

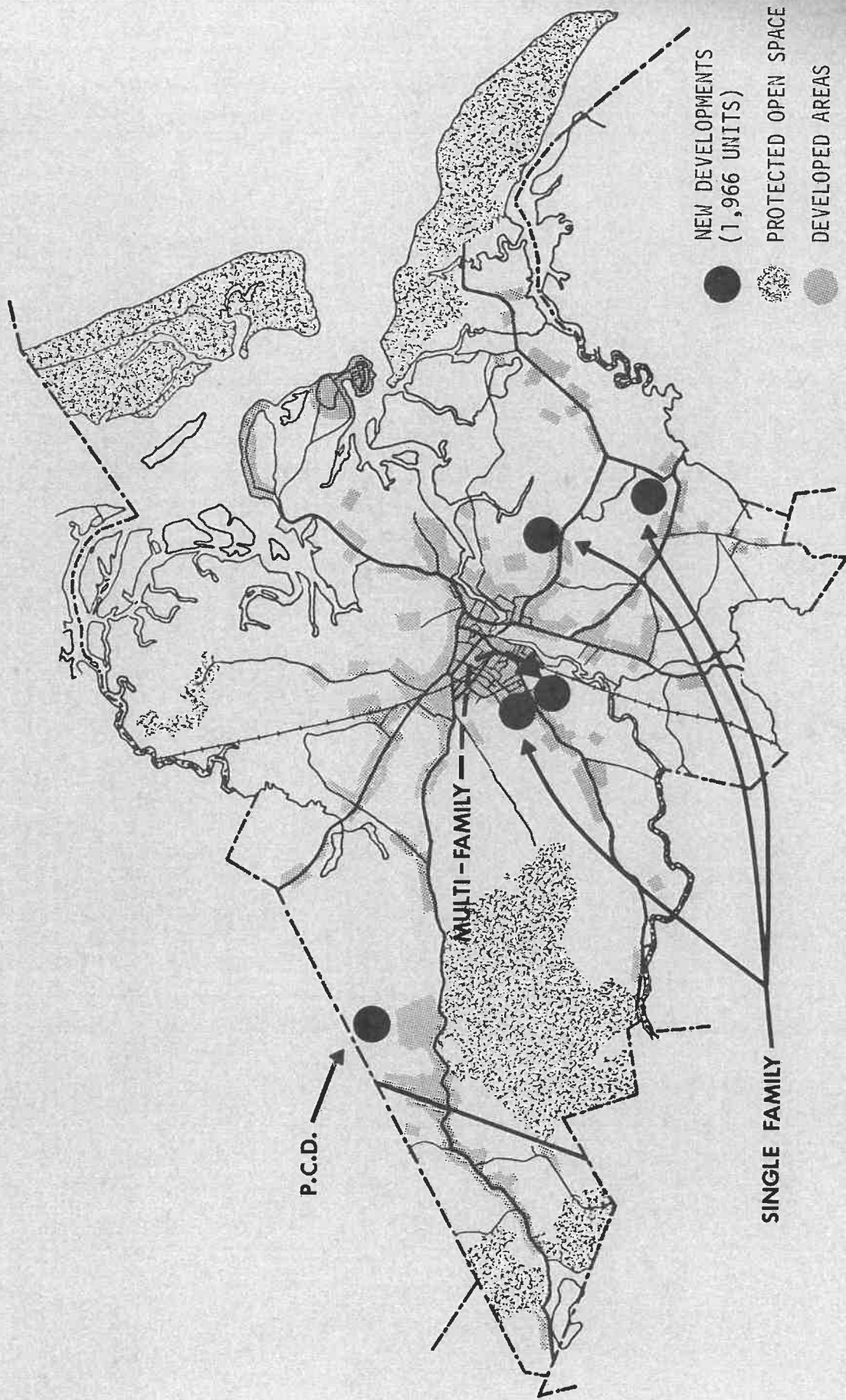
PROGRESS REPORT

IPSWICH MASTER PLAN



JUNE 1974

IPSWICH PLANNING BOARD • IPSWICH, MASSACHUSETTS



GENERALIZED LAND DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE OF THE PROGRESS REPORT

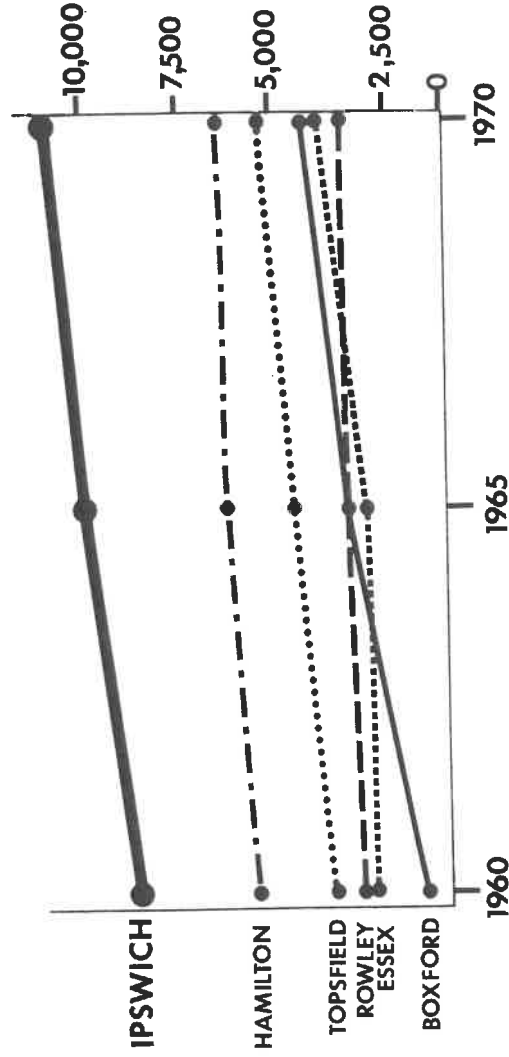
The basic purpose of this progress report is three-fold:

- To summarize work completed to date on the Town's Master Plan Study.
- To establish the policies and goals of the Master Plan.
- To identify the necessary steps to achieve these goals.

GENERALIZED DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

The socio-economic characteristics of Ipswich are substantially the same as those of Essex County and the Boston Metropolitan Area, with one important difference: While the Boston Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area has exhibited a population growth from 1960 to 1970 of 6.1 percent, and Essex County's population growth has been 12.1 percent, Ipswich has increased by 25.9 percent. Ipswich is growing twice as fast as Essex County and four times as fast as the Boston SMSA. The graph below compares the changes in population of neighboring towns to that of Ipswich.

POPULATION 1960 - 1970



The major increases in the population of Ipswich took place chiefly in the age groups of 0-15 and 30-44 years. From 1960 to 1970, the population increased from 8,544 to 10,750; 73.46 percent of this growth is attributable to immigration. Thus, the socio-economic character of the Town has been and continues to be determined in large part by the character of the housing resources available to prospective residents.

Existing and proposed development in Ipswich is shown on the map printed on the inside front cover. The planned but unconstructed dwellings represent approximately 1,960 units of new housing, and a new demand for facilities and services to be provided by the Town. Taking into account Ipswich's current zoning and excluding streets, parking, utility areas, wetlands, and steep-slope areas, the remaining vacant land could accommodate 7,000 to 7,500 additional residential units, or an additional population of 21,000 to 25,000 persons. (See Appendix). The potential impact could change the entire complexion of Ipswich in the years to come.

