



# Ipswich Community Development Plan

*Final Report*

*July 2003, updated 2007*

*"...there are many sands at the  
entrance of the Harbour ... Here  
are many rising hills, and on  
their tops and descents are many  
corn fields and delightful groves ...  
plain marsh ground, fit  
for pasture, or salt ponds.*

*There is also Okes, Pines, Walnuts,  
and other wood to make this place  
an excellent habitation, being  
a good and safe harbour."*

*-Captain John Smith of Ipswich  
1614*



## **Ipswich Growth Management Steering Committee**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Ipswich at a Crossroads .....	1
1.2 An Overview of the Community Development Plan.....	1
1.3 Guiding Principles for Smart Growth .....	4
1.4 Planning for Growth in Ipswich.....	5
1.5 Land Use Guide Plan.....	8
1.6 Action Plan for Ipswich’s Future .....	9
1.6.1 Housing Action Plan .....	9
1.6.2 Economic Development Action Plan .....	11
1.6.3 Transportation Action Plan .....	12
 <b>CHAPTER 1: PLANNING FRAMEWORK</b>	
<b>2. PLANNING FRAMEWORK .....</b>	<b>16</b>
2.1 The Ipswich Vision Statement .....	16
2.2 Ipswich Goals Statement.....	17
2.3 Housing Goals and Objectives.....	17
2.4 Economic Development Goals and Objectives.....	19
2.5 Transportation Goals and Objectives.....	20
 <b>CHAPTER 2: ACTION PLAN FOR IPSWICH'S FUTURE</b>	
<b>OVERVIEW OF THE ACTION PLAN.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>A NOTE ON IPSWICH’S INFRASTRUCTURE.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>3. HOUSING ACTION PLAN .....</b>	<b>27</b>
3.1 Narrative Summary.....	27
3.2 Implementation Matrix.....	28
3.3 Description of Action Items .....	31
3.3.1 Promoting Housing in Appropriate Areas.....	31
3.3.2 Expanding Opportunities for Multi-Family and Senior Housing.....	33
3.3.3 Encouraging Compatible Residential Development .....	35
3.3.4 Providing More Affordable Housing .....	37
3.4 Impact of Housing Policies.....	41
<b>4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN .....</b>	<b>43</b>
4.1 Narrative Summary.....	43
4.2 Implementation Matrix.....	44
4.3 Description of Action Items .....	47
4.3.1 Improving Business Zoning .....	47
4.3.2 Encouraging Appropriate Uses Downtown.....	50

4.3.3	Encouraging Compatible Business Development .....	50
4.3.4	Sustaining Farm and Fishery Economies .....	52
4.3.5	Conserving the Town’s Limited Water Supply.....	54
<b>5.</b>	<b>TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN .....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Narrative Summary.....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Implementation Matrix.....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Description of Action Items .....</b>	<b>58</b>
5.3.1	Providing Safe Roads with Adequate Capacity .....	58
5.3.2	Making Transportation Systems Compatible with Ipswich’s Character .....	61
5.3.3	Supporting Non-Automotive Transportation Modes .....	63
5.3.4	Providing Appropriate Parking .....	64
5.3.5	Considering Transportation Factors in Local Decision Making .....	67

### CHAPTER 3: COMMUNITY PROFILE

<b>6.</b>	<b>HOUSING PROFILE .....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>6.1</b>	<b>Existing Housing Stock.....</b>	<b>71</b>
6.1.1	Number of Housing Units .....	72
6.1.2	Age and Condition of Housing Stock.....	72
6.1.3	Characteristics of Existing Housing Stock.....	73
6.1.4	Housing Ownership.....	76
6.1.5	Length of Residency.....	77
6.1.6	Vacancy Rates and Abandoned or Vacant Units.....	78
6.1.7	Home Sales Activity.....	78
<b>6.2</b>	<b>Residential Zoning, Regulations, and Development Patterns.....</b>	<b>80</b>
6.2.1	Residential Zoning Districts.....	80
6.2.2	Additional Residential Zoning Regulations .....	81
6.2.3	Residential Development Patterns.....	82
6.2.4	Housing Permit Data and Recent Housing Trends.....	83
<b>6.3</b>	<b>Potential for Future Residential Growth.....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>6.4</b>	<b>Housing Affordability Analysis .....</b>	<b>87</b>
6.4.1	Housing Costs .....	87
6.4.2	Housing Affordability Indices.....	90
6.4.3	Inventory of Affordable Housing.....	92
<b>6.5</b>	<b>Housing Needs.....</b>	<b>94</b>
6.5.1	Changing Demographics .....	94
6.5.2	Family Housing .....	94
6.5.3	Rental Housing.....	95
6.5.4	Affordable and Subsidized Housing .....	95
6.5.5	Senior Housing and Special Needs Housing.....	96
<b>6.6</b>	<b>Housing Resources.....</b>	<b>97</b>
6.6.1	Ipswich Zoning Bylaw .....	97
6.6.2	Affordable Housing Organizations and Programs .....	97

<b>7.</b>	<b>ECONOMIC PROFILE .....</b>	<b>100</b>
7.1	<b>Ipswich’s Labor Force.....</b>	<b>100</b>
7.1.1	Labor Force Profile and Unemployment Statistics .....	100
7.1.2	Occupation of Ipswich Residents.....	101
7.1.3	Local Employment Trends in Ipswich .....	102
7.1.4	Commuting Patterns.....	104
7.2	<b>Ipswich Economic Base .....</b>	<b>104</b>
7.2.1	Ipswich Businesses.....	104
7.2.2	Major Ipswich Industries.....	105
7.2.3	Tax Base.....	108
7.2.4	Economic Development Organizations and Strategies .....	110
7.3	<b>Location of Economic Activities .....</b>	<b>112</b>
7.3.1	Business, Commercial and Industrial Zoning .....	112
7.3.2	Commercial Areas.....	114
7.3.3	Industrial Areas .....	115
7.4	<b>Future Economic Considerations.....</b>	<b>116</b>
7.4.1	Availability of Land for Future Economic Development.....	116
7.4.2	Projected Labor Force and Projected Jobs .....	116
7.4.3	Infrastructure .....	117
<b>8.</b>	<b>TRANSPORTATION PROFILE.....</b>	<b>118</b>
8.1	<b>Regional Highway System and Commuting Patterns .....</b>	<b>118</b>
8.1.1	Residence Locations and Workplace Destinations.....	119
8.1.2	Journey-to-Work Mode of Travel .....	119
8.1.3	Commuting Times.....	120
8.2	<b>Existing Street System in Ipswich .....</b>	<b>121</b>
8.2.1	Jurisdictional Classification of Ipswich Streets.....	121
8.2.2	Functional Use Classification of Ipswich Streets.....	122
8.2.3	Traffic Conditions on Ipswich Streets.....	124
8.2.4	Scenic Roadways.....	125
8.2.5	Safety on Ipswich Streets .....	126
8.3	<b>Alternative Transportation Options in Ipswich.....</b>	<b>127</b>
8.3.1	Commuter Rail .....	128
8.3.2	Van Services.....	128
8.3.3	Bicycle and Pedestrian Access.....	128
8.4	<b>Parking .....</b>	<b>130</b>
8.5	<b>Future Transportation Considerations.....</b>	<b>131</b>
8.5.1	Development Trends .....	131
8.5.2	Infrastructure Investments.....	131
8.5.3	Transportation Recommendations from Previous Studies .....	132

## MAPS AND FIGURES

Land Suitability Map .....	Figure 1-1
Land Use Guide Plan .....	Figure 1-2
Housing Suitability Map/Action Plan .....	Figure 3-1
Economic Development Suitability Map/Action Plan.....	Figure 4-1
Transportation Action Map.....	Figure 5-1
Size of Housing Units in Ipswich, 1990 and 2000.....	Figure 6-1
Size of Housing Units in Nearby Essex County Communities, 1990 and 2000 .....	Figure 6-2
Home Sales Activity in Ipswich, 1992-2001 .....	Figure 6-3
Zoning Map.....	Figure 6-4
1999 Land Use Map.....	Figure 6-5
Single-Family Housing Permit Activity, 1995-2001 .....	Figure 6-6
Median Residential Home Sale Price in Ipswich, 1992-2001.....	Figure 6-7
Transportation Inventory Map .....	Figure 8-1

## APPENDICES

Demographic Profile.....	Appendix A
Business Profile .....	Appendix B
State and Federal Resources to Provide Low and Moderate Income Housing .....	Appendix C
Recommendations from the Green Ring Report and Open Space & Recreation Plan .....	Appendix D

## RELATED DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE INTO THIS PLAN

An Open Space & Recreation Plan for the Town of Ipswich, January 2000  
Creating a Vision for the Future, July 2000  
The Vision for Open Space: The Ipswich Green Ring Report, July 2000

# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## 1.1 Ipswich at a Crossroads

Ipswich is a unique and beautiful community on the north shore of Massachusetts. Although the Town lies squarely within the ring of suburbs and exurbs that surround Boston, Ipswich has been able to remain basically a “country town”—a community with a vibrant and well-defined downtown surrounded by rural lands including farms, forests, and marshes. The sense of being a vibrant small town is more than just an appearance. The Town supports a diverse economic base that still includes farming and fishing industries as well as manufacturing, office, and locally-owned retail businesses. And, although housing prices have climbed rapidly in recent years, Ipswich has been able to retain a degree of social and economic diversity.

The Town’s ability to preserve so much of what makes it unique in the face of so much change regionwide is more than just luck. It is the result of deliberate local policies—ranging from zoning bylaws to spending decisions—that have been implemented over the past years and decades. Yet, as regional housing, economic, traffic, and land development pressures continue grow, the Town will need to do even more if it hopes to remain a “country town,” as its Vision Statement says. Many of these actions will require bold initiatives on the part of the Town: for example, investing money in preservation or community facilities now in order to gain long-term benefits. Others will force the Town to weigh and balance different objectives that sometimes conflict with one another: for example, the desire to mitigate traffic congestion without destroying the “small town” feel of the Town’s roads. While Ipswich’s residents agree that the Town must preserve its landscape, community, and way of life, the challenge now is to decide how best to accomplish this—what combination of policies will be most effective, what tradeoffs are necessary, and how the Town should prioritize its efforts. Through the Community Development Plan, Ipswich and its residents are answering these important questions.

## 1.2 An Overview of the Community Development Plan

The Community Development Plan is a document of, by, and for the residents of Ipswich. The recommendations of the Plan reflect the input of the Town’s residents and business people, as well as the guidance of the 24-member Growth Management Steering Committee and the Ipswich Department of Planning and Development. A team of consultants led by Daylor Consulting Group of Braintree assisted the Steering Committee by helping to frame key issues and opportunities for public discussion, helping to develop Community Development Plan recommendations, and preparing reports, maps and graphics.

The Community Development Plan is based on an inclusive public process that proceeded in three parts. Beginning in early 2000, the Town held a public visioning session and distributed a survey to obtain feedback on what type of community Ipswich’s residents would like the Town to be 10 or 20 years in the future. Based on this input, the Town worked with the consulting firm Community Design Partnership to develop The Ipswich Vision Statement (see **Section 2**). During the second part of the planning process, the Town hired Daylor Consulting Group to work with town staff and the Growth Management Steering Committee to take the residents’ Vision and shape it into a preliminary set of goals, policies, and action steps. Finally, these preliminary planning elements were presented back to the public for their comments

and suggestions. The final Community Development Plan incorporates this public input and spells out a pragmatic set of action steps to guide Ipswich into the future.

The Community Development Plan is organized into three chapters plus this Executive Summary:

- Executive Summary (Section 1)
- Chapter 1 (Section 2): Planning Framework
- Chapter 2 (Section 3-5): Action Plan for Ipswich’s Future
- Chapter 3 (Sections 6-8): Community Profile

The focus of this Plan is mainly on three topics: Housing, Economic Development, and Transportation.<sup>1</sup> A fourth important topic—open space—was addressed in detail in the Town’s 2000 Green Ring Report and in the 2000 Open Space and Recreation Plan, which are incorporated by reference into this Plan. To tie together these open space plans with the other three planning elements, the Community Development Plan contains a comprehensive Land Use Guide Plan, which is part of this Executive Summary.

*This Community Development Plan is not a static document. In the summer of 2007, recognizing the need to incorporate a more specific focus on resource efficiency and sustainability issues, the CDP Implementation Task Force convened to propose additions to the goals, policies and action steps included in this Plan. These amendments were adopted by the Planning Board in September of 2007. At the time of the Board’s vote, The Ipswich Commission on Energy Use and Climate Protection baseline report, “Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Inventory, Ipswich, Massachusetts,” along with the subsequent recommendations that will emerge from the Commission’s analysis, were incorporated by reference in the Plan.*

It is important to note that a Community Development Plan is not intended to be a comprehensive municipal plan. As such, there are certain topics—particularly public facilities and services (e.g., schools, public safety, and social and cultural services) and infrastructure (e.g., roads and utilities)—that are addressed in this Plan only as they relate to the topics at hand, not in an in-depth manner. Typically, facilities and services are the subject of more detailed studies that are commissioned separately by the Town through its various departments. Recognizing, however, that facilities and infrastructure could be serious impediments to Ipswich’s future growth and/or fiscal or environmental sustainability, the Plan does identify major facility and infrastructure constraints. See **Table 1-1** as well as “A Note on Ipswich’s Infrastructure,” which is located just before **Section 3**.

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<sup>1</sup> Although this plan is not a Master Plan in that it does not contain all the elements needed to qualify as a Master Plan under Massachusetts law, it does satisfy the requirements for the Town’s Community Development Plan, as required by Executive Order 418. The preparation of the Plan was funded partially by the Town of Ipswich and partially through the Executive Order 418 Community Development Planning program, which is funded by the Massachusetts Department of Economic Development, Department of Housing and Community Development, Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, and Executive Office of Transportation and Construction.

## How to Use This Plan

The Community Development Plan is a guidance document—not law. It is up to the Town’s legislative and executive bodies, such as Town Meeting, the Board of Selectmen, and other boards and commissions, to implement the Plan’s recommendations over the upcoming months and years. To this end, the Community Development Plan contains an action plan for each topic—housing, economic development, and transportation—that identifies the specific steps that the Town should take to implement the Plan. The action plans also designate what group(s) in Ipswich are responsible for implementing each action step, and in what timeframe. In order to ensure the action plan is generally adhered to, the Town should establish a Community Development Plan Implementation Committee. One of this group’s responsibilities should be to continually review the action plan and monitor the Town’s progress toward implementing the Plan.

In addition to acting on the various policies and initiatives identified in the action plans, Ipswich’s boards and commissions should consistently use this document to guide their decision making process with regard to major Town decisions—for example, permitting decisions by the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals, and priority-setting by the Open Space Committee. One way to do this would be to pass a general bylaw that requires all Town boards and commissions to evaluate whether their actions are consistent with the Community Development Plan, and, if they are not, to state why the board or commission has taken an action that is inconsistent with the Plan. This system will not only encourage boards and commissions to act in a way that furthers the Town’s long-term interests; it will also make the reasons for Town decisions more transparent and more amenable to review by local residents.

### 1.3 Guiding Principles for Smart Growth

As discussed above, planning is the process of translating a community’s ideas and wishes into concrete goals, which can then lead to specific planning proposals. **Section 2** (Ipswich’s Planning Framework) includes **The Ipswich Vision Statement** as well as a more detailed **Goals Statement**, both of which guided the preparation of the Community Development Plan. The Growth Management Steering Committee has also encapsulated the Town’s goals into a set of nine **Guiding Principles for Smart Growth**, which are included in the Executive Summary because they concisely articulate the Town’s intended approach to future planning and development issues.

<b>Ipswich’s Guiding Principles for Smart Growth</b>	
<b>1. Provide a range of housing opportunities for residents of all income levels and abilities.</b>	Different housing choices are essential for Ipswich to remain a diverse community, and for the Town to continue to be able to welcome a variety of new residents who wish to live in Ipswich.
<b>2. Reduce sprawl by limiting excess roadways and by evaluating and controlling the growth impacts associated with sewer extensions.</b>	New growth should be focused in and near the downtown, or in compact configurations elsewhere in Town. Extensive new roads and spread-out development patterns are generally inconsistent with these smart growth principles and should be minimized through regulations and incentives.
<b>3. Provide a variety of transportation choices. Develop and enhance non-motorized travel options by developing new paths and trails, connecting existing paths and trails, and making roadways and intersections more pedestrian-friendly.</b>	With a compact town center and commuter rail service, Ipswich is well-positioned to reduce its use of automobiles and increase its use of other travel modes.
<b>4. Protect the village character and strong “sense of place” of downtown Ipswich, with its locally-owned businesses, mix of uses, healthy economy, pedestrian-friendly environment, historic resources, multi-modal transportation, and prominent role in community life.</b>	Where applicable, new development proposals and proposed changes to the Town’s bylaws and regulations should work to enhance these positive qualities of downtown Ipswich.
<b>5. Enforce the highest standards when reviewing development projects that affect the Town’s critical natural resources, such as the Great Marsh, the Parker River-Essex Bay ACEC, the threatened Ipswich River, sites of historical and archeological value, and other resources that are threatened or endangered, such as contiguous habitat.</b>	

## Ipswich's Guiding Principles for Smart Growth

6. **Increase the Town's ability to influence and direct development consistent with these smart growth principles by strengthening the planning and review processes, particularly through the use of incentives. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective.**
7. **Support the survival of resource-based businesses, as they are critical to the character of the town, the conservation of open space, and the livelihood of local residents.** Shellfishing and farming are vital elements of Ipswich's sense of identity and sense of place. Future Town policies and development decisions should be favorable to the continuation of these activities.
8. **Ensure that the Town's population does not exceed the carrying capacity of its environment, infrastructure, and services by anticipating future growth and working actively to reduce future growth potential while at the same time planning for increased services as feasible.**

~~Work toward making Ipswich a more ecologically sustainable community through education and incentives to reduce water and electric use, better manage the Town's septic systems and wastewater, and encourage the use of alternative energy sources.~~

9. ***Work toward making Ipswich a more ecologically sustainable community through policy, education and incentives to: a) reduce water and energy consumption, solid waste disposal and greenhouse gas emissions; b) better manage the Town's septic systems and wastewater, and c) encourage waste reduction, recycling and the development and use of renewable energy sources.***

### 1.4 Planning for Growth in Ipswich

As suggested by several of the smart growth principles, effective planning must consider the interconnectedness between natural and human systems. As development occurs in Ipswich, it affects land and water resources, infrastructure and transportation systems, and the overall character of the Town. Each of these systems and features has a limited ability to accommodate new growth and development before it exceeds its capacity or becomes degraded. At the same time, new development threatens to impair local surface and groundwater resources, fragment natural ecosystems, and change the historic, rural character that now prevails in many sections of Ipswich.

These considerations do not mean that the Town should completely close its doors to new growth: this approach would not only be impractical, but also undesirable. In particular, there are many forms of growth, development, and change that will be critical in allowing the Town to meet its goals with regard to housing, economic development, and transportation. However, these considerations do underscore the importance of planning both for an appropriate *amount* of future growth, and for appropriate *types* of growth. In terms of the amount of growth that can be accommodated in Ipswich, **Table 1-1** identifies several measures of “carrying capacity” in the Town. In some cases, exceeding these carrying capacities could have severe impacts on the Town's natural environment or fiscal resources. In these cases, good planning would dictate that the Town guide growth so as to stay within these carrying capacities, unless there is a compelling reason to exceed them. As for the types of growth that Ipswich should seek to attract, this Plan recognizes that not all forms of growth have identical—or even similar—impacts. Accordingly, the Plan includes strategies to guide growth into forms that will consume less land, put less

pressure on the Town's infrastructure and public services, and complement the Town's traditional landscape and character.

**Table 1-1  
Measures of Carrying Capacity in Ipswich**

<b>System or Resource</b>	<b>Existing Usage</b>	<b>Carrying Capacity</b>	<b>Growth-Related Issues</b>
Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Town has a land area of about 21,000 acres, and currently contains about 5,600 dwelling units.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>About 5,000 acres of buildable land remains.</li> <li>If all of this land is developed in accordance with zoning, the Town could see 4,100 new dwelling units and 2.5 million square feet of new business development (see <b>Section 6.3</b>).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The remaining 5,000 acres could accommodate even more growth if zoning changes or Comprehensive Permits allow for denser development.</li> <li>Development will reduce the Town's supply of open space and may alter town character.</li> </ul>
Public Water Supply <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average daily water usage is 1.16 million gallons/day (mgd). This equals 88.6 gallons/person/day.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Town's water permit allows 1.18 mgd average daily withdrawal. The stated safe yield for the Town's sources is 1.69 mgd, but the reliable year-round supply is probably less than this</li> <li>For each 0.10 mgd of excess capacity, the Town could accommodate about 350 new dwelling units or 1 million square feet of office space.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water supply is the Town's most severe growth limitation.</li> <li>New supplies, if needed, would probably be difficult and expensive to obtain.</li> <li>Even if system capacity is not exceeded, new water demand will further stress the Ipswich and Parker River Watersheds.</li> </ul>
Ipswich River and Parker River Watersheds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two reservoirs in the Parker River Watershed and wells in the Ipswich River Watershed supply the Town's water.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impaired water quality and low flow conditions are already serious problems in the Ipswich River. In this sense, humans have already exceeded the carrying capacity of this system.</li> <li>Upstream users are most responsible for problems on the river, although Ipswich's activities also contribute.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absent new conservation practices and careful management, further water usage could worsen water quantity and quality conditions.</li> </ul>
Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Other Wastewater Disposal <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The public sewer system and WWTP serve 1,760 users. On-site systems serve 4,000 users.</li> <li>The WWTP is now at 50% capacity (2.7 mgd peak flow versus 5.4 mgd peak capacity).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As growth occurs, Ipswich will exceed the capacity of its water supply before it exceeds the capacity of the WWTP.</li> <li>Major expansions of the Town's sewer system are not currently contemplated. Most recent new development has used on-site disposal systems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sewerage commonly results in a net loss of water from local watersheds, which contributes to low flow conditions.</li> </ul>
Public Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>About 1,900 students are currently enrolled in the public schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>According to the School Dept., the schools are currently at 95% capacity.</li> <li>Based on the current average of 0.34 school children per household and 50 new homes per year, the schools will reach capacity within about five years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some types of new housing attract far more school children than others.</li> <li>School enrollments vary over time due to age cohort trends in addition to new growth.</li> </ul>
Public Safety Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ipswich Police and Fire Dept. both provide public safety services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both departments are nearing capacity for facilities and staffing. The Town has discussed expanding these facilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future growth projections will affect the need for additional facilities and staff.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Source: Great Neck, Jeffreys Neck and Little Neck Wastewater Facilities Alternatives Draft Environmental Impact Report, May 2002.

Equally important as the amount of growth that Ipswich can or should accommodate is the type and location of this growth. Through the Community Development Plan, the Green Ring Plan (prepared in 2000), and the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan (updated in 2000), the Town has made choices and set priorities concerning where new growth would be most suitable and where land should be targeted for conservation. The Town has also continued to refine its conservation priorities as it decides what lands to protect using funds raised through the recent Open Space Bond.

These guidelines concerning suitable areas for growth and for conservation are shown on **Figure 1-1**, the Land Suitability Map. Through this map and the Land Use Guide Plan (see below), the recommendations of this Community Development Plan are integrated with the Town's prior and ongoing open space planning to create a cohesive growth and conservation plan for Ipswich's future.

The Land Suitability Map divides the Town into three general classifications of land:

- **Not Available for Development:** Land that is not available for new development includes those areas that are permanently protected open space or wetlands (where no development is permitted) and those areas that are already developed. Some of the Town's developed areas—especially business areas—are suitable for redevelopment.
- **Suitable for Housing, Commercial, or Industrial Development:** These areas of Town are available for new development. Several factors determine the best land use for each area, including existing land uses, environmental characteristics (e.g., slope, soils, and wetlands), accessibility by automobile and other travel modes, and availability of infrastructure (e.g., water and sewer).
- **Less Suitable for Development:** Although these areas could legally be developed, they are less suitable for development because of environmental, scenic, historic and/or recreational values.<sup>3</sup> The Town, through its Green Ring Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan, and ongoing open space conservation activities, would like to protect these areas, or if protection is not possible, to encourage sensitive limited development.

## 1.5 Land Use Guide Plan

The Land Use Guide Plan (**Figure 1-2**) illustrates the recommended future land use patterns for the Town of Ipswich. The Land Use Guide Plan is actually a synthesis of two different themes: the recommended future zoning for the Town as well as future land conservation priorities. The eight desired future zoning categories are shown on the map in various shades of yellow, orange, red, pink, and grey. These include Rural Residential, Village Incentive, Intown Residential, Central Business, General Business, Highway Business, Industrial, and Limited Industrial. Conservation priorities are depicted with a green cross-

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<sup>3</sup> The areas shown on **Figure 1-1** as being Less Suitable for Development are meant to depict generalized corridors and patches within the Town, not specific parcels of land. These areas are derived from maps and analyses in the Green Ring Plan and Open Space and Recreation Plan, as well as the Open Space Committee's Open Space Bond List.

hatch, while lands that are already protected are shown in solid green. The recommendations shown on the Land Use Guide Plan build on the Town’s vision, goals, and principles for smart growth by translating these ideas into specific physical planning proposals. The following is a summary of some of the key action items depicted on the Land Use Guide Plan:

- Create a new Village Incentive zoning district to help direct new residential growth away from rural areas and into downtown and the immediately adjacent areas. The proposed Village Incentive area is located near public water and sewer, transportation, schools, stores, and services.
- Encourage a compact, vibrant, and aesthetically appealing mixed-use center in downtown Ipswich by dividing the current Business zone into separate Central Business and General Business areas that regulate use and design in a manner appropriate to the context.
- Avoid commercial sprawl on Route 1 by discouraging strip commercial in the Planned Commercial District.
- Conserve Ipswich’s open land—including farms, forests, and recreation lands—based on the priorities identified in the Green Ring Plan, the Open Space and Recreation Plan, and the Open Space Bond acquisition program. These priorities are shown on the map in green cross-hatching.

## **1.6 Action Plan for Ipswich’s Future**

The Land Use Guide Plan is supported by a range of specific policy recommendations related to housing, economic development, and transportation. A summary of these policies is provided below; a more complete explanation may be found in **Sections 3 through 5**.

### **1.6.1 Housing Action Plan**

Housing is a key part of what makes Ipswich unique: from downtown apartments to oceanside bungalows to traditional New England farmhouses, residences help define the Town’s physical landscape and determine what kinds of people choose to live here. In recent years, however, the Town has encountered two sets of challenges with regard to housing. The first set of challenges relates to the location and design of new development. Whereas many of Ipswich’s older homes blend gracefully into the Town’s semi-rural landscape or into its compact downtown, much of the Town’s newer housing follows a conventional template of suburban development that often brings with it a homogenization of landscape and community. The second set of challenges relates to the diversity and affordability of the Town’s housing stock. While Ipswich’s housing stock historically provided affordable options for a wide range of households (small and large, working class and wealthy), recent trends have undermined this diversity by favoring large homes over smaller ones, expensive homes over affordable ones, ownership units over rentals, and single-family units over other housing types.

Recognizing these threats to the Town’s character and socioeconomic diversity, Ipswich in recent years has taken steps to require appropriate siting and design for new development, as well as to meet the housing needs of a wide range of residents. Despite these efforts, however, the Town is still seeing new “sprawl” development and still falls short of providing enough affordable housing. For example, the Town’s affordable housing inventory of 351 units falls more than 200 units short of the state-mandated

level of 10% affordable housing. And the Town actually had less rental housing in 2000 than in 1990, even as the number of households in Ipswich grew 13%. This Plan identifies several housing needs in Ipswich, including additional rental housing, additional affordable housing for families, seniors, and young adults, and additional programs to encourage homeownership among moderate-income families. The following policies (which are detailed further in **Section 3**) are intended to address these housing-related challenges by building on the Town's past successes and focusing on areas where improvements can still be made.

**HOUSING POLICY 1: Promote both ownership and rental housing development in areas in and near the downtown that are already affected by development and have infrastructure in place to meet the needs of new residents.** Suggested action steps to implement this policy include establishing the new Village Incentive District for new village-scale housing; promoting housing in infill settings; promoting housing redevelopment and adaptive reuse; and encouraging mixed-use development downtown.

**HOUSING POLICY 2: Expand the areas throughout the Town where multi-family residential development and senior housing is allowed by special permit.** The Plan proposes adding one or more additional use categories to the zoning bylaw to allow clustered multi-family housing development in downtown settings, in the new Village Incentive District, and on environmentally suitable parcels in rural sections of the Town.

**HOUSING POLICY 3: Ensure that new residential development is environmentally and aesthetically compatible with the Town's existing landscape.** The Town should continue to encourage the use of Open Space Preservation Zoning and may want to consider making this lower-impact development method the only as-of-right housing use in certain environmentally sensitive areas. Other recommended measures include minimum upland requirements and design guidelines to ensure that new housing is consistent with the Town Character Statement.

**HOUSING POLICY 4: Increase the availability of affordable housing in the Town, and the amount of housing that counts toward the Town's 10% requirement under Chapter 40B.** Actions recommended to implement this policy include strengthening the Town's inclusionary housing requirements, providing municipal funding and land for affordable housing, providing support to local housing organizations, and conducting outreach to qualified candidates regarding the various housing programs available, including housing rehabilitation grants. Other suggested steps include programs that condition the resale of affordable properties, rental price restrictions, and just cause eviction controls.

***HOUSING POLICY 5: Encourage the reduction of resource consumption in new and existing residential developments. (ADD DESCRIPTION HERE)***

### **1.6.2 Economic Development Action Plan**

Ipswich has a diverse economic base that includes manufacturing, retail, service, and natural resource industries. The Town's diverse economy is an important part of the community's character and self-image: Ipswich is not just a bedroom community but also a place where people grow crops, make products, practice a wide variety of professions, and come to shop and relax. The economic development goals expressed in this Plan reflect the Town's desire to retain and enhance its diverse economic base, but not at the expense of the Town's natural resources and community character. Accordingly, the Town should focus on making the best use of existing business-zoned areas rather than re-zoning large areas of additional land for business use. This emphasis on enhancing current business areas and opportunities will require a combination of zoning changes, design guidelines, and other Town actions, as well as initiative on the part of the private sector to take advantage of business opportunities in Ipswich.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY 1: Through appropriate business zoning and targeted marketing and recruitment efforts, seek to attract the types of businesses that Ipswich wishes to have in the Town.** The Town would like to attract several different types of businesses such as retail and service businesses downtown; low-impact office and light industrial uses in the industrial parks and along Route 1; and natural resource industries (including tourism) in the rural areas. A key action step to accomplish this is to revise the Town's business zoning so that each district more effectively encourages the types of uses the Town desires. At the same time, the Town should increase its business marketing, recruitment, and advocacy capacity to attract and retain desired businesses.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2: Allow for and encourage an appropriate mix of uses in and near the town center.** This policy focuses on facilitating the preferred types of development and redevelopment in the town center. Specific recommendations include zoning changes to encourage a mix of uses including housing, and improving the parking situation in the town center.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY 3: Ensure that business development and redevelopment is compatible with and enhances the Town's visual character and residential uses.** Action steps to implement this policy include creating design guidelines or a design review process, drafting a noise regulation, and refining the Town's site plan review.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY 4: Sustain Ipswich's agriculture and fisheries industries.** Actions steps related to this policy include streamlining the regulatory process for farmers, making available a purchase of development rights program, and adopting Right-to-Farm policies to protect local farmers from nuisance complaints. The Town can provide additional support to local farmers by preparing and disseminating publicity materials, educating local officials on the industry's importance, and providing direct technical assistance. Continuing efforts to improve the Town's water quality will help support the local shellfishing industry.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY 5: Make the best use of the Town's limited water supply.** Ipswich is likely to face severe water limitations in the future. Accordingly, the Town should begin implementing sustainable water use policies and regulations now, to ensure that water is available to meet

the needs of future businesses in the Town. These include investigating recycling wastewater, instituting conservation measures, monitoring and possibly limiting the number of private wells competing with public wells, improving stormwater infiltration, and minimizing irrigation water demand.

***ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY 6: Provide a framework for consideration of resource efficiency within economic development decisions. (ADD DESCRIPTION HERE)***

### **1.6.3 Transportation Action Plan**

Ipswich's transportation network not only links the Town's residents and businesses to one another and to the larger region; it also helps define the Town's unique character. Unlike many cities and towns in the region, Ipswich is a little bit "off the beaten path": it has no direct Interstate access and the Town's largest highway—Route 1—passes through the western section of Town, several miles from downtown. In general, roads do not dominate the landscape in Ipswich: no road is wider than two lanes, and many have retained their narrow alignment and rural character as they pass through fields or woods. The community also values its access to non-automotive modes of transport, such as the Commuter Rail, and has made a concerted effort to build and link a network of pedestrian and equestrian paths that provide circulation as well as recreation benefits.

Ipswich's transportation goals reflect the Town's desire to retain its small town character while at the same time benefiting from a safe and functional local transportation system. These goals suggest that the Town should generally pursue small-scale road projects that focus on improving problem intersections or road segments—not on wholesale road widening or other large scale road upgrades. Another major goal of the Town is to enhance non-automotive transportation options by developing and designating pedestrian and bicycle trails and routes. Finally, land use decisions play an important role in determining transportation demand and patterns. Several of the land use policies recommended in **Sections 3 and 4** will help focus mixed-use development near the downtown, where walking, bicycling, and commuter rail are all viable day-to-day modes of transport.

**TRANSPORTATION POLICY 1: Provide for safe and efficient roadways through limited infrastructure improvement projects and by adopting traffic regulations for new developments.** Action steps to further this policy include requiring traffic analyses for major projects, adopting site plan review standards, and conducting studies of "problem" intersections.

**TRANSPORTATION POLICY 2: Continue to develop the Town's transportation systems in a way that is compatible with the Town's character.** Possible ways to do this include instituting traffic calming techniques and reducing pavement widths where appropriate, adding to the Town's inventory of designated Scenic Roads, and creating a scenic overlay district to regulate the siting of development within a designated scenic corridor. Other action steps include allowing narrower subdivision roads in some cases, discontinuing no longer viable roadways, and allowing pre-existing private access roads to serve new development when appropriate.

**TRANSPORTATION POLICY 3: Support non-automotive transportation modes including cycling and walking.** As part of this policy, the Community Development Plan recommends the development of additional trails and sidewalks as well as efforts to support bicycling.

**TRANSPORTATION POLICY 4: Make the best use of existing parking downtown and provide additional parking, if necessary, to support downtown activities. Ensure that the Town's parking requirements are adequate for and consistent with the types of development that the Town would like to attract.** To implement this policy, the Town must institute a downtown parking management program that focuses on the efficient use of the downtown Market Street parking lot as well as on-street parking. Other action steps include providing additional commuter parking and updating the Town's Off-street Parking and Loading Regulations.

**TRANSPORTATION POLICY 5: Consider transportation factors when making local decisions related to issues such as planning, zoning, open space protection, and the siting of public facilities.** The primary recommendation to further this policy is to target specific types of development to those areas most able to accommodate the development in terms of the existing capacity of the transportation infrastructure.

***TRANSPORTATION POLICY 6: Reduce resource consumption by transportation systems. (ADD DESCRIPTION HERE)***



# Chapter 1: Planning Framework



*Ipswich Community Development Plan*

*Final Report – July 2003*

## 2. PLANNING FRAMEWORK

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As discussed in the Executive Summary (**Section 1**), the Town and their consultants conducted a multi-part public participation process as part of the Community Development Plan. The input received through this process, together with the guidance of the Growth Management Steering Committee and the recommendations of previous Town plans and studies, is encapsulated in two guidance statements—the Vision Statement and the Goals Statement. These statements summarize what type of community Ipswich’s residents would like the Town to be in the future, and are the basis for formulating the policies and recommendations of the Community Development Plan.

### 2.1 The Ipswich Vision Statement

The **Vision Statement** is a broad set of themes identifying what type of community Ipswich would like to be in the future. This statement is intended to be general, and to capture the overall consensus of the majority of the Town’s residents.

#### **IPSWICH IN 2020: The Ipswich Vision Statement**

**Ipswich in 2020 is a community that understands how to manage change by:**

- Protecting the town’s natural beauty, water resources, and environmental health through enhancing its “green infrastructure”
- Preserving its historic structures and sites
- Sustaining its rural heritage by supporting local farming
- Providing a wide variety of economic and housing opportunities to support social and economic diversity in the community

**In 2020, Ipswich remains a real country town, not simply a suburb or bedroom community.**

- The historic downtown core is surrounded by an ecologically diverse network of open spaces containing wildlife corridors and trails for equestrian and human use.
- The Ipswich River flows throughout the summer and water quality has improved so much in the estuary that clam beds are increasingly open for harvest.
- Housing is concentrated in the downtown core, where a lively village commercial center still offers owner-operated retail establishments.
- Environmentally-friendly businesses in the core and in a redeveloped Mitchell Road industrial park provide jobs for a significant proportion of local residents.
- Outside the core, fields and woods are interspersed along the roads with nodes of housing.
- Local farms survive, thanks to strong market and policy support from the community.
- Transportation alternatives to cars benefit local residents as well as visitors to Ipswich.
- The town’s successful preservation of open spaces and management of transportation makes it attractive to visitors, who admire historic sites and patronize downtown businesses in addition to enjoying beaches and other natural areas.

Source: “Creating a Vision for the Future,” July 2000.

## 2.2 Ipswich Goals Statement

The **Goals Statement** builds on the Vision, providing more specificity about how Ipswich would like to grow, change, and/or remain the same in the future. The Goals Statement provides the basis for the Community Development Plan policies and action steps. As the Plan is implemented in upcoming years, the Goals Statement will provide a “yardstick” to measure whether the Town is pursuing policies that are consistent with its residents’ desires.

The Goals Statement is divided into three sections, one for each of the three Community Development Plan topics (Housing, Economic Development, and Transportation). For each topic, three or four broad goals (shown in boldface) are followed by several more specific sub-goals or objectives.

