

NEWBURY PLANNING PROGRAM

SECTION III - POLICIES & PLANS

POLICY STATEMENT

During the first six months of the planning program, the consultant's work focused on trends, problems and issues. The major findings of this work have been documented in Section II of this report.

During the fall of 1978 and the winter months of 1979, the consultant also worked with the Long-Range Planning Committee to develop a set of planning policies. These policies were considered a key part of the planning process. Once major policies had been resolved, the consultant could proceed confidently with the development of specific physical plans and action plans for guiding future growth and development in Newbury.

As is often the case, the development of general policies turned out to be a fairly time-consuming process. Scope and language for a number of key policies were discussed at length at a number of worksessions. Finally, by April of 1979, a preliminary statement of Planning Policies was resolved. These policies were submitted to town officials and to the voting public in May of 1979 for consideration and comment.

The policy statement contained nine policies, as follows:

- A. Population - Develop tools for guiding growth so that the rate of future population increase does not exceed the rate that Newbury has experienced during the 1970's (about 800 people per decade).
- B. Land Use - Develop land use controls and related programs that will build upon Newbury's existing land use pattern of Town Centers, Neighborhood Centers, and outlying Rural Residential/ Agricultural areas by: (1) encouraging future residential growth to locate in or near the traditional Town Centers of Oldtown and Byfield, (2) allowing moderate growth that will enhance the character of neighborhood centers, (3) limiting growth in outlying areas.
- C. Housing - Provide for a variety of residential dwelling types in order to encourage the development of diverse housing for people of all income levels.

- D. Land & Water Conservation - Newbury and its various Boards and Departments should work to preserve and protect important land and water resources such as farmlands, groundwater, and the Parker River watershed.
- E. Visual & Historical Values - Work toward the preservation of important historic districts, sites and structures, and the preservation of Newbury's rural visual quality (scenic roads, open space).
- F. Town Facilities - Improve public facilities such as roads and water lines so as to structure future growth in accordance with the Land Use Plan.
- G. The Local Economy - Broaden the town's tax base by encouraging compatible industrial and commercial development - thereby lessening the tax burden on individual homeowners, farmlands and open space.
- H. Plum Island - Balance strict code enforcement and new growth regulations in areas such as floodplain, minimum lot dimensions and trailers with a program of publicly-funded community improvements.
- I. Plan Implementation - Proceed with the development of a coordinated, practical, action-oriented system that will ensure the implementation of these policies.

This preliminary statement of Planning Policies did not spark any significant debate. This is probably not surprising given the relatively general nature of such policies. The importance of these policies can be more clearly seen in the subsequent work on Land Use Planning, Zoning and specific projects and programs.

THE NEWBURY LAND PLAN

One of the key products that must emerge from a long-range town planning program is a future land use plan or, as we prefer to call it, a Land Plan.

Basically, a Land Plan shows the desired future use of land and water areas and resources for the particular community. The Land Plan must be based on a realistic assessment of land use and growth trends, on a careful analysis of natural features and resources, and on major planning policies. The Land Plan thus illustrates what the planning team (Planning Board, Planning Committee and planning consultants) would like the use of land to be in the future. Other parts of the planning program - especially the Action Plan and the Zoning Ordinance - address the question of how this desired future is to be attained.

Land Plan Criteria

The "future land use plan" contained in many town comprehensive plans is often a bland document at best. Many planners seem content with assessing current growth trends and projecting these trends into the future, with little regard for the difficult issues of environmental protection and deliberate guiding of future growth.

In contrast to this relatively passive land use planning attitude, we have sought to structure a Land Plan that responds to the specifics of Newbury's natural landscape and resources as well as to the concerns for environmental quality and guiding growth articulated in the planning policies.

In terms of our actual work process, then, we developed an important criteria map that combined a number of key land use and resource factors. This map, entitled LAND PLAN WORKSHEET, shows all existing roads, streams and topography, and is color-keyed to show eight important factors:

1. Existing Development
2. Town Water Lines
3. Existing Well Field (Byfield)
4. Future Well Field (Oldtown)
5. Active Agriculture
6. Floodplain
7. Soil Areas with slight or moderate limitations for septic disposal systems.
8. Soil Areas with severe limitations for septic disposal systems.

The LAND PLAN WORKSHEET was then used as an analytical base for the development of the NEWBURY LAND PLAN. The LAND PLAN went through several preliminary stages before being finalized in late 1979.

The NEWBURY LAND PLAN illustrates ten distinct kinds of existing and future potential land use. These land use categories, and their approximate respective acreages, are:

<u>Land Use Category</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
1. Industrial	75	0.5%
2. Commercial	145	0.9%
3. Town Centers	245	1.3%
4. Plum Island	180	1.1%
5. Neighborhood Centers	825	5.2%
6. Rural Areas	2,150	13.4%
7. Farmland Preservation	1,850	11.6%
8. Well Fields	325	2.0%
9. Flood Plain	3,700	23.1%
10. Tax Exempt Land	<u>6,500</u>	<u>40.6%</u>
	15,995	99.9%

(Note: total acreage less than 16,224 acres because of generalized nature of the map.)

It can be readily seen from the attached reduced-scale copy of the Land Plan that the boundaries for the various land use areas are somewhat generalized. That is, the boundaries do not follow specific "hard" land use features such as streets and roads. This generalized approach to drawing a Land Plan is appropriate because the Land Plan is intended to illustrate overall objectives for future land use rather than sharply defined land use districts.

Thus, the NEWBURY LAND PLAN provides overall guidelines for future land use and, as such, can be used as the basis for more specific - and legally binding - planning tools such as a new Zoning Bylaw.

