

THE MASTER PLAN

Previous sections of this report have considered the various phases of community life in Sterling, its natural physical features, its present use of land, its population growth and need for space to live in. We have studied the existing community facilities and projected those that may be needed, and finally the town's economic base and means of circulation.

THE MASTER PLAN brings all of these elements into a unified guide for future development. Essentially its purpose is to establish a pattern of land use and future traffic arteries, and to determine what public facilities will be needed, and some estimate as to when and where they should be located. Sterling's Master Plan is based on a population forecast of 7 to 10,000 persons, and the plan is flexible enough to provide for double this amount.

FUTURE LAND USE consists of previous studies touched upon in this report, and a plan has been devised for utilizing the land in the town to its best advantage. In general, natural and cultural features determined the location of the four major functions of land use, residence, business, agriculture and industry. Industrial land has been chosen to meet requirements of industry, adequate land for modern buildings, off-street parking, storage and other amenities must be provided. Sites must be near good highways and rail facilities, the land must be level with a minimum of ledge and swamp. Sterling is attempting to attract industry, and in so doing must provide adequate water supply for manufacturing and fire protection.

The Master Plan shows two residential densities. One for 20,000 square foot lots and the other for one acre lots. The low density areas are in the more rural sections of town and include those areas without town water, areas with poor drainage characteristics, large farms and orchards. Most of the commercial area is located along the Route 12 approaches to Sterling center. Expansion plans for commercial use in this area will make it possible to develop a shopping center in town. It will be possible to provide off-street parking and adequate access from the proposed by-pass that will carry Route 12 southeast of the actual town center. These facilities are included in the town center plan.

Eventual construction by widening existing roads and connecting sections through now empty land will form a new circumferential highway in Sterling. Such an artery will connect the spokes of the plan, which are the collector streets radiating from the center of town. It should be pointed out that the plan is merely a guide for future development. The plan is flexible and changes can be adopted when new situations arise.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

SCHOOLS. The Master Plan makes provision for future expansion of the school system on the present site of the Houghton school. As Wachusett Regional High School becomes larger and requires a reduction in pupil load, so Sterling must be ready with a new school based on an elementary, junior-senior high school plan. In this way it will be possible to achieve a logical sub-region of school union No. 24, with Sterling and Princeton perhaps entering a joint Junior High school construction program.

RECREATION. Need of organized play space in all quadrants of Sterling is evident. At present there are no public recreation facilities with the exception of the picnic area and the Town Beach at Waushacum. Proposed plans incorporate a town athletic field at the Houghton school complex. Recommendations are made for playground space and equipment at Buttrick School, Spring Hill, Twin Oaks, Moore's Corner and expanded facilities at the Town Beach, which will include a playground for children of all ages.

ADMINISTRATIVE FACILITIES. It is obvious that a consolidation of town offices and administrative facilities is in order. These administrative units are scattered in several buildings in the town center. Remodelling of the first floor of the Town Hall will accommodate all of these facilities easily. One distinct advantage is the expansion of library facilities in a growing town. This would be made possible when other town offices are removed from the first floor of the library building.

UTILITIES. Industrial growth and residential expansion require extension of town water service for the health and safety of the town inhabitants. Planned expansion of the water system by construction of a standpipe in Fitch Hill and extension of water mains to more remote sections of town are recommended to go along with projected new development.

OPEN SPACE. Preservation of large acreages of open space is guaranteed by continual holdings of M.D.C. land in the Wachusett, reservoir water shed. In other sections of Sterling the conservation commission can set aside land for future use as forest, park, campground and scenic beauty spot. In the years ahead, much thought must be given to the preservation of Sterling's character as a rural New England town. The Master Plan can assist in continuing effort to make Sterling a wonderful place to, live.