Ipswich can control the scale and diversification of its future residential mix and thereby the character of the Town, through careful planning. Zoning is the most powerful tool available to this end. In light of the findings of the Master Plan, a correct mix of single family and multi-family housing can be determined and located geographically to achieve economic balance while protecting the traditional appearance of the Town.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS NEW GROWTH

A survey was conducted in 1972 which defined issues in the areas of housing and residential development, environment, economic base, Town finances, the Town Center, and public services and facilities. The responses obtained give a picture of the attitudes of Ipswich residents toward their Town as it exists now and how they would like to see it develop in the future.

It is apparent from the results of the survey that residents do not want the Town to provide new housing for the region. A growth of less than 1,000 was generally deemed most desirable, with the majority of responses indicating that the Town might grow by some 4,000 to 5,000 people over the next ten years. Ipswich residents do not want to see greater densities than exist today, and would like to see open spaces preserved.

The responses to some of the important questions which affect the future growth of Ipswich are shown on the opposite page.

SELECTED RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE

In general, for what types of use do you think the remaining buildable land in Ipswich should be put?

- Single family houses on one acre lots: 25.5% ranked 1st.
- Municipal parks and recreation areas: 35.7% ranked 2nd.
- Kept undeveloped in its natural state: 43.8% ranked 1st.

What policies do you think the Town should have to protect the quality of its wetlands and marine resources, such as marshes, estuaries, and beaches?

- | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| | yes | no |
| -The Town should buy the wetlands for conservation and recreation purposes: | <u>69.6%</u> | <u>30.1%</u> |
| -Private enterprise should be encouraged to develop new quality facilities: | <u>30.8%</u> | <u>69.2%</u> |
| -The Town should enact zoning ordinances to promote the conservation of as much of the wetlands as possible: | <u>92.6%</u> | <u>7.4%</u> |

Should the Town pass bylaws to regulate the following more strictly?

- | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| | yes | no |
| -The design of public buildings: | <u>76.6%</u> | <u>23.4%</u> |
| -The location and size of advertising signs: | <u>92.4%</u> | <u>7.6%</u> |
| -The quality, size, and aesthetic design of new commercial and industrial developments: | <u>86.0%</u> | <u>14.0%</u> |
| -The landscaping of residential development: | <u>67.2%</u> | <u>32.6%</u> |

Should new housing be constructed to:

- Meet the needs of the existing residents not satisfied with their present housing: 38.6%
- Allow new residents to move to the Town: 3.8%
- Both: 50.6%

In what general direction would you like to see Ipswich developed in the next ten years?

- More as a "bedroom" commuter suburb of Boston: 19.2% ranked 1st.
- More as a summer resort and tourist area: 19.4% ranked 2nd.
- More to preserve its character as an historic New England town: 33.8% ranked 1st.
- No more development. Try to keep it as it is: 20.8% ranked 1st.

Do you think any of the following should be encouraged in the downtown business center of Ipswich?

- | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| | yes | no |
| -Improved appearance of buildings: | <u>94.3%</u> | <u>5.7%</u> |
| -Additional parking: | <u>67.0%</u> | <u>33.0%</u> |
| -Stricter control of the size, number, and character of advertising signs: | <u>88.8%</u> | <u>11.2%</u> |
| -Construction of more offices: | <u>28.5%</u> | <u>71.5%</u> |
| -Construction of more community facilities: | <u>61.7%</u> | <u>38.9%</u> |
| -Limit automobile traffic: | <u>49.9%</u> | <u>50.1%</u> |
| -Keep it as it is: | <u>44.6%</u> | <u>55.1%</u> |

What does your family like most about this area?

- Rural, natural environment and wetlands: 65.0%

What do you like best about Ipswich as a Town?

- Natural environment: 33.8%

Some of these attitudes are clearly in direct contradiction to growing development pressures occurring in the entire region, and in Ipswich in particular. It has been estimated (based on the MAPC's projected rate of population growth) that by 1990, Ipswich might expect to face demands to house an additional 14,000 to 21,000 persons, at least doubling the current population. Generally, residents want the new development to follow the characteristics of the old development, maintaining in their eyes a low density, New England village identity. While 42 percent of respondents felt that new development should be of the single family type, even for low and moderate income groups, only 22.7 percent favored two-family housing, and 24.1 percent were in favor of garden apartments.