Some basic information on the ten categories of land use shown on the Land Plan is provided below.

1. Industrial - An area west of U.S. Route 1, near the Newburyport line. This area is contained within the main industrial district defined in Newbury's existing Zoning Bylaw. Locationally, this area is considered the only feasible area for significant future development of light industrial uses. However, much of the land here has engineering and environmental constraints due to wet and rocky soils and adjacent flood plains.
2. Commercial - Existing small commercial centers in Byfield, at the Byfield/I95 interchange, at the Parker River Bridge, and along U.S. Route 1 have been shown. The Route 1 commercial areas are the only areas that have some potential for future new commercial uses.
3. Town Centers - The relatively densely developed, historic centers of Byfield and Oldtown. These traditional village centers should continue to be the town's primary population and activity centers. (Designated "Village Centers" on the Plan.)
4. Plum Island - The developed portion of Plum Island has been separately identified because of its special problems and opportunities. Plum Island Village is an important and growing population center, the town's primary resource area for moderately priced housing, and a major recreational resource. This area also has some serious environmental problems that will require well-organized future action.
5. Neighborhood Centers - A number of distinct neighborhoods have formed in the areas of Byfield, South Byfield, the Lower Green and the Parker River/Marsh Avenue area. Neighborhood Center areas should continue to serve as subcenters for residential development.
6. Rural Areas - Areas scattered throughout the central and western parts of Newbury that are generally characterized by wet and/or rocky soil conditions, and that should be used only for woodland, open space and low density residential development.
7. Farmland Preservation - The larger areas of active agricultural land in South Byfield, along Middle Road and Scotland Road, and along High Road (Route 1A) are shown. It is unlikely that these areas can be given any special legal status through zoning or other legally constituted planning tools. However, the continued success of farms and farmers is essential to Newbury's special rural quality. The Land Plan thus expresses the need for preservation of active agricultural areas. How this objective is to be accomplished must be answered by means of specific projects and programs.

8. Well Fields - A circular zone with a radius of about 1,500 feet has been drawn around the existing well field in Byfield and the potential well field off Parker Street in Oldtown. These zones are illustrative only, and are meant to signal caution in the types of land uses that should be allowed to occur in the vicinity of the two well fields. State regulations restrict land uses within 400 feet of a municipal well. It is a well known fact, however, that a well's zone of influence may extend several thousand feet beyond the well site, and that "pollution plumes" may travel for miles through the groundwater system, eventually causing pollution to town wells. Complete hydrological studies for this concern are not yet available.
9. Flood Plain - Lands below the ten foot contour interval and not included within major publicly-owned parcels have been indicated. The Flood Plain zone extends from the salt marshes of Plum Island to the east to the upper reaches of the Parker River in Byfield, and northward along the Little River corridor. Construction activities, filling, effluent discharge and the like should be severely restricted within the Flood Plain zone.
10. Tax Exempt Land - The major parcels of public land and other tax exempt land are shown, including Parker River National Wildlife Refuge lands, the Downfall area, other lands managed by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game, Governor Dummer Academy, and major town-owned parcels. Several dozen small town-owned parcels have not been shown.

ZONING BYLAW AND SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

The NEWBURY LAND PLAN is one important expression of the various planning studies, natural resource protection criteria, and growth management policies that were developed during the first year of the planning program. As initially conceived, the program was to have included the development of a new Zoning Bylaw - one of the essential tools needed to implement the Land Plan and related land use and planning policies. In practice, the two-year planning program actually led to the development of two important growth management tools: a new Zoning Bylaw and new Subdivision Rules and Regulations.

A new Zoning Bylaw was necessary for a number of reasons. The planning team felt that Newbury's existing Zoning Bylaw suffered from a number of serious defects, including:

1. Lack of clear definitions.
2. Lack of consistency with the Massachusetts Zoning Act (Chapter 40A).
3. Inconsistent and inaccurate material contained in the Zoning Map.
4. Lack of use variance provisions.
5. Industrial uses too broadly defined.

In addition, it was clear that the existing Zoning Bylaw could not adequately express the growth management policies developed by the planning team. The existing Bylaw provided for only one type of residential district throughout the town (40,000 square foot minimum lot size). It was clear that several distinct residential districts would be needed to implement the planning policies and the guidelines illustrated in the NEWBURY LAND PLAN.

Work on a new Zoning Bylaw began in the summer of 1979. A special Zoning Subcommittee was formed, consisting of the five Planning Board members and several members of the Long-Range Planning Committee. The subcommittee worked closely with the consultants over a nine-month period that included a dozen work sessions, a number of public informational meetings, and a Public Hearing. A new Zoning Bylaw was constructed piece by piece, with many provisions going through several drafts before being deemed satisfactory.

The new Zoning Bylaw was presented to the voters for formal action at a Special Town Meeting in May, 1980. The proposed Bylaw had a completely new format, and included important new provisions such as three types of residential districts, several limited business districts, wetland

regulations, and clear procedures for the granting of special permits.

The proposed new Zoning Bylaw failed to receive the required two-thirds Special Town Meeting vote by the narrow margin of nine votes. There are some indications that opposition to the new Bylaw was an expression of local political differences rather than of substantive disagreement. In any case, the Planning Board will work on refining the Bylaw, and will present the revised new Bylaw to the voters in the fall of 1980.

