

PLANNING FOR NAHANT: 1986 & BEYOND

Nahant Planning Board

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CONTENTS

Page

I. JOBS, POPULATION, AND HOUSING

A. Overview	2
B. Housing	2
C. Population	5
D. Employment	8

II. LAND USE

A. Residential Development	11
B. Commercial and Industrial Development	13
C. Institutional and Open Space Uses	13
D. Developable Land	15

III. TOWN SERVICES

A. Schools	16
B. Water and Sewer Systems	19
C. Fiscal Analyses	20

IV. DEVELOPMENT POLICY

A. Background	24
B. Development Policy; Nahant Massachusetts ..	24

V. IMPLEMENTATION

A. Current Zoning Proposals	26
B. Action on Dwelling Unit Conversions	29
C. Future Regulatory Changes	30

APPENDIX

Nahant's first Master Plan was published in 1961. That extensive document contained information on the Town's basic socio-economic characteristics, projected future local population, forecast needs for additional school capacity, described the Town's existing fiscal capability, and assessed the need for increasing fiscal resources in the future.

In 1977 the Nahant Planning Board revised the original 1961 Master Plan. The format closely paralleled that of the '61 Plan while updating information on local population, economics, and housing characteristics. By reviewing assessors' records, the Planning Board produced an inventory of land uses in the Town as of 1973. The Planning Board completed their study by issuing a statement on Nahant's future. Future population and new commercial development was projected. Future land uses were evaluated through site-specific analyses.

Over eight years have now passed since the Nahant Master Plan was last revised, and many things have changed. These changes have raised new development concerns (i.e. an increasing pressure for development on the Town's remaining vacant land), and heightened issues which have faced the Town for a number of years (e.g. multifamily development).

The focus of the Town's current master plan program has been in designing actions that directly address local development issues. Two public workshops were held, the first examining concerns surrounding multifamily development in the Town, and the second proposing an alternative to the Town's current development process. Finally, a public hearing was held on the regulatory changes that have been proposed as a result of the Master Planning Program.

Master Planning efforts have appropriately focussed on the development process. However, it is important that current and future planning proposals be based on an understanding of current socio-economic characteristics, existing land uses, and current fiscal capacity. This report presents such an analysis. The form of these analyses parallels those in the 1977 Master Plan. Thus, changes in local conditions over time - beginning with the 1961 Master Plan, through the 1977 update, to the present - can be examined. Those sections of the 1977 Plan most germane to current development issues have been examined in detail. Information on population, housing, and fiscal capacity have been examined. Future population has been forecast. Land use information has been updated by the Planning Board. Finally, several scenarios have been developed that examine what impact changes in current development regulations may have on the Town's population, employment, school enrollment, and fiscal capacity.

I. JOBS, POPULATION, AND HOUSING

A. Overview

Many things have changed in Nahant since the Town's Master Plan was last revised in 1977. Yet the qualities basic to the Town's character, valued so highly it appears, by so many of its residents, remain intact. The Town is still small in population, almost a residential enclave, located more than a mile out into Massachusetts Bay. Although some growth has occurred over the past decade, new development has proceeded very slowly. Today fewer persons are living in new and existing units than there were ten years ago. As a result, the Town's population has been slowly declining. About 4,000 people now live in Nahant - 100 less than in 1970. Moreover, the population is aging. And, as the number of older residents increases, fewer pupils are being enrolled in Nahant schools.

Nahant is a community supported by wages earned elsewhere. Outcommuters comprise the majority of the local labor force. However local employment has grown over the past ten years. For the most, these jobs are service-oriented, servicing the needs of the existing residential population.

Unless there are major attempts at intervention, the Town should expect more of the same in future years. The Town is almost fully developed. Few opportunities exist to increase the housing supply and even fewer are available to support new commercial development. The Town's future population will be determined largely by its housing supply. Total population will determine future school enrollment and be a major factor effecting the growth of local service employment. It appears likely then, that Nahant in the year 2000 will not differ greatly from the Nahant of today.

B. Housing

The quantity and type of housing available in Nahant will continue to be the major factor determining population growth. The Town is largely residential in nature. With the land base almost fully developed, few opportunities exist to increase the supply of local housing. Thus, demographic trends - largely outside local control - and to a lesser extent the amount and the type of building that occurs on the developable properties that remain, will be the forces shaping Nahant's character in future years.

Table 1 notes the number of housing units existing in Nahant and surrounding communities in 1970 and 1980. In all communities but Lynn, the number of units increased during this period, however Nahant saw less new residential development than most surrounding communities. Between 1970 and 1980, the number of housing units in the Town increased by 11%, while in Saugus the number of housing units increased by 13.4%, in Revere by 17.4%, and in Swampscott by almost 20%.

Table 1
HOUSING UNITS 1970-1980

	1970	1980	1970-1980
Lynn	32,603	32,617	0.0%
Marblehead	7,599	8,305	9.3%
NAHANT	1,397	1,547	10.7%
Revere	14,635	17,176	17.4%
Salem	14,119	15,879	12.5%
Saugus	7,326	8,307	13.4%
Swampscott	4,399	5,229	18.9%
Total	82,078	89,060	8.5%

Source: MAPC, "Regional Decline or Revival", 1982

In almost-all communities examined, the number of housing units increased between 1970 and 1980 at the same time population was declining. While the number of dwelling units in Nahant increased by over 10% during this period, population declined by just under 5%. This increase in dwelling units in the face of a declining population can be accounted for by decline in household size. Table 2 illustrates how the number of persons occupying existing dwelling units declined over the last decade. In Nahant, the number of persons per housing unit declined by 13.5%, from 2.95 in 1970 to 2.55 in 1980. This is highlighted in the increased number of single person households in the Town. In 1970, 16.4% of all households were single person households. By 1980, single person households comprised almost 25% of all households in the Town. The decline in household size was fairly uniform throughout the region. For all communities considered, the number of persons per dwelling unit declined by 14.2%.

Table 2
PERSONS PER HOUSING UNIT 1970-1980

	1970	1980	1970-1980
Lynn	2.77	2.41	-13.1%
Marblehead	2.80	2.42	-13.5%
NAHANT	2.95	2.55	-13.5%
Revere	2.95	2.47	-16.2%
Salem	2.87	2.41	-16.2%
Saugus	3.43	2.98	-13.1%
Swampscott	3.09	2.65	-14.3%
Total	2.90	2.49	-14.2%

Source: Herr Associates computations

Changes in household size can have major effects on total population size. This is especially true in a town such as Nahant where few opportunities exist for new residential development. The Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC) has projected that the population of North Shore communities is unlikely to change through the year 2000.

Table 3 presents housing unit projections through 2000 assuming that total local population will remain stable but that household size will continue to decline - though at half the rate of decline noted between 1970 and 1980. As shown in Table 3, by the year 2000 over 1,750 dwelling units would be necessary in Nahant, to house a population which in 1980 resided in 1,550 units. It appears then that the Town will need over 200 new residential units - an increase of about 14% over the existing number of units - to accommodate a year 2000 population of 3,900 persons. The situation would be similar in other communities. Regionwide, to house the 1980 population in the year 2000, over 11,000 additional units will be necessary.