## 2.3 Housing Goals and Objectives

### **H-1. Provide a variety of housing options to meet the needs of residents of diverse income, age, and family size to support social and economic diversity in the community.**

- a) Maintain the Town’s socio-economic diversity by providing a mix of housing types, including units that are permanently affordable.
- b) Provide affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families through the use of local, state, federal, and private resources.
- c) Encourage the development of affordable housing by providing incentives to developers.
- d) Utilize Open Space Preservation Zoning and other tools to reduce infrastructure costs, increase the amount of protected open space, and provide a housing alternative for families who do not wish to purchase and maintain a large lot.
- e) Create and enforce bylaws that call for the provision of affordable housing units.
- f) Provide adequate housing opportunities (both market rate and affordable as well as rental and homeownership) for those aged 55 and over.
- g) Provide more opportunities for aging long-term residents to downsize their housing and remain in Ipswich.
- h) Provide adequate housing for the disabled and others requiring special assistance.

### **H-2. Pro-actively guide growth so as to provide housing for Ipswich’s current and future residents while maintaining the Town’s pastoral character.**

- a) Promote development patterns that allow Ipswich to continue as both town and country, with a distinct separation between the developed and rural sections of the Town.
- b) Direct new residential development to appropriate areas, such as infill development in the downtown core and housing nodes outside the downtown.
- c) Discourage new conventional residential development in inappropriate areas, such as on large open space parcels.

- d) Encourage Open Space Preservation Development and/or small lot residential development near existing subdivisions in order to preserve large open space parcels.
- e) Promote residential development that adaptively reuses existing structures and takes advantage of existing infrastructure.
- f) Preserve the Town's scenic character by protecting existing farmland, forest, and marshland from overly consumptive residential subdivision development.
- g) Monitor the amount, location, type and design of new development within the Town.

**H-3. Maintain the quality of life in Ipswich's residential neighborhoods.**

- a) Protect Ipswich's scenic vistas and unique natural features.
- b) Preserve Ipswich's safe and peaceful character.
- c) Foster a sense of civic involvement among Town residents and local workers, allowing Ipswich to continue as a friendly, community-minded place.
- d) Continue to enhance quality of life by making improvements to the Town's infrastructure and streetscape.
- e) Maintain the Town's social diversity.
- f) Mitigate the potential negative impacts of growth on residential neighborhoods: impacts such as increased traffic, and water quantity or quality problems.
- g) Minimize the negative impacts of commercial and industrial development—such as increased traffic, noise, and pollution—on residentially zoned areas.
- h) Provide recreational, avocational, and cultural opportunities for the Town's diverse population.

**H-4. *Encourage resource efficiency in both new residential development and in the rehabilitation of existing housing stock to maintain the sustainability of the community.***

- a) Promote the use of energy efficient technology, including energy conservation measures.*
- b) Encourage green building design.*
- c) Foster the development and use of alternative energy sources.*
- d) Consider water conservation measures and groundwater protection and recharge to be critical components of sustainable housing design.*
- e) Promote construction and renovation of attached single and multi-family dwelling units to conserve energy use in residential development.*
- f) Municipally-sponsored housing initiatives should set the model for energy efficient choices and sustainability practices.*

## **2.4 Economic Development Goals and Objectives**

### **E-1. Maintain a sound and diverse economic base in order to provide local jobs, sustain overall fiscal and community vitality, and prevent Ipswich from becoming solely a “bedroom community.”**

- a) Promote the creation of a variety of local jobs and business opportunities to facilitate the Town’s effort to maintain its socio-economically diverse population.
- b) Increase revenue from commercially- and industrially-zoned land to reduce Ipswich’s dependence on residential property taxes.
- c) Promote the development of environmentally friendly businesses throughout the Town.
- d) Encourage job development so that Ipswich residents may work within the town.
- e) Cooperate with the development community to encourage economic development that is consistent with the character and scale of existing uses in Ipswich and the Town’s environment.
- f) In appropriate areas of the Town, promote business uses such as offices, high technology and research and development activities, limited industrial, and other “clean” businesses.

### **E-2. Strengthen and preserve Ipswich’s historic town center.**

- a) Maintain and enhance the character of Ipswich’s historic town center by promoting appropriate development that is designed at a pedestrian scale and enhances the downtown streetscape.
- b) Encourage infill development that allows for the adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of existing structures and previously developed sites.
- c) Promote the town center as a pedestrian-friendly shopping and service area and a neighborhood gathering place.
- d) Preserve the Town’s small-town character by encouraging the continuation and growth of a vital, downtown “Main Street” characterized by locally-owned businesses.
- e) Strengthen the viability of local retail businesses by promoting the Town’s historic downtown as well as its coastal beaches and other natural areas to visitors.

### **E-3. Sustain the Town’s rural and historic heritage by guiding the development of commercial and industrial businesses in a manner that preserves Ipswich’s pastoral character.**

- a) Target business development in areas already impacted by growth, such as the town center, Mitchell Road, and Route 1.
- b) Encourage clustered business development for the preservation of Ipswich’s open space.
- c) Encourage the creation of open space buffers and interior parcel development to preserve the visual character of major roads and scenic roads.

- d) Ensure that commercial development built under the Great Estates Preservation Development bylaw is consistent with the intent of the bylaw.
- e) Protect the Town's primary gateways along Routes 1, 1A and 133 by encouraging visually compatible development and guarding against undesirable strip commercial development.
- f) Improve the appearance of commercial and retail development through sign control, landscaping, design guidelines, and redevelopment.
- g) Guide new growth so as to complement and, wherever possible, adaptively reuse historic structures.

**E-4. Sustain the Town's rural heritage by supporting local natural resource-based industries.**

- a) Institute Town policies that promote the continuation of local farming.
- b) Institute new programs or take advantage of existing programs that promote the continuation of agricultural uses.
- c) Support the local farming industry by promoting and patronizing local growers.
- d) Develop additional land conservation tools and make better use of existing tools (such as Chapter 61A) to allow farmland to remain in agricultural use.
- e) Promote a healthy shellfish industry by addressing water pollution concerns that affect shellfish harvesting.
- f) Preserve coastal lands and waters to ensure the continuation of the local beach tourist industry.

**E-5. *Encourage resource efficiency in the economic development process to maintain the sustainability of the community.***

- a) *Promote increased energy efficiency in buildings and their associated transportation systems.*
- b) *Consider sustainability principles when evaluating proposed expansions of town infrastructure systems.*
- c) *Encourage the use of alternative energy resources in Ipswich.*
- d) *Promote the use of green building design in commercial development projects.*
- e) *Encourage energy efficient technology, including energy conservation measures.*
- f) *Encourage resource efficiency.*
- g) *The town should be the model for energy efficient choices for economic development through municipal policies and purchasing.*

**2.5 Transportation Goals and Objectives**

Recognizing that transportation services can either help or hinder a community's overall land use objectives, the transportation goals and objectives relate to larger issues of development and community character, not to just transportation systems *per se*.

**T-1. Provide and maintain a safe and efficient transportation system for private vehicles.**

- a) Improve traffic safety at key intersections where necessary.
- b) In Ipswich's town center, ensure that traffic congestion and efforts to mitigate it do not come at the expense of traditional village development patterns, pedestrian accessibility, and aesthetics.
- c) Promote safe and efficient traffic movement along arterial routes by controlling the amount, location and spacing of curb cuts.
- d) Identify areas of roads with narrow pavement width or other substandard conditions and assess whether improvements are required for safety reasons, weighing the potential impact of these improvements on rural character or neighborhood character.

**T-2. Provide viable non-automobile modes of transportation for Ipswich residents and workers.**

- a) Provide residents and visitors with transportation alternatives by providing safe and accessible sidewalks, crosswalks, and other pedestrian amenities.
- b) Foster a safe street environment for pedestrians and cyclists.
- c) Encourage recreational and commuter bicycling in Ipswich by providing bicycle facilities on existing roads wherever practical.
- d) Encourage use of the Commuter Rail.

**T-3. Develop town policies and infrastructure investment priorities that are harmonious with and promote the Town's overall community development objectives.**

- a) Through zoning and other policies, guide appropriate new development to the town center, where walking, biking, and public transportation are all viable modes of transportation.
- b) Through zoning and other policies, guide commercial and industrial development to those areas where there is sufficient transportation infrastructure to accommodate such uses.
- c) Through the Town's development review process, minimize curb cuts on arterial roadways in order to reduce the impact of new development on traffic congestion.

**T-4. *Promote resource efficient transportation choices, design and technology to maintain the sustainability of the community.***

- a) *Reduce automobile emissions in Ipswich.*
- b) *Increase the use of more efficient transportation choices.*
- c) *The town should be the model for energy efficient transportation choices through municipal policies and purchasing.*



# **Chapter 2: Action Plan for Ipswich's Future**



***Ipswich Community Development Plan***

***Final Report – July 2003***

## OVERVIEW OF THE ACTION PLAN

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The Action Plan for Ipswich's Future presents strategies for how the Town can achieve its goals related to housing, economic development, and transportation. The Action Plan is divided into three sections, each corresponding to one component of the Community Development Plan: Housing Action Plan, Economic Development Action Plan, and Transportation Action Plan. Within each section, there are three parts. The first part is a narrative summary describing the general thrust of the recommendations for each topic, and how they relate to the challenges that the Town is trying to address and the goals it is trying to promote. The second part is an Implementation Matrix that summarizes each of the strategies and spells out the suggested timeframe and group(s) responsible for implementing the strategy. Finally, the third part describes each of the strategies in greater detail.

The Implementation Matrix is a step-by-step guide for Ipswich to follow over the next few years to ensure that the Community Development Plan recommendations are put into action. Implementing the Community Development Plan will require a concerted and ongoing effort on the part of the Town's elected and appointed officials. However, the Community Development Plan—and the public consensus that it reflects—is too important for the Town not to carry through with its recommendations. The actions that the Town takes now will have a lasting legacy that affects future generations. Implementing the Community Development Plan is the best way to ensure that Ipswich will continue to be a desirable community in which to live and do business five, ten, twenty, and even fifty years into the future.

Within the Implementation Matrix, each action item is ranked both by importance (high, medium, or low) and time frame (immediate, short-term, middle-term, and long-term). The timeframe expresses the degree to which an action can likely be implemented immediately. Generally, “immediate” means within the first 12-18 months; “short-term” is within 1-3 years; “medium-term” is within 2-5 years; and “long-term” is more than 5 years from the adoption of this Plan. Some items, while very important, may be hard to implement right away due to a lack of resources, resistance from key constituencies, or other practical obstacles. However, because these circumstances change over time, a longer time frame does not suggest that an action item cannot be achieved. Indeed, action items that are not implemented in the next year or two should be re-evaluated at regular points in the future so that initiative will be taken when it becomes auspicious to do so. Similarly, the relative importance of different action items will also change over time as the community's objectives and the pressures on the community inevitably change. The Implementation Matrices are a starting place. Town officials and committees should continue to re-evaluate the importance and feasibility of the action items and consider new items on a regular basis.

This Community Development Plan has a planning horizon of approximately 20 years: that is, planning needs are evaluated over the next two decades and recommendations are made based on their projected benefit over the same timeframe. However, the Implementation Plan only has a 5-7 year timeframe in the sense that most of the Community Development Plan recommendations are targeted to be implemented (or least commenced) within 5-7 years. After about five years (around 2008), Ipswich should revisit the Community Development Plan to determine whether its goals and general strategies are still appropriate to the Town. A full re-write of the Community Development Plan will not be necessary at this time, but the Town should facilitate a public review of the document, modify the goals and strategies as necessary,

and prepare a new Implementation Plan for the subsequent five years. The Town should consider preparing a new Community Development Plan after 15-20 years, at which time conditions in the Town will probably have changed substantially and a new plan will be needed to address the challenges that these conditions present.

To ensure that the action plan is implemented and incorporated into Town policy decisions during the upcoming years, Ipswich should consider two specific steps. First, the Town should establish a Community Development Plan Implementation Committee. One of this group's responsibilities would be to continually review the action plan and monitor the Town's progress toward implementing the Plan. Second, the Town should require its boards and commissions to consistently use the Community Development Plan to guide major Town decisions—for example, permitting decisions by the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals, and priority-setting by the Open Space Committee. One way to do this would be to pass a general bylaw that requires all Town boards and commissions to evaluate whether their actions are consistent with the Community Development Plan, and, if they are not, to state in writing why the board or commission has taken an action that is inconsistent with the Plan. This system will not only encourage boards and commissions to act in a way that furthers the Town's long-term interests; it will also make the reasons for Town decisions more transparent and more amenable to review by local residents.

## A NOTE ON IPSWICH'S INFRASTRUCTURE

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As noted in the Executive Summary, a Community Development Plan is not intended to be a comprehensive municipal plan, but rather an action-oriented document focusing on housing, economic development, open space, and transportation. As such, there are certain topics—particularly public facilities and services (e.g., schools, public safety, and social and cultural services) and infrastructure (e.g., roads and utilities)—that the Plan does not address in an in-depth manner. Typically, facilities and services are the subject of more detailed studies that are commissioned separately by the Town through its various boards and departments.

Recognizing, however, that facilities and infrastructure could be serious impediments to Ipswich's future growth and/or fiscal or environmental sustainability, the Plan does identify major facility and infrastructure constraints in **Table 1-1** and alludes to them throughout the Plan. This level of information, though not extremely detailed, is enough to establish several parameters for planning. First, it is evident that the Town's water supply will be the most limiting infrastructure system, while the school system is a major public facility that is near capacity. Second, because of the Town's sensitive environmental setting, any new growth contributes incrementally to local human impacts and brings the Town incrementally closer to its environmental carrying capacity. Finally, given these factors, it is unlikely that Ipswich will be able to accommodate its full buildout, as currently projected, in a manner that is at all sustainable. Full buildout could come only at a high cost both to Ipswich's taxpayers and to the environment.

The Plan's response to these considerations is to acknowledge that Ipswich must plan now to reduce both the amount of growth that the Town could accommodate under full buildout and the per-unit impact of new growth on public facilities, infrastructure, and the environment. In other words, without studying how much more water is in Ipswich's aquifers or recommending how the Town should expand the capacity of its school system, the Community Development Plan is nevertheless planning for the future with facilities and infrastructure in mind. In the upcoming years, the Town may wish to supplement this plan with in-depth studies on the Town's individual facilities and infrastructure systems.

### 3. HOUSING ACTION PLAN

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#### 3.1 Narrative Summary

Housing is a key part of what makes Ipswich unique: from downtown apartments to oceanside bungalows to traditional New England farmhouses, residences help define the Town's physical landscape and determine what kinds of people choose to live here. In recent years, however, the Town has encountered two sets of challenges with regard to housing. The first set of challenges relates to the location and design of new development. Whereas many of Ipswich's older homes blend gracefully into the Town's semi-rural landscape or into its compact downtown, much of the Town's newer housing follows a conventional template of suburban development that often brings with it a homogenization of landscape and community. The second set of challenges relates to the diversity and affordability of the Town's housing stock. While Ipswich's housing stock historically provided affordable options for a wide range of households (small and large, working class and wealthy), recent trends have undermined this diversity by favoring large homes over smaller ones, expensive homes over affordable ones, ownership units over rentals, and single-family units over other housing types.

Recognizing these threats to the Town's character and socioeconomic diversity, Ipswich in recent years has taken steps to require appropriate siting and design for new development, as well as to meet the housing needs of a wide range of residents. Despite these efforts, however, the Town is still seeing new "sprawl" development and still falls short of providing enough affordable housing. For example, the Town's affordable housing inventory of 351 units falls more than 200 units short of the state-mandated level of 10% affordable housing. And the Town actually had less rental housing in 2000 than in 1990, even as the number of households in Ipswich grew 13%. Housing statistics presented in **Section 6** confirm anecdotal observations that housing in Ipswich is getting much more expensive and that new homes being built are primarily large single-family detached units. Based on a review of the Town's residents and its existing housing stock, this Plan identifies several housing needs in Ipswich, including additional rental housing, additional affordable housing for families, seniors, and young adults, and additional programs to encourage homeownership among moderate-income families.

The action strategies take two main approaches toward addressing Ipswich's recent decline in housing diversity and affordability. The first set of strategies attempts to harness market forces to build housing for under-served groups in Town. Clearly, there is a market for multi-family, senior, and affordable housing in a suburban or semi-rural setting, as witnessed by the large number of Comprehensive Permit projects and senior housing developments now being built in eastern Massachusetts. The challenge is to make sure that these developments are compatible with the Town's character. Accordingly, Housing Policy 2 suggests some possible special permit mechanisms for allowing privately developed multi-family housing with careful siting and design controls. The second set of strategies for increasing housing diversity and affordability recognizes that the private market alone will not be able to meet the needs of all who wish to live in Ipswich. For this reason, a range of policies and programs are suggested that utilize funding and expertise from the Town, non-profit organizations, and other sources to build affordable housing, preserve housing affordability and rental units, and provide direct support to those who need housing. These strategies are listed under Housing Policy 4.

In terms of counteracting residential sprawl and its effects, this Plan takes several approaches. Protection of open space is a key part of the Town’s growth management strategy, but this topic is addressed in other Town plans. The housing action plan focuses on two other aspects of residential growth management: where development is located, and how it is designed. Housing Policy 1 directs new housing to the downtown and nearby areas. A centerpiece of this strategy is the proposed Village Incentive District, which will encourage more compact development near the town center, linked to the protection of open space in the rural areas. Housing Policy 3 focuses on encouraging better site design within residential developments.

*Finally, Housing Policy 5 addresses the need to be more cognizant of the demands residential homes put on resources, specifically energy resources. Housing Policy 5 presents action steps for the Town to implement that will encourage the use of resource efficient design and products for new residential developments as well as in retrofits to existing housing. The main action step (H5-1) is to complete the milestones necessary to become part of the Cities for Climate Protection, and support any recommendations as a result of the study prepared by the Ipswich Commission on Energy Use and Climate Protection.*

See **Figure 3-1**, the Housing Suitability Map/Action Plan, for a visual depiction of the areas proposed for housing and a summary of housing creation targets over the next ten years.

### 3.2 Implementation Matrix

<b>Housing Implementation Plan</b>					
<b>Item #</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Importance</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>HOUSING POLICY 1: Promote both ownership and rental housing development in areas in and near the downtown that are already affected by development and have infrastructure in place to meet the needs of new residents.</b>					
H1-1	Infill Development in IR District	Planning Bd., Town Meeting	Medium	Immediate	
H1-2	Village Incentive District	Planning Bd., Town Meeting	High	Immediate	
H1-3	Adaptive Reuse	Planning Bd.	Medium	Ongoing	Bylaws already implemented
H1-4	Mixed-Use Developments Downtown	Planning Bd.	Low	Short-term	
H1-5	Promote Housing Redevelopment	Planning Dept., Housing Partnership	Medium	Short-term	
<b>HOUSING POLICY 2: Expand the areas throughout the Town where multi-family residential development and senior housing is allowed by special permit.</b>					

<b>Housing Implementation Plan</b>					
<b>Item #</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Importance</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Notes</b>
H2-1	Senior Housing Use Category	Planning Bd., Town Meeting	Medium	Short-term	Use this policy or H2-2, but not both.
H2-2	Multi-generational Housing Use Category	Planning Bd., Town Meeting	Low	Middle-term	Use this policy or H2-1, but not both.
H2-3	Large Parcel Planned Development	Planning Bd., Town Meeting	Medium	Short-term	This policy could replace H2-1 and H2-2.
H2-4	Multi-family Housing in the Village Incentive District	Planning Bd., Town Meeting	Low	Short-term	
<b>HOUSING POLICY 3: Ensure that new residential development is environmentally and aesthetically compatible with the Town's existing landscape.</b>					
H3-1	OSPZ/Incentive Zoning	Planning Bd., Town Meeting	High	Ongoing	Bylaws already implemented
H3-2	OSPZ As-of-Right Areas	Planning Bd., Town Meeting	Medium	Short-term	
H3-3	Minimum Upland Requirement	Planning Bd., Conservation, Town Meeting	Low	Middle-term	
H3-4	Guide New Residential Development to be Compatible with Town Character Statement	Planning Bd., Planning Dept.	High	Ongoing	
H3-5	Provide Additional Support to Planning Board/Department	Town Meeting, Selectmen, Finance Cmte.	Medium	Short-term	
<b>HOUSING POLICY 4: Increase the availability of affordable housing in the Town, and the amount of housing that counts toward the Town's 10% requirement under Chapter 40B.</b>					
H4-1	Inclusionary Housing Requirements	Planning Bd., Town Meeting	Low	Immediate	
H4-2	Accessory Dwelling Units	Planning Dept., Town Meeting	Medium	Short-term	
H4-3	Inclusionary Senior Housing	Planning Bd.	Medium	Ongoing	
H4-4	Funding for Affordable Housing	Planning Bd., Town Meeting, Voters, Developers	High	Middle-term	

<b>Housing Implementation Plan</b>					
<b>Item #</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Importance</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Notes</b>
H4-5	Municipal Land for Affordable Housing	Planning Dept., Selectmen, Housing Partnership	Low	Immediate	
H4-6	Affordable Housing Purchase/Resale Program	Housing Partnership	Medium	Short-term	
H4-7	Affordable Housing Rehab Program	Housing Partnership	Medium	Ongoing	
H4-8	Rental Price Restriction Program	Housing Partnership	Medium	Ongoing	
H4-9	Support Nonprofit Housing Organizations	Town Meeting, Selectmen	High	Ongoing	
H4-10	Housing Outreach	Housing Partnership	Medium	Ongoing	
H4-11	Just Cause Eviction Controls	Housing Organizations	Medium	Ongoing	
H4-12	Prioritize Local Residents for Affordable Units	Housing Organizations	Medium	Immediate	
H4-13	Encourage housing development on vacant and underutilized sites	Housing Partnership, Planning Dept.	Medium	Ongoing	
<b><i>Housing Policy 5: Encourage the reduction of resource consumption in new and existing residential developments.</i></b>					
<b><i>H5-1</i></b>	<b><i>Complete the “Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Inventory, Ipswich, MA”</i></b>	<b><i>Ipswich Comm. on Energy Use and Climate Protection</i></b>	<b><i>High</i></b>	<b><i>Ongoing</i></b>	<b><i>Draft report prepared</i></b>
<b><i>H5-2</i></b>	<b><i>Weatherization of existing housing stock</i></b>	<b><i>Housing organizations, Planning Dept.</i></b>	<b><i>Low</i></b>	<b><i>Long-Term</i></b>	
<b><i>H5-3</i></b>	<b><i>Landscape Design</i></b>	<b><i>Planning Bd.</i></b>	<b><i>High</i></b>	<b><i>Immediate</i></b>	<b><i>Revision to P.B. regulations</i></b>
<b><i>H5-4</i></b>	<b><i>Building Design</i></b>	<b><i>Planning Bd., Bldg. Dept.</i></b>	<b><i>High</i></b>	<b><i>Immediate</i></b>	<b><i>Revision to P.B. regulations</i></b>

<b>Housing Implementation Plan</b>					
<b>Item #</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Importance</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>H5-5</b>	<b>Alternative Energy Use</b>	<b>Planning Bd., Planning Dept.</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Bylaw to go to Town Meeting, ongoing education</b>
<b>H5-6</b>	<b>Encourage Mixed-Use</b>	<b>Planning Bd.</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	
<b>H5-7</b>	<b>Promote Energy Star Appliances</b>	<b>Planning Bd., Planning Dept., Utilities, Bldg. Dept.</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Long-Term</b>	
<b>H5-8</b>	<b>Promote single attached and multi-family homes</b>	<b>Planning Bd.</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	

### **3.3 Description of Action Items**

#### **3.3.1 Promoting Housing in Appropriate Areas**

*Issue: Development is often allowed to occur in less than appropriate areas where it has major impacts on the Town’s environment and character. Since it is usually less costly to develop new construction on “green” or undeveloped fields, as opposed to previously developed “brown” fields, developers usually look to build new housing on current or former agriculture lands or forestlands. In addition to consuming open space, development in rural sections of the Town contributes to sprawl and increased traffic.*

**HOUSING POLICY 1: Promote both ownership and rental housing development in areas in and near the downtown that are already affected by development and have infrastructure in place to meet the needs of new residents.**

#### **ACTION STEPS:**

**H1-1. Infill Development:** Allow additional infill development in the Intown Residence (IR) district: for example, by allowing houses to be built on “double lots” that are now nonconforming. Maintain small lot sizes (approximately 10,000 s.f.) in the IR district.

**H1-2. Village Incentive District:** Create a new Village Incentive (VI) district that abuts the IR district and offers incentives for developers to build single-family, two-family, and possibly 3-4 family housing on lots in the range of 10,000 to 20,000 square feet. The purpose of the VI district is twofold: first, to make good use of land and infrastructure near the downtown by allowing compact and compatible residential development, and, second, to conserve open space in the rural sections of Town. Potential areas for VI zoning shown on the Land Use Guide Plan (**Figure 1-2**)

are either already developed at a moderate density, or are located close to the town center, the middle school and high school, and shopping areas on High Street.

The VI district could use a simplified transfer of development rights (TDR) model to allow higher-density development adjacent to downtown while at the same time protecting open space in the Town's Rural Residence districts. For example, in the VI district, the as-of-right residential density could be one unit per two acres, but a density bonus of up to 300% could be offered through a special permit process to developers who conserve priority open space off-site in the Town's Rural Residence districts.<sup>1</sup> The open space could be conserved either through direct purchase and dedication of land in the rural sections of the Town, or by contributing a payment-in-lieu to a Town fund for open space acquisition. The payment-in-lieu option will make this process much easier for developers to use than conventional TDR policies, and therefore encourage its success. In addition, a sufficient density bonus should be provided to encourage the use of the incentives (e.g., allow 1.5 additional units in the VI district for each potential developable lot that is conserved in the rural area).

In terms of layout and design, the VI district should encourage the continuation of the gridded street pattern present in the IR district in order to build on the New England town character present in the downtown area and reduce dependence on automobiles. Although a mix of 1, 2, 3, and 4-family units could be allowed, all structures should be designed to convey the appearance of a neighborhood of single-family homes.

**H1-3. Adaptive Reuse:** Continue to encourage the creation of small, affordable dwelling units within existing structures through the implementation of two recently adopted additions to the zoning bylaw. The first provision (passed in 2001) allows by special permit the adaptive reuse of structurally sound pre-existing secondary buildings on residential parcels in the Intown Residence district—such as garages, barns, and carriage houses—for the purpose of creating additional small residences. In this way, the Town can further increase its number of affordable housing units without unduly altering the physical appearance of these areas. Because the Town requires such units to have a mechanism to ensure long-term affordability, these units could count toward the Town's 10% affordable housing requirement. To minimize the impact of accessory building conversions on existing neighborhoods, the bylaw requires that the dwelling be located entirely within the envelope of the pre-existing accessory building. The Town may also want to amend this policy to prevent the accessory unit from being subdivided into a separate parcel at some time in the future. The second bylaw (passed in 1999) allows the creation of “accessory in-law apartments” by special permit. These units may provide up to one bedroom, one bathroom, and 800 square feet of floor area, and must be occupied by a relative of the owner of the lot.

**H1-4. Mixed-Use Developments:** Continue to encourage mixed-use developments in the business districts in the town center. Currently, the Town allows multi-family housing in the business districts by special permit from the Planning Board. This housing could be stand-alone or part of

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<sup>1</sup> As an alternative to attaining a density bonus by conserving open space off-site, developers of land within the VI district should also be allowed to build at a net density of one unit per acre provided that development complies with the Open Space Preservation Zoning bylaw and the Inclusionary Housing bylaw. This incentive program is currently offered in the Town's Rural Residence districts, as described in **Section 6.2.1**.

a mixed use development with commercial and retail uses on the ground floor. In order to further encourage mixed-use developments downtown, the Town could designate multi-family housing as an allowed use, providing that it is not located on the ground floor.

**H1-5. Promote Housing Redevelopment:** According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the Town has 124 unoccupied housing units; additional vacant space may be available in the downtown. The Town should promote the use of unused or underutilized building space to be redeveloped as housing. The Town, possibly working in collaboration with local real estate brokers, should play a greater role in identifying any significant vacant square footage available in or near downtown. The Town should also focus attention on identifying any vacant housing units that could be rehabilitated to address the need for affordable housing. Once such properties have been identified, the Town should work with property owners to encourage their development or redevelopment. In certain cases, the Town may wish to offer financial assistance from its Affordable Housing Trust Fund or outside grants in exchange for guarantees that the newly created housing will remain affordable in perpetuity.

### **3.3.2 Expanding Opportunities for Multi-Family and Senior Housing**

*Issue: In small communities such as Ipswich, rental housing is often the community's primary type of affordable housing. However, the number of rental units in Ipswich actually declined during the 1990s. In addition, the Town's zoning currently provides few areas outside of the downtown where medium-density multi-family housing could be built. While downtown is a suitable location for small-scale infill multi-family housing, it does not offer any large vacant sites that would be suitable for a larger multi-family development surrounded by open space.*

**HOUSING POLICY 2: Expand the areas throughout the Town where multi-family residential development and senior housing is allowed by special permit.**

#### **ACTION STEPS:**

**H2-1. Senior Housing Use Category:** Housing for senior citizens is an important need in Ipswich, and will become even more critical in the future, as the elder population continues to grow. In addition, housing for seniors generally has much lower impacts (e.g., traffic and schoolchildren) than other single-family or multi-family housing, and therefore can be part of a comprehensive growth management strategy. Accordingly, the Town should consider adding senior housing as a separate use category in the "Table of Use Regulations." Senior housing could include retirement communities for active seniors as well as assisted living arrangements (nursing homes are already allowed by special permit in the residential districts). In order to give the Town adequate control over the siting and design of senior housing projects, such developments should require a special permit. Appropriate districts for senior housing could include all of the residential districts as well as the business districts.

In conjunction with adding senior housing to the Table of Use Regulations as a special permit use, the Town should adopt a senior housing bylaw to guide the design and development of such projects. These provisions could vary by district. For example, senior housing in the Rural

Residence and Highway Business districts could be buffered from main roads and set amid open space and walking trails, whereas senior housing in the Intown Residence, Village Incentive, Central Business, or General Business districts could be integrated into the surrounding neighborhood and accessible to downtown by sidewalks.

**H2-2. Multi-Generational Housing Use Category:** Many people feel that age-segregated housing tends to fragment a community and isolate seniors. One possible solution would be to allow multi-generational housing as a special permit use in the residential districts. Multi-generational housing would include a mix of housing types for families, single persons and childless couples, empty nesters, and active and/or less active senior citizens. Some portion of the units (e.g., 50%) would need to be age-restricted for persons 55 or older. One intended benefit of this policy is to integrate senior citizens into the larger Ipswich community rather than segregating them into self-contained retirement homes. At the same time, the mix of age groups (with at least 50% seniors) ensures that multi-generational housing will not generate a large number of schoolchildren.

The Town could adopt a multi-generational housing use category and zoning bylaw as an alternative to the senior housing bylaw discussed above. In this case, multi-generational housing should be a special permit use allowed in the Rural Residence, Village Incentive, and Intown Residence districts. Again, the bylaw should specify appropriate densities, configurations, designs, age restriction clauses, and an affordability requirement.

**H2-3. Large Parcel Planned Development:** The Town's Great Estates Preservation Development (GEPD) bylaw has been used twice to build creative developments that are more compatible with their surroundings than conventional development. However, only a few parcels in Town are eligible for GEPD, and most of these have either been developed or conserved. To build on the success of the GEPD bylaw, the Town could adopt a similar provision that would apply to additional land in Ipswich. The purpose of this bylaw would be threefold: 1) to preserve the scenic and ecological landscape features of large tracts more effectively than could be done with conventional development; 2) to allow more flexibility to build different types of housing, including senior housing and smaller dwelling units; and 3) to allow for dispersed, low-impact economic development for business uses that do not require a high-visibility site.

If the Town adopts a Large Parcel Planned Development (LPPD) bylaw, it should generally follow the form and content of the GEPD bylaw, with a few exceptions. Whereas the GEPD bylaw requires a site to have 60 acres with 40,000 square feet of pre-existing buildings, the LPPD bylaw could apply to tracts at least 25 acres in size with little or no pre-existing development. The site should have access to an arterial or collector road that can accommodate the traffic that will be generated. As in the GEPD, allowed uses could include single-family housing, multi-family housing (however, some portion of the units must be affordable and some portion must be age-restricted and/or limited to no more than 2 bedrooms), conference centers or spas, research and development facilities, and offices. Density should be based on total floor area (not number of dwelling units), which will encourage the creation of smaller dwelling units to help diversify the Town's housing stock. Site planning guidelines should focus on preserving scenic values and creating a sense of rural openness as viewed from the road.

If the Town adopts a LPPD bylaw, this provision may provide enough opportunity to build senior and multi-family housing, making the previous two strategies unnecessary.

**H2-4. Multi-Family Housing in the VI District:** The Town should consider allowing three and four-family residential structures in the proposed Village Incentive district as possible uses that could be allowed through the VI special permit process. (At present, multi-family development can occur only in the Intown Residence, Highway Business, and Business districts, and only by special permit.) The VI district appears to be a suitable location for small-scale multi-family housing because public water and sewer are available (or could be made available) and because it is located within walking distance of schools, downtown stores, and the commuter rail station. In addition, encouraging compatible higher density development in the VI district through the incentive provisions will allow more open space to be preserved in the rural sections of the Town (see policy H1-2). In order for multi-family housing in the VI district to remain compatible with the character of nearby neighborhoods, such housing should be limited to 4 units per structure and should be designed to look as similar as possible to single-family homes.

### **3.3.3 Encouraging Compatible Residential Development**

*Issue: Often new developments are constructed with little regard for a community's existing character, landscape, and environmental characteristics. In many cases, Ipswich has been able to use its development review process to prevent the worst offences, but the Town still needs to do more to protect its historic and scenic landscapes as well as its unique environmental features.*

**HOUSING POLICY 3: Ensure that new residential development is environmentally and aesthetically compatible with the Town's existing landscape.**

#### **ACTION STEPS:**

**H3-1. Open Space Preservation Zoning/Incentive Zoning:** Continue to promote the use of Open Space Preservation Zoning (OSPZ) as the preferred method for residential development outside the downtown area. A 2001 zoning change goes far toward meeting this goal. This change increases the minimum lot size in the Rural Residence districts from one to two acres. However, developers who construct subdivisions that comply with both the OSPZ provisions and the Town's Inclusionary Housing bylaw may receive a density bonus, allowing them to develop at a net density of one unit per acre. In addition, the Town requires that developers who propose to build more than six single-family attached or detached dwelling units on a lot four acres or larger must submit an OSPZ concept plan.<sup>2</sup> The Planning Board then recommends which site plan is considered most beneficial to the Town. Because of these policies, developers in Ipswich have a strong incentive to use the OSPZ development method.

**H3-2. Open Space Preservation Zoning As-of-Right Areas:** The Town should also consider modifying the zoning bylaw so that OSPZ development is the only allowed form of residential development in certain designated environmentally sensitive areas such as the coastal areas,

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<sup>2</sup> For developments of five or less units, a developer **may** submit an OSPZ concept plan.

farming areas, and lands near the State Forest. This policy would try to direct development away from land with unique features and ecological assets. The areas shown in **Figure 1-1** as being less suitable for development may be candidate areas where the Town should consider making OSPZ the only allowed use; however, further study is needed to identify the most appropriate areas. If OSPZ development is allowed as the only as-of-right use in the specified areas, the Town will have somewhat less discretionary control over this development than in places where it is a special permit use. However, the Town can require any as-of-right OSPZ project to undergo site plan review, which will provide the Planning Board with an opportunity to ensure that the project complies with the OSPZ standards.<sup>3</sup>

**H3-3. Minimum Upland Requirement:** Require every buildable lot to contain some minimum amount of contiguous upland area. The required minimum should be defined to be some percentage (e.g., 50%) of the minimum lot size for the district where the lot is located. This change will decrease the amount of wetlands that can count toward lot area calculations and therefore decrease the overall number of dwelling units that can be constructed in environmentally sensitive sections of the Town.

**H3-4. Guide New Residential Development to be Compatible with the Town Character Statement:** New residential development, including subdivisions, should be designed to comply with Ipswich's Town Character Statement, slated for adoption in the fall of 2003. For example, this statement would suggest that new roads be sited in a way that preserves old road vistas, and that lawn areas be limited in favor of preserving native vegetation.

**H3-5. Provide Additional Support to the Planning Board/Department:** Establishing additional project review procedures will not have the intended effect unless the Town has staff to administer them. To ensure that the additional review procedures are successfully implemented and to promote the type of the development that the community wants, Ipswich must provide the Planning Board with additional staffing and support.

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<sup>3</sup> The Town could also consider requiring OSPZ for all new subdivisions townwide, to the extent that legal counsel determines this policy to be permissible by state law.

### **3.3.4 Providing More Affordable Housing**

*Issue:* Although Ipswich has been active in its attempts to encourage the construction of affordable housing, the Town still falls short of both the state-mandated goal of 10% affordable housing and its own goals established in its July 2000 Vision Statement. As described in **Section 6.4.2**, a recent study has shown that the estimated 2001 median household income in Ipswich, \$63,156, can support the purchase of home costing, at maximum, \$218,335. However, the median single-family home price in Ipswich in 2001 was \$325,000—or \$106,665 (49%) more than what the median Ipswich household could afford. This lack of housing affordability is felt especially among the Town’s public employees, including teachers, local government workers, and public safety workers, as well as among younger residents that would like to buy their own homes in Ipswich.