The new Subdivision Rules and Regulations were developed as a special part of the planning program, and in response to the Planning Board's need for substantially improved tools to control the subdivision of land in Newbury. The consultants and the Executive Director of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission worked with the Planning Board during the spring, summer and fall of 1979. The new Subdivision Rules and Regulations provide for clarity of information requirements and review procedures, and require complete environmental assessments for larger subdivisions. The new Subdivision Rules and Regulations were formally adopted by the Newbury Planning Board in November, 1979. The reader is referred to these two documents for details.

PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

The last part of this section of the Planning Report describes priority projects and programs that should be developed during the next few years. This material is a summation of working papers and discussions from the 2 year comprehensive planning effort.

In developing this part of the Comprehensive Plan, we have kept several important criteria in mind. It was felt that these projects and programs should be:

1. As concrete and realistic as possible.
2. Not so long-range in nature that some form of action could not or would not be taken on them within the next year or two.
3. Not so complex that major outside technical resources would be required.
4. Relatively small in terms of required capital investments.

The description of plan elements as identifiable projects and programs is, we feel, a useful technique, one that helps town boards and officials to grasp the concrete nature of good town planning.

Projects and programs discussed here have been keyed to the nine principal policies. The project titles are:

- 1.1 - Zoning Bylaw Refinements
- 1.2 - Floodplain Zoning
- 1.3 - Wetland Zoning
- 1.4 - Subdivision Rules Refinements
- 1.5 - Board of Health
- 2.1 - Housing for the Elderly
- 2.2 - Housing for Moderate Income People.
- 3.1 - Conservation Plan
- 3.2 - Farmland Conservation Program
- 3.3 - Environmental Impact Monitoring
- 4.1 - Newbury Historic Commission Program

- 4.2 - Local Historic District
- 5.1 - Road Improvement Program
- 5.2 - Water Supply Systems
- 6.1 - Industrial Development Feasibility Study
- 6.2 - Study of the Local Economy
- 7 - Plum Island - Management Plan
- 8.1 - Personnel Needs Study
- 8.2 - Code Enforcement
- 8.3 - On-going Planning

The suggested lead agencies for these 19 major projects (not including the 21 Plum Island projects) are:

Planning Board:	8 projects
Board of Selectmen:	5 projects
Newbury Historic Commission:	2 projects
Highway Department:	1 project
Conservation Commission:	1 project
Local Water Districts:	1 project
Non-Profit Housing Corps.:	1 project

Projects by type are:

On-going programs:	7
Studies:	3
Plans:	2
New planning data:	2
Ordinances:	2
Enforcement:	1
Housing Development:	1
Construction:	1

With the exception of projects on Road Improvements and Water Supply Systems, the projects and programs do not require capital investments. In most cases, suggested project budgets are "no cost" or a few thousand dollars.

Local commitments of time, energy and cooperation rather than dollars will be the key to the success of these recommended projects and programs.

1. Growth Management Tools

Two of the nine policies developed during the Newbury planning program relate strongly to growth management. These policies are:

"Population - Develop tools for guiding growth so that the rate of future population increase does not exceed the rate that Newbury has experienced during the 1970's (about 800 people per decade)."

"Land Use - Develop land use controls and related programs that will build upon Newbury's existing land use pattern of Town Centers, Neighborhood Centers, and Outlying Rural Residential/Agricultural areas by: (1) encouraging future residential growth to locate in or near the traditional Town Centers of Oldtown and Byfield, (2) allowing moderate growth that will enhance the character of neighborhood areas, (3) limiting growth in outlying areas."

Extremely sophisticated or radical growth management tools are neither necessary nor appropriate for Newbury. Town boards and departments do not have the manpower and resources to administer complex growth management ordinances and bylaws, and the growth rate does not warrant measures such as building moratoria or limits on building permits.

There are, however, a number of growth management tools that Newbury can and should develop and refine over the next few years.

Project 1.1 - Zoning Bylaw Refinements

Lead Agency: Planning Board

Type of Action: Enact new Bylaw and on-going program.

Objective: To improve and refine Newbury's new proposed Zoning Bylaw so that the Bylaw can be enacted in the fall of 1980.

Description: The need for some revisions and refinements in the proposed Bylaw, and strategies for another Special Town Meeting to consider the Bylaw have already been discussed in the Action Plan.

Once the Bylaw has been enacted, the Planning Board should continue to monitor and refine the Bylaw as needed. Longer-range, the Planning Board should plan on considering several new sections to the Bylaw, including provisions for Cluster Zoning and some form of Planned Residential Development (PRD) zoning. Major new sections and provisions of this kind should be thoroughly researched, and should receive ample public review. A step-by-step and year-by-year improvement of the Zoning Bylaw should be one of the Planning Board's top priorities.

Cost and Funding: There are no major costs involved with this on-going program. However, it is recommended that the Planning Board seek funds from Town Meeting on a regular annual basis to pay for outside professional assistance. Costs will range from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars per year, depending on the nature and scope of refinements needed.

Project 1.2 - Floodplain Zoning

Lead Agency: Planning Board

Type of Action: Incorporate new planning data.

Objective: To incorporate new Floodplain Maps, to be made available by the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) in 1980.

Description: Newbury's new Zoning Bylaw contains a fairly comprehensive section on regulations pertaining to wetland and floodplain areas of the town. The Floodplain Maps referenced in the Bylaw will, however, be obsolete as soon as FEMA publishes new Floodplain Maps for Newbury and other southern New England communities.

As soon as this new material is available, the Planning Board should:

1. Evaluate the material, and make sure that the essential details of the new Floodplain Maps are thoroughly understood by Board members.
2. Develop simple language for modifying the Zoning Bylaw so as to reference these new maps in place of the obsolete maps.
3. Obtain from FEMA and Stone & Webster of Boston, the project engineers, supplemental data so that the methodology for and technical limitations of the maps can be clearly understood.