Table 3
PROJECTED HOUSING UNITS

	1980	1990	2000	1980-2000 % change	1980-2000 units/yr	# auth 1984
Lynn	32,617	33,074	35,131	7.7%	126	127
Marblehead	8,305	8,919	9,590	15.5%	64	38
NAHANT	1,547	1,644	1,767	14.2%	11	5
Revere	17,176	18,459	19,848	15.6%	134	329
Salem	15,879	17,065	18,350	15.6%	124	74
Saugus	8,307	8,916	9,587	15.4%	64	?
Swampscott	5,229	5,608	6,030	15.3%	40	24
Total	89,060	93,683	100,302	12.6%	562	597

Source: Herr Associates projections, based on MAPC population projections.

Given the historic rate of residential development in Nahant, new housing construction is likely to fall short of the 200 units necessary given MAPC population projections. Table 4 notes the number of residential building permits issued in Nahant between 1974 and 1985. As shown, there has been little new residential development; on the average just over three permits have been issued annually over the past 12 years.

Thus, unless development controls are changed to allow more intensive use of residential land, it is likely that Nahant's population will continue to decline. Regulatory changes to allow dwelling unit conversions or limited multifamily building could increase the number of units available in the Town in the future. As a result, a larger population could be accommodated. In fact, pressure for such regulatory changes may increase over the next several years. Recent population counts have noted an increase in the population of many North Shore communities opposing earlier MAPC projections. Given the expected shortage of available housing in Nahant, regional population growth could well increase the demand for regulatory change.

Table 4
 BUILDING PERMITS 1974-1985

Year	Housing Units Authorized
1974	3
1975	4
1976	4
1977	1
1978	2
1979	1
1980	1
1981	7
1982	3
1983	4
1984	5
1985	5
Total	40
Avg. per year	3.3

Source: Nahant Town Clerk

C. Population

The physical shape and size of the community, geographic location, and existing level of development have been the major forces influencing Nahant's development. Nahant, as one of metropolitan Boston's "North Shore" communities, has remained residential in nature. Although commercial activities have increased over the past decade, residential uses continue to dominate local land uses.

The population of the Town has declined slightly since the 1977 Master Plan was issued. The 1977 plan cites population data based on 1970 U.S. Census figures. As shown in Table 5, in 1970 Nahant had a population of 4,119 persons. Between 1970 and 1980, the population had declined by 172 persons (4.2%) to reach a 1980 population of 3,947. The Town Clerk estimates that as of January 1, 1985 Nahant's population had increased to 4,070 - a gain of 123 persons (3%) over the four year period between 1980 and 1984.

This declining population trend parallels that identified for most communities in the surrounding area. As noted in Table 5, the communities of Lynn, Marblehead, Revere, Salem, and Saugus all experienced population losses since 1970. Population declines ranged from 1.4% in Saugus to over 13% in Revere. Swampscott was the only community in the region immediately surrounding Nahant to gain population. The population declines experienced between 1970 and 1980 are in contrast to the population increases noted between 1960 and 1970. During this period, when Nahant's population grew by 4%, all surrounding communities except Revere experienced increases in population ranging from 2.1% in Swampscott, to 21.5% in Saugus.

Table 5
POPULATION 1960-1984

	1960	1970	1980	1984	'60-'70	'70-'80	'80-'84
Lynn	94,478	90,294	78,471	79,264	-4.4%	-13.1%	1.0%
Marblehead	18,521	21,295	20,126	19,755	15.0%	-5.5%	-1.8%
NAHANT	3,960	4,119	3,947	4,070	4.0%	-4.2%	3.1%
Revere	40,080	43,159	42,423	43,141	7.7%	-1.7%	1.7%
Salem	39,211	40,556	38,220	38,555	3.4%	-5.8%	0.9%
Saugus	20,666	25,110	24,746	25,313	21.5%	-1.4%	2.3%
Swampscott	13,294	13,578	13,837	13,499	2.1%	1.9%	-2.4%
Total	230,210	238,111	221,770	223,597	3.4%	-6.9%	0.8%

Source: 1960 to 1980- U.S. Census
1984- U.S. Census unpublished estimates; Nahant Town Clerk

Table 6 compares the age structure of Nahant's population in 1970 with that found in 1980. Between 1970 and 1980, the age structure of the community changed considerably. In 1970, one of every three Nahant residents was under 20 years of age. In 1980, less than 25%, or only 1 in four residents was under 20. Correspondingly, the number of older adults had increased over the decade. In 1970, just over 10% of the population was 65 years of age or older. In 1980, almost 15% of the resident population was 65 or older. Likewise, in comparison with the state as a whole, in 1980, Nahant had proportionately fewer children and more older adults. In 1980, 30% of the state's population was 19 years of age or younger. In contrast, only 24% of Nahant's population was less than 20.

Table 6
POPULATION AGE STRUCTURE

Age	Nahant Number	1970 Percent	Nahant Number	1980 Percent	Massachusetts 1980 Percent
under 5	351	8.5	187	4.7	5.9
5-19	1,107	26.9	773	19.6	24.1
20-34	808	19.6	1,064	27.0	25.9
35-64	1,408	34.2	1,364	34.5	31.4
65 and older	445	10.8	559	14.2	12.7
Total	4,119	100.0	3,947	100.0	100.0

Source: U.S. Census

As shown in Table 7, Nahant's population has grown at rates well below that projected in earlier planning studies. The 1961 Master Plan projected that by 1980 the Town's population would reach 5,000 persons. The authors of the 1977 Master Plan update, cognizant of the trend toward reduced household sizes and anticipating few changes in existing regulations controlling development, made a more conservative estimate for a 1980 population of 4,400 persons. According to the U.S. Census,

the population of the Town in 1980 was 3,947, 21% less than that projected in 1961 and 10% less than that projected in 1977.

Table 7
POPULATION PROJECTIONS

	Actual	1961 Master Plan Projection	1977 Master Plan Projection
1960	3,960		
1970	4,119	4,700	
1980	3,947	5,000	4,400

Sources: U.S. Census, 1961 and 1977 Nahant Master Plans

Table 8 presents recent population forecasts developed for Nahant and surrounding communities by the MAPC. The MAPC utilized seven indicators of growth potential to develop population forecasts. These were: housing construction trends; population and employment growth (long term and recent); regional location; transportation access (accessibility to major expressways, rail transit and commuter rail lines; community image/fiscal and service capacity; local growth attitudes/local zoning; and developer/investor outlook. Of the 101 communities in the MAPC planning region, 32 are expected to gain population in the coming decades, 14 are expected to lose population, and 55 are expected to neither gain nor lose population over the 30-year forecast period. The population of Nahant, as with the majority of North Shore communities, is expected to remain stable through the year 2010.

Table 8
MAPC POPULATION PROJECTIONS 1990-2010

	1980	1990	2000	1980-2000	2010
Lynn	78,471	74,000	73,100	-6.8%	72,800
Marblehead	20,126	20,100	20,100	-0.1%	20,100
NAHANT	3,947	3,900	3,900	-1.2%	3,900
Revere	42,423	42,400	42,400	-0.1%	42,400
Salem	38,220	38,200	38,200	-0.1%	38,200
Saugus	24,746	24,700	24,700	-0.2%	24,700
Swampscott	13,837	13,800	13,800	-0.3%	13,800
Total	221,770	217,100	216,200	-2.5%	215,900

Source: MAPC, "Regional Decline or Revival", 1982

The physical characteristics of the Town and the Town's development history would appear to support the MAPC's population projections. The 1977 Master Plan stated that substantial residential growth could occur only if one or more of the following occurred:

- all available vacant land was developed to the greatest degree allowed under current zoning;
- existing seasonal dwelling units were converted to year-round use;
- the Town's zoning and building codes were changed to allow more intensive development;
- there was an increase in the occupancy of existing units.