**HOUSING POLICY 4: Increase the availability of affordable housing in the Town, and the amount of housing that counts toward the Town’s 10% requirement under Chapter 40B.**

#### **ACTION STEPS:**

**H4-1. Inclusionary Housing Requirements:** Ipswich currently has an Inclusionary Housing Bylaw to encourage the creation of affordable housing in new developments (see **Section 6.2.2**). Recent changes to the zoning bylaw further encourage the development of affordable housing by allowing a density bonus for residential developments that provide 10% affordable housing and are constructed in accordance with the OSPZ bylaw. To be considered “affordable,” a unit must be affordable to persons or families earning no more than 70% of the region’s median household income.<sup>4</sup> For developments of less than 10 units, the developer may provide one affordable unit or, alternatively, may provide an affordable housing fee. The affordability requirement may be reduced to 5% if the affordable units are sold or rented at prices affordable to households at or below 50% of the regional median household income. The requirement may also be increased to 15% if federal, state, or local subsidies are available and used to offset the cost to the developer of providing affordable units in excess of 10%.

Although the Inclusionary Housing Bylaw is already a far-sighted and effective policy, two changes could potentially further improve the bylaw. First, the Town should consider extending the minimum length of time for which affordable units must remain affordable. Currently, the Inclusionary Housing Requirements mandate that units developed under the bylaw must be subject to long-term use and resale restrictions to ensure their continued affordability for the longest period deemed practicable by the Planning Board, but no less than 30 years. This time period could be extended to 45, 50, or even 99 years to help ensure that Ipswich remains a community where moderate-income persons and families can reside.

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<sup>4</sup> An affordable rental unit must cost no more than 30% of the annual income of a household earning 70% of the region’s median household income. An affordable ownership unit must cost no more than 33% of the annual income of a household earning 70% of the region’s median household income, including mortgage payments, tax, property insurance, and condominium fees, if applicable.

Second, the Town may wish to allow a payment-in-lieu option for affordable housing in all situations, not just for developments with fewer than 10 units. The reasons for this change would be twofold. First, the Town may be able to create or preserve more affordable units by accepting the payment-in-lieu than by requiring the developer to build the affordable units himself. The Town can stretch these funds by “matching” them with state and federal subsidies, assistance from nonprofit groups, free or low-cost Town land, and a streamlined permitting process (for example, through the Local Initiative Program<sup>5</sup>). Conversely, the marginal cost to a developer of building a single affordable unit can be quite large: perhaps \$200,000 to \$300,000 in a subdivision of \$500,000 houses. The payment-in-lieu should be set ahead of time by the Planning Board, but may be changed from time to time. The payment in lieu of an affordable unit should be based on the additional marginal profit that developers would earn if they were able to build a market-rate unit in place of an affordable unit.<sup>6</sup>

**H4-2. Accessory Dwelling Units:** The Town already allows the creation of accessory in-law apartments by special permit. These units may provide up to one bedroom, one bathroom, and 800 square feet of floor area, and must be occupied by a relative of the owner of the lot. In addition, the Town allows by special permit the conversion of pre-existing secondary buildings on residential parcels in the Intown Residence district—such as garages, barns, and carriage houses—into additional small residences. While both of these policies are important steps toward encouraging dispersed, low-impact forms of affordable housing, several changes to these policies are recommended to make them even more effective:

1. Any accessory dwelling unit created in Ipswich—whether an attached apartment or a small unit in a secondary building—should be required to have a deed restriction that ensures that it will be rented at an affordable rate in perpetuity (or until the use is discontinued). Without an acceptable deed restriction to ensure long-term affordability, accessory units will not count toward the Town’s state-mandated 10% affordable housing goal.<sup>7</sup>
2. The Town should consider allowing attached accessory apartments as-of-right, subject to a deed restriction to ensure long-term affordability plus the other requirements of the current bylaw. However, the owner should be allowed to rent the unit to anyone, not just to a relative, as is now the case.
3. The Town could allow the conversion of structurally sound secondary buildings into accessory units by special permit townwide, rather than just in the IR district, as is now the case.

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<sup>5</sup> This state-sponsored program encourages locally supported affordable housing projects to use the Comprehensive Permit process (Chapter 40B) to create affordable units that could toward the Town’s 10% affordable housing requirement.

<sup>6</sup> For example, if an affordable unit costs the developer \$150,000 to build and can be sold for \$180,000, the gross profit on that unit (excluding fixed costs such as land, infrastructure, and design) is \$30,000. For a market-rate unit, the cost to build might be \$240,000 versus a sales price of \$400,000—a gross profit of \$160,000. In this case, the developer could earn \$130,000 more by building the market-rate unit. In theory, if the Town requires \$130,000 or less as the payment-in-lieu, it would be in the developer’s interest to make the payment rather than building the unit. Actual construction cost and potential sale numbers should be updated regularly to keep the payment-in-lieu fee current.

<sup>7</sup> See 760 CMR 45—the state regulations pertaining to the Local Initiative Program.

4. Finally, if the Town does not adopt the second proposed change (allowing accessory units to be rented to non-family members), the Town could allow an owner to convert a lapsed in-law apartment (i.e., one where the family member has moved out) into an affordable unit rather than having to tear out the kitchen, as would now be the case.
- H4-3. Inclusionary Senior Housing:** The proposed senior housing or multi-generational housing uses (policies H2-1 and H2-2) would both be subject to the Inclusionary Housing Requirements because they would both require the issuance of a special permit. As such, at least 10% of the units would be required to be affordable.
- H4-4. Funding for Affordable Housing:** The Town recently initiated a trust fund to subsidize affordable housing throughout the Town. Additional financial resources should be identified and pursued. One revenue source is the payments made to the Town in lieu of creating affordable units under the Inclusionary Housing Requirements. Another possible revenue source would be for the Town to pass the Community Preservation Act (CPA). This law allows Massachusetts cities and towns to establish a surcharge on local real estate taxes of up to 3%, which is matched with state funds. The money can be used for open space conservation, affordable housing, and historic preservation activities. At least 10% and up to 80% of the CPA funds must be used for affordable housing. The Town should postpone adopting the CPA until the conclusion of the Open Space Bond program, lest the Town be asked to either terminate that program or accept responsibility for a further tax obligation.
- H4-5. Municipal Land for Affordable Housing:** The Town's existing land holdings have been evaluated previously and there are few if any current opportunities for housing development on town-owned land. However, if tax title properties become available, the Town should act quickly to take control of any appropriate such parcels that could be used for affordable housing. Once suitable parcels have been identified, the Town can proceed in one of several ways. First, the Town could issue a request for proposals (RFP) to the for-profit and non-profit development communities to build affordable housing in accordance with density and design guidelines that the Town establishes in the RFP. Second, the Town could donate the land to a specific non-profit housing developer, such as Habitat for Humanity, to build affordable housing. Finally, to the extent permitted by state law, the Town could conduct land swaps to acquire or consolidate property in a section of the Town that is appropriate for building affordable housing, then proceed with one of the other two options.
- H4-6. Affordable Housing Purchase/Resale Program:** The Town should consider instituting a purchase/resale program, whereby the Town purchases existing low-cost housing units as they come on the market. The Town could then re-sell these units to qualifying homebuyers with a deed restriction that ensures that the units to remain affordable long-term, even when they are re-sold.
- H4-7. Affordable Housing Rehab Program:** Another option for keeping existing low-cost housing units affordable is to offer housing rehabilitation grants (e.g., \$25,000) to homeowners who agree to a long-term affordability deed restriction on their property. This program would be similar to the proposed housing rehab initiative by the Housing Partnership (using Community Development Block Grant [CDBG] funds) except that a deed restriction would be required.

- H4-8. Rental Price Restriction Program:** The Town should continue and, if possible, expand its existing rental assistance program whereby it pays the owners of rental properties a flat one-time fee in exchange for the owner agreeing to rent the unit at an affordable rate for a period of years.
- H4-9. Support Nonprofit Housing Organizations to be Active in Ipswich:** The Town benefits from the work of several active affordable housing organizations, including the Ipswich Housing Authority, the recently revived Ipswich Housing Partnership, North Shore HOME Consortium, Cape Ann Habitat for Humanity, and the Town’s Department of Planning and Development. The Town should continue to support these organizations with funding and staffing as necessary to carry out the other initiatives described in this section. One potential source of funding both for staff and for these initiatives is the Town’s Affordable Housing Trust Fund. In addition, the Town and its existing housing organizations should seek to develop partnerships with existing non-profit housing developers that have experience developing affordable housing. This will allow the Town to focus its resources on affordable housing creation without bearing the responsibility of constructing the units itself.
- H4-10. Housing Outreach:** The Town should provide information to potential homebuyers about resources available to them, including state, federal, and non-profit programs, that can help make home ownership affordable. These resources include down payment gift and loan programs, as well as other assistance to homebuyers, especially first-time homebuyers. For example, the Housing Authority or a local non-profit agency could sponsor educational sessions or a mailing for first-time homebuyers with qualifying income levels alerting them of relevant programs.
- H4-11. Just Cause Eviction Controls:** These laws give special protection to the elderly, disabled, or ill, and ensure that landlords can only evict with proper cause, such as failure to pay rent or property destruction. They protect renters against being evicted by landlords who want to profit from rising rental and housing markets. Local housing organizations should help educate existing tenants in Ipswich about these laws so that they are aware of their rights.
- H4-12. Prioritize Local Residents for Affordable Units:** In allocating available units of elderly and family housing, the Ipswich Housing Authority gives preference to existing Ipswich residents for the programs that the Housing Authority administers. The Town is also authorized by the State to allocate up to 70% of Chapter 40B affordable units constructed as part of a residential development to income-eligible, local residents.<sup>8</sup> The Town can strengthen these regulations to ensure, that upon resale of any of the previously allocated “local resident” units, those units will continue to be occupied by income-eligible Ipswich residents.
- H4-13. Encourage Housing Development on Vacant and Underutilized Sites:** The Town should work to identify specific vacant or underutilized sites that may have the potential for housing development or redevelopment. Once these sites have been identified, the Town should work with property owners to encourage the development of appropriate types of housing. In certain cases, the Town may wish to offer financial assistance from its Affordable Housing Trust Fund or

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<sup>8</sup> The State allows communities flexibility in defining “local,” which can mean existing resident, previous resident, one-time resident, etc.

outside grants in exchange for guarantees that the newly created housing will remain affordable in perpetuity.

### **3.3.5 Resource Efficiency and Sustainability**

*Issue: The issue of resource efficiency should become a major consideration in the town's Housing Action Plan. Town regulations and review procedures, choices made in the administration of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, and zoning regulations that may impact the adoption of residential alternative energy technologies all need to be informed by an appreciation, of and consistent advocacy for, improved resource efficiency and sustainability.*

**HOUSING POLICY 5: Encourage the reduction of resource consumption in new and existing residential developments.**

#### **ACTION STEPS: (ADD DESCRIPTION OF EACH)**

- H5-1 Complete the "Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Inventory, Ipswich, MA"; anticipate and complete other milestones to become part of the Cities for Climate Protection; and implement any resulting recommendations for the new and existing housing stock*
- H5-2 Weatherization of existing housing stock*
- H5-3 Resource-efficient landscape design*
- H5-4 Resource-, energy- and water-efficient building design*
- H5-5 Alternative energy use*
- H5-6 Encourage mixed use development*
- H5-7 Promote the use of Energy Star products*
- H5-8 Promote construction and renovation of attached single and multi-family dwelling units to reduce energy consumption*

### **3.4 Impact of Housing Policies**

The extent to which the proposed housing policies will produce tangible results is contingent upon local and regional forces in the housing market, which are always difficult to predict. This is especially true in the case of Ipswich, where many of the existing and proposed housing policies consist of "optional" development methods or incentives that developers may choose to use or not use. However, one can make a reasonable estimate of the impact of these policies by beginning with well-founded assumptions. This analysis assumes the following trends over the next 10 years (2003-2013):

Residential Growth Rate (new dwelling units): <sup>9</sup>	50 per year (approx.)
Portion of new housing that will utilize incentives: <sup>10</sup>	75%
Affordable units created through Town and nonprofit initiatives: <sup>11</sup>	4 per year
Open space created per dwelling unit in OSPZ & VI projects:	0.7 acres
Accessory apartments created:	2.5 per year

**Table 3-1  
Potential Impact of Housing Policies, 2003-2013**

Type of Development	Number of Market Rate Units	Number of Affordable Units	Total New Units	Acres of Open Space Protected
<b>With Proposed &amp; Recently Adopted Housing Policies<sup>12</sup></b>				
Single-family & two-family housing	416	34	450	236
Senior housing	67	8	75	15
Accessory apartments (attached & detached)	0	25	25	0
Town & nonprofit affordable housing	0	40	35 <sup>13</sup>	0
<b>Total, 2003-2013</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>107 (18%)</b>	<b>585</b>	<b>251</b>
<b>Total, Townwide<sup>14</sup></b>		<b>458 (7.4%)</b>	<b>6,186</b>	
<b>Without Proposed &amp; Recently Adopted Housing Policies</b>				
Single-family & two-family housing	500	0	500	0
Senior housing	0	0	0	0
Accessory apartments (attached & detached)	0	15	15	0
Town & nonprofit affordable housing	0	0	0	0
<b>Total, 2003-2013</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total, Townwide</b>		<b>366 (6.0%)</b>	<b>6,116</b>	

<sup>9</sup> Based on the average number of building permits per year from 1995-2001.

<sup>10</sup> The portion of dwellings built in the RR districts that will utilize the 100% density bonus in exchange for developing in accordance with the Open Space Preservation zoning bylaw and the Inclusionary Housing bylaw. Also, the portion of the dwellings built in the proposed VI district that will utilize the density bonus in exchange for conserving open space off-site and adhering to the Inclusionary Housing bylaw

<sup>11</sup> Estimated based on recent and proposed Town and nonprofit projects such as building housing at Memorial Hall and Whipple School Annex.

<sup>12</sup> Assumes use of the following policies: 1) incentive zoning in the RR districts (passed 2001); 2) dwelling units in accessory buildings (passed 2001); 3) Village Incentive district (proposed); 4) senior housing by special permit (proposed); and 5) various Town and nonprofit affordable housing initiatives (underway and proposed).

<sup>13</sup> The number new units is smaller than the number of affordable units because some units will be created by adding long-term affordability to existing units.

<sup>14</sup> Includes the 2002 baseline of 5,601 total units of which 351 qualify as affordable housing for the purposes of Mass. General Laws, Chapter 40B.

## 4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

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### 4.1 Narrative Summary

The Town's diverse economy is an important part of the community's character and self-image: Ipswich is not just a bedroom community but also a place where people grow crops, make products, practice a wide variety of professions, and come to shop and relax. Over the past decade, Ipswich's economy has exhibited considerable strength and resilience, adding more than 800 jobs or 27% from 1990 to 2001. (During the same time period, employment in the sub-region only grew by 10%.) Despite this job growth, however, the contribution of recent business growth to the tax base has been disappointing. The Town's commercial and industrial tax base increased by only a modest 27% from 1992 to 2002—very little considering inflation and the large run-up in real estate prices in the 1990s. The share of the total tax base made up of commercial and industrial properties fell from 10.5% in 1992 to 7.6% in 2002.

Ipswich's economic development goals favor continued job growth as well as the expansion of the business tax base. However, the Town does not want to promote business growth at the expense of its natural resources and community character. Accordingly, the Economic Development Action Plan focuses not only on attracting appropriate business development, but also on making sure that this development is compatible with these important Town values. The Plan recommends making the best possible use of existing business areas as well as undeveloped land zoned currently for economic development, rather than re-zoning additional land for business use. Within existing business-zoned areas, the Plan takes a detailed look at allowed uses and design guidelines, and suggests some improvements to these policies. The locations proposed for various business activities are shown on **Figure 4-1**.

The connection between Ipswich's economy and its resource base is emphasized in two sections of the Economic Development Action Plan. Economic Development Policy 4 focuses on ways to support the Town's agriculture and shellfishing industries. While the future of farming in Ipswich will be affected by many factors beyond the Town's control, the Town's response to this fact should not be resignation, but rather a concerted focus on those factors that are within its control. With this in mind, the Plan recommends several pro-farming policies and initiatives that will require almost equal dedication on the part of both local farmers and the Town. Water supply is the second important nexus between the Town's economy and its environment. With a very limited water supply, the Town must aggressively conserve what water it has if it hopes to have enough remaining water to attract new businesses. Not only should the Town conserve water using a variety of strategies (discussed under Economic Development Policy 5); it should also preferentially seek to attract new businesses that do not require large amounts of water.

***Ipswich should seek to attract businesses that are resource efficient and sustainable for the community. The Town should take a lead role in investigating and implementing policies and regulations to encourage the use of resource efficient technology as outlined by Economic Development Policy 6. Critical to this policy is the completion of the Ipswich Commission on Energy Use and Climate Protection's report "Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Inventory, Ipswich, MA" and the implementation of its ensuing recommendations.***

## 4.2 Implementation Matrix

<b>Economic Development Implementation Plan</b>					
<b>Item #</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Importance</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY 1: Through appropriate business zoning and targeted marketing and recruitment efforts, seek to attract the types of businesses that Ipswich wishes to have in the Town.</b>					
E1-1	Create Central Business District	Planning Bd., Town Meeting	Medium	Immediate	
E1-2	Create General Business District	Planning Bd., Town Meeting	Medium	Immediate	
E1-3	Revise Highway Business District	Planning Bd., Town Meeting	Low	Middle-term	
E1-4	Revise Industrial District	Planning Bd., Town Meeting	Medium	Immediate	
E1-5	Expand Limited Industrial District	Planning Bd., Town Meeting	Medium	Middle-term	Consolidate LI and PC districts.
E1-6	Large Parcel Planned Development	Planning Bd., Town Meeting	High	Short-term	See strategy H2-3.
E1-7	Expand the Town's Business Recruitment and Marketing Capacity	Planning Dept., Selectmen	Medium	Short-term	
E1-8	Use Ipswich's ETA Status to Attract Business	Planning Dept., Business Organizations	Medium	Ongoing	
E1-9	Encourage business development on vacant or underutilized sites	Selectmen, Planning Dept.	Medium	Middle-term	
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2: Allow for and encourage an appropriate mix of uses in and near the town center.</b>					
E2-1	Encourage Mix of Uses Downtown	Planning Bd.	Medium	Ongoing	
E2-2	Home-Based Businesses In and Near the Town Center	Planning Bd., Town Meeting	Low	Middle-term	
E2-3	Downtown Parking	Selectmen, Planning Dept., Police	High	Immediate	See Action Steps T4-1, T4-2, and T4-3
E2-4	Downtown Housing	Planning Bd.	Medium	Ongoing	

<b>Economic Development Implementation Plan</b>					
<b>Item #</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Importance</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY 3: Ensure that business development and redevelopment is compatible with and enhances the Town's visual character.</b>					
E3-1	Design Guidelines	Planning Bd., Selectmen, Town Meeting	Low	Middle-term	
E3-2	Site Plan Review in LI District	Planning Bd.	High	Ongoing	
E3-3	Noise Regulation	Planning Dept., Town Meeting, Code Enforcement	Medium	Short-term	
E3-4	Comprehensive Signage Program	Planning Dept.	Low	Long-term	
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY 4: Sustain Ipswich's agriculture and fisheries industries.</b>					
E4-1	Streamline the Regulatory Process for Farmers	Conservation	Medium	Immediate	
E4-2	Purchase Development Rights to Preserve Open Space	Town Meeting, Planning Dept.	Medium	Short-term	
E4-3	Establish Ipswich Agricultural Commission	Selectmen	High	Short-term	
E4-4	Provide Town Support to Local Farmers	Town Meeting, Planning Dept.	Medium	Short-term	
E4-5	Right-to-Farm Policy	Town Meeting, Planning Dept.	Medium	Middle-term	
E4-6	Improve Water Quality to Support Shellfishing	Conservation, Planning Bd., DPW, Utilities, Bd. of Health, Sewer Cmsnrs.	High	Ongoing	
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY 5: Make the best use of the Town's limited water supply.</b>					
E5-1	Investigate Recycling Treated Wastewater	Utilities Dept.	Medium	Long-term	
E5-2	Promote and Mandate Water Conservation	Utilities Dept. Planning Bd. ZBA	High	Short-term	
E5-3	Limit Private Wells that Compete with Public Wells	Utilities, Bd. of Health, Town Meeting,	Medium	Middle-term	

<b>Economic Development Implementation Plan</b>					
<b>Item #</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Importance</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Notes</b>
		Planning Bd.			
E5-4	Limit Irrigation Water Usage	Utilities Dept. Planning Bd. ZBA	High	Short-term	
<b><i>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY 6: Provide a framework for consideration of resource efficiency with economic development decisions.</i></b>					
<b><i>E6-1</i></b>	<b><i>Complete the “Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Inventory, Ipswich, MA”</i></b>	<b><i>Ipswich Comm. on Energy Use and Climate Protection</i></b>	<b><i>High</i></b>	<b><i>Ongoing</i></b>	<b><i>Draft report prepared</i></b>
<b><i>E6-2</i></b>	<b><i>Purchase Infrastructure</i></b>	<b><i>Town Mtg, Selectmen, FinComm Selectmen, Finance Cmte.</i></b>	<b><i>Medium</i></b>	<b><i>Mid-Term</i></b>	
<b><i>E6-3</i></b>	<b><i>Incentives for Green Electricity</i></b>	<b><i>Utilities</i></b>	<b><i>Medium</i></b>	<b><i>Long-Term</i></b>	
<b><i>E6-4</i></b>	<b><i>Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Program</i></b>	<b><i>Utilities, Bldg. Dept.</i></b>	<b><i>Medium</i></b>	<b><i>Long-Term</i></b>	
<b><i>E6-5</i></b>	<b><i>Conduct Energy Audit</i></b>	<b><i>Utilities, Ipswich Comm. on Energy Use and Climate Protection, Bldg. Dept.</i></b>	<b><i>Immediate</i></b>	<b><i>Short-Term</i></b>	
<b><i>E6-6</i></b>	<b><i>Incentives for Retrofitting</i></b>	<b><i>Utilities, Bldg. Dept.</i></b>	<b><i>Medium</i></b>	<b><i>Long-Term</i></b>	
<b><i>E6-7</i></b>	<b><i>LEED certification for municipal and new construction</i></b>	<b><i>Planning Dept., Bldg. Dept., Utilities</i></b>	<b><i>Low</i></b>	<b><i>Long-Term</i></b>	
<b><i>E6-8</i></b>	<b><i>Pay-as-you-throw Program</i></b>	<b><i>DPW</i></b>	<b><i>Low</i></b>	<b><i>Mid-Term</i></b>	

<b>Economic Development Implementation Plan</b>					
<b>Item #</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Importance</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>E6-9</b>	<b>Explore Alternative Energy</b>	<b>Planning Bd., Utilities</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Wind energy bylaw to Town Meeting</b>
<b>E6-10</b>	<b>Consider Sustainability in Infrastructure Expansion</b>	<b>DPW, Utilities, Planning Bd.</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Long-Term</b>	
<b>E6-11</b>	<b>Establish Green Bldg. Practices</b>	<b>Planning Bd., Bldg. Dept.</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Long-Term</b>	
<b>E6-12</b>	<b>Compile and Provide Information</b>	<b>Planning Dept.</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	
<b>E6-13</b>	<b>Reduce Artificial Lighting in Municipal Bldg.</b>	<b>Selectmen, Bldg. Dept.</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Long-Term</b>	
<b>E6-14</b>	<b>Strengthen Energy Efficient Regulations</b>	<b>Planning Bd., Town Meeting</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Wind energy bylaw to Town Meeting</b>

### 4.3 Description of Action Items

#### 4.3.1 Improving Business Zoning

*Issue:* A review of the Town’s existing commercial and industrial zones reveals that the allowed uses and site layout requirements in these districts is not completely consistent with the community’s desires for the future, as expressed in the vision and goals statements. In addition, the Town has not always been able to attract the types of businesses that it wishes to have in Town, even when it has zoned for these uses.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY 1: Through appropriate business zoning and targeted marketing and recruitment efforts, seek to attract the types of businesses that Ipswich wishes to have in the Town.**

#### **ACTION STEPS:**

*Note:* The first five of these strategies involve revising the Town’s zoning map to contain five business-oriented zoning districts. The extent of each of these proposed districts is shown on the Economic Development Suitability Map/Action Plan (**Figure 4-1**).

**E1-1. Establish the Central Business District:** This district would contain the core business area of downtown Ipswich, including portions of Central Street, Market Street, Hammatt Street, South

Main Street, Union Street, and Depot Square. The purpose of the CBD is to encourage investment in the stable sections of the town center without the potentially detrimental influences of heavier commercial uses, automotive uses, and visually unattractive uses. The CB zoning district should include specific use, setback and dimensional requirements appropriate to this area that distinguish it from the other business areas. For example, the CB district should encourage mixed-use development, require only minimal setbacks, and provide flexible parking requirements to allow for the use of on-street, shared, or reduced parking in certain situations. Higher-impact business uses such as automotive uses should not be allowed in the CBD. Future efforts related to design review, streetscape enhancements and other programs could be targeted to the CBD.

- E1-2. Establish the General Business District:** The General Business district would include the remainder of the land currently zoned Business (which includes several small areas downtown that were formerly zoned Industrial until they were re-zoned business in 2001). The purpose of the GBD is to provide suitable areas on the periphery of the existing core downtown area where a wider range of small business and mixed uses can be developed. The allowed uses in the GBD could be similar to those now allowed in the Business district. In contrast to the CBD, which is intended to be compact and pedestrian friendly, the GBD could include both pedestrian-oriented and auto-oriented uses.
- E1-3. Revise the Highway Business District:** The intent of this district would be the same as is currently defined in the zoning bylaw. However, an additional purpose would be to protect against incompatible development along the Town's gateways from Hamilton, Essex, and Rowley. Accordingly, design guidelines for this district may be appropriate, and setback requirements should be carefully reviewed, as the current 50-foot setback requirement encourages large parking lots in front of buildings. One potential modification could include maintaining the existing 50-foot setback but requiring a 20-to-30-foot buffer area along the road's frontage. Landscaping in the buffered area should emphasize the retention of existing vegetation and the use of native plantings to the greatest extent possible. Another potential change might include reducing the setback and eliminating parking from the front of the buildings altogether.
- E1-4. Revise the Industrial District:** The intent of this district would be the same as is currently defined in the zoning bylaw. However, given the shortage of buildable land in the industrial parks, the Town should consider increasing the effective allowed floor-area ratio by reducing setback requirements and open space requirements.<sup>1</sup> This change would allow for a more efficient use of land within existing industrial areas without significantly affecting the character of the Town. However, environmental features should be studied to ensure that the revised regulations do not result in excessive amounts of impervious surface.

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<sup>1</sup> However, two exceptions to this suggestion should be noted. First, in order to avoid adverse impacts on established neighborhoods, current setback requirements should be retained where Industrial-zoned properties abut residential districts, if possible. (The Town should obtain legal advice to confirm that it is permissible to require a larger setback for those properties that abut residential districts prior to implementing this provision.) Second, the open space requirement should not be decreased within the Water Supply Protection District, where natural groundwater infiltration is essential to the continued productivity of the Town's water supply wells.

**E1-5. Revise the Planned Commercial District:** The regulations for the Planned Commercial district should be revised slightly to encourage this area as a center for high-value light industrial, office, and high technology uses. New industrial and office development should be guided to this proposed district, which can provide the large sites, visibility, and highway access that office and industrial users seek. Although it is possible that public sewer will be extended to the Route 1 area in the future, the Town should focus on encouraging uses that do not rely on public sewer.

In the long-term, office and light industrial uses can probably provide the Town with the greatest amount of jobs and tax revenue relative to their impact on traffic and aesthetics. “Strip commercial” uses should generally be discouraged in the Planned Commercial district, although retail, service, and restaurant uses should be continue to be allowed by special permit subject to appropriate design and siting standards. Design guidelines in the Planned Commercial district should seek to minimize traffic congestion and safety problems by limiting the number and size of curb cuts and encouraging shared access drives between adjacent sites. In addition, natural vegetation should be retained or landscaping provided to soften the visual impact of commercial and industrial development and avoid a “sea of asphalt” character along Route 1.

**E1-6. Large Parcel Planned Developments:** This potential new development option for large parcels in the Rural Residence districts could provide an opportunity for dispersed, low-impact economic development for business uses that do not require a high-visibility site. These uses might include conference centers, hotels, spas and health clubs, research and development facilities, and offices. See Strategy H2-3 for additional information.

**E1-7. Expand the Town’s Business Recruitment and Marketing Capacity:** Zoning alone is not always adequate to attract and retain the types of businesses that a community wishes to have. For this reason, many other cities and towns have established business recruitment, marketing, and advocacy organizations to attract these businesses—in Ipswich’s case, businesses such as retail and service uses downtown; low-impact office and light industrial uses in the industrial parks and along Route 1; and natural resource industries (including tourism) in the rural areas. This business advocacy function should be connected to Town government, either as a staff function (e.g., within the Planning and Community Development Department) or as an appointed economic development committee comprised of business and government officials.

**E1-8. Use Ipswich’s ETA Status to Attract Business:** As discussed in **Section 7.2.4** (Economic Profile), Ipswich is part of an Economic Target Area, a state designation that gives the Town tools to attract business, such as state and local tax relief, and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to help fund infrastructure investments. The Town should promote its status as an ETA to attract desirable businesses. Part of this effort would be to investigate creating additional Economic Opportunity Areas (EOAs)—designated areas within an ETA where the incentives apply (an EOA was used to attract EBSCO). In addition, the Town’s business recruitment and marketing function (see above) can promote the benefits of locating in Ipswich because of its ETA status.

**E1-9. Encourage Business Development on Suitable Vacant and Underutilized Sites:** To encourage desired business development and expand the non-residential tax base, the Town (perhaps in conjunction with local real estate brokers) should identify vacant or underutilized properties that may be suitable for development or redevelopment with business uses. The Town should then

work with property owners to facilitate the (re)development of these sites, utilizing tools such as Economic Opportunity Areas (see above) if necessary.

#### **4.3.2 Encouraging Appropriate Uses Downtown**

*Issue: The Town's vision for downtown Ipswich is a true mixed-use area, where retail, office, and housing uses contribute to a vibrant feel during the day, evening, and weekend. In a few regards, the Town's current policies do not promote this vision as strongly as they might.*

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2: Allow for and encourage an appropriate mix of uses in and near the town center.**

#### **ACTION STEPS:**

- E2-1. Encourage Mix of Uses Downtown:** Encourage a mix of uses in the town center, including retail, office, residential, and public/institutional. The presence of daytime office workers and nighttime/weekend residents is critical to reinforcing the town center's vibrant feel and to providing an adequate customer base for the area's local businesses. The business zoning changes discussed above as well as the proposed housing policies to increase the number of residents living in and near downtown are both mechanisms to achieve the desired mix of uses.
- E2-2. Promote Home-Based Businesses In and Near the Town Center:** The Town should strengthen the Home Occupation provision in its zoning bylaw, which is currently rather vague, to allow appropriate home-based businesses in residences downtown and in the Intown Residence district. To give residents more flexibility for home-based businesses while still protecting the surrounding neighborhood, home occupations can be regulated based on their impact.
- E2-3. Downtown Parking:** Providing adequate short-term and long-term parking downtown is essential to the health of downtown businesses. The Town should take an active role in managing existing parking resources such as on-street parking spaces, the large parking lot located between Market and Hammatt streets, and the commuter rail parking lot. See Action Steps **T4-1**, **T4-2**, and **T4-3** for further discussion.
- E2-4. Downtown Housing:** The town center (CB and GB districts) should be targeted for future housing as part of mixed-use developments with retail or office uses on the first floor and housing on the upper floors. Housing should include market rate multi-family housing, senior housing, and condominiums. Small residences targeted for individuals and couples without children are an appropriate use in the downtown, and will typically generate a net surplus of tax revenue. Housing that is not part of a mixed-use project is less desirable downtown, because there is already a very limited supply of land for business development downtown.

#### **4.3.3 Encouraging Compatible Business Development**

*Issue: If not properly sited and designed, business development and redevelopment can have significant impacts on a community's character and environment. Ipswich's vision and goals emphasize that any future economic development in the Town must not come at the expense of these values.*



numbers of tourists, and studies have found that such programs can provide better direction for tourists, reduce visual clutter and unattractive signage, and reduce the total number of signs by up to 50%. In addition, it can benefit businesses by capturing “pass-by” traffic that might not otherwise know about a particular business such as a farm stand or restaurant. The Town should investigate the feasibility of establishing a comprehensive signage program in Ipswich. In doing so, it should coordinate with adjacent communities as well as the Essex National Heritage Commission. Support of local businesses is also essential for establishing a successful comprehensive signage program.

#### **4.3.4 Sustaining Farm and Fishery Economies**

*Issue: Although it has historically been a significant component of Ipswich’s economy, the Town’s shellfishing industry has encountered substantial setbacks in recent years, mainly resulting from environmental pollution. The Town’s agriculture industry has also been challenged by a number of economic, social, and environmental concerns, including rising land values, an increase in the number of residential abutters, the diminishing number of nearby farms, and concern about the effects of non-point source pollution.*

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY 4: Sustain Ipswich’s agriculture and fisheries industries.**

#### **ACTION STEPS:**

- E4-1. Streamline the Regulatory Process for Farmers:** Facilitate the success of Ipswich’s farm businesses by minimizing the number of Town-imposed regulatory and bureaucratic hurdles that farmers must overcome. Agriculture and aquaculture currently enjoy significant exemptions under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, and the Ipswich Conservation Commission can and does waive fees in some cases. However, better communication between farmers and the Town is needed to minimize regulatory requirements that affect farmers. As an initial step, the Conservation Commission should prepare written materials for the farming community explaining the regulations and exemptions that are most likely to apply to them, as well as procedures for working effectively with the Commission when required.
- E4-2. Purchase Development Rights to Preserve Farmland:** Utilize some of the Town’s Open Space Bond funds to offer to purchase development rights from active farms. The Town should attempt to partner with the state’s Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program to further this goal. This practice provides farmers with money up-front, allows them to continue to work their land, and protects the land from development in perpetuity. Funds generated for open space preservation through the use of the Village Incentive district provisions (policy H1-2) could also be used to purchase farmland or development rights. Farmers must be offered a realistic price for their development rights in order for this program to have much value.
- E4-3. Establish Agricultural Commission:** An agricultural commission is a Town body (typically appointed by the Selectmen) whose mandate is to promote farming and farm-related businesses within the Town. In other Massachusetts towns, agricultural commissions help provide farmers with a voice in local government; connect farmers to agricultural business assistance (such as

business planning and capital); network farmers to educational opportunities, available farmland, and bulk purchasing; facilitate the sale and marketing of farm products; communicate directly with other Town boards and departments; and serve as an advocate for farming interests. The membership of the agricultural commission should include several farmers in Town as well as individuals with an interest in farming and expertise in other areas such as finance, marketing, engineering, or environmental science.<sup>3</sup> The work of an agricultural commission could be furthered through the staff support suggested in the following strategy.

**E4-4. Provide Town Support to Local Farmers:** Dedicate staff resources toward the following farming-related efforts:

- a) Creating maps, brochures and other publicity materials that advertise the local farms and explain to residents and tourists what products the farms offer, and in which seasons;
- b) Educating Town officials and the public at large about the financial and other benefits of retaining the Town's working farms;
- c) Assisting farmers in taking advantage of state programs such as the Farm Viability Enhancement Program, which provides grants of up to \$40,000 to upgrade farm operations, and the "Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs" program, which provides signs that direct motorists to farms; and
- d) Working directly with farmers to provide technical assistance in developing business plans, moving into more profitable sectors of agriculture, conducting advertising/marketing, or locating needed support services.

**E4-5. Right-To-Farm Policy:** Right-to-farm laws protect farmers against lawsuits arising from residents who move into a farming area and subsequently complain about farm-related nuisances such as smells or noise. Ipswich can reinforce the state's right-to-farm law (M.G.L. Chapter 243, Section 6) locally by asking property owners and realtors who are selling land or new homes in farming areas to provide information to prospective buyers about living near farms. Some communities even require the buyer to sign a form indicating that they are aware of the potential nuisances, or, if the buyer will not sign, the seller must attest that he or she has explained the potential nuisances. In addition, Ipswich could pass a resolution stating farmers' value to the community and right to continue their operations free from nuisance lawsuits and complaints arising from ordinary agricultural operations. Such a resolution would establish the Town as a pro-farming community, thereby creating an understanding among farmers, Town government, and local residents as to the outcome of future farming-related policy decisions.<sup>4</sup>

**E4-6. Improve Water Quality to Support Shellfishing:** Continue to take steps to improve water quality in Ipswich Bay and the rivers that feed into it so that shellfishing areas will be open for harvesting as often as possible. Specific recommendations to improve water quality are beyond

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<sup>3</sup> Other Massachusetts towns that have recently established agricultural commissions include Middleborough, Rehoboth, and Westport.

<sup>4</sup> This type of approach to protecting desirable businesses against future nuisance complaints or lawsuits could also be used to protect other types of private businesses or public-private partnerships in the Town.

the scope of this plan, but are addressed in previous studies, such as the Town's 2000 Stormwater Management Plan.

#### **4.3.5 Conserving the Town's Limited Water Supply**

*Issue: As noted in Table 1-1, Ipswich has a limited water supply, and it will likely be very difficult and expensive for the Town to find additional water sources. At the same time, in order to meet many of the Town's economic development goals, Ipswich will need to be able to provide water to new businesses. Given these constraints, conservation appears to be the most feasible and cost-effective means to ensure that water will be available for existing residents and businesses as well as to accommodate a limited amount of new growth.*

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY 5: Make the best use of the Town's limited water supply.**

#### **ACTION STEPS:**

- E.5-1. Investigate Recycling Treated Wastewater:** While it must be recognized that practical, economic, and permitting considerations impose serious limitations on the feasibility of this approach to even a partial resolution of the Town's water supply shortages, Ipswich should investigate the possibility of recycling treated wastewater (i.e., effluent from the wastewater treatment plant). It may be possible to pipe some of this effluent to a group of nearby water users who could use the water for irrigation. By using treated effluent, these users would not be drawing on the Town's potable water supply or directly tapping the aquifer through a private well. Alternative methods for returning the effluent to the natural environment could also be explored in order to enhance groundwater recharge or local stream flow. Direct reuse of effluent as a potable water supply should not be pursued.
- E.5-2. Promote and Mandate Conservation to Ensure the Continued Availability of Supply:** The Town must aggressively pursue conservation as a means of ensuring continued future water availability. Pricing mechanisms, educational programs, financial support for conservation measures such as low-flow devices and toilets, and non-pricing measures directed at reducing summer peak usage (such as watering and pool-filling restrictions and controlling installation and operation of automatic sprinkler systems) are all important and, to a degree, demonstrably effective. However, regulatory and punitive measures, in particular, come with political reactions and are rarely as effective as desired.
- E.5-3. Limit Private Wells That Compete with Public Wells:** Explore methods to control the installation and use of private wells, especially in areas where those wells would compete with public sources for groundwater.
- E.5-4. Limit Irrigation Water Usage:** Irrigation is a major component of peak (summer) water demand. To address this often wasteful use of water, the Town should consider banning the installation of in-ground sprinkler systems. Requiring new development to retain native vegetation instead of clearing it and planting lawns and gardens is a very effective long-term strategy for reducing irrigation water demand.

