



SOUTH COAST RAIL

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND LAND USE

CORRIDOR PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

JUNE, 2009



Acknowledgements

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Deval Patrick, *Governor*

Timothy Murray, *Lieutenant Governor*



Executive Office of Transportation

- James Aloisi, *Secretary*
- Kristina Egan, *South Coast Rail Manager*



Executive Office of Housing
and Economic Development

- Greg Bialecki, *Secretary*
- Robert Mitchell, *Special Assistant for Planning Initiatives*

THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING FOR LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORT:

- Leslie Kirwan, *Secretary, Executive Office for Administration and Finance*
- Ian Bowles, *Secretary, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs*
- Suzanne Bump, *Secretary, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development*
- Tina Brooks, *Undersecretary, Department of Housing and Community Development*
- David Perini, *Commissioner, Division of Capital Asset Management*

SPECIAL THANKS TO THESE ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO HELPED MAKE THIS PLAN POSSIBLE:

- The leaders and residents of the South Coast Corridor cities and towns
- Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District: Steve Smith, Greg Guimond, Nancy Durfee, Don Sullivan, Karen Porter, Sandy Conaty
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council: Marc Draisen, Steve Winter, Mark Racicot
- Old Colony Planning Council: Pasquale Ciaramella, Karen Winger, Charles Kilmer
- MassGIS: Christian Jacqz, Michael Trust

CONSULTANT TEAM

PRIME CONSULTANT

- Goody Clancy: David Spillane, Amy Kohn, Larissa Brown

with

- AECOM: Al Raine
- Central Transportation Planning Staff: Scott Peterson
- EDR Group: Steve Landau
- FXM Associates: Frank Mahady
- Regina Villa Associates: Nancy Farrell, Eric Hove
- Susan Jones Moses and Associates
- Westfield State College: Marijoan Bull

STATE INTERAGENCY CORRIDOR PLAN TEAM

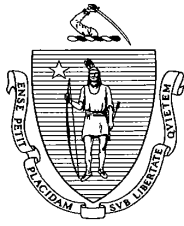
- Kristina Egan, *co-chair*
- Robert Mitchell, *co-chair*
- Administration and Finance
Jay Gonzalez, Karol Ostberg, Thomas Dugan
- Department of Housing and Community Development
Alana Murphy, Patrick Hart, Carol Wolfe, William Reyelt
- Housing and Economic Development
Eric Nakajima
- Energy and Environmental Affairs
David Cash, Maeve Valley Bartlett, Robert O'Connor
- MEPA (Energy and Environmental Affairs)
Aisling Eglington
- MassGIS (Energy and Environmental Affairs)
Christian Jacqz
- Labor and Workforce Development
R.J. McGrail, Robb Smith
- Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
Joe Cosgrove, Mark Boyle, Ron Morgan
- Transportation and Public Works
Peter O'Connor, Tim Doherty, Katherine Fichter
- MassHighway (Transportation and Public Works)
Diane Madden
- Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District
Steve Smith, Greg Guimond, Nancy Durfee
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council
Marc Draisen, Amy Cotter
- Old Colony Planning Council
Pasquale Ciaramella, Charles Kilmer, Karen Winger
- South Coast Commuter Rail Task Force
John Bullard

SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS COMMUTER RAIL TASK FORCE

John Bullard, *chair*

Melinda Ailes, Kerrie Babin, George Bailey, Kyla Bennett, Bob Carney, Priscilla Chapman, Pasquale Ciaramella, David Colton, Christopher Cooney, Marc Draisen, Kevin J. Dumas, Kenneth Fiola, Thomas Fitzgerald, Leonard Flynn, Francis Gay, Ruth Geoffroy, Louis Gitto, Heather Graf, Linda Grubb, James K. Hartnett, Roland Hebert, Andy Jasmin, Susan Jennings, Robb Johnson, William G. Kenney, Rick King, Peter Kortright, Carolyn LaMarre, Ray Ledoux, Jill Maclean, Dan A. McGaffey, Christopher McGowan, Robert Mellion, Jennifer Menard, Paul Modlowski, Matthew Morrissey, Arthur Motta, Roy M. Nascimento, Martin Newfield, Richard O'Flaherty, Jim Oliver, Steven J. Ouellette, Robert Overholtzer, Lisa Pacheco, Donald Perry, Susan Peterson, Mark Rasmussen, Edward Reese, Sr., William Roth, Jr., Bruce D. Sauvageau, Richard Shafer, Kevin Shea, George I. Spatcher, David A. Tibbetts, Erika Ueberbacher, Marilyn Whalley, Henry Young





DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE HOUSE • BOSTON, MA 02133
(617) 725-4000

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

June 29, 2009

Dear South Coast Residents,

I am pleased to release the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' South Coast Rail Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan. To maximize the economic benefits of the South Coast Rail project it is not enough just to reestablish transit connections between the South Coast cities of Fall River, New Bedford, and Taunton with Boston. We must plan intentionally and thoughtfully to ensure this investment in transportation catalyzes job creation and housing and encourages this new development to happen in the right places to revitalize our Gateway cities and downtowns.

We also intend this project to expand environmental protection, curb sprawl, and cut greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the need for families and workers to drive everywhere.

This Corridor Plan is the culmination of over 18 months of intensive planning at the local, regional, and state levels. We have broken new ground in Massachusetts – for the first time, we have seamlessly integrated planning for transportation investments with economic and land use development on a regional scale.

With an unprecedented level of civic engagement – over 100 local meetings – we have worked with our partners at the local and regional levels to create a new consensus vision for the future of the 31 cities and towns of the South Coast Rail Corridor through 2030. The Plan calls for creating great places at the new stations – places full of vitality and diversity. By clustering jobs and homes close to the stations through transit-oriented development and “greening” the stations by encouraging renewable energy on site, new neighborhoods will be created.

The Plan also identifies priorities for land protection, which will preserve the farms, fields, and forests in every city and town. Protecting working farms, cranberry bogs, habitat, rivers and wetlands is not only important for ecological reasons, but for economic reasons. This rich landscape is central to the South Coast's quality of life and long-term competitive advantage in the economy.

The Commonwealth is committed to seeing this plan implemented. We will use the Corridor Plan to guide our investments in infrastructure and land protection and to help target technical assistance to where it is needed most. But we can't implement this plan on our own. We will need to continue to work hand-in-hand with the municipalities, regional planning agencies, environmental and land protection organizations, and economic development and housing officials and advocates. Local actions will be a vital component in realizing the vision contained in the Plan. New zoning, such as overlay districts that encourage a mix of jobs, housing types, and green spaces at the new station areas will be needed.

We look forward to working with all of you to make this plan reality. We have a unique opportunity through the South Coast Rail project to create a more competitive, more equitable, and more sustainable region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deval Patrick", written over a large, stylized circular flourish.

Executive Summary

South Coast Rail Corridor Plan

The Corridor Plan is the result of a collaborative partnership among the Commonwealth, thirty-one corridor communities, and three regional planning agencies working in conjunction with the Southeastern Massachusetts Commuter Rail Task Force. The process for developing this document included more than 100 civic engagement meetings and events that drew on the knowledge and insights of regional residents, businesses, officials, and community-based organizations. The result is a blueprint for clustering jobs and homes around stations, maximizing the economic benefits of rail investment, minimizing sprawl development, and preserving the farms, fields, and forests of the South Coast.

The Region Today

The South Coast region comprises 31 cities and towns with a combined population of approximately 740,000. By 2030 the regional population is projected to grow to more than 900,000, making the South Coast one of the fastest-growing regions of the state.

The South Coast is a region of tremendous natural assets, high quality of life, and relatively affordable housing. The region is known for its seacoast and estuaries, its cranberry bogs and rural landscapes, and the historic towns and cities that played prominent roles in the nation's economic and cultural history. In recent years, Southeastern

Massachusetts has faced a complicated series of threats: loss of natural areas, struggling older industrial cities, sprawling development, and congested highways.

