low scale structures. The first of these clusters is a two-story commercial area made up of small retail sales establishments. One building in particular (lot 2) has a substantial number of merchants, ranging from a video store to an archery sales store. Those businesses front both Main and Mechanic Streets; however most are accessible from Mechanic Street.

To the rear is a separate building with 27 residential units. Storefront signage is generally uniform and attractive. One merchant, a surplus department store, has vacated due to an ownership dispute rather than to a drop-off in business.

Traveling westbound there is another, older structure, where the most visible tenant is a Chinese restaurant. The three other uses are a barber shop, shoe repair store and a martial arts building. To the south along School Street is a recently renovated three-story building. The owner is proposing 6 residential units and 4 units for commercial or retail use.

Further along School Street is an auto body shop (with a parking lot), a private lot for a funeral home in Block S, and several apartment buildings, one presently under construction. Multi-family units prevail along Barnes Street and at the Barnes

Street/Mechanic Street intersection. Another auto body shop (along with parking for the shop) is found on Mechanics Street.

The entire block is zoned B-4 and no use conflicts are apparent. Off-street parking does seem to be a problem, however, when considering the densely-packed commercial character of the block. Only 22 off-street spaces were counted in the 1986 CMRPC study, all private. An additional 10 curbside spaces were tallied, 8 of which were on Main Street and the other 2 on School Street.

Recommendations:

CMRPC's 1986 Downtown traffic/parking study noted that an additional 10 parking spaces were needed for Block R. Lot 4, next to an auto body facility on Mechanic Street, offers a possible solution. This parcel appears underutilized and is the only available off-street lot. Either the Town could arrange a deal with the owners of lot 3 to utilize a portion of lot 4, or purchase it outright. An alternate solution is to negotiate with the funeral home to open some or all of their 22 spaces to the public during off-peak business hours. This option, however is less realistic given the typical schedule of visiting hours for funeral parlors.

Sign controls should be enforced on the corner block with the Chinese restaurant, etc. (lot 1). Signs on this building contrast sharply with the consistent and appealing signage found on lot 2. The yellow structure attached to the rear of the restaurant is vacant but is sound structurally. The two-story building, roughly 120 years old, provides an opportunity for adaptive reuse for new housing provided that federal funds are available through the state for future rehabilitation.

BLOCK S

Block S is the smallest of all the CBD's blocks in terms of total square footage. (CMRPC staff decided not to include the southern "ends" of blocks S & T due to their considerable linear distance from Main Street). Nevertheless, the block serves a vital role in helping to energize this area of Webster's Downtown. In particular, the donut shop on lot 1 serves to "capture" potential retail customers. In other words, patrons of the shop who otherwise would not stop Downtown in many cases venture on foot to the various retail outlets in the area. Conversely, shoppers may have a tendency to patronize such a quick-service food outlet, especially during the morning hours. This helps to further invigorate the local economy.

Otherwise, no other retail businesses exist on this block. Other uses include a 20 space public parking lot, a funeral home, a multi-family unit and the Town's Senior/ Pediatric Center. Traffic along High Street is one-way only (south-north) from the right of way behind the donut shop to Main Street. Otherwise, circulation is two-way.

The boundary line between the M-R and B-4 districts cuts across this block. Webster's Zoning Map shows that a fire station was once located where the public parking lot now is (lot 2). The Zoning By-Law does not permit funeral parlors in the M-R district, so the establishment on lot 3 is non-conforming.

Recommendations:

Rezoning sections of the block currently zoned M-R to B-4 makes sense given present land use; the one multi-family building (approximately 3 units) would conform to zoning in any event. Another option is to rezone only as far south as the funeral home's property line (lot 3) since such uses belong in the B-4.

BLOCK T

Two attached, older structures which front Route 12 are "home" to the only commercial uses within this block. An appliance outlet and a local newspaper occupy space in the three-story building on lot 1 (The second and third floors are mostly abandoned, except for a dentist). A hardware store is the sole proprietor within the two-story structure occupying lot 2. Six units of low-moderate income apartments are found on the second floor. Lots 3, 4, and 5, south of lots 1 and 2, are all vacant and appear developable although slope conditions may present a problem. (Elderly housing has been proposed in the past for Lot 4). Land uses for lots 6-10 are all multi-family residential. CMRPC's 1986 traffic study notes a 25-space public lot on parcel 3.

As is common within the CBD, unattractive and inconsistent storefront signage is the scourge for the Main Street businesses on this block. A large rooftop billboard adds little toward enhancing the visual quality of the Downtown. The advertising featured on this billboard can be seen as far away as the intersection of Lake and Main Streets, and the rear of the structure is quite noticeable from Dudley.

Recommendations:

Town officials should place a high priority on adopting controls for billboard regulation. Such measures, if properly enforced, would require the dismantling of existing billboards over a specified period of time. Sign controls as well would be applicable to the businesses on this block. The 25 space public parking lot shown in CMRPC's 1986 Downtown study should be more clearly marked by appropriate street signage along High Street

(vehicular access directly off Main Street is not possible as High Street is one way as mentioned earlier).

BLOCKS U and V

Lots 1-3 in Block U presents an interesting challenge to planning for the future revitalization of Webster's Downtown. The lots, all privately-held, are vacant and comprise over 1/2 acre of prime developable business property. The remaining lots in Block U and both parcels in Block V consist of a mix of duplex and multi-family structures and vacant lots. All are zoned B-4.

Recommendations:

The 1986 Downtown parking/traffic study noted that Webster "will need to develop 200 to 300 parking spaces over the next five years...the use of surface lots...does little to enhance the attractiveness of the downtown area. A well-placed parking garage - either publicly or privately financed and built - would address many problems."

Though somewhat distant from the CBD's "core" area, this vacant area seems a candidate location for a multi-leveled parking garage considering its developability and proximity to a signalized intersection (Main Street/Chase Avenue). This would only apply, however, in the event that commercial redevelopment took place in the general vicinity i.e., in Block 1E.

Discussions have taken place over the years concerning the construction of multi-level garages in Blocks G and M. Such locations would be preferable for a garage given the proximity to major retail companies and offices in the CBD.

BLOCK X

Block X is a mixed use area similar in character to Block 1C, located diagonally across Main Street. Retail sales and service establishments occupying five separate buildings monopolize frontage properties along Route 12. (Approximately 8 apartment units occupy the second and third floors of one of these buildings). River Court provides access to single family and multi-family residences toward the middle of the block. A commercial building on lot 2 (a former laundry company) is undergoing renovation along this secondary road. Lots 17-23, all Chase Avenue "addresses", consist of a combination of residential structures and vacant lots. Lots 22 and 23 are Town-owned.

Unfortunately signage, in particular the signs in front of the businesses east of River Court, is in need of upgrading. The building west of River Court (lot 2), occupied by a travel agency and a thrift store, is only one-story tall and signage is less obtrusive.

The Zoning Map shows the block as "split" between the industrial and business districts. The intent of this configuration seems to be to discourage merchants from locating within the French River's floodplain. Another theory is that this scheme is leftover from the days when Webster was a bustling manufacturing center, and industries would often locate along river banks. Several single family and multi-family dwelling units fall within this industrial zone, and the 100-year floodplain.

Recommendations:

Sign controls and/or improvements need to be enforced, especially with the businesses east of River Court. Rezoning from "Industrial" to either B-4 or M-R, or both, would make sense here. The Building Inspector should verify that all buildings - both residential and commercial - subject to the 100-year flood are properly floodproofed based upon State Building Code requirements.

Map 14

BLOCK A

It can reasonably be argued that Blocks A and B of Assessor Map 14 lay beyond the commercialized core of Webster's businesses district. Nevertheless, if the CBD is to become the bustling commercial center it once was, now is the time to plan for rehabilitating its "fringe" areas. By doing so, accelerated redevelopment of the Downtown may ensue if neighborhood improvements are given high priority. Upgrading of housing and businesses within these blocks ultimately has a "rippling" effect, enhancing the vitality of the Town's center. Improving the appearance of these blocks serves to "lure" more shoppers and reinvestment into the Downtown's core.

Block 14A is situated between Peter Street to the southeast, the French River to the west, Church Court to the northeast and South Main Street to the east. The block sits diagonally across from the South Main Street/East Main Street intersection.

The block is characterized by a mix of commercial, industrial and residential uses. Lots with frontage along Route 12 (South Main Street) are largely residential. The Webster Business Complex (formerly the South Village Mill), with roughly one dozen tenants and available rental space, is accessible from a right-of-way off South Main Street and additional access off Peter Street. A credit union, restaurant, gift shop and garnetting manufacturer (which is almost entirely within the 100-year floodplain) constitute the remaining land uses.

Block 14A is within the "Industrial" district, which presents some use conflicts with local zoning. All the residences evidently predate zoning, and gift shops and financial institutes are not permitted by right or by special permit. Variances of use may have been approved to allow such uses.

Recommendations:

Neighborhood development monies under the Mass. Small Cities program could be put to good use for rehabilitating some or all of the residences in this block. (Three duplexes southwest of the Webster Business Complex appear in greatest need of renovation). By doing so, better quality housing would be available for those of low-moderate incomes.

The Webster Business Complex would be better served if signage were more visible and access improved. The present entrance to the complex is difficult to negotiate and in need of widening and realignment.

The garnetting business (lot 8), as previously mentioned, is susceptible to flooding. If not yet done so, measures should be taken to ensure that the structure is adequately floodproofed.

A Zoning Map change is recommended since most of the land uses in the block, with the exception of the garnetting enterprise, are commercial and residential uses. The old South Village Mill is structurally deficient and no longer able to support industrial operations. The boundary line should be redrawn to reflect current land use in Block 14A.

Town officials should examine the feasibility of acquiring rights-of-way on lots 8 and 9 in the event that extension of a future secondary bypass is deemed desirable. Instead of having this road terminate at Peter Street, the bypass could continue through this block and intersect further north at Church Court. The net effect of this action could be the furtherance of revitalization within Block 14A.

BLOCK 14B

Block 14B is one of the more residential in character of the 19 blocks analyzed for this chapter. Most of these dwelling units (primarily multi-family) front Prospect Street, however. Several commercial buildings occupy parcel space along South Main Street. They are an automobile dealership, a fitness center and an eating establishment. All buildings are small, one-story structures with generally substandard signage.

A zoning transition line between the "Business" and "Multiple Family" districts "cuts through" the block. Unlike Block 1J, the line seems to follow property lines, and is fairly reflective of actual land use. Several parcels are vacant, two of which have frontage on Route 12. A floor tile business is situated at the corner of East Main and South Main Streets.

Recommendations:

Adaptive reuse of existing residences and infill development are possibilities for this block. Town officials must be careful not to allow displacement of residents in this area, however. But if dwelling units become abandoned, particularly along Main Street, some could be converted to non-residential uses such as professional offices or small retail outlets. Vacant parcels offer potential for new commercial development in this block.

Sign controls are urged for this block. Existing signage is obtrusive and is in fact a roadblock towards further revitalization of Webster's Downtown.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Signs

A common theme throughout the discussion in Section 3.1 was the observation that some strengthening of design guidelines. Sign improvements appear in order, at least as a first step toward revitalizing the CBD.

One may assume that the local market generally is familiar with the Downtown merchants. Therefore, there seems little rational reasoning behind any contention made that large and/or "flashy" signage is warranted. A vital step in attracting out-of-town shoppers and businesses is to update the CBD aesthetically (preceded by the construction of a secondary Main Street).

The difficulty lies with enforcing the eventual conformance of pre-existing, on-premise signs erected before any sign bylaw is adopted. Chapter 93, Section 30 of the Massachusetts General Laws broadly defines signs as any device which "advertises or calls attention to any business, article, substance of any other thing."

Webster's Zoning By-Law, however, has few explicit sign controls. Section 7.K of the By-Law primarily addresses regulation of signage within Residential zoning districts. They include a provision that signs be not more than size feet in area, except for educational institutions which permit signs or bulletin boards of not more than sixteen square feet in area. Advertising devices in other than Residential districts must conform to the regulations of the Massachusetts Outdoor Advertising Authority.

Chapter 40A, Section 6 ("The Zoning Act"), subject to Ch. 93 and 93D, appears not to grandfather nonconforming signs and billboards. However, the State Land Court held in Fry vs. Plymouth (1978) that since those chapters do not control on-premise signs, such signs are still given "grandfather clause" protection. Only off-premise signs do not enjoy this protection. A possible solution is to adopt a Chapter 40 nonzoning bylaw under the Town's home rule powers. Such a bylaw could require the phasing out of certain signs over a period of years, providing the amortization period was commensurate with the owner's investment in the sign. (Chapter VIII Analysis of Existing Land Use Controls looks into this issue in greater depth.)

Section 1400.0 of the State Building code governs the construction, alteration, repair and maintenance of signs. The code does provide exemptions for certain signs. Examples are wall signs painted on the surface of a fence or approved building wall, and any non-illuminated sign on a building or structure which is not more than ten square feet in area. Nonetheless, provisions do exist for the removal of unsafe and unlawful signs. The local building official thus has the authority to require that a sign conform to the State code, or the owner may be required to remove it. Projecting signs of certain varieties erected at other than right angles to the wall of a building or structure are unlawful, and must be removed or reconstructed.

Another option of controlling sign displays in Webster is to apply for commercial improvements funds under the Mass. Small Cities Program. Monies could be used to revitalize businesses in the CBD through participation in a Downtown Improvement Program. Participation by merchants would be voluntary, with the State providing a financial match for various storefront improvements. Such a cooperative public-private effort could lead to enhancement of the CBD as an attractive place to reside and do business.

A recent case study of a community using this approach is the Town of Winchendon, MA located in Northern Worcester County on the New Hampshire border. Town officials, seeing a need to revitalize commercial establishments in the downtown area, contracted with an architectural firm to come up with a plan to reinvigorate this business area. Small Cities funds paid for the services of this firm. The final product, entitled "Design Guidelines/Commercial Revitalization Program" described a number of improvements, in addition to signs, warranted in the downtown. For signs, the architects noted the following:

1. Signs should complement the architecture of the buildings on which they are located.
2. Signs should be clear and easy to read.