Cost and Funding: No funds needed, except possibly a few hours of assistance from an outside professional planner for interpretation of supplemental data.

Project 1.3 - Wetland Zoning

Lead Agency: Planning Board

Type of Action: Incorporate new planning data.

Objective: To incorporate into the Zoning Bylaw, if possible, new wetland maps developed by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (DEM).

Description: The Planning Board is aware that the Wetlands provisions in the new Zoning Bylaw are linked to a generalized map of wetland areas, derived from U.S. Soil Conservation Service (SCS) data.

More detailed maps should be used if possible. The ideal wetlands mapping system would involve the development of detailed maps at a scale of at least 1 inch = 100 feet, with 2 foot contour intervals, based on field studies by qualified scientists. For Newbury, however, the cost of such maps and studies would probably be prohibitive.

An alternate source of wetlands maps is the DEM wetlands mapping program. Final maps for Newbury should be available in the near future. The Planning Board may wish to incorporate these maps into the Zoning Bylaw. First, however, the Board should evaluate the technical quality of these maps - especially for upland wetland areas, including swamp areas. The DEM maps were developed from photographs taken in May, 1979. Some wetland features may thus have been difficult to identify because of the lateness of photos and late spring foliage.

Cost and Funding: No significant cost, except possibly a few hours of assistance from an outside professional planner for evaluation of the DEM maps.

Project 1.4 - Subdivision Rules Refinements

Lead Agency: Planning Board

Type of Action: On-going program

Objective: To continue to refine and improve Subdivision Rules and Regulations.

Description: Newbury has a new set of Subdivision Rules and Regulations, developed as part of the Comprehensive Plan program. These new Regulations provide the Planning Board with a strong growth management tool.

It is expected that improvements and refinements in the Subdivision Rules will be needed from time to time. The Planning Board should work on such changes on an as-needed basis.

Cost and Funding: No special costs, except for a few hours of assistance from time to time from an outside planning consultant. The MVPC may be able to provide most of the assistance needed. The Planning Board should request MVPC assistance with review of the first subdivision to be proposed under the new regulations.

Project 1.5 - Board of Health

Lead Agency: Board of Selectmen

Type of Action: Better regulatory procedures and/or stronger regulations.

Objective: To strengthen Board of Health efficiency and effectiveness.

Description: The Board of Health and the local Health Code provide an important means of managing future growth in an orderly manner. As Newbury continues to grow, however, these growth management tools will need to be strengthened.

It is therefore recommended that the Board of Selectmen consider the feasibility and desirability of:

1. Strengthening provisions of the Health Code, if needed.
2. Creating a Board of Health separate and distinct from the Board of Selectmen. The Selectmen are overworked as it is, and sometimes lack the technical knowledge to decide on public health matters. A separate Board of Health made up of qualified professionals might therefore be advisable.
3. Funding the position of a Health Officer - perhaps jointly with one or two neighboring small towns.

Cost and Funding: Funds for a Health Officer may be needed. These funds would have to be provided through local tax revenues.

2. Housing

The policy on housing is to "Provide for a variety of residential dwelling types in order to encourage the development of diverse housing for people of all income levels."

This policy will be partly implemented through the provisions of the new Zoning Bylaw. Beyond the provision of three distinct Residential densities, however, the Long-Range Planning Committee did not see the need for an elaborate or ambitious housing strategy.

Strong housing development strategies are most often associated with cities and larger, semi-urban towns. Given Newbury's relatively small population and predominantly rural character, it is not surprising that residents and community leaders generally do not see the need for a strong housing program - especially since such programs almost always involve various forms of state and federal subsidies. However, there are at least two types of housing programs that will be needed in the years ahead.

Project 2.1 - Housing for the Elderly

Lead Agency: Local Non-Profit Housing Corporation(s)

Type of Action: Housing development.

Objective: Provide affordable, decent housing for Newbury's low and moderate income elderly people.

Description: During the past few years, two Housing for the Elderly projects have been built in Newbury. The two projects provide a total of 70 units.

Several general trends suggest that there will be a need for more such projects in the foreseeable future. These trends include: (1) a national trend toward longer life expectancy and an "aging population," (2) continued escalation of energy costs and other house maintenance costs. The net result of these trends will be an increase in the number of elderly people in Newbury, and an increase in the percentage of elderly people who can no longer afford to maintain single-family homes. It thus seems probable that Newbury will need more subsidized elderly housing units during the 1980's. Town officials will also have to find means of helping elderly people to maintain their existing homes.

Cost and Funding: Financing for elderly housing projects is available through the Farmers Home Administration (FMHA) and the Massachusetts Housing Finance Authority (MHFA). Rent subsidies are available through FMHA and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Project 2.2 - Housing for Moderate Income People

Lead Agency: Selectmen and Planning Board

Type of Action: On-going program

Objective: To ensure that town policies and programs provide reasonable opportunities for the continued availability of housing for people of moderate income.

Description: Newbury's leaders do not have to encourage federally-subsidized low-income family housing in order to implement the housing policy expressed above. However, the Board of Selectmen, the Planning Board and other key town boards and commissions should do their best to ensure that town policies and programs do not have a negative impact on housing choices.

HUD's 1980 guidelines define "moderate income" for the Newbury area as \$14,050 per year for a family of four people. Current income data for Newbury's residents will not be available until the 1980 U.S. Census figures have been tallied. However, we can reasonably estimate that at least 10%, and perhaps as many as 20% of Newbury's families earn \$14,050 or less per year.