The South Coast communities of Fall River, New Bedford and Taunton are the only cities within 50 miles of Boston not served by commuter rail, and a reliable, fast transit connection is needed to connect these cities to the major economic hub of New England—Boston.

How Should the Region Grow?

Today the region has arrived at a critical juncture. Will its future growth be driven by auto-oriented, dispersed development patterns that exacerbate current problems? Or will the region of 2030 be characterized by more compact growth within existing centers and downtowns, as well as around new transit infrastructure, that strengthens connections to the metro Boston economy and labor markets? Will growth advance in ways that preserve open space, working landscapes and other natural assets, or will the integrity of these places continue to erode through ad hoc development? In other words, how can the South Coast grow without losing its character, and how can the train help with this challenge?

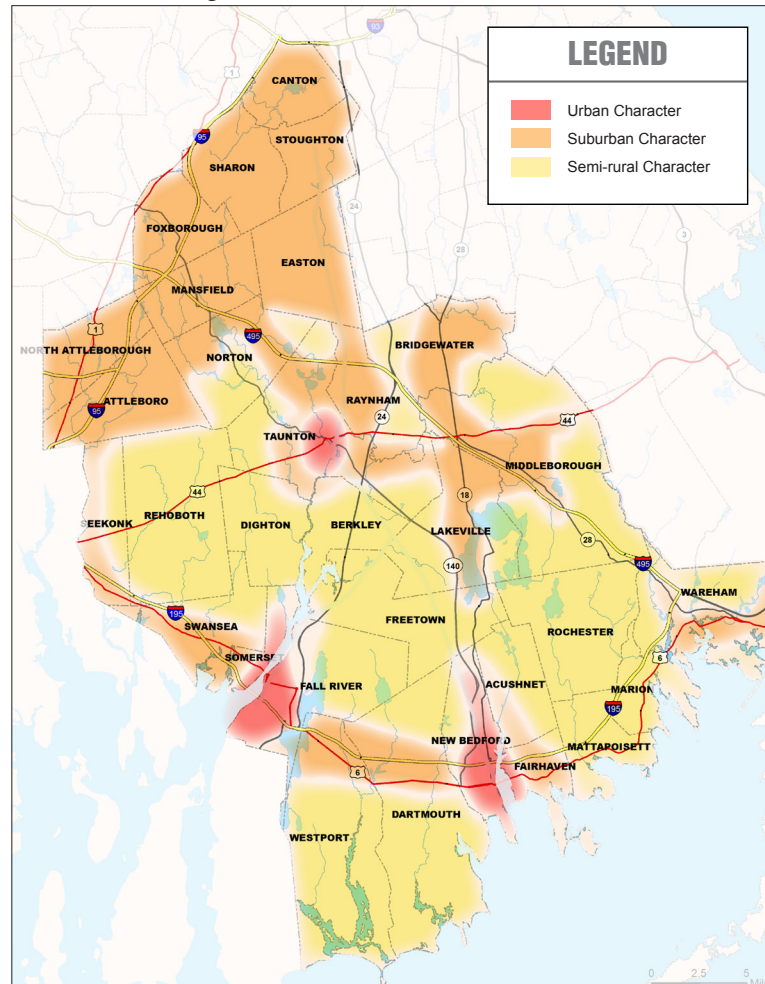
The region's leaders and residents provided answers to these questions in the development of the Corridor Plan. The Plan provides a framework for