#### **4.3.6 Encouraging Resource Efficiency and Sustainability**

*Issue: Current policies and regulations do not necessarily incorporate or encourage sustainability practices. Ipswich prides itself on being a community that has taken the leadership role in many ways: open space preservation, downtown revitalization, and progressive zoning practices that discourage sprawl. In an era of global climate change, Ipswich’s vision is to again be a model in encouraging a partnership between economic development and environmental leadership.*

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY 6: Provide a framework for consideration of resource efficiency within economic development decisions.**

##### **ACTION STEPS: (ADD DESCRIPTION OF EACH)**

- E6-1** *Complete the “Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Inventory, Ipswich, MA”; anticipate and complete other milestones to become part of the Cities for Climate Protection; and implement any resulting recommendations for economic development.*
- E6-2** *Purchase infrastructure to support green electricity at municipal buildings*
- E6-3** *Provide incentives to the community for the use of green electricity*
- E6-4** *Establish an environmentally preferable purchasing program*
- E6-5** *Conduct an energy audit of municipal facilities*
- E6-6** *Provide incentives to the community for retrofitting for resource efficiency*
- E6-7** *Encourage LEED certification in all municipal buildings and in all new construction*
- E6-8** *Expand recycling program to include “pay-as-you-throw” and educate community on benefits of recycling program*
- E6-9** *Explore the potential for alternative energy, including wind power*
- E6-10** *Consider sustainability principles when evaluating proposed expansions of town infrastructure systems.*
- E6-11** *Encourage, promote and, where feasible, require green building methods and practices within the town.*
- E6-12** *Compile information on new energy technologies, policies, and programs that may prove helpful to Ipswich’s economy and environment for the general public, elementary and secondary schools, and libraries.*
- E6-13** *Promote a reduction in artificial lighting and the increased use of daylighting in all new construction or major remodeling of town buildings and facilities.*
- E6-14** *Strengthen development regulations that promote energy efficiency in buildings and transportation systems by making energy efficiency a condition of approval where possible.*

## 5. TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN

### 5.1 Narrative Summary

Ipswich’s transportation goals reflect the Town’s desire to retain its small town character while at the same time benefiting from a safe and functional local transportation system. These goals suggest that the Town should generally pursue small-scale road projects that focus on improving problem intersections or road segments—not on wholesale road widening or other large scale road upgrades. Another major goal of the Town is to enhance non-automotive transportation options by developing and designating pedestrian and bicycle trails and routes. Finally, land use decisions play an important role in determining transportation demand and patterns. Several of the land use policies recommended in **Sections 3 and 4** encourage compact and/or mixed-use development near the downtown, where walking, bicycling, and commuter rail are all viable day-to-day modes of transport. See **Figure 5-1** for a graphical depiction of major transportation recommendations. *Section 6 presents recommendations taking Ipswich further toward a sustainable and resource efficient transportation system which supports the overall health of the community: air pollution is decreased, pedestrian and bike options become even more attractive, ridership on the commuter rail is enhanced, and fossil-fuel dependent transportation choices are discouraged.*

### 5.2 Implementation Matrix

Transportation Implementation Plan					
Item #	Description	Responsibility	Importance	Time Frame	Notes
<b>TRANSPORTATION POLICY 1: Provide for safe and efficient roadways through limited infrastructure improvement projects and by adopting traffic regulations for new developments.</b>					
T1-1	Traffic Analyses for Major Projects	Planning Bd., Zoning Board of Appeals	Medium	Immediate	
T1-2	Site Plan Review Standards	Planning Bd.	Medium	Short-term	
T1-3	Study and Address “Problem” Intersections	Planning Dept., Selectmen, DPW	Medium	Short-term	
T1-4	Improve Connectivity Between Radial Roads	Planning Dept., DPW, Selectmen	Medium	Middle-term	
<b>TRANSPORTATION POLICY 2: Continue to develop the Town’s transportation systems in a way that is compatible with the Town’s character.</b>					
T2-1	Traffic Calming Techniques/ Reduced Pavement Widths	DPW, Planning Dept., Selectmen	Medium	Short-term	
T2-2	Scenic Roads Bylaw	Planning Bd., Town Meeting	Low	Middle-term	

<b>Transportation Implementation Plan</b>					
<b>Item #</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Importance</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Notes</b>
T2-3	Scenic Overlay District	Planning Bd., Town Meeting	Medium	Middle-term	
T2-4	Subdivision Road Standards	Planning Bd.	Medium	Short-term	
T2-5	Road Discontinuance and Closure	Selectmen, Town Meeting, DPW	Medium	Short-term	
T2-6	Internal Roads in Large Estates	Planning Bd., Town Meeting	Medium	Short-term	
<b>TRANSPORTATION POLICY 3: Support non-automotive transportation modes including cycling and walking.</b>					
T3-1	Trail System	Volunteers, DPW, Planning Dept.	Medium	Short-term	
T3-2	Support Bicycling	Volunteers, DPW, Planning Dept.	Medium	Middle-term	
T3-3	Sidewalk Construction	DPW, Town Meeting	High	Short-term	
T3-4	Crane's Beach Shuttle	Selectmen, Trustees of Reservations, Business Assn.	Medium	Middle-Term	
<b>TRANSPORTATION POLICY 4: Make the best use of existing parking downtown and provide additional parking, if necessary, to support downtown activities. Ensure that the Town's parking requirements are adequate for and consistent with the types of development that the Town would like to attract.</b>					
T4-1	Downtown Parking Management	Selectmen, Police	Medium	Short-term	
T4-2	Downtown Parking Lot	Selectmen, DPW, Police, Planning Dept.	High	Immediate	
T4-3	Commuter Parking	Planning Dept., Selectmen, Commuter Rail Committee	Medium	Middle-term	
T4-4	Parking Regulations	Planning Bd., Town Meeting	Low	Middle-term	
<b>TRANSPORTATION POLICY 5: Consider transportation factors when making local decisions related to issues such as planning, zoning, open space protection, and the siting of public facilities.</b>					
T5-1	Siting New	Planning Bd.,	High	Immediate	

<b>Transportation Implementation Plan</b>					
<b>Item #</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Importance</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Notes</b>
	Development	Open Space Committee			
T5-2	Siting Public Facilities	Town Dept's, Town Meeting	Low	Middle-term	
T5-3	Pumper Truck Traffic to Little Neck	Police Dept., Bd. of Health	Medium	Immediate	
<b>Transportation Policy 6: Reduce resource consumption by transportation systems.</b>					
<b>T6-1</b>	<b>Complete the “Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Inventory, Ipswich, MA”</b>	<b>Ipswich Comm. on Energy Use and Climate Protection</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Draft report prepared</b>
<b>T6-2</b>	<b>Restrict Vehicle Idling</b>	<b>Planning Bd., Selectmen, DPW, Utilities</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Short-Term</b>	
<b>T6-3</b>	<b>Encourage Car-pooling and Van-pooling</b>	<b>Selectmen</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Short-Term</b>	
<b>T6-4</b>	<b>Retire Old Fleet Vehicles</b>	<b>DPW, Fire, Police, Utilities</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Long-Term</b>	
<b>T6-5</b>	<b>Bring Car-sharing to Community</b>	<b>Selectmen, Planning Bd.</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Short-Term</b>	
<b>T6-6</b>	<b>Encourage Mixed-Use</b>	<b>Planning Bd.</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	
<b>T6-7</b>	<b>Encourage use of Transportation Alternatives</b>	<b>Health Dep’t (education), Planning Bd.</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Long-Term</b>	
<b>T6-8</b>	<b>Use Energy Efficient Street Lights</b>	<b>Planning Bd., Selectmen</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Long-Term</b>	

### 5.3 Description of Action Items

#### 5.3.1 Providing Safe Roads with Adequate Capacity

*Issue:* As discussed above, Ipswich’s preference is not to create large roadways that dominate the Town’s landscape. Nevertheless, there are some existing areas that are not as safe as they might be, and may

*require infrastructure improvements in the future. In addition, the Town must always be vigilant in its development review process to make sure that new development projects do not create or contribute to unsafe roadway conditions.*

**TRANSPORTATION POLICY 1: Provide for safe and efficient roadways through limited infrastructure improvement projects and by adopting traffic regulations for new developments.**

**ACTION STEPS:**

**T1-1. Traffic Analyses for Major Projects:** The Town should consider requiring a traffic analysis—complete with projected trip generation numbers, level-of-service (LOS) data, and proposed mitigation measures to address likely impacts—for any project over a certain size that requires a special permit or Site Plan Review. The threshold could be based on the size of the project (number of units, square feet, or parking spaces) and/or the projected peak-hour trip generation. A reasonable threshold for review might be any use that will generate 25 or more new trips during the peak hour of the development. If no streets are impacted by the proposed development, the Special Permit Granting Authority may waive the traffic study requirement. The traffic analysis requirement could be a component of the Town’s existing Site Plan Review submission requirements and special permit submission requirements, or the Town could establish a new traffic bylaw dealing specifically with this issue.

**T1-2. Site Plan Review Standards:** The Town presently has a Site Plan Review process that requires developers provide information on the following transportation-related issues: 1) traffic circulation and access; 2) pedestrian safety and access; 3) off-street parking and loading; and 4) emergency vehicle access. To ensure development that is consistent with the Town’s goals, the Site Plan Review requirements should provide more guidance to developers in the form of standards related to each of these issues. For example, good site planning should minimize traffic impacts and safety problems on main roads that are caused by vehicles entering and exiting individual developments (whether residential or commercial/industrial). Therefore, one standard should be to minimize the number of curb cuts providing access to new development, encourage the use of internal service roads to connect adjacent commercial uses, and provide adequate turning lanes for traffic entering or exiting the development. These standards can be developed as supporting regulations to the existing Site Plan Review bylaw.

**T1-3. Study and Address “Problem” Intersections:** During the planning process, residents identified several intersections as congested and/or potentially dangerous. As part of the Community Development Plan, Daylor and transportation consultant Bruce Campbell & Associates examined three intersections in Ipswich. This work did not include any traffic counts or quantitative analysis, so more study of the intersections may be required.

- a. Mill Road/Topsfield Road intersection:** This intersection creates a potentially hazardous situation for two reasons. First, northbound traffic approaching the intersection on Mill Road must move forward 10-15 feet beyond the stop line in order to see the eastbound traffic on Topsfield Road because of vegetation that obscures visibility. Second, as the Mill Road portion of the intersection is excessively wide, vehicles turning

left from Topsfield Road westbound onto Mill Road are not forced to slow down as they approach the intersection and complete their turns.

Although reconstruction is not necessary at this time, the Mill Road/Topsfield Road intersection should be remarked and repainted. The stop line for the northbound travel lane on Mill Road should be redrawn 10-15 feet closer to Topsfield Road. This would more accurately represent the traffic pattern that actually occurs at the intersection. To address the issue of traffic turning at high speeds, the Mill Road intersection should be geometrically tightened. This can be accomplished by painting a second stop line for vehicles making left turns from Mill Road onto Topsfield Road and/or painting a wider striped island where the centerline now exists. A more permanent, effective, and costlier option would be to install a traffic island at the intersection. Any changes to the intersection should be done to proper design standards to accommodate heavy vehicle movements.

- b. Jeffrey’s Neck Road/East Street/Newmarch Street:** This intersection is excessively wide and potentially dangerous, allowing right-turning vehicles to quickly advance off East Street onto Newmarch Street without sufficiently slowing down. Improvements to the intersection could easily be made by reconfiguring and repainting the intersection, making it tighter and forcing drivers to slow down on turns. In addition, drivers traveling westbound on Jeffrey’s Neck Road might benefit from additional warning signage alerting them to the drop in speed limit from 40 mph to 20 mph, the tight curves, and the intersection on the left.
  - c. Market Square:** The Market Square intersection (Market/Central/North Main/South Main Streets) is Ipswich’s most congested intersection. Central and South Main Streets (Route 1A/133) function as the major roads in the intersection, with traffic flow directed only by the stop signs located on Market and North Main Streets. Although traffic flow at this intersection is inefficient during peak hours (there is sometimes ambiguity about who has the right-of-way), there is no obvious solution to improve the intersection. A four-way stop-sign might help to guide traffic flow more precisely, but for this device to work well, the traffic flow from each approach must be relatively similar. A traffic light would be out of keeping with the Town’s expressed goals for downtown Ipswich. If the Town wanted to pursue either of these options, it would first need to study the intersection, taking traffic counts for each of the four approaches and analyzing how the intersection currently functions.
- T1-4. Improve Connectivity Between Radial Roads:** Ipswich’s road system is primarily radial in nature, with spokes heading out from the downtown in almost all directions. While this system provides convenient access to and from downtown, it makes travel in other directions difficult since there are relatively few roads that connect these “spokes.” For example, to travel from Linebrook Road or Pineswamp Road to Topsfield Road requires going either into the downtown or out to Route 1 to find a connector road. This lack of connectivity is not only inconvenient for residents; it also has serious implications for providing adequate public safety response times to all sections of the Town. Although salt marsh or protected open space will preclude new road

connections in some areas of Town, there may still be opportunities to improve connectivity. As further development occurs in Ipswich, the Town should be aware of those areas that could benefit from improved connectivity and work with landowners to provide appropriate new connections as opportunities arise.

### **5.3.2 Making Transportation Systems Compatible with Ipswich's Character**

*Issue: Ipswich's existing transportation network—with its many narrow and rural roads—contributes greatly to the Town's character. These character-defining features can be preserved and enhanced through deliberate planning and policies. On the other hand, there are a few section of Town where automobiles have dominated to such an extent that the area is no longer safe or pedestrian-friendly. In these instances, corrective measures may be necessary to restore the desired balance between vehicular mobility, roadway character, and pedestrian safety and comfort.*

**TRANSPORTATION POLICY 2: Continue to develop the Town's transportation systems in a way that is compatible with the Town's character.**

#### **ACTION STEPS:**

**T2-1. Traffic Calming Techniques/Reducing Pavement Widths:** Traffic calming measures include a range of strategies to slow down traffic and deter the use of local residential roads for through traffic. The goal of these measures is to preserve neighborhood quality and protect the safety of area residents. Strategies might include one-way streets, narrow streets, neckdowns, narrow travel lanes, on-street parking, or speed humps. Daylor and Bruce Campbell & Associates examined the following three street segments with regard to traffic calming needs and pavement widths. Before any traffic calming measures are implemented, the Town should examine their potential impacts on emergency services and snow removal.

- **High Street:** The section of High Street from North Main Street to Lords Square is excessively wide, encouraging motorists to speed along its length. The Town could take several different approaches to traffic calming here. For example, a raised planted strip could be constructed in the center of the road or along one sidewalk; the road could be striped for parking spaces; a double yellow line could be painted down the center of the road in the section where it is lacking now; or no action could be taken. From a traffic engineering standpoint, there is no single right answer for this street. Therefore, the guidance of local residents is essential in determining which traffic calming actions, if any, the Town should undertake here.
- **North Main Street:** Portions of this street south of Meetinghouse Green have excessively wide pavement. The Town should reduce the width where appropriate and use the land to extend the green areas and islands along the street, improve pedestrian safety, and better accommodate on-street parking. These improvements have already been designed and will be constructed once funds are obtained.
- **County Street:** Based on field investigations, speeding traffic along this street occurs less frequently than on High Street, although it is still an issue. Because of recent

accident history, the Town in spring of 2003 established a four-way stop at the County Street/Green Street intersection. This action should help lower speeds for at least a portion of this corridor.

**T2-2. Scenic Roads Bylaw:** Narrow, tree-lined roadways help to define the Town's character and many residents would like to retain this character and preserve the Town's many scenic roads. While the Town recently improved the protections in its Scenic Roads Bylaw, no additional scenic roads were added. Several additional road segments that are not yet designated as scenic have nevertheless been identified as contributing significantly to the Town's character (e.g. Jeffrey's Neck Road). These roads should be considered for Scenic Road designation. It should be noted that state law does not allow numbered state highways to be designated as scenic roads.

**T2-3. Scenic Overlay District:** While the Town's Scenic Roads Bylaw is an important protection for designated scenic roads, it only applies to work proposed within the road right-of-way. A Scenic Overlay District goes further, to regulate the siting of development within a designated scenic corridor extending into the properties that abut designated scenic roads.

A 2000 report entitled *Preserving the Scenic Character of Ipswich, Massachusetts*<sup>1</sup> recommended that the Town establish a Scenic Overlay District extending from the road right-of-way to the rear lot line of all parcels abutting designated scenic roads. Within this overlay district, three site planning standards would apply: 1) if the existing roadside is vegetated with mature trees, a strip at least 30 feet wide must be retained along the road frontage; 2) if the property lacks a 30 foot buffer of mature trees more open space (65% of the site) must be provided to encourage the preservation of long views from the road; and 3) the use of closed fencing is restricted, again to preserve views from the road. Finally, the overlay district would offer additional options for "back lot development" as an alternative to Approval-Not-Required frontage development. With back lot development, houses are sited back from the road and accessed via common driveways.

In order to preserve its scenic character as seen from the road, the Town should adopt a Scenic Overlay District that is similar to the one proposed in the 2000 report.

**T2-4. Subdivision Road Standards:** In 1995, the Planning Board modified the Town's Subdivision Rules and Regulations to define two new sets of roadway design standards that apply to small subdivisions. **Courts** may apply to subdivisions of up to two lots, and allow for an 18' wide road with a 30' right-of-way and up to a 12% slope. **Lanes** may apply to subdivisions of up to five lots, and allow for a 20' wide road with a 40' right-of-way and up to a 10% slope. The Planning Board should consider increasing the applicability of these narrower road standards to create developments that are more in keeping with the narrow, scenic roads that characterize much of the Town's rural areas. For example, the "court" roadway standards could apply to subdivisions with up to five lots and the "lane" roadway standards could apply to subdivisions with up to twelve lots.

**T2-5. Road Discontinuance and Closures:** The Town should identify those roadways that are no longer used or viable and discontinue them for the safety and welfare of the Town's residents.

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<sup>1</sup> *Preserving the Scenic Character of Ipswich, Massachusetts*, Tufts UEP 255 Field Project, prepared by Matthew Martin, Wendy Muzzy, Kathi Rodrigues, Kayo Tajima, and Jodi Theut, April 2000.

Closing these roads also eliminates the possibility that they could be developed under the Approval-Not-Required process.

**T2-6. Internal Roads in Large Estates:** Ipswich has several estate properties where large homes and smaller buildings sit on large tracts of land. Most of these estates have internal roads or lanes that provide access to the buildings and often contribute to the estate's character. Even though many of these internal roads would not meet Ipswich's standards for new subdivision roads, they may still be suitable for providing access to new development on the site (such as single-family houses). Therefore, the Town should consider adopting a bylaw that allows pre-existing private access roads to serve new development upon the issuance of a special permit from the Planning Board and subject to appropriate legal arrangements and/or easements to ensure that access is maintained. This policy could help preserve the character of estate properties, minimize runoff from paved surfaces, and reduce the cost of housing.

### **5.3.3 Supporting Non-Automotive Transportation Modes**

*Issue: In many regards, Ipswich is well-suited to walking and bicycling as modes of transportation. The Town has a compact downtown where residences, shops, places of employment, schools, and the commuter rail station are all located relatively close to one another. Even outside of the town center, many of the roads are safe and pleasant for bicycling, and some are also safe for walking. Additional efforts to knit together the components of the Town's non-automotive transportation infrastructure can further promote walking and bicycling and viable modes of transport.*

### **TRANSPORTATION POLICY 3: Support non-automotive transportation modes including cycling and walking.**

#### **ACTION STEPS:**

**T3-1. Trail System:** The Essex County Trail Association recently completed a map identifying the publicly accessible trails in Ipswich. The Town can use this map as a starting point from which to add additional trails to the Town's system. Two short-term action steps are suggested.

- a. First, the Town should continue to study the feasibility of building a bicycle/walking path along Argilla Road from County Road to Crane Beach. Such a trail would probably be heavily used in the summer, when Crane Beach attracts thousands of visitors on peak days. Although local volunteers have already begun to evaluate the feasibility of such a trail, additional work is needed to coordinate with affected landowners and identify a trail route that is sensitive to constraints such as wetlands, shade trees, stone walls, driveways, and private property.
- b. Second, the Town should use the subdivision review process as an opportunity to provide multi-use trails that link new developments to destinations such as schools, shopping areas, the downtown, and other nearby trails (see **Figure 8-1**). These trails may provide a viable alternative to sidewalks in the more rural areas of the Town. The Planning Board should consider whether the Subdivision Rules and Regulations should be modified to require multi-use trails where appropriate.

**T3-2. Support Bicycling:** The Town should support bicycling as a safe alternative to driving by providing more bike racks at key destination locations, such as the downtown and the commuter rail station. The Town should also work to develop an on-street cycling network by adopting a “Share the Road” program. Only roads deemed safe and appropriate for cycling should be included in the network. Potential roadways should be evaluated to determine their suitability for cycling based on traffic volume, road width, sight distances, and the vertical profile of the road. Once a road has been designated an official bicycle route, cyclists will come to perceive the road as being safe for bicycling. The Town must confirm that this is in fact the case before encouraging additional cycling on the route. The following are some potential cycling routes that the Town may want to study: Jeffreys Neck Road, Little Neck Road, Labor In Vain Road, Argilla Road, Northgate Road, Heartbreak Road, Candlewood Road, Sagamore Road, Fellows Road, Lakemans Lane, Waldingfield Road, Mill Road, and Topsfield Road.

Once the Town has studied and selected roads to include in the cycling network, a townwide “Bicycle Route” sign can be designed, created, and posted on the designated roads as appropriate. Another component of a Share the Road program is to promote awareness of cyclists’ rights and responsibilities through education and outreach efforts.

**T3-3. Sidewalk Construction:** The Town should seek to construct and maintain sidewalks in the higher density areas adjacent to the downtown, including the proposed Village Incentive (VI) district. In addition, sidewalks should be constructed near and around schools, providing students with the opportunity to walk to school. In general, sidewalks should be provided within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of the elementary schools and within 1 mile of the middle school and high school, as shown on **Figure 8-1**. (The Town does not currently offer school bus service to elementary school students who live within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of their school or to middle school or high school students who live within 2 miles of their school.) Sidewalk construction and maintenance should be phased over a number of years, with priority given to those areas with the greatest pedestrian traffic demand that currently lack satisfactory sidewalks (or any at all).

**T3-4. Crane’s Beach Shuttle:** The Town should work cooperatively with the Cape Ann Transportation Authority and the Trustees of Reservations to institute a weekend and holiday shuttle service from the commuter rail station to Crane’s Beach during the summer months. This service would not only reduce congestion along Argilla Road and at the beach; it might also attract additional tourists to shop and dine in downtown Ipswich. Currently, Ipswich is at a competitive disadvantage for attracting tourists without cars compared to towns like Rockport and Manchester-by-the-Sea, where tourists can visit a beach, shops, restaurants, and other amenities all without a car. Establishing a shuttle service to the beach will make Ipswich a more attractive destination for tourists without a car.

### **5.3.4 Providing Appropriate Parking**

*Issue: The Town’s current management of parking in the downtown leads to some inefficiencies and inconveniences. For example, when potential downtown shoppers cannot find a short-term parking space because these spaces are occupied by longer-term parkers, they may decide not to stop and patronize local businesses. While making better use of available public parking, the Town may, at the same time,*

*wish to reduce requirements for private parking as a way of reducing the aesthetic and environmental impacts that go along with excessively large parking lots.*

**TRANSPORTATION POLICY 4: Make the best use of existing parking downtown and provide additional parking, if necessary, to support downtown activities. Ensure that the Town’s parking requirements are adequate for and consistent with the types of development that the Town would like to attract.**

**ACTION STEPS:**

**T4-1. Downtown Parking Management:** While there is a significant amount of free parking in downtown Ipswich, motorists sometimes have trouble finding on-street parking. In order to keep on-street parking spaces available for customers of downtown businesses, the Town should allocate parking in the municipal lot and municipal spaces in the Market Street lot for downtown employees. While downtown Ipswich does not currently have any parking meters, many on-street parking spaces are posted as being time-limited (one hour) spaces. Adding additional signs, installing meters, and enforcing the one-hour time limit are three ways that the Town can encourage downtown workers to park in the long-term lots, thus freeing up on-street spaces for customers. Without parking meters and/or enforcement, there is no reason for employees to park in less convenient off-street spaces.

**T4-2. Downtown Parking Lot:** The large interior parking lot between Market, Hammatt, Central and Washington streets is crucial to the health of downtown. However, as a result of fragmented land ownership patterns and parking management, this lot contains 30-50 fewer spaces than it could have if it were striped and managed in a coordinated fashion. To improve this situation, the Town, through the Board of Selectmen, must take the lead in bringing together all of the landowners to make this parking lot more efficient, thus enabling the owners to add dozens of needed long-term (and some short-term) parking spaces downtown.

If the downtown grows significantly, the Town may wish to consider building a parking structure at this location. To do so, the Town would most likely need to assemble several land parcels. Some of the cost of the garage could potentially be offset by creating ground-floor retail or office space.

**T4-3. Commuter Parking:** Currently the existing Town-owned commuter rail parking lot is filled to capacity during the day. As a result, some riders probably park in other sections of downtown Ipswich (thus taking parking away from other uses) while others opt to drive to work rather than riding the train. Although many local residents would like to have more parking at the train station, there is no vacant land adjacent to the lot. The Town should consider two potential solutions to this problem:

- a. **Short-Term:** The Town could try to make better use of the commuter rail lot by encouraging commuters from Rowley and points north and west to take the train from Rowley, not Ipswich. Currently, there may be commuters who park in Ipswich to ride the train, even though the Rowley station is closer to their home. This is because the Rowley lot charges \$1.00 per day to park while the Ipswich lot is free. Also, a monthly commuter

rail pass from Ipswich costs \$8.00 less than from Rowley. Over the course of a year, commuting by train from Ipswich to Boston would save more than \$300 versus commuting from Rowley. Given this situation, it is unsurprising that the Ipswich lot is sometimes full by 7:00 am while the Rowley lot has excess capacity.<sup>2</sup>

To address this situation, the Town could charge a \$1.00 daily fee for parking in the Ipswich commuter rail lot or could institute a resident sticker system. However, if the Town decides to charge a fee, commuters may opt to use the Market Street/Hammatt Street lot instead of paying the fee. Thus, before any fee is instituted for the commuter rail parking lot, the Town should have an appropriate parking policy and enforcement strategy in place for the Market Street/Hammatt Street lot.

- b. **Long-Term:** If the Town determines that more commuter parking is essential and the previous strategy has not proved adequate, the Town may want to research to feasibility of forming a public/private partnership with a developer to construct a parking structure on the site with ground level retail and/or commercial uses.

**T4-4. Parking Regulations:** The Town's Off-Street Parking and Loading Regulations (Section VII of the Zoning Bylaw) are generally appropriate. However, the Town should consider making the following changes:

- For residence uses (#1 in the Table of Minimum Parking Requirements), reduce the parking requirement to one space per dwelling unit for age-restricted senior housing. Reduce the requirement for assisted living facilities (#5) from 1.5 spaces per unit to 0.5 or 0.75 spaces per unit (many assisted living residents do not drive).
- Consider creating a separate category for High Schools (#8b), which require more parking because some students drive to school.
- While the Shopping Center (#34) parking requirement of five spaces per 1,000 square feet is a commonly accepted ratio, the Town may wish to consider entertaining waiver requests to reduce the parking requirement if the applicant can demonstrate that the shopping center will attract shoppers on foot or by bicycle (e.g., a center in or near downtown).
- The parking regulations could allow a certain portion of parking spaces to be allocated for compact cars (for example, 20-25%) and provide separate design standards for such parking areas. This policy could reduce the amount of blacktop and reduce development costs.
- While the existing parking lot design standards are appropriate, it may be appropriate to reduce the aisle width for one-way aisles with 80 degree parking from 24 feet to 20 feet and for 90 degree parking from 25 feet to 20 feet. It may also be appropriate to reduce the aisle width for two-way aisles for 90 degree parking from 25 feet to 23 feet. The Town could consider this change as a way to reduce runoff from parking areas.

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<sup>2</sup> A survey on Wednesday, April 17, 2002 revealed that approximately 49 of the 283 spaces in the Rowley lot were full at 10:30 am.

- In order to reduce excess pavement and encourage non-auto modes of travel, the Town should consider establishing maximum parking ratios for land uses such as retail, office, and light industrial. Maximum parking ratios have been used in urban communities such as Boston and Cambridge as a way of reducing the traffic impact of new development, since it is recognized that the number of vehicle trips into a congested area is directly related to the amount of parking available. In Ipswich, maximum parking ratios could be used to encourage developers to site or design their projects in a way that makes them more pedestrian friendly. However, some flexibility should be provided, since suburban office and light industrial developers also need to meet the parking demands of prospective tenants in order for their projects to be successful (and hence feasible).
- For large non-residential and multi-family housing projects, the Town could require the proponent to prepare a transportation demand analysis to justify the amount of parking that they need. This requirement could be used in conjunction with the maximum parking ratios suggested above to ensure that excessive parking (and thus impervious surface) is not created. If such analyses are required, the reviewing authority should be given considerable flexibility to waive the minimum (or maximum) parking requirements based on the proponent’s documentation of actual parking need. In situations where there is some uncertainty about the likely parking demand, the Town could initially require a smaller amount of parking, but ask the developer to set aside buildable “reserve land” that could be converted into parking in the future if it becomes necessary. If more parking is not necessary, the reserve land could remain as open space.

### **5.3.5 Considering Transportation Factors in Local Decision Making**

*Issue: Transportation demand is generated by the need for people to get from one land use (such as their house) to another land use (such as a store, office, or school). As such, physical land use planning is extremely important in determining a community’s long-term transportation demand.*

**TRANSPORTATION POLICY 5: Consider transportation factors when making local decisions related to issues such as planning, zoning, open space protection, and the siting of public facilities.**

#### **ACTION STEPS:**

**T5-1. Siting New Development:** Although this Plan includes many strategies to target new development into areas with good transportation infrastructure (e.g., downtown), most of the Town’s buildable land is located away from downtown in areas where private automobiles are likely to be the predominant form of transportation (see **Figure 8-1**). New development in some of these areas will have a relatively small impact on the road network, while development in other areas will have a much larger impact. The following are some of the factors that determine which sections of Town are most suitable for new development and which are least suitable from the standpoint of transportation infrastructure capacity.

- The portion of Ipswich’s road network with the least available capacity (the most congestion) is the town center, especially Central Street, South Main Street, and Market

Square. Away from downtown, Ipswich's state highways and major collectors—including Routes 1, 1A, and 133, Topsfield Road and Linebrook Road—generally have excess capacity. Therefore, future development that is accessed mainly by traveling through downtown will have a greater adverse impact on the Town's road network than development that is accessed mainly by other arterial and collector roads.

- For residential development, most vehicle trips are to or from work, school, or shopping areas. Most Ipswich residents who drive to other cities and towns to work would use Route 1, 1A, or less frequently Route 133 to access the regional highway network.<sup>3</sup> Some residents would also drive to the town center for employment or to take the commuter rail to their job. Schools and shopping areas are located in the town center and to its north (High School, Middle School and Shaw's Plaza) and west (Doyon School and the Market Basket Plaza in Rowley).
- Based on these considerations, one can see from **Figure 8-1** the relative suitability of the Town's buildable land for new development from the standpoint of transportation access. For example, new development located off of Argilla Road or on Great Neck has relatively poor access because residents need to pass through the town center for most trips. Areas off of Linebrook Road and Route 1 are much more accessible to the regional transportation network as well as common local destinations. Areas with fair or poor access should be considered for open space protection or limited development. While transportation access is obviously not the only or even the primary factor to consider when deciding which parcels of land to conserve as open space, it should be a consideration given the congested condition of downtown roads during peak hours.

**T5-2. Siting Public Facilities:** A town's choices about where to site public facilities such as schools, town offices, and recreational, social, and human services can influence private land use and transportation decisions. The Town has generally done a good job of locating facilities in and near the downtown and should continue this trend in order to add vitality to the town center and encourage walking and biking as modes of transport. For example, virtually all of the downtown neighborhoods are now within walking distance of Winthrop Elementary School as well as the Middle School and High School. Two exceptions where a downtown location may be unadvisable are public safety facilities—which must be sited to provide acceptable emergency response times to all parts of Town—and public works facilities, which should be buffered from non-industrial uses.

**T5-3. Pumper Truck Traffic to Little Neck:** The state has mandated the installation of approximately 175 tight tanks on Little Neck, which will likely require several hundred pumper truck trips annually between April and October to empty the tanks. Additional tight tanks may also need to be installed at various locations on Great Neck. The truck traffic created by servicing these tanks could become a problem, or at least a nuisance, and should be addressed by the Town in cooperation with the Little Neck Association. Upon closer examination of the situation, there

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<sup>3</sup> See **Table 8-1**, the Journey-to-Work data, for a breakdown of cities and towns where Ipswich residents commute for work.

may be opportunities to reduce the impact of pumper trucks by servicing multiple tanks on a single trip, scheduling trips during off-peak hours, or other arrangements.

### **5.3.6 Encouraging Resource Efficiency and Sustainability**

*Issue: Energy waste and emissions associated with transportation are principal contributors to climate change and pollution. As such, local and individual transportation policies and practices represent a significant opportunity to improve the environment and cut energy consumption. Ipswich’s vision is to be a community that walks, bikes and takes the train whenever possible.*

**TRANSPORTATION POLICY 6: Reduce resource consumption by transportation systems.**

**ACTION STEPS: (ADD DESCRIPTION AFTER EACH)**

- T6-1** *Complete the “Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Inventory, Ipswich, MA”; anticipate and complete other milestones to become part of the Cities for Climate Protection; and implement any resulting recommendations for Ipswich’s transportation system.*
- T6-2** *Restrict idling of vehicles*
- T6-3** *Encourage car pooling and van pooling by municipal employees*
- T6-4** *Retire older municipal fleet vehicles and replace with fuel-efficient vehicles*
- T6-5** *Help bring car sharing to community*
- T6-6** *Mixed-use development, which results in a net decrease in automobile mileage and air emissions, should be encouraged.*
- T6-7** *To decrease dependence on private automobiles, address demonstrated public needs for convenient, accessible, economical alternatives to private automobiles, and promote energy efficiency and reduced pollution.*
- T6-8** *Promote the use and design of energy efficient street lighting systems, and continue to convert street lights to be more energy efficient.*

# **Chapter 3: Community Profile**



***Ipswich Community Development Plan***

***Final Report – July 2003***

## **6. HOUSING PROFILE**

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Housing is a key part of what makes Ipswich unique: from downtown apartments to oceanside bungalows to traditional New England farmhouses, residences help define the Town's physical landscape and determine what kinds of people choose to live here. Many of Ipswich's older homes blend gracefully into the Town's semi-rural landscape of fields, forests, and coastline, or into its compact downtown. And, historically, the Town's housing stock has provided affordable options for the working class as well as the wealthy, for families as well as non-family households. Much—though by no means all—of the newer housing in Ipswich is less distinctive, following a conventional template of suburban development that is replicated nationwide, a template that often brings with it a homogenization of landscape and community.

Recognizing the threat of “cookie-cutter” suburban development to the Town's character and socioeconomic diversity, Ipswich in recent years has taken a pro-active approach toward requiring appropriate siting and design for new development, as well as toward meeting the housing needs of a wide range of residents. Despite these efforts, however, the Town is still seeing new “sprawl” development and still falls short of providing enough affordable housing.

An evaluation of housing stock should consider three important aspects: the housing structures themselves, the population that inhabits the housing, and the environments in which the housing is located. This chapter provides an inventory of the Town's existing housing stock, discusses recent housing trends in Ipswich, and evaluates housing costs, affordability, and local needs. Analyses in this chapter are based on data from the Town, the state, and the U.S. Census. Based on this background information, housing goals and action steps are proposed to help Ipswich meet its future housing needs in a manner that is consistent with the Town's existing landscape and quality of life.

### **6.1 Existing Housing Stock**

Housing has become a major issue in the Boston region in recent years, as housing prices have climbed to all-time highs and availability remains low. The regional housing market has tended to favor the construction of large, expensive single-family homes that meet the needs and the budget of exclusively upper-income and upper middle-income families. While the Town has an uphill battle given the continuously rising housing costs in the Boston metro region, Ipswich has been trying to mitigate the effects of this regional housing crisis by actively encouraging other types of housing development. For example, the Town has seen the construction of several multi-family and mixed-use developments in and around the town center in recent years, such as infill development at Depot Square and on Hammatt Street. Although small in number, these units do provide housing for Ipswich residents who might not otherwise have been able to live in the Town. The Town has also recently implemented several zoning changes designed to increase housing diversity and expand the Town's stock of affordable housing.