These factors determine, to a large degree, the Town's potential for future growth just as they did in 1977. Currently, little land remains available for residential development. The amount of vacant land remaining in the Town is small and current ownership and/or physical limitations to building will constrain development of some vacant land. Similarly, conversion of seasonal units will not contribute greatly to future residential growth. The number of seasonal units remaining is small. The 1980 U.S. Census identified 63 of the Town's 1,547 dwelling units in 1980 - 4.1% - as being only seasonally occupied. Further, local zoning regulations have not changed significantly since 1977 and it is unclear whether regulations will be adopted that allow more intensive use of existing dwellings or will allow greater densities for new developments.

Finally, an increase in density of dwelling unit occupancy will occur only with increases in local household size. Given regional and national trends toward decreased family size, the Town will likely experience a decline, rather than an increase, in average household size in future years. Thus, the MAPC forecast that Nahant's population will experience little change through 2010 seems reasonable.

In summary, although no change is expected in Nahant's population, the pressure for additional - especially smaller - housing units will continue.

D. Employment

Nahant, although largely a residential community, has a commercial sector which has experienced substantial growth over the last decade. Unlike surrounding communities such as Lynn and Salem, the Town has no major employers. As shown in Table 9, 28 commercial establishments were added in Nahant between 1974 and 1984. Most of these are service enterprises serving the existing residential population. Generally, local employment establishments are small. In 1984, 419 persons were employed by local businesses, an increase of 38% since 1974 (Table 10).

Table 9
EMPLOYMENT ESTABLISHMENTS 1974-1984

	Employment	Establishments		Major Employer by Industry 1984
	1974	1984	1974-1984	
Lynn	1,559	1,455	-6.7%	Manufacturing
Marblehead	344	514	49.4%	Wholesale and Retail Trade
NAHANT	34	62	82.4%	Services
Revere	576	623	8.2%	Wholesale and Retail Trade
Salem	886	1,072	21.0%	Services
Saugus	364	520	42.9%	Wholesale and Retail Trade
Swampscott	206	292	41.7%	Wholesale and Retail Trade
TOTAL	3,969	4,538	14.3%	

Source: Mass. Division of Employment Security

As noted in Table 10, although employment in Lynn declined by 4% between 1974 and 1984, the city remains the center of regional employment. In 1984 Lynn had more than five times the employment found in Marblehead, Nahant, Revere, or Swampscott, and more than four times that found in Saugus. In Lynn and in Salem as well, there were more local jobs during 1980 than there were resident workers. In contrast, in Marblehead, Revere, and Swampscott, the local labor force exceeded the number of local jobs by a ratio of over two to one. In Nahant there were just less than four resident workers for every local job in the Town.

Table 10
EMPLOYMENT 1974-1984

	1974	1980	1984	1974-1984	Labor Force Jobs/Labor	
					1980	Force 1980
Lynn	36,852	37,070	35,507	-3.6%	34,459	107.6%
Marblehead	2,691	4,345	4,613	71.4%	10,051	43.2%
NAHANT	303	506	419	38.3%	1,934	26.2%
Revere	6,226	7,644	6,684	7.4%	19,318	39.6%
Salem	15,910	20,262	20,015	25.8%	18,630	108.8%
Saugus	6,246	8,121	8,704	39.4%	12,196	66.6%
Swampscott	1,791	2,777	2,882	60.9%	6,748	41.2%
TOTAL	70,019	80,725	78,824	12.6%	103,336	78.1%

Source: Mass. Division of Employment Security U.S. Census

In many communities, employment growth has often fostered population growth and increased pressures for residential development. This does not appear to have occurred in North Shore communities. During the period that regional employment increased by almost 12% (Table 10), regional population declined by almost 7% (Table 5). On the other hand, regionwide, the size of labor force has increased - primarily due to the increasing entrance of women into the work force. In Nahant alone, the labor force increased almost 75% between 1970 and 1980. It appears

then, that local workers rather than new residents from outside region have filled new employment added since 1970.

However, future economic development may well affect the climate for residential development (as it has in other metropolitan communities in recent years) as the Eastern Massachusetts economy continues to grow. As shown in Table 11, about one third of Nahant's labor force works in Boston. Almost 20% of Nahant workers are employed in Lynnfield, Nahant, Saugus, or Swampscott. About one worker in four works in Lynn and that number may well increase in future years. A major redevelopment is now underway in the Lynn downtown and waterfront areas. The redevelopment program will provide downtown Lynn with thousands of square feet of new and rehabilitated commercial, residential, and industrial space, through a combination of public and private initiatives. The Lynn branch of the North Shore Community College has just been completed. Eight acres of the Lynn waterfront are now under development. Over half of this acreage will be part of the Lynn Heritage State Park. The Heritage Park, a multimillion dollar public/private development venture, will feature the Heritage State Park and Interpretive center, a 160 slip public marina, and a mixed use development to include over 100 luxury condominium units.

Table 11
PLACE OF WORK, NAHANT RESIDENTS

	Number	Percent
Boston	617	33.0%
Lynn	446	23.9%
Lynnfield, Nahant, Saugus, Swampscott	330	17.6%
Salém, Beverly, Danvers, Marblehead, Peabody	100	5.3%
Remainder Boston SMSA and elsewhere	377	20.2%
Total reporting	1,870	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census

Employment growth is expected to be strong across Eastern Massachusetts. However, given Nahant's residential character and the small percentage of developable land that remains, little new commercial development is expected in the Town. Instead, it appears likely that increased economic development in the metropolitan region will increase pressures for residential development in Nahant. To some degree, development pressure may be "relieved" by new residential construction in Lynn and Revere. A number of redevelopment projects in Lynn are strictly residential; several others have a residential component. Developments proposed for seven sites along Revere Beach will add about 1,400 new units to the region's housing supply. Nonetheless, given the forecast for economic growth in the metropolitan region, together with declining household size, housing in Nahant will be in increasingly short supply in future years.

II. LAND USE

The existing pattern of land use in Nahant is largely the result of the Town's peninsular location in Massachusetts Bay. Occupying an area of only 1.2 square miles, the Town is surrounded on all sides by ocean waters, connected to the mainland only by a narrow causeway 1 1/2 miles in length. Bounded by Nahant Bay to the north and east, and by Broad Sound to the south and east, the Town's jagged coastline gives rise to many small coves, harbors, and unusual land projections.

Access constraints, small geographic size, and lack of a developable deep water harbors have limited the development of large commercial and industrial enterprises. The Town has historically been a residential community with the majority of residents commuting elsewhere to find employment. Given that Nahant is already primarily residential in nature, and that few large parcels remain available for development, it is unlikely that sufficient new commercial and industrial development will occur in future years to change the Town's current mix of land uses.

A. Residential Development

By far the largest share of developed land in the Town is devoted to residential uses. Currently over 97% of the Town's total real property valuation is comprised of residential properties. The Town's current Zoning Bylaw provides for two residential districts. Approximately 1/4 of the Town is in the R-1 District. Minimum lot size required for development is 30,000 sq.ft. About 3/4 of all residentially zoned land lies within the R-2 District. Minimum lot size here is 10,000 sq.ft.