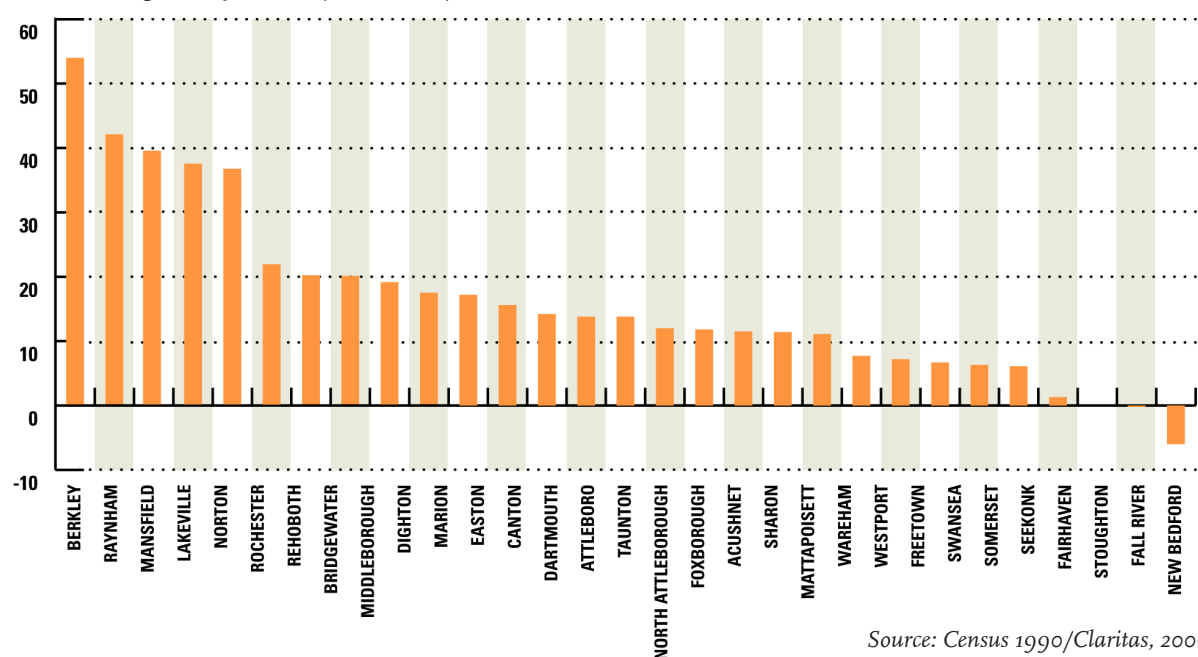
regional growth that is clustered, more sustainable, and better connected within the region and to metro Boston. The region seeks a future in which it renews and expands urban centers while adding new walkable neighborhoods and preserving natural assets for future generations. Commuter rail can catalyze this future, providing an opportunity to organize new growth around stations and direct it away from sensitive areas of ecological value. It can also provide better access to high-quality jobs for residents of the region, and better access for businesses to the metro-Boston labor force, business and educational clusters that will drive the 21st-century economy.

We must connect the dots between protecting the South Coast's natural areas and sparking economic development in places that make sense. Residents and businesses want a high quality of life and future

The South Coast Region



Percent Change in Population by Community, 1990-2006



Source: Census 1990/Claritas, 2006

investments will, in part, depend on the South Coast region's ability to shape the growth that's coming and the new growth the train will bring.

The Corridor Plan

The Corridor Plan is organized to provide responses to four basic questions about growth.

- Where should new development be supported?
- What land, open space and environmental assets represent the highest priorities for protection?
- What kind of development can be attracted to areas around new stations?
- What kinds of tools can communities use and the state provide to better plan for their futures?

Priority Development and Protection Areas – The Corridor Map:

The Corridor Map is a centerpiece of the plan. Developed through a process of local, regional and state review, the map designates more than 30 Priority Development Areas and more than 70 Priority Protection Areas. Priority Development Areas are those with the greatest capacity or potential to accommodate new development, including downtowns, major job centers, and

