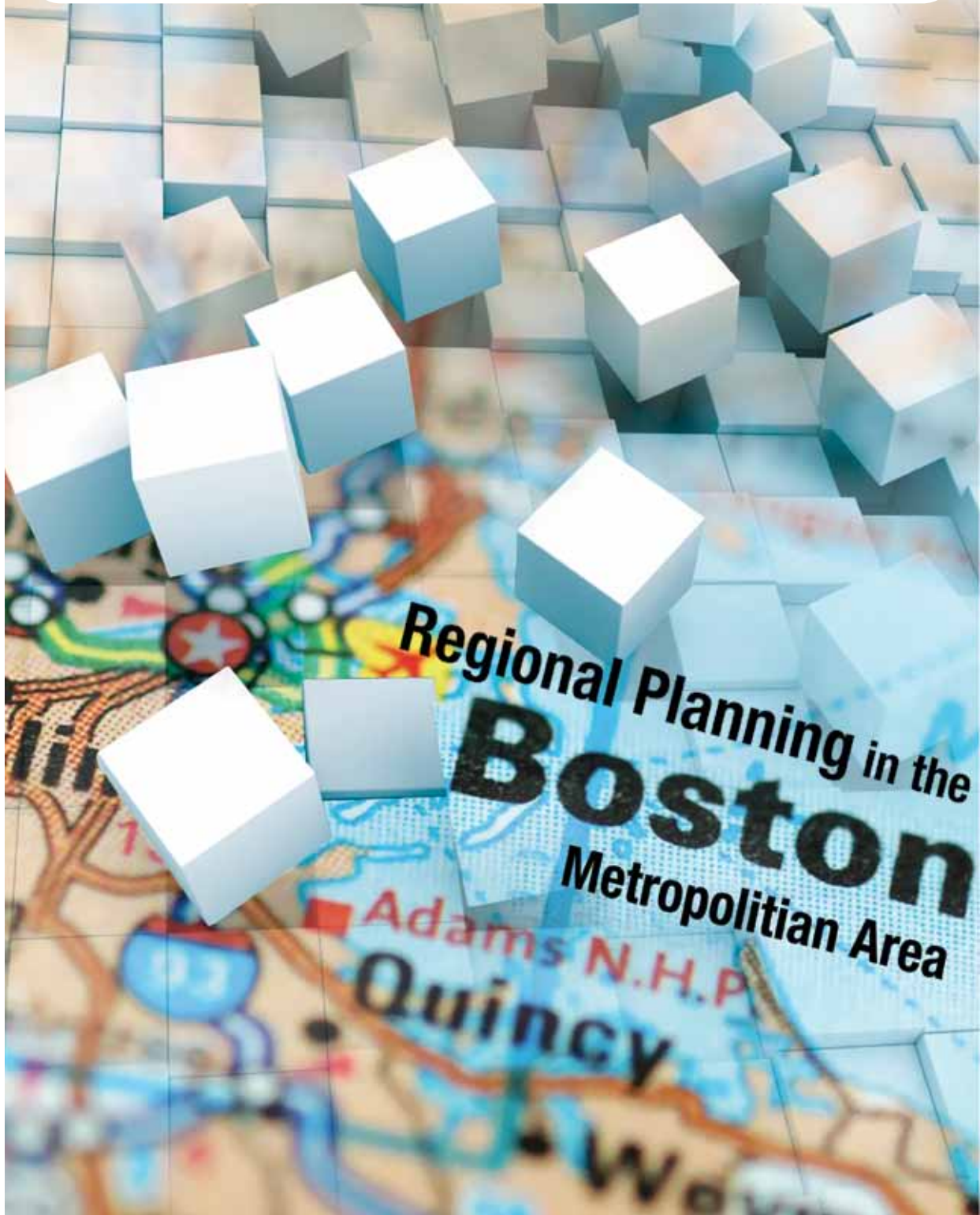




European Union
European Regional
Development Fund
Investing in your future



Regional Planning in the Boston Metropolitan Area

James Kostaras | François Vigier | John Driscoll

Regional Planning in the Boston Metropolitan Area

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	ii
About the Authors	iii
Background	1
Introduction	2
<i>Challenges of Inter-Jurisdictional Regional Planning and Cooperation in the USA.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>New Regionalism and Smart Growth</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Ad hoc Regionalism in Metropolitan Boston: Overcoming Opposition to Regional Planning</i> <i>.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Overview of Metropolitan Boston.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Metropolitan Area Planning Council.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Non-Governmental Facilitators of Regional and Local Planning</i>	<i>13</i>
Inter-Jurisdictional Cooperation in Metropolitan Boston.....	19
<i>Lessons for Inter-Jurisdictional Cooperation in the Island of Ireland</i>	<i>20</i>
References.....	24
Useful Websites	25
Appendix I: The International Centre for Local and Regional Development.....	26
Appendix II: Profile of Metropolitan Boston.....	28

This research on governance and spatial planning reform has been undertaken as part of the International Centre for Local and Regional Development's (ICLRD) EU-Funded initiative, CroSPlaN (see Appendix I). Funded under INTERREG IVA, and administered by the Special EU Programmes Body, this three-year programme promotes the development of a cross-border planning network by enhancing and promoting the opportunities that exist for collaboration and addressing identified areas of need.