Housing trends throughout the country are such that moderate income people are finding it more and more difficult to buy and maintain single-family homes. Newbury is certainly not exempt from these trends. However, town leaders can act to encourage some degree of housing opportunities for moderate income families by:

1. Moving forward with programs to broaden the non-residential tax base.
2. Supporting environmentally suitable community development projects for Plum Island - the town's primary moderate income housing resource.

Cost and Funding: No direct costs.

3. Land and Water Conservation

The policy on Land and Water Conservation is: "Newbury and its various Boards and Departments should work to preserve and protect important land and water resources such as farmlands, groundwater, and the Parker River watershed."

Newbury's large areas of public lands and salt marsh areas already provide a good framework for long-range natural resources protection and conservation. Strong bylaws and regulations in the areas of zoning, subdivisions and public health - and strong enforcement thereof - will also be effective conservation measures.

In addition, several distinct projects are suggested for future actions.

Project 3.1 - Conservation Plan

Lead Agency: Conservation Commission

Type of Action: 5 year Plan

Objective: To develop a 5 Year Action Plan for Conservation programs in order to provide: (1) guidelines for future action, (2) state certification for funding eligibility.

Description: There are already extensive publicly-owned conservation lands in Newbury, and thus acquisition of land for conservation purposes does not seem to be a priority concern. However, town boards and officials can and should develop detailed strategies that will help to ensure the continued quality of the town's land and water resources. A variety of tools such as acquisition, easements, purchase of development rights, land trusts, enforcement of ordinances and public education programs need to be thoroughly researched and used in an on-going, aggressive conservation program. The development of an official 5 Year Plan would also mean that Newbury would qualify for 50% matching funds from state and federal sources for any acquisition actions that may become necessary.

Cost and Funding: The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission could assist the Conservation Commission in the development of this Plan - provided that Conservation Commission (or Special Committee) members are willing to do most of the inventory work and some of the report writing. MVPC would provide assistance through its local Technical Assistance program, at no direct cost to the town.

Project 3.2 - Farmland Conservation Program

Lead Agency: Board of Selectmen

Type of Action: On-going program

Objective: To encourage the continued use of much of Newbury's prime land for agricultural purposes.

Description: The decline of agricultural activities - in terms of numbers of farms and farmers, total agricultural acreage, and increasing dependence on food imports - is an historical trend of long standing in New England. Newbury, along with other small towns in the region, has become primarily a bedroom community, and agriculture plays only a minor role in the local economy.

However, Newbury still has about 1,600 acres of active farmland. Farmland in Newbury is recognized by most residents as a vital part of the community's rural heritage and image. If most or all of Newbury's farmland was lost - either through subdivision or abandonment - the impact on the community's character would be substantial.

Active Farmland Conservation Programs of various kinds were discussed by the Long-Range Planning Committee. The consensus was that the issue was an important one, but that organized action and intervention were neither feasible nor desirable at this time. Some committee members felt that informal action on the part of town leaders to encourage the continuation of current farming activities was sufficient.

Hopefully, this informal farmland conservation program will be effective for the foreseeable future. Growing public awareness of the importance of regional food production, and the growing trend of small "gentlemen farmer" operations are also encouraging signs. However, if one or two or more major farm parcels were put on the market tomorrow, Newbury's town government would be completely unprepared to take significant action to preserve the agricultural use of the land. Unfortunately, experience also suggests that town leaders will not organize for strong action on this issue until a crisis situation develops - at which point the chances for successful town action are slim.

We therefore strongly recommend that town leaders develop a coherent farmland conservation program in the near future. Minimally, the program should spell out: (1) ways in which continued active agriculture can be encouraged, (2) strategies for acquiring endangered important farm parcels, (3) legal mechanisms for re-selling such acquired land with development restrictions, as appropriate.

Cost and Funding: No immediate costs. Eventually, however, an effective program will require: (1) some planning funds, (2) substantial acquisition funds.

Project 3.3 - Environmental Impact Monitoring

Lead Agency: Planning Board

Objective: To develop a coordinated procedure for monitoring - and, where necessary, correcting - adverse environmental impacts caused by any major development projects.

Description: We have already discussed this program in the 1980-1981 Action Plan. Once policies and procedures have been developed concerning monitoring and correction of adverse environmental impacts, implementation of these procedures will be the key. Newbury does not at this time have adequate town personnel to implement environmental impact monitoring procedures on a regular basis. Thus, funds will eventually be needed either to (1) upgrade an existing position or (2) create a new position. We will discuss this personnel question in more detail in the section on "Plan Implementation."

Cost and Funding: Not yet determined.

4. Visual and Historical Values

The policy here is: "Work toward the preservation of important historic districts, sites and structures, and the preservation of Newbury's rural visual quality (scenic roads, open space)."

Historic preservation projects and programs have become increasingly important in recent years. The historic preservation ethic has been institutionalized through a combination of federal recognition and tax incentive programs and state laws authorizing the formation of local historic commissions and historic districts. The key factor in this component of Newbury's Comprehensive Plan would thus seem to be effective leadership and action at the local level.

The issue of visual quality is a more difficult one. Most Newbury residents would agree that the visual quality of the town - ocean vistas, woodland roads, farm fields, village areas - is of great importance. Yet, by and large, there are no institutionalized means - whether state or local - by which the town's pleasing visual quality can be protected and preserved.

Town leaders and officials must recognize that the subjective but important issue of visual quality is inextricably interwoven with the entire complex of trends, growth pressures, land use changes, bylaws, ordinances and town government decisions. A concern for visual quality must therefore be seen as an elusive but important criterion by which many town government and private business proposals and actions must be evaluated.