The Town is thought to be divided into three neighborhoods. Little Nahant is a densely developed residential area located on a small hilly peninsula off the Lynn-Nahant causeway. Two neighborhoods comprise Nahant proper. The area west of the lowlands adjacent to Bear Pond, to the Town's western shore, is an area of swampy lowlands, steep hills, and complex street patterns. The area contains a mix of old and new housing including the recent Bass Point apartment development. A third neighborhood has developed on the plateau running along both sides of Nahant Road. Lot size and residential units in this area are generally larger than in other areas of Town. Much of this area lies within the R-1 District.

Although the majority of dwellings in the Town are single-family residences, there has been a considerable amount of multifamily development over the years. According to the 1980 census, approximately 25% of all residential dwellings are multifamily units.

Prior to 1977, Nahant had two major multifamily developments. Town Meeting approved the largest of these, the Bass Point Apartments, through a zoning change in 1969. The original proposal for the seven acre site included a marina, motel, and service and retail uses. The commercial portions of the development were never built, and currently,

128 one-bedroom units, "Bass Point Apartments", occupy the site. It appears that any future development in the area will be limited to residential uses, as a zoning change subsequent to construction of the apartments changed the zoning from B-2, Limited Business, to R-2 Residential.

In July 1970, Town Meeting approved a zoning article which allowed a "non-conforming hotel or inn" to be "converted to apartment use", upon special permit by the Board of Appeals. This article permitted a complex of buildings, formerly the Edgehill Inn, to be converted for use as 30 one-bedroom apartments. A little less than 8 years later in April 1978, Town Meeting removed this provision from the Zoning Bylaw.

Since 1977, several additional multifamily developments have been built in the Nahant. In 1983, Article VII, Section 4.2 of the Zoning Bylaw was amended to allow Special Permit approval "for use of a legal, nonconforming lodging house as a multifamily dwelling." In the same way that the 1970 amendment permitted conversion of the Edgehill Inn, this article allowed the former Scanlan Rooming House to be converted into 11 one-bedroom residential units. Unlike the earlier article, however, this provision remains in the text of the Zoning Bylaw.

Nahant realized 29 new units of multifamily housing in 1983 when the Wilson School was converted to elderly housing under the State's Ch.667 program. In addition, five family units were built adjacent to the school with the assistance the State's Ch.705 program. The Nahant Housing Authority, which administers these state programs, also manages 14 multifamily units at Spring and Emerald Roads. Built as Veterans' Housing about 1945, these seven duplex units are now financed through the State's Ch. 200 program.

Eleven more multifamily units are expected to be constructed in the Town within the year. A Special Town Meeting in October 1985 approved an article which would allow the conversion of a "non-conforming structure formerly used as a Nursing Home" to be converted to apartment use. This article will permit the proposed conversion of the former Rockledge Nursing Home into 11 one-bedroom residential units.

In total then, 228 multifamily units have been authorized in Nahant. 48 of these units - 21% - are managed by the Nahant Housing Authority. 89% of all multifamily dwellings then, have been built under zoning changes approved at Town Meeting. In addition to these authorized units, a large number of accessory or "in-law" apartments have been developed in single-family dwellings. Decreasing household size, increases in energy and maintenance costs, and increasing property valuations have caused owners of many of Nahant's large older homes to convert single-family dwellings to two- and three-family units. Although an official count has never been taken, it is thought that conversions have been widespread. Since dwelling unit conversions are not permitted under the current Bylaw, there have been on-going concerns in the Town over violation of health and safety codes, parking, noise, overall density, and property valuations. Although past efforts to enforce the current building code or change existing use regulations to permit dwelling unit conversions have been met with little success, the Planning Board is currently proposing an amendment which would allow such conver-

sions under fairly stringent provisions. It remains unclear whether such a proposal could gain the approval of Town Meeting. Until some form of action is taken on this matter however, whether it be enforcement of the existing regulations, or an amendment authorizing conversions under limited conditions, existing dwellings will continue to be converted and the issue will remain an important concern of many local residents.

B. Commercial and Industrial Development

Commercial and industrial development in the Town has been constrained by the Town's geographic location, lack of deep harbors, and extensive residential development. Currently (1984), about 3% of the Town's total property valuation is comprised of commercial properties. Industrial properties contribute less than .01% to the Town's total valuation. Most of the commercial uses which have located in Town are retail or service in nature. The Zoning Bylaw currently provides for two business districts, the B-1 Business District and MB-1 Marine Business District.

The largest concentration of commercial development is found at the intersection of Nahant and Spring Roads. Fire recently forced the closing of a restaurant near this intersection. Redevelopment of that property could have considerable impacts on the character of this commercial area. The original plan for the site proposed multifamily development, but was defeated at the April 1985 Town Meeting. Although future plans for that site are uncertain, it would appear that redevelopment in some form will occur in the near future.

Commercial uses have also been established in the B-1 Districts in Little Nahant, just off the Lynn-Nahant causeway. This area has historically been the site of restaurant and retail uses. Now however, service enterprises will supplement existing uses, as construction of a full-service bank at the intersection of Nahant and Wilson Roads approaches completion.

The MB-1 district was created to encourage and control development of marine-related uses. Although the Town has a small lobster fishing fleet and a number of part-time fishermen, the MB-1 District has remained largely undeveloped. Located at the western edge of the Town in the "Old Boatyard", the district contained what, until recently, was one of the largest undeveloped parcels remaining in the Town. It now appears unlikely that there will ever be significant commercial marine development in this area as a single-family residential subdivision proposed for the site has recently received Planning Board approval.

C. Institutional and Open Space Uses

According to the 1977 Master Plan, approximately 1/3 of the Town is in public ownership. A recent Planning Board update of 1977 land use inventory concluded that that percentage has not changed significantly in recent years. As noted in Table 12, The Town of Nahant is owner of over half of all publicly owned land. Its major property holdings include the Police and Fire Stations, the Johnson School Complex, Housing Authority property, and a number of recreational areas. Short

Beach, at 66 acres, is the Town's largest waterfront holding. The Lowland Playground has been constructed on approximately eight acres at the site of the former Town Dump. A major Town-owned recreational complex has been developed adjacent to the Johnson School complex off Flash Road. This area now includes two baseball fields, a basketball court, tennis courts and a tot lot. The Town's Tudor Wharf, located adjacent to Marjoram Park off Willow Road, is currently the most widely utilized public recreational facility in the Town. Rebuilt in 1978, the Wharf provides boat launching, parking facilities, and ocean access for local residents.

Table 12
INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE 1985

Institution	Acres Owned	% Total Institutional	% Total Town
Town of Nahant	134	55.1%	18.2%
MDC	74	30.5%	10.0%
Northeastern University	20	8.2%	2.7%
U.S. Government	5	2.1%	0.7%
Mass. Audubon Society	4	1.6%	0.5%
Other private institution	6	2.5%	0.8%
Total	243	100.0%	33.0%

Source: Nahant Master Plan 1977, updated

The Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) owns about 74 acres within the Town. The MDC's Beach Reservation on the Lynn-Nahant causeway includes over a mile of Nahant Beach. The Reservation provides active and passive recreational opportunities for thousands of area residents throughout the year.