This is one of three case studies focusing on inter-jurisdictional planning and governance; the others focusing on the island of Ireland and the Basle Metropolitan Area.

Acknowledgements

The ICLRDR would like to thank the CroSPlaN Steering Committee for their assistance, advice and guidance throughout the course of this research. We also convey our sincerest thanks to the numerous interviewees and focus group attendees who were consulted during the course of this study; the views and opinions expressed contributed significantly to this work.

The information and opinions expressed in this document have been compiled by the ICLRDR team from sources believed to be reliable and in good faith. However, no representation or warranty, express or implied, is made to their accuracy, completeness or correctness. All opinions contained in this document constitute the authors judgment as of the date of publication and are subject to change without notice.

About the Authors

James Kostaras is a senior research associate at the Institute for International Urban Development. During his 20-year career in the public sector as an architect, urban planner and executive director of a planning and development agency, Mr. Kostaras has implemented successful urban design and development strategies to revitalize economically distressed cities. Mr. Kostaras was a Lecturer in Urban Planning and Design at the Graduate School of Design at Harvard (1997-2008) and has lectured and consulted on strategic approaches to urban development at universities and conferences in the United States and around the world.

Francois Vigier is President of the Institute for International Urban Development in Cambridge, Massachusetts, a not-for-profit research group specialising in urban development in developing and transitional economies. He is also a founding member of the International Centre for Local and Regional Development. A member of the Harvard faculty since 1962, he is the Charles Dyer Norton Professor of Regional Planning Emeritus at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. He has been responsible for numerous planning and design projects in the United States, Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. In 1995, he was made a Knight of the National Order of Merit (France).

John Driscoll is Director of the International Centre for Local and Regional Development and Vice President of the Institute for International Urban Development, Cambridge, Massachusetts. He has over 30 years experience of cross-regional planning, urban regeneration and economic development in the United States, the EU, Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.

Background

This case study on promoting regional development in the Boston Metropolitan area has been developed as part of the ICLRD research programme on cross-border and inter-jurisdictional planning. This case on Boston was developed under the ICLRD's Cross-Border Spatial Planning Network Programme (CroSPiAN) funded by the EU INTERREG IVA Programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body. A case on the Basel Metropolitan area is also available on the ICLRD website.

Together these cases provide practitioners, policy makers and academics involved in cross-border and inter-jurisdictional cooperation practical examples of how cooperation in local and regional development can be shaped by collaborative efforts.

Borders always have the twofold function of separation and of serving as an interface. Over the last decades, the accelerating processes of globalization, the strengthening of regional integration, and the consolidation of supranational bodies have led to profound changes in the traditional functions of borders. In the same time, there has been a resurgence of cities and city-regions as new forms of economic and political organisations that are the changing relationships between borders and cities in a North American and European context¹.

These cases provide examples of how territorial cooperation in a cross-border context can support future EU policies that are emphasizing 'place-based strategies' that can 'supply bundles of integrated public goods and services' (*EU 2020 Strategy* and the *Barca Report*). These cases are relevant to the island of Ireland where central and local government on both sides of the border are looking for new ways to improve services, generate jobs and promote sustainable development in challenging economic times. The cases illustrate a range of practices, structures and projects that rely more on a bottom-up approach among local governments that can be supported by central and EU funding mechanisms. These cases are part of ICLRD's efforts to improve local government capacity within the border region as local councils take on an increasing role in promoting their development in partnership with central government agencies, cross-border bodies, civil society and the private sector.

¹ Description of the workshop on border and cities, American Association of Geographers 2010 Annual conference.

Introduction

There is new recognition in the US of need for regional planning in order to manage growth more effectively, build competitive regional economies, coordinate investments in transportation and infrastructure, and mitigate the impacts of low-density suburban sprawl and the patchwork of fragmented jurisdictions in metropolitan areas. Yet, in spite of such notable exceptions as Portland, Oregon², or the Denver (Colorado) Regional Council of Governments and the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan Council in Minnesota³, regional planning in the US over the last two decades has been typically a succession of false starts and disappointed hopes.

