

# The Time is Past Due for Zoning Reform in Massachusetts

Massachusetts is listed by the American Planning Association as one of the states with the weakest and most outdated state land use laws.

In the Commonwealth, land use planning and the regulation of development is largely a local matter. However, the enabling state laws contain unclear or restrictive provisions that effectively deprive cities and towns of authority consistent with their responsibilities. These impediments render local planning ineffective, and even discourage it. Current planning, zoning and subdivision control statutes subvert local planning by laying down a minefield of exemptions, prohibitions and zoning freezes that consistently get in the way of local plan implementation. The realization of local land use plans is hindered.

The end result of the status quo is that no one is well-served—neither advocates for housing, economic development, nor environmental and resource protection.

***An Act Promoting the Planning and Development of Sustainable Communities (H.1859)*** is the first major update of the Commonwealth's planning, zoning, and subdivision control statutes in over 38 and 60 years, respectively. H.1859 rewrites Massachusetts' outdated statutes governing local land use planning. It blends aspects of previous zoning reform legislative proposals, including CLURPA, the Community Planning Act, and the Land Use Partnership Act, to create a much-needed overhaul of the state's land use laws.

H.1859 encourages communities to adopt planning that achieves the state's goals for housing, economic development and natural resource protection. In exchange, it provides strong incentives in the form of enhanced planning tools and preferential consideration for state infrastructure funding and other state funds and grants. At the same time, many of the existing statutory impediments to the achievement of "smart growth" in Massachusetts are eliminated so that communities may better manage their growth and shape their futures.

*An Act Promoting the Planning and Development of Sustainable Communities* has been filed by its principal sponsors, Rep. Stephen Kulik and Senator Daniel Wolf, with an additional 56 co-sponsors.

See the reverse side for a summary of the bill's main features.

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## Summary of

### “AN ACT PROMOTING THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES” (House Bill #1859)

Sponsored by Representative Stephen Kulik & Senator Daniel Wolf

**Statutory Authority:** Defines and explicitly authorizes the use of some planning tools, including impact fees, inclusionary zoning, natural resource protection zoning and transfer of development rights.

**Zoning Vote:** Allows communities to lower the required vote down to a simple majority to adopt zoning changes.

**Vested Rights (grandfathering):** Provides reasonable and standardized zoning protections for development projects proposed in building permits, special permits and subdivision plans, and creates a more level playing field between developer and municipality. Eliminates some excessive grandfathering provisions.

**Special Permits:** Amends current statute to address unreasonable burdens on both applicants and local boards.

**Site Plan Review:** Authorizes site plan review in statute and establishes standardized procedures for its use.

**Development Impact Fees:** Currently unavailable in Massachusetts in most cases, this section authorizes impact fees in statute and establishes standards for its use.

**Inclusionary Zoning:** This new section in the Zoning Act authorizes and provides parameters for adopting zoning measures that require the creation of affordable housing in development projects.

**Land Use Dispute Avoidance:** Offers an “off-line” avenue for applicants, municipal officials, and the public to work through the difficulties in a prospective development project by using a neutral facilitator.

**Variations:** Rewrites the current variance statute to create more reasonable procedures and criteria for variances while still maintaining a community’s discretion to condition or deny a variance.

**Consolidated Permitting:** Helps to ensure that for larger, more complex projects, local boards receive common information about the project and have the opportunity to bring all decision-making bodies together at the beginning of a project for more timely review.

**Master Plans:** Updates and simplifies the master planning process, divides the plan elements between those that are required and optional, incorporates the state’s Sustainable Development Principles, makes master plans optional, and allows for more flexibility in creating a plan based on local needs.

**Approval Not Required (ANR):** Allows municipalities to replace ANR with minor subdivision regulations, enabling greater regulatory oversight. Current ANR is practically unregulated and is a great sprawl generator.

**Parks and Playgrounds:** Gives municipalities the ability to require parks and playgrounds in new subdivisions.

**Appeals:** Streamlines and reforms the appeals language for site plan review, special permits, and subdivisions.

**Planning Ahead for Growth Act (opt-in):** Provides strong incentives for smart growth that promotes housing, economic development and natural resource protection. In exchange for adopting measures that embrace these state goals, communities are given enhanced planning tools and preferential consideration for infrastructure funding and other state funds and grants.