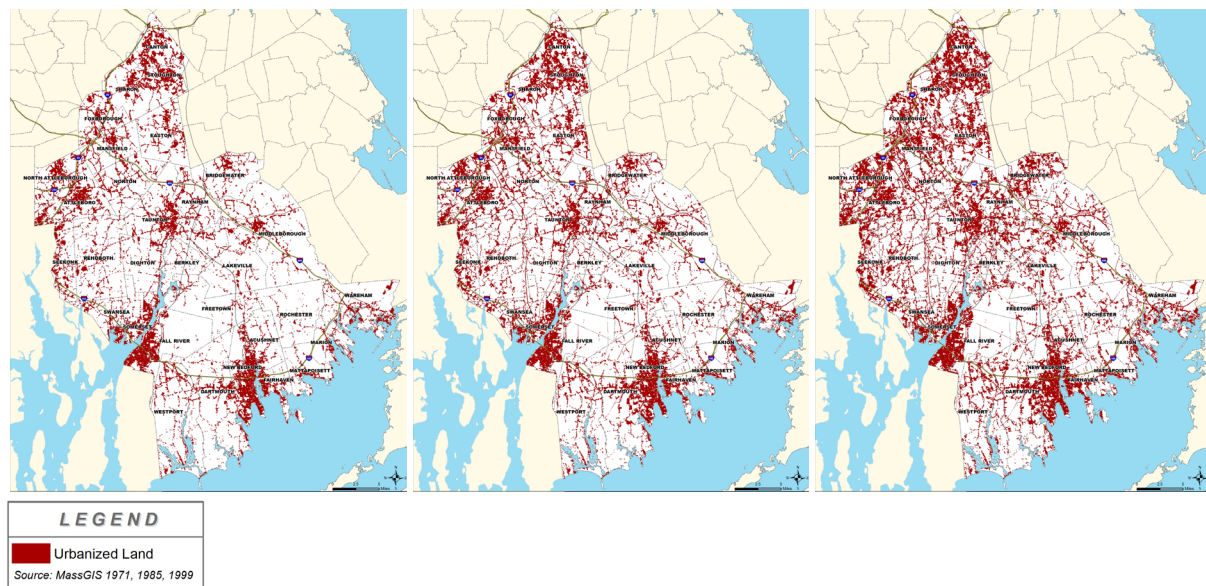
We must connect the dots between protecting the South Coast's natural areas and sparking economic development in places that make sense. Residents and businesses want a high quality of life and future investments will, in part, depend on the South Coast region's ability to shape the growth that's coming.

future South Coast Rail station areas. Priority Protection Areas include land or environmental resources that are not permanently protected but are worthy of increased levels of protection through planning, regulation, conservation or acquisition. This map emerged from a process facilitated by regional planning agencies working first with communities to identify municipal priorities. Communities selected several hundred areas that represent local priorities for growth or conservation, and they are now moving forward with implementation. Regional planning agencies—working in conjunction with the Southeastern Massachusetts Commuter Rail Task Force, the