In spite of a lack of state-initiated regional planning, Boston presents a particular case where municipalities and non-governmental civic groups have initiated a relatively successful process of collaborative planning and joint decision-making despite an institutional framework and a local political tradition that have historically worked against efforts to create regional organisations with statutory powers that supersede those of municipal government. In Metropolitan Boston, non-formal inter-jurisdictional cooperation has proven to be a more effective alternative to planning and managing metropolitan growth than more formal efforts by the State government. It is an example of cooperation between the public and private sectors to build a metropolitan region based on a diffuse form of governance that relies on a looser, negotiable set of political arrangements⁴.

This paper examines several inter-jurisdictional initiatives in Metropolitan Boston that have been effective to varying degrees in spite of the idiosyncratic system of autonomous local government in Massachusetts, the institutional arrangements and traditionally parochial political culture at the local level that otherwise works against inter-jurisdictional cooperation. It is based on:

- **Negotiated political “compacts”** between elected officials to jointly compete for federal funding for projects that benefit all cities within the ‘compact’. The ability to secure federal funding for major infrastructure projects through competitive processes has proven to be a strong incentive for inter-jurisdictional cooperation. Competitive

² Portland has a directly elected metropolitan government.

³ The first state-established regional planning entity in the U.S which manages wastewater collection and treatment, operates bus and rail services, coordinates the regional park system and provides affordable housing opportunities.

⁴ Sohn C., Reitel B. & Walther O., 2009, “Cross-border metropolitan integration in Europe: the case of Luxembourg, Basel, and Geneva,” *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 27(5), 922–939.

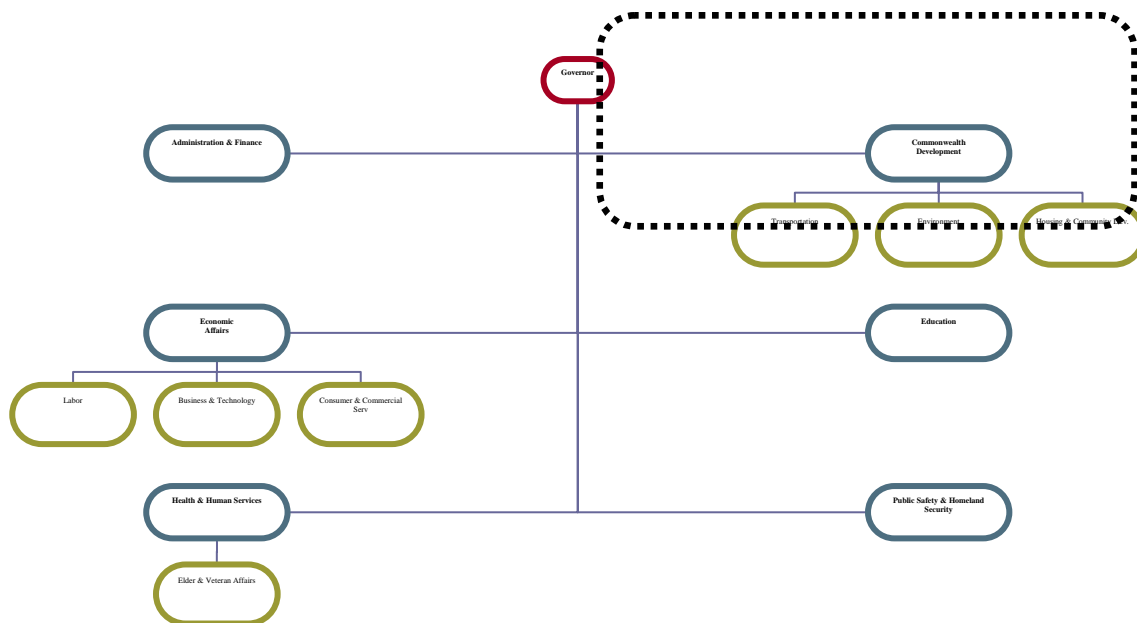
bidding requires municipalities and other jurisdictions to advocate jointly for investment in transportation and economic development.

- **Single-purpose government organisations that have a mandate to operate at a regional scale and, by default, engage in regional and metropolitan planning by virtue of the inter-connectedness of issues.** In Massachusetts, these agencies often fill a vacuum in the absence of robust regional planning organisations and act, even if inadvertently, as facilitators of cooperation or at least a “negotiation” between municipal jurisdictions.
- **Non-governmental facilitators of an *ad hoc* planning and decision-making process: civic and business organisations and not-for-profit research and advocacy organisations.** In reaction to less than effective or politically compromised governance in terms of spatial planning, an ‘extra-jurisdictional’ *ad hoc* regionalism emerges, led and initiated by a community of influential non-governmental civic organisations and business groups takes form in Boston. Independent, non-governmental organisations in Boston have often assumed roles as advocates, initiators and facilitators of regional cooperation.