3. Sign materials should be attractive and durable.
4. Signs should have pleasing colors, letter design and graphics.
5. Signs should be sized to fit in with their surroundings.
6. Free standing signs allow buildings set back from the street to have a sidewalk presence.

Other storefront features discussed in the report included awnings and canopies, windows, entrances and doorways, lighting, color and decorative details among others. Small Cities funds, as mentioned earlier, would be utilized to match costs associated with any improvements a particular merchant wishes to make. The stipulation is that the owner must pay for a portion of these costs, and abide by the guidelines set forth by the architect.

4.2 Billboards

Massachusetts Law regulates "off premise signs", otherwise known as billboards, somewhat differently than it does signs. The State Constitution provides that advertising on public ways, in public places and on private property within public view may be regulated and restricted by law. Mass. General Laws Ch. 93, S. 29 states that the Outdoor Advertising Board (OAB) may make, amend and repeal regulations for the proper control of "billboards, signs and other advertising devices" on public ways or private property within the public view of any highway, public park or reservation (this provision exempts all on-premise signs from the Board's permit power). All billboards must obtain an annual permit from the OAB, which reviews its location and compatibility with local uses.

Towns and cities may further regulate and restrict billboards through local bylaws provided that they are not inconsistent with Mass. law or with OAB regulations. Billboards in the state as previously mentioned exist only on an annual permit. If the OAB or local bylaw require a particular billboard termination, the billboard owner has no right to claim grandfather protection status.

We recommend that local officials examine all the possible legal ramifications of instituting any billboard regulations. If adopted, such controls should apply Town-wide rather than applying only to the Main Street Business area. (See Chapter VIII for further discussion on this issue).

4.3 Zoning and Existing Land Use

In addition to a general assessment of aesthetic problems in the CBD, it was felt that an identification of zoning conflicts was in order. Most properties in the Downtown, as highlighted in section 3.2 of this chapter, conform to use regulations under

Webster's Zoning By-Law. In some cases, however (notably in blocks 1A, 1B, 1R, 1S and 14A) parcels appear non-conforming because of the configurations of zoning transition lines.

In some cases a zoning scheme not reflective of true land use patterns, aside from making little sense, acts to thwart optimal economic vitality of a given area. Perhaps two of the best (or worst) examples identified in this study are Blocks 1A, 1B and 14A, all located in the CBDs "outer" areas. The three blocks are zoned for industrial use, yet few if no industries exist. Rezoning of these blocks to business may invite reinvestment in these blocks, both in terms of commercial interests and developers looking to build affordable housing units.

Multi-family dwelling units and most commercial uses are not explicitly allowed in "Industrial Districts", according to our interpretation of the Zoning By-Law.

An option is available to change the zoning boundaries in the Downtown. This would be to eliminate all "Industrial" zoning districts and clarify other discrepancies noted in the block assessments. This would not require any Zoning By-Law revisions but would simply mandate amendments to the Zoning Map.

In addition, a number of parcels, some of which conform to zoning, are subject to flooding as a result of their proximity to the French River. This is particularly dangerous for the residences in Block 1X and for the "industrial" business in Block 1G. CMRPC strongly recommends that if not yet done so, all existing structures located within the 100-year floodplain as identified on the Webster Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) be floodproofed per requirements of the Massachusetts State Building Code. Inundation of land and structures in the CBD is a possibility, and property damage resulting from floods only detracts from any revitalization efforts intended to improve the quality of Webster's Downtown.

Perhaps the most logical and potentially comprehensive approach toward the realization of Downtown revitalization is to work with the State through its various redevelopment programs. The Massachusetts Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and other public funds may be used to revitalize the CBD and to create an atmosphere leading to significant investment and reinvestment. The State's Main Street program awards cities and towns with substantial funding i.e., grants for hiring full-time downtown managers and for technical assistance. However, such a program is highly competitive. To be eligible, a community must demonstrate a desire to invigorate the local economy and have a tangible track record of success. An example of a recent award recipient is the City of Peabody which had been involved in a series of Downtown improvement projects. Examples of these efforts include new sidewalks, street improvements and storefront and signage facelifts.

4.4 Main Street Bypass

All of the proposed improvements, etc. previously discussed are secondary compared to the two most pressing problems facing revitalization of Webster's CBD - traffic and parking. Gridlock along Main Street, especially during the P.M. rush hour, is a fact of life in the Downtown. Frequent traffic congestion along Route 12 only detracts potential shoppers from patronizing businesses in the CBD.

Town officials proposing the construction of a lateral Main Street hope that by making Main Street one-way (east-west) and opening up the new road for one-way traffic (west-east), the gridlock will end and substantial revitalization may begin. New off-street parking areas will also be developed. CMRPC recommends that the Town seriously consider earmarking funds for a study to determine the possible impacts of this bypass on traffic and off-street parking. The 1986 traffic/parking study is now somewhat dated and did not delve deeply into the feasibility or probable consequences of this proposed public improvement.

Another effort, equally as important, is for local officials to actively seek potential tenants outside of Webster to fill vacant buildings in the Downtown. A cooperative public-private strategy with the local Chamber of Commerce is a more preferable avenue towards successful recruitment of new merchants for the CBD.

CHAPTER VIII

ANALYSIS OF EXISTING LAND USE CONTROLS

1.0 IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATING GROWTH CONTROLS

Most communities "by and large" tend to react to growth pressures through enactment of "stop-gap" measures, such as downzoning (i.e., requiring larger minimum lot sizes in certain zoning districts) or denying special permits for large development projects. Without the proper tools available to guide and manage growth, cities and towns, including Webster, feel obligated to prevent most development perceived as detrimental to local interests. Eventual by-products of this approach may include hodgepodge development patterns, exclusion of low and moderate income persons from rental and mortgage housing opportunities, overburdened public water and sewer systems, traffic impacts and negative environmental consequences.

Fortunately, solutions are available to manage growth while at the same time reducing potential impacts on local infrastructure and natural resources. Most of these tools, especially the zoning and non-zoning techniques, have withstood legal challenges either in Massachusetts or in other states (across the country), or are explicitly allowed by state enabling legislation.

This chapter will first examine Webster's present bylaws and regulations which guide growth, or serve to mitigate the effects growth may present to the environment. Then, a number of growth control and related concepts will be discussed, some of which could be incorporated into Town bylaws and other regulations. Webster's By-Law Committee (which consists of seven registered voters appointed by the Board of Selectmen), has been working on revisions to the Zoning By-Law. Where applicable, reference will be made to the Committee's recommendations on various aspects of the By-Law.

2.0 SUMMARY OF EXISTING LOCAL BY-LAWS AND REGULATIONS

2.1 General Bylaws

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 21 gives municipalities the power to enact local bylaws which in their judgement would protect the public welfare. For a town or city, there are several advantages in passing general as opposed to zoning bylaws. First, local or general bylaws usually apply Townwide, as the emphasis primarily is with requiring safeguards for handling and storage of materials or for regulating certain activities which could harm the environment (instead of regulating land uses, which is done through zoning). Second, in some municipalities where allowed under local charter (which includes Webster) no public hearing is required to adopt a general bylaw. Thus, land uses can be reasonably regulated and are not afforded protection under some kind of "grandfather"

clause, as they are under Section 6 of Chapter 40A (The Zoning Act). Third, a Chapter 40 bylaw requires only a majority vote at Town Meeting, as opposed to a two-thirds vote in the case of zoning bylaws.

The Town of Webster published its most recent set of By-Laws in May 1988. These controls were originally adopted in March 1969, and have been amended on a number of occasions since. The document includes regulations governing, among other things, the powers and duties of the Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator and Town Engineer; financial affairs; licenses and permits; the Building Code; and the Zoning By-Law. Notably absent are local By-Laws aimed at protecting environmental resources (e.g., wetland protection, earth removal controls), and those enhancing community aesthetics (e.g., sign and/or billboard controls).

2.2 Zoning Bylaws

The Zoning Act vests considerable power in the Commonwealth's towns and cities to regulate the character and quantity of most land uses within municipal borders. The old "Zoning Enabling Act" was replaced by the Zoning Act through passage of Chapter 808 of the Acts of 1975. The new legislation, as opposed to the enabling act, gives municipalities more discretion in establishing zoning regulations. Specifically, M.G.L. Ch. 40A allows towns and cities to adopt Cluster or Planned Unit Development (PUD), or inclusionary zoning bylaws as amendments to their zoning. The old legislation did not expressly permit adoption of such innovative growth control tools, although that did not necessarily mean that they were illegal. Chapter 808 clarified the legality of these concepts through the new Section 9 of Ch. 40A. Other concepts, such as site plan review and performance zoning, are not specifically cited in the new law although have been recognized by Massachusetts courts as valid growth management techniques.

Webster's Zoning By-Law currently sets forth general provisions for guiding growth and development in the Town. Webster is divided into nine zoning districts - four residential, two commercial, one industrial, a floodplain overlay district and the Conservation District (which does not explicitly allow or prohibit any use of the land). Minimum lot size requirements range from 5,000 square feet in the Lake Residential district to 43,560 sq. ft. (one acre) in the Agricultural-Single Family Residential zone. Aside from these general provisions, the bylaw is deficient both in terms of organization and content insofar as prescribing clear and comprehensive controls to manage growth.

In addition to the many tools discussed in Section 3 of this chapter which could be incorporated as amendments to the By-Law, some reorganization of the text is in order. For example, instead of listing permitted uses using the "pyramid" approach (i.e., defining uses permitted by right and by special permit "beneath" each of the zoning district classifications), a

preferred and more popular method is to set up a use regulation table or schedule. Such a table typically lists all possible land uses (which a municipality could anticipate an individual or group submitting an application for) in a series of horizontal rows. A list of all zoning districts is shown in vertical columns, and letters identifying whether or not the use is permitted by right (e.g., "Y" or "P"), permitted through special permit process (e.g., "SP" or "P") or prohibited (e.g., "N") and inserted in a matrix format. In addition, a dimensional or "intensity" table is lacking in the By-Law (although an abbreviated version is found, listing all nine zoning districts along with minimum lot areas and floor area ratios where applicable). The By-Law Committee has drafted a use regulation schedule and dimensional regulation table which appears to be a good start in reorganizing these elements of the Zoning By-Law.

Town officials should seriously consider revising the definition of uses allowed and prohibited in the "Conservation District." The present wording leaves open a number of questions as to specific uses allowed, in addition to minimum lot and dimensional requirements. The inclusion of both use and dimensional regulation tables would clarify uncertainties as to the intent of this zoning district, and should head off any legal challenges regarding development of vacant land in the several tracts in Webster classified as "Conservation."

2.3 Subdivision Rules and Regulations

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 41, Sections 81K-81GG, otherwise known as "The Subdivision Control Law," empowers towns and cities through local Planning Boards to adopt regulations for the laying out and construction of ways providing access to lots in subdivisions. The statute defines subdivisions as "the division of a tract of land into two or more lots" unless said lots have the necessary frontage, providing vital access, on a public way. The law provides a great deal of protection to landowners to develop their property; a Planning Board must approve a "definitive" or final subdivision plan as long as it complies with its rules and regulations, and the rules and regulations of the local Board of Health.

Webster has adopted adequate subdivision control regulations. These regulations typify rules and regulations found in a number of Massachusetts towns in terms of content and format. For instance, the sequence and substance of various sections dealing with definitions, plan submission procedures, design standards, required improvements and administration resemble other similar or smaller size towns in the area. These existing regulations, although providing for many basic subdivision regulatory requirements pursuant to State law, appear to some degree to be vague and overly general.

Although beyond the scope of this study, the Town should consider an in-depth review and evaluation of its subdivision rules and regulations so that more control is placed in the hands of the Planning Board rather than the development community. (Hiring a consultant under separate contract is recommended since volunteer board members usually do not have the time nor expertise to independently evaluate and redraft such regulations.)

In addition to clarifying the basic language of the text, amendments to the regulations would serve to expand the Board's role in subdivision review. An example of innovative strategies for furthering the Town's review authority over subdivision development include requirement of an environmental analysis with Definitive Plans for development proposals over a certain size (e.g., 25 or more lots). The applicant would be required to submit to the Board maps and text describing the development's impact on surrounding natural resources. Graphics could include a composite site plan map and sensitive areas map, the latter identifying constraining natural resources. Narrative could include documentation of impacts and control measures to protect adjacent properties within the subdivision and abutters' properties, and general impacts upon groundwater and surface water quality and levels.

The Planning Board may want to consider appointing a separate subcommittee to review any text submitted by a consultant (if the Town so chooses to hire one) before proposing any formal amendments. In this way, regular Board meetings would not be disrupted in a period where the Board is busy with subdivision plan reviews. A subcommittee could take whatever time is necessary to review the report and refine the recommendations as deemed necessary. The Board could proceed in steps, adopting several changes at a time, then proceed to review other changes, until the entire report has been thoroughly evaluated.

2.4 Board of Health Regulations

Webster's new Town Charter, adopted in 1988, dissolved the local health board and shifted authority of this body to the Board of Selectmen, acting through the Town Administrator or designated agents. Thus, the Selectmen are now empowered to regulate specific activities deemed threatening to the public health. (State law vests broad powers to Boards of Health in this regard). Included among these responsibilities are the monitoring of the design, construction and maintenance of on-site septic systems, enforcement of sewer hookups on land abutting a way in which there is a common sewer, site assignments for solid waste disposal (e.g., transfer stations, landfills, incinerators, recycling centers) and for hazardous waste facility site assignments.

Webster's "Health Department Regulations," found in the General By-Laws, address two issues: improperly functioning on-site sewage systems along Webster Lake (i.e., septic system

maintenance program), and the discarding of "waste matter within... public ways or rights of ways, streets, public or private land, except for normal curbside pick up. The former states in part:

"...it shall be the duty of the Board of Selectmen through the Town Administrator or their agents, to examine, remove or prevent nuisances due to improper on-site sewage disposal systems bordering Webster Lake and the Town Administrator is directed and authorized to implement a program of septic system inspection, repair and maintenance, and disposal of the contents of such septic systems."