The Federal government, at one time owning over 13 acres in the Town, has reduced its property holdings to about five acres. The government has however, retained ownership of 12 residential properties off Castle, Gardner, and Goddard Roads. Similarly, although no longer serving as a life-saving facility, the Coast Guard Station on the causeway between Little Nahant and Nahant proper, has remained in Federal ownership serving as a recreational facility for area military personnel.

In addition to Town recreational properties, there are several other properties committed to open space use. The Audubon Society maintains a 4 acre wildlife sanctuary between Willow Road, Furbush Road and Wharf Street. Another major open space property is the 10.5 acre nine-hole golf course located between Willow and Flash Roads in the western portion of the Town. Although the parcel is privately owned, as a result of property transactions with the Town of Nahant, a restriction has been placed on deed, assuring the future open space use of the property.

The Town-owned Greenlawn Cemetery provides local residents with over five acres of reserved open space land. The Town Cemetery Commis-

sion is currently looking at alternatives for cemetery expansion. An area of lowlands at East Point, currently owned by Northeastern University, is being considered for acquisition. In addition to use as a cemetery it is anticipated the site could also be used for recreational purposes that might include a picnic area and jogging trails.

D. Developable Land

Few vacant parcels capable of accommodating new development remain in Nahant. Two of the major developable parcels, land within the MB-1 District, and the restaurant site at Nahant and Spring Roads, have recently been the subject of development proposals. The first of these, the "Nector Place" subdivision off Willow Road, has been approved for residential development.

Still, a number of parcels exist where new development remains a possibility. A wetland area northeast of the golf course off Pond Street appears to hold some development potential. The area is now divided into about 10 parcels which could be combined into five or six buildable lots. There also appears to be the potential for subdividing several of the large estate lots in the Town. Similarly, although there have been no proposals for such development, it would appear land on Nahant Road, owned by the Nahant Country Club, could be divided to accommodate residential development.

In light of the fact that little acreage remains to accommodate new development, it would appear that the pressures to use existing land and properties more intensively will increase. Proposals for multifamily development will continue, as will the conversion of existing single-family dwellings into multifamily units. Proposals for commercial uses may increase, and such proposals may call for larger and more intensive development. Given this development climate, it is important for the Town to have in place a comprehensive workable set of development regulations.

III. TOWN SERVICES

A. Schools

Nahant's public school system has undergone substantial change since publication of the 1977 Master Plan. Continuing the trend of declining school enrollments established in the early 1970's, enrollment since 1977 has declined nearly 20% (Table 13). Two of the Town's four public schools have been closed. The Wilson School, formerly housing grades 1 and 2, was converted in 1983 to 29 units of elderly housing. The Valley Road School, closed in 1983, was formerly used for Grades 3 and 4. A proposal for reuse of the school as condominium units was defeated at Town Meeting. The warrant for the 1986 Town Meeting contains an article proposing that conversion to apartments be permitted, however, to date, no definite reuse proposals have been presented. In 1983, Nahant Junior High School and the Johnson School were combined to form a central school complex for Nahant grades kindergarden through six. Children grades seven through 12 now attend schools in neighboring Swampscott.

Table 13
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT 1977-1985

Year	Public School Enrollment
1977	551
1978	480
1979	427
1980	400
1981	373
1982	378
1983	405
1984	441
1985	443
Change 77-85	-19.6%

Source: Nahant School Dept.

School enrollment changes can be thought of as resulting from two components: the average number of pupils per dwelling unit and the total number of dwelling units. Changes in the public/private school enrollment ratio will also affect total public school enrollment although it is unlikely that in Nahant this ratio will change greatly over the next decade. In 1960, about 16% of all Nahant children attended private/parochial schools. By 1974 only 8% of all children attended private schools and it seems reasonable to assume that that percentage will remain fairly constant in future years.

Pupils per dwelling unit closely correlates nationally with fertility rates (births per woman), lagging fertility trends by a few years. Fertility rates have changed little in recent years and are projected not to change much, so in contrast with the early '70s, there

is now no reason to expect much change in pupils per dwelling unit as a result of national demographic change. As shown in Table 14, Nahant has fewer pupils per dwelling unit than do most other communities in the region.

Table 14
PUPILS/DWELLING UNIT 1983

	Dwelling Units	Pupils (1)	Pupils/Unit
Lynn	33,153	14,136	0.43
Marblehead	8,405	3,334	0.40
NAHANT	1,556	594	0.38
Revere	17,383	6,128	0.35
Salem	16,129	5,485	0.34
Saugus	8,637	4,739	0.55
Swampscott	5,291	2,263	0.43
Total	90,554	36,679	
Regional Average			0.41

(1) School-age children in public and private schools

Source: Mass. Dept. of Education

Pupils per dwelling unit can be influenced by change in the mix of types of dwelling unit. With great consistency, new single-family units have more children in them than do older ones, and two-family and multi-family units have far fewer pupils per unit than do single-family units. Based on 1984 data, we would expect these numbers of public school pupils per unit in Nahant.

Existing single-family housing unit	0.33 pupils/unit
New single-family unit	0.40 pupils/unit
Two-family or townhouse unit	0.17 pupils/unit
Other walk-up multifamily	0.05 pupils/unit
Average, all existing units	0.28 pupils/unit

Given the already low ratio of pupils per dwelling unit, together with the historic rate of residential development in the Town (Table 4), it is unlikely that there will be large changes in public school enrollment in the future. Table 15 presents school projections for Nahant through the year 2000. Several scenarios have been developed to examine what effect changing development conditions could have on school enrollment. The Appendix details the methodology used to develop enrollment projections.

Table 15
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS

Building Scenario	Y e a r			Change 85-2000
	1985	1990	2000	
1. Status Quo (a)	443	427	439	-0.8%
2. Increased Development (b)	443	435	459	3.5%
3. Multifamily permitted (c)	443	426	435	-1.7%
4. Conversions permitted (d)	443	430	448	1.0%
5. Multifamily and conversions permitted (e)	443	429	443	0.0%

(a) 3 SF units/yr

(b) 6 SF units/yr

(c) 2 SF units + 3 MF units/yr

(d) 3 SF units + 2 conversions/yr

(e) 2 SF units + 3 MF units + 2 conversions/yr

Source: Herr Assoc. calculations

As shown in Table 15, at the rate of residential development noted over the last decade (Scenario 1), school enrollment will decline 1% by 2000. Even if the rate of single-family construction doubles (Scenario 2), only 16 additional students would be expected in public schools by 2000. If pressures for residential development increase in future years as anticipated, in light of the small percentage of developable land remaining in Nahant, the Town may wish to accommodate new growth by changing development controls to allow multifamily building and/or the conversion of existing single-family units. Development Scenario 3 forecasts school enrollment based on multifamily development being permitted in the Town. As shown in Table 15, if multifamily development is allowed, school enrollment will be slightly less than if new residential development is limited to single-family units. Assuming multifamily development, public school enrollment in 2000 will be 435 students, a 2% decrease from 1985 enrollments.

Scenario 4 predicts school enrollment should conversion of single-family units be permitted. Under this scenario, school enrollment will increase by about 1% by 2000. If both multifamily development and conversions are allowed (Scenario 5), public school enrollment in 2000 will be no different than enrollment in 1985.

It appears then, that in contrast to the period 1977 to 1984, there is likely to be little need for major changes in the structure of Nahant's school system through the year 2000. Substantial changes in school enrollment are unlikely to occur in the coming decades. Even if school enrollment increases to the extent projected under Scenario 2, no new school construction would be necessary. The Town's current centralized school complex has ample room to accommodate new students - even under the highest rates of growth anticipated in Nahant through the year 2000.