This type of inter-jurisdictional cooperation is a form of “multi-party negotiation” premised on jointly identified common interests among participating jurisdictions. Inter-jurisdictional cooperation benefits from the intervention of a neutral party, or consensus-builder that facilitates agreement on a negotiated arrangement, a role often filled by a non-governmental entity. Yet, Metropolitan Boston still suffers from the lack of alignment among many “regional planning-like efforts” led by non-governmental actors and the concurrent *de facto* regional planning activities of special purpose agencies.

An effort was made in 2003-2006, by then Massachusetts Governor Romney, for the state to provide a coordinating role through the newly established Office for Commonwealth Development (OCD), a cabinet-level department that coordinated Massachusetts’s capital spending programmes that affect development patterns and facilitated the linkages between state spending programmes and municipal land use planning and implementation. In this capacity, OCD functioned as an ombudsman and facilitator of multiple concurrent programmes and initiatives that, in the aggregate, represented an approach to regionalism in Massachusetts. In 2007, Massachusetts’s newly-elected Governor Patrick re-organised state government at the cabinet level and eliminated OCD (see Figure 1). Transportation, Environment, and Housing and Community Development were re-established as autonomous departments with separate cabinet secretaries in the new organisation.

Figure 1: Organisation of the Governor's Cabinet, 2004



(Source: Adapted from organisation chart in Governor Romney's *Executive Summary* (2003), from the Governor's Budget Recommendation website: <http://www.mass.gov/bb/fy2004h1/frames/es5-body.shtml>)

Metropolitan Boston's *de facto* approach to regional planning and inter-jurisdictional cooperation may offer some lessons worth considering as the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland move to adapt and transform their respective spatial planning systems through the planned reform of local government.

Challenges of Inter-Jurisdictional Regional Planning and Cooperation in the USA

A characteristic of most metropolitan regions in the US is a fragmentation of local government jurisdictions that make independent, autonomous decisions about land use and investment within their respective jurisdictions with no overarching regional plan or framework to rationally guide their decisions in a way that fosters cooperative planning that benefits the entire region⁵. This fragmentation undermines the capacity of metropolitan areas to address regional problems such as concentrated poverty, social and fiscal disparities, traffic congestion, and urban sprawl. Recent literature and research on

⁵ Orfield, M., 2002, *American Metropolitics: the New Suburban Reality*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

contemporary American cities, posits that this fragmented jurisdictional structure undermines regionalism and does not allow municipalities to collaborate in managing growth or initiate strategies to competitively “position” themselves in the global and national economies.

Example of Suburban Sprawl



(Source: Landslides)

US urban history is replete with sporadic, but ineffective, attempts to establish a system of regional and metro planning despite nascent public aspirations. In his 1961 Housing Message to Congress, President Kennedy argued that the old jurisdictional boundaries were no longer adequate and that a means of facilitating cooperation between jurisdictions within the metro regions was necessary:

“The city and its suburbs are both interdependent parts of a single community bound together by the web of transportation and other public facilities and by common economic interests...This requires the establishment of an effective and comprehensive planning process in each metropolitan area embracing all activities, both public and private, which shape the community”⁶.

Although regional planning was encouraged by the federal government in order to ensure that individual federally funded projects were in accordance with metropolitan or regional plans, state governments often had no capacity, in terms of resources or procedural mandate, to produce or implement such plans. In California, the debate over localism versus regionalism became more salient with the increase in the incorporation of new municipalities. Planning and development decisions of local governments within their jurisdictional boundaries often negatively impacted neighbouring municipalities. Calls for creating regional

⁶ Cullingworth, B. & Caves, R., 1997, *Planning in the USA: Policies, Issues and Processes, 2nd Edition*, New York: Rutledge, (p.58).

planning agencies to comprehensively address larger than local issues affecting metropolitan areas were often blunted by local resistance. In 1963, the California Legislature passed legislation that created “Councils of Government” (COGs), voluntary organisations of local governments that would assume responsibility for regional planning⁷. The California approach was widely emulated and, by 1970, most American metropolitan areas had some sort of association to address regional issues.