Although this section seemingly delegates broad powers to certain local officials for seeking to remedy septic system-related problems, the language appears vague, and the ability of such individuals to enforce mitigation of nuisances is questionable. Webster officials may instead want to consider a septic system maintenance program (this is what this section may be authorizing, which is unclear from a literal translation). A septic system maintenance program can require that systems be pumped on a periodic basis (i.e., every three years) as a preventative measure. Such a program can be implemented with or without direct financial assistance to homeowners, and would entail additional demands upon Town personnel to administer and monitor the program.

3.0 POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE GROWTH CONTROL MEASURES

3.1 Environmental Protection

3.1.1 Wetland Protection: Non-Zoning

A number of Massachusetts towns and cities have enacted non-zoning wetland bylaws. Use of a general bylaw for wetlands protection, under the "police power", was upheld by the Mass. Supreme Judicial Court in the case Lovequist vs. Conservation Commission, Town of Dennis (1979). The Court upheld a Town of Dennis bylaw modeled on the Wetlands Protection Act. The justices expressly ruled that the local bylaw was not in conflict with the State Zoning Act or the Wetlands Protection Act (Mass. General Laws Chapter 131, section 40), which the Court recognized as merely a minimum level of wetlands protection.

The Wetlands Protection Act allows regulation of work for only eight "values", which are flood control, storm damage prevention, groundwater, water supply, shellfish, fisheries, pollution control, and wildlife (recently added). The jurisdictional "reach" of the Act is 100 feet from the edge of wetland vegetation, or 100 feet from the

100-year floodplain, whichever is greater. The Act itself is limited to lands subject to flooding plus listed wetland resources "bordering" listed waterbodies. Under the Lovequist case, Home Rule allows regulation of work in "isolated" wetlands (those not bordering waterbodies) and upland areas which do border waterbodies. Also, other statutory interests - namely, erosion and sedimentation control, recreation values, aesthetic values, aquifer and well protection, and even signs - may also be regulated.

The Town of Webster should seriously consider examining the feasibility of adopting such a bylaw. The Dennis bylaw, considered a model for this type of local legislation, authorizes the Conservation Commission as the appropriate board of review. This might be considered a high priority item relative to the protection of not only the water quality of Webster Lake but also the municipal water supply as well.

3.1.2 Earth Removal Controls

Webster presently has no local controls designed to regulate the mining or removal of sand, gravel and loam. Mining of navigable rivers and great ponds, such as Webster Lake, is controlled under M.G.L. Ch. 91. Similarly, the State Wetlands Protection Act (Ch. 131, S. 40) protects these same natural resources in addition to wetland features. However, the absence of local legislation creates a vacuum with regard to oversight of earth removal operations in Webster. The lack of controls may result in erosion, increased runoff, and pollution of the public drinking water supply, as many aquifers and recharge areas are overlain by sand and gravel deposits.

Earth removal may be regulated through zoning or by a general bylaw under Chapter 40, S. 21 (17). The advantages of utilizing general as opposed to zoning controls, as discussed earlier, generally apply to earth removal regulations as well. For instance, a non-zoning earth removal bylaw requires only a majority Town meeting vote, as opposed to two-thirds for a similar zoning proposal.

A typical non-zoning earth removal bylaw gives approval authority to an earth removal board, appointed by the Board of Selectmen, consisting of five members from various local boards (e.g., Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Board of Health, Conservation Commission). The bylaw governing earth removal usually applies to any excavations over a certain size threshold, say over 10-50 cubic yards. Exemptions could include excavations incidental to residential construction or accessory uses, earth removal in the course of customary agricultural or

horticultural activities, and excavation in compliance with the specific requirements of an approved subdivision plan, among others. The board would then issue a permit if in their judgment the proposed earth removal operation would not irreparably harm the environment.

Conditions of the permit might include restoration of the area following expiration of the permit (e.g., 1 year), withdrawal of the permit, or cessation of operations; hours of the day during which the removal may take place; and grasses, shrubs and trees to be planted.

3.1.3 Erosion and Sedimentation Bylaw

Runoff from construction sites, if not properly managed and controlled, may result in erosion of river and stream banks, high sedimentation accumulations in streams and reservoirs, adverse effects on wildlife populations, pollution of public water supplies, and upsetting the flooding capacity of the land. Certain state and local regulations, such as the Wetlands Protection Act, general wetland bylaws, subdivision control and site plan review provide only limited jurisdiction over development contributing to this problem.

At the present time, no State enabling legislation exists allowing stringent local regulation over private or public development which results in erosion of the land. Nevertheless, the Home Rule Amendment to the State Constitution implicitly allows communities to enact such by laws. The local controls could require that developments over a certain size submit an erosion control plan to the Conservation Commission for their review and comment, or review and approval, before permits may be issued by other boards or agencies.

3.1.4 Hazardous Materials and Underground Storage Tank Controls

Communities have the option of adopting such controls via local bylaws or through their Board of Health regulations. As with three of the four other controls covered in this section hazardous materials and underground storage tank controls regulate uses or activities which may harm water supplies. A secondary result of adopting such controls is the management of Town growth.

The storage and disposal of hazardous wastes are regulated under the Massachusetts Waste Management Act. (M.G.L. Ch. 21C). Hazardous materials are not, however, regulated until they become wastes.

Mass. General Laws Ch. 148 regulates underground storage tanks. The statute deals primarily with fire prevention, and 527 CMR 9.00 (Mass. Board of Fire Prevention regulations) establish standards for tank construction and installation to prevent leaking tanks from polluting groundwater. The regulations, however, do not apply to farm or residential motor fuel tanks less than 1100 gallons and tanks for storing heating oil for use on the premises. Locally-adopted standards could ensure that tanks with a capacity of less than 1100 gallons are regulated according to the State standards, or even stricter standards (e.g., mandatory removal after "X" years).

A combination local hazardous material and underground storage tank bylaw or regulations (Board of Health) would specify various prohibitions, such as underground storage tanks in aquifer zones, and set up a system for requiring permits to install new tanks.

A cursory examination of Massachusetts towns and cities with these controls indicates that the majority regulate these activities through their Boards of Health.

3.1.5 Aquifer or Groundwater Protection Districts

Webster, as discussed in Chapter IV, is solely dependent on three public wells for its municipal water supply. Although the quality of local drinking water at present is good, it is difficult to say with any degree of certainty what condition the supply will be in ten to twenty years from now. Increases in impermeable surface areas, a common by-product of development, often results in runoff conditions which could threaten the potability of a public supply.

Massachusetts has a role in regulating activities deemed threatening to groundwater supplies. For example, the Commonwealth, with help from local officials, regulates the siting of hazardous waste facilities and establishes minimum standards for septic system design, siting and maintenance. However, such programs provide only limited protection for municipal supplies.

Fortunately, State law vests considerable authority to towns and cities for the protection of groundwater resources. These include the powers of local chief elected officials (i.e., the Board of Selectmen), who can appoint citizens concerned about groundwater protection to town boards and committees and accept conservation restrictions for the municipality. Boards of Health can hire agents to enforce state and local law and regulations, as well as regulate "nuisances" including those considered threatening to groundwater quality.

One of the more far-reaching and newer approaches for protecting groundwater is through the adoption of zoning districts that protect aquifers, recharge areas and areas of influence. In most cases, where this occurs, municipalities initially hire a hydrogeologic firm to map the location of aquifer and recharge areas. An aquifer protection bylaw is then written, either by the geologic firm or by another consultant, which corresponds to the professional map study. The aim of the regulations, unlike traditional zoning, is to prevent certain types of polluting substances from seeping into the groundwater and to minimize impervious ground coverage which prevents water recharge. Thus, such measures do not aim to forbid all development, but instead may ban some uses outright while subjecting others to the special permit process (delegated under zoning).

3.1.6 Watershed Protection Districts

Watershed Protection Zoning, on the other hand, imposes restrictions or prohibitions on the use and storage of materials which will damage the water supply, and typically imposes a site plan review requirement on commercial and industrial uses. Such bylaws create a zoning district for the protection of a local watershed, defined as the area drained by a particular body of water. These controls serve to protect an existing drinking water supply, conserve a watershed which may be needed for future water, or protect sensitive lakes or streams.

Under Watershed Protection Zoning, municipalities can require larger lot sizes, and this can be combined with a mandatory cluster requirement (See Section 3.21 for further discussion on cluster). Watershed Protection bylaws are typically adopted as an overlay district including only the watershed, while allowing the underlying zoning to remain.

3.1.7 River and Lake Protection Districts

Another tool for protecting water quality is through adoption of a river and lake protection district bylaw. In September of 1985, the Town of Sterling overwhelmingly approved the Stillwater River Protection District bylaw.

This legislation is aimed at protecting water quality, wildlife habitat, and other river resources and public interests of the river. The bylaw specifies that a 100-foot buffer zone be established along Sterling's section of the Stillwater River, and also protects wetlands beyond 100 feet, which lie within the 100 year floodplain. Potential threats to the Stillwater include

high building densities, septic system malfunctions, fuel tank runoff, and minor urban and agricultural runoff situations. Prior to this, Townsend voters adopted a similar bylaw.

A version of a comparable bylaw could be applicable to Webster since its most significant natural resource - Webster Lake - is fed by a number of brooks and streams, all virtually unprotected under the Town's existing bylaws. An overlay district would be established, with activities such as dumping, filling, dredging, and removal of materials identified as prohibited uses within these "buffer" zones.

3.1.8 Road Salt Policy

The application of de-icing chemicals, i.e., road salt, could have an adverse effect upon surface reservoirs and groundwater (used as municipal water supplies). Drinking water with sodium levels over 20 mg/l, as discussed in Chapter IV: Infrastructure, represents a public health problem for certain segments of the population; namely, persons with heart disease, high blood pressure, kidney disease, cirrhosis, and some pregnant women. Also, road salting has been known to damage plants (e.g., salt spray can damage foliage of evergreen trees up to 120 meters from a road) and animal and fish life (due to oxygen deprivation).

Of course, finding a "middle ground" between protecting the Town's supplies and providing for safe roads during the winter months is not easy. Substitute chemicals such as calcium chloride, (which is known not to be harmful to New England's acid, low pH waters) verglimit (a mixture of 80% calcium chloride, 5% sodium hydroxide and a mixture of other chemicals added directly to the pavement for ice control) and calcium magnesium acetate (which was tested nationally in 1985), although costly, may prove minuscule when compared to the cost of developing new water sources. Reduction or elimination of salt applications, especially near the municipal wellfield cones of depression, would go a long way to enhancing the quality of the Town's supplies (as well as private supplies and Webster Lake) from these damaging chemicals.

Salt storage operations should also be closely monitored so that a minimal amount of salt leaches into the groundwater. Although the most recent DEQE water quality analysis for the Town's wells indicates relatively low sodium levels, these readings likely will rise as more salt is added to the roads. The Town's Highway Department should make a concerted effort to ensure that the present sodium levels do not increase and, if possible, help to lower them. Implementation of a salt reduction

elimination program would undoubtedly contribute to a more sodium-free supply.

3.2 Growth Management

3.2.1 Cluster Zoning

Chapter 40A, Section 9 of the Mass. General Laws encourages communities to enact cluster development bylaws. By definition, cluster zoning allows for the preservation of open space, natural drainage systems and other natural features while concentrating dwelling units on the most buildable portion of a land tract. It can also help lower housing costs through shorter street and utility systems. The same density which would be allowed in a conventional subdivision may be maintained in a cluster.

Chapter 40A, S. 9 specifies that clusters can only be allowed by special permit, and the land set aside for open space conveyed to the municipality for park and open space use, to a non-profit organization (e.g., a land trust) or to a homeowners' association consisting of owners of the lots or units in the subdivision.

Cluster zoning is fast becoming an accepted device for preserving valuable open space in many communities. More often than not, local cluster bylaws allow the "clustering" of single family detached units only rather than a mixture of different residential use types; a draft cluster bylaw has been included in the By-Law Committee's recommendations.* This amendment should be studied by local officials to determine if further revisions are warranted prior to placing it on any future Town Meeting warrant.

3.2.2 Planned Unit Development

Planned unit development (PUD) like cluster, is another device for controlling growth. Section 9 of Ch. 40A defines PUD as:

"a mixed use development on a plot of land containing the minimum of the lesser of sixty thousand square feet or five times the minimum lot size of the zoning district, but of such larger size as a bylaw may specify, in which a mixture of residential, open space,

*The Center for Rural Massachusetts (a non-profit research group affiliated with the University of Massachusetts) strongly urges communities to adopt a mandatory cluster bylaw as a means of protecting open space and preserving rural character.

commercial, industrial, or other uses and a variety of building types are determined to be sufficiently advantageous to render it appropriate to grant special permission to depart from the normal requirements of the district to the extent authorized by the bylaw."

This option provides a viable alternative to commercial strip development which more often than not results in aesthetically displeasing environments and traffic congestion. Common characteristics of PUDs include:

- o regulations apply to entire developments rather than to individual lots;
- o concept promotes large scale, unified land development according to comprehensive and detailed plans;
- o increased administrative discretion is given to local planning officials; and
- o common open space is dedicated for the use of the neighborhood and not necessarily the general public, and is maintained by the residents of the development.

3.2.3 Planned Residential Development

The concept of PUD is closely akin to another density-based mixed use development approach. Planned Residential Development (PRD) has been defined as a "lesser form of PUD which does not employ the industrial or regional commercial elements yet in all other aspects is similar to a larger PUD."* Planned development (including PUDs) is not new, but is the result of attempts made by planning professionals since the 1930's to move away from preset subdivision control toward a new interest in facilitating the municipal/developer bargaining process.

Webster Town Meeting considered a warrant article on October 17, 1988 to amend the Zoning By-law and Map to allow PRD. The amendment had been prepared by R & S Associates to allow a PRD to take place on property under its control, known as Sugarloaf Hill. Town Meeting passed over this zoning proposal.