It has been shown in studies across the Country that single family houses with three bedrooms or more cost a town more in services than they produce in tax revenue; every new single family residence represents a net loss for the community, which must be made up by higher taxes if vital services, particularly schools, are to be maintained at a high quality. To attain a balance between the great pressure for growth, maintenance of Ipswich's character, and fiscal stability, the completion of a comprehensive Master Plan to guide the Town in making sound economic and land-use decisions is essential.

THE PAC

The Planning Board, wishing to involve as many residents as possible in the Master Plan process, organized a group of interested citizens, the Planning Advisory Committee, to define goals, objectives, and issues, as the initial step to a working Master Plan document. Subcommittees were asked to consider critical issues of the Town. The subcommittees are as follows:

- Attitudinal Survey Subcommittee
- Environmental Subcommittee
- Town Center Subcommittee
- Economic Base and Town Finances Subcommittee
- Residential Development and Housing Needs Subcommittee.

Each of these met over a period of months, initially to define relevant issues and to phrase questions for the survey in their specific area of concern. The input from this preliminary planning work was formulated

into a final questionnaire by the Consultant, and distributed by mail to about 3,400 residents; 600 were returned within three weeks, representing an 18-20 percent response from most areas of the Town, which is a better than usual rate of return for a mail survey. In addition, the analysis of the returns showed that it was generally representative of the Town. From the survey analysis, specific areas of concentration were defined for the ongoing Master Plan process in order to create a document tailored to the expressed needs and desires of the Town's residents. The PAC subcommittees undertook detailed study in these areas as summarized below.

ECONOMIC SUBCOMMITTEE

The Economic and Town Finances Subcommittee is currently analyzing relationships between development and its subsequent costs and benefits to the Town. This work will evolve into a Land Use Plan and a long range Capital Budget Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUBCOMMITTEE

Inventory work is being compiled by the Environmental Subcommittee, toward an Open Space and Conservation section to the Master Plan, suitable for filing with the Department of Natural Resources. This will make the Town eligible for State and Federal matching funds for the acquisition or restriction of needed parcels of land.

TOWN CENTER SUBCOMMITTEE

The major contribution of the Town Center Subcommittee has centered upon trying to improve the character of the Town Center, making it a center for retail activity as well as a visual resource for the Town. Focal points for study include the location of the train depot, parking, new development, Town-owned property, historic sites, river bank improvements, and a new sign by-law.

HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE

The difficult issue of considering alternative housing policies for the Town is being addressed by the Housing Subcommittee. This includes the determination of a proper mix of housing types and the assessment of recent State legislation affecting the provision of low and moderate income housing. In addition, the character and control of new development are being assessed, especially in the area of zoning and subdivision regulations.

GOALS

This planning process has to date resulted in the completion of considerable work toward the Master Plan. As part of this effort, the following goals have been formulated to structure planning and its subsequent implementation:

TO PRESERVE THE TRADITIONAL CHARACTER OF IPSWICH, BY MAINTAINING ITS VISUAL APPEAL AS A HISTORIC SMALL NEW ENGLAND COASTAL TOWN.

TO PROVIDE A VARIETY OF HOUSING TYPES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL IPSWICH RESIDENTS: YOUNG FAMILIES, FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN, AND SINGLE, MIDDLE AGED, AND ELDERLY CITIZENS.

TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND SCOPE OF EXISTING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SERVICES TO MEET THE CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS OF TOWN RESIDENTS.

TO STABILIZE THE TAX RATE THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELECTED COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL USES, AND THE CAREFUL CONTROL OF PUBLIC REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES WITH A CAPITAL BUDGETING PLAN.