## Bill Section Descriptions

“AN ACT PROMOTING THE PLANNING AND  
DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES”  
House Bill #1859

Principal Sponsors:  
Representative Stephen Kulik  
Senator Daniel Wolf

<u>BILL SECTION</u>	<u>STATUTE SECTION</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
1.	40A:1A	Expands existing definition of “permit granting authority” to include planning boards and others as locally designated.
2.	40A:1A	Adds definitions for 12 new terms in the Zoning Act. Redefines “cluster development” in a more general manner.
3.	40A:2	Statement that the Zoning Act shall be construed to give full effect to the 1966 Home Rule Amendment to the Massachusetts Constitution. Enumerates certain powers of cities and towns, whether under home rule or as specifically authorized in the Zoning Act. States that the Zoning Act shall not be construed to limit certain special acts of the legislature, in particular the Cape Cod or Martha’s Vineyard Commission Acts.
4.	40A:5	Retains the default of a two-thirds majority required to adopt or amend zoning, but allows for cities and towns to vote in a lesser vote majority.
5.	40A:5	Stipulates that the zoning vote majority may be anywhere between a simple and a two-thirds majority, any change must be made by the vote majority then in effect, and such a change does not become effective for 6 months after the vote.
6.	40A:6	This section strikes out the old vested rights language for building and special permits. In a later section the bill makes a fundamental change in the vested rights protections accorded to these permits.
7.	40A:6	Same as above.
8.	40A:6	States the new vested rights protections accorded to building and special permits, and the duration of the protections, two and three

years, respectively. Extends the protections equal to any period where a moratorium upon construction is imposed.

9. 40A:6 Eliminates the five-year dimensional vested rights protection for up to three adjacent lots in common ownership.
10. 40A:6 States the new vested rights protection accorded to definitive subdivision plans, and the duration of the protection – for eight years after approval. The same vested rights protection applies to minor subdivision plans, but for four years. Extends both protections equal to any period where a moratorium upon construction is imposed.
11. 40A:6 Eliminates the three-year use vested rights protection for so-called ANR lots.
12. 40A:6 Strikes reference to “land shown on” a definitive subdivision plan, which brings the language into conformance with new vested rights protections for such plans (protection is for the plan, not the “land shown on” the plan).
13. 40A:9 Section 9 of the Zoning Act is re-named “Special Provisions” because the section deals with more than just special permits.
14. 40A:9 Eliminates outdated (in view of 1966 Home Rule Amendment) and limiting language relative to: special permits for increased density, special permits for multi-family residential uses in non-residentially zoned areas, transfer of development rights, cluster development, planned unit development, and shared elderly housing. Striking these paragraphs enhances rather than inhibits the use of these techniques.
15. 40A:9 Restates the previously stricken third paragraph relative to multi-family residential uses in non-residentially zoned areas. Requires a special permit and same safeguards, but phrased in post-Home-Rule-Amendment language.
16. 40A:9 Resets the default vote majority to approve special permits to a simple-majority, but allows for an increased majority by ordinance or bylaw (not to exceed today’s requirements).
17. 40A:9 Sets the minimum duration of a special permit at 3 years before it lapses (if not used), which may be increased by ordinance or bylaw. Such period shall not include the time required to pursue or await the determination of an appeal. Establishes a process

whereby the duration of a special permit may be extended before it lapses.

18. 40A:9 Amends the exemption provided for hazardous waste facilities in industrial use zones such that if the area is zoned as mixed-use with an industrial component, the industrial use must be the principal use in order to secure the exemption for such facilities.
19. 40A:9 Amends the exemption provided for solid waste facilities in industrial use zones such that if the area is zoned as mixed-use with an industrial component, the industrial use must be the principal use in order to secure the exemption for such facilities.
20. 40A:9D Inserts a new section into the Zoning Act, 9D, which standardizes the statutory requirements for site plan review, including a two-year grace period to bring existing ordinances or bylaws into compliance.
21. 40A:9E Inserts a new section into the Zoning Act, 9E, which sets out the statutory requirements for development impact fees.
22. 40A:9F Inserts a new section into the Zoning Act, 9F, which sets out the statutory requirements for inclusionary zoning (to require affordable housing). Written in a manner general enough to encompass most existing ordinances or bylaws of this type.
23. 40A:9G Inserts a new section into the Zoning Act, 9G, which sets out the statutory requirements for a local voluntary land use dispute avoidance process.
24. 40A:10 Strikes out the existing section on zoning variances and inserts a new section that allows greater local discretion.
25. 40A:11 Adds the local board of health as a “party in interest” for the purposes of providing written notice of a public hearing on a zoning matter.
26. 40X Adds a new chapter to the General Laws, 40X, which sets out the statutory requirements for consolidated permitting, which is an option for applicants wishing to coordinating the review of certain larger projects.
27. 40Y Adds a new chapter to the General Laws, 40Y, the Planning Ahead for Growth Act, which sets out the statutory requirements and benefits for communities that “opts-in” to the program. A budget line of \$2,000,000 is provided to fund a technical assistance