### 6.1.1 Number of Housing Units

As of 2000, there were 5,601 housing units in Ipswich.<sup>1</sup> This represents a net increase of 439 units, or 8.5%, from the 1990 total of 5,162 units. During the 1990s, the number of housing units grew by 5.6% in Essex County and by 6.0% statewide. The number of housing units in a group of nearby Essex County communities<sup>2</sup> grew by an average of 14.1% during this period.

Some of the Town's 5,601 housing units are seasonal homes or second homes. However, many structures originally constructed as seasonal homes have been converted to year-round residences, particularly on Great Neck. Consequently, the Great Neck/Little Neck area, which is located within the Parker River/Essex Bay Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), has become the most densely populated section of Town outside of the town center.<sup>3</sup>

### 6.1.2 Age and Condition of Housing Stock

Information from the 2000 U.S. Census on the age of the Town's housing stock is presented in **Table 6-1**. Approximately 37% of the Town's housing stock was constructed prior to 1940, 20% between 1940 and 1959, and 22% between 1960 and 1979. About 22% of the Town's housing has been constructed during the past 20 years, with 11% constructed since 1990.

**Table 6-1**  
**Age of Housing Stock in Ipswich, 2000**

<b>Year Built</b>	<b>Total Units</b>	<b>%</b>
1939 or Earlier	2,039	36.5
1940 to 1959	1,117	19.9
1960 to 1969	565	10.1
1970 to 1979	644	11.5
1980 to 1990	635	11.3
1990 to 2000 <sup>4</sup>	601	10.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,601</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

Despite the age of many of the housing units, field investigations of the Town's residential areas revealed that most of Ipswich's housing stock is in very good condition. The Town is home to a large number of

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> This group includes the following communities: Boxford, Danvers, Essex, Georgetown, Hamilton, Manchester, Middleton, Newbury, North Andover, Rowley, Topsfield, and West Newbury. The Ipswich Growth Management Steering Committee selected this group of towns as an appropriate benchmark for comparison to Ipswich because of their geographic proximity to Ipswich and their partial similarity in some regards (e.g., landscape, demographics, and growth patterns).

<sup>3</sup> Ipswich Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> The 2000 U.S. Census reported that 601 new housing units were constructed in Ipswich during the 1990s, but that the net increase in the total number of units was only 439. Some of this difference is likely due to housing demolitions, most of which were replaced with new construction on the same lot. However, the difference of 162 units seems excessively high, and might be the result of errors in one or both census figures.

pre-1730 early colonial homes that have been well maintained and continue to function as private residences.

### 6.1.3 Characteristics of Existing Housing Stock

#### Type of Housing Units

**Table 6-2** summarizes Ipswich’s housing stock by type of unit. Consistent with national trends, single-family detached housing comprises the majority (66.5%) of the Town’s housing inventory. While housing grew at a rate of 8.5% during the 1990s, the growth rate for single-family detached homes was 12.2%. From 1990 to 2000, the share of single-family attached units, or townhouses, grew at the fastest rate—almost 90%.<sup>5</sup> The number of two-family units in Ipswich decreased by 3.6%. Other types of multi-family housing remained roughly the same or decreased slightly.

**Table 6-2  
Types of Units in Ipswich, 1990 and 2000**

<b>Type of Units</b>	<b>1990 Units</b>	<b>1990 %</b>	<b>2000 Units</b>	<b>2000 %</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Single-family (detached)	3,318	64.3	3,723	66.5	12.2
Single-family (attached)	166	3.2	315	5.6	89.8
Two-family units	388	7.5	374	6.7	-3.6
Three or four units	402	7.8	409	7.3	1.7
Five to nine units	340	6.6	316	5.6	-7.1
Ten to nineteen units	142	2.8	143	2.6	0.7
Twenty or more units	326	6.3	303	5.4	-7.1
Mobile Home*	13	0.3	18	0.3	38.5
Other	67	1.3	--	0.0	-100.0
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>5,162</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>5,601</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>8.5</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000.

\* It should be noted that the Ipswich Zoning Bylaw has prohibited mobile homes since the 1970s. Although the Census Bureau identified the number of mobile homes as having increased during the 1990s, improper sampling methods or changes to the classification methodology may have caused this result. In 1990, the Census Bureau identified 67 housing units of type “Other” while no units were so classified in 2000. It is likely that several units classified as “Other” in 1990 were reclassified as mobile homes in 2000.

**Table 6-3** summarizes the breakdown of housing types of a selected group of nearby Essex County communities.<sup>6</sup> For this Essex County sub-region, single-family housing grew on average at a rate of 16.2% during the 1990s, while the number of single-family attached units grew by only 23.5%. Compared to many of its neighbors, Ipswich has a more diverse housing inventory, with a smaller portion of the Town’s units comprised of single-family detached units (66.5% in Ipswich versus an average of 72.1% in the nearby communities). In terms of providing multi-family housing, however, Ipswich lost

<sup>5</sup> A single-family attached unit is a 1-unit structure that has one or more walls extending from ground to roof separating it from adjoining structures. In rowhouses or townhouses, each house is a separate, attached structure if the dividing or common wall extends from ground to roof.

<sup>6</sup> This group includes Boxford, Danvers, Essex, Georgetown, Hamilton, Manchester, Middleton, Newbury, North Andover, Rowley, Topsfield, and West Newbury.

ground to its neighbors in the 1990s: the Town's housing stock actually became less diverse. The percentage of multi-family housing (i.e., 3+ units per structure) in Ipswich dropped from 23.5% of all housing in 1990 to 20.9% in 2000. At the same time, the percentage of multi-family housing in the surrounding sub-region increased slightly from 16.5% to 16.9% of all housing. Much of the new multi-family housing in the nearby towns was probably created through Comprehensive Permits under Chapter 40B (see **Section 6.4.3**).

**Table 6-3**  
**Types of Units in Nearby Communities, 1990 and 2000\***

<b>Type of Units</b>	<b>1990 Units</b>	<b>1990 %</b>	<b>2000 Units</b>	<b>2000 %</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Single-family (detached)	2,183	70.6	2,538	72.1	16.2
Single-family (attached)	119	3.8	147	4.2	23.5
Two-family units	222	7.2	219	6.2	-1.4
Three or four units	141	4.6	176	5.0	24.8
Five to nine units	141	4.6	157	4.5	11.3
Ten to nineteen units	151	4.9	135	3.8	-10.6
Twenty or more units	73	2.4	125	3.6	71.2
Mobile Home	26	0.8	21	0.6	-19.2
Other	36	1.2	3	0.1	-91.7
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>3,091</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,522</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>13.9</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000.

\* Average number of each type of housing unit in twelve nearby towns.

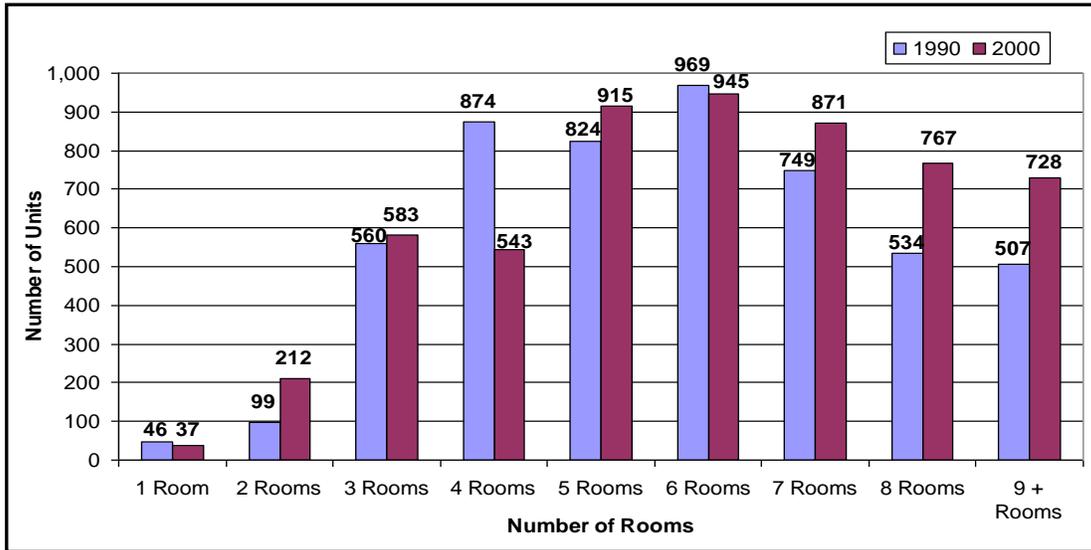
### Size of Housing Units

Recent housing trends in the U.S. have seen the construction of larger homes. This trend held true in Ipswich, where the Planning Director reports that single-family homes constructed during the late 1990s and early 2000s have averaged about four bedrooms each. Data from the U.S. Census (**Figure 6-1**) confirms that the average home size in Ipswich increased between 1990 and 2000. In 1990, less than 35% of the Town's housing units contained seven or more rooms and only 20% had eight or more rooms. By 2000, 42% had seven or more rooms, while 27% had eight or more rooms.

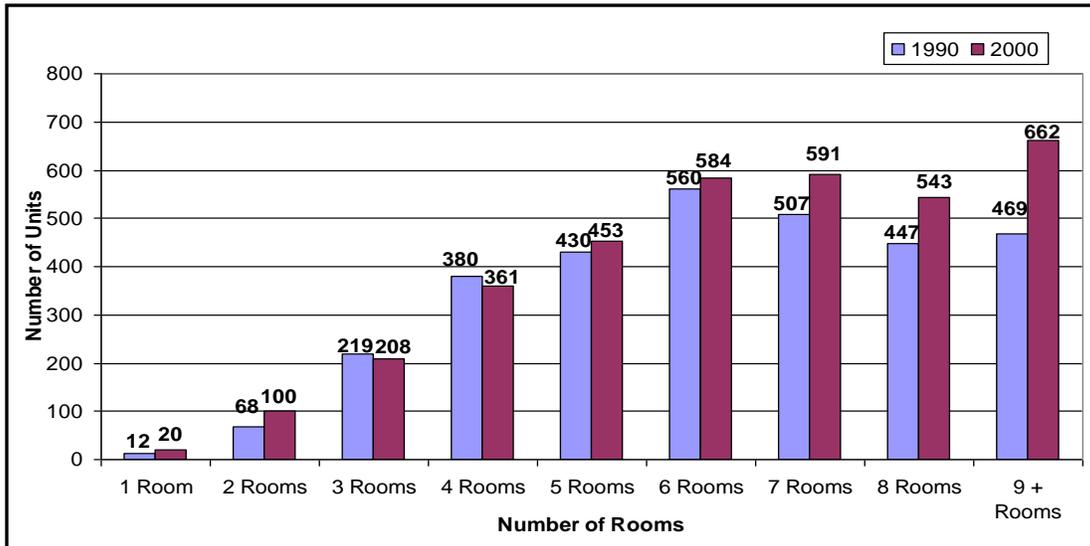
Despite this recent increase, houses in Ipswich are still, on average, relatively small when compared to homes in many neighboring Essex County communities. **Figure 6-2** shows how the average size of homes in twelve nearby Essex County communities<sup>7</sup> changed between 1990 and 2000. In 1990, about 46% of the housing units in these towns contained seven or more rooms while 30% had eight or more rooms. In 2000, 51% had seven or more rooms, while more than 34% contained eight or more rooms. The smaller average size of units in Ipswich almost certainly reflects the Town's greater proportion of multi-family housing, which tends to have smaller units.

<sup>7</sup> This group includes Boxford, Danvers, Essex, Georgetown, Hamilton, Manchester, Middleton, Newbury, North Andover, Rowley, Topsfield, and West Newbury.

**Figure 6-1**  
**Size of Housing Units in Ipswich, 1990 and 2000**



**Figure 6-2**  
**Size of Housing Units in Nearby Essex County Communities, 1990 and 2000**



The data in **Figure 6-1** and **Figure 6-2** reveal that the average size of housing units in Ipswich has been growing much faster than in many neighboring communities. In 1990, much of the housing in nearby Essex County communities already contained six or more rooms. Ipswich still had a significant portion of its housing comprised of units with only four or five rooms. Ipswich’s inventory of 4-room units dropped most sharply during the 1990s, from 874 units (17% of the Town’s inventory) in 1990 to only 543 units (just under 10% of the inventory) in 2000—a decline of 38%. Ipswich’s inventory of housing units with 8 rooms grew by nearly 44% during the 1990s versus a growth rate of only 22% for the nearby

Essex County communities. Evidence of at least some success in promoting housing diversity can be seen in the sharp increase in the number of two-room units, which increased by more than 114% in Ipswich between 1990 and 2000, compared to only 47.3% for nearby Essex County communities.

#### 6.1.4 Housing Ownership

The rate of homeownership in Ipswich increased significantly in the past ten years. Approximately 72.9% of housing units in Ipswich were owner-occupied in 2000 as compared to 62.2% in 1990. While the total number of units in the Town increased during the 1990s, the number of rental units actually dropped from 1,470 to 1,436, a decrease of 2.3%. This decrease in the number of rental units is likely due to a combination of demolitions and condominium conversions. In 2000, 27.1% of Ipswich householders were renters as compared to 20.6% in the comparison group of nearby Essex County communities and 36.4% for Essex County as a whole.

**Table 6-4  
Homeownership by Age of Householder, 2000**

Age of Householder	Ipswich		Nearby Towns	Essex County	Massachusetts
	Number	%	%	%	%
<b><i>Owner Occupied Units</i></b>					
15 to 24 years	8	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4
25 to 34 years	259	4.9	6.7	6.4	6.5
35 to 44 years	925	17.5	21.6	15.5	14.7
45 to 54 years	1,040	19.7	21.5	15.7	14.8
55 to 64 years	694	13.1	12.9	10.2	10.0
65 to 74 years	495	9.4	9.4	8.1	8.1
75 to 84 years	347	6.6	5.8	5.8	5.7
85 years and older	86	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.5
<b><i>Owner Occupied Subtotal</i></b>	<b>3,854</b>	<b>72.9</b>	<b>79.4</b>	<b>63.6</b>	<b>61.7</b>
<b><i>Renter Occupied</i></b>					
15 to 24 years	71	1.3	0.8	2.5	3.5
25 to 34 years	294	5.6	4.5	8.8	10.7
35 to 44 years	341	6.4	4.8	8.5	8.4
45 to 54 years	251	4.7	3.2	5.8	5.5
55 to 64 years	130	2.5	1.8	3.4	3.2
65 to 74 years	154	2.9	2.0	3.1	2.9
75 to 84 years	132	2.5	2.4	3.0	2.8
85 years and older	63	1.2	1.1	1.3	1.2
<b><i>Renter Occupied Subtotal</i></b>	<b>1,436</b>	<b>27.1</b>	<b>20.6</b>	<b>36.4</b>	<b>38.3</b>
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>5,290</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

Using data from the 2000 U.S. Census, **Table 6-4** provides a breakdown of ownership and rental households by age of householder for Ipswich, a group of neighboring Essex County communities, Essex County as a whole, and the state. Ipswich has a lower percentage of homeowners aged 25 to 34 than many of its neighbors, the county, and the state. The Town also has a smaller percentage of homeowners aged 35-44 and 45-54 than many of its neighboring communities, but a larger percentage than the county and the state. While cost of housing is one factor that may lead to these patterns, there are other considerations as well. These include the type of housing that is available, proximity to employment, transportation access, and accessibility of entertainment and other social activities. Another possibility is that, since Ipswich has a higher percentage of rental housing than nearby towns, given the option, some younger households might choose to rent rather than buy.

### 6.1.5 Length of Residency

**Table 6-5** shows the length of residency for Ipswich residents as compared to residents in a group of nearby Essex County communities, the county as a whole, and the state for 2000. This information indicates that Ipswich residents are somewhat more stable than residents in either Essex County or the state as a whole. Length of residency figures for Ipswich are roughly comparable to figures for a selected group of neighboring Essex County communities.<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that the “length of residency” statistic indicates how long the head of the household has lived in his or her current residence, not how long the householder has lived in the Town. Thus, it is a measure of the average turnover of housing units—not a direct measure of new residential influx. Turnover is a useful statistic because it is related to the rate of new construction as well as to changes in the cost of housing. Very often, areas that are subject to escalating prices experience high turnover rates.

**Table 6-5**  
**Length of Residency by Householder In Unit, 2000**

Length	Ipswich		Nearby Towns	Essex County	Massachusetts
	Number <sup>□</sup>	%	%	%	%
One year or less	702	13.3	12.3	15.5	16.4
Two to five years	1,449	27.4	27.9	29.3	28.0
Six to ten years	859	16.2	17.3	15.6	15.6
Eleven to twenty years	882	16.6	17.9	15.9	16.1
Twenty-one to thirty years	644	12.2	11.5	9.9	10.5
Thirty-one years or longer	754	14.3	13.1	13.8	13.4
<b>Total Householders</b>	<b>5,290</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

<sup>□</sup> This total reflects the total number of occupied units, not total number of housing units.

<sup>8</sup> As mentioned above, this group includes Boxford, Danvers, Essex, Georgetown, Hamilton, Manchester, Middleton, Newbury, North Andover, Rowley, Topsfield, and West Newbury.

### **6.1.6 Vacancy Rates and Abandoned or Vacant Units**

Vacancy rates are an indicator of the availability of housing units. A vacancy rate of 5% is considered ideal because it allows occupants to move freely in the marketplace. A vacancy rate below 5% indicates that there is demand for additional housing. The vacancy rate for rental units in Ipswich was 8.9% in 1990. Reflecting the tight housing market found throughout eastern Massachusetts, Census 2000 placed the rental vacancy rate at 2.7%. Vacancy rates for single and two-family ownership units have been consistently low in Ipswich: 1.1% in 1990 and 0.9% in 2000. With vacancy rates this low, it is common for homes to be sold as soon as they are placed on the market and often after only one showing.

While the *vacancy rate* includes only units that are available for rent or sale, the number of *unoccupied units* also includes dwellings that are not available for rent or sale because they are abandoned, dilapidated or otherwise not suitable for habitation. In 1990, unoccupied units in Ipswich accounted for 250 units, or 4.8% of the Town's housing stock (of these, 41 were considered not suitable for habitation while 209 were merely vacant). A stronger housing market by the end of the 1990s reduced this number to 124 unoccupied units, or 2.2% of the total (of these, 46 were considered not suitable for habitation while 78 were merely vacant).<sup>9</sup> This figure compares to 2.6% for Essex County and 3.2% for the state.

### **6.1.7 Home Sales Activity**

Home sales remained fairly consistent in Ipswich from 1992-2001, with an average of 183 homes (including both condominium units and single family houses) being sold each year. The peak of sales activity was during 1998, when 229 homes were sold; the lowest point was 1992, during the recession of the early 1990s, when only 132 homes were sold.<sup>10</sup> For additional details, see **Table 6-6** and **Figure 6-3**.

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<sup>9</sup> In addition to the 124 unoccupied units in Ipswich, there were 187 seasonally occupied units in the Town. The total number of unoccupied plus seasonally occupied units in Ipswich (311) accounts for the difference between the total number of units (5,601) and the total number of households (5,290) identified in the 2000 U.S. Census.

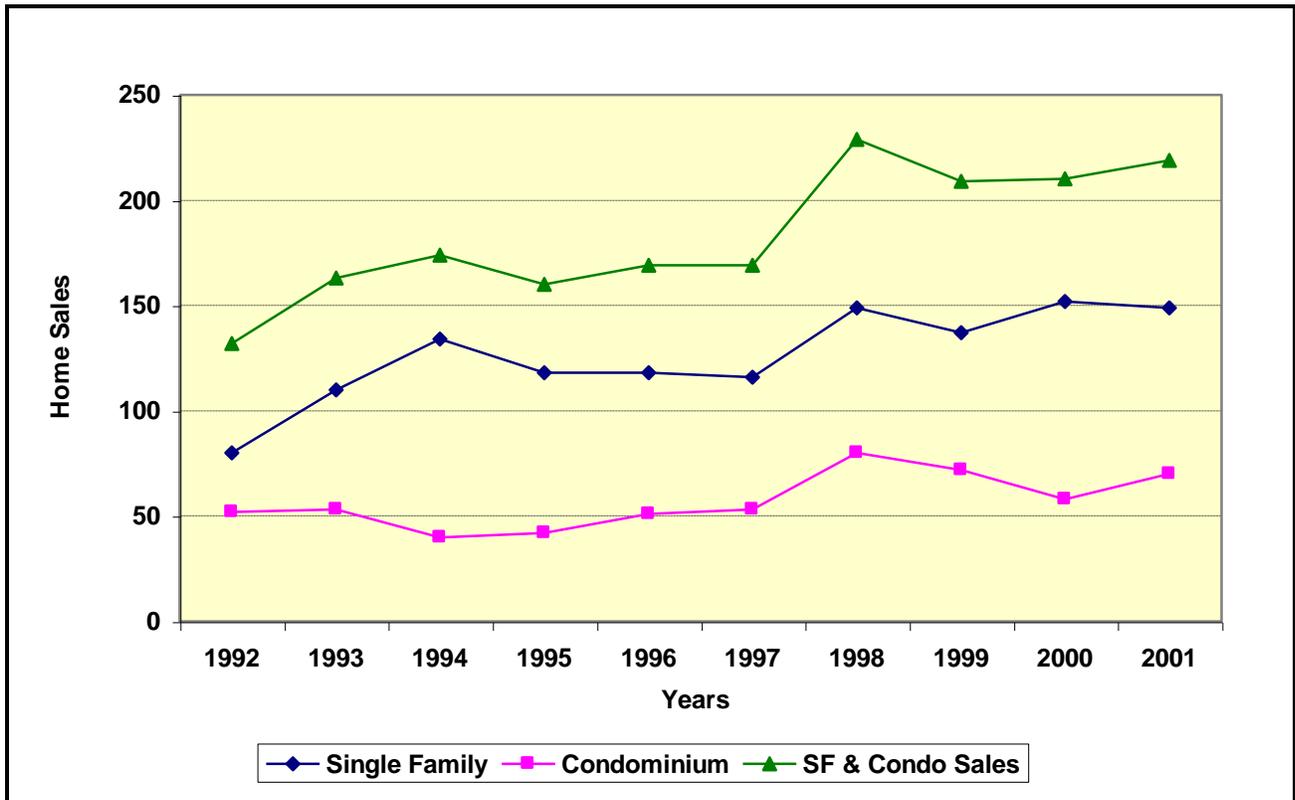
<sup>10</sup> Source: Banker and Tradesman, a publishing and information services organization that provides services to professionals working in the fields of real estate, banking, and commerce.

**Table 6-6**  
**Home Sales Activity in Ipswich, 1992-2001**

Year	Single Family Home Sales	Condominium Sales	Total SF Residential Sales
1992	80	52	132
1993	110	53	163
1994	134	40	174
1995	118	42	160
1996	118	51	169
1997	116	53	169
1998	149	80	229
1999	137	72	209
2000	152	58	210
2001	149	70	219

Source: Banker and Tradesman

**Figure 6-3**  
**Home Sales Activity in Ipswich, 1992-2001**



## 6.2 Residential Zoning, Regulations, and Development Patterns

Residential development is influenced by several factors, including historical development patterns, local zoning regulations, and the forces of supply and demand in the housing market. This section provides an overview of the Town's residential zoning regulations as well as past residential development patterns and trends.

### 6.2.1 Residential Zoning Districts

The Town contains four residential zoning districts: the Intown Residence (IR) district and three Rural Residence districts (RRA, RRB, and RRC). **Figure 6-4** shows the Town's zoning map as of April 2003. As an incentive to developers to construct affordable housing and conserve open space in the Rural Residence districts, the Town offers a 100% density bonus in these districts (a net average density of 1 unit per acre instead of the otherwise required 1 unit per 2 acres). In exchange for the bonus, developers must use Open Space Preservation Zoning (see below) and adhere to the Town's Inclusionary Housing Requirement, which mandates that 10% of the units be affordable to households earning 70% or less of the median household income for the Boston region.

#### Rural Residence A (RRA)

The RRA district consists of rural and semi-rural areas throughout Ipswich, and covers about 89% of the Town. Public water is generally available while public sewer is generally not. Single-family homes are allowed as-of-right, while two family houses are allowed by special permit on a 3-acre lot. Open Space Preservation Zoning (OSPZ, see below) is allowed by special permit from the Planning Board.

Dimensional requirements mandate that lots in the RRA district be 2 acres in size with a 150-foot frontage and 175-foot width. The building footprint may not exceed 20% of the lot, and at least 50% of the lot must be open space. As mentioned above, some of these dimensional requirements may be reduced as a result of the density bonus for OSPZ and affordable housing.

#### Rural Residence B (RRB)

The RRB district has a similar purpose and use regulations to the RRA district, but is located only on Great Neck and Little Neck (approximately 2.2% of the Town's area). This district allows single-family houses by right and two-family houses by special permit. The Planning Board can issue special permits to allow OSPZ. Dimensional requirements are the same as in the RRA district, except front, side, and rear setbacks are smaller. Most of the lots in the RRB district were established prior to the adoption of the RRB zoning, and lack the now-required dimensions. However, the Town's regulations are fairly permissive in terms of allowing expansions to structures on nonconforming lots.

#### Rural Residence C (RRC)

The RRC district is virtually identical to the RRA district in terms of purpose, allowed uses, and dimensional requirements. This district is located along Paradise Road north of downtown, and covers approximately 1.7% of the Town. Unrelated to the 100% density bonus offered for Inclusionary Housing and OSPZ, a density bonus of 20% for OSPZ alone is offered in the RRC district.

## Intown Residence (IR)

The Intown Residence (IR) district allows a combination of single-family and two-family houses. Multi-family housing and small businesses are also allowed by special permit. This district, located in and around the town center, has both public water and public sewer and comprises approximately 2.2% of the Town's land area. Single-family structures require 10,000 sq. ft. while two-family structures require 12,000 sq. ft. Multi-family structures require 9,000 sq. ft. for the first unit and 5,000 sq. ft. for every unit thereafter, resulting in an overall allowed density of about 8 units per acre for larger projects. Dimensional requirements that apply to all uses include a 50-foot minimum frontage, 90-foot minimum width, a maximum building coverage of 40%, and at least 30% open space.

### **6.2.2 Additional Residential Zoning Regulations**

#### Open Space Preservation Zoning (OSPZ)

Developers proposing to build more than six single-family units must submit an OSPZ plan to the Planning Board, while developers of five or fewer units may submit an OSPZ plan in lieu of the conventional plan. After reviewing the applications, the Planning Board decides which of the site plans it prefers and the applicant then decides on how to develop the site. Allowed uses in an OSPZ development include single-family detached houses, single-family attached houses, and community-related uses.

To determine the allowed density in an OSPZ development, the applicant submits a yield plan to establish the "base density." One-half of the wetland/flood plain area counts toward lot area. The number of allowed units in an OSPZ development is up to 100% of base density in the RRA and RRB districts and 120% of the base density in the RRC district. The development may be served by public sewer or by individual or shared septic systems. At least 50% of the site must be publicly accessible open space, which should be selected by consulting the Planning Board's "Criteria for Evaluating Proposed Open Space." Dimensional requirements are both minimal and flexible.

#### Inclusionary Housing Requirements

The Town's Inclusionary Housing Bylaw is a mandatory requirement that applies to all multi-family developments requiring special permits. In addition, it is an optional provision that developers may use to construct developments in the Rural Residence districts at a density higher than that allowed by the base zoning (see above). For any development subject to the bylaw, 10% of units must be affordable. For developments that are less than 10 units in size, the developer may pay the Town \$10,000 per unit in lieu of providing an affordable housing unit. These funds are then used for local affordable housing programs. Affordable units developed under this bylaw must be made affordable to households earning 70% (or less) of the regional median household income, as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. In addition, the units are subject to long-term use and/or resale restrictions to ensure that they remain affordable for the longest period deemed practicable by the Planning Board, but at least 30 years. Affordable family units generally must have at least two bedrooms.

The Planning Board may reduce the required percentage of affordable units to 5% if the units are made affordable to households earning 50% or less of the region's median household income. The Board may also increase the required percentage to 15% if it determines that federal, state, or local subsidies are

available to defray any additional cost to the developer. The bylaw also allows the required affordable housing to be provided off-site.

### Accessory Uses

Accessory in-law apartments are allowed by special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals in all residential districts. In-law apartments are generally defined as small dwelling units for family members that are located in the same building as the primary residence (but with a separate entrance). It should be noted that in Ipswich the permit for an accessory apartment runs with the owner, not the lot.

In addition, home occupations are allowed as-of-right in almost all districts as long as they create minimal impacts.

### Additional Residential Structures on Existing Lots

Property owners may renovate existing accessory buildings into additional residential structures by special permit on single-family and two-family lots in the Residence districts, as long as the proposed additional dwelling unit is located entirely within the envelope of a pre-existing accessory building. In addition, the proposed accessory unit should provide a mechanism to ensure long-term affordability. To the extent possible, the Town may provide a financial subsidy to assist the applicant in satisfying this objective.

### **6.2.3 Residential Development Patterns**

Existing development patterns in Ipswich (as of 1999) are shown on **Figure 6-5**, the Land Use Map. Like many older New England towns, Ipswich is characterized by a densely populated town center and more sparsely populated rural areas. Much of the densely populated area is contained within the Intown Residence (IR) district, which is the only district that allows two-family homes without a special permit. It also requires the least amount of land per single family home (only 10,000 sq. ft., as compared 2 acres in the Rural Residence districts). The IR district abuts and encircles the downtown business areas. The street pattern in the town center is generally rectilinear and interconnected, with a few cul-de-sacs and small dead-end roads. Sidewalks exist throughout this pedestrian-friendly area.

Most of the Town's major roads are directed radially outward from the center. While these roads have some residential development along their frontages, many of the rear parcels are currently being farmed or are undeveloped woodland. This is true of Argilla Road, Essex Road, and County Road in the southeast of Town and Topsfield Road and Linebrook Road in the west. The Willowdale State Forest limits the amount of development that can occur in the southwestern section of Town.

Other densely populated residential areas include Great Neck and Little Neck, which are developed in a circular grid system. Originally a seasonal home area, many of the houses are small, tightly clustered, and located on or near the water. Most of the lots on Great Neck do not conform to the RRB dimensional requirements. Little Neck is even more densely populated, with houses sitting on about 3,000 square feet of land each. Little Neck is not a subdivision, since the entire peninsula is one large parcel. Since the houses do not exist on individual lots, the dimensions surrounding each house are not nonconforming.

A few larger residential subdivisions have been developed off several of the major arterials. These include the houses developed within the Ipswich Country Club off Route 1 (Newburyport Turnpike); the Pinefield subdivision off Linebrook Road; on Longmeadow Drive and Bushhill Road off Topsfield Road; and on Drumlin Road off Essex Road in the southeast. Some of these developments were built under the Open Space Preservation Zoning bylaw so lot sizes are smaller than the one acre that would otherwise have been required; the Pinefield subdivision was built prior to the one acre zoning coming into effect.

### Recent Housing Projects and Trends

As discussed earlier, Ipswich has been heavily affected by the trend throughout eastern Massachusetts toward developing large, expensive, 4+ bedroom single-family houses. The Town has been able to mitigate this trend to some extent by encouraging other types of housing such as multi-family units, moderate-income housing, and senior housing. The relative impact of these efforts, however, has been small. As can be seen in **Table 6-2**, the vast majority of new units in the Town are single-family, detached units.

In the past several years, the Town reviewed about a dozen proposed developments totaling about 275 new housing units. The largest of these, Turner Hill, includes about 182 housing units and was permitted under the Great Estate Preservation Development (GEPD) bylaw. Turner Hill will include villas, townhouses, and condominium units, and will be developed in a village cluster style with much of the site retained as open space. At least half of the units must be occupied by persons 55 and over, and, consistent with the GEPD bylaw 10% affordable housing must be provided.<sup>11</sup>

A number of infill or adaptive reuse projects with a housing component have been proposed or constructed in several downtown locations, including Depot Square, Hammatt Street, Central Street, Green Street, Market Street, and Brownville Avenue. Several other recent development proposals have called for housing on lands that have historically been considered significant open space, including Chapter 61A land, lands adjacent to the Ipswich River and the State Forest, and a 90-acre site that contains several historically significant buildings. Subsequent to the subdivision proposals, the Town and/or its partners have permanently protected four large parcels, including the Wendell property on Jeffreys Neck Road, the Scott Farm property on Mill Road, the Barrowy property on County Road, and the Willowdale property on Gravelly Brook Road.

#### **6.2.4 Housing Permit Data and Recent Housing Trends**

In reviewing housing permit data from 1995 through 2001<sup>12</sup>, a few trends become apparent. First, Ipswich has averaged 47 new single-family units per year from 1995 through 2001, although there has

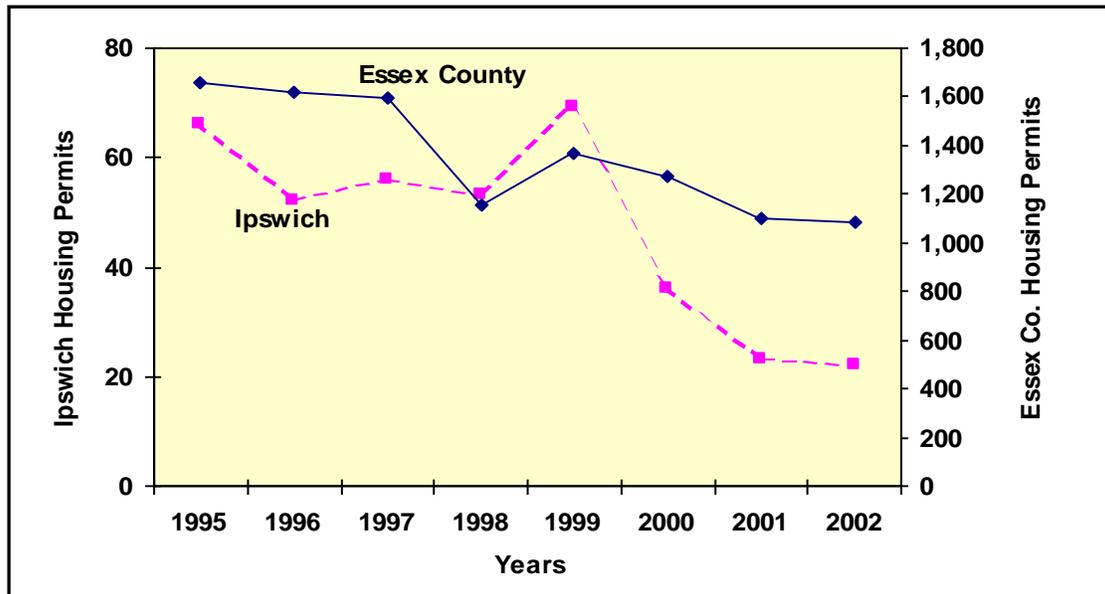
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<sup>11</sup> Under this bylaw, the affordable units may be located on-site or off-site. In the case of Turner Hill, the majority of the units will be located off-site.

<sup>12</sup> This information is disseminated by the Massachusetts Institute of Social and Economic Research (MISER), which is an affiliate State Data Center for the U.S. Census Bureau. Each community is responsible for providing the construction permit information to the Census Bureau, which then compiles the numbers and releases them on a monthly and annual basis through MISER. As some communities are better at tracking the information than others, it is sometimes necessary for the Census Bureau to impute or estimate missing figures. Therefore the data are valid

been considerable year-to-year variation. Second, the average construction cost of single-family houses in Ipswich has been about 20% lower than was typical for Essex County as a whole during the study period.

**Figure 6-6**  
**Single Family Housing Permit Activity, 1995-2001**



Source: MISER/Mass. State Data Center, U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Residential Building Permit Data

In 2002, this gap widened to 32%. The average construction cost of a single-family house in Essex County increased 52.6% from 1995 and 2002, while the average cost rose only 21.6% in Ipswich during the same period. This figure was 34.5% for a group of nearby Essex County communities. For additional information, see **Figure 6-6** and **Table 6-7**. The reasons for the significantly lower construction cost in Ipswich are not entirely clear, especially since new houses in the Town appear to be roughly as large and as expensive as in many nearby towns. One possible explanation is that the Town is less diligent than most communities about requiring developers to accurately report the construction cost of new dwellings. If not forced to do so, developers might tend to under-report construction cost in order to reduce building permit fees. The Town should investigate this matter further in order to determine whether changes to the system of assessing building permit fees could lead to greater revenues for the Town.

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for estimating relationships between various geographical regions but, as is the case with many data sources, are not 100% accurate.

**Table 6-7  
Building Construction Cost of New Single Family Units, 1995-2001**

Year	Ipswich		Essex County		Nearby Communities	
	Units	Avg. Cost	Units	Avg. Cost	Units	Avg. Cost
1995	66	\$112,009	1,659	\$132,079	510	\$178,778
1996	52	\$114,809	1,618	\$144,887	469	\$184,995
1997	56	\$112,613	1,597	\$141,450	470	\$184,789
1998	53	\$115,428	1,152	\$145,517	403	\$208,498
1999	69	\$120,792	1,367	\$151,421	341	\$208,287
2000	36	\$144,724	1,276	\$173,174	395	\$233,653
2001	23	\$137,520	1,098	\$176,992	249	\$254,312
2002	22	\$136,235	1,081	\$201,599	339	\$240,381

Source: MISER/Mass. State Data Center, Residential Building Permits. To develop totals, it was necessary to use reported plus imputed data.

Note: Building construction cost tends to be much lower than the sales price of new housing, which is to be expected since building construction cost excludes several significant development costs such as land, infrastructure, design and permitting, etc., as well as the developer's profit.

### 6.3 Potential for Future Residential Growth

In 1999, students at the Harvard Graduate School of Design (GSD), under the supervision of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), prepared a buildout analysis for Ipswich as part of the GSD's *Grow Smart North Shore* studio project.<sup>13</sup> A buildout analysis attempts to estimate the number of dwelling units and the amount of business development that could potentially be built in a community, assuming that all the buildable land is developed in accordance with zoning regulations and environmental laws. Subsequently, MAPC revised the GSD's work based on feedback from the Town to include an analysis of potential development under the Great Estate Preservation Development (GEPD) bylaw and to incorporate other comments. As part of this report, Daylor Consulting Group has again modified the study results to exclude two of the GEPD-eligible parcels that were recently developed (Turner Hill and the Don Bosco parcel, which will soon be occupied by New England Biolabs).