There are at least two important historic preservation projects that should be pursued.

Project 4.1 - Newbury Historic Commission Program

Lead Agency: Newbury Historic Commission

Type of Action: On-going program

Objective: To proceed with a step-by-step program for the preservation and interpretation of Newbury's important historical districts, sites and structures.

Description: The Newbury Historic Commission and the Newbury Historic District Committee have been active for several years now. These volunteer local groups have made significant progress in their efforts to develop a preservation framework for Newbury's historic resources. One of their major achievements has been the completion of work that led to the listing of the core historic portion of High Road/Oldtown as a National Register Historic District.

Much work remains to be done, including: completion of a comprehensive inventory of the town's historic sites and structures, establishment of other National Register Historic Districts, including portions of Byfield and Governor Dummer Academy, and a variety of special projects relating to historic sites, bridges and roads.

During the past year or so, it seems that the Historic Commission's energies have been somewhat dissipated. It thus seems essential that town leaders - the Board of Selectmen in particular - take appropriate action to support and encourage the Commission in its work. Selectmen are often too busy with day-to-day problems to pay much attention to historic preservation programs. Yet, in the long run, the success of these programs will have a substantial impact on Newbury's future visual quality and social and economic well-being.

Cost and Funding: It is recommended that the Newbury Historic Commission be provided at least modest funds for the continuation of their work. The volunteer members of the Commission have given generously of their time. However, some town funds should be made available for basic costs such as records, files, attendance at important conferences and printing of reports.

Project 4.2 - Local Historic District

Lead Agency: Newbury Historic Commission

Type of Action: New ordinance

Objective: To establish one or more Local Historic Districts in order to ensure the preservation of Newbury's primary historic neighborhoods and buildings.

Description: Local Historic Commissions are empowered by state law (Chapter 40C) to review and approve proposed changes to historic structures within an area designated as a Local Historic District.

This kind of program is considered somewhat long-range for Newbury. Concrete local controls, design criteria and review processes for historic areas are concepts that will require considerable research and public education before they can be actually implemented. Eventually, however, a program for Local Historic Districts should be developed. National Register designation does not provide any significant control over the repair, rehabilitation, renovation or demolition of historic structures. The establishment of Local Historic Districts does provide the framework for such controls. In the long run, this kind of program will be the best method for preserving Newbury's primary historic resources.

Cost and Funding: No significant costs.

5. Town Facilities

The policy is: "Improve public facilities such as roads and water lines so as to structure future growth in accordance with the Land Use Plan."

Our planning studies have indicated that Newbury does not have major capital improvement needs in terms of schools, town buildings, sewer systems or other costly facilities. The principal needs are in the areas of roads and water systems. As suggested by the policy, road and water improvements can and should be implemented in a manner that can help to guide future growth.

Project 5.1 - Road Improvements Program

Lead Agency: Newbury Highway Department

Type of Action: On-going program

Objective: To improve and maintain Newbury's town roads at a reasonable level of quality.

Description: In Fiscal Year 1980, Town Meeting appropriated \$40,000 for the repair and resurfacing of town roads. This level of funding is barely adequate for the most basic repair work.

Newbury has about 50 miles of town-owned roads. The present condition of these roads ranges from good to very poor. Many of the existing "country roads" were never properly constructed. The lack of adequate gravel base and consequent frost-heaving and pavement failure are particularly evident for heavily used roads like Scotland Road.

The Highway Department works hard to repair and maintain roads with the limited funds and manpower available. The Department needs support from town leaders and voters to achieve the following:

1. A continued, phased program of major repaving and road improvements over the next 5 to 10 years. Increased annual budgets are needed.
2. Coordination of the design and reconstruction of Scotland Road, the major access road from Interstate 95 to the Newburyport Industrial Park. Construction funding to be provided by Mass. DPW.
3. A phased road improvement project for Plum Island.

Cost and Funding: Town leaders need to educate voters on the need for increased road improvement funds. The 1980 Annual Town Meeting rejected a request for \$400,000 (via a 4 year loan) for major road

repairs. Funds of this magnitude are needed. Proper repair and resurfacing done in a timely manner will prevent much larger reconstruction costs in the future.

Project 5.2 - Water Supply Systems

Lead Agency: Local Water Districts

Type of Action: Construction

Objective: To develop and improve Newbury's public water supply systems in support of policies for guiding future growth.

Description: Newbury now has three separate and independent water districts - Byfield, Oldtown, and Plum Island. Each district has its own particular set of problems and concerns. Actions needed for each water district are:

1. Byfield Water District - Assess current supply and potential future demand. Locate other sources of water - either within Newbury or in adjacent towns - so that future water supplies will be assured. Do not expand the system of water mains without first consulting closely with the Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen.
2. Oldtown Water District - Proceed with actions necessary for the replacement of old, undersized water mains in High Road. Determine the feasibility and desirability of purchasing the Oldtown water distribution system from Newburyport. Monitor land use changes within the recharge zone of the potential wellfield area off Parker Street to ensure that groundwater quality will remain high. Do not expand the system of water mains without first consulting closely with the Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen.
3. Plum Island Water District - This District is still in the early stages of organization. Planning, design, funding and construction of a Plum Island public water supply system will take years to accomplish. It is strongly recommended that the Plum Island Water Commissioners work closely with the Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen to ensure that public water for Plum Island does not cause undesirable environmental impacts.