*Source: Burchell, Robert W., and James W. Hughes "Planned Unit Development: New Communities American Style, " p.37.

3.2.4 Site Plan Review

In many cases, large development projects are proposed which can have major impacts upon a community, but which are not subdivisions. A site plan review procedure can be adopted as a zoning amendment to fill the gaps for any uses which should be the subject of a detailed review, such as large multi-family, commercial and industrial projects.

Typically, site plan review is incorporated into a special permit application. The Special Permit Granting Authority receives all the information it needs to evaluate a proposal. It can thus make a better determination whether or not the special permit is warranted and what changes should be made to lessen adverse impacts. Some communities set threshold criteria requiring a special permit with site plan review for only large proposals. For example, if over 50 parking spaces for a use must be provided, or if over 50,000 square feet of building floor space is proposed, such a use would require a special permit with the additional requirement that site plan review procedures be followed. Of course, the threshold criteria can be varied to require site plan review for even relatively minor projects if the community feels an in-depth evaluation in nearly every case is important. The By-Law Committee has devised a Site Plan Review procedure. Under this proposal, all special permit applicants would have to submit site plans describing among other things number of parking and loading spaces, landscaping, lighting and drainage.

3.2.5 Inclusionary Zoning

A growth control option which has been gaining increasing acceptance nationwide has been the use of inclusionary zoning techniques. Such strategies offer a means of providing affordable housing for a limited number of persons. They usually specify that a certain number of units in proposed developments be set aside for low and moderate income households.

Inclusionary programs can be voluntary or mandatory. If mandatory, a developer must insure that a percentage of units as specified in the bylaw be so reserved. A voluntary program typically offers incentives, such as increased density to encourage a developer to provide such units. Section 9 of Mass. General Laws Ch. 40A authorizes municipalities to amend local zoning bylaws to allow bonus zoning by special permit. The law states: "...bylaws may...provide for special permits authorizing increase in the permissible density of population or intensity of a particular use in a proposed development; provided that ...applicant shall...provide certain open space, housing

for persons of low and moderate income,..." etc. The law also specifies that a bylaw must state the amenities permitted and identify the maximum zoning bonus allowed.

3.2.6 Point-Based Systems or Controls

In October of 1988, Webster Town Meeting members voted overwhelmingly to approve a limited moratorium on building permits. This interim provision, an amendment to the Zoning By-Law, limits building permit issuances to proposed single family developments having less than ten units on a single parcel, and restricts multi-family development to no more than one building on a single parcel with a maximum of four units per structure. The moratorium will expire at the close of the 1990 Fall Semi-Annual Town Meeting.

Somewhat less restrictive than a moratorium and offering more permanence is "Point-Based Systems" or ("Adequate Public Facilities") controls. Adoption of a point-based system provision enables a community to regulate the amount and rate of growth. Ordinary zoning bylaws can only control the type and the density of uses permitted. More innovative growth control techniques such as cluster zoning, PUDs/PRDs and site plan review, control details of layout and design. Except for points based system regulations (and phased growth or development scheduling controls, discussed in the next section) none of these methods will control either the amount of growth or the rate at which it occurs. Point based controls can be considered a more sophisticated method for controlling growth and providing for more diverse development. Common characteristics of such regulations are the following:

- o An annual quota on building permits is specified.
- o An awarding of points is made to each development proposal based upon adequacy of public facilities, design of the development, amount of open space provided, inclusion of affordable housing units, among other criteria.
- o Process may exempt small projects, e.g., 4 units or less or in-fill development.

An advantage of point based controls is that it may be used to induce production of affordable housing by awarding points for such units. However, there are two disadvantages as well. First, the process is administratively complex, and requires additional review time for the permit granting authority (e.g., the Planning Board). Second, the process is subject to legal attack, as it can raise serious questions of equity if utilized in the absence of scheduled improvements, i.e., based upon

capital facilities planning. For these reasons, more communities have opted for phased growth.

3.2.7 Phased Growth

Similar in some respects to point based controls, phased growth controls typically are simple Zoning bylaw amendments which attempt to slow growth. This is accomplished by stating in a "formula" that no more than a certain number of the units in a residential development may be built in any two year (or 24-month) period. A trigger mechanism kicks in when growth reaches a certain level, and the bylaw applies whether or not a community is experiencing growth pressures. Communities in Worcester County that have adopted these controls include Blackstone, New Braintree, North Brookfield and Oakham, and Holden adopted this approach at its 1989 Annual Town Meeting.

Advantages to adopting a phased growth provision are: protecting the community from uncontrolled development, and ease in administration. Two disadvantages are evident, the first being legal and the second monetary. Massachusetts Law does not expressly allow phased growth controls although no municipalities which adopted such measures have yet been legally challenged. And if approved by the town (or city), developer carrying costs will increase because some land will become unbuildable for a number of years.

Such a bylaw, in order to be considered a viable growth control option, should:

1. Name the specific purpose of the slowdown and its relation to the provision of public services.
2. Offer protection to purchasers of subdivision lots by including a recorded schedule of development dates when lots can be built upon.
3. Exempt housing subsidized by any federal or state programs for low and moderate income persons, including federal, state or municipal programs which may be used for production of housing for such persons.
4. Exempt small developments (e.g., under 10 units).
5. Be triggered by a rise in building permits issued over a certain threshold within a stated period.

3.3 Accessory Uses

3.3.1 Accessory Apartments Provision

Many communities have witnessed a change in many older, large single-family homes, often in the form of alterations, oftentimes resulting in a displeasing appearance of a structure's exterior. This can be explained in a number of instances by a conversion of a portion of the building's interior from one dwelling unit to two or several units. More popularly referred to as accessory apartments, other terms referring to this process include single family conversions, mother-in-law apartments, mother-daughter homes, and secondary residences, among others.

Even a marginal supply of single family homes ripe for conversions presents a dilemma to towns, like Webster, which have inadequate controls for regulating housing conversions. Any increase in the rental housing stock opens up more affordable housing opportunities for single professionals, in-laws, and the elderly (who in many instances could not afford to remain in their homes). However, illegal conversions can result in unsafe units that cause parking problems and could in some cases change the character of a neighborhood.

Towns which control apartment conversions usually do so through the special permit process in their zoning bylaws. [The special permit granting authority usually is either the Planning Board or the Board of Appeals]. These controls typically set forth conditions to regulate the interior layout of structures, off-street parking, aesthetics, and location of entrances. Listed below are excerpts from accessory apartment bylaws in area towns that may be useful to Webster:

Interior Design

- o There shall be no more than one accessory apartment per single family dwelling.
- o The owner of the premises shall occupy one of the dwelling units, except for bona fide temporary absences.

Parking

- o At least three off-street parking spaces shall be available for use by the owner-occupant(s) and tenant(s).

Aesthetics

- o The accessory apartment shall be designed so that to the degree feasible, the appearance of the building remains that of a one-family residence.

Location of Entrances

- o In general, any new entrances shall be located on the side or in the rear of the building, and additions shall not increase the floor area of the original house by more than ten (10) percent).

3.3.2 Home Occupations

An accessory use now regulated under Webster's existing Zoning By-Law but in need of strengthening is the partial conversion of dwellings for business-related purposes. (Section 6.(1) regulates these uses). Although this does not appear a problem in the Town, unchecked commercial uses, especially those within residential areas, can often result in negative impacts to the surrounding neighborhood. Common effects include increased traffic, parking problems, excess noise, unsightly signage, and strains on the local infrastructure (i.e., increased water consumption and sewer or septic system use).

The By-Law's existing language regarding home occupations relates primarily to the types of businesses permitted. Section 6.(1)-(2) (which applies to all districts except for the B-5 zone) reads as follows:

1. Use of room or rooms in a dwelling for customary home occupations conducted by resident occupants, such as dress making, candy making or for the practice, by a resident, of a recognized profession and provided these are no more than two employees.
2. Use of premises or building thereon in connection with his trade by a resident carpenter, electrician, painter, plumber or other artisan, provided that there shall be not external manifestation of said use except as provided in ...Section "M" (which establishes parking requirements for all new buildings)."

As previously mentioned, some strengthening of this section appears in order, particularly if a proliferation of new business uses within residential areas happens to occur in the future. Possible amendments include the following:

- a. There shall be no exterior display, no exterior storage of materials and no exterior indication of the home occupation.

- b. One sign not to exceed two (2) square feet in area is permitted but only to display the occupant's name and occupation.
- c. The home occupation shall not generate traffic, parking, sewage, water use, or noise in excess of what is normal in the residential neighborhood.
- d. No more than twenty-five (25) percent of the floor area of the residence shall be used for the purpose of the home occupation.

The bylaw should also more clearly specify what uses are permitted and those prohibited. Some additions to the permitted use category could include tutoring (limited to four students at a time) and computer programming. Possible prohibited uses would be barber shops and beauty parlors, animal hospitals, private clubs and restaurants, among others.

3.3.3 Day Care

Family day care centers have been increasing in numbers in recent years as the female workforce has grown. Few towns and cities, however, have taken a role in the oversight of day care homes. Those which have strengthened their oversight role have usually done so by amending local zoning to include a provision for regulating these facilities. Family day care centers differ from day care centers, nursery schools, and private kindergartens in that the day care for children is provided in private residences.

A subsection of Chapter 40A, S. 3 (adopted in 1988) states in part that "family day care homes...shall be an allowable use unless a...town prohibits or specifically regulates such use in its zoning bylaw..." In other words, state law empowers municipalities to designate zones for uses such as family day care, to restrict operations of that use and even require a special permit in order for the use to operate.

Chapter 28A of the Mass. General Laws delegates licensing power for the Office for Children (OFC) which municipalities may request be applied to their jurisdictions. These regulations detail required building and fire safety provisions. State fire, building and health codes can be enforced by local officials in family day care situations. However, this power is seldom used.

Unregulated family day care centers (which may accommodate no more than 6 children and must meet OFC-licensing requirements), could present some problems down the road

if these operations become commonplace in Webster. Issues such as safety, facility quality and nuisance problems top the list of common concerns among municipalities most frequently voiced about family day care. With regard to safety, local officials want to avoid structural fire safety problems and other structural dangers, in addition to hazards in outdoor play space. For facility quality, good care, absence of abuse, nutritious meals and good health procedures in dealing with groups of children are common concerns. And in terms of nuisances, the amount of traffic, noise, exterior changes to the residence associated with the business, and trespassing of children onto adjoining properties are problems commonly associated with family day care facilities.

Webster is in a good position to adopt regulations for family day care centers in light of the new zoning language and if in fact these enterprises do not yet proliferate in residential neighborhoods. This can be accomplished either through a "home occupation" amendment to the Zoning By-Law, or by addressing family day care centers explicitly through zoning. These facilities can be allowed by special permits in certain zoning districts, or be an as-of-right accessory use subject to various bulk, dimensional, screening, and parking requirements.

3.4 Aesthetics

3.4.1 Sign and Billboard Controls

As discussed in Chapter VII, Section 7K of the Webster Zoning By-Law regulates the display of advertising signs, and billboards and other outdoor advertising in Residential Districts only. Otherwise, such uses in other zoning districts are not regulated locally but rather must conform only to the regulations of the Massachusetts Outdoor Advertising Board. The existing regulations appear in need of review and eventual updating, which would entail a complete revision and expansion of the text. (The By-Law Committee has included in their proposed Zoning By-Law revision amendments to the sign regulations.)

Billboards and signs are treated differently under Massachusetts law. An "on-premise" sign is broadly defined under M.G.L. Ch. 93, S. 30 as any device which "advertises or calls attention to any business..." A billboard, regulated under M.G.L. Ch. 93 and 93D, is a sign located "off premises" instead of indicating the person or product occupying the business or premises. The State Outdoor Advertising Board (OAB) has been set up to regulate billboards and signs on public and private ways within the public view of any highway, public park or reservation.

Many communities in Massachusetts and elsewhere have adopted comprehensive regulations governing the display of signs, billboards and other advertising devices. In some cases, towns and cities have banned billboards or "off-premises" signs in certain areas or community-wide. The State Supreme Judicial Court has upheld the right of municipalities to absolutely ban billboards in the landmark case Donnelly Sons Inc. vs. OAB (Brookline, 1975). The court stated that towns and cities are acting within the scope of the police power when enacting local bylaws aimed at improving the community's aesthetic environment.

As such, cities and towns are allowed to develop stricter regulations not inconsistent with OAB's regulations, including the option of not allowing billboards at all. Chapter 93 of the Massachusetts General Laws, however, does not regulate "on premises" signs used by landowners or businessmen. Instead, this is left to the municipality under Ch. 40 or Ch. 40A. Webster therefore has the option of further regulating signs and billboards through zoning or via a general bylaw provision, the latter applying Town-wide. Non-conforming signs and billboards usually are regulated stringently among communities with other type of controls.

Allowing non-conforming signs to remain in place indefinitely hampers a primary function of such a bylaw - improving the appearance of Webster through sign control. Probably the best approach to guaranteeing that unattractive signs are upgraded is to include an amortization schedule in a new sign bylaw.

The amortization process insures that owners are able to continue using their signs until the original investment has been recovered. Courts across the country have generally looked favorably on this approach because due process of law is preserved, as well as equal protection since both old and new businesses will be affected.

The amortization schedule might work like this. The period for sign removal would relate to the permit value of the sign. For instance, signs valued at \$20.00 or less which are not in conformance to whatever requirements are set forth in the bylaw would have to be removed immediately. Signs valued at \$20.01 to \$150.00 must be removed within one year, and so on. The amortization period could stretch to seven or ten years depending upon the range of overall sign values townwide.

Utilization of available funding (e.g., Mass. Small Cities Program) could assist some merchants whose signs must be brought into conformance. As discussed in the previous chapter, participation in the State's Downtown

Improvement Program would enable businesses in the CBD to voluntarily participate in a program to offset costs for sign upgrading, among other, improvements.