**Figure 1-1** illustrates some of the factors that were considered in preparing the buildout analysis. As shown on this map, buildable land in Ipswich includes any land that is not either already developed, permanently protected as open space, or unbuildable because of environmental constraints. The results of the final buildout analysis are provided in **Table 6-8**. Overall, it is estimated that up to 4,190 new dwelling units could be added to the Town's existing total of 5,601, for a total buildout of almost 9,800 dwelling units.<sup>14</sup> This represents a 75% increase over existing conditions.

<sup>13</sup> The methodology for the buildout analysis is consistent with MAPC's methodology used for all of the state-sponsored buildout analyses.

<sup>14</sup> The buildout analysis is based on zoning in effect as of 2000. It should be noted that subsequent to the Buildout Analysis, the zoning for the Rural Residence District was modified to require a two-acre minimum lot size, as opposed to the one-acre lot size required at the time of the buildout analysis. However, the original buildout

The buildout analysis also estimated the effect of potential new development on the Town's population, number of public school students, water demand, miles of roadway, and solid waste generation (**Table 6-9**). Estimates for new population and new school children are based on multipliers that MAPC developed specifically for Ipswich: 2.36 persons per household (based on 2010 projections) and 0.33 school children per household (based on the 1990 ratio). Multipliers for the other parameters are based on standard multipliers that MAPC developed as part of their general methodology for the region and the state. As shown in **Table 6-9**, Ipswich's population could increase by almost 10,000 at buildout. This would increase the population from 12,987 (as of 2000) to almost 23,000, an increase of 76%.

**Table 6-8  
Ipswich Residential and Commercial Buildout Analysis, 2000**

Zoning District	Developable Acres	Net yield (dwelling units per acre) <sup>a</sup>	Net yield (effective floor-area ratio) <sup>a</sup>	% of District Allocated to Use	New d.u. at Buildout	New Commercial/Industrial s.f. at Buildout
<b>RRA</b>	4,500	0.81		100%	3,549	
<b>RRB</b>	129	0.81		100%	103	
<b>RRC</b>	226	0.81		100%	176	
<b>IR</b> 1-family	53	3.12		60%	95	
2-family	53	5.39		20%	54	
Multi-fam.	53	6.00		20%	60	
<b>HB</b> Multi-fam.	61	4.99		50%	145	
Other	61		0.49	50%		620,577
<b>B</b> Mixed-use	1	7.96	0.55	100%	8	16,264
<b>PC</b>	49	-	0.40	100%		795,506
<b>I</b> Commercial	14	-	0.40	50%		40,581
Industrial	14	-	0.38	50%		38,551
<b>LI</b>	41	-	0.38	100%		681,260
<b>Great Estates<sup>b</sup></b>	171	-	0.043	100%		320,000
<b>Total</b>					<b>4,190</b>	<b>2,542,739</b>

Sources: *Grow Smart North Shore*, Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 1999, and MAPC, 2000.

<sup>a</sup> Yield may be lower in areas within flood zone or 100'-200' river zone. Accordingly, numbers presented in this table do not always compute precisely to the net new buildout.

<sup>b</sup> The only remaining developable site that is GEPD-eligible is the Sisters of Notre Dame property. If this parcel were instead developed in accordance with the underlying zoning, up to 138 dwelling units could be built in lieu of the 320,000 sq. ft. of commercial space.

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analysis is still applicable if one assumes developers will take advantage of incentive provisions that allow development at a net density of one unit per acre in exchange for protected open space and affordable housing.

**Table 6-9  
Impact of Potential Buildout**

<b>Zoning District</b>	<b>New Dwelling Units</b>	<b>New Commercial/ Indust. s.f.</b>	<b>New Residents</b>	<b>New School Children</b>	<b>New Water Demand (gallons/day)</b>	<b>New Solid Waste (tons)</b>	<b>New Roads (miles)</b>
<b>RRA</b>	3,549		8,377	1,313	628,242	3,244	70.6
<b>RRB</b>	103		243	38	18,221	94	2.1
<b>RRC</b>	176		415	65	31,159	161	3.5
<b>IR</b>	209		493	77	36,990	191	1.3
<b>HB</b>	145	620,577	343	54	72,248	133	0.2
<b>B</b>	8	16,264	19	3	2,659	7	
<b>PC</b>		795,506			59,663		
<b>I</b>		79,132			5,935		
<b>LI</b>		681,260			51,094		
<b>Grt. Est.</b>		320,000			31,182		
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,190</b>	<b>2,542,739</b>	<b>9,890</b>	<b>1,550</b>	<b>937,393</b>	<b>3,820</b>	<b>78</b>

Sources: *Grow Smart North Shore*, Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 1999, and MAPC, 2000.

### Discussion of Buildout Results

Because of the large number of factors that influence development potential in a community, the buildout analysis is intended to provide not an exact determination of future growth potential, but rather a general order-of-magnitude estimate. Nevertheless, this study is very useful for planning because it gives the Town a picture of what the future might hold if the community does nothing to alter its present course. In a few key regards, the picture that the buildout presents is at odds with the Town’s vision for the future as discussed in **Section 2**. For example, the addition of 4,000-plus new dwellings and 78 miles of new road would obliterate much of the Town’s remaining rural character as it consumed key open space parcels. In addition, the Town’s current water supply would be unable to provide the almost one million gallons per day of additional water needed to service the full buildout scenario, and it is doubtful that additional water sources could be found to meet this demand, except at exceptional cost. These factors challenge the Town to find ways to reduce both the amount of development that could occur in the future, and the potential impacts of this development.

## **6.4 Housing Affordability Analysis**

Housing affordability is a critical factor that determines what types of people will be able to live in Ipswich and, in turn, what type of community Ipswich will be. This section provides an analysis of housing costs and affordability, as well as existing programs and policies for providing affordable housing in the Town.

### **6.4.1 Housing Costs**

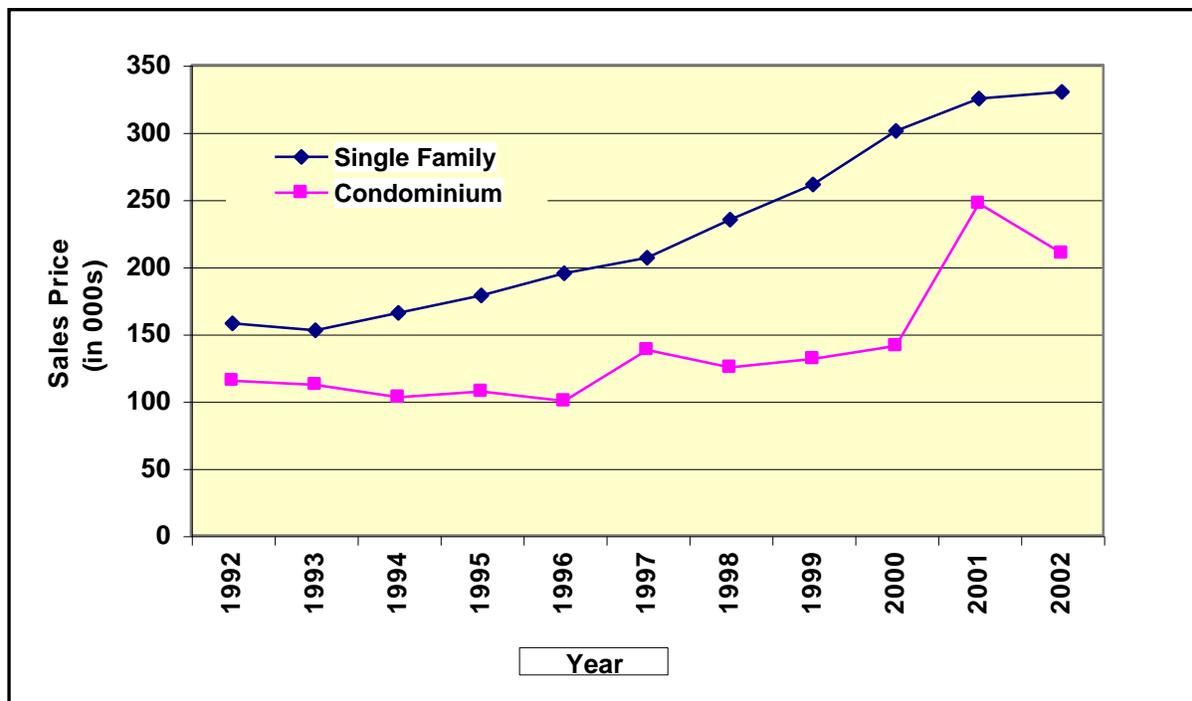
This sub-section evaluates housing costs for the two main sectors of the housing market: homeownership units and rental housing.

### Cost of Homeownership Units

The cost of homeownership units in Ipswich can be examined in two different ways. Data from the Banker and Tradesman, which tracks real estate trends in Massachusetts, provides current (2002) figures and past trends related to the price of real estate that was bought and sold (see **Figure 6-7**). These data provide an accurate representation of prices for those units that changed hands, but may not be totally representative of all the housing units in the Town. Data from the Ipswich Assessor's Office, on the other hand, includes assessed valuation information for all dwelling units (see **Table 6-10**). However, these figures are based on assessments conducted in 2000, which may not be an entirely reliable indicator of current prices. Both data sets taken together provide the best insight into the cost of ownership housing in Ipswich.

As of August 2002, the median sales price for single-family houses was \$330,000, up from the 2001 median single-family sales price of \$325,000. The median sales price for condominiums was \$210,000, down from the 2001 median of \$246,915 (see **Figure 6-7**). While prices have continued to rise, the 2002 median sales price for single-family homes has leveled off from the linear growth experienced since 1993. The dramatic increase in sales prices in Ipswich in recent years is consistent with regional growth pressure and housing prices. For example, the 2001 median sales price for single-family homes was \$273,500 in Essex, \$330,000 in Hamilton, and \$411,000 in Topsfield.

**Figure 6-7**  
**Median Residential Home Sale Price in Ipswich, 1992-2002**



Source: Banker and Tradesman, 2002.

As shown in **Table 6-10**, Ipswich’s single-family housing stock is heavily skewed toward more expensive units. Only about 10% of the Town’s single-family units are affordable to households earning the median income for the region or less. More than 40% of the single-family housing units are affordable to households with incomes 120%-180% of the median income and nearly 30% of the single-family units are affordable only to households earning more than 180% of the median household income. Not surprisingly, condominium units are less expensive, with a large share of the units in the low- to mid-\$100,000s. Overall, more than 75% of Ipswich’s condominiums are affordable to households earning 100% or less of the median income.

**Table 6-10**  
**Approximate Cost of Homeownership Units in Ipswich, 2000**

Home Assessed Value Range <sup>a</sup>	Affordability Range (% of Median HH Income)*	Single-Family Units		Condominium Units	
		Number	%	Number <sup>b</sup>	%
Less than \$97,000	Less than 50%	5	0.1	76	16.5
\$97,000 - \$155,000	50% - 80%	109	3.0	161	34.8
\$155,001 - \$194,000	80% - 100%	251	6.9	114	24.7
\$194,001 - \$233,000	100% - 120%	740	20.3	86	18.6
\$233,001 - \$349,000	120% - 180%	1,508	41.3	24	5.2
More than \$349,000	180% and over	1,041	28.4	1	0.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>3,654</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Town of Ipswich Assessor’s Database. Assessed value is assumed to be 93% of actual value or potential sale price. However, quickly escalating home prices in recent years has made it difficult to gauge the exact relationship between assessed values and actual values. Two additional considerations should be noted in reviewing these data. First, the data in **Table 6-10** are from the 2000 Assessor’s database while the Banker and Tradesmen data in **Figure 6-7** are from 2002. Second, **Table 6-10** includes all residential units in Ipswich, not just those on the market. The homes included in **Figure 6-7** are homes that are currently on the market, and the values may be slightly skewed by a higher percentage of larger, newly constructed homes.

<sup>a</sup> See **Section 6.4.2** for a discussion of the Homebuyer’s Affordability Index.

<sup>b</sup> Not all condominiums listed in the Assessor’s Database were given an assessed value. Accordingly, this table does not reflect all condominium units within the Town.

### Cost of Rental Housing

Rental housing in eastern Massachusetts has become much more expensive in recent years. Pressure on suburban rental markets has increased as housing availability grows tighter in the city. In 1990, median gross rent in Ipswich was \$566 per month, compared to the countywide median of \$597 and the statewide median of \$580. In 2000, median gross rent in Ipswich was \$664 per month, again roughly comparable to the county median of \$665 and statewide median of \$684. See **Table 6-11** for a comparison of Ipswich’s median rent to that in neighboring Essex County communities.

**Table 6-11  
Median Rents in Essex County Communities, 2000**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Median Rent</b>
Boxford	\$1,256
Danvers	\$766
Essex	\$768
Georgetown	\$515
Hamilton	\$641
Ipswich	\$664
Manchester	\$780
Middleton	\$423
Newbury	\$697
North Andover	\$879
Rowley	\$819
Topsfield	\$625
West Newbury	\$826

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

Additional data on rental housing in Ipswich were collected through a 2003 survey of Ipswich’s renter households.<sup>15</sup> The survey included questions related to the price, size, and condition of rental units, as well as other factors. Of the 650 surveys that were distributed, more than 30% were returned. Of the 208 respondents, 28.4% reported that they paid \$700 per month or less for rent; 23.6% paid \$701-850 per month; 28.4% paid \$851-1,000; 5.8% paid \$1,001-1,150 per month; 8.2% paid \$1,151-1,300; and 5.3% paid more than \$1,300 per month. These prices are somewhat higher than the 2000 median rent reported by the U.S. Census. This is probably due to a combination of factors, which could include increased rents from 2000-2003, lower survey participation by low-rent households, and/or different survey methods or questions. Whatever the cause for the discrepancy, the 2003 survey is probably the more accurate reflection of the current rental market in Ipswich, while the 2000 U.S. Census data provide a useful comparison between rental prices in Ipswich and those in surrounding communities.

#### **6.4.2 Housing Affordability Indices**

The definition of housing affordability considers both the price of the housing unit and the income of the household living in it. It should be noted that the term “affordable housing” is relative, since it depends on the income of the household. Affordable housing is not the same thing as subsidized housing for persons of low and/or moderate income, although subsidized housing is one type of affordable housing.

#### **H.U.D. and Bank Standard**

A generally accepted standard used to define affordability is that monthly housing cost should not exceed 30% of household income. According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD),

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<sup>15</sup> Tufts University, Dept. of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning, Masters Degree Program field work project, 2003.

families who pay more than 30% of their income for housing may be “cost-burdened” and have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care.<sup>16</sup> A guideline used by banks when evaluating home mortgage applications is that monthly payments should not exceed 30%-33% of household income. In 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated that approximately 20% of Ipswich homeowners spent 35% or more of their household income on housing costs, while an additional 7% spent between 30% and 34.9%. Of renter households, it was estimated that at least 28% spent 35% or more of their monthly income on housing costs, while another 6% spent between 30% and 34.9%.<sup>17</sup>

### Homebuyers Affordability Index

To determine the affordability of ownership units for any given family, it is necessary to estimate the maximum price of a home that the family could afford if they are to spend no more than 30% of their income on housing costs, including mortgage payments, property taxes, and insurance. This calculation depends on many factors, including interest rates (which, in turn, are affected by the borrower’s credit rating), length of the mortgage (e.g., 15-year vs. 30-year), and amount of the down payment. Based on assumptions for a typical home buyer, a family earning the median household income for the Boston Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) of \$55,234 in 1999 could afford a home costing approximately \$194,000.<sup>18,19,20</sup> This is \$67,000 less than the 1999 median home price in the Town of \$261,000. Housing affordability for other income ranges and the number of units in each price range in Ipswich is shown in **Table 6-10**.

### Northeastern University’s Center for Urban and Regional Policy

In October 2002, Northeastern University’s Center for Urban and Regional Policy released a housing study evaluating the eastern Massachusetts housing market and the growing lack of affordable housing. The study analyzed each of the communities in Boston MSA and sought to identify each community’s Affordability Gap, or the difference between the median single-family home price and the price a median income household could afford. According to the report, the median single-family home price in Ipswich in 2001 was \$325,000, while the 2001 median household income in Ipswich was estimated to be \$63,156.

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<sup>16</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Community Planning and Development website, “Who Needs Affordable Housing?” <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/index.cfm>.

<sup>17</sup> Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000. These numbers are not completely accurate since housing cost as a percentage of household income was not computed for 0.6% of homeowners and 8.5% of renters.

<sup>18</sup> This calculation assumes a 20% down payment, 30-year mortgage, interest rate of 7.17% (the average rate from July 2000 through June 2002 for a borrower with good credit history), and insurance and property tax rates typical of the area. It should be recognized, however, that changing any of these assumptions would affect the amount that a family could borrow and therefore the maximum house price they could afford. Total borrowing power is particularly sensitive to the interest rate, which can fluctuate greatly.

<sup>19</sup> This analysis examines median *household* income rather than median *family* income as the measure of affordability because many individuals that require housing live in non-family households. Thus, median household income is more indicative of the total range of living groups requiring housing. Housing affordability for the purposes of Ipswich’s Inclusionary Housing Bylaw is calculated based on the median household income for the region. It should be noted, however, that “affordability” for the purposes Chapter 40B and certain other programs is defined based on median *family* income for the MSA. For the Boston MSA, this figure is currently approximately \$74,000.

<sup>20</sup> Using the Town’s median household income as a benchmark would lead to a similar result, since the Town’s median household income in 1999 was \$57,284—within 4% of the regional median of \$55,234.

Assuming no more than 33% of household income is spent on housing, the maximum home price an Ipswich household could afford in 2001 was \$218,335. Thus, the 2001 median single-family home price of \$325,000 was \$106,665 (49%) more than what the median Ipswich household could afford.<sup>21</sup>

### Chapter 40B Standard for Affordability

Under Chapter 40B of the Massachusetts General Laws, housing considered “affordable” must be affordable to families earning no more than 80% of the median family income for the region—currently about \$59,300. It should be noted, however, that even units deemed “affordable” under this state definition may not be affordable to many people who work in Ipswich or would like to live in Ipswich—including many of the Town’s municipal employees.

### **6.4.3 Inventory of Affordable Housing**

State law (M.G.L. Chapter 40B) mandates that communities have 10% of their total housing dedicated to households with low and moderate incomes. In order to qualify as affordable under Chapter 40B, housing units must be subsidized with state or federal funding, qualify under the Local Initiative Program, or meet certain other requirements. In communities that have less than 10% affordable housing, Chapter 40B allows private developers who construct affordable housing to circumvent local zoning and subdivision controls through the Comprehensive Permit process. This process allows developers to submit a single application to the Zoning Board of Appeals, and requires that the application be approved unless it presents serious health or safety risks.

As of 2002, approximately 6.3% of Ipswich’s housing stock (351 out of 5,601 units) qualifies as affordable housing under Chapter 40B. This is less than the 10% requirement, but significantly more than many suburban communities, including many of Ipswich’s neighbors. Given Ipswich’s total housing stock of 5,601 dwelling units, the Town would need about 560 qualifying units to comply with Chapter 40B—or about 209 additional units. It should be noted that only certain affordable units (primarily those constructed with state or federal assistance) count toward meeting the Chapter 40B housing inventory.

Since 1998 there have been five Comprehensive Permit projects in Ipswich. Some of these were conducted with the cooperation and/or participation of the Town while others met with Town disapproval and neighborhood opposition. For example, one proposed project on Safford Street near downtown was initially disapproved by the ZBA because of problems with flooding in the area but was later approved and constructed. The ZBA also initially turned down a two-unit development on Cogswell Street in central Ipswich, but the State overrode this disapproval.

### Publicly Assisted and Subsidized Housing

The Ipswich Housing Authority manages a total of 246 publicly assisted housing units in Ipswich, including 200 units for elderly/disabled persons (Mass. Chap. 667), 14 scattered site units for families (Mass. Chap. 705), and eight special needs units for handicapped adults (Mass. Chap. 689). These units

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<sup>21</sup> For comparison purposes, the Affordability Gap was 6% in Boxford; 24% in Danvers; 18% in Essex; 2.7% in Georgetown; 21% in Hamilton; 102% in Manchester; 4% in Middleton; 2% in Newbury; 36% in North Andover; 21% in Rowley; 7% in Topsfield; and 4% in West Newbury.

provide housing for persons of low income.<sup>22</sup> **Table 6-12** summarizes the Town’s subsidized housing units. (More information on the various public housing assistance programs identified in the table is provided in **Appendix C**.)

As of November 2002, the wait list for the Ipswich Housing Authority’s elderly or disabled units was 300-400 households. The majority of those on the list are disabled individuals, aged 60 and under. For these persons, the wait can be at least five years, since the Authority is required by the state to allocate no more than 13.5% of its elderly/disabled units to non-elderly, disabled residents. For elderly Ipswich residents, the wait may be at least six months, but those requiring ground level units may have to wait longer. Since the Authority has only 38 family units, located at Southern Heights and Agawam Village, the family housing wait list, which currently exceeds 300 households, has been closed since 1996.

**Table 6-12**  
**Subsidized Housing Inventory**

Location	Funding Agency	Program <sup>a</sup>	Total Units
Southern Manor <sup>b</sup>	DHCD	Chapter 667	20
Caroline Ave.- Part 1	DHCD	Chapter 667	42
Caroline Ave.- Part 2	DHCD	Chapter 667	58
Agawam Village	DHCD	Chapter 667	80
Agawam Village	DHCD	Chapter 705	14
Agawam Village	DHCD	Chapter 689	8
Southern Heights <sup>b</sup>	DHCD	Chapter 200	24
<b>Total Number of Units Owned by the Ipswich Housing Authority</b>			<b>246</b>
<b>Leased Housing:</b>			
Scattered	HUD	Federal Section 8	55 <sup>c</sup>
Scattered	DHCD	MA Rental Vouchers	11
Cable Gardens	DHCD	MA Rental Vouchers (Project Based)	28
Scattered	DHCD	Adult Rental Vouchers	28 <sup>d</sup>
<b>Total Number of Leased Units</b>			<b>122</b>

<sup>a</sup> More information on the various public housing assistance programs is provided in **Appendix C**.

<sup>b</sup> Both Southern Manor and Southern Heights are located in Agawam Village.

<sup>c</sup> The Ipswich Housing Authority administers 55 Federal Section 8 housing certificates. Of these, 25 units are in Ipswich, and the remainder are scattered in other towns.

<sup>d</sup> The Ipswich Housing Authority issues vouchers for 28 units of special needs (adult handicapped) housing. Seven of these are in Ipswich and the remaining units are in other Massachusetts communities.

<sup>22</sup> Low income is defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as 50% or less of the median family income for the region; moderate income is defined as 50-80% of median family income. Income limits vary depending upon the federal or state program that subsidizes the housing.

## 6.5 Housing Needs

Several factors will determine future housing needs in Ipswich: the existing housing stock and housing deficiencies; projected demographics; local and regional market forces; and the needs of particular groups. These factors are discussed in this section. Overall, the greatest housing needs in Ipswich are for additional affordable housing, additional rental housing (especially three-bedroom rental units), more housing for senior citizens and “empty nesters,” and smaller housing units that are suitable for a smaller household size.

### 6.5.1 Changing Demographics

Several demographic trends will influence the need for various types of housing in Ipswich. A complete Demographic Profile is provided as **Appendix A**.

#### Ipswich Population and Age Trends

Demographic data and projections reveal an aging population with periodic “bulges” in the school-aged population based on generational cycles. According to the 2000 Census, the greatest population growth in Ipswich during the 1990s was among persons aged 45 to 64. This age cohort grew by about 45%. The Town also witnessed a large increase in the number of school-aged children (aged 5 to 17), which grew by 25.7% from 1990 to 2000, and a lesser increase in the 65+ population, which grew by 15.7%.

As generations age, there will be periodic bulges and deficits in the various age groups. However, the overall trend nationwide is toward an older population—and this trend is quite apparent in Ipswich. In 2000, the median age in Ipswich was 41.7 years as compared to 36.5 for the state. MAPC estimates that Ipswich’s elderly population (65+) will grow 61% from 2000 and 2020. It appears likely that there will be additional demand for various types of senior housing, including “empty nester” housing and congregate independent and assisted living units.

#### Ipswich Household Trends

The number of non-family households in Ipswich increased from 30.9% of all households in 1990 to 34.6% in 2000. This trend mirrors state and national trends toward a greater number of smaller households, including elderly householders or single adults living alone. In 2000, the average household size in Ipswich was 2.42, lower than both the Essex County average (2.57) and the state average (2.51). Of the family households, the proportion of single-parent female-headed households increased from 13.5% in 1990 to 15.5% in 2000. As this group grows, its unique needs will also need to be considered.

### 6.5.2 Family Housing

As was discussed in **Section 6.4.2**, the 2001 median single-family home price in Ipswich—\$325,000—was \$106,665 (49%) more than what the median Ipswich household could afford. While homeowners that purchased their homes prior to the past decade’s steep escalation in prices now enjoy substantial equity in their investment, residents who have not yet purchased homes are being forced to look outside Ipswich for affordable housing opportunities. Of particular concern to the Town are the housing needs of employees who work in Ipswich, including many of the Town’s local government employees and those

that work in lower-paying service and retail jobs based in the downtown. Most of these people will not be able afford \$325,000 homes.

### **6.5.3 Rental Housing**

As low mortgage rates have driven home and condominium prices higher, rental housing represents the only affordable housing option for many households. In 2000, 38% of Massachusetts households and 37% of Essex County households rented their home. More than 27% of the Ipswich's households were renter households in 2000, which compares quite favorably to the percentage in surrounding communities, where only 20.6% of households rented.<sup>23</sup> However, Ipswich actually had fewer rental units in 2000 than in 1990. In addition, there is no guarantee that many of the Town's existing rental units will continue to be rentals. Individual resale through condominium conversions poses a constant threat to units located in multi-unit buildings. Thus, there is a critical need to create new rental housing in Ipswich and ensure the continuation of the Town's existing rental units.

### **6.5.4 Affordable and Subsidized Housing**

Additional affordable and subsidized housing is needed in Ipswich for two reasons. First, the Town's existing housing stock provides many more housing opportunities for upper-middle and upper income families than for low and moderate-income families. (See **Table 6-10**.) Second, the Town needs to provide additional Chapter 40B-qualifying affordable housing in order to make progress toward meeting its 10% requirement. Once the Town reaches 10% affordable housing, it will be able to gain more control over its local planning and land use since it will no longer be subject to Comprehensive Permits. The following table illustrates what percentage of new units in the Town must be affordable (as defined by Chapter 40B) for the Town to meet its 10% quota within certain timeframes.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> This figure represents the average share of rental households for the following communities: Boxford; Danvers; Essex; Georgetown; Hamilton; Manchester; Middleton; Newbury; North Andover; Rowley; Topsfield; and West Newbury. Only Essex, Manchester, and North Andover had greater shares of rental households.

<sup>24</sup> It should be noted that for Chapter 40B rental developments, 100% of the units created qualify towards a community's Chapter 40B inventory, even those units that are rented at market rate prices. For Chapter 40B homeownership developments, only the units that are subsidized and sold to income-eligible households count towards a community's Chapter 40B inventory.

**Table 6-13**  
**Alternatives for Meeting the Chapter 40B 10% Affordable Housing Requirement**

<b>% of New Units that are Chapter 40B-Affordable</b>	<b>Number of New Units</b>	<b>Number of New Chapter 40B Affordable Units</b>	<b>Total Units</b>	<b>Total Qualifying Affordable Units</b>	<b>Meets 40B?</b>
Existing Housing Stock			5,601	351 (6.3%)	No
30%	1,046	314	6,647	665 (10%)	Yes
25%	1,394	349	6,995	700 (10%)	Yes
20%	2,091	418	7,692	769 (10%)	Yes
15%	4,182	627	9,783	978 (10%)	Yes
10%	4,280 (buildout)	428	9,881	779 (8%)	No

### **6.5.5 Senior Housing and Special Needs Housing**

Ipswich has some existing senior housing, including 70 units of market rate senior housing and 28 units of handicapped and disabled housing for low and moderate income seniors at Cable Gardens, a private development at the intersection of Routes 1A and 133. These 28 units receive state funding through the MA Rental Voucher Program as distributed by the Ipswich Housing Authority. There are 33 units of moderate-income, elderly or disabled housing at Oak Hill in downtown Ipswich. Non-elderly disabled residents occupy two units, while moderate-income elderly residents occupy 31 units. Recent discussions have included the possibility of using additional portions of the former Cable Hospital property for assisted living or other forms of housing, but no official proposals are pending at this time. The Town recently sold a one-acre parcel to the Ipswich Housing Authority to build a four-bedroom mental health group home for persons 60 and over; that facility is now under construction. Other existing special needs housing in the Town includes Henry’s House, an independently operated facility that provides temporary housing for homeless individuals and recovering addicts.

As discussed above, Ipswich will see a large increase in the number of elderly residents over the next 20 years. The Town should address the needs of this group by allowing for the development of appropriate senior housing. In addition to senior citizens, people needing special housing include physically and mentally handicapped persons of all ages, and persons with debilitating illnesses. Some common types of housing for seniors and other persons with special needs include age-restricted townhouses or condominiums, assisted living complexes, congregate living, and single room occupancy units.

In 1990, according to the U.S. Census, there were 301 persons in Ipswich aged 65+ who claimed to have mobility and/or self-care limitations. An additional 160 residents under the age of 65 had such disabilities. In 2000, 359 residents 65 and over had physical disabilities, while another 136 had self-care disabilities.<sup>25</sup> An additional 295 individuals under age 65 had a physical disability while another 51 residents under 65 had a self-care disability. Although not all of these individuals may be candidates for

<sup>25</sup> An additional 244 individuals aged 65 and over were identified as having sensory disability; another 95 were identified as having a mental disability; and 275 were identified as having go-outside-home disability.

special needs housing, these statistics, and the fact that Ipswich's population above age 65 is expected to grow substantially, indicate that the need for additional housing options does exist.

## **6.6 Housing Resources**

The Town of Ipswich has taken a proactive role in identifying housing needs and attempting to meet those needs, even as the regional economy has affected housing affordability and development trends. As a result, the Town has several programs already in place that promote the development of affordable housing and housing for various underserved segments of the population.

### **6.6.1 Ipswich Zoning Bylaw**

The Town's zoning bylaw includes several measures to encourage affordable housing development. The Inclusionary Housing Requirements (Section IX.I of the zoning bylaw) mandate that 10% of the units in multi-family developments be affordable. The Intown district allows considerable flexibility for residential development by allowing for small lot sizes. Mixed-use zoning in and around the town center allows the creation of affordable apartments above ground floor retail, while in-law apartments provide for additional residential units on single-family lots. A recent change to the zoning bylaw allows carriage houses to be used as full-time residences, providing for additional, smaller housing units on single-family lots and two-family lots. In addition, a 2001 change to the zoning bylaw offers developers a density bonus to construct affordable single-family housing in the Rural Residence districts.

### **6.6.2 Affordable Housing Organizations and Programs**

Various state and federal programs offer financing or other incentives to private developers who build affordable rental or homeownership units, construct and/or maintain subsidized units, or provide vouchers to tenants seek housing in the private rental market. These programs are described in **Appendix C**. This section discusses local affordable housing organizations and programs.

#### Ipswich Housing Authority

The Ipswich Housing Authority supports the development of affordable housing for families, special needs residents, and senior citizens. The Authority channels funding received from DHCD and HUD for housing construction and voucher disbursement. The Authority is working cooperatively with Cape Ann Habitat for Humanity to build housing at a Town-owned site on Essex Road (Route 133). Habitat has built the first of three units of first-time homeowner housing on a 1.5-acre portion of the site. The Housing Authority is building a group home to accommodate four mentally disabled Chapter 689 clients on a separate one-acre portion of the site. The Housing Authority also owns land at 21 Leslie Road, which could be used to build elderly/handicapped housing or another type of affordable housing, either by the Housing Authority or by a local nonprofit organization.

#### Non-Profit Housing Organizations

Cape Ann Habitat for Humanity builds affordable ownership units in cooperation with the future homeowner. Other non-profit agencies have also been actively involved in the development of affordable

housing, especially for seniors. Affordable developments in Ipswich with non-profit involvement include Oak Hill, Cable Gardens, and Agawam.

The Town is also working with the North Shore Housing Trust (NSHT) to develop additional affordable housing at the Whipple School Annex Building (now owned by the Town). The building would be renovated into 10 units of elderly affordable rental housing.

### North Shore HOME Consortium

Ipswich is a charter member of the North Shore HOME Consortium, which was created in 1993 with the primary purpose of developing affordable housing. Funded through the federal government, the consortium's 27 member cities and towns include many Essex County communities, although it is not limited to Essex County. Communities elect whether or not they want to participate in the program.

The HOME program can be used for rental housing production and rehabilitation; first-time homebuyer assistance; rehabilitation assistance for homeowners; and tenant-based rental assistance. Rental programs are targeted to households earning less than 60% of area median income while homebuyer and homeowner programs are targeted to individuals with incomes below 80% of area median income. In addition, for dwellings to be eligible for rehabilitation under the program, the proposed rehabilitation activities must not result in the dwelling's value exceeding the program's established affordable price. The current federal definition of an "affordable" home is one that does not exceed \$239,250,<sup>26</sup> regardless of square footage or number of bedrooms.

Since Ipswich is a member of the Consortium, money is set aside each year for the Town, based on its number of low and moderate income residents. The Town currently receives about \$45,000 per year. The Ipswich Planning and Development Department currently administers the funds and related programs. In the past, Ipswich has used its HOME funds primarily to fund a First Time Homebuyer Program. Eligible homebuyers are granted interest free loans for up to 5% of the purchase price or \$6,500, whichever is less. The homebuyers are required to repay the loan only if they sell their house or refinance. In recent years, rising housing prices have limited the program's activities to affordable units only. This is because households eligible under the program guidelines have not been able to qualify for mortgage financing.

Given the constraints imposed on the First Time Homebuyer program, Ipswich has sought other uses for the HOME funds, including rehabilitation and renovation of existing structures. The Town is currently using HOME funds to partially fund the renovation of Memorial Hall into affordable elderly housing. The Town has also used HOME funds to subsidize rent: in exchange for a flat fee paid by the Town, the property owner agrees to lower the rental cost to a specified level for a specified time (e.g., 30 years).

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<sup>26</sup> As of February 2002.

## Housing Partnership

The Town revived its Housing Partnership in January 2002. During the first part of 2002, the group met several times, adopting a mission statement, goals, and supporting strategies. The Partnership, which receives staff support from the Planning Department, is looking to continue the Town's activity of subsidizing property owners to lower rents for income-eligible households. In addition, they are currently instituting a housing rehabilitation program. The Town was recently awarded a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) along with the Town of Salisbury to run a housing rehab program. Through this grant, Ipswich will receive \$100,000 to fund the rehab of four to five qualifying homes at \$20,000 to \$25,000 each. Recipient households would not have to pay back the funds if they remain in their home for 15 years.

The Town recently established an Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which will be funded by developers who choose to make a payment in lieu of building affordable housing under the Town's Inclusionary Housing bylaw. The Housing Partnership would like to use at least some of these funds to preserve the affordability of existing rental units through the acquisition of additional price restrictions.

## 7. ECONOMIC PROFILE

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Ipswich has a diverse economic base that includes manufacturing, retail, service, and natural resource industries. In the past, the Town's natural resource base has heavily influenced its economic development. Its proximity to water and the construction of a dam on the Ipswich River led to the Town's emergence during the 19th century as an economically diverse mill town. The Town's varied ecology supports land- and resource-based industries such as shellfishing (Ipswich is the state's largest producer of soft-shell clams) and farming. Although a limited public water supply and restricted access to public sewers are constraints to more intense commercial and industrial development, the Town in the past has attempted to overcome such constraints if the development is regarded as desirable.

This section provides an overview of the Town's existing economy, and then examines the following issues related to economic development: zoning; the strengths and weaknesses of individual industries; and the potential of the Town's business areas and industries to meet goals related to employment, tax base, and overall economic health.

### 7.1 Ipswich's Labor Force

Specific information on the Town's economic characteristics, including the labor force, employers, and types of businesses is provided in the following sub-sections. These statistics are based on the most recent available data from the U.S. Census, the Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), and the Town of Ipswich. For additional economic statistical information, see **Appendix B**.

#### 7.1.1 Labor Force Profile and Unemployment Statistics

The 2000 Census revealed that there are 7,017 people in Ipswich's labor force, a 6.0% increase from 1990, or an annual average growth rate of 0.6%. While this growth has been moderate, it is higher than both Essex County (4.1% increase during this period) and the state (0.3% increase).

On average, Ipswich residents have a higher level of education than both Essex County and state residents. More than 40% of Ipswich residents over the age of 25 have a bachelor's degree. Averages for Essex County and the state are seven to ten percentage points lower. In addition, in 2000, nearly 18% of Ipswich's residents aged 25 and over held a graduate degree, compared to about 12% in Essex County and 14% in the state.

Median age in the Town increased from 37.3 in 1990 to 41.7 in 2000. The 45-64 age group comprised 28.1% of the Town's population in 2000 and is projected to further increase, as is the 65 and over cohort. MAPC predicts that the 25-44 age group will become a smaller component of the Town's population, shrinking from 28% of the Town's total population in 2000 to 20% by 2010. If current trends continue, Ipswich will see an increasingly older resident labor force with more retirees. See **Appendix A** for additional information.

Ipswich’s unemployment rate has consistently been lower than the rate for both Essex County and the state, but slightly higher than the rate for a group of twelve nearby Essex County communities. Employment trends in Ipswich have mirrored those in Essex County and in the state, with an unemployment peak during the 1991 recession followed by declining unemployment through the 1990s. After bottoming out in 2000, unemployment levels began rising in 2001. See **Table 7-1** for details.