Cost and Funding: No town funds required - each Water District is responsible for raising its own funds via bonds, user fees, grants and loans. Grants and loans for water supply systems will become more difficult to obtain in the years ahead. Hydrological studies, as appropriate, will be needed for each of the water districts.

6. The Local Economy

The policy is: "Broaden the town's tax base by encouraging compatible industrial and commercial development - thereby lessening the tax burden on individual homeowners, farmlands, and open space."

There are few small suburban towns that would not support a policy of this kind. Implementing this policy, however, will be a difficult task. Newbury's current lack of a significant industrial/commercial tax base results from a combination of factors - land, utilities, access, market trends, etc. If Newbury was naturally well-suited for commercial and industrial development, much of this development would have taken place already. Further work and study is thus needed to determine how and to what extent new industrial and commercial development can be encouraged.

Project 6.1 - Industrial Development Feasibility Study

Lead Agency: Planning Board

Type of Action: Feasibility Study

Objective: To determine the desirability and feasibility of encouraging certain kinds of industrial and commercial development within the town of Newbury.

Description: This project has already been discussed in the 1980-1981 Action Plan. The Planning Board will begin their work on this study during the summer of 1980. We recommend that most of the work be completed by early 1981. This schedule will provide ample time for the development of specific proposals for the 1981 Annual Town Meeting.

Cost and Funding: The Planning Board has allocated approximately \$2,500 of special planning funds to this study. HUD 701 planning funds of about \$5,000 may also be available for the study. An overall budget of \$7,500 should be adequate for expert consultants and other project costs.

Project 6.2 - Study of the Local Economy

Lead Agency: Planning Board

Type of Action: Study

Objective: To analyze and document the major dynamics of the local economy in order to provide town leaders with economic impact criteria for future actions and decisions.

Description: The subject of local economic dynamics is of growing interest to many small towns, especially in the light of continuing

inflation, state-mandated tax caps, and voter resistance to tax increases.

How does the local economy work? What are the relative tax contributions of the various major land uses? How do major trends such as conversions on Plum Island affect the town's tax base? Do large subdivisions cost the town more than would outright acquisition of land for conservation purposes? What are the longer-range prospects for increasing the local employment base?

Answers to such questions are important, and, to a large extent, such answers can be quantified. Town leaders and officials will be able to develop long-range plans and make important decisions much more knowledgably if hard facts and figures on the local economy have been documented.

Cost and Funding: The Planning Board should consider undertaking this study during the period July 1981-June 1982. A budget of \$3,000 to \$5,000 will probably be needed for assistance from a qualified economist.

7. Plum Island

The policy for Plum Island is: "Balance strict code enforcement and new growth regulations in areas such as floodplain, minimum lot dimensions and trailers with a program of publicly-funded community improvements."

A separate policy was developed for Plum Island because of the special problems and opportunities of that area of Newbury. As part of the Comprehensive Plan studies, we developed a basic analysis of existing conditions, problems and needs.

In April, 1979, the Newbury Planning Board applied for a Coastal Zone Management Grant of \$12,000 for the development of a comprehensive Management Plan for Plum Island. The grant application was approved, and work was begun in September.

The Plum Island Management Plan will be completed in the near future. The final report is similar in format to this report. Because of the much more concentrated focus of the Plum Island Study, however, the discussion of plans and projects for the Island is substantially more detailed than the comparable discussion for Newbury as a whole.

We will not attempt a detailed summary of the Plum Island Management Plan here. The reader is referred to the Management Plan report for details. The Plan attempts to balance recommendations in the areas of community development, environmental protection and growth management. The major recommended projects are related to seven policies. There are seven component plans in the Management Plan, each component related to a key policy. A brief summary of the seven component plans is given below.

1. Water Supply and Wastewater Disposal - The development of a public water supply system is the priority for most of Plum Island's residents and community leaders. Some people are beginning to realize, however, that a narrow-minded focus on water supply alone may eventually lead to severe problems. Several other programs must also be considered, including serious programs for managing wastewater disposal and managing future growth. A comprehensive, multi-faceted approach is needed if the Plum Island community development process is to be: (1) fundable, (2) environmentally responsible, (3) truly beneficial to the long-range interests of residents. Thus, a balance of management and development programs is the key.
2. Flood Protection - Plum Island was hit by major storms and flooding in 1969, 1974 and 1978. We have already discussed the inevitability of storms and occasional flooding in our section on "underlying problems." It is probable that there is no means by which Plum Island could be entirely protected from future storm damage and flooding.

Residents generally agree that some flood protection measures can and should be taken. Currently, the principal components of a Flood Protection Plan involve the reconstruction and raising of Old Point Road and Sunset Drive and the development of a comprehensive Flood Emergency Plan.

The proposed road reconstruction project would create a continuous "dike," about 8.5 feet above mean sea level, along the western edge of the Island. This dike would protect residences from all but the most severe floods. This proposed project, however, has come into conflict with state agency policies for protection of coastal wetlands and floodplain areas.

This conflict between community needs and environmental protection policies is unfortunate, but all too real. It remains to be seen whether this conflict can be resolved - for flood protection projects, or for the Plum Island community development process as a whole.

3. Erosion Control - There have been some sporadic local efforts made in the past to deal with the problems of dune and beach erosion. The Corps of Engineers' 1976 study provides a fairly comprehensive analysis of both flooding and erosion problems. The Corps' study outlines a number of "non-structural" programs and actions that can be taken to alleviate the erosion problem.