New Regionalism and Smart Growth

During the current decade, the attention of academics and policy makers shifted to making the case for metropolitan planning as a response to the growing concern with global warming and environmental issues. The current ‘smart growth’ movement⁸ has prompted a new commitment to metropolitan planning throughout the US to counter the impact of suburban sprawl in US metropolitan regions⁹. Smart growth advocated as a means of “changing the nation’s predominant pattern of urban development so that the country can continue to grow without covering the landscape with expanding suburbs and crowded highways,” has inspired a political constituency in support of state policies and programmes to encourage public transit and more efficient higher density development¹⁰. For example, in an attempt to reduce sprawl by directing state capital spending to existing built-up areas, the state of Maryland introduced priority funding for infrastructure investments in zones designated by local governments. Introduced in 1997, the overall impact of the programme and related fiscal incentives to reduce sprawl have been disappointing. The level of state funding incentives could not overcome the market pressures for suburban residential development¹¹. Additionally, smart growth policies have been persistently stymied by legal challenges prompted by the ‘property rights’ movement¹². The strand of libertarian-inspired political

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Gillham, O., 2002, *The Limitless City: a Primer on the Urban Sprawl Debate*, Washington, DC: Island Press, xiv.

⁹ A useful definition of *sprawl* is: “a low-density, scattered, urban development without systematic large-scale or regional public land-use planning.” (Bruegmann, R., 2005, *Sprawl: A Compact History*); Another definition is: *Sprawl* (whether characterized as urban or suburban) is a form of urbanization distinguished by leapfrog patterns of development, commercial strips, low density, separated land uses, automobile dominance and a minimum of public open spaces.” (Gillham, 8).

¹⁰ “What is ‘Smart Growth’? Broadly defined, smart growth is managed growth that attempts to fulfill the need to provide for growth (both economic and in population) while at the same time limiting the undesirable impacts of that growth. The population of the USA is forecast to grow by 45% over the next fifty years, and it is widely hoped that smart growth will help the nation meet the needs of that expansion without the negative impacts that have accompanied widespread suburbanization.” (Gillham, 156-157).

¹¹ Developers of residential housing choose to build outside the designated zones despite higher infrastructure costs. See Lewis R., Knaap G.J. & Sohn J., *Journal of the American Planning Association* 75(4), 457–478.

¹² “Property rights—the notion that the government cannot reduce the value of land or block a particular use of land because that is unconstitutional—may be most associated with the ‘Sagebrush Rebellion’ of western states, but New England has its own culture of the violability of property...nurtured by a culture of Yankee independence, economic self-interest remains of primary importance.” (Flint, A., 2002, “Planning the Fragmented Metropolis: Acting Regionally and Locally” in *Governing Greater Boston: the Politics and Policy of Place*, Cambridge, MA: the Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston).

ideology in the USA, premised on the primacy of property rights and the devolution of power and decision-making to an autonomous local government is a major challenge to regional planning in American metropolitan areas. The courts, including the US Supreme Court have failed so far to lay a clear path to balance local and regional aspirations and navigating the legal terrain will be challenging for American regional planners in the coming decades.

Ad hoc Regionalism in Metropolitan Boston: Overcoming Opposition to Regional Planning

In the absence of a comprehensive state-initiated regional and/or metropolitan planning process in most states in the US, the alternative has been a negotiated partnership of convenience to allow cooperation between municipalities, county governments and state agencies to manage growth. These arrangements have proven to be politically viable alternatives to more formal efforts by state governments to create a regional governmental entity with powers to supersede municipal governments. For the foreseeable future in the US, *ad hoc* inter-jurisdictional arrangements, sometimes in collaboration with non-governmental civic organisations, will be the main vehicle for regional and metropolitan planning as opposed to more formalized approaches in which state government creates and confers statutory powers to regional agencies¹³.

Ad hoc approaches can be grouped into three categories, each representing a different approach to regional planning:

- (1) Supplementing of the powers of local governments to manage a region that is defined primarily on environmental grounds;
- (2) A voluntary association of local governments to jointly manage growth and share the public benefits of future development; and
- (3) Creating special purpose regional agencies whose primary role is to provide information and advice to local governments.

In Metropolitan Boston, despite the clear need for larger than local planning, there has historically been a resistance to the creation of regional planning agencies with statutory power as a result of a historic political parochialism that privileges the autonomy of local government and resists state-mandated regional governance. Informal inter-jurisdictional cooperation within a loose system of negotiated arrangements between municipalities has proven to be an effective alternative solution. They include:

¹³ See Vigier F., Driscoll J. & Lee-Chuvala C., Spring 2006, "Ad Hoc Regionalism: Managing Growth through Spatial Planning– Learning From the American Experience," *Journal of Cross Border Studies in Ireland No. 1*.

- Political “compacts” between mayors of cities and towns to jointly compete for federal funding for projects that benefit all cities within the ‘compact’. The ability to secure federal funding for major transportation and infrastructure projects has proven to be a strong incentive for inter-jurisdictional cooperation.
- Civic and business groups concerned with ineffective regional planning have often been advocates of *ad hoc* regionalism initiators and facilitators of regional cooperation.
- State agencies with a regional mandate – in transportation or environmental protection, for example – have supported these initiatives.