Since these goals have been established, the information gathered must now be integrated, and in some instances expanded, to produce the Master Plan. Once the Plan has been formulated and adopted by the Town, an action program for its implementation will include:

- Zoning regulations.
- Recommendations for Town acquisition or control of certain critical geographic areas, in order to preserve the Town's traditional character.
- Recommendations for such Town capital expenditures as schools, roads, utilities, and community facilities.
- A clear step-by-step implementation scheme, outlining legislative procedures and options available to the Town to make the Plan a reality.

The intermediate steps between establishing the goals and the implementation of the Plan consist of a series of studies, the results of which will allow the Town to reach specific decisions. Following is a list of these steps. Each one will provide answers to questions that the Town must resolve, in order to maintain and improve Ipswich.

WETLANDS WATERSHEDS FLOOD PLAINS

Wetlands, watersheds, and flood plains form Ipswich's major natural resource. Their importance cannot be stressed enough. In addition to being the basis for the Town's domestic water supply, they provide an essential visual and environmental asset. Historically, the Town's marshes, water bodies, and their associated flood plains and watersheds have served as areas for farming, fishing, hunting, and recreation, with little or no recognition of their immense importance. They have been simply taken for granted. Today, a point has been reached where they must be protected from the primary and secondary impacts of increased development.

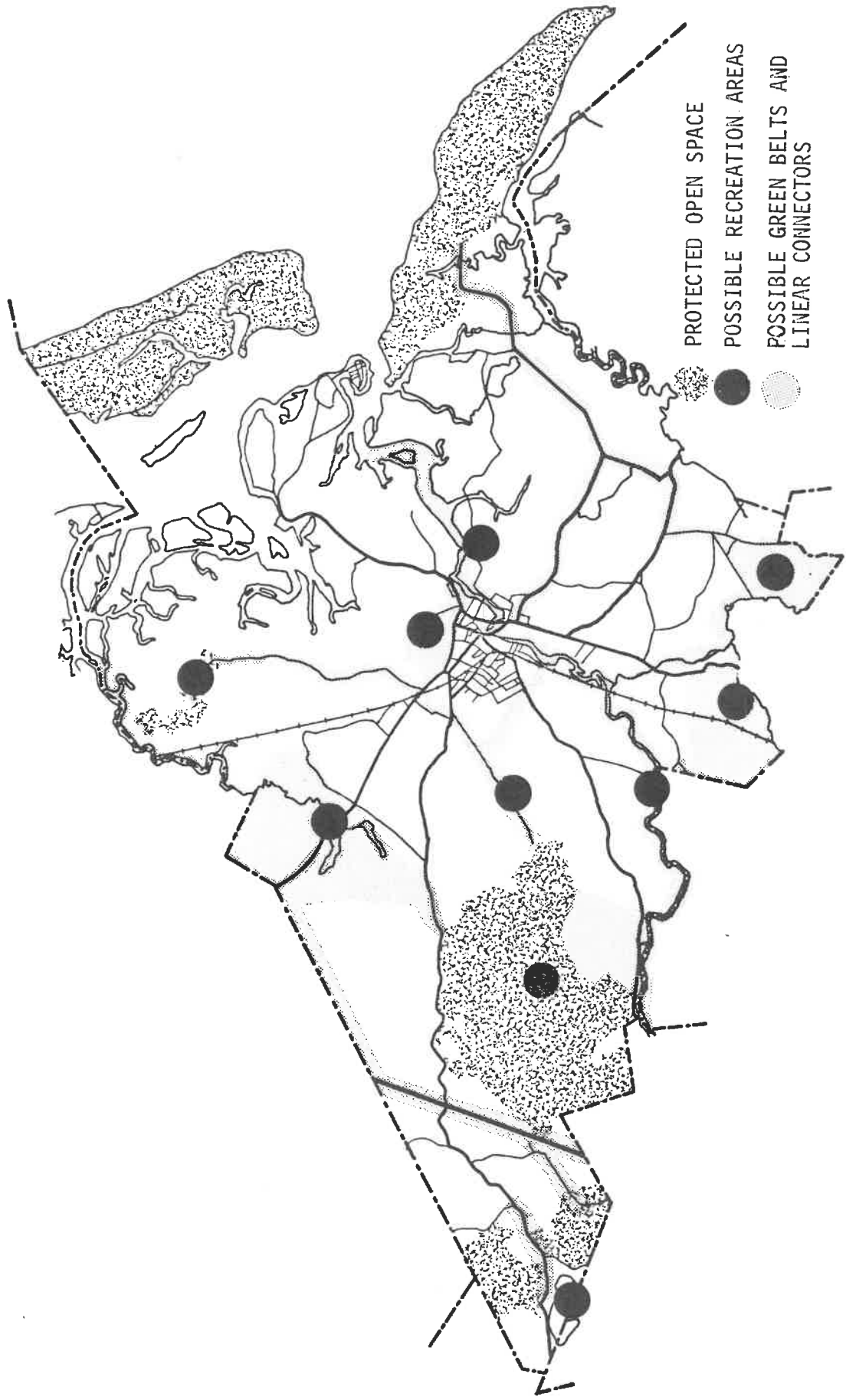
Using certain legislative options available to the Town, flood damage can be reduced, water supplies protected, wildlife enhanced, and recreational activities expanded. However, if no real action is taken, the Town will face increasing problems of polluted water, costly flooding, diminished animal and fish populations, and progressive degradation of the natural environment. The new Wetlands Bylaw, approved at this year's Annual Town Meeting, is an important first step. The Master Plan will develop and identify other necessary alternatives to safeguard these resources.

