

City of New Bedford



Priority Development & Protection Areas

May 2008



PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS PRIORITY PROTECTION AREAS

INTRODUCTION

Southeastern Massachusetts is growing rapidly. As a region, we are developing nearly 8 acres each and every day, or about 4½ square miles a year. This is equivalent to fully developing an area the size of the Town of Somerset every 21 months.

Development is inevitable – our region is a desirable place to live and work, and a certain amount of new growth is healthy. But in the past, we have not always planned well for development, and the result has not always been an asset for our communities and region.

Good development should be on sites that are matched to their intended uses. Sites for more intensive development need good access, compatible abutting land uses, public water and sewer service nearby, and minimal environmental constraints. These areas need to be located, mapped and appropriately zoned.

Likewise, we need to plan to protect our most important natural areas. These are the areas that contribute to our water supply, contain threatened or endangered species or are special due to their scenic or historic features. These areas also need to be located, mapped and appropriately protected.

We must steer development toward the appropriate (priority development) areas and away from the critical (priority protection) areas in order to achieve the vision that we have for our communities.

In conjunction with the South Coast Rail project and the Southeastern Massachusetts Commuter Rail Task Force, SRPEDD will be working with the cities and towns of the region to identify those areas that are the best ones for development and the best ones to be protected. These will be the **Priority Development Areas (PDAs)** and **Priority Protection Areas (PPAs)** and we will be working with municipal officials and citizens to locate and designate these areas.

WHAT ARE PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS?

These are areas within a city or town that are capable of handling more development due to several factors, including good access, available infrastructure (primarily water and sewer), an absence of environmental constraints, and local support. PDAs can range in size from a single lot to many acres. Areas designated under state programs such as Chapter 43D (expedited permitting), Chapter 40R (smart growth zones) or Economic Opportunity Areas can be examples of PDAs. Included in these designations will be the local recommendations for how these sites should be developed.



WHAT ARE PRIORITY PROTECTION AREAS?

These are areas within a city or town that deserve special protection due to the presence of significant environmental factors and natural features, such as endangered species habitats, areas critical to water supply, scenic vistas, or areas of historic significance. Like PDAs, the protection areas can vary greatly in size. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), aquifer recharge areas or designated priority habitats can be examples of PPAs.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE PDA/PPA DESIGNATIONS?

This work is useful to all communities in making land use and zoning decisions. But it may also be helpful when considering potential mitigation for the commuter rail project and may be utilized if a regional system of transfer of development rights is utilized. The PDA/PPA information that is developed will also be integrated into the corridor plan for the South Coast Rail project.

HOW DOES THE PROCESS WORK?

SRPEDD assembled known data, local zoning bylaws, master plans and open space plans and worked with local planners, conservation agents, economic development officials, elected officials, interest groups, local organizations and citizens to review this information and refine it with local knowledge. This process took several months in each community. State officials will be consulted for their input and final recommendations will be brought before local officials and the Southeastern Massachusetts Commuter Rail Task Force.

HAS THIS BEEN DONE BEFORE?

Similar efforts undertaken by SRPEDD in 1997 and The Coalition of Buzzards Bay have completed pieces of this process, and that work will be incorporated into this effort.

The following pages reveal the work that members of the City of New Bedford identified as Priority Protection and Priority Development Areas in the spring of 2008. *SRPEDD would like to express appreciation to the New Bedford Planning Department for all their assistance developing the City of New Bedford Priority Summary.*

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Summary

The City of New Bedford is located in southeastern Massachusetts, bordered by Dartmouth on the west, Freetown on the north, Acushnet on the east and Buzzards Bay on the south. New Bedford is a wonderfully diverse and culturally rich community. The city evolved from the whaling center of the world, into a leading cotton manufacturing center, and finally into a historic revitalized community with an authentic working waterfront.. While it is a city of approximately 92,000 people, New Bedford maintains a close-knit community feel. New Bedford’s rich history has endowed the city with an identity and unique “sense of place” that cannot be found elsewhere. New Bedford’s seaport location, diverse neighborhoods, rich history, outstanding architecture, vast cultural resources and a growing arts community make it a compelling destination for visitors; however the quality of life relished by residents makes it an even better place to live.

“The town is perhaps the dearest place to live in all of New England.... All these brave houses and flowering gardens come from the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans. One an all they were harpooned and dragged up hither from the bottom of....”

Herman Melville

City of New Bedford’s Goal for the Future

- Enhanced educational attainment
- Attractive and safe neighborhoods
- Continued economic development
- A stronger more cohesive sense of community

New Bedford Priority Protection & Development Areas