One of the incentives that has prompted inter-jurisdictional cooperation is the fiscal autonomy of local governments in Massachusetts and the political need to contain long-term increases in the property tax. Local governments in the United States have the sole authority to regulate land uses within their political boundaries. They also provide such basic public services as education, public safety, streets, and sanitation that are primarily financed through local taxes. Most suburban localities have used “fiscal zoning” as a strategy to attract investment in commercial and office parks and suburban retail centres that can be taxed at higher rates than housing without the fiscal cost of providing schools and other social services required by residential development, particularly for families with limited income¹⁴. The fiscal zoning process can significantly influence where people are able to live, the public services they receive, and whether they can find jobs near their homes. As a result, one community’s gain is likely to be another’s loss.

The US political system places a high value on local autonomy. One argument is that because local governments are smaller and closer to voters, local service provision encourages residents to participate in the democratic process. Another is that because the actions of local governments have a direct impact on the economic well being of voters, primarily through their effect on home values, local control creates a powerful incentive for voters to monitor the services with which they are provided. It is also argued that policies designed to create greater equity would undermine local autonomy and the advantages derived from providing individuals with a wide range of choices. Local autonomy also rewards localities for accepting land uses with some undesirable effects – for example, commercial activity that generates congestion – by allowing them to reap local through taxation. Finally, the variety in the quality of local services provides consumers and voters

¹⁴ Orfield, 90.

with a variety of choices, limiting the inevitable welfare losses that result from uniform provision of services.

Yet, many activities currently carried out by local governments have consequences beyond local borders. Natural systems spread the costs and benefits associated with water, sewer, and sewage treatment systems; regional housing markets spread the costs and benefits of local affordable housing programmes, land use restrictions, and income redistribution policies; regional labour markets spread the costs and benefits of economic development and education programmes; transportation systems spread the costs and benefits of local street and bridge maintenance and enable non-residents to enjoy locally maintained amenities such as parks.

Although a strong case can be made for state directed regional planning and development in Massachusetts, many elected officials and citizens contend that “local governments will always be the major unit of policy on planning and development, and that they should be mobilized to meet larger regional goals”¹⁵. A 1997 survey commissioned by the *Regionalization Commission* found that voters opposed creating a new ‘regional government’ and held negative views toward any arrangement that might threaten local autonomy. Those surveyed favoured ‘cooperative action’ between municipalities in delivering services if it were done voluntarily.

Overview of Metropolitan Boston

In 2008, Metropolitan Boston (as defined by the Metropolitan Planning Organisation or MPO) covered an area of 1,405 square miles and had a population of approximately 4.5 million, an increase of almost 132,000 residents since the 2000 census, a gain of 3.0%. It is one of the largest metropolitan areas in the United States. Its economy is larger than that of any other city in the US except for New York, Los Angeles and Chicago. If Metropolitan Boston were a nation, its economy would rank 23rd in the world, ahead of Belgium and Sweden and just behind Russia and Switzerland¹⁶ (see Appendix II).

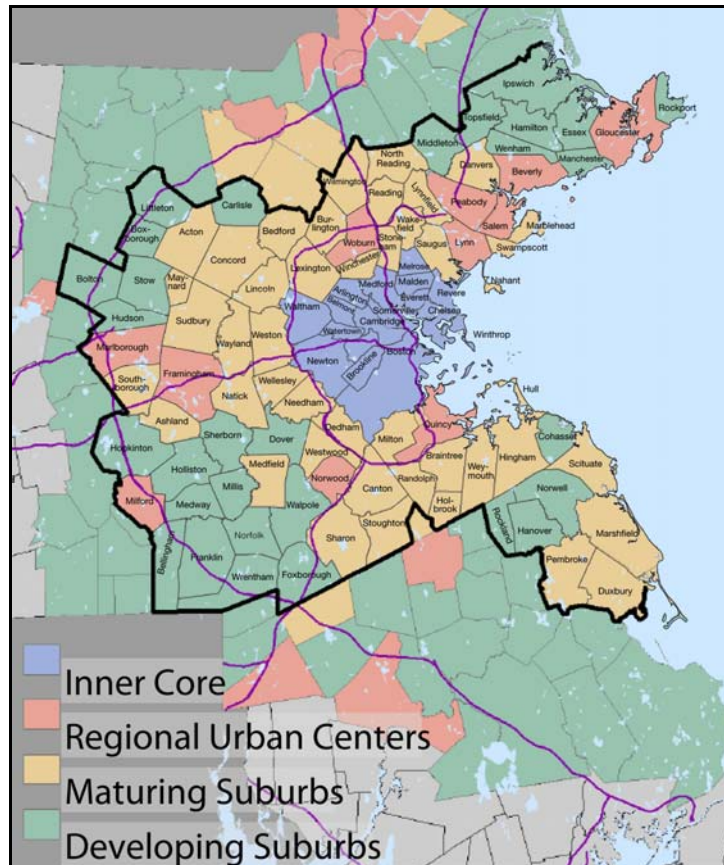
The metropolitan area lies within the 20-mile radius extending from the central City of Boston and includes 101 separate urban and suburban municipalities. Boston itself is a dense urban area of only 48.4 square miles with a population of 620,000; the other thirteen independent