OPEN SPACE

The protection and maintenance of open areas in their natural state creates a multi-use resource for some or all of the following:

- Maintenance of Ipswich's visual character.
- Active or passive recreation for the entire population.
- A barrier between conflicting land uses, such as commercial and residential.
- Habitats for certain flora and fauna which cannot be maintained on developed land.
- Protection of watersheds, wetlands, and water recharge areas.

Developing an open space network in Ipswich will require the establishment of an order of priorities, based on an Open Space Plan, incorporating existing and proposed resource areas. The Town's Conservation Commission has already prepared valuable inventories of land that they would like to see preserved and made several proposals that will be carefully reviewed for the Open Space Plan.



OPEN SPACE CONCEPTUAL PLAN

The Open Space Plan should be developed in order to:

- Create a system of readily accessible open areas throughout the Town.
- Enhance the educational and recreational amenities of the Town, by providing a variety of open spaces.
- Connect major public land holdings containing playfields, picnic areas, water bodies, vistas, and areas suitable for bicycling and walking, to the most feasible extent.
- Develop the most suitable use for various land types.
- Enable the Town to qualify for State and Federal matching funds.

The map (opposite) shows an illustrative sketch for an open space network. It has been included to initiate discussion of what could be done within the Master Planning process.

CIRCULATION

Ipswich land use patterns are due to the Town's location and to contemporary social, economic, political, and technological factors. These land uses are inter-connected by the movement of goods and people along the street network. Public roads within the Town are generally adequate for vehicular movement to major highways in the area. Commuter service to Boston is provided daily by the Boston and Maine Railroad. However, some inadequacies do exist now, and will become a progressively greater handicap with additional development.

Town planning and the transportation of people and goods cannot be separated; therefore, the circulation of vehicles as well as people must have a major role in the Master Plan process. Areas of study needed under this heading include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Developing a balanced transportation system, meeting the demands of internal travel as well as connections with areas outside the Town.
- Alleviating traffic congestion and parking problems within the Town Center.
- Providing protected ways for pedestrians and bicycles.