The downside of an amortization schedule is that additional municipal staff would be needed to log all nonconforming signs and determine at what time they are to be removed. Staff time would also be needed to monitor this schedule to make certain that all signs are removed at the scheduled time. Such administrative procedures would likely be costly.

4.0 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Affordable Housing

A study of land use controls and alternatives would be incomplete without some discussion of housing affordability. Defining what is "affordable" is not simple in these times of skyrocketing land and housing costs. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that the price of many homes in Webster, as in the majority of the State's communities, has placed the dream of buying a home beyond the means of many, particularly those wishing to purchase their first home.

4.1.1 Executive Order 215

The Commonwealth has become very concerned about the affordable housing problem. There have been numerous programs at the State level to subsidize market rate projects to enable more middle income couples to purchase a home. The State, realizing its own limitations, is actively encouraging communities to take steps to help alleviate the situation. Executive Order 215, signed by Governor King in 1982, is the principal policy statement of the Commonwealth in regard to local actions that affect housing construction. In essence, E.O. 215 states that any community found to be unduly restrictive of new housing growth will be denied State development related assistance. When Webster applies under discretionary grant programs, such as water main extensions or aquifer land acquisition, the Town's housing policies are reviewed for compliance with E.O. 215. If the Town is determined to be overly restrictive, the grant application could be denied. To a very large extent, market forces play a larger role in housing prices than zoning policies, but E.O. 215 mandates that each community remove barriers to the production of new housing units.

4.1.2 Comprehensive Permits

M.G.L. Chapter 40B, Sections 20-23, otherwise known as "The Anti-Snob Zoning Law," allows certain local rulings

which prevent the development of subsidized and low and moderate income housing to be overruled at the State level when such a proposed development is judged to be "reasonable" and "consistent with local needs." The carrot for developers, if the local Board of Appeals allows the development to proceed (by a majority vote), is that they may receive a "comprehensive permit," whereby the developer is able to bypass the usual permitting process (i.e., building inspector, Board of Health, etc. but not Conservation Commission) and obtain a single authorization prior to the start of construction. Prospective developers can apply for comprehensive permits in communities, such as Webster, which have not met the threshold criteria of having either 10% of the housing stock or 1.5% of the land area (zoned for residential, commercial or industrial use) used for in low or moderate income housing. As of October, 1987, Webster's percentage of affordable housing units was 4.79, or 290 out of 6,051 total units.

4.1.3 Elderly Housing Concepts

Elderly couples are often left with large houses after their children have moved out, and there is a desire to move to new quarters where maintenance demands are lower. If suitable alternatives can be found, these older units can be put back into circulation for families with young children. There have been many recent innovations in elderly housing as demographic forces have caused the number of elderly to rise, and new housing styles have evolved to meet their needs. Congregate facilities are now becoming quite popular, where a number of elderly share common dining and recreation facilities, but live in separate units. Continuing/continuum care retirement communities provide an intermediate level of care where medical facilities are readily available but residents maintain their independence. Webster needs to be responsive to the needs of its elderly residents who wish to remain in the community but do not have other viable options available.

4.1.4 Multi-Family Zoning

Multi-family structures with up to six units per building are permitted by right in the Multiple Family Residential District (M-R) and Business District (Within Sewer). The Zoning By-Law requires a minimum lot area of 12,000 square feet for the first two units with 2,500 square feet required for each additional unit. Applications for apartments with more than six units require a special permit from the Board of Appeals. Otherwise, the By-Law is silent on procedures for regulating apartment development in Webster, which includes condominium construction.

Two criteria are important when evaluating multi-family proposals: locational factors, and design factors. The former category will provide criteria concerning the suitability of a site for the proposed use, while the latter category will aid in evaluating site design elements such as the circulation system, layout of buildings, and relation to natural topography. Examples of locational factors include:

- o All new multi-family uses must be connected to public water and sewer systems.
- o There should be easy access to major highways and collector streets to minimize impacts on single family neighborhoods, but the street should not be so congested so that large amounts of additional traffic do not aggravate an already bad situation.
- o Public park and recreation facilities should be adequate to serve existing and future residents.

Some questions which the local Special Permit Granting Authority could consider regarding site design include:

- o Does the arrangement of buildings and open space areas contribute to the overall aesthetic quality of the environment?
- o Are the elements of the site plan arranged favorably with existing natural topography, vegetation and other natural features of the site?
- o Does the street and parking system provide for smooth, safe and convenient movement of vehicles both on and off the site?

The By-Law Committee has drafted a multi-family bylaw which local officials should carefully scrutinize prior to considering any Town Meeting article for regulating this type of growth. Preparation of a detailed and workable bylaw of this type is time-consuming but is evidently needed since existing controls for dealing with multi-family development are sorely lacking.

4.2 Open Space Preservation

4.2.1 Conservation Restrictions

State law (G.L. Ch. 184 S. 32) enables communities to enter into conservation restrictions with private landowners. The landowner agrees not to develop his property, and the restriction, which runs with the land, is binding upon any subsequent owners. The landowner retains title to the land and may use the land any way he

wishes provided the property is kept in its natural state. Depending upon the terms of the restriction, the owner may or may not allow public access to the property. Many landowners may be motivated to keep their property in an undeveloped condition and agree to donate such a restriction to the Town. The Conservation Commission should be vigilant in searching for potential donors who may wish to make a contribution to the Town for permanently preserving large tracts of open space.

4.2.2 Land Trust

Non-profit land trusts present an additional avenue for Town officials, and members of the general public, to seek and acquire valued open space property. The advantages of utilizing a trust, instead of relying on Town acquisition, are severalfold. First, a trust can buy up sensitive or threatened land more quickly than a municipality would be able to. Second, a trust may purchase and sell land, where development of part of a parcel will help to save the remainder. Third, the trust can accept land that does not meet the standards of the Conservation Commission. And fourth, a trust may purchase land that has been voted down at Town Meeting.

CHAPTER IX

GOALS, POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO PLAN FOR WEBSTER'S FUTURE

1.0 GOALS AND POLICIES

Town officials often render decisions which ultimately affect the quality, type and rate of growth occurring in Webster. However, the various local boards and professionals do not have appropriate reference information to aid their decisions. The establishment of goals and policies, listed below, will provide guidance for the form and content of the Master Plan's recommendations, presented at the end of this chapter.

I. GOAL: LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

To promote a land use pattern which provides sufficient open space for the activities of Webster's residents, locates industry in close proximity to infrastructure and major transportation routes, and encourages commercial development compatible with surrounding residential uses.

1. Policies

- a. To plan for the optimal use of the Town's remaining tracts of vacant land.
- b. To carry out innovative land use policies designed to encourage a sophisticated approach to dealing with growth pressures in Webster.
- c. To rezone certain areas of Town to better reflect existing land use patterns in addition to planning for development or preservation of vacant land.
- d. To encourage dense residential uses only where infrastructure is in place and where the circulation system can handle the increased traffic.
- e. To attract industries that are non-polluting, generate jobs and improve the Town's tax base.
- f. To ensure that any industrial expansion minimizes traffic increases along local street.
- g. To carefully monitor and control commercial strip development along the Route 12, 16 and 193 corridors.
- h. To adopt sign controls and site plan regulations to upgrade existing commercial uses and to ensure high quality new commercial development.

- i. To encourage mixed use development along the Route 12 and 16 corridors.

II. GOAL: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

To maintain a high quality environment (acknowledging the rights of landowners to develop their property) while at the same time recognizing the importance of minimizing impacts on water quality, wetlands, floodplains, topography and natural habitat.

1. Policies: Water Quality

- a. To identify and protect waterbodies, groundwater resources, and groundwater recharge areas.
- b. To investigate the need of adopting a septic system maintenance program (primarily for failing systems around the lake) which would require that systems be pumped on a regular basis to prevent pollution.
- c. To adopt and enforce bylaws and regulations recognized as effective tools for protecting public and private water supplies, Webster Lake and its tributaries.
- d. To discourage the development of noxious industries which may contaminate local water supplies (and Webster Lake and tributary rivers and brooks).
- e. To reduce or prohibit application of road salts on Town roads which are upgradient or within close proximity of the municipal wells and Webster Lake in an effort to keep sodium levels within safe limits.

2. Policies: Natural Environment

- a. To protect wetlands through adoption and enforcement of innovative wetland controls.
- b. To enforce the provisions of the Floodplain Overlay Zoning District to mitigate potential threats to the public safety during periods of high water levels.
- c. To discourage development on slopes of 15% or greater grade and/or steep slopes with shallow soil cover, and carefully control development on slopes between 10% to 15% grade.
- d. To identify and protect sensitive wildlife habitats and restrict development in these areas.
- e. To implement the recommendations of the French River Planning study prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management.

- f. To implement the recommendations of the 1988 Conservation and Recreation Plan through capital facilities planning.

III. GOAL: INFRASTRUCTURE

To target higher intensity growth to areas where public water and sewer are available to control the timing of development, and to promote environmental protection.

1. Policies: Public Water Supply

- a. To develop a new well along Route 16, and target additional supply sources when the need arises.
- b. To promote water conservation measures that reduce water demand.
- c. To maintain the high quality of the water supply so that treatments need not be applied to counteract man-made pollutants.

2. Policies: Public Sewerage

- a. To devise a capital facilities program aimed at planning for expansion of the sewer system to serve existing development based on the Town's 20-year phasing program. This would also involve targeting new sewers to areas where failing septic systems pose a threat to the environment, especially Webster Lake.
- b. To create negotiation tools such that large scale developments pay for some of the costs associated with expansion and upgrades of the sewerage and water systems.

IV. GOAL: TRANSPORTATION

To maintain and upgrade the existing road network which includes streets and sidewalks in order to ensure safe and convenient travel for all of Webster's residents.

1. Policies

- a. To upgrade hazardous local roads and intersections identified in this Plan in conjunction with a capital improvements program.
- b. To coordinate with the Massachusetts Department of Public Works to initiate improvements on various State-numbered routes and intersections.
- c. To improve the pedestrian systems within the Town.

- d. To cooperate with neighboring communities in an effort to solve existing and anticipated traffic-related problems.
- e. To work with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission to solve regional transportation problems.

V. GOAL: HOUSING

To provide for safe and affordable housing for all of Webster's residents, and retain the single family, rural character of a large portion of the Town.

1. Policies

- a. To continue to apply for State assistance for improvements to existing housing and for affordable housing development.
- b. To improve the quality of the layout of certain development by revising the subdivision regulations which will serve to strengthen the Town's role in the subdivision review process.
- c. To strengthen the role of Webster's Housing Partnership in providing for housing which is affordable to local residents but respectful of the environment and surrounding neighborhoods.
- d. To encourage the development of housing for low and moderate income persons only in areas convenient to transportation, shopping and community facilities.
- e. To allow for the conversion of portions of older, larger homes to accessory apartments through an amendment to the Zoning By-Law.
- f. To provide for safe and affordable housing for the Town's elderly, which represent a large segment of Webster's total population.
- g. To strengthen the ties between the Housing Authority, State programs, municipal government and local developers.
- h. To encourage multi-family development as transition areas between commercial and single family neighborhoods.

VI. GOAL: DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

To strive to regain the prominence of Webster's Downtown as a center for retail establishments, offices, institutional activities, high quality but affordable housing, and as a setting for safe social interaction.

1. Policies

- a. To extend Davis Street to Peter Street to alleviate traffic congestion along Route 12.
- b. To upgrade or replace signage in the Downtown in order to improve the appearance of the area.
- c. To coordinate with the local Chamber of Commerce to continue revitalization efforts in the Downtown by seeking tenants outside of Webster to fill vacant buildings.
- d. To negotiate with local merchants for the best possible solution to the Downtown parking problem, preferably by designating an area for a multi-level parking garage.
- e. To continue pursuing State and federal assistance to encourage business investment and reinvestment in the Downtown, and to rehabilitate the area's housing stock.
- f. To encourage attractive landscaping and pedestrian paths.
- g. To maximize views and the use of the French River.

VII. GOAL: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

To attain a vital local economy which primarily serves Town residents with regard to new and more upscale employment opportunities, but also seeks to attract not only Town residents but also clientele from outside of Webster.

1. Policies

- a. To attract industries that are reflective of future growth in Massachusetts (i.e. research and development firms).
- b. To formulate a public-private partnership geared to determining how the Town can help all local businesses and industries to prosper.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO PLAN FOR WEBSTER'S FUTURE

2.1 Implementing the Plan

The previous section, Goals and Policies, presented a series of guidelines with which the Master Plan Committee and the Planning Board have agreed form a solid foundation to establish plan recommendations. Implementing a master plan is a complex process, involving discussions among various local boards and officials, and consensus at Town Meeting. As mentioned in the first chapter, the plan should be viewed as a tool by which to guide the future course of community growth. It should not, however, be looked upon as a panacea for all Town problems, nor be so rigid as to not allow change to occur.

The following is a priority ranking of action steps to implement the plan. Town officials and boards deemed responsible for carrying out these recommendations will be identified where applicable.

I. LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Local officials and Town Boards should work together to plan for the best use of Webster's remaining undeveloped land.
2. Draft and implement, as soon as is feasible, a phased growth bylaw (zoning) to control the timing of new residential construction in each development and in the Town as a whole.

Responsible parties: Planning Board
By-Law Committee

3. Adopt sign regulations and development review tools (e.g., site plan review) to better control strip commercial development along state-numbered Routes 12, 16 and 193.

Responsible parties: Planning Board
By-Law Committee

4. Draft and implement, as soon as is feasible, a cluster development bylaw (zoning) to help in preserving the environment, setting aside open space and as an alternative to conventional subdivision development.

Responsible parties: Planning Board
By-Law Committee

5. For Conservation District, establish use and dimensional regulations. Require mandatory cluster, and mandate a density of one unit for every two acres. Higher densities could be allowed if proposed development is near water and sewer.

Responsible parties: Board of Selectmen
Planning Board
By-Law Committee

6. Allow dense residential uses only in areas where water and sewer lines are accessible, and where the circulation system can accommodate increased traffic flow.