**Table 7-1**  
**Average Annual Labor Force and Unemployment, 1991-2001**

Year	-----Ipswich-----		Nearby Towns	Essex County	State
	Labor Force	Unemployment Rate	Unemployment Rate*	Unemployment Rate	Unemployment Rate
1991	6,462	6.7	6.6	9.2	9.1
1992	6,464	6.3	6.5	9.0	8.6
1993	6,608	5.0	5.0	7.2	6.9
1994	6,706	4.3	4.3	6.3	6.0
1995	6,572	3.9	3.8	5.4	5.4
1996	6,696	3.5	2.9	4.4	4.3
1997	6,937	3.1	2.9	4.2	4.0
1998	7,059	2.8	2.5	3.7	3.3
1999	7,106	2.5	2.2	3.5	3.2
2000	7,017	2.0	1.8	2.7	2.6
2001	7,107	2.8	2.7	3.2	3.7

Source: Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training.

\* Average for the following nearby towns: Boxford, Danvers, Essex, Georgetown, Hamilton, Manchester, Middleton, Newbury, North Andover, Rowley, Topsfield, and West Newbury.

### **7.1.2 Occupation of Ipswich Residents**

Employment of Ipswich’s residents is characterized by a predominance of “white collar” occupations that surpasses the county, state, and national averages. (See **Table 7-2**.) In 2000, 47% of Ipswich’s labor force was employed in managerial, professional, and related occupations. This exceeded both Essex County and state averages, which were around 40%, as well as the national average of approximately 34%. These occupation types are usually among the better paying positions, which contribute to a median household income in Ipswich that exceeds county, state, and national averages. In 2000 the median household income for Ipswich residents was \$57,284, compared to \$51,576 for Essex County, \$50,502 for the state, and \$41,994 for the U.S. It should be noted, however, that Ipswich’s labor force is slightly less “white collar” than a group of similar nearby communities.<sup>1</sup> Compared to these towns, Ipswich has a slightly lower proportion of managerial, professional workers, sales, and office workers; and a slightly higher proportion of workers involved in trades such as construction, maintenance, production, and transportation.

<sup>1</sup> Average for the following nearby towns: Boxford, Danvers, Essex, Georgetown, Hamilton, Manchester, Middleton, Newbury, North Andover, Rowley, Topsfield, and West Newbury.

**Table 7-2**  
**Occupation of Ipswich Residents, 2000**

Occupation Type	Ipswich %	Nearby Towns %	Essex Cnty. %	State %	U.S. %
Management, professional, and related	46.8	48.4	39.4	41.1	33.6
Service occupations	13.4	11.2	13.6	14.1	14.9
Sales and office occupations	23.7	26.4	27.0	25.9	26.7
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.7
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	7.6	6.8	7.3	7.5	9.4
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	7.8	6.9	12.4	11.3	14.6
<b>Total Residents Employed</b>	<b>6,897</b>	<b>57,165</b>	<b>349,835</b>	<b>3,161,087</b>	<b>129,721,512</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000.

### **7.1.3 Local Employment Trends in Ipswich**

**Section 7.1.2** discussed the occupation of Ipswich residents; this section discusses the share of employment by industry for Ipswich workers (those who work in Ipswich but may or may not live in the Town). As of 2001, the largest employers in Ipswich are wholesale and retail trade (26.0%), services (25.7%), manufacturing (16.2%), and government (15.4%). **Table 7-3** presents a time series comparison of employment by sector in Ipswich.<sup>2</sup>

In 2000, Ipswich had 6,897 employed residents but only 3,927 local jobs—a net deficit of almost 3,000 jobs. Thus, Ipswich is a net exporter of labor. Examined another way, there are about 1.1 jobs for every dwelling unit in Massachusetts as a whole, whereas in Ipswich this figure is about 0.7 jobs per dwelling unit. (Comparatively, this ratio is 0.5 in Hamilton; 1.4 in Topsfield; 1.2 in Rowley; 1.0 in Essex; and 1.2 in Essex County.)<sup>3</sup> This deficit requires most Ipswich residents to commute to other communities to work. Ipswich did add an impressive 845 jobs, or 27.4%, between 1990 and 2000, compared to an increase of 10.4% in the North Shore Task Force (NSTF) subregion of the MAPC region.<sup>4</sup> New employment in Ipswich alone has accounted for about 5.6% of the new employment in the 15-community NSTF region since 1990. In this regard, the Town's economy is growing quickly, although it still remains relatively small for a town of its population.

<sup>2</sup> The time series study uses 1990 as the first year because the United States was experiencing a recession during 1991 and, as a result, growth estimates using 1991 as a base are skewed.

<sup>3</sup> Although 2001 employment figures were available at the time of this report, 2000 figures were used so that they would more directly compare to the total number of housing units as identified in the 2000 Census.

<sup>4</sup> The North Shore Task Force communities include Beverly, Danvers, Essex, Gloucester, Hamilton, Ipswich, Manchester, Marblehead, Middletown, Peabody, Rockport, Salem, Swampscott, Topsfield, and Wenham.

The economy in Ipswich has remained fairly consistent throughout the past decade. The number of establishments fluctuated and total employment declined by nearly 9% during the recession of the early 1990s, but has since rebounded. The number of establishments in 2001 shows a 13.2% increase over the 1990 figure. (See **Table 7-3.**) See **Appendix B** for additional information on the Town's business profile.

Consistent with statewide and national trends, the greatest number of jobs in Ipswich is in trade, which remained relatively constant throughout the twelve-year analysis period. In comparison, the Town's share of manufacturing jobs has fluctuated significantly from a low of 487 in 1991 to a high of 893 in 1994; the annual average has been around 720. The number of jobs in agriculture, forestry, and fishing has nearly tripled in the past twelve years, although the total number of jobs is relatively small. For the most part, all industrial sectors are relatively stable, and are, overall, exhibiting an upward trend except for the transportation, communications, and public utilities sector, which has diminished significantly since the recession of the early 1990s.

The average annual wage for employees in Ipswich in 2001 was \$32,457, up from \$23,957 in 1990, or a 35% increase.

**Table 7-3**  
**Employment by Industry in Ipswich, 1990-2001**

Year	Average Annual Wage	Number of Establishments	Total Employment	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	Government	Construction	Manufacturing	Transportation, Comm. Utilities	Wholes. & Retail Trade	Finance, Real Estate, Insurance	Services
1990	\$23,957	380	3,082	38	439	148	496	78	1,012	212	638
1991	\$23,936	373	2,822	38	418	121	487	73	1,000	182	492
1992	\$25,505	354	3,126	52	436	111	661	12	1,029	172	605
1993	\$25,860	366	3,433	77	446	99	886	14	1,027	187	653
1994	\$26,725	373	3,529	92	481	130	893	14	1,055	209	599
1995	\$28,075	406	3,748	107	510	145	891	9	1,085	193	746
1996	\$28,806	420	3,752	128	508	160	789	64	1,113	201	773
1997	\$29,967	411	3,847	128	532	179	847	NA	1,104	190	789
1998	\$30,273	409	3,753	125	544	188	737	11	1,148	220	756
1999	\$30,140	426	3,731	121	573	199	621	7	1,124	223	794
2000	\$32,278	427	3,927	107	602	207	678	17	1,051	211	979
2001	\$32,457	430	3,922	112	603	228	635	19	1,019	225	1,007

NA = not available.

Source: Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training (covered employees only). U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Survey.

### **7.1.4 Commuting Patterns**

As stated previously, Ipswich has 0.7 jobs for each resident in the labor force. This deficit of jobs in Town necessitates inter-municipal commuting for Ipswich residents to find employment. In 1990, only 25% of Ipswich's residents worked in Ipswich, while the remainder commuted to other cities and towns. However, 44% of those employed in Ipswich were also Ipswich residents. A more detailed summary of the commuting patterns for Ipswich residents and employees is provided in **Section 8.1.1**.

## **7.2 Ipswich Economic Base**

This section describes the Town's economic base, including its existing businesses, industries, non-residential tax base, and current economic development initiatives.

### **7.2.1 Ipswich Businesses**

This sub-section profiles several of the larger businesses in Ipswich based on information from the Planning Department and representatives of some of the businesses. Large established businesses in Ipswich include the following:

- **EBSCO Publishing**, a software publishing company, is presently the largest private-sector employer in Town, with approximately 475 employees. EBSCO relocated from Peabody to Ipswich in 1995. They occupy two buildings in the town center and have recently acquired a third, the underutilized former Ebinger Leather building next to the commuter rail lot on Topsfield Road.
- Another major employer, **Ipswich Shellfish Company**, is located in the Ipswich Business Park, an industrial park on Hayward Street. After expanding their operations in 1995, the company recently expanded a second time with the construction of a retail market building adjacent to their operations buildings. Current employment is approximately 125-130. In addition to their wholesale operations, the company sells shellfish in a retail store.
- **Shaw's Supermarket** on High Street (Route 1A/133) is another significant employer. Originally a Bell Market, this site has housed a supermarket for the past 50 years. The market was expanded significantly about six years ago, and was soon thereafter converted to a Star Market and then to a Shaw's Supermarket.

In addition to these existing businesses, the Town has recently approved several business and mixed-use developments, which will further increase the Town's employment and tax base. These include two projects on former "Great Estates" in Ipswich as well as two additional developments:

- The Great Estate mixed-use development on **Turner Hill**, which is currently under construction, will consist of a 26-room luxury hotel, an 18-hole golf course, a 45-seat restaurant, a health spa/racquet facility, and approximately 180 residential units. The golf course is expected to open in the fall of 2003, with other components of the project opening in 2004. The development is expected to employ approximately 40-100 persons, depending on the season.

- **New England Biolabs**, an enzyme company based in Beverly, is currently building a corporate headquarters on one of the other Great Estates sites. The facility will include a new building with 150,000 sq. ft. of lab space as well as a rehabilitated historic building (that was part of the original Great Estate) containing 50,000 sq. ft. of office space. The facility is expected to open in late 2004, and will eventually employ about 400 workers.
- A 20-room motel, **Arbor Inn**, is currently under construction on High Street (Route 1A/133). Directly across the street, a **mixed-use office building** with four apartments is also under construction.
- **Kortec**, a manufacturing firm located in Beverly, recently received approval for an 85,000 sq. ft. building on Old Right Road. The business is expected to employ 70 people.

### **7.2.2 Major Ipswich Industries**

The 1997 U.S. Economic Census provides information on the major business sectors within Ipswich, including retail trade, wholesale trade, and various service industries. This subsection includes a quantitative analysis of these sectors as well as a qualitative assessment of the Town's three biggest natural resource-based industries: agriculture, shellfishing, and tourism. A detailed breakdown of the number of establishments, annual sales, annual payroll, number of paid employees, and the average employee wage for each of the business groups is provided in **Appendix B**.

#### Retail and Wholesale Trade

In 1997, the Town's retail sector included 55 establishments with 468 employees, annual sales of about \$95 million, and an annual payroll of about \$12 million. For the retail trade sector, employees in building material and garden equipment and supply stores had the highest average retail wages, at \$40,157. The overall average wage, including all retail types, was \$25,355.

The wholesale trade sector included 59 establishments with 678 employees, annual sales of about \$246 million, and an annual payroll of about \$23 million. Employment in wholesale trade was split fairly evenly between durable goods and nondurable goods.

#### Services

Of the service sector employees for which the 1997 Economic Census disclosed information, those in the healthcare and social assistance fields have the highest wages, averaging \$24,567. The lowest-paid sectors included real estate and rental and leasing jobs (\$12,522 average wage) the food services industry (\$11,072 average wage). Wages in the professional, scientific, and technical service industries averaged about \$31,010. See **Tables B-3** and **Table B-4** in **Appendix B** for a more detailed breakdown of these data.

#### Agriculture

Agriculture represents a small overall portion of the Town's economic base, but makes a large contribution to the Town's land base, community character, and self-perception as a semi-rural community. According to the 2000 Open Space and Recreation Plan, the Town has about 2,064 acres of

land assessed under Chapter 61A for agricultural tax abatement, or about 10% of the Town's land area. In order to receive this assessment, a significant portion of the land must be in active production.

Economic statistics for agriculture in Ipswich are not available, but statistics for Essex County shed some light on the relative importance of the industry. In 1997, agriculture in Essex County produced over \$25 million worth of sales. Many farms are oriented partially or mainly toward direct retail sales to the public; Essex County ranked 35th among all U.S. counties in the value of agricultural products sold directly to consumers, according to the USDA. However, according to the most recent agricultural census, 51% of Essex County farms operated at a net loss in 1997.

Major farm crops in Ipswich include corn, squash, tomatoes, strawberries, and hay. Some of the Town's farms have added an "agri-tourism" component to their business, attracting customers to the farm to participate in activities such as U-pick and petting zoos, and to purchase prepared foods such as breads and pies. In 2001, a subcommittee of the Town's Growth Management Steering Committee prepared a report on family farms in Ipswich. This report identified agriculture as a primary contributor to the Town's character, open space, and way of life, but pointed out that few of Ipswich's farmers rely solely on farm income for their livelihood. As farm costs (equipment, labor, chemicals, etc.) have increased in recent years and revenues have remained relatively flat, farming in the Town is often a break-even business that must be supplemented by outside income. The report concluded that many farmers remain in business because they enjoy the lifestyle or wish to carry on a family tradition; typically in Ipswich, farmers have not sold their land until forced to do so because of financial duress.

Agricultural statistics from Essex County and the 2001 Ipswich farming report underscore some of the challenges and opportunities of farming in a metropolitan area. In general, those farms that have been most successful have adapted to include an agri-tourism component, have added a retail store to sell directly to the public, or have shifted to "niche" markets such as organics, specialty crops, and flowers, which bring in higher revenue than "commodity" crops. Many have also added a "value-added" component to their business, preparing foods such as jams, cider, pies, and ice cream from the raw foods produced on the farm.

### Shellfishing

Ipswich is one of the top shellfish producers in the state. According to the Shellfish Constable, commercial shellfishing in 2000 landed 366,500 pounds of softshell clams and 3,850 pounds of razor clams. Recreational harvests totaled 98,900 pounds, including 82,500 pounds of softshell clams and smaller amounts of sea clams, mussels, and oysters.

According to the Shellfish Constable, the shellfishing industry fluctuates from year to year depending on biological and weather conditions. The number of commercial shellfish permits also fluctuates according to the availability of clams, with approximately 120 commercial permits issued in 2002. Shellfishing in Ipswich is rarely the sole source of income for shellfishers; instead, it is often a second job or a weekend pursuit. Since licensed shellfish dealers purchase all of the commercial harvest, and shellfish processing and wholesale is a significant industry in Ipswich.

The health of the shellfish industry is closely tied to conditions in the coastal areas where shellfish are found. For example, a red tide in the early 1970s completely closed the Town's shellfishery for several months. After large rains, runoff is washed into the creeks and marshes, bringing with it fecal coliform and other pollutants. Because of this pollution, certain potential shellfishing areas in Ipswich are completely closed to shellfishing, or are closed after storms. If pollution sources can be found and eliminated, some of these areas could be re-opened for shellfishing, which could potentially increase the size of the Town's shellfishing industry. In the last couple of years, some progress appears to have been made toward improving water quality around the Town's coastal areas. For example, the Ipswich River clam flats were open for harvesting during much of 2001 and 2002.

### Tourism

With the largest collection of pre-1725 homes of anywhere in the U.S., Ipswich attracts many tourists, both locally and from abroad (many from Ipswich, England). "Old Ipswich Tours" conducts walking and driving tours of historic homes. A visitor center in the downtown provides information on local historic resources. The Town also supports a strong agri-tourism industry, with a number of family-owned or family-operated farms that provide visitors with a hands-on agricultural experience, allowing them to pick apples, raspberries, and strawberries. Of course, Ipswich's open fields and farms also contribute to the Town's scenic character, which is a major attraction for tourists.

Crane Estate, a permanently conserved 2,100-acre site owned and operated by the non-profit The Trustees of Reservations, draws hundreds and even thousands of visitors to the Town's scenic coast on summer days to enjoy the view of uninterrupted salt marsh and Crane Beach. A building on the former Crane property has been converted to a bed and breakfast, the Inn at Castle Hill. The Trustees of Reservations use proceeds from the Inn to fund their land preservation activities.

According to a representative from the Ipswich Visitor Information Center, the Town currently has about 15 motel and bed and breakfast beds available. However, this number will increase substantially over the next couple of years with the opening of the new 20-room motel on Route 1A/133 north of the town center as well as the 26-room luxury hotel at Turner Hill. Approximately 8,000 tourists visited the Visitor Center during the 2002 season, which ran from roughly Memorial Day weekend to the end of October. According to the Visitor Center representative, most Ipswich residents support tourism in the Town and see it as a good way to keep the Town's businesses and downtown viable. However, some residents do not support increased tourism because of the fear of increased traffic and other potential impacts.

Recent measures to encourage tourism have included improvements to the pedestrian environment of the town center by reconfiguring intersections, upgrading pedestrian amenities, and adding landscaping treatments. In addition, a Riverwalk over and along the Ipswich River (to connect the west section of town center to the east side, by the visitor center) will be constructed by the Massachusetts Highway Department in 2003. In 2002, the Town built a park overlooking the Ipswich River at Great Cove on County Street. Part of that project includes installing benches and an interpretive sign that will inform visitors about the history of that area of Town.

### 7.2.3 Tax Base

The tax base in Ipswich is overwhelmingly residential, with homeowners providing approximately 91% of the tax revenues. Commercial and industrial properties comprise about 5% and 3%, respectively, of the taxable property in Ipswich. (See **Table 7-4**.)

**Table 7-4**  
**Comparison of Total Property Values in Ipswich by Land Use Category, 1992 and 2002**

Use Category	1992 Assessed Property Value	% of Total	2002 Assessed Property Value	% of Total	% Change
Residential	\$783,352,900	88.1	\$1,422,678,509	91.4	81.6
Commercial	\$56,243,898	6.3	\$73,649,158	4.7	30.9
Industrial	\$37,239,300	4.2	\$45,298,820	2.9	21.6
Personal Property	\$11,956,470	1.3	\$14,592,941	0.9	22.1
<b>Total (taxable only)</b>	<b>\$888,792,568</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>\$1,556,219,428</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>75.1</b>

Source: Massachusetts Division of Local Services, Municipal Data Bank, 1992 and 2002.

Note: Dollars are in current dollars (not inflation-adjusted).

As shown above, Ipswich's tax base grew by 75.1% from 1992 to 2002, an average annual increase of 7.5%. However, the residential tax base grew much faster than the business tax base, such that the residential share of the tax base grew from 88.1% to 91.4% of the total, while the business tax base shrunk from 10.5% to 7.6% of the total. The strong growth in the residential tax base is due both to new development and to significant increases in residential property values. At the same time, the value of commercial properties suffered a significant decline in the early 1990s, from which they have recovered only in the last few years.<sup>5</sup>

**Tables 7-5** and **7-6** provide a breakdown by sub-category of the tax base provided by various commercial and industrial sub-sectors.

<sup>5</sup> The most significant decrease occurred between 1991 and 1992, when total assessed valuations in Ipswich dropped by 14.7%. At this time, residential assessments fell by 14.4% while commercial assessments and industrial assessments dropped by 16.6% and 22.9%, respectively.

**Table 7-5  
Total Property Values in Ipswich by Commercial Sub-Category, 2001**

	<b>Assessed Property Value</b>	<b>%</b>
Storage Warehouses and Distribution Facilities (LUC* 31)	\$20,514,800	29.3
Retail Trade (LUC 32)	15,142,500	21.6
Retail Trade – Automotive & Engine Vehicle Related (LUC 33)	10,334,000	14.7
Office Buildings (LUC 34)	12,714,900	18.1
Other Commercial (LUC 30, 35-39)	11,372,677	16.2
<b>Total (taxable only)</b>	<b>\$70,078,877</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Town of Ipswich, Office of the Assessor.

\* Assessor's Land Use Code

**Table 7-6  
Total Property Values in Ipswich by Industrial Sub-Category, 2001**

	<b>Assessed Property Value</b>	<b>%</b>
Manufacturing (LUC* 400)	\$18,969,600	43.4
Manufacturing Warehouses (LUC 401)	10,073,100	23.0
R & D/Industrial Condominium (LUC 404 & LUC 405)	6,445,500	14.7
Sand/Gravel Mining/Quarrying (LUC 410)	4,428,900	10.1
Other Industrial Uses	3,819,000	8.7
<b>Total (taxable only)</b>	<b>\$43,736,300</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Town of Ipswich, Office of the Assessor.

\* Assessor's Land Use Code

**Table 7-7** compares Ipswich's tax base and tax rate with that of neighboring communities. In fiscal year 2002, the Town had a single tax rate of \$11.54 per \$1,000 of assessed value. This represented a slight increase from the FY 2001 tax rate of \$11.40. Nevertheless, as a result of the higher assessed values, the average single-family tax bill increased by more than 9%, from \$3,301 in FY 2001 to \$3,606 in FY 2002. While the current average single-family tax bill in Ipswich is approximately 40% higher than the state average, it is considerably lower than many of its neighboring communities (see **Table 7-7**).

Municipalities in Massachusetts have the option of setting different tax rates for different property categories. By adopting a dual tax rate for residential and business properties, the Town could increase the assessment of non-residential taxes to help offset residential taxes. In the long term, however, a dual tax rate could also discourage new economic development, redevelopment and re-investment in existing businesses, which could eventually result in a smaller business tax base.

According to the Department of Revenue, state law requires that the following conditions be met before a community may establish multiple tax rates:

- The commissioner of the Department of Revenue must certify that all real and personal property values are being assessed at full and fair cash value every three years.
- All real property must be classified into one of four categories: residential, open space, commercial and industrial.
- The Board of Selectmen must hold an annual public meeting and vote to tax classes at different rates.

Further, state law requires that the commercial, industrial and personal property share of the tax levy cannot increase by more than 50% of what it would have been if the community had a single tax rate. The state laws regarding this issue are: Chapter 40, Section 56; Chapter 58, Section 1A; and Chapter 59, Section 2A. Slightly more than one hundred cities and towns in Massachusetts choose to set multiple tax rates each year, according to the Department of Revenue.

**Table 7-7  
Comparison of Tax Base in Ipswich and Neighboring Communities, Fiscal Year 2002**

	% of Total Assessed Valuation			Tax Rate	Avg. Res. Assessed Value	Avg. Res. Tax Bill
	Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Res./Nonres. <sup>6</sup>		
Boxford	97.6	1.0	0.0	12.54	\$451,283	\$5,659
Danvers	69.7	22.7	6.1	12.92/16.98	\$254,383	\$3,287
Essex	88.1	8.4	2.1	11.65	\$303,574	\$3,537
Georgetown	88.9	4.7	4.8	12.34	\$259,620	\$3,204
Hamilton	94.9	4.0	0.1	14.54	\$341,118	\$4,960
<b>Ipswich</b>	<b>91.4</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>11.54</b>	<b>\$312,499</b>	<b>\$3,606</b>
Manchester	93.4	4.9	0.3	8.40	\$690,401	\$5,799
Middleton	80.7	13.6	4.0	12.13	\$327,273	\$3,970
Newbury	95.2	3.0	0.3	10.44	\$294,348	\$3,073
North Andover	85.8	6.5	5.9	12.66/15.40	\$346,574	\$4,388
Rowley	85.7	8.5	4.1	11.66	\$284,227	\$3,314
Topsfield	92.5	5.0	1.3	13.70	\$380,500	\$5,213
West Newbury	96.8	1.6	0.3	11.61	\$364,403	\$4,231
Massachusetts						\$2,577

Source: Mass. Data Bank, Mass. Department of Revenue, 2002.

#### **7.2.4 Economic Development Organizations and Strategies**

Many communities engage in activities to foster economic development. For example, some towns establish organizations that are charged with creating a “business-friendly” climate and encouraging

<sup>6</sup> Dollars per \$1,000 of assessed valuation.

businesses to locate within the town. Some communities also offer incentives to potential businesses such as special financing opportunities, assistance in parcel assemblage, and special tax rates. The following paragraphs discuss Ipswich economic development organizations, programs, and initiatives.

### Economic Development Organizations

Presently there are no organizations or departments in Ipswich whose sole purpose is to promote economic development in the Town. Most economic development efforts are now conducted by the Town's Department of Planning and Development, although this is just one of their many responsibilities. There are, however, several groups in Town that play a role in supporting the local business community. These include the Ipswich Business Association, the Ipswich Visitor Center, and (until recently) the now-defunct Ipswich Partnership. Although there is a Chamber of Commerce, it has not been active in recent years.

The Ipswich Business Association (IBA), a nonprofit community-based group that counts both individuals and businesses among its members, is an advocacy group that actively seeks to promote the Town and its businesses. In its mission statement, the group identifies its primary commitment as improving the Town's economic well-being, improving the Town's image, and fostering a positive economic climate. The IBA receives funding from the Town to maintain its website, which provides information about the Town, including where to eat, where to stay, local activities, the events calendar, and a listing of local businesses. The IBA also took over several annual events that were originally initiated by the Ipswich Partnership. These include Chowder Fest and Colonial Holiday; summer events such as sidewalk sales and block parties; and a winter holiday parade.

The Ipswich Visitor Center plays a significant role in encouraging tourism in the Town. Supported primarily by volunteers and a couple of paid workers, the Visitor Center is funded mostly by the Town and partially by grant funds received from the Essex National Heritage Area.

The Ipswich Partnership, a non-profit organization comprised of residents, retailers, bankers, professionals, and town officials, was created in 1995 expressly to facilitate the revitalization of the downtown. The Partnership administered several downtown improvement programs including the Building Façade Improvement Program; streetscape improvements (including hanging flower baskets) on Market Street; and assisting the Town on the design of a footbridge, riverwalk, and pocket park for downtown. As these efforts have been completed or are nearing completion, the Partnership's Board of Directors voted to become inactive in November 2001.

### Economic Opportunity Area

In 1994, the state, under its Economic Development Incentive Program, designated Ipswich and four other Cape Ann communities (Gloucester, Manchester, Essex, and Rockport) as an Economic Target Area (ETA). The primary benefit of the incentive program is that it allows towns and cities to create Economic Opportunity Areas (EOAs) within the ETA to encourage business development. Through this program, the state gives tax relief to businesses; however, the municipality must also grant tax relief. The EOA

Program is generally targeted for manufacturing (as defined by the state), but clean manufacturing or research and development can qualify if the State Economic Council approves it.

The EOA was mapped to include all of downtown Ipswich; a certified project could then be established anywhere within the EOA. In 1995, a 15-year Tax-Increment Financing (TIF) program was created in the EOA to attract EBSCO Publishing (an educational software firm). In return for tax relief over a 15-year period, EBSCO agreed to provide an easement for the Downtown Riverwalk, as well as free abstracts of magazines and other software to town schools. In addition, EBSCO committed to holding regular job-training sessions. At present EBSCO is the only certified project in Town and there are no immediate plans to offer more incentives through another EOA. EOAs can be created anywhere within Ipswich.

### **7.3 Location of Economic Activities**

#### **7.3.1 Business, Commercial and Industrial Zoning**

Ipswich contains five zoning districts for economic development activities: Business, Highway Business, Industrial, Limited Industrial, and Planned Commercial.

##### **Business (B)**

The Business District covers approximately 42.3 acres in Ipswich, or about 0.2 % of the Town's land area. Land uses allowed in the Business district include community facilities; most commercial uses; a mix of wholesale, transportation, and industrial uses (some are allowed as-of-right, while others require special permits); and multi-family housing by special permit. In some areas, sewer is currently available while other areas are targeted for sewer expansion. Maximum lot coverage allowed for all uses is 80%, and there is a 5% open space requirement. For mixed-use developments, 3,000 square feet of open space is required for the first dwelling unit, and 2,000 square feet is required for each dwelling unit thereafter. The Business district is located in the town center.

##### **Highway Business (HB)**

The Highway Business district covers 204 acres in Ipswich, approximately 1.0% of the Town's land. Most commercial uses are allowed within this district, although some require a special permit. Most community uses and most wholesale, transportation, and industrial uses are either allowed as-of-right or by special permit; multi-family housing is also allowed by special permit. The majority of the areas zoned HB have access to public sewer.

##### **Industrial (I)**

The Industrial district is located on 197 acres, or 0.9% of the Town's land. Industrially zoned districts are located along Mitchell Road off of Route 1A/133, and along Peabody and Hayward Streets, south of the town center (Ipswich Business Park). This district allows for industrial uses, as well as some community, commercial, wholesale, and transportation-related uses. Public water is available throughout the Industrial district. Public sewer service is provided in the Ipswich Business Park, but only a small portion of the Mitchell Road industrial area has public sewer.

### Limited Industrial (LI)

The Limited Industrial district comprises 106 acres, or about 0.5% of Ipswich's land. The district is intended primarily for light industrial uses, and both retail and office uses are prohibited, as well as most commercial uses. Permitted uses include most community uses (either as-of-right or by special permit) and certain wholesale, transportation, and industrial uses. This district is located along Route 1. Currently, there is no public sewer available in this area.

### Planned Commercial (PC)

The Planned Commercial district covers 109 acres, or 0.5% of the Town's land. A variety of commercial uses are allowed in this district, including offices, services, and limited retail. Compared to the LI district, the PC district allows more commercial retail uses. As stated in the zoning bylaw, the intent of the PC district is to preserve the natural features of the Route 1 corridor. Presently, much of this area has public water but lacks public sewer.

### Great Estate Preservation Development (GEPD)

The Great Estates Preservation Development bylaw was adopted in October 1997 and defines a "Great Estate" as an architecturally significant residence with landscape features and support structures constructed prior to 1948, having more 60 acres of land, and located in the RRA district. Currently, four sites totaling 597 acres (2.8% of the Town's land) are eligible for GEPD. However, one of these parcels, Crane's Estate, owned by the Trustees for Reservations, is unlikely to be developed. Two of the remaining estates are in the process of being developed, while the last one is currently engaged in a planning process.

Permitted uses in a GEPD include residential (limited to 25% of a total allowed floor area<sup>7</sup>), hotels, conference centers, clinics, health/fitness spas, recreation facilities, schools, multi-family dwellings (provided at least 50% are for those aged 55+ and 10% are affordable), professional offices, retail, research offices, and biotechnology. The maximum total floor area is 3,000 square feet multiplied by the total number of dwelling units permissible under standard, underlying zoning. A bonus of 5 additional square feet is available for each square foot of building that is renovated if all historic buildings are renovated. The total allowable floor area may not exceed 8% of the total lot area. In addition, at least 30% of the site must be open space that is accessible to the general public.

### Additional Provisions

The Town's zoning bylaw allows mixed-use developments in certain districts. Farming on lots less than 5 acres requires a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) and is not allowed in the Rural Residence C (RRC) district. The sale of farm products is allowed as-of-right only in the B and HB districts; it requires a special permit from the ZBA in all other districts. "Formula fast food establishments" are prohibited, except in the B district by Special Permit from the Planning Board.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> This figure is 45% for parcels larger than 200 acres.

<sup>8</sup> Only if pedestrian-oriented, evidenced by location of premises having no more than nine off-street parking spaces and having no drive-through facilities.

Special permit uses include research offices and research and development, which must be approved by the ZBA and are allowed in all districts except RRC. As long as they create minimal impacts, home occupations are allowed in almost all districts. Small retail/service uses are allowed as an accessory use in the PC district and by ZBA special permit in all other districts except the Rural Residence districts.

### **7.3.2 Commercial Areas**

Ipswich's primary commercial districts include the town center, the HB district near the junction of Routes 133 and 1A, and the HB district north of the town center on Route 133/1A.

#### Town Center

The town center, with few vacancies, is quite economically healthy considering that it is not located near a major highway and that it lacks a major anchor store. Primarily oriented toward meeting community needs, the town center is subject to some tourist traffic and houses a few major employers, such as EBSCO Publishing. With recently reconstructed sidewalks, well-preserved historic buildings, glass storefronts, and a good mix of retail and service uses, Ipswich's downtown has a vibrant, lively feeling. Downtown businesses include restaurants, specialty stores, convenience goods stores, banks, attorney's offices, and beauty salons.

The Brown Square area is an older, underutilized section of downtown. Businesses located in this 5-acre area include a lumber and building supplier, a glass company, a bakery, and an automotive repair shop. While redevelopment in this area is desirable, it will not be easy to accomplish given the fragmented parcel ownership patterns.

Positive aspects of the town center include the available parking, both on-street and off-street (although parking management and signage to parking needs improvement), the center's historic character, the commuter rail station, and the Ipswich River. Negative factors associated with the town center include the heavy traffic that periodically afflicts Routes 133/1A, a few unattractive frame buildings, and some nearby older industrial areas (e.g. Brown Square).

On balance, the future of downtown appears bright, especially considering the new projects that are now being planned or constructed. These include the recently completed mixed use buildings in Depot Square and on Hammatt Street, the recent infrastructure improvements to Hammatt Street, the proposed streetscape improvements to the North Green area, and the proposed Riverwalk (see **Section 8.3.3**). Areas of concern include future control of the large parking lot between Market and Hammatt Streets, the lack of cohesive urban design in some areas (e.g. the south frontage of Central Street), and the difficulty in gaining access to Central Street from secondary streets during many times of the day.

#### Highway Business Area Near Route 133/1A Junction

This area is anticipating changes and expansion with two major projects, including the proposed expansion of the Bruni property on Essex Road into a commercial/residential community and a potential mixed use project at the former Millstone Restaurant on Route 133/1A. The current business uses

primarily serve auto-oriented customers, although this could change somewhat if new/additional housing is constructed on the Millstone site and the adjacent property.

### Highway Business Area North of the Town Center on Route 133/1A

This area—stretching from the school complex in the south to the Clam Box restaurant in the north—includes auto-oriented businesses and some multi-family housing. It includes the Shaw’s shopping plaza, professional offices, and scattered retail and service uses. Recent developments in this area have included a motel, two mixed-use commercial /residential buildings, and multi-family housing.

Ipswich is fortunate that its two principal highway business areas do not convey an excessively “strip commercial” image. The primary concern for these areas is to continue to monitor site design, driveway access, sign control, landscaping, and other image-related issues, and to encourage more functional and aesthetic design for any redevelopment. This is especially important since the HB districts are gateways to Ipswich from Essex, Rowley, and Hamilton, and can tend to form first impressions of the Town for visitors.

### **7.3.3 Industrial Areas**

Ipswich has two industrial areas located near the center of Town: one along Mitchell Road north of High Street and the other consisting of the Ipswich Business Park off Hayward Street. In addition, there are three larger areas on Route 1 at the western end of Town. Two of these districts are zoned Limited Industrial while the remaining one is zoned Planned Commercial.

Industrially zoned Mitchell Road is characterized by a number of automotive repair and parts supply shops. In addition, the area houses several other industrial uses such as engine distributors, engineers, high tech communication parts, and manufacturers. Occupants of the Ipswich Business Park include the Ipswich Shellfish Company, Mercury Brewing/Ipswich Ale, and Dalton Electric and Heating. While there is some space for existing businesses to expand (for example, Ipswich Shellfish Company constructed a new building in recent years), there are no vacant parcels available in this condominiumized industrial park.

Some opportunities exist on Route 1 for larger industrial uses, although the lack of municipal water and sewer facilities may be a limiting factor for industrially zoned land located north of Linebrook Road. The most likely scenario for the Route 1 areas (including the areas now zoned Planned Commercial) will be for larger office, service, high tech, distribution, and limited industrial uses that desire the type of access that Route 1 provides, with its accessibility to Interstate 95. While many of these potential uses do not need high volume sewer access, public water would definitely be a stimulus to development. However, any proposed substantial extensions to the public water system need to be analyzed in light of the Town’s limited water supply before they are implemented.

## **7.4 Future Economic Considerations**

In recent years, economic development has been increasingly regarded as important in Ipswich for a variety of reasons. These include: the fiscal security associated with having a solid economic base; the convenience for Ipswich residents of having nearby employment opportunities; and the convenience of having retail, service, and other commercial establishments (such as movie theaters) located nearby.

Ipswich has several assets and opportunities for future business development, as well as some weaknesses. Strengths include an attractive, stable town center characterized by a low vacancy rate; several large employers that have made numerous contributions to the Town reflecting their commitment; many areas that can potentially be redeveloped (including several sizable parcels in the town center); and nearby natural and cultural resources, including the Ipswich River and coastal waters, Crane Beach, State and Federal natural areas, numerous historic homes and buildings, and agricultural lands. Weaknesses and challenges include some zoning-related issues, limited availability of public water and sewer, and the lack of direct access to an interstate highway.

### **7.4.1 Availability of Land for Future Economic Development**

According to the 1999 buildout study, there is very limited potential for new development in the Business and Industrial districts, but some opportunity for new development along the Town's highway corridors. The study estimates that the Business district can support 16,000 sq. ft. of new development while the Industrial districts have space for 79,000 sq. ft. of new development. Redevelopment in both areas is also possible (and is not included in these numbers). Along the highway corridors, the PC district can support an additional 795,000 sq. ft. of business development, the HB district can accommodate 620,000 sq. ft., and the LI district can support an additional 681,000 sq. ft. In total, open, developable land in Ipswich can support an additional 2.2 million sq. ft. of commercial or industrial floor space, excluding any business development on the Great Estates.<sup>9</sup>

One of the major constraints to future industrial development is the lack of additional vacant industrial land in the Town's existing Industrial districts (especially the Ipswich Business Park on Hayward Street). In addition, the development potential along the Route 1 corridor is less than it may seem from the buildout numbers because these sites are characterized by environmental constraints such as wetlands, steep terrain, and vernal pools, some of which were not considered in the buildout study.

### **7.4.2 Projected Labor Force and Projected Jobs**

MAPC estimated that the number of jobs in Ipswich would increase from 3,731 in 1999, to 4,033 by 2010 (an 8% increase), and to 4,318 by 2020 (a 16% increase over 1999). However, these estimates are almost certainly low since the Town added nearly 200 jobs between 1999 and 2001 alone. Additional employment is expected in the next few years as large developments such as New England Biolabs and

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<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that these estimated—which were generated through the MAPC Buildout Analysis—almost certainly overstate the amount of development that would ever occur in Town. This is because the formula assumes full utilization of the land area with maximum building heights and site coverage in a way that is rarely feasible and rarely built.