program in the form of grants to municipalities and regional planning agencies for the preparation and review of implementing regulations. This is the only budget item in H.1859.

28. 41:81D Strikes the existing section on master plans and inserts an entire new section that, among other things, reduces the number of required elements to 5 (7 more are optional). Communities in Barnstable or Dukes Counties may instead adopt a local comprehensive plan pursuant to the special acts that apply there; such plans if approved by the RPA shall be deemed a master plan for the purposes of this section.
29. 41:81L Strikes the existing definition of the term “subdivision” and rewrites it to eliminate the so-called ANR exemption.
30. 41:81L Adds a definition for “minor subdivision” while retaining references to the so-called ANR standards applicable to communities that do not adopt regulations for minor subdivisions (effect is to keep ANR in place until regulations for minor subdivisions are adopted by the planning board).
31. 41:81O Eliminates the ability to alter the lot layout of an approved subdivision via the so-called ANR process; instead requires that either the modification process in 41:81W be used or such modifications be defined and regulated as minor subdivisions.
32. 41:81P Strikes out the existing section 81P pertaining to procedures for so-called ANR divisions and replaces it with a section describing the statutory requirements for minor subdivisions. Existing ANR procedures apply until regulations of minor subdivisions are adopted by planning board.
33. 41:81Q Establishes a presumption that subdivision roadway standards in excess of those applied to the reconstruction of public ways are unlawfully excessive. Width requirements for total travel lanes not exceeding 24 feet shall not be presumed excessive.
34. 41:81Q Allows subdivision regulations to require parks within subdivisions for the benefit of the residents, but not exceeding 5 percent of the total project area.
35. 41:81T Eliminates remnant ANR language.
36. 41:81U Allows subdivision regulations to require permanent parks within subdivisions, as above.

37. 41:81X Eliminates remnant ANR language.
38. 41:81X Eliminates remnant ANR language.
39. 41:81X Establishes streamlined procedures for the approval and recordation of perimeter plans for existing lots and, under certain conditions, plans showing lot line changes.
40. 41:81BB Establishes that a court's review of an appeal of an approved subdivision plan shall be on the existing record of the planning board (*certiorari* review), not on new evidence (*de novo* review). Imposes additional burdens of proof and aggrievement on appellants, including appellants who are the applicant.
41. 185:3A Gives the permit session of the Land Court original jurisdiction over appeals relating to the development of real property.
42. 185:3A Requires that upon petition qualified cases shall be transferred to the permit session of the Land Court.
43. 240:14A Provides that cities and towns may use consistency with an adopted master plan to defend their zoning ordinances and bylaws against challenge. Inconsistency shall not count against a city or town in this regard.

# **Outline of Zoning Reform Bill<sup>i</sup>**

“AN ACT PROMOTING THE PLANNING AND  
DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES”  
House Docket #3216

Principal Sponsors:  
Representative Stephen Kulik  
Senator Daniel Wolf

## Chapter 40A: Zoning Act

- Statutory Authority
- Zoning Vote (majority to adopt or amend)
- Vested Rights
- Special Permits
- Site Plan Review
- Development Impact Fees
- Inclusionary Zoning
- Land Use Dispute Avoidance
- Variances
- Notice to Boards of Health

## Chapter 40X: Consolidated Permitting (new chapter)

## Chapter 40Y: Planning Ahead for Growth Act (new chapter)

## Chapter 41

- Master Plans
- Approval Not Required (ANR)
- Parks and Playgrounds (in subdivisions)
- Subdivision Roadway Standards
- Appeals (relating to subdivision decisions)