Responsible parties: Planning Board
Board of Selectmen
Town Engineer
Town Administrator

7. Examine the feasibility of adopting mixed use development controls, such as Planned Unit Development or a planned business development overlay district. These could apply to the B-4 and B-5 districts that abut Routes 12 and 16.

Responsible parties: Planning Board
By-Law Committee

8. Encourage the development of non-polluting, job-generating industries in Webster. Limit those uses to where infrastructure is readily available and traffic impacts on local streets can be minimized.

Responsible parties: Planning Board
Board of Selectmen

9. Hire full-time professional help to assist various municipal boards and departments so that they become better equipped to deal with growth pressures. Those in greatest need are the Planning Board and the Building Inspector's office.

Responsible parties: Town Administrator
Board of Selectmen
Planning Board

II. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

1. Adopt a watershed protection bylaw as a first step to ensure protection of the water quality of Webster Lake and of the municipal water supply.

Responsible parties: Conservation & Lake Commission
Planning Board
By-Law Committee

2. Adopt a non-zoning wetland protection bylaw. Use of a general bylaw for wetland protection has been recognized by Massachusetts courts as a valid use of a municipality's home rule powers. Such a bylaw would apply Town-wide.

Responsible parties: Conservation & Lake Commission
By-Law Committee

3. Revise Health Department regulation 155.1 (Septic System Maintenance Program) to require that failing septic systems (primarily around Webster Lake) be serviced regularly (i.e., every 2-3 years).

Responsible parties: Webster DPW
Conservation & Lake Commission
Board of Selectmen
Town Administrator

4. Hire a hydrogeologic firm to study groundwater and recharge areas in the Town. Adopt an aquifer protection zoning bylaw regulating contamination threats to the Town's water supply.

Responsible parties: Town Administrator
Board of Selectmen
Conservation & Lake Commission

5. Adopt a road salt policy to ensure that application of sodium chloride on local roads is reduced to keep sodium levels within safe limits (i.e., 20 ppm).

Responsible parties: Webster DPW
Board of Selectmen
Conservation & Lake Commission
Massachusetts DPW

6. Examine the feasibility of adopting and enforcing additional tools aimed at protecting public (and private) drinking water supplies. These would include earth removal controls, erosion and sedimentation bylaw or controls, hazardous materials and underground storage tank controls, and river and/or lake protection districts.

Responsible parties: Board of Selectmen
Conservation & Lake Commission
By-Law Committee
Town Administrator

7. Work with the Massachusetts Natural Heritage Program to protect rare and endangered species by preserving their natural habitats.

Responsible parties: Planning Board
Conservation & Lake Commission
Board of Selectmen

8. Protect and enhance the French River through adoption of river protection controls, enforcing flood protection bylaws and improving public use and access, especially for recreation.

Responsible parties: Board of Selectmen
Conservation & Lake Commission
By-Law Committee
Town Administrator

9. Require that all uses, existing and proposed, within the Floodplain Overlay District be floodproofed per requirements of the Massachusetts Building Code.

Responsible party: Building Inspector

III. INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Target new sewers to areas where failing septic systems pose a threat to the environment, especially Webster Lake. The Town should adopt and follow a comprehensive capital improvements program (in conjunction with the 20-year sewer phasing program) to attain this objective.

Responsible parties: Board of Selectmen
Webster DPW

2. Monitor efforts at the state level aimed at enabling communities to adopt impact fee bylaws. If adopted, this legislation would empower towns and cities to enact local controls requiring developments to pay for the costs associated with the infrastructure improvement (e.g., water and sewer systems upgrades or expansions).

Responsible parties: Board of Selectmen
Town Administrator

3. Encourage homeowners, businesses and industries to conserve water by installing water conservation devices and by reducing water consumption.

Responsible party: Webster Water Department

4. Continue with efforts to fund the development of a new municipal well along Route 16. The Town should pursue the search of additional water supplies when the need arises.

Responsible parties: Board of Selectmen
Webster DPW

IV. TRANSPORTATION

1. The newly-formed Capital Planning Advisory Committee should establish a priority ranking of bridges, roads and intersections which warrant improvements. Referral to those areas identified in this plan considered in need of improvements is recommended. In some cases, approval from the MDPW is required.

Responsible parties: Capital Planning Advisory Committee
Webster DPW
Police Department
Board of Selectmen
Massachusetts DPW

2. Identify streets in need of sidewalks, and upgrade existing sidewalks where needed.

Responsible parties: Capital Planning Advisory Committee
Webster DPW
Police Department
Board of Selectmen
Massachusetts DPW

3. Initiate a series of meetings with officials from abutting towns (Oxford, Dudley, Douglas and Thompson, CT) to solve existing and expected inter-community traffic problems. Utilize the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission to help coordinate these meetings, which would be aimed at taking a regional approach to solving local transportation problems.

Responsible parties: Webster DPW
Board of Selectmen
Town Administrator

V. HOUSING

1. The Office of Community Development (OCD) should be reactivated in order for Webster to aggressively pursue all grant programs aimed at community revitalization. Funds from Massachusetts Small Cities and other grant programs may be applied to rehabilitate housing, for the construction of new affordable housing units, and for infrastructure improvements that benefit low and moderate income persons.

Responsible parties: Board of Selectmen
Town Administrator

2. Amend the Zoning By-Law to allow, by special permit only, the conversion of existing single family homes to rental units to provide for small apartments. Only one converted apartment per dwelling should be permitted and Board of Health approval must be sought for septic system adequacy, where applicable.

Responsible parties: Planning Board
By-Law Committee

3. The Webster Housing Partnership, with OCD assistance, should take a more active role in creating housing affordable for families and the elderly. As a first step, it is advised that OCD and partnership members work closely

with the state Executive Office of Communities and Development (EOCD) to organize the partnership.

Responsible party: Webster Housing Partnership

4. Encourage new, safe and affordable housing for the elderly through adoption of innovative elderly housing zoning concepts (e.g., congregate housing, continuing/continuum care retirement communities).

Responsible parties: Planning Board
By-Law Committee

5. Adopt controls for regulating the location and design of multi-family developments.

Responsible parties: By-Law Committee
Planning Board

6. The Webster Housing Authority should be encouraged to create more housing for families and particularly for the elderly. Dialogue between the Authority and Town officials, developers, and state officials should be fostered and where appropriate, formalized.

7. Evaluate and amend the Town's Subdivision Rules and Regulations so that Town officials may have greater leverage in achieving the best possible design and construction of new subdivisions.

Responsible parties: Planning Board
Subcommittee of the Planning Board

VI. DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

1. Address all of the more pressing problems in the Downtown. These include inadequate traffic circulation, absence of retail establishments, and substandard parking.

Responsible parties: Board of Selectmen
Town Administrator
Webster DPW
Chamber of Commerce

2. The local Chamber of Commerce should take a more active role assisting Town officials in their efforts with Downtown revitalization. A possible solution is to create a business roundtable between the Webster Redevelopment Authority and Downtown merchants who are Chamber members.

Responsible parties: Board of Selectmen
Town Administrator
Redevelopment Authority
Chamber of Commerce

3. Town officials should actively seek, via advertisements in the local media (e.g., other town's cable television, newspapers), tenants to occupy vacant buildings in the Downtown area.

Responsible parties: Board of Selectmen
Town Administrator
Redevelopment Authority
Chamber of Commerce

4. Adopt a policy with regard to improving aesthetics in the Downtown. Factors such as building facades, the Common, other public open space, landscaping and overhead utility wires need to be addressed.

Responsible parties: Board of Selectmen
Town Administrator
Webster DPW
Chamber of Commerce

VII. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Create new industrial or office park zones along I-395 to maximize ready access to interstate system and to minimize impacts on local streets.

Responsible parties: Board of Selectmen
Planning Board

2. Adopt new industrial or office park regulations in conjunction with recommended Zoning Map changes.

Responsible parties: Board of Selectmen
Planning Board

3. Devise an active recruitment program to attract firms to the new industrial or office park.

Responsible parties: Board of Selectmen
Town Administrator
Chamber of Commerce

4. Extend sewer line to new industrial or office park district.

Responsible parties: Board of Selectmen
Capital Planning Advisory Committee
Webster DPW

APPENDIX 1:

SURVEY RESPONSES

COMMUNITY SURVEY FOR MASTER PLAN

Dear Webster Resident:

The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) is assisting a fourteen member committee and the Webster Planning Board in preparing a master plan for the Town. The purpose of this study is to analyze the physical and environmental factors present in the Town in order to develop a sound plan for permitting growth to occur that conforms to the needs and character of the community. Based on this analysis, changes to the Zoning Bylaw and Map will be prepared for presentation at a future Town Meeting.

An important part of the plan preparation is to find out what you, the citizen, feel about a number of issues confronting Webster. Filling out this survey will take about 10-15 minutes of your time. After you finish filling it out, all you have to do is mail it back to us in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. All responses are strictly confidential. Thank you for your participation.

Master Plan Committee
Webster Planning Board
Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

Members of the Master Plan Committee:

Lawrence J. Gardecki, Jr., Chairman
Joseph Annessee
Ronald L. Budrow
Wilfred Ceppetelli
Joan A. Comeau
William Cunningham
John C. Faber
Linda Kijowski
Ed Kus
Jeffrey E. Kwasiborski
Nancy Lamontagne
Jeffrey Lavergne
Emile J. Plasse
Bennett J. Smith

Members of the Planning Board:

Lawrence J. Gardecki, Jr., Chairman
Robert J. Caplette
Earl A. Hart
Jess H. Klein
John Zimatravich

I. GENERAL

A. How do you rate Webster on the following items:

	<u>ADEQUATE</u>	<u>INADEQUATE</u>	<u>NO OPINION</u>
POLICE SERVICES	<u>70/80</u>	<u>27/16</u>	<u>3/4</u>
HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT	<u>83/82</u>	<u>17/13</u>	<u>0/5</u>
FIRE SERVICES	<u>89/87</u>	<u>9/10</u>	<u>2/3</u>
AMBULANCE SERVICES	<u>84/80</u>	<u>16/10</u>	<u>0/10</u>
WATER SUPPLY	<u>86/77</u>	<u>11/11</u>	<u>3/12</u>
SEWERAGE	<u>58/62</u>	<u>39/24</u>	<u>3/14</u>
TRAFFIC CONTROL	<u>41/38</u>	<u>56/54</u>	<u>3/8</u>
DOWNTOWN PARKING	<u>61/42</u>	<u>37/53</u>	<u>2/5</u>
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION	<u>31/34</u>	<u>64/48</u>	<u>5/18</u>
# OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES	<u>38/41</u>	<u>62/47</u>	<u>0/12</u>
SUPPLY OF FAMILY HOUSING	<u>58/47</u>	<u>35/32</u>	<u>7/21</u>
SUPPLY OF ELDERLY HOUSING	<u>49/43</u>	<u>33/39</u>	<u>18/18</u>
AMOUNT OF OPEN SPACE	<u>34/35</u>	<u>59/47</u>	<u>7/18</u>
CONTROL OF GROWTH	<u>25/30</u>	<u>70/52</u>	<u>5/18</u>
SOLID WASTE COLLECTION/DISPOSAL	<u>24/28</u>	<u>71/64</u>	<u>5/8</u>
MEDICAL CARE	<u>67/59</u>	<u>28/26</u>	<u>5/15</u>
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION	<u>44/38</u>	<u>42/48</u>	<u>14/14</u>
PUBLIC SCHOOLS	<u>82/71</u>	<u>12/13</u>	<u>6/16</u>
OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)			

II. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

In the last several years, housing costs across the state rose 20-30%, while average wages rose just 4% per year. This situation is making it increasingly difficult for people to afford their rent and has dramatically decreased the number of families who can afford to own a home.

A. Do you feel that the Town of Webster should actively pursue ways to provide housing that low to moderately income people can afford?

36/55 YES 52/32 NO 12/13 NO OPINION

B. Are you in favor of permitting the conversion of older, larger homes to apartments, which presently is not allowed under existing zoning?

51/54 YES 44/36 NO 5/10 NO OPINION

C. Are you aware that the state offers grants and loans to communities for the creation of affordable housing units?

82/69 YES 18/31 NO

D. Do you feel that the Town should pursue state funding so that additional housing for the following groups be provided:

ELDERLY: 68/80 YES 21/13 NO 11/7 NO OPINION

FAMILIES: 50/59 YES 45/27 NO 5/14 NO OPINION

E. One possible way to provide affordable housing is to amend the Town's Zoning Bylaw to allow cluster development. Simply stated cluster is an option whereby a developer may build the same number of housing units on a smaller section of land than otherwise is allowed. The developer would then set aside the remainder of the area as open space or recreational land. Do you think Webster should allow cluster housing?

FOR SINGLE FAMILY HOMES: 26/25 YES 73/69 NO 1/6 NO OPINION

FOR MULTI-FAMILY DWELLINGS: 14/20 YES 86/74 NO 0/6 NO OPINION

III. DOWNTOWN

A. Does the Main Street business district satisfy your needs?

16/27 YES

82/70 NO

2/3 NO OPINION

B. If no, what would you like changed in the downtown area? (check as many as apply)

94/49 MORE RETAIL STORES

37/16 MORE COMMERCIAL SERVICES

31/24 MORE EATING ESTABLISHMENTS

12/9 MORE INDUSTRY

61/46 IMPROVED PARKING

14/15 HOUSING (ELDERLY)

5/6 HOUSING (FAMILIES)

96/57 BETTER TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

_____ OTHER (please specify) _____

*C. At present, the mix of residential, commercial and industrial uses in the Downtown central business district is as follows:

45 % Residential

35 % Commercial

20 % Industrial

If you feel these percentages should change, what breakdown would you like to see?

_____ % RESIDENTIAL

_____ % COMMERCIAL

_____ % INDUSTRIAL

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

A. If open areas are to be acquired by the Town or restricted by conservation easements, what type(s) of land do you think should be preserved?