Turner Hill are completed. These two employers alone will probably push the Town well above the 2010 employment estimate. Looking further into the future, whether or not Ipswich can continue to sustain its recent rapid economic growth will depend on the extent to which the Town promotes economic development through zoning, infrastructure investments, and direct business marketing, recruitment, and assistance programs. The condition of the regional economy will also play a major role.

### **7.4.3 Infrastructure**

While public water is available to almost all of the Town's commercial and industrial areas, public sewer is not. Private funds were used to extend sewer lines about a half-mile out Essex Road (Route 133) to facilitate expansion of a large commercial site. At one time there was also discussion of extending the sewers along Mitchell Road using private funds. A group of Mitchell Road property owners petitioned the Town to extend sewers to the area. The Town obtained state approval of a home rule petition that would allow them to assess the cost of the sewer extension project entirely to the property owners. However, by the time the petition was approved, support among the property owners had diminished and the project was abandoned. However, it is possible that this proposal could be revived if the property owners once again decide that sewers would be a worthwhile investment. In order to encourage redevelopment of the Mitchell Road area (and hence greater future tax revenues), the Town should consider offering to underwrite some portion of the cost of the project (e.g., 10%). However, the Town should not invest a large amount of taxpayer dollars in infrastructure improvements on Mitchell Road because this area is at a locational disadvantage by virtue of its poor access to an interstate highway. This locational disadvantage may limit the ultimate value of this land for business development.

Bringing sewers to the Route 1 corridor would be more difficult and costly than sewerage Mitchell Road given the topography, wetlands, and other environmental constraints along Route 1. In addition, sewers may not be necessary to attract many of the types of development allowed by zoning in this corridor.

Any consideration of expanding the Town's water and sewer networks to attract new business raises concerns about the capacity of the Town's infrastructure systems. As shown in **Table 1-1**, the Town still has considerable unused capacity in its wastewater treatment plant. However, water is a severe limitation in Ipswich. In this regard, it should be noted that business development varies tremendously in its water demand. For example, office and warehouse uses need relatively little water on average—about 75 gallons per day per 1,000 square feet. However, certain manufacturing, food processing, or other industrial uses can use tens or even hundreds of thousands of gallons of water per day. In the future, the Town will be able to accommodate more business growth within the constraints of its limited water supply if it focuses on attracting non-water-intensive businesses, or businesses that are capable of internally recycling their own water.

## 8. TRANSPORTATION PROFILE

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Ipswich's transportation network not only links the Town's residents and businesses to one another and to the larger region; it also helps define the Town's unique character. Unlike many cities and towns in the region, Ipswich is a little bit "off the beaten path": it has no direct Interstate access and the Town's largest highway—Route 1—passes through the western section of Town, several miles from downtown. In general, roads do not dominate the landscape in Ipswich: no road is wider than two lanes, and many have retained their narrow alignment and rural character as they pass through fields or woods. The community also values its access to non-automotive modes of transport, such as the Commuter Rail, and has made a concerted effort to build and link a network of pedestrian and equestrian paths that provide circulation as well as recreation benefits.

This section discusses the Town's transportation network, including existing road conditions, alternative forms of transportation, and an analysis of the transportation issues associated with new development. **Section 5** includes recommendations for transportation policies and infrastructure improvements to create a more efficient transportation system and mitigate the impacts of new development. Since the Census Bureau has not released some of the more detailed commuting pattern data from 2000, 1990 data are used in this section some instances.

Transportation and land use are inextricably linked. Land use activities, such as residential or commercial developments, can have a large effect on the demand for transportation facilities. Similarly, transportation access and services are a major consideration in evaluating potential sites for new development, especially commercial or retail projects. A clear-cut, well-focused town plan can be an important tool for ensuring that a community's residents are afforded continued accessibility, and that existing and future land uses do not overwhelm the community's transportation system, both its external regional links and its internal local networks.

### 8.1 Regional Highway System and Commuting Patterns

The regional highway system is one of the most important infrastructure elements influencing a community's development pattern. The accessibility provided by a regional highway not only stimulates new development, but allows residents greater flexibility in making decisions that are affected by locational factors such as where to work, where to live, or where to shop.

Regional transportation access to Ipswich is provided primarily by Interstate 95, which runs north-south, just west of the Town in the neighboring towns of Boxford and Georgetown. I-95 provides high-speed access to New Hampshire and Maine to the north and to the Boston region, Providence, and Connecticut in the south. Route 128, located to the south and east of Ipswich in Beverly and Gloucester, connects to Ipswich via both Route 1A and Route 133. Route 1A (County Road) links the center of Town with its neighboring communities to the south and north. Route 133 (Essex Road) runs east-west from Gloucester to Lowell. Route 133 and Route 1A overlap in and near the town center. Route 1 (the Newburyport Turnpike) transverses the western side of Ipswich, providing additional north-south access.

### 8.1.1 Residence Locations and Workplace Destinations

**Table 8-1** identifies the residence locations of those working in Ipswich and the workplace destinations of Ipswich residents in 1990. **Table 8-2** identifies the transportation modes used for Ipswich residents commuting to work. **Table 8-3** shows average commuting times for Ipswich residents and compares these average times to Essex County residents and residents statewide.

**Table 8-1**  
**Top Destinations of Persons Traveling To or From Ipswich for Work, 1990**

<b>Town of Residence of Ipswich Employees</b>	<b># of Persons</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Workplace of Ipswich Residents</b>	<b># of Persons</b>	<b>%</b>
Ipswich	1,561	44.3	Ipswich	1,561	25.8
Gloucester	207	5.9	Boston	689	11.4
Beverly	180	5.1	Beverly	336	5.6
Rowley	144	4.1	Peabody	290	4.8
Essex	129	3.7	Danvers	265	4.4
Hamilton	101	2.9	Salem	259	4.3
Amesbury	95	2.7	Gloucester	217	3.6
Other MA Towns	999	28.1	Other MA Towns	2,237	37.0
New Hampshire	95	2.7	Other NE States	125	2.1
Maine	16	0.5	Elsewhere in U.S.	52	0.9
			England	8	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,527</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>6,039</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990.

Individuals employed in Ipswich come primarily from within Ipswich (44.3%) or from neighboring Massachusetts municipalities (52.6%), with a small number commuting in from New Hampshire (2.7%) or Maine (0.5%). The more interesting aspect of the Town's commuting patterns is the extensive list of places that Ipswich residents identify as their place of work. Only 25.8% of the Town's residents work within the Town. Another 11% commute to Boston. Most of the remaining residents commute to other Massachusetts towns (60%), with Beverly and Peabody topping the list. Of the 3.1% of the population that does not work in Massachusetts, 1.2% work in New Hampshire, 0.3% in Rhode Island, 0.3% in Maine, 0.2% in Vermont, and 0.1% in Connecticut. The remaining 60 residents commute to such diverse locations as Ohio, New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Tennessee, and England.

### 8.1.2 Journey-to-Work Mode of Travel

Given the wide range of residents' workplaces, it is not surprising that Ipswich residents and workers rely heavily upon their autos to reach their jobs. In 2000, 82.2% of all employed Ipswich residents 16 and over drove alone to their workplace, while for Essex County this figure was 78.7%. Another 6.4% traveled to work via carpool in 2000, while Essex County had 9.4% of its labor force carpooling. In 2000, 4.5% of Ipswich workers took public transportation while 4.6% worked at home and 1.7% walked

to work. Overall, Ipswich falls behind the county in use of travel modes other than driving alone. See **Table 8-2** for additional details, including the changes between 1990 and 2000.

**Table 8-2  
Journey-to-Work Mode of Travel for Ipswich Residents, 1990 and 2000**

Mode of Travel	Ipswich			Essex County		
	1990 %	2000 %	Change	1990 %	2000 %	Change
Drove Alone	79.7	82.2	2.5	77.6	78.7	1.1
Carpooled	8.4	6.4	-2.0	11.0	9.4	-1.6
Public Transit	4.3	4.5	0.2	4.3	4.9	0.6
Walked	4.1	1.7	-2.4	4.0	2.8	-1.2
Other means	0.4	0.6	0.2	0.8	0.9	0.1
Worked at home	3.2	4.6	1.4	2.4	3.3	0.9
<b>Total Number</b>	<b>6,236</b>	<b>6,819</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>324,829</b>	<b>343,631</b>	<b>NA</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990 and 2000.

### 8.1.3 Commuting Times

Commuting times for Ipswich residents in 1990 were overall slightly higher than the Essex County and state averages.<sup>1</sup> For example, whereas about 20% of Essex County residents and 19% of state residents commuted more than 45 minutes, a full 25% of Ipswich residents had commutes longer than 45 minutes. Conversely, the percent of resident workers driving less than 15 minutes is about 30% for Essex County, 27% for the state, and 26% for Ipswich. This statistic is likely due to the fact that many Ipswich residents commute to out-of-town jobs. None of the Town's immediate neighbors are large employment draws. The nearest employment cluster is the Beverly-Peabody-Danvers-Salem area.

**Table 8-3  
Average One-Way Commuting Time for Ipswich Residents, 2000**

Commuting Time	Number	Ipswich Percentage	Essex County Percentage	Massachusetts Percentage
Less than fifteen minutes	1,669	25.7	29.7	27.2
Fifteen to twenty-nine minutes	2,005	30.8	31.9	33.3
Thirty to forty-four minutes	1,214	18.7	18.4	21.1
Forty-five minutes and more	1,618	24.9	19.9	18.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,506</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

<sup>1</sup>These statistics are determined for resident workers age 16 and over who do not work at home.

## 8.2 Existing Street System in Ipswich

A Town's character is not only affected by its proximity to the regional highway system; it is also very much influenced by the pattern and condition of its local street network. The configuration of Ipswich's local street system is shown in **Figure 8-1**. The figure also identifies the agency that administers the various roads, identifies frequent accident locations, and provides traffic count information. As is the case in many other Massachusetts towns, since travel in Ipswich is heavily oriented toward private automobile transportation, it is essential that the road capacity be able to accommodate existing and future volumes of traffic efficiently and safely.

To understand the existing street system, an inventory of conditions on Ipswich streets was obtained from the Massachusetts Highway Department ("MassHighway"). This Road Inventory File identifies the administrative bodies with jurisdiction over each street, the functional use of each street, and a host of other physical and operating characteristics.<sup>2</sup> Although the MassHighway inventory identifies 96 miles of roadway in the Town, there are presently approximately 103 miles of roadway.<sup>3</sup>

The street network in Ipswich's town center is best characterized as an interconnected rectilinear pattern interspersed with cul-de-sacs and small dead-end roads. Emerging outward from the town center, the roads are radial in pattern and few in number. While the town center streets are pedestrian-friendly, furnished with sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities, the radial arterials are less so, although some roads, such as Linebrook Road, do have sidewalks/paths close to the town center.

### 8.2.1 Jurisdictional Classification of Ipswich Streets

The jurisdictional and functional classification of Ipswich's streets are important to understanding how the streets relate to one another, how they are used, and who exercises control over them. **Table 8-4** lists the agencies that have jurisdiction over the use and maintenance of the streets in Ipswich.

Ipswich's roads are generally Town-owned with the exception of several numbered state highways (Routes 1, 1A, and 133), several roads that run through park lands (Sandy Point State Reservation, Willowdale State Forest, and Parker River National Wildlife Refuge), and some privately-owned roadways. In addition, unlike many other Massachusetts communities, the length of roadways owned by state agencies is relatively small. The segments of Routes 1A and 133 that overlap in the center of town cease being state highways in the town center and, instead, are considered local roads. See **Figure 8-1**.

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<sup>2</sup> MassHighway, Bureau of Transportation Planning and Development, Road Inventory File. The Road Inventory File is maintained by the MHD/BTP&D. It contains information on roadway mileage, conditions, and numerous other characteristics. The Road Inventory File is updated periodically, but does not always include the most recent roadway information.

<sup>3</sup> This discrepancy is due to the fact that MassHighway updates each of the state's communities on a periodic basis. Roads unaccounted for in the MassHighway inventory are largely new residential roads under Town jurisdiction.

**Table 8-4  
Jurisdictional Classification of Ipswich Streets**

<b>Controlling Agency</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Mileage</b>
Town of Ipswich	Throughout town	72.92
Massachusetts Highway Department	Route 1A; Route 133; Route 1	8.32
State Park or Forest	Sandy Point State Reservation; Willowdale State Forest	2.54
Federal Park or Forest	Parker River National Wildlife Refuge	2.32
Unaccepted but open to public travel	Throughout town	9.59
<b>Total Roadway Mileage</b>		<b>95.69</b>

Source: MassHighway Road Inventory File.

The majority (76%) of the streets are Town-owned. MassHighway controls 8.32 miles of state numbered roads (Routes 1, 1A, and 133). Approximately 10% of the Town’s roadways are classified as unaccepted roadways (private ways) in the Town. In general, these unaccepted streets are all relatively short, tend to branch off main roads, and primarily provide access to residential developments. Several areas in Town that have a concentration of unaccepted roadways include Great Neck, Little Neck, and the Ocean Drive development off Jeffrey’s Neck Road.

The Town of Ipswich assumes primary responsibility for the ongoing maintenance and safe operation of Town-accepted roads while MassHighway and the other state/federal agencies assume responsibility for the conditions of roads under their jurisdiction.

### **8.2.2 Functional Use Classification of Ipswich Streets**

Roadways can serve two basic functions: they can provide *access* to individual parcels of land, or they facilitate *movement* of vehicles between various locations. A roadway that primarily provides access will likely have driveways that connect to private residences or businesses. Parking and loading may also occur on such roadways. Roadways that are principally intended to facilitate movement often limit access with grade-separated crossings and restrictions on curb cuts. For example, interstates exist only to provide for high-speed travel, and access is limited to on and off ramps, road maintenance facilities, and minor functions that facilitate travel (e.g., rest areas). When a roadway experiences high demand for both access and through movement, the road tends to perform neither function efficiently. Vehicles attempting to gain access must navigate turns amidst heavy through traffic, while through traffic is often stalled behind turning vehicles.

The U.S. Department of Transportation and the Massachusetts Highway Department classify roads according to function and location.<sup>4</sup> Roads in urban cities and urban towns are classified as “urban” while

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<sup>4</sup> MassGIS does not use the same classification system that is used by U.S. Department of Transportation and MassHighway. As a result, the functional road classifications identified in **Section 8.2.2** are different from the classification system used in **Figure 8-1**. The purpose of the classification system shown on **Figure 8-1** is primarily to indicate the governmental level (town or state) that has jurisdiction over each segment of road.

roads in rural towns are classified as “rural.” Because Ipswich is a rural town (according to the classifying agencies), all of its roads are classified as “rural” roads. The following is the hierarchy of function by which U.S. roads are classified. As shown in this list, roads of the same function have a different name depending on whether they are located in urban or rural communities.

1. Interstates
2. Rural principal arterials OR Urban extensions of principal arterials
3. Rural minor arterials OR Urban extensions of minor arterials
4. Other urban principal arterials
5. Urban minor arterials OR Rural major collectors
6. Urban collectors OR Rural minor collectors
7. Local streets

**Table 8-6** identifies the functional classification of major streets in Ipswich. While no interstates travel through Ipswich, Interstate 95 comes the closest, providing north-south access just west of the Town in Boxford. Of the three state numbered routes in the Town, two—Route 1 (Newburyport Turnpike) and Route 1A (County Road/South Main Street/Central Street/High Street/Lords Square)—function as rural minor arterials, carrying commuters through the town to I-95 in the west and to Route 128 in the south. Route 133 (Essex Road) functions as a rural major collector as do many other named streets in Town (totaling 22 miles of roadway). Northgate Road, located in the southeast quadrant of Town, is a rural minor collector. The majority of streets in Ipswich—65.6 miles or roughly 69% of the total roadway mileage—function as local or residential streets designed to provide access to individual residential parcels or neighborhoods.

In recent years, several of Ipswich’s main roadways, including Route 1, Route 1A, Route 133, Linebrook Road, and Topsfield Road, have been upgraded and can now function, to some extent, as high-speed thoroughfares.<sup>5</sup> These roads now have an increased utility for commuters, but their accessibility and usability for residential and community related uses (e.g., biking and jogging) has diminished.

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<sup>5</sup> Town of Ipswich Open Space and Recreational Plan, January 2000.

**Table 8-6  
Functional Classification of Ipswich Street System**

<b>Functional Classification</b>	<b>Street Name</b>	<b>Length (in miles)</b>
Rural Minor Arterial	Central Street (Route 1A)	0.45
Rural Minor Arterial	County Road (Route 1A)	2.16
Rural Minor Arterial	High Street (Route 1A)	2.48
Rural Minor Arterial	Lord's Square (Route 1A)	0.05
Rural Minor Arterial	South Main Street (Route 1A)	0.26
Rural Minor Arterial	Newburyport Turnpike (Route 1)	1.95
Rural Major Collector	Argilla Road	4.17
Rural Major Collector	Bayview Road	0.20
Rural Major Collector	Clark Road	0.79
Rural Major Collector	County Street	0.45
Rural Major Collector	East Street	0.42
Rural Major Collector	Essex Road (Route 133)	1.93
Rural Major Collector	High Street	0.61
Rural Major Collector	Hillside Road	0.26
Rural Major Collector	Jeffrey's Neck Road	1.69
Rural Major Collector	Linebrook Road	3.99
Rural Major Collector	Little Neck Road	1.37
Rural Major Collector	Market Street	0.18
Rural Major Collector	Mill Road	0.67
Rural Major Collector	North Ridge Road	0.99
Rural Major Collector	Plover Hill Road	0.40
Rural Major Collector	Topsfield Road	3.74
Rural Minor Collector	Northgate Road	0.70
Local Streets	Various	66.83
<b>Total</b>		<b>95.69</b>

Source: MassHighway Road Inventory File

### **8.2.3 Traffic Conditions on Ipswich Streets**

The average daily traffic volumes on several of Ipswich's major roadways are shown in **Table 8-7**. Recorded at various times between 1992 and 2001, they represent 24-hour average daily traffic volumes, adjusted to reflect monthly variations. County Road, north of Ward Street, experienced a 34% increase in traffic volume between 1992 and 1998. While some of that traffic appears to have tapered off by 2001, the road still experienced a 23% traffic increase from 1992 to 2001.

Many of Ipswich's arterials and a few of the major collectors are subject to heavy commuter traffic. These roadways include Linebrook Road from the town center to Route 1, Topsfield Road from the town center to Route 1, Route 1, Route 1A (County Road), Route 133 (Essex Road), and Route 1A/ 133 (High Street).

Market Square (intersection of Route 1A/133 and Market St./No. Main St.) is often subject to the Town's worst congestion. In addition, at peak times traffic also backs up on the streets that approach this square, including Central Street, South Main Street, and County Road. Some drivers use the grid-like network of

roads near the town center (Washington St., Pleasant St., Brownville Ave., East St., etc.) to avoid the often heavily backed up intersections at Lords Square and Market Square.

During peak times such as summer weekends and special events, the demand for access to the Crane’s Beach area causes heavy congestion on Argilla Road, with traffic sometimes backed up all the way to Northgate Road. This is a long-standing traffic problem that not only inconveniences residents and visitors, but also creates significant negative economic impacts to businesses located on Argilla Road, particularly Russell Orchards. The Town should work with the Trustees of Reservations, who own Crane’s Beach, to address these traffic problems.

**Table 8-7  
Average Daily Traffic on Ipswich Streets, 1992-2001**

<b>Major Roadway</b>	<b>Crossing Street</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Average Daily Traffic</b>
County Road	North of Ward St.	1992	15,000
	North of Ward St.	1995	17,000
	North of Ward St.	1998	20,100
	North of Ward St.	2001	18,400
Liberty Street	West of Central Street	2001	3,200
Linebrook Road	East of Route 1	1993	4,100
	West of Route 1	1993	1,700
	West of Central Street	2001	4,600
Mineral Street	West of Central Street	2001	1,600
Route 1	North of Linebrook Road	1993	12,000
	South of Linebrook Road	1993	11,000
Topsfield Road	South of Market Lane	2001	10,800
Washington Street	North of Hammatt Street	2001	6,300

Source: MassHighway

Notes: ADT refers to the average daily traffic volume (without regard to direction) recorded on the street over a 24-hour period on a typical weekday during the indicated year.

#### **8.2.4 Scenic Roadways**

A number of Ipswich roadways have been designated scenic roads under the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 15C. Ipswich’s Scenic Roads Bylaw (Article 19) establishes the criteria by which roads are evaluated in order to be designated a Scenic Road. These include: a) overall scenic beauty; b) contribution of trees and stone walls to scenic beauty; c) age and historic significance of roads, trees, and stone walls; d) built features such as historic buildings, monuments, etc.; and e) road features such as historic layout, surface, carriage width, use restrictions, and non-historic bridges. On any designated Scenic Road, Planning Board approval and a public hearing are required prior to the alteration of the road layout or the alteration or removal of significant trees or stone walls within the road right-of-way. The scenic roadway designation has no effect on land outside of the right-of-way. Designated Scenic Roads in Ipswich (and the year designated) include:

Argilla Road (1974)	Linebrook Road from Leslie Road to Topsfield (1976)
Boxford Road (1974)	Meetinghouse Green (1974)
Candlewood Road (1974)	Mill Road (1988)
Chebacco Road (1974)	Newbury Road (1974)
East Street, #2 (1989)	Old England Road (1974)
Fellows Road (1974)	Old Right Road from Rt. 1 to Topsfield (1989)
Goodhue Road (1974)	Pineswamp Road (1974)
Gravelly Brook Road (1989)	Rocky Hill Road (1974)
Heartbreak Road (1974)	Sagamore Road (1974)
Labor in Vain Road (1974)	Topsfield Road from Kennedy Dr. to Topsfield (1988)
Lakeman's Lane (1991)	Waldingfield Road (1974)
Linebrook Road from School to Howe Street (1988)	

Recently, the Town strengthened its Scenic Roads Bylaw but did not add any new roads to the inventory. Since the Town's narrow, tree-lined country roads are regarded as intrinsic to the Town's character, many residents have described the preservation of these roads, even undesignated roads such as Jeffrey's Neck Road and Essex Road, as very important.

### **8.2.5 Safety on Ipswich Streets**

Not surprisingly, the most heavily traveled roads are also those subject to the highest frequency of motor vehicle accidents. **Table 8-8** identifies those streets or corridors with the highest frequency of accidents for the most recent 3-year period for which data is available (January 1, 1997 through December 31, 1999).

Linebrook Road tops the list with 79 accidents occurring along its corridor during the analysis period. As one of only two roads that bisect Ipswich east to west and provide direct access between the town center and Route 1 (the other is Topsfield Road), it is a very heavily traveled roadway. The intersection with the highest incidence of accidents is the Linebrook Road/Route 1 intersection, contributing 16 accidents to the 79 accidents total. Recently, the state installed a stoplight at this intersection, which is expected to substantially reduce the accident rate there.

High Street/Lord's Square (Route 1A/133) runs northwest-southeast between the town center and Rowley. In Rowley, Route 1A splits off and heads north along the shore while Route 133 runs west, eventually intersecting with Route 1. The High Street intersection with the most accidents is the High Street/Route 1A/Lords Square intersection, which contributed eight of the 78 total accidents. Although this intersection was recently upgraded, it is too soon to assess whether the improvements will have a significant impact on the accident rate.

Fifty-eight accidents occurred along County Road (also Route 1A, southeast of downtown) between 1997 and 1999. The intersection responsible for the most accidents along County Road is County Road/Essex Road, the site of 13 accidents within the 3-year time period.

Although a relatively short roadway (less than one half mile), Central Street, in the town center, has been the site of 51 accidents between 1997 and 1999. Of these, 11 have been at the Central Street/Main Street/Market Street intersection. Given the various activities in the town center, a number of other intersections are also subject to a relatively high number of accidents. These include the Central Street/Mineral Street intersection (10) and the Central Street/Hammatt Street intersection (8).

While it is the fifth-highest street for accidents, Topsfield Road appears to have few accidents at intersections, and with the exception of one, no Topsfield Road intersections appear to repeatedly be the site of automobile accidents. The one exception is the Mill Road/Topsfield Road intersection, located southwest of the town center. This intersection was the site of eight accidents in 1999 alone.

**Table 8-8**  
**1997-1999 Top Ten Accident Streets**

Street	1997	1998	1999	Total
Linebrook Road	31	24	24	79
High Street/Lord's Square	25	37	16	78
County Road	19	23	16	58
Central Street	17	19	15	51
Topsfield Road	20	11	14	45
Market Street	12	10	8	30
Main Street	8	10	11	29
Argilla Road	10	7	6	23
Newburyport Turnpike/Route 1	7	9	6	22
Essex Road*	5	7	5	17
Route 133**	1	9	7	17

Source: MassHighway Accident Report File

\* This includes only accidents that were identified as occurring on the segment of Route 133 known as Essex Road.

\*\* This includes only those accidents that have been identified as occurring on Route 133, but are not associated with any specific roadway segment.

Notes: Incidents at intersections have been counted only once and are attributed to the roadway listed first in the filed accident report under the "Street" heading. Accidents in which the "Street" identified is a facility driveway have been attributed to the roadway upon which the facility is located.

### 8.3 Alternative Transportation Options in Ipswich

Ipswich residents, like those of most suburban and rural communities, are heavily dependent on private automobiles for transportation. However, a number of viable alternatives are available to the Town's residents. Local support for and use of non-single occupant vehicle (SOV) travel alternatives can help to preserve community character, maintain quality of life, and lessen the need to redesign intersections and expand streets and highways for an ever-increasing number of vehicles. This section describes transportation alternatives, including public transportation, biking and walking.

### **8.3.1 Commuter Rail**

Commuter rail service extends south from Ipswich to Boston's North Station. In 1998, the Ipswich line was extended north to Newburyport. At present, the Ipswich station is highly utilized, with the 170-space parking lot normally reaching full capacity at peak periods. It is quite common for the commuter lot to reach capacity by 7:00 A.M. When this occurs, most commuters park on the street while a few will park illegally in the short-term lot behind Market St. The Ipswich station is handicapped accessible and the lot also accommodates four (4) handicapped parking spaces. The next closest station is in Rowley, which provides parking for an additional 283 vehicles.

As of March 2003, the schedule for the Newburyport/Rockport line included seven southbound trains with a stop at Ipswich in the morning and six southbound trains in the afternoon and evening. The northbound schedule included four morning trains and nine afternoon/evening trains with a stop in Ipswich. The travel time between Ipswich and North Station is approximately 50 minutes.

Ipswich is located in the MBTA Zone 6, which identifies the fares for the commuter rail. As of March 2003, one-way fare for Zone 6 was \$4.25. Twelve rides cost \$46.75 and a monthly pass to use the commuter rail costs \$145.00.

### **8.3.2 Van Services**

Ipswich's Council On Aging (COA) offers van services for the elderly. A 12-passenger handicapped-accessible van is utilized by Ipswich seniors Monday to Friday from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. for in-town transportation. The service runs weekdays 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. There is no mandatory fare, but a donation of \$1.00 per round trip is requested. Riders call the service to arrange for rides. Salaried drivers provide in-town services only (along with trips to an area supermarket). Volunteer drivers provide rides to out-of-town doctors and medical offices through COA's Outreach Program. The Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA), the regional transportation authority, offers transportation for local senior citizens to area shopping malls; the Market Basket grocery store in Rowley; the Ipswich Meal Site (Caroline Avenue); and the Blackburn Center Adult Day Care Center.<sup>6</sup>

### **8.3.3 Bicycle and Pedestrian Access**

While the capacity of the street system and public transit modes are important, so too are the needs of bicyclists, joggers and pedestrians. As the public's interest in health and physical fitness grows, the needs of this growing segment of the population should also be considered. In addition, biking and walking are viable modes of commuting for many Ipswich residents, either alone or in combination with the commuter rail.

Most areas of the Town are regarded as walkable, even those areas lacking sidewalks. There are sidewalks on most streets in the town center, although some are in a state of deterioration. (In 2001 and 2002, Town Meeting voted to allocate more than \$500,000 to repair and replace sidewalks. The Town hopes to make the repair/replacement of sidewalks an annual undertaking.) Currently, the Town's

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<sup>6</sup> Ipswich Council On Aging website, 2002.

subdivision regulations require that sidewalks be constructed on both sides of the street along all arterial roads. Sidewalks are also required along one side of the street along all lanes, local streets, and collector streets unless the Planning Board determines that pedestrian movement is otherwise accommodated. This sidewalk requirement, complied with for the most part, has been in place for at least 25 years.

In the Town's business districts, the sidewalks are required to be six feet wide. They are required to be five feet wide on residential roads and along all other roadways. In residential areas, the sidewalks can be either meandering or standard. Meandering sidewalks follow existing terrain and features, such as stone walls, while standard sidewalks are of a uniform width and run parallel to the road.

The Downtown Riverwalk is a proposed public walkway that will provide pedestrian access across the Ipswich River in downtown Ipswich. Located in the Business district, the Riverwalk will originate slightly east of Union Street and run along the Ipswich River at the rear of the EBSCO property. (A fence will separate the EBSCO parking lot from the walkway; EBSCO provided an easement for the walkway as well as subsidizing the reinforcement of the parking lot and stonewall supports). The walkway will connect to a pedestrian bridge, which will span the Ipswich River, emerging on South Main Street at a pocket park near the Town visitor center. On the EBSCO (west) side of the river, two canopied structures will provide pedestrians with protection from the sun and an opportunity to pause and enjoy the view of the river.

Other pedestrian accommodations include the Town's extensive trail system, which includes twenty-six different public trails (see **Figure 8-1**). Although most of the Town's trails are used primarily for recreation, several do provide pedestrian access between areas otherwise not connected, including Mitchell Road to Town Farm Road and Fowlers Lane to Spring Street. Several trails can also be used as an alternative to formal sidewalks in the sense that they connect potential destinations rather than just making a circuit around a given parcel of land. These include the Bay Circuit Trail as well as other public trails that connect Linebrook Road with High Street south of the Rowley border and County Road (Route 1A) with Essex Road (Route 133) south of the Route 1A/Route 133 intersection. Additionally, a number of Ipswich's trails connect to trails in neighboring communities, including Hamilton, Topsfield, and Rowley. The trails located in the Willowdale State Forest continue into Hamilton and Topsfield, while several Appleton Farms horse trails continue into Hamilton. Finally, several trails from Prospect Hill in the northwest area of Town continue into Rowley.

The Essex County Trail Association (ECTA), with assistance from the Town's Open Space Committee, the Department of Environmental Management (DEM), and the Bay Circuit Trail Committee, recently published and distributed an "Ipswich Trails Guide" map. The Bay Circuit Trail Committee oversees much of the trail system in the western side of Town, including the Bay Circuit Trail and the trails in the Willowdale State Forest while ECTA maintains the DEM trails. In addition to the State Forest, there are also a substantial number of trails and paths in the Town's parklands and reservations, including the dune trails at Crane's Beach Reservation. While many of the trails are multi-use and are suitable for walking, hiking, horseback riding, and cross-country skiing, several trails are horse-only while a few prohibit horses. In addition to the public trails, Ipswich also has a substantial number of horse trails that traverse private property that are not identified on the map.

Additional trails proposed for the Town include several trails winding through the Turner Hill great estate development and a path along Argilla Road, providing pedestrian and non-vehicular access between downtown Ipswich and Crane's Beach.

## **8.4 Parking**

The Elm Street/South Main Street Municipal Parking Lot and the Market Street Parking Lot provide parking for downtown businesses. The Elm Street/South Main Street Municipal Parking Lot has 80 parking spaces,<sup>7</sup> while the Market Street Parking Lot provides parking for approximately 280 vehicles.<sup>8</sup>

Although the Town owns the highest number of parking spaces (110) of any of the ten property owners at the Market Street Parking Lot<sup>9</sup>, there are three other major property owners, including Banknorth, First National Bank of Ipswich, and a realty trust. Four driveways, each owned by a different entity, presently provide access to the lot from Hammatt, Central, and Market Streets. Each property owner has an independently configured sub-lot, maximizing the number each individual parcel can accommodate, but not working in conjunction with the neighboring property owner. The authors of the "Parking Management for Downtown Ipswich" study estimated that between 30 and 50 additional parking spaces could be developed if the entrance/exit driveways were combined and the parking spaces were reconfigured. However, the problems associated with this parking lot have been ongoing. It will require strong leadership from the Town to coordinate and promote cooperation among the various property owners, but it is necessary in order to redevelop the parking lot, maximize the number of spaces available, enhance the safety and aesthetics of the lot (through the addition of landscaping islands and lighting), and improve the quality of the lot's operation and maintenance.

The Town provides several mechanisms in its zoning bylaw to promote commercial redevelopment and protect the downtown from developing a proliferation of parking lots. The Town provides an exemption to the parking requirements for businesses that are 1) 12,000 square feet or less; 2) located within buildings constructed prior to September 1, 1994; and 3) within 500 feet of either the Elm Street/South Main Street Municipal Lot or the Town-owned parking spaces in the Market Street lot. For businesses that do not meet the size or construction date thresholds, the Planning Board may (by special permit) reduce the required number of parking spaces up to a maximum of 50%.

In addition, the Town also allows joint use of parking areas. Under this regulation, the ZBA may issue special permits to establishments allowing for the joint use of required parking spaces by intermittent uses. The intermittent uses (such as churches, assembly halls, and theaters) must have non-conflicting peak parking demand.

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<sup>7</sup> "Parking Management for Downtown Ipswich" prepared for the Ipswich Partnership. Prepared by John D. Edwards, Bob Betz, and Brad Edwards, May 1997.

<sup>8</sup> "Parking Management for Downtown Ipswich" identified 312 parking spaces at the Market Street Parking Lot.

<sup>9</sup> "Site Plan of Land" completed February 23, 1999 by Meridian Engineering, Inc.

## **8.5 Future Transportation Considerations**

This section discusses factors that may affect Ipswich's transportation decisions in the upcoming years, including development trends and infrastructure investments. This section also discusses the recommendations of previous transportation studies, and how they may be applied to the current situation in Ipswich.

### **8.5.1 Development Trends**

As discussed previously, land use and development are the major contributors to transportation demand. In the recent past, most of Ipswich's development has been located outside of the town center, which tends to place additional pressure on the Town's collector and arterial roads, such as Topsfield Road, Linebrook Road, and Route 1A/133. This dispersed development pattern also makes it difficult to take advantage of alternative modes such as public transit, or even walking or bicycling. On the other hand, the Town has managed to attract some new development into its town center, such as EBSCO Publishing and several smaller residential and mixed-use projects. These projects offer at least the potential to be easily accessed by walking, biking, or commuter rail. As Ipswich considers revisions to its zoning bylaw, it should consider the potential transportation impacts of the developments that could be built in the various sections of the Town.

### **8.5.2 Infrastructure Investments**

In recent years, the Town has invested in several projects to make its town center more attractive to local residents as well as potential tourists. Infrastructure improvements have included intersection realignments to improve safety at hazardous crossings, new sidewalk construction to improve continuity and accessibility, and the planning and construction of other pedestrian amenities. In 1999, the Washington St./Hammatt St. intersection was reconfigured as part of the commuter rail extension to Newburyport. In 2000, the Lords Square intersection was realigned to improve the traffic flow for both motorists and pedestrians, and to improve public safety.

Several streets have been resurfaced and/or sidewalks have been replaced in recent years (Central, Hammatt, Main and Saltonstall streets). The Town also plans to upgrade the infrastructure and facilities on both North Main and Market Streets. A combination of local, state, and federal funds have been used to pay for street reconstruction/resurfacing in the town center over the past seven years. Additional planned infrastructure projects on the 2002-2003 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) include reconstruction of the County Road bridge over the Ipswich River; replacing the Route 1A (High Street) bridge over the MBTA and Boston and Maine railroad tracks; and resurfacing a segment of Essex Road (Route 133).

A number of intersections in the town center have been made accessible to the physically handicapped and are now compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Newly ADA-compliant intersections include Market Square (1997), Depot Square (1998), the intersection of Washington and Hammatt streets (1998), the intersection of Central and Hammatt streets (1998), and the remainder of Hammatt Street (2002).

A major tourism-related project currently near construction is the Downtown Riverwalk. As previously mentioned, the Riverwalk involves the construction of a pedestrian bridge that will connect the downtown area to the west of the Ipswich River, at Union Street, to the east side of the river, near the Ipswich Visitor Center, at South Main Street. The design and cost estimating stage of the Riverwalk has been completed, and MassHighway has advertised the project for bidding. A combination of transportation enhancements and Public Works and Economic Development (PWED) funds will provide approximately \$720,000 to build the Riverwalk. Construction is expected to start in the fall of 2003.

### **8.5.3 Transportation Recommendations from Previous Studies**

The 1995 Draft Strategic Economic Development Plan identified issues related to traffic, circulation, parking, and the built environment. Circulation and parking issues included inadequate management of downtown parking, poorly configured intersections in the town center, and insufficient pedestrian circulation areas. The Draft Plan recommended that the Town improve parking, pedestrian circulation, public transit, and road layout by conducting a capacity and turnover analysis of all on-and-off-street parking spaces in the town center; making all town center intersections ADA-compliant; reconfiguring the Washington St./Hammatt St. intersection as part of the commuter rail extension to Newburyport; and realigning the Lords Square intersection to improve the traffic flow for motorists and pedestrians. Many of these recommended actions have been completed or are underway.

Recommended strategies to improve the built environment included installing trash receptacles in the town center (which has subsequently been completed), resurfacing many of the town center's streets (mostly complete), and rebuilding much of the sidewalk and curbing (partially complete). Some of the broader objectives included developing a streetscape improvement plan, identifying underutilized buildings (especially in the town center) and developing an appropriate reuse strategy.