B. Water and Sewer Systems

Considerable improvements have been made in Nahant's sewage disposal system since 1977. Less than a decade ago the Town was discharging untreated sewage into coastal waters at Broad Sound through an outfall sewer off Trimountain Road and at six other public sewer outlets. Local concern over the quality of the Town's most valuable resource, together with a directive from the Environmental Protection Agency to eliminate untreated discharges, prompted the Town in 1984 to tie into the Lynn sewage treatment facility. Nahant's sewage is now being pumped to this regional plant where it receives primary treatment. The facility is operated by the Lynn Sewer and Water Commission and receives wastes from both Saugus and Nahant as well as from Lynn. A sewer outfall discharges treated waste into Lynn Harbor. Original plans called for extension of the outfall into deeper waters in Massachusetts Bay. This option is currently being reconsidered and a proposal to upgrade the current facility to provide secondary treatment is now under review.

Public sewerage is available everywhere in the Town although approximately 5 to 10% of the Town continues to use on-site systems for sewage disposal. Failure of aging cesspool-type systems has recently been causing many of those remaining on private systems to request public tie-ins. There is currently a waiting list for sewer connection and it is expected that virtually all residential units will be serviced by the public system by the end of this decade.

The Town's existing sewage collection system was evaluated in a 1984 study by Camp, Dresser, and McKee. Study results report the system to be in fairly good condition. It appears then, given the capacity remaining at the Lynn treatment plant, that any new development within the Town can readily be accommodated by the existing public sewage system.

All Nahant properties are serviced with public water. The Town joined the Metropolitan Water District (now the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority) in 1900 making considerable extensions to the system between the period of 1900 to 1940. Based on a study by the firm of Whitman and Howard, in the late 1940's the Town made a series of system improvements including cleaning and main and hydrant replacements. The local system was again extended, with additional improvements being made as a result of a 1969 study by Camp, Dresser and McKee.

Two transmission mains (14-inch and 10-inch unlined cast iron) cross the Lynn-Nahant causeway to supply the Town with water. The Town's distribution system is comprised of eight major piping loops. The majority of pipes are between six and ten inches. Some lots are still serviced by small mains (four and six inches). Dead-end mains found in some sections of the system have prompted taste and pressure complaints from a number of system users.

The Town's water consumption has remained fairly constant over the past decade. Per capita consumption has in fact actually declined since the early 1970's when per capita usage ranged between 137-140 gallons per person per day. By 1982 consumption had decreased 30% to 99 gallons

per person per day. In 1982 domestic uses consumed on the average, 323,000 gallons per day (gpd) accounting for over 50% of average daily demand. Non-domestic uses utilized 16,000 gpd, while approximately 53,000 gpd (14% of average daily usage) remained unaccounted for.* No major changes in consumption rates are expected over the next 20 years.

A study of the town's water system was completed in 1985 by Camp, Dresser, and McKee as an update of the 1969 report. The study examined local fire flow requirements, available fire flows, the reduction in carrying capacity in older mains, and the need for distribution storage in the existing system. The report presents a set of prioritized recommendations for system improvements. Cost estimates have been developed for each improvement. Recommendations were prioritized based on: meeting required fire flows in light of projected future maximum day consumption; replacing all water mains six inches or less; and addressing additional needed improvements including distribution storage, and valve, hydrant, and meter replacement.

The Town has recently received two state grants to assist with water system improvements. Funds will be used for system rehabilitation in Little Nahant and for hydrant and valve replacement throughout the Town.

In general, Nahant's water distribution system is in good condition. Scheduled improvements will improve domestic service and available fire flows. It appears then, that neither regional water supply and nor the local distribution system will present serious constraints to development in Nahant over the next 20 years.

C. Fiscal Analyses

Two major state legislative actions have occasioned major changes in the local fiscal pattern since 1977. Legislative approval of G.L. Ch.797 in 1979, and voter approval of Proposition 2 1/2 in November 1980 required Nahant and many communities in the Commonwealth to make significant changes in local assessment practices and calculation of the local tax levy. As of Fiscal Year (FY) 1981, local governments have been required to assess property on its full market value; the median ratio of all assessments must now fall within 10% of full value. Beginning with FY82, the local tax levy was limited to 2 1/2% of the fair value of all local personal and real property. Further, the tax rate could not increase more than 2 1/2% over the previous year's levy limit unless approved by a 2/3 majority of the local appropriating authority.

As a result, tax rates in most communities have declined considerably in recent years. As shown in Table 16, for the region as a whole, the effective tax rate decreased 56% between 1977 and 1984. In comparison to other communities in the region, the tax rate in Nahant changed only modestly, declining 37% between 1977 and 1984. Currently the Town's property tax rate (FY84) is \$19.62 per thousand, slightly below the regional average of \$21.08 per thousand.

* Camp Dresser & McKee "Nahant, Massachusetts; Report on Improvements to the Water Distribution System", Nov. 1985.

Table 16
FULL VALUE TAX RATE

(dollars per thousand)

	1977	1981	1984	Change 1977-1984
Lynn	78.96	71.76	25.00	-68.3%
Marblehead	28.56	24.39	18.80	-34.2%
NAHANT	31.08	24.00	19.62	-36.9%
Revere	58.40	59.03	21.27	-63.6%
Salem	55.00	41.44	21.03	-61.8%
Saugus	37.40	34.57	19.71	-47.3%
Swampscott	44.22	34.60	22.15	-49.9%
Regional Average	47.66	41.40	21.08	-55.8%

Source: Mass. Taxpayers Foundation

Table 17 compares the fiscal structure of regional communities. Local expenditures range from \$1,193 per person in Marblehead to \$841 in Revere. Nahant spends about 12% less per resident than the average regionwide. In contrast, per capita assessed valuation in the Town- \$33,232 - is well above the regional average of \$25,175. Per capita valuation in Nahant is among the highest in the region, exceeded only in Swampscott where per capita valuation in 1984 was \$34,694. The 1984 tax levy per capita in Nahant was \$652, just over the regional average of \$612. The local tax levy (the sum of all appropriations and charges to be met in the fiscal year, minus total revenue from all sources) divided by the community assessed valuation determines the local tax rate. In Nahant and in Saugus as well, it appears that a relatively moderate tax levy in light of relatively high property valuations have resulted in lower local tax rates than in other communities in the region.

Table 17
1984 FISCAL COMPARISONS

(dollars)

	Per Capita Expenditures	Assessed Valuation Per Capita	Levy Per Capita	Tax rate (per thousand)
Lynn	912	17,783	445	25.00
Marblehead (a)	1,193	11,236	787	18.80
NAHANT	862	33,232	652	19.62
Revere	841	21,093	449	21.27
Salem	1,131	27,725	583	21.03
Saugus	867	30,461	600	19.71
Swampscott	1,017	34,694	768	22.15
Regional Average	975	25,175	612	21.08

(a) assessments not at full valuation

Source: Mass. Taxpayers Foundation

Final3/Nahant3

IV. DEVELOPMENT POLICY

A. Background

The concerns and ideas expressed in the planning workshops held over the past year clearly spell out the direction planning in Nahant should take. In the time since then, those ideas have been shaped into a development policy. All of the items in this policy are based on a few central ideas.