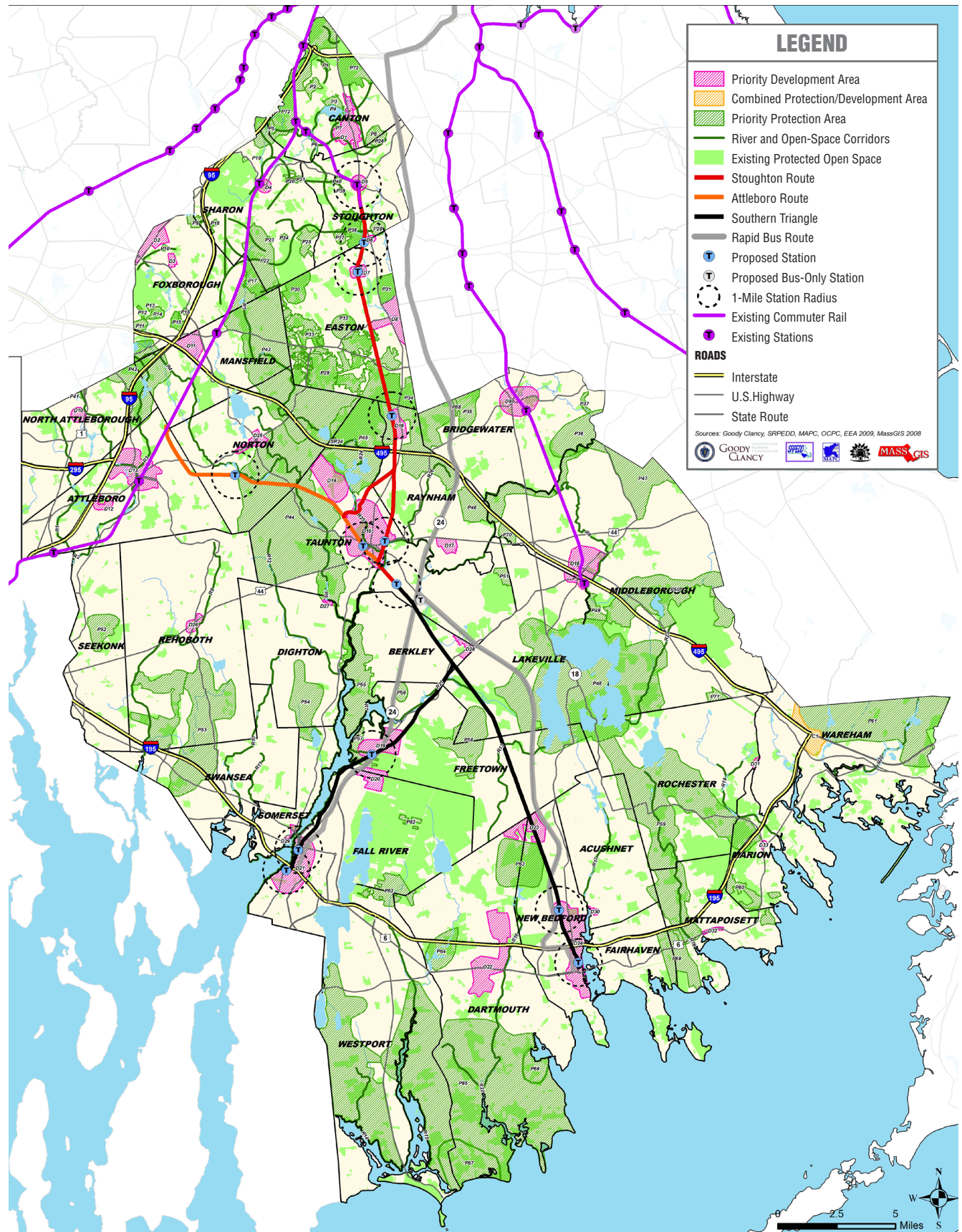
corridor communities, advocacy organizations and each other—then identified the places with the greatest significance from a regional bird's-eye view. Many of these priority places span town borders. State

agencies modified the resulting framework to best reflect state goals, and established the results as the Corridor Map. Detailed maps and narrative descriptions of each of the designated areas are included within the plan.

Development in the Corridor, 1971, 1985, 1999.



The Corridor Map



Station Area Development: Potential Development Around Whale's Tooth Station in New Bedford



Station Area Development: Proposed South Coast station sites have been selected both to serve existing residents and businesses and to provide opportunities for new transit-oriented development around stations. The consultant team that helped

prepare this report, working with the regional planning agencies, analyzed existing development around station locations and evaluated future development potential, resulting in a realistic projection of what type and amount of development could occur within one mile of future stations and within a five-minute walk of stations (about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile).