¹⁵ O'Connell, J.C., 2002, “Thinking like a Region: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives” in *Governing Greater Boston: the Politics and Policy of Place*, Cambridge, MA: the Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston, 56.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 51.

cities that comprise the urban core have a total population of 580,000. Even though it is the major economic centre of its metropolitan area, Boston has no say over policies affecting its development.

Figure 2: Metro Boston Community Types



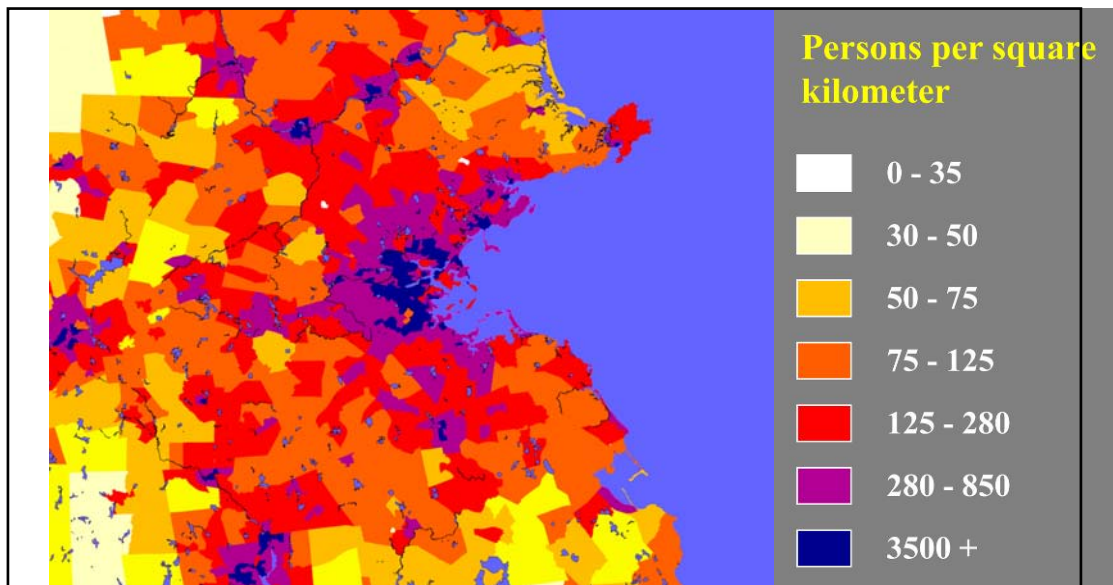
(Source: Adapted from MAPC map (2008) in the Boston Region MPO's *JOURNEY TO 2030*¹⁷).

The structure of governance in Massachusetts presents both opportunities and challenges for meeting the region's social, economic and transportation needs. The region's intense localism distinguishes Metropolitan Boston's jurisdictional structure from other metropolitan area in the country. All land in New England is incorporated as part of a municipality, city or town, many of which were established in the 17th century. New England's historic tradition of robust participatory democracy reflects the high degree of sovereignty granted to each locality, which is solely responsible for the provision of public services and managing development. In most regions of the US, counties are the "building blocks of metropolitan areas" and are typically responsible for public safety, infrastructure, environmental management, schools, public transit, parks and open space, planning and land use regulation, and economic development. 'Unincorporated' areas – communities that are not

¹⁷ Sept. 2009, http://www.ctps.org/bostonmpo/3_programmes/1_transportation_plan/2030Tranplan_ch11.pdf.

formally part of a city or town – often constitute most of a county and, therefore, are managed by their respective county government. The expansive geographic scale of US counties require county governments to plan and manage growth and land development on a more ‘regional’ basis than the limited jurisdictional area of municipalities whose scope and control is confined to the area within their limited jurisdictional boundaries¹⁸.

Figure 3: Metro Boston Population Density (2000)



(Source: François Vigier, Institute for International Urban Development).

The diverse Metropolitan population consists of approximately 1.2 million households, averaging 2.47 persons per household. There were an estimated total of 3.1 million jobs in 2007 and total personal income grew at an annual average rate of 5.9% from 2003 through 2007, just under the national average of 6.1%.