First, people generally like Nahant as it is and want to give up as little of what exists as is possible. Protection rather than change is the center of what needs to be done in Nahant. People like Nahant's small size and residential nature. They like the fact that geography has limited population growth. They like living on or near the ocean, and like the way in which geography and the ocean combine to give the Town a unique sense of place.

However, there are some things about Nahant which aren't widely liked. One is the lack of enforcement of zoning controls. Although dwelling unit conversions are not permitted under the current bylaw, conversions have been widespread and have raised concerns over traffic, parking, and neighborhood character. Another concern is the shortage of affordable housing. Young people growing up in Nahant and older residents wishing to relocate are finding it increasingly difficult to obtain affordable housing within the Town.

The development policy seeks to provide the direction for future changes in regulatory controls. Further, it has been designed as a guide for those proposing new development, and to those evaluating development proposals. The Town will be well served by development and development controls based on a comprehensive local development policy.

B. Development Policy; Nahant Massachusetts

Future development in Nahant should benefit the Town and its citizens alike, as well as benefitting those doing the development. New development should preserve or enhance those things which form the unique character of the Town.

Little land is left in the Town to support new development. There are, and will be, few opportunities for additional residential or commercial growth. Those few opportunities should be used at least in part to increase the housing opportunities available to local residents, rather than only responding to the market for costly seaside housing. Special efforts should be taken to meet the housing needs of the Town's young people and elder population.

There are even fewer locations in Nahant which are suitable for business development rather than for residential development. Again, that suggests being selective to make certain that the Town is well served by any such development. New commercial development is welcome, but not at the expense of the quality of residential life. New commercial development should contribute to the diversity of services availab-

le to Town residents. New commercial uses should be located where they can benefit, not damage, existing uses nearby. Adjacent properties should be screened from parking and service areas, and the visibility of such areas from public streets should be minimized. In design, new development, commercial or otherwise, should reflect Nahant's predominant domestic scale, and avoid large or monumental designs.

The local "quality of life" appears to be rated quite highly by Nahant residents. New development should preserve and strengthen those qualities that make Nahant an attractive place to live. New development should maintain traditional public access to or along the shoreline. Development which increases and encourages coastal access will best serve local objectives. Scenic views from public ways and existing developments should be treated considerately in the location and design of new development. The environmental impacts of new development should be positive, not negative. Wetlands, open areas important for wildlife habitat, valuable trees, unusual geologic features, and other natural assets should be preserved.

In a community the size and shape of Nahant, the impacts of development on traffic, safety, and public services should be considered. The Town is small in area and densely populated. Access to the community is limited to a causeway crossing a mile and a half of ocean water. Local roads are narrow, many of them hilly and twisting. Thus, new development should not substantially increase existing traffic. New development should provide for safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular movement to, from, and within the site, and should not disturb existing uses. Moreover, new development should not create special problems for public services such as schools, police and fire protection, and water and sewer systems.

New development in which these concerns have been considered and appropriately addressed will be those developments which will best serve the Town and its residents.

V. IMPLEMENTATION

A. Current Zoning Proposals

The Planning Board has developed two articles proposing changes to the Town's Zoning Bylaw. The first of these creates a new system for controlling major developments. The second provides a mechanism for controlling the creation of new dwelling units in existing homes.

Currently, almost every major building proposal in Nahant winds up being debated on the floor of Town Meeting as each proposal attempts to reshape the zoning text and zoning map to suit its particular needs. Unfortunately, under the current system, once zoning changes are approved, there is no assurance that the projects proposed are what will be built. The Concept Plan article seeks to change this process by requiring Town Meeting approval of Concept Plans for all major developments. When the Town approves a specific Concept Plan for a specific project, that plan and no other will be the outcome of development. If the proposal is not built within a year after approval, nothing has been changed by that approval: there is no "leftover" district which can be used for something different. The system is designed for all kinds of Major Proposals. Two are presently included, multifamily housing construction and large non-residential development.

The Dwelling Conversion article regulates conversion of existing dwelling units. Although conversions are not allowed under the current bylaw, they have been widespread in the past. This article would allow conversion by Special Permit if a set of strict development standards have been met. Conversions would only be allowed on lots which are two or three times the required minimum lot size. All units must meet appropriate code specifications. Adequate parking must be provided.

There appears to be some concern that, should multifamily development be allowed and/or dwelling unit conversions permitted, the Town risks overcrowding, traffic congestion, increased demand on schools and public services, and as a result, negative fiscal impacts. The following analysis compares the potential impacts of development under four different development scenarios. Scenarios "Current" and "Increased" assume that local regulatory controls remain unchanged and that all new construction will be for single-family units. Scenario Current assumes that residential construction will proceed at the rate averaged over the past decade (Table 4) - three units per year. Scenario Increased assumes that that rate will double, to six units per year. Scenario MF shows the impacts of multifamily building at the rate of three units per year. Scenario Conversion presents the impacts of dwelling unit conversion at the rate of three conversions per year.

Impacts were developed using a computer-based community profile system designed to estimate selected impacts of development alternatives. Current employment, housing, population, and fiscal data for Nahant was entered in the system. Table 18 presents the impacts of development under the four scenarios in the year 1996.

Table 18
DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS

Impacts 1996	Base Year (1984)	Scenario			
		Current	Increased	MF	Conversion
Total Dwelling Units	1,567	1,595	1,625	1,594	1,594
Population	4,070	4,171	4,272	4,124	4,140
School Enrollment	441	453	465	445	445
Employment	419	430	440	425	426

Source: Herr Assoc. calculations

The impacts presented in Table 18 assume that all Scenarios are independent. In other words, Scenario Current assumes no multifamily building while Scenario MF assumes no new single-family construction. If the Town's development controls are changed to permit multifamily construction and/or dwelling unit conversions, it is likely that a variety of dwelling unit types will be built each year. Because of the difficulty of forecasting just what that mix would be, however, it appears reasonable instead to forecast impacts independently.

As noted in Table 18, population growth is greatest when development is limited to single-family construction. As a rule, single-family units house more persons than do two-family or multifamily units. Further, new single-family units will generally have more persons per unit than existing single-family homes. As shown in Table 19, in 1984, single-family dwelling units in Nahant held 2.74 persons per unit. Assuming that the population per dwelling unit will decline at half the rate noted between 1970 and 1980, by 1996 we expect 2.56 persons per existing single-family unit in Nahant. If residential development continues at the current rate of three single-family units per year (Scenario Current), by 1996 Nahant's population would reach 4,171 persons, a 2.5% increase from the 1984 population. Should the rate of residential development double (Scenario Increased), the Town would hold just over 4,270 persons in 1996. In contrast, if all new residential development was for multifamily units, the Town's population is projected to increase by only 54 persons to reach 4,124 by 1996. Residential development through dwelling unit conversion (Scenario Conversion) would result in a 1996 population of 4,140 persons - greater than under multifamily development, but less than that under single-family development.

Similarly, school enrollments under Scenarios Current and Increased would be greater than should new units be multifamily units or dwelling conversions (Scenarios MF and Conversion). As before mentioned, multifamily units usually generate fewer pupils than do single-family units, while new single-family dwellings are expected to have more pupils than existing single-family homes.