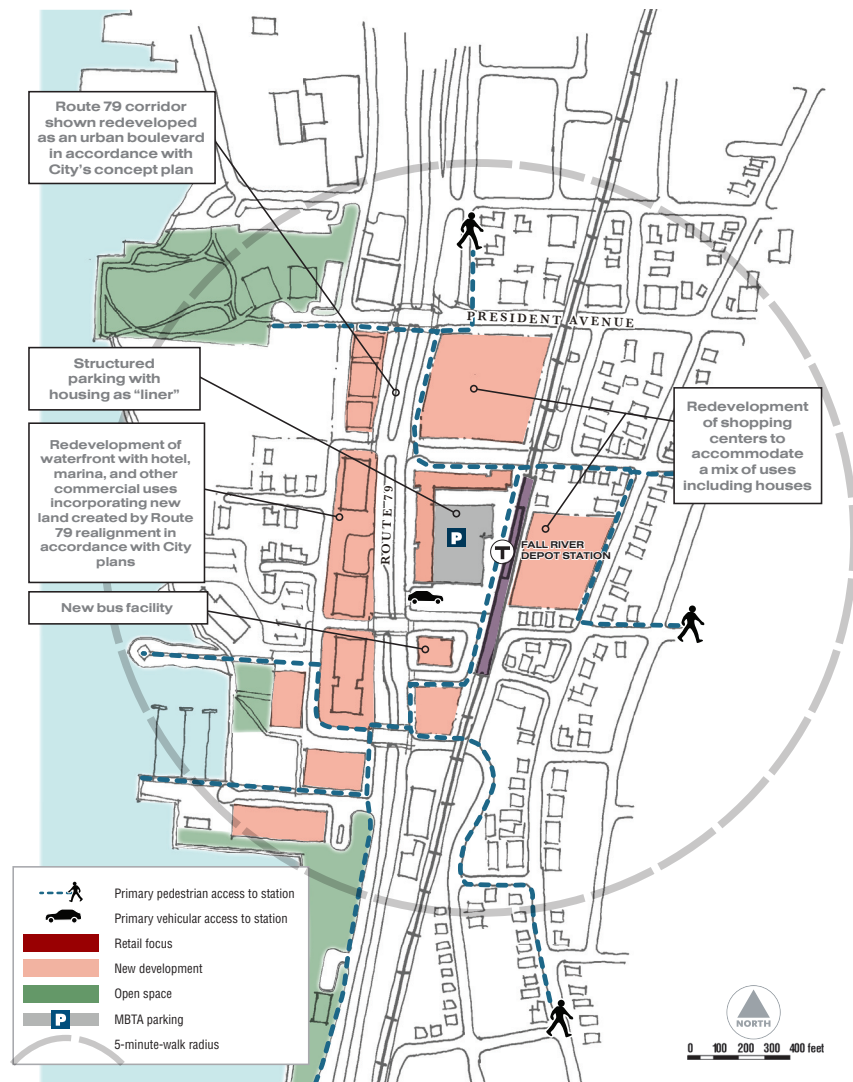
Today, more than 40,000 households and over 55,000 jobs lie within one mile of proposed transit stops, offering many commuters the option to walk or bike to the train. South Coast Rail station areas are well positioned to benefit from national demographic trends and lifestyle preferences that increasingly favor development in compact transit-served locations. By 2030, given expected growth, transit in place, and the implementation of this Plan, an additional 9,000 households and 11,000 jobs will locate within one mile of station areas. High levels of private-sector investment could be attracted to station-served areas such as Hicks-Logan-Sawyer in New Bedford and Davol Street in Fall River, as well as areas in Taunton, Freetown, and other corridor communities. However—as national experience with comparable sites demonstrates—attracting private investment will not be possible without a sustained public effort to position these sites for redevelopment.

During the Corridor Plan process, communities that will host stations explored visions for station areas and opportunities for development. Concept plans for station areas included within the Corridor Plan represent a starting point for further planning at the local level. The plans also reflect current thinking about the location of station platforms, parking and other infrastructure. To fully tap into the potential of future station areas—and to create market-ready development opportunities—station areas will need new zoning aimed at advancing locally embraced visions. A few communities, like Taunton and Stoughton, have already established new zoning, and others are initiating the process.

What are the Potential Economic Effects of South Coast Rail?