## Chapter 185

- Appeals

## Chapter 240

- Master Planning Incentive

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<sup>i</sup> Consensus bill descending from previous zoning reform bills: MLURA, CPA-2, LUPA, LURSEP, and CLURPA

## Talking Points

“AN ACT PROMOTING THE PLANNING AND  
DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES”  
House Bill #1859

Principal Sponsors:  
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### Local Permitting

- **Vested Rights:** More reasonably obtainable vesting provisions for building and special permits.
- **Special Permits:** Reduced vote majority to approve (default becomes a simple majority, but may be increased by ordinance); extends duration to minimum of 3 years; clear lapse and extension process.
- **Building Permits:** Extends zoning life of building permit from 6 months to 2 years.
- **Site Plan Review:** Statewide standards for site plan review (SPR), including: 95 day time frame; establishes SPR as a by-right process; minimum 2-year duration after approval; limits on ability to condition (must relate to defined standards/criteria in the by-law); limits on imposition on off-site mitigation; obligatory consolidation of SPR and special permit process when both are required; no vested rights for SPR; and an appeal process based upon the existing record (*certiorari*).
- **Variances:** Rewrites the current variance statute in its entirety: expands landowner eligibility to apply for a legal variance; sets reasonable procedures and criteria; effective duration of variance extended from one to 2 years before lapse if not used; and permissible extension interval increases from 6 months to one year.
- **Development Impact Fees:** Adds predictability for big projects; instead of long negotiations over what exactions or mitigation are required in exchange for permit approval, impact fees are quickly calculated up front by formula (prompt); fees are known in advance and can be built into a project’s pro forma (predictable).
- **Land Use Dispute Avoidance:** an “off-line” avenue for applicant and town to work out difficulties in a prospective development project so that formal approval process may be successful.
- **Consolidated Permitting:** This provision, a new Chapter 40X, allows the proponent of an eligible project (projects consisting of 25,000 or more gross floor area or of 25 or more dwelling units) to file a concurrent application, which starts a process that includes a consolidated hearing for all boards involved within 45 days of filing, after which the boards may continue their regular process of peer and board reviews per applicable statutes and local regulations. It calls for a concurrent application that contains general project information relevant to all boards.

- **Subdivision Roadways:** Establishes a presumption that road width requirements in subdivision regulations exceeding those commonly applied to public roadway reconstructions are excessive.
- **Minor Subdivision:** Local option to replace ANR; if selected, applies to smaller residential subdivisions that today are treated as full subdivisions; shorter review period – 95 days; public hearing optional; waivers to requirements otherwise applicable to subdivisions; limits total travelled lanes width requirements to no greater than 22 feet.
- **Lot Line Changes:** Streamlines the process to alter lot lines under certain circumstances.
- **Appeals:** Streamlines the appeals language for site plan review, special permits, and subdivisions; provides for a record-based decision rather than a decision based on new evidence (*certiorari*) by the court evaluating a local approving authority’s action; and clarifies the jurisdiction of the Land Court permit session to include residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use projects.
- **Planning Ahead for Growth Act:** A new chapter, 40Y, provides strong incentives for the “plan, zone, invest” framework and provides more opportunities for housing and job growth in appropriate locations, coupled with environmental and open space protections. In exchange for local adoption of zoning districts for new residential and commercial development, preserving open space in subdivisions, and protecting water quality in development projects, municipalities will be granted access to additional regulatory tools and fiscal resources to realize their plans for sustainable development.

## Housing

- **Inclusionary Zoning:** Explicit statutory authorization for zoning measures that require the creation of housing for households earning up to 120% of area median income (AMI). Units created may be eligible for Subsidized Housing Inventory if restricted to households earning no more than 80% of AMI.
- **Development Impact Fees:** Exempts affordable housing from impact fees, but allows impact fees to be used to create such housing under the Planning Ahead for Growth Act.
- **Master Plans:** Robust new housing element, with consideration of alternatives to single-family.
- **Minor Subdivision:** More streamlined process applies to smaller residential subdivisions that today are treated as full subdivisions. See above.
- **Subdivision Roadways:** Establishes a presumption that road width requirements in subdivision regulations exceeding those commonly applied to public roadway reconstructions are excessive. Lowers costs to create housing
- **Planning Ahead for Growth Act:** For communities that opt-in, 180 day, by-right permitting of housing at higher densities in certain districts; affordable housing exempt from rate of development measures; oversight, implementing regulations, and resolution of disputes through secretary of Housing and Economic Development .