FUTURE LAND USE

Much of the time and effort expended so far in the planning process in Ipswich has been devoted to determining how Ipswich should grow. Since some growth is inevitable, a comprehensive plan defining goals and objectives and a step-by-step action program to control and shape development are essential. From the responses to the survey and discussions between the Planning Board and the various subcommittees of the Planning Advisory Committee, a consensus has been reached: Ipswich must maintain its character as a low-density, New England coastal town, while attempting to stabilize the tax rate by expanding the Town's economic base.

The Town must therefore plan and program the use of its human, land, water, and economic resources to achieve this goal. This can only be accomplished through the efforts of responsible citizens, sound economic policies, and a full understanding of the complex inter-relationships that exist between various types of land use. Studies used to formulate a future land use plan include:

- Mapping of pertinent physiographic information, such as topography, wetlands, soils limitations, flood plains, and water bodies.
- A land use survey showing current land uses - residential, commercial, public, and recreational - and also delineating areas of vacant developable land.
- Cost-revenue studies of alternative land uses.
- Continuing evaluation of public attitudes and preferences with regard to land use.
- Circulation and transportation studies.

Most of this work has already been completed by the Consultant and the different subcommittees of the Planning Advisory Committee, and the emphasis should now be shifted to integrating this information into a Master Plan, including recommendations to be submitted to the Town Meeting. Changes in the Zoning Bylaws, possible land acquisitions and other capital expenditures, and revision in other Town Bylaws are needed to implement the Future Land Use Plan.

TOWN CENTER PLAN

Most people would agree that certain improvements are required to make Ipswich's Town Center a viable economic and visual resource. Revising the sign bylaw is a first step, but in order to complete the revitalization of this area, certain detailed studies must be included in the Master Plan. The following specific areas

for study have been identified to develop policies for possible improvements:

- Traffic circulation
- Parking problems
- Pedestrian and bicycle movement
- Preservation of historic sites
- Development of the Ipswich River as a visual and recreational component in the Town Center
- Improvement of the aesthetic quality of the Town Center

NEEDED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

The implementation of the Master Plan rests in part upon the Town's undertaking of needed investments in buildings, land, equipment, and public services. Some capital improvements are necessary for the assurance of the public health and well-being; others are highly desirable for cultural or educational enrichment.

Town revenues and expenditures are growing in Ipswich, along with the population. The largest category of expenditure in every year is education. Second in importance has been public safety. The chief source of revenue continues to be the property tax, which is one of the few sources of revenue over which the Town can exert complete control. Should Ipswich be able to lower the proportion of tax income to total revenues, it would lessen the financial burden on the residents. A major issue of the Master Plan is therefore to find the best way to finance necessary projects without substantially increasing local taxes. This can be achieved by:

- Assessing the need for and priority of capital improvements, in terms of the well-being of Town residents.
- Determining their fiscal implications on the Town's tax base, debt structure, and operating expenditures.
- Investigating alternative Federal and State funding sources.
- Evaluating the long-term impacts on the tax base of generating additional income by improving the Town's competitive position for new tax revenue uses, such as industry and commerce.

NEW BYLAWS

The major tools for implementing the land use recommendations of the Master Plan are:

- A new Zoning Bylaw which takes into account the current development pressures in Ipswich, the physical, economic, and social recommendations of the Master Plan, and the proposed new State enabling legislation.
- Revisions to the Subdivision Regulations to give the Planning Board greater control over the quality of new development.
- Updating of the Town's Building Code to make it responsive to the current and anticipated future needs for quality construction in Ipswich and to the proposed State-wide Code.

These three legislative options must complement and reinforce each other, in order to establish and maintain a high quality of development in Ipswich.

THE MASTER PLAN

To summarize, the Ipswich Master Plan must fulfill the following requirements:

- Address itself to the community's development objectives, as determined in the planning process.
- Include research conducted on the growth and development of the Town.
- Provide direction for its implementation and administration.
- Set up a framework to coordinate government activities which affect the Town's growth and development.
- Establish guidelines to administer land use controls.
- Be concise and readable, so as to increase public understanding and acceptance of its recommendations.