	STRONGLY SUPPORT	SUPPORT	NEUTRAL	DISCOURAGE
AGRICULTURAL LAND	<u>35/49</u>	<u>52/28</u>	<u>13/19</u>	<u>0/4</u>
FLOOD-PRONE AREAS	<u>49/43</u>	<u>36/32</u>	<u>13/21</u>	<u>2/4</u>
WETLANDS	<u>70/64</u>	<u>24/21</u>	<u>3/14</u>	<u>3/1</u>
BEACHES	<u>72/80</u>	<u>21/16</u>	<u>5/3</u>	<u>2/1</u>
FOREST LAND	<u>65/77</u>	<u>29/14</u>	<u>4/8</u>	<u>5/1</u>
OTHER (please specify)	_____	_____	_____	_____

B. Concerning Webster Lake, what improvements would you like to see take place there (if any), assuming local tax monies may be used to pay for those efforts? (Check as many as apply)

40/33 RECREATION LAND ACQUISITION

35/34 DREDGING OF LAKE

19/19 PARKING FOR THE BEACH

14/18 ACCESS TO THE LAKE

70/70 WEED CONTROL

98/88 REGULATION OF HIGH SPEED BOATS

46/48 IMPROVEMENT OF RECREATION FACILITIES

_____ OTHER (please specify) _____

V. GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Town of Webster has a limited amount of privately-owned vacant land available for development. Decisions made as to how this land is to be used ultimately will determine the type and rate of future growth in the community. Your responses to the following will establish some measure of what direction the citizens of Webster feel the Town should be going with regards to growth and development.

A. Webster's 1980 population, according to the U.S. Census, was 14,480. Do you want the population to increase in the coming years?

39/26YES 58/58NO 3/16NO OPINION

B. Webster should seek development that first and foremost (check as many as apply):

47/37 INCREASES REVENUES FOR RESIDENTIAL TAX BASE

51/39 INCREASES REVENUES FOR COMMERCIAL TAX BASE

60/67 PROVIDES JOBS

51/36 INCREASES NUMBER OF RETAIL STORES

32/22 INCREASES COMMERCIAL SERVICES

____ OTHER (please specify) _____

C. Do you feel that the following volunteer town boards are able to deal effectively with growth issues?

	YES	NO	NO OPINION
PLANNING BOARD	<u>33/38</u>	<u>58/35</u>	<u>9/27</u>
BOARD OF APPEALS	<u>21/30</u>	<u>70/33</u>	<u>9/37</u>
CONSERVATION COMMISSION	<u>32/34</u>	<u>59/40</u>	<u>9/26</u>
BOARD OF SELECTMEN/HEALTH	<u>20/28</u>	<u>70/48</u>	<u>10/24</u>
OTHER (please specify)	_____	_____	_____

D. Should the town hire full-time professional help to assist the following departments and boards?

	YES	NO	NO OPINION
BUILDING INSPECTORS OFFICE	<u>56/35</u>	<u>33/37</u>	<u>11/28</u>
PLANNING BOARD	<u>59/42</u>	<u>33/34</u>	<u>8/24</u>
BOARD OF APPEALS	<u>46/26</u>	<u>36/45</u>	<u>18/29</u>
BOARD OF HEALTH	<u>50/43</u>	<u>33/33</u>	<u>17/24</u>
CONSERVATION COMMISSION	<u>48/43</u>	<u>37/33</u>	<u>15/24</u>
OTHER (please specify)	_____	_____	_____

VI. INFRASTRUCTURE (Traffic, Water Supply, Sewerage and Solid Waste)

A. Do you feel that, in general, the condition and safety of streets and roads in Webster are adequate?

54/52 YES

42/45 NO

4/3 NO OPINION

B. If no, what do you feel are the particular problem areas in Webster?
(please give names of roads, routes or intersections)

Town Meeting (Top 3): Int. Rtes 16/12/193, Thompson Rd/I-395; & E. Main St. Traffic

Random Sample (Top 4): Lake Pkwy; School/Klebart; Thompson Rd/I-395; & Rte. 12 in front of Wonder Food Whse

C. Is truck traffic a problem on residential streets in Webster?

16/28 YES

58/56 NO

26/16 NO OPINION

D. If yes, would you favor restricting trucks from traveling on certain residential streets, bearing in mind that the Massachusetts Department of Public Works must ultimately approve such measures?

56/52 YES

0/23 NO

44/25 NO OPINION

E. If yes, which street(s):

Town Meeting (#1): Lakeside Avenue

Random Sample: School Street

F. If not on water and/or sewer now, and you desire one or both of these services, would you be willing to fund the planning and construction of extensions?

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>NO OPINION</u>
WATER	<u>53/35</u>	<u>31/30</u>	<u>16/35</u>
SEWER	<u>60/41</u>	<u>28/30</u>	<u>12/29</u>

G. Would you be willing to pay 100% of the costs for one or both of the above services over a 20-year period if no funds are available from the federal or state governments?

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>NO OPINION</u>
WATER	<u>49/27</u>	<u>35/42</u>	<u>17/31</u>
SEWER	<u>50/28</u>	<u>37/44</u>	<u>13/28</u>

H. What do you feel is the best method of handling solid waste disposal in Webster? Please rank the following methods in order of preference with "1" being your first priority and "5" (or "6" if you checked "Other" as well) being your lowest priority.

4/3 INCINERATION

5/5 LANDFILL

1/1 RECYCLING

3/4 COMPOSTING

2/2 TRANSFER STATION

OTHER (please specify) _____

VII. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

A. Should Webster encourage the development of more industrial uses to balance residential growth?

84/77 YES 11/18 NO 5/5 NO OPINION

B. If yes, what type(s) of industry should local officials try to attract? (check as many as apply)

53/46 WHOLESALE DISTRIBUTORS (i.e. warehouses)

71/59 RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OR "HIGH TECH"

30/24 HEAVY MANUFACTURING

4/4 OTHER (please specify) Both groups (#1): "light" manufacturing

VIII. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

A. The Webster Office of Community Development, with assistance from a number of citizens, Town officials and special associations, completed a "Conservation and Recreation Plan" in 1988. The Plan calls for the development and/or acquisition of certain sites for the purposes noted below. Please rank the following projects and areas in importance with "1" being your first priority, and "8" (or "9" if you check "Other" as well) being your lowest priority.

1/1 WEBSTER MEMORIAL BEACH (summer recreation, e.g. swimming, recreation equipment, picnic facilities, handicapped facilities, jogging trails)

2/2 WEBSTER MEMORIAL BEACH (winter recreation, e.g. cross-country ski trails)

4/3 SLATER MEMORIAL PARK (tot lot, elderly/passive equipment, recreation equipment)

8/6 BERTHOL FIELD, OFF SCHOOL STREET (recreational/athletic facilities)

6/7 GEORGE STREET PLAYGROUND, OFF MYRTLE AVENUE (athletic fields, recreation equipment, fences)

5/5 FRENCH RIVER AREA (conservation, recreation)

3/4 TOWN COMMON (new walkways, refurbish statues, new lighting, fences, planting)

7/8 CEDAR SWAMP, OFF POINT BREEZE ROAD (acquire for conservation purposes)

 OTHER NOT CITED ABOVE (please specify) _____

B. Would you support user fees to finance the maintenance and operation of Town recreation facilities?

64/64 YES 27/24 NO 9/12 NO OPINION

IX. PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A. Do you have children in the Webster school system?

32/26 YES 68/74 NO

B. If yes, are you satisfied with the quality of the education provided by the town of Webster to your children?

35/31 VERY SATISFIED 60/61 SATISFIED 5/8 DISSATISFIED

C. Do you think the Webster school system has adequate space capacity for accommodating its students?

67/59 YES 23/13 NO 10/28 NO OPINION

D. If a need to provide increased space capacity in the Webster school system does indeed exist, which of the following choices do you favor to remedy the problem? (check as many as apply)

30/20 EXTENDING THE LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

9/12 CONSTRUCTION OF NEW SCHOOL(S)

11/13 DOUBLE SESSIONS

63/50 ADDITIONS TO EXISTING BUILDINGS

5/4 OTHER (please specify) Town Meeting: Use of Filmer School

Random Sample: Varied e.g., lengthen school day; use Filmer School

E. Would you be in favor of spending more tax money for school-related expenses?

58/52 YES 35/36 NO 7/12 NO OPINION

F. If yes, how would you like to see these funds spent? (check as many as apply)

49/43 CURRICULUM

23/18 SERVICES

21/16 AFTER-SCHOOL RECREATION

9/8 DAY CARE

7/3 OTHER (please specify) Town Meeting: Hire new teachers at better salaries

Random Sample: Same as above

X. DEMOGRAPHICS

A. How long have you lived in Webster?

1/14 LESS THAN FIVE YEARS

1/9 5 TO 10 YEARS

12/10 10 TO 20 YEARS

86/87 OVER 20 YEARS

B. In the future, how long do you expect to live in Webster?

2/9 LESS THAN FIVE YEARS

7/15 5 TO 10 YEARS

11/17 10 TO 20 YEARS

80/59 OVER 20 YEARS

C. Do you or any member of your household work in Webster?

74/48 YES

26/52 NO

D. What is your occupation:

25/14 SERVICE

1/1 FARMING OR FORESTRY

52/37 MANAGERIAL, PROFESSIONAL, OR ADMINISTRATIVE

9/12 TECHNICAL, SALES OR CLERICAL

2/10 OPERATORS, FABRICATORS, LABORERS OR CONSTRUCTION

2/5 PRECISION PRODUCTION, CRAFT OR REPAIR

9/21 OTHER (please specify) Both groups (#1): Retirees

E. How do you get you information about what is going on in Webster? (check as many as apply)

86/81 WEBSTER TIMES

61/45 THE PATRIOT

70/56 RADIO STATIONS

2/7 TOWN CABLE TELEVISION STATION

65/62 WORD OF MOUTH

75/15 ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

86/75 WORCESTER TELEGRAM AND EVENING GAZETTE

OTHER (please specify) _____

F. Please check the appropriate range of income your household earns:

5/15 LESS THAN \$14,999

2/5 \$15,000 TO \$19,999

7/16 \$20,000 TO \$29,999

11/20 \$30,000 TO \$39,999

24/17 \$40,000 TO \$49,999

51/27 \$50,000 OR HIGHER

** XI. PLEASE ATTACH A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER TO THIS SURVEY IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS YOU'D LIKE TO MAKE REGARDING ANY SURVEY QUESTIONS, OR ANY TOPICS YOU FEEL WE MISSED.

Town Meeting Members: 2

Random Sample: 22

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!
UPON COMPLETION, RETURN TO CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL
PLANNING COMMISSION IN THE ENCLOSED SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED
ENVELOPE.

*

* Staff decided not to consider the responses to question III.c. due to three factors: the inaccuracy of the percentage breakdown for the three land uses, the low response to the question, and the difficulty with tabulating the responses of those choosing to answer.

** Most respondents offered comments relative to a single issue, while a few addressed more than one topic of interest to them. A summary of those responses is listed below.

<u>Needs/Concerns/Opinions</u>	<u>Responses</u> <u>(#)</u>
Lack of Shopping Facilities	3
Need to Improve Downtown Parking	1
Lack of a Movie Theater	1
Parking Problems at Webster Lake	1
Pursue High Tech Industries	1
Expand Recreation at the Lake	1
More Planning for Future Growth	1
Improve Appearance of Main Street & its Buildings	1
More Apartments Downtown	1
Keep Streets Clean; Institute Fine for Littering	1
Town More Progressive Than Most in State	1
Inadequate Activities for the Teenagers	3
More Cultural Activities for Seniors	1
Cable TV Costs Too High	2
Repair Road Signs on I-395	1
Webster Public Schools Too Crowded	1
Install Meters for Downtown Parking	2
More Police Patrols Townwide	1
Police are Unprofessional and Apathetic	1
Install Water Purifier for Municipal Supply; Water Too Acidic	1
Improve Downtown Traffic Flow	1
"Cranston" Intersection Needs to be Redesigned	1
Parking Regulations Enforced Downtown But Not in Other Areas	1
No Solid Waste Collection Offered	1
Out of Town Residents Should Help Pay for Improving Webster Lake and the Beach	1
Need Educated, Dedicated People to Serve on Town Boards	1
I-395 Great Highway & Perfect for Industry, preferably High Tech	1
Preserve Some Open Space to Attract More Residents	1
Would Like to See Minimum One and One Half Acre Zoning for Residential Growth to Preserve Open Space	1
Need for Police Surveillance on Harris Street	1
Emergency Service Provider Need Monies for Purchase of Equipment, Vehicles, Supplies, Additional Stations & Full Time Personnel	1

Needs/Concerns/Opinions

Responses
(#)

New Sidewalks Needed on Worcester Road	1
All Lakefront Properties Should be Sewered	1
Need New Regulations to Control Multi-Family Development and Condos on Lake	1
Complaints Concerning High Speed and Noisy Boats on the Lake are Exaggerated	1
Memorial Beach Needs to be Cleaned Up	1
Incineration a Viable Alternative, but Concerned about Emissions	2

APPENDIX 2:

LAND USE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Land Use Classification System*

I. AGRICULTURAL OR OPEN LAND

1. Cropland (AC) - is tilled or tillable cropland which is or has recently been intensively farmed; or is unused tillable land which has not recently been tilled, occurs near growing urban areas, and is usually mowed annually to maintain its value.
2. Pasture (P) - is pasture or wild hay which is not suitable for tillage due to steepness of slope, poor drainage, stoniness, or lack of fertility.
3. Open Land (O) - is an abandoned field which is reverting to wild land, and is highly productive of wildlife; an abandoned orchard; or powerlines or buried telephone lines, gas or oil pipe lines or other right-of-way 100 feet or more in width maintained through wooded areas.
4. Woody Perennial - Orchard (WP) - is a productive fruit orchard; or land supporting nurseries.

II. FOREST LAND

1. Forest Land (F) - is a grouping of tree species consisting of predominant hardwoods, predominant softwoods, or a mixture of hardwoods and softwoods.