The proposed Erosion Control Plan presented here builds on the Corps of Engineers' study in three specific areas: Dune Protection, Dune Stabilization and Acquisition of Primary Dune Properties. Dune protection and stabilization must be pursued through a number of means, including new ordinances for dune protection, strong enforcement of these ordinances and on-going stabilization programs involving dune grass planting and the installation of sand fences.

4. Community Services and Facilities - Concrete plans, funding, organization and action are needed in a number of areas, including: special summer police patrols, improved summer trash pick-up system, improved community center, construction of a community park and provision of public restrooms. These projects range from small to moderate in cost. None of them will be simple to organize and implement. However, projects of this kind are essential to the improvement of community quality.

5. Transportation - The primary "transportation" problem on Plum Island is that there are too many summer weekend visitors transporting themselves to the Island via private car. A comprehensive program designed to solve this problem must include Newbury/Newburyport cooperation, the cooperation of the Wildlife Refuge, and a system of parking facilities and enforced parking

regulations. A program of this kind will not be especially costly. It will, however, require a high degree of organization and centralized management. PITTA and other town and city agencies should also be involved in the new Master Plan for the Refuge. This component plan also addresses the need for local street improvements.

6. Code Enforcement - Codes, ordinances, regulations and code enforcement are not especially popular subjects on Plum Island - or in most communities, for that matter. However, it is essential that codes and code enforcement be taken seriously on the Island. Regulations relating to land uses, construction, sewer systems, wetlands, floodplains, and occupancy of summer rental properties must be understood and respected if: (a) Plum Island is to continue to improve as a residential community, (b) state and federal grants for community development are to be made available.

A dual program of public education and strong code enforcement is needed. The need for a number of specific new or revised code provisions is also outlined in this section.

7. Inter-Governmental Cooperation - There is at present no established institutional or governmental system by means of which the Plum Island Management Plan can be implemented. The Island's "split jurisdiction, Newbury/Newburyport" problem has always been a key obstacle to organized planning and phased community development actions. In addition, current state and federal policies for coastal areas (and for barrier islands in particular) are such that grant requests and construction plans for Plum Island projects will be carefully scrutinized by the responsible agencies.

The solution to these several problems will not be easy. Clearly, however, a carefully formulated program for inter-governmental and interagency cooperation is essential if the Plum Island community development process is to proceed as planned.

We therefore recommend the formation of a Special Plum Island Task Force. The Task Force should be a small (5 member) body with representatives from both Newbury and Newburyport. The Task Force should be formally charged with the implementation of the Plum Island Management Plan. Once constituted, the Task Force would focus its attention on a number of priority projects, including the sponsoring of an Interagency Agreement among state agencies that have a regulatory and/or funding interest in Plum Island, and a similar Interagency Agreement for federal agencies.

The Plum Island Community development process will be a complex one. The Management Plan provides facts, figures, concepts and recommendations that should help to ensure a balanced development process.

8. Plan Implementation

The policy is: "Proceed with the development of a coordinated, practical, action-oriented system that will ensure the implementation of these policies."

As we have noted elsewhere in this report, town planning is a task that is never "done." An "updated" Comprehensive Plan of this kind is an important part of the process. The implementation of the plan, however, requires dedicated people, hard work, clear priorities, local funds, grants and loans - and, in certain instances, more detailed plans for specific problem areas and community development projects.

There are at least three important projects and programs that need to be discussed here.

Project 8.1 - Personnel Needs Study

Lead Agency: Board of Selectmen, with assistance from the
Planning Board

Type of Action: Study

Objective: To assess present and possible future needs for expanded Town Government personnel.

Description: We have already discussed this project in the 1980-1981 Action Plan. There seems to be a general consensus that Newbury's basic form of government is appropriate for the town - i.e., three part-time selectmen and an open Town Meeting. The suggested Personnel Needs Study will focus on existing and possible future staff positions - including the concept of a full-time "Conservation Officer" or "Environmental Engineer."

Cost and Funding: No significant costs at this time.

Project 8.2 - Code Enforcement

Lead Agency: Board of Selectmen

Type of Action: Enforcement

Objective: To improve the enforcement of town codes and bylaws.

Description: Newbury's leaders recognize that management of future growth will require, among other things, strong action in the areas of both new or improved codes and the enforcement of these codes.

Newbury is at this time sorely lacking in code enforcement personnel. Present enforcement personnel are a part-time Building Inspector and a 4 man Police Department. It is virtually impossible for these people to provide adequate enforcement of the Building Code, Zoning Bylaw, Subdivision Regulations, Health Code, Police Department Bylaw and other important codes and regulations.

As the town continues to grow, upgraded positions and/or more personnel will be needed in this important area. The Selectmen should begin preparing plans accordingly.

Cost and Funding: Within the next few years, additional town funds will be needed for code enforcement personnel.

Project 8.3 - On-Going Planning

Lead Agency: Planning Board

Type of Action: Plans

Objective: To continue to expand, refine and update Newbury's town planning process.

Description: It should be evident from the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan that there are many plans, projects and programs that must be put together over the next 5 to 10 years. In order to proceed with this work, the Planning Board should do at least the following:

1. Request special planning funds from time to time, as may be needed.
2. Solidify the on-going planning role of the Long-Range Planning Committee.
3. Become more active in attending workshops and seminars that deal with planning for small towns.
4. Become more knowledgeable about state and federal grant programs for planning and community development.

Town Planning Boards do not always play a lead role in real planning for the community. During the past two years, the Newbury Planning Board has put in hundreds of man-hours on the comprehensive planning program. These efforts must continue.

Cost and Funding: Modest amount of town funds from time to time. Some state and federal funds may also be available, including HUD Section 701 planning funds and CZM Community Assistance grants.