Table 19
 PERSONS PER DWELLING UNIT

Type Housing Units	1984	1996
Average, all existing units	2.61	2.43
Existing single family	2.74	2.56
New single family	3.57	3.33
Two family or townhouse	2.47	2.30
Other multifamily	1.92	1.79

Source: Herr Assoc. calculations

Since fewer persons will occupy two-family and multifamily dwellings, fewer local jobs will be generated by these types of developments. Although local employment is not projected to grow significantly under any scenario, job growth is greatest when new development is limited to single-family construction.

Although not shown in Table 18, the traffic impacts of new residential development will be greatest when new construction is limited to single-family dwellings. On the average, a single-family detached house will generate 10 vehicle trips per day. In contrast, an apartment unit is expected to generate 6.1 trips per day. A condominium will generate just 5.2 trips per day - half the number of trips expected from a single-family dwelling.

The fiscal impacts of the various development scenarios is shown in Table 20. As noted, although total local revenue generated from single-family development is somewhat greater than from multifamily development or dwelling unit conversions (compare Scenario Current with Scenarios MF and Conversion), the total local costs of single-family development are greater than the costs of multifamily development or development through conversions. As a result, with a rate of residential construction of only three units per year, from the fiscal standpoint, the Town is better off when new development is multifamily units or conversion of existing units. Only if the rate of single-family construction increases to twice its current level would single-family development create a more favorable fiscal picture than under multifamily development or dwelling unit conversion.

Development decisions should not, of course, be based solely on fiscal considerations. The social and environmental impacts of various development alternatives should be considered. Increasing the equity and efficiency of local development controls might also be of concern.

Table 20
1996 FISCAL IMPACTS

Scenario	Current	Increased	MF	Conversion
Site related revenue	\$65,900	131,799	60,755	60,167
Off-site revenue	3,485	6,966	1,874	2,408
Total revenue	69,385	138,765	62,629	62,574
Site related costs	53,040	106,080	39,090	39,090
Off-site costs	2,000	3,996	1,076	1,382
Capital costs	0	0	0	0
State aid costs	1,098	2,144	5,471	3,573
Total costs	56,139	112,221	45,637	44,045
Net balance	13,246	26,545	16,992	18,529
Tax rate difference (\$/\$1000) ...	-0.10	-0.19	-0.13	-0.14

It appears timely for the Town to review current development controls, evaluate their effectiveness and make necessary changes. The Town should have in place a comprehensive set of development guidelines. In this way, new growth in Nahant can be "caring growth", growth that is sensitive to the environment and the character of the Town; growth designed to serve the social and economic needs of the Town and its residents, both now and in the years to come.

B. Action on Dwelling Unit Conversions

Dwelling unit conversions have been a source of concern for many years in Nahant. The Zoning Bylaw has never permitted conversions, yet many units have been converted over the years. Given the number of large older homes in Nahant, declining household size, increasing housing costs, and (until recently) rising energy costs, conversions are likely to continue.

Nahant is not the only community to be concerned over accessory apartments. In Newton, it is estimated that about 15% of the City's housing stock contains one or more accessory units. In the greater Boston area as a whole, planning officials note that there may now be over 30,000 illegal units.* In Nahant, as in most communities, for the most part, zoning code violations have been pursued only upon neighborhood complaint. But with the number of illegal units growing, concerns over public safety and changing neighborhood character rise. In Newton, the city has effectively been forced into enforcement actions. Confronted with a listing of over 100 buildings containing illegal apartments from an irate citizen charged with code violations, the city took court action on at least 8 property owners between January 1, 1986 and February 1, 1986. Faced with the possibility of having to file criminal charges against people who may own as much as 20% of the city's units, the city is increasing efforts to develop a solution to the conversion problem.

* "Housing Pinch Brings Rise in Illegal Apartments", The Boston Globe, November 14, 1985.

Before the problem spearheads in Nahant, which well it may given recent events in other communities, the Town should address the issue of dwelling unit conversions. Whether it is by adoption of the proposed dwelling conversion article, by grandfathering existing converted units, or aggressive enforcement of the existing Zoning Bylaw, something should be done. The problem has effects beyond the conversion issue itself. As was evident in the planning workshops held last year, many residents are hesitant to support proposed regulatory changes when current regulations go unenforced.

It is now time for the Town to take a proactive rather than a reactive stand. Current and future residents alike will benefit from local action addressing the issue of dwelling unit conversions.

C. Future Regulatory Changes

Two zoning proposals have been developed proposing major changes to the Town's current development process. The Town may, in the future, wish to propose additional regulatory changes which, although not as sweeping in their effects, would offer considerable benefits if adopted. Two proposals that could be considered are improvements to existing sign regulations and development of design guidelines for use in the Business Districts.

As confirmed in recent legal actions, communities have broad powers in the area of sign regulation. Yet Nahant's Zoning Bylaw controls for signs only minimally. Confusion even exists over the legality of off-premise signs. Moreover, there are currently no provisions addressing the aesthetic issues of sign control.

On a related note, a number of other communities have adopted regulations controlling building design aimed at preserving and enhancing the character of areas of special significance. Guidelines for landscaping, building materials, signage, architectural details, and building color are used by other towns, and could be developed for use within Nahant as well.

These changes, consistent with the Town's proposed policy on development, will help assure that new development - particularly new commercial uses - will serve to strengthen Town character and function.

APPENDIX

School Enrollment Projections

Future school enrollment will be determined by the total number of year-round dwelling units in the Town and the average number of pupils per dwelling unit. Total dwelling units at the projection data will be the number of existing units plus new residential construction.

The number of pupils per dwelling unit is not expected to change much from current estimates. Based on 1984 data, we would expect these numbers of public school pupils per unit in Nahant through 2000.

New single-family unit40 pupils/unit
Average, all existing units28 pupils/unit
Two-family or townhouse units17 pupils/unit
Other walkup multifamily units05 pupils/unit

Scenario 1: Status Quo. Assumes new residential development will continue at the current rate of 3 units/year based on building in Nahant between 1974 and 1985. All new units assumed to be single-family dwellings as per current zoning controls. Pupils per new unit = .40; Pupils per existing unit = .28. Enrollment in the year 2000 = pupils from 1,501 existing year-round dwelling units (420) + pupils from new units (7) = 427.

Scenario 2: Increased Development. Building rate is assumed to double to 6 new single-family units per year. Enrollment in 2000 = pupils from existing units (420) + pupils from new units (39) = 459.

Scenario 3: Multifamily Building Permitted. Assumes that development controls are changed to permit multifamily building. Three multifamily units are assumed to be built each year with the rate of new single-family development dropping to two units per year. Pupils per new multifamily unit = .05. Enrollment in 2000 = pupils from existing units (420) + pupils from new single-family units (13) + pupils from new multifamily units (2) = 435.

Scenario 4: Conversions Permitted. Assumes that development controls are changed to allow dwelling unit conversions. A conversion has been defined as one existing unit being converted to two units. Two conversions per year are assumed, with new single-family building continuing at the three units per year. Pupils per converted unit = 0.17. Enrollment in 2000 = pupils in existing units - units converted (418) + pupils in new single-family units (19) + pupils in converted units (11) = 448.

Scenario 5: Multifamily and Conversions Permitted. Assumes single-family development at the rate of three units per year, multifamily construction at the rate of three units per year and two conversions per year. Enrollment in 2000 = pupils in existing units - units converted (418) + pupils in new single-family units (13) + pupils in new multifamily units (2) + pupils in converted units (11) = 444.