MASTER PLAN

 INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

PRIMARY ROADS

LOCAL ARTERIAL STREETS

EXISTING LOCATIONS

PROPOSED LOCATIONS

COLLECTOR STREETS











EXISTING SCHOOL



PROPOSED SCHOOL



EXISTING PUBLIC BATHING BEACH



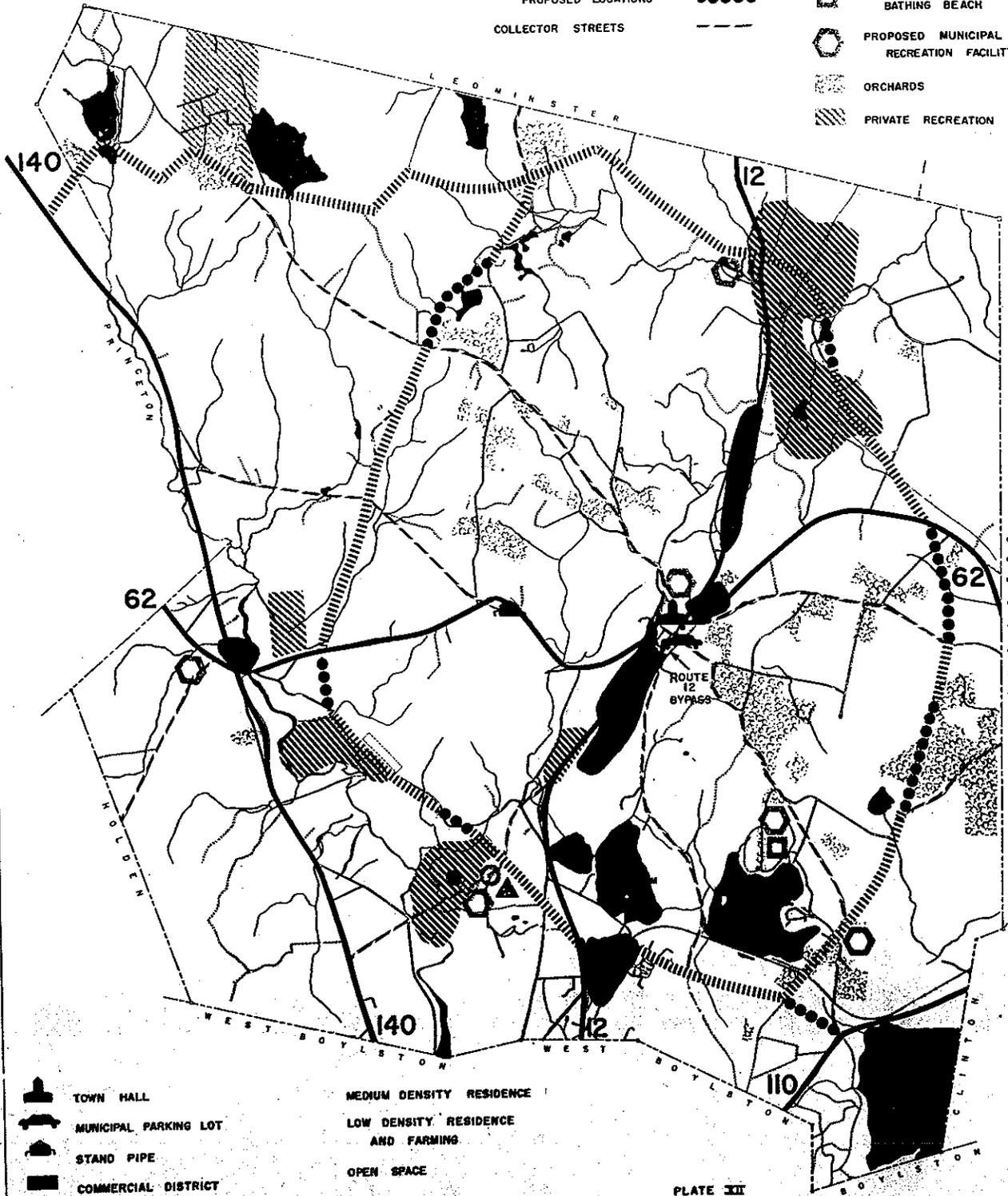
PROPOSED MUNICIPAL RECREATION FACILITY



ORCHARDS



PRIVATE RECREATION



 TOWN HALL
 MUNICIPAL PARKING LOT
 STAND PIPE
 COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENCE
 LOW DENSITY RESIDENCE AND FARMING
 OPEN SPACE

PLATE XII

MAP SCALE

STERLING PLANNING BOARD