Commuter rail service to the South Coast will generate nearly \$500 million in new economic activity every year. This is new growth by the year 2030 that would not have occurred without the train. The rail connection is also projected to create between 3,500 and 3,800 net new jobs within the Commonwealth by 2030—about two-thirds of which would locate in the South Coast region with the remaining third in Boston-Cambridge and other communities outside the region. This new economic activity within the Commonwealth would be a consequence of travel-cost savings and improved business and labor productivity brought about by the accessibility (shorter travel times) and mobility (mode choice) improvements of commuter rail. Because commuter rail would offer an attractive, reliable alternative to auto trips from the South Coast to Boston, many of the job increases expected to take

Station Area Development: Potential Development Around Fall River Depot Station



place within the South Coast are likely to be in the higher-paying professional services sectors.

During construction of the rail project, slated to begin in 2012, expenditures for labor and materials would generate construction period benefits of

Economic Effects in 2030 of South Coast Rail Alternatives (\$ 2007)

GEOGRAPHIC AREA	BUSINESS OUTPUT	JOBS	HOUSEHOLD INCOME
South Coast Corridor communities	\$268–295 million	2,300–2,540	\$87–97 million
Boston-Cambridge	\$140–149 million	730–790	\$47–50 million
Rest of Massachusetts	\$40–43 million	450–490	\$12–13 million
TOTAL ALL AREAS	\$448–487 million	3,500–3,800	\$146–160 million

about 7,000 to 8,000 jobs, \$1.4 to \$1.8 billion in business output, and about \$315 to \$360 million in household income. The spin-off activity from the investment will benefit South Coast workers, shop owners, suppliers, and other firms providing services.

Much of the development estimated to occur by 2030 around the station areas would be growth that is now projected to occur in less densely developed areas of the South Coast region, including areas that are now open space. Not only is development of the region's older built-up areas essential to creating attractive urban lifestyle choices that draw residents and business investors, but the reallocation of growth to these target areas can relieve development pressures on open space that contribute to the region's attractiveness as a place to live and do business.

Next Steps

The Corridor Plan has been developed in a period of economic and financial uncertainty at the national, state and local levels. Currently state and local governments face financial uncertainties that pose challenges to immediately advancing parts of the Corridor Plan. The Plan, however, provides a framework for the region that will maximize the economic and environmental benefits of the rail project and help realize a long term vision for the region. There's no time to lose.

State Policy Actions: The Commonwealth is committed to implementing these policies to support the Corridor Plan:

1. **Create great places at the station areas** by maximizing transit-oriented development that builds new green neighborhoods with jobs and housing.
2. **Use discretionary state funding flowing to municipalities to encourage zoning and land use changes** that support sustainable development and the Corridor Plan.
3. **Steer the state's own direct investments** in state infrastructure, buildings, and office leases to

station areas and priority development areas, such as downtowns.

4. **Provide technical assistance to expand affordable housing opportunities** and use the Corridor Plan to guide new housing development.
5. **Create a regional transfer-of-development rights program to steer growth away from sensitive sites** in rural and suburban areas at risk for low-density residential sprawl and into areas appropriate for development, like village centers and downtowns.
6. **Consider retaining a portion of the value created by transportation investment** to help fund the project by capturing new tax revenue from growth around the train stations.

Technical Assistance: The Commonwealth and regional planning agencies provided technical assistance to corridor communities during the development of the Corridor Plan. Technical assistance will continue to support implementation of this plan, and particularly to help realize the Corridor Map—a core element of the plan—and create new zoning around station areas.

Local Actions to Shape Growth: Many corridor communities, particularly smaller towns within the middle of the region that have experienced very large upticks in residential growth, seek to ensure that growth occurs in locally preferred, sustainable ways that preserve the region's distinctive character and high quality of life. The Corridor Plan provides strategies and tools that communities can use to protect sensitive environmental and cultural resources while encouraging growth in places where it makes sense.

The Plan offers all of the communities in the region, from the cities to the suburban towns to the smaller rural towns, both a vision and a set of recommendations that can ensure that growth occurs in locally preferred, sustainable ways that preserve the region's distinctive character and high quality of life.