## Environment

- **Master Plans:** Robust new natural resources and energy element.
- **Vested Rights:** Limits premature vesting of subdivision plans to discourage their use in thwarting local zoning changes designed to protect the environment.
- **Approval Not Required Plans (ANR):** Option to discontinue ANR allows for greater control of linear sprawl development on substandard roads, often in remote, undeveloped areas with high natural resource value.
- **Natural Resource Protection Zoning (NRPZ):** Definition and explicit authorization of NRPZ in Zoning Act; ability to use very low-density NRPZ under Planning Ahead for Growth Act.
- **Limits on Subdivision Roadway Widths:** Reduction in impervious surfaces and roadway runoff.
- **Planning Ahead for Growth Act:** Communities that opt-in must use Low Impact Development (LID) techniques for land developments over one acre and require open space residential design if minimum lot sizes are in excess of one acre.

## Municipal Interests

- **Authority:** Explicitly establishes that zoning authority derives from the Home Rule Amendment to the Constitution of the Commonwealth.
- **Powers of Cities and Towns:** Explicitly confirms statutory authority relative to use of impact fees, inclusionary zoning, unified development ordinances, form-based zoning, transfer of development rights, cluster development, and natural resource protection zoning.
- **Vested Rights:** 3 year zoning use freeze for ANR plans is eliminated; 5 year zoning dimensional freeze for lots in common ownership is eliminated; zoning freeze for preliminary subdivision plans amended such that only the definitive plan itself is protected if duly applied for prior to first notice of public hearing on a zoning amendment, and is ultimately approved.
- **Adoption of Zoning:** Increases local discretion by allowing communities the option to reduce the vote majority from two-thirds down anywhere to a simple majority (the national norm).
- **Special Permits:** Provides greater flexibility by reducing the statutory vote majority to approve special permits to a simple majority, but allows for individual communities to increase the vote quantum to a super-majority if desired; provides clear lapse/extension process.
- **“Enabling” Language:** Paragraphs 3-9 in Section 9 of the Zoning Act are stricken or modified to eliminate unnecessarily limiting definitions or requirements; definition of “cluster development” is rewritten in section 1A of the Zoning Act.
- **Solid or Hazardous Waste Facilities:** Amends Section 9 of Zoning Act to limit existing permitting exemptions for solid or hazardous waste facilities to areas zoned “principally” for industrial use.

- **Variiances:** Increases local flexibility by expanding the usefulness of the variance to address a wider array of local zoning situations while maintaining discretion to deny a variance.
- **Inclusionary Zoning:** Provides a tool to create affordable housing; explicit statutory authority to require the creation of affordable housing in development projects; written in a general manner to provide statutory “cover” for the many local inclusionary ordinances and by-laws in existence; may be used to produce housing eligible for inclusion on a community’s Subsidized Housing Inventory (such units counting toward attainment of the 10% required under Chapter 40B).
- **Development Impact Fees:** Enables cities and towns to recoup costs of growth by providing explicit statutory authority to require payment of impact fees associated with development projects; provides a clear and defensible path to follow so that impact fees may be assessed for any development shown to generate eligible impacts, regardless of whether the approval is discretionary, by-right, or through subdivision control. Impact fees may be used to defray the costs of master planning.
- **Land Use Dispute Avoidance:** Provides communities with “off-line” avenue for an applicant, town, and interested parties to resolve difficulties in prospective development project so approval process is successful.
- **Zoning Defense:** Section 14A of chapter 240 is amended to require a court in any claim challenging the validity of a zoning ordinance or by-law to first determine if the provision challenged is consistent with the city’s or town’s master plan adopted pursuant to section 81D of chapter 41, if any. If the court so determines, then such provision shall be deemed to serve a public purpose. A determination of inconsistency by the court or the absence of an adopted master plan shall not count against a city or town.
- **Judicial Review of Site Plans and Subdivision Plans:** Introduces a presumption that local board’s decision was correct in the event of an appeal of any approval or denial; requires judicial review of appeal be based upon the existing record, not new evidence (*certiorari*).
- **Master Plans:** Entire section on master plans rewritten: 1) all communities must complete five required elements instead of the nine required today (goals and objectives, housing, natural resources and energy, land use and zoning, and implementation); 2) communities are free to choose among the other seven optional elements, and may customize their treatment of the subject matter according to local needs; 3) allows for greater flexibility in plan format and content and discourages superfluous, costly data collection; and 4) public participation enhanced by requirement for a public hearing before a plan may be adopted by the planning board, and the plan must subsequently be adopted by a simple-majority of the local legislative body.
- **Approval Not Required Plans (ANR):** Increases local control by providing option to adopt regulations for “minor subdivisions” in place of current ANR provisions; this option for communities will shift some costs for roadway upgrades, drainage improvements, and other improvements to those benefiting from the development.
- **Modification of Subdivision Plans:** Increases local control by requiring that changes to number, shape, and size of lots shown on approved subdivision plans go through formal c. 41, §81W process unless such changes are locally defined as minor subdivisions.