III. FRESH WATER WETLANDS

1. Inland Wetland (FW) - is a shrub swamp; meadow; shallow marsh (up to six inches of water during the growing season); seasonally flooded basin or flat; deep marsh (water depth ranges from six inches to three feet); or bog.
2. Water (W) - is open water in lakes, rivers and large streams. Water depth is greater than three feet during the growing season.

IV. MINING AND WASTE DISPOSAL AREAS

1. Mining (M) - is land used for the extraction of sand and gravel; or land used for the extraction of stone and material other than sand and gravel.
2. Waste Disposal (UW) - is land used for dumping waste and refuse materials; automobile graveyards or active automobile junk yards; or land and associated buildings used for treating liquids containing organic or chemical matter.

V. URBAN LANDS

1. Multi-Family Residential (R0) - is town or rowhouses or apartment buildings set close to streets having a close pattern; or "garden" apartments which are usually located outside the downtown "core", are set back from the street, may have some "grounds" and may have attached recreational facilities such as swimming pools and tennis courts.
2. High Density Residential (R1) - is high density urban residential land used for homes which are spaced closely, set back from the street, and arranged in orderly rectangular patterns on lots less than one-quarter acre in size.
3. Medium Density Residential (R2) - is medium density residential land use for homes which are spaced closely and arranged in orderly curved or rectangular patterns and set back from the street on lots which are predominantly one-quarter or one-half acre in size.
4. Low Density Residential (R3) - is light residential land with lot sizes from one-half acre to one acre in size, with most lots one acre in size and there is one dwelling unit per acre; or open very light residential land with large lots from one acre to two acres in size.
5. Commercial (C) - is commercial land predominantly used for distribution, or merchandising goods and services; highway commercial land used for merchandising goods and services to the traveling public away from urban centers; or shopping centers away from the urban core which are surrounded by large parking lots and may have some landscaping and trees as part of the complex.
6. Industrial (UI) - is heavy industrial land containing facilities for the manufacture, storage and assembly of new or partially processed products such as machinery, metals, chemicals, or electrical power; or is light industrial land containing facilities for the manufacture or assembly of smaller, partially processed products such as electronics, appliances and other secondary process products.
7. Urban Open - or - Public (UO) - is open undeveloped land which is lying idle in the midst of urban areas or adjacent to them; or is public or quasi-public land with "grounds" and green space which contains facilities to serve large numbers of people (e.g. schools, churches, hospitals).
8. Transportation (UT) - is divided highways with 200 feet or more of right-of-way width (narrower roads shown on U.S.G.S. maps, but do not have their right-of-way mapped or measured for area); railyards, terminal freight and storage facilities; or transportation facilities which are part of an industrial complex.

VI. OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

1. Participant Recreation (RP) - is playgrounds; tennis courts (three acres or more in size); golf courses; golf driving ranges, or skeet shooting ranges.
2. Spectator Recreation (RS) - is athletic fields; fairgrounds, or drive-in theaters.
3. Water Based Recreation (RW) - is marinas or boatyards; freshwater sandy beaches (includes bathhouses, parking and related facilities); and swimming pools (complex including bathhouses and parking facilities three acres or more in size).

*Source: Massachusetts Agricultural Experiment Station,
University of Massachusetts of Amherst.

APPENDIX 3:

POPULATION PROJECTION METHODOLOGY

Population Projection Methodology

Assumptions

1. The Town will issue 75 residential building permits annually, mostly for single family detached units (high projection estimate).
2. The Town will issue 50 residential building permits annually (low projection estimate).
3. The number of persons per household will decrease 0.01 persons per year through the year 2000.
 - based on 1980 persons per household (U.S. Census occupied households and household population for Webster) of 2.55 less change in average household size (U.S. Census households, families, subfamilies, married couples and unrelated individuals, 1960-1988) of 0.12 between 1980 and 1988 = 2.43 for 1988.
 - (Urban communities like Webster usually have a lower number of persons per household than do rural suburban towns).

Methodology

A. Estimated 1990 Population

1. Multiply 6,411 and 6,361 occupied units (1980 U.S. Census base of 5,626 plus 635 residential building permit issuances 1980-1988 added to 75 and 50 new units, 1989) by 2.41 persons/HH.
2. Use MISER age cohorts.

B. Estimated 1995 population

1. Multiply 6,786 and 6,611 occupied units by 2.36 persons/HH
2. Use MISER age cohorts.

C. Estimated 2000 population

1. Multiply 7,161 and 6,861 occupied units by 2.31 persons/HH
2. "Straightline" age grouping numerical changes between 1990 and 1995 to arrive at population percentage breakdowns by cohorts.

*
Webster-Based Businesses Belonging to the
Webster-Dudley-Oxford Chamber of Commerce

INDUSTRIAL

Light Industry: Extractive; Light Manufacturing; Industrial Services

AB Engineering Company
Ads Associates
D & W Auto Body
Saad's Garnetting - Peter St. (linen manufacturing)
Guardian Industries Corp. - Cudworth Rd. (glass manufacturing)
Olektron Corporation - 61 Sutton Rd. ("high tech" engineering)
Quality Auto Body - 14 Mechanic St.
Shield Packaging Company - Peter St.

Heavy Industry & Heavy Manufacturing

AJM Metal Products Company
Anglo Fabrics Company - Pearl St.
Cranston Print Works - Worcester Rd.
Economy Press - 7 Lincoln St.
Gould & Eberhardt Gear Machinery Corp. - 1 Sutton Ave.
Guardian Industries Corp. - Cudworth Rd.
Lelanite Corp. (manufacturing of packaging material)
The Patriot
Perkins Press - Birch Island Rd.
Waste Paper Corp. of Worcester County
Webster Aluminum Products
Webster Bottling Co., Inc.
Webster Sheet Metal Co. - Old Worcester Rd.
Webster Times, Inc. - Main St.

Transportation, Communications & Utilities

Arrow Gas Realty Corp.
Bolduc-Goulet Express
Boston Gas Company - Rainville Ave.

Contract Construction, Wholesale Trade, Warehousing & Storage

A & M Developers, Inc.
Bonnette Construction - 11 Racicot Ave.
Guenther & Sabaj Builders - 20 Brodeur Ave.
K.S.O. Construction & Development Corp. - 168 Main St.
Leo Construction Co. - Arkwright Rd.
P & P Contractors, Inc.

COMMERCIAL

Commercial - General

Berthiame Electric Company
Big Apple - 156 Lake St.
Bolduc Electrical Company
Burger King - East Main St.
Chauvin Paint & Wallpaper - 76 Lake St.
Dugan's Drug Store - 299 Main St.
Fashion Bug - East Main St.
Gift Gallery
Hillside Park 'N Shop - East Main St.
A.M. Kouri Co. - 13 Main St. (clothing retail)
J & M Refrigeration - Pineview Plaza
James Electric - 11 Crown St.
K-Mart - Worcester Rd.
Kentucky Fried Chicken - 51 East Main St.
Lake Piza - Thompson Rd.
Little Red Shoe House - East Main St. Plaza
Maggie's Fish World - 42 Main St.
Masters Auto Body Supplies, Inc. - 14 Negus St.
McDonald's - East Main St.
Moore Lumber - Cudworth Rd.
Nipmuc Package Store - 35 Thompson Rd.
R.S. Pratt Vacuum - 151 Thompson Rd.
Price Busters - East Main St. Plaza
Bobby Russo's Electric
Something Different - 8 Mechanic St. (retail clothing)
Webster Lake Marina
Windsor Paint Center - 4 East Main St.
Wonder Food Warehouse - East Main St.
World Gym - South Main St.

Retail Services

The Backdoor Pub, Inc. - 251 Rear-Main St.
Barb's House of Hair Styling
Capital Tire - Thompson Rd.
Chauvin Paint & Wallpaper - 76 Lake St.
Colonial Club Restaurant
Colleen's Restaurant - Worcester Rd.
Dugas Vending Corp. - 26 Poland St.
East Main Street Laundromat
William Jolde & Son, Inc. - 79 N. Main St. (retail oil company)
Kunkel Buick, Inc.
Robert J. Miller, Inc. - 366 School St. (funeral home)
Mohegan Bowl - A - Drome
Moussa Family, Inc. - Rte. 16 (restaurant A.K.A. "The Lodge")
Place Motor, Inc. - Thompson Rd.
Jules E. Paradis - Point Pleasant (funeral home)
Point Breeze Pavilion - Point Breeze Rd.
Quality Dryers

APPENDIX 4:

WEBSTER-BASED BUSINESSES BELONGING
TO THE WEBSTER-DUDLEY-OXFORD
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Retail Services (Continued)

R & R Citgo Service
Scanlon Funeral Home - 2 Lincoln St.
Shaw - Majercik Funeral Home - 48 School St.
60 Minute Cleaners - East Main St.
Trembley Oil Company, Inc. - 8A Wakefield St.
Video Tyme - Main St.
Video Paradise of Webster - 267 Main St.
Video Magic of Webster - 55 East Main St.
Weagle Transmission
Wind Tiki - Thompson Rd.
Zmetra Memorials - Worcester Rd.

Professional Services

G.M. Abodelly Insurance Agency - 135 Thompson Rd.
Arrow Gas Realty Corp. - 8 Park Ave.
Artie's Barber Shop - 110 Main St.
Bank of New England - 206 Main St.
Bay Finance Company - 211 Main St.
Bolduc-Goulet Express
Dr. Paul Rudzynkiewicz
Cam's Oil Service, Inc. - Old Worcester Rd.
Charnick Insurance Company - 274 Main St.
Clark Prout Insurancy - 400 Main St.
Commerce Bank & Trust - 115 East Main St.
A.L. Corrado, M.D.
Commerce Insurance Company - 211 Main St.
Attorney Alfred S. Erlich - 13 East Main St.
Empire Travel - Main St.
Gibney Associates - East Main St. (insurance)
Attorney Thomas. W. Gorski
Grey & Associates - 17 Blueberry Ln. (architect-engineering)
Hallmark Optical
Mason Paving Company - 661 South Main St.
Klebart Plumbing Supply
Kokocinski Plumbing - 3 Morris St.
McKay Rooting Service
Nalewajk Insurance Agency - 121 Main St.
Attorney George Robinson
Shawmut Worcester County Bank - 248 Main St.
Gurbachan Singh, M.D. - Thompson Rd.
Richard E. Raymond & Co. (accounting services)
Smith Company - 195 Thompson Rd. (electrical/mechanical contractor)
The Sight Center - 224 Main St.
Sterling Realty
Smith's Stationers
Zenon P. Szlyk, M.D.
T.E.A.L. Realty - 168 Main St.
Tip Top Motel
Tri-Town Travel, Inc.
P. Wajer & Sons Express Company, Inc.
Webster Credit Union - 1 North Main St.

Professional Services (Continued)

Webster Co-Operative Bank - 218 Main St.
Webster 5 Cent Savings Bank - Thompson Rd.
Webster 5 Cent Savings Bank - Main St.
Webster Insurance Planning
Webster Internists, Inc. - Thompson Rd.
Webster Lens Company
WGFP Radio - Route 16

Institutional

Hubbard Regional Hospital - Thompson Rd.
Visiting Nurse Association
Webster Community Development Program
Webster Board of Selectmen

Recreational

Indian Ranch - Route 16

* Land use categories based on Land Use Classification Code devised by CMRPC and the City of Worcester in 1975.

APPENDIX 5:

CARTOGRAPHIC METHODOLOGY

Cartographic Methodology

This appendix will explain the data sources and methodology used for the Webster Master Plan.

Maps 1 and 2, the 1971 and 1985 Land Use maps, are from the UMASS Resource Mapping Group at Amherst and were produced in conjunction with the MASSGIS Group at DEQE. These maps were interpreted and digitized by the UMASS staff.

Map 3, Large Scale Residential Growth and Approved Development Plans Since 1985, is based on information made available by the Webster Building Inspector and the Webster Planning Board.

Maps 4 and 5, Slopes and Wetlands, were derived from USGS topographic maps by CMRPC staff.

Map 6, 100 Year Floodplains, is based on the information shown on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program Flood Insurance Rate Maps for Webster.

Map 7, Drainage Basins and Watersheds, is compiled from DEQE drainage basin overlays and interpretation of USGS topographic maps.

Maps 8, 9, 10, and 11 are of the Existing Water System, the Future Water Supply Extensions, Existing Sewer System and Future Sewer Expansion Districts. These maps are based on information provided by the Webster Department of Public Works.

Maps 12, 13 and 14 are the 24 Hour Traffic Counts, the Hazardous Roads and Intersections, and the Proposed Intersection and Roadway Improvements maps. These maps are used to illustrate various locations referred to in the text of the Webster Master plan.

Map 15 is a map showing the location of Census Tracts in Webster and is based on U.S. Census Department data.

Map 16, the Central Business District (CBD) Base Map, shows property lines as well as lot and block identification numbers. It is based on information supplied by the Webster Assessor's office and field investigation by CMRPC staff. This map is the base map used for maps 17, 18 and 19.

Map 17 shows zoning, floodplains and nonconforming land uses. The zoning information came from the Webster Zoning Map. The floodplain area came from the same FEMA maps as did map number 6, the 100 Year Floodplain map. The nonconforming land uses identified on this map were identified by CMRPC staff based on a lot by lot comparison of actual land use (map 18) with the zoning information already mentioned.

Map 18, the CBD Land Use map, is based on assessor's records as well as a detailed field survey completed by CMRPC staff within the CBD.

Map 19, which shows the Downtown Webster Revitalization Proposal, is from the Massachusetts Small Cities Program Fiscal Year 1988/89 General Fund Proposal completed by the Town of Webster.

The base map used for maps 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 is derived from the transportation overlay for USGS grids 72 and 86 from DEQE's MassGIS Project. The base map used for the other town-wide maps is derived from USGS topographic maps. Most of the Town-wide maps (numbers 4 through 15) were drafted on a personal computer using Computer Assisted Drafting (CAD) software.