And, most important of all, provide a vehicle for continuous re-examination of the plan, to adjust for future needs of the Town. Therefore, the planning process established to produce this plan will continue as a permanent method of planning in Ipswich.

**MASTER
PLAN
TASKS
COMPLETED**

APPENDIX

- A survey of the Town's residents was conducted and the results were summarized in the Problems and Opportunities Report of November, 1972.
- Various regional and local information was compiled and analyzed, including a review of Town government activity, MAPC projections, and Census data. This material was presented to the Planning Board and the Planning Advisory Committee.
- Review of existing studies: Various engineering and natural resource studies provided by the Planning Board were reviewed and assessed.
- Land development trends: The activities of developers were reviewed and compared with the regional market assessment of MAPC. A land use map was prepared.
- Zoning review: The Town's Bylaws were reviewed and several memoranda considered by the Planning Board.
- Conceptual future land use maps were presented to the Planning Board in February, 1973, and were discussed at several meetings thereafter. A report describing each of these hypothetical alternatives was also prepared and presented at that time.

**RELEVANT
STATISTICS
CONCERNING
IPSWICH**

IPSWICH HOUSING UNITS, 1970

Units by Type	Total Units		Owner Occupied		Rental Units	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1 unit detached	2,401	70.80	2,108	89.90	229	25.41
1 unit attached	15	.44	15	.63	00	0.00
2 units	342	10.08	162	6.84	172	19.08
3-4 units	276	8.13	38	1.60	215	23.86
5+ units	338	9.96	30	1.26	281	31.18
Mobile homes and trailers	19	.56	15	.63	4	.44
TOTALS	3,391	100.00	2,368	100.00	901	100.00

IPSWICH SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS - 1970

Median income	\$11,278
Percent households with \$15,000+ income	25.6
Percent poverty level households	5.1
Percent employed in manufacturing	28.3
Percent employed in white collar jobs	55.0
Population growth, 1960-1970	25.9

IPSWICH OPEN LANDS

Beaches, State Forest, and conservation land	<u>acres</u> 2,300
Salt marshes	4,400
Inland wetlands	3,400

IPSWICH AGE COMPOSITION, 1960-1970

	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>
0-19 years	2,872	4,043
20-29	1,000	1,426
30-39	1,398	1,254
40-49	1,313	1,398
50-59	759	1,172
60-64	333	377
65 and over	<u>969</u>	<u>1,080</u>
	8,544	10,750

IPSWICH SOURCES OF FAMILY INCOME

<u>Source</u>	<u>Family units</u>	<u>Median</u>
Salary income	2,500	\$11,212
Non-farm, self-employed	342	7,410
Farm, self-employed	30	
Social Security	542	1,581
Public welfare	102	1,185

ESTIMATED DEVELOPABLE LAND BY ZONING DISTRICT

<u>Zoning District</u>	<u>Maximum allowable # of units per acre</u>	<u>Remaining developable acres (approx.)*</u>	<u>Holding capacity in units</u>
PCD	4	185	1,150
RRA	1	4,000	3,200
RA	2	1,000	1,600
SR	3	250	600
RB	4	100	320
GR	8**	100	600
IR	30***	50	300
		<u>5,500</u>	<u>7,770</u>

* excluding wetlands, slope areas, and current developed areas
 ** with special permit

IPSWICH OCCUPATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Professional, technical	987	22.06
Managerial	397	8.87
Sales	343	7.66
Clerical	735	16.42
Craft, foreman	520	11.62
Operatives	567	15.02
Laborers	148	3.30
Farmers	67	1.49
Services	615	13.52
Unemployed	157	3.50

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

TOWN MANAGER: Leonard J. Silvia
Richard Conti (until 1973)

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS:

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George R. Mathew
John P. Prosser
Curtis Tuttle
Jason A. Sokolov
William Thoen
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Mrs. E.O. Jennings
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Albert Harkness III
Cornelius Cleary
Thomas Emery