- **Parks and Playgrounds:** Establishes that subdivision rules and regulations may require the set-aside of up to 5% of a subdivision as a park or playground for the new neighborhood.
- **Planning Ahead for Growth Act:** Provides attractive incentives to opt-in such as shorter vesting periods for subdivisions (from 8 down to 5 years); natural resources protection zoning at very low densities; broader use of impact fees; use of development agreements and rate of development measures; priority for state infrastructure funding, requirements that the state take local master plans into consideration in its capital spending, and technical assistance grants.
- **Funding for Planning:** Provides portion of \$2,000,000 for development of local implementing regulations under the Planning Ahead for Growth Act.

## **Master Planning and Public Health**

- **Master Plans:** Entire section on master plans rewritten to accomplish a number of objectives: 1) the elements of a plan are described in updated language reflective of the state's *Sustainable Development Principles*, including public health considerations; 2) all communities must complete five required elements (goals and objectives, housing, natural resources and energy, land use and zoning, and implementation), but are free to choose among the other seven optional elements, and may customize their treatment of the subject matter according to local needs; 3) allows for greater flexibility in plan format and content and discourages superfluous data collection unrelated to land use and the physical development of the community; 4) all elements required or selected must be assessed against similar material in a regional plan, if any; 5) a public hearing is required before a plan may be adopted by the planning board; and 6) the plan must subsequently be adopted by a simple-majority of the local legislative body.
- **Parks and Playgrounds:** establishes that subdivision rules and regulations may require the set-aside of up to 5% of a subdivision as a park or playground for the new neighborhood.
- **Planning Ahead for Growth Act:** Communities that opt-in must require open space residential design if minimum lot sizes are in excess of one acre, with open space often accessible to residents for recreational purposes. State agencies responsible for regulatory or municipal capital spending shall take into account an adopted master plan.
- **Zoning Defense:** A court in any claim challenging the validity of a zoning ordinance or by-law must first determine if the provision challenged is consistent with the city's or town's master plan. If the court so finds, then such provision shall be deemed to serve a public purpose. This potential advantage would serve as an incentive to adopt a master plan and bring zoning into consistency with it.

## **Regional Interests**

- **Master Plans:** Each subject required or selected must be assessed against an adopted regional plan, if any.
- **Enhanced Local Powers:** Facilitates many tools and techniques that communities within a region may use to effectuate smarter growth, redevelopment, conservation, and preservation.

- **Planning Ahead for Growth Act:** Major role for regional planning agencies in certifying local implementing regulations and partnering with communities to map priority development and preservation areas. State discretionary funds for municipal infrastructure and land preservation shall, to greatest extent feasible, be consistent with an adopted regional plan.
- **Funding for Planning:** Provides portion of \$2,000,000 for regional planning agency review of local implementing regulations under the Planning Ahead for Growth Act.

### **State Interests**

- **General:** After almost 40 years Massachusetts has a significantly modernized zoning act and planning statute, absent the abnormalities that have plagued the Commonwealth for too long.
- **Master Plans:** State's *Sustainable Development Principals* are reflected in the descriptions of each required or optional subject in a master plan.
- **Planning Ahead for Growth Act:** Many of the State's interests in housing, economic development, environmental protection, and open space preservation are advanced when cities and towns opt-in.