The current economic crisis gripping the US has had a predictable impact on Metropolitan Boston and most job losses from December 2008 to December 2009 occurred in construction, manufacturing, retail trade, professional and business services, financial activities, and wholesale trade. Gains were only evident in the education and health services sectors and government. In January 2010, the unemployment rates for the City of Boston and the Metropolitan area were both 9.3 %, significantly lower than the U.S. rate of 10.6%.

Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Cooperative action in the Boston region has been encouraged by providing reliable

¹⁸ O'Connell, 51.

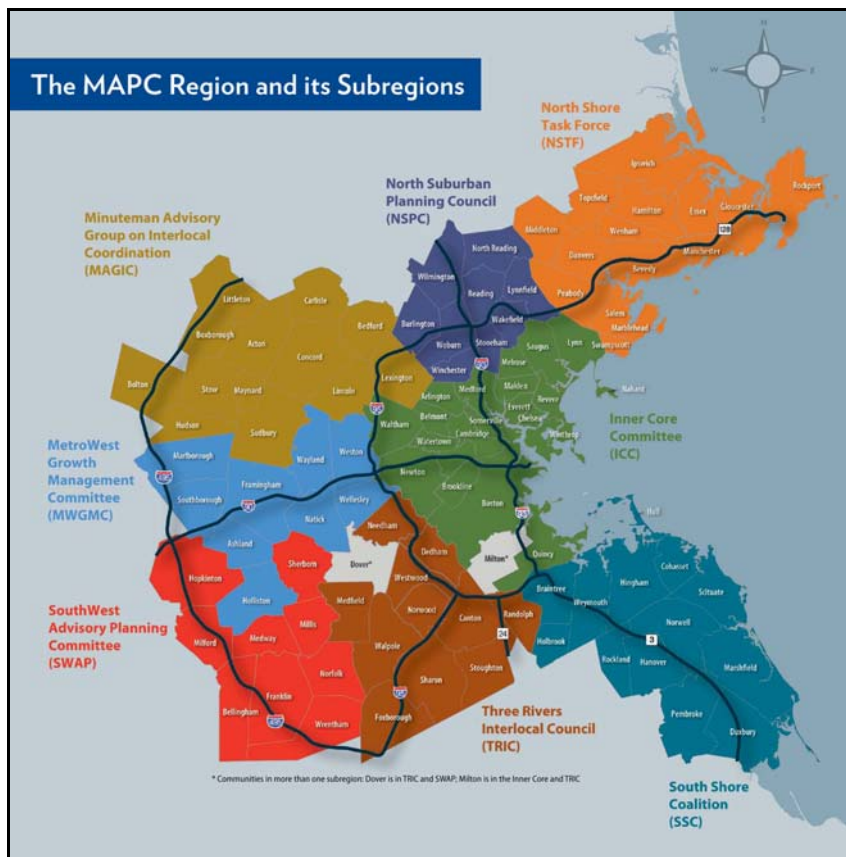
information on trends affecting their region to local units of government. To that end, the Massachusetts State Legislature created the **Metropolitan Area Planning Council** (MAPC) in 1963 with the mandate to document regional social, economic and development trends in the eastern part of the state, an area that included 101 municipalities. The purpose was to provide local jurisdictions within this area with a common information base. Although MAPC has proven to be influential in guiding the allocation of regional transportation planning funded by the federal and state governments in its role as a member of the Boston Area Planning Organisation, it has no statutory power and therefore has no capacity to function as a “regional/metropolitan government”. Its history is an instructive object lesson for advocates of regional planning in Massachusetts: it was established and functioned as a state agency between 1963 and 1971, but was then reconstituted as an independent organisation with a board made up of municipal and state officials, and gubernatorial appointees. MAPC functions as an independent advisory agency with an annual budget of \$2.8 million, funded by a combination of federal, state, local and private grants. It has provided technical planning assistance to member communities, and serves as a facilitator of collaborative planning and management efforts between municipalities.

Since 2003, MAPC has shifted its agenda by becoming more pro-active in the formulation of regional policy. MAPC continues to provide GIS and data resources on regional development trends, support for the local planning initiatives of smaller municipalities, and assistance in implementing “smart growth” strategies. The following projects typify MAPC’s recent proactive efforts in support of regionalism in Boston:

- In 1997, it convened communities along the I-495 interstate highway, a high-growth corridor, to consider the wide range of traffic and infrastructure issues that accompany development. It facilitated the formation of the *I-495 Technology Corridor Initiative / Campaign for Shared Solutions* to coordinate planning efforts for 42 communities in the fastest growing area of the state. The principal issues that emerged were: ensuring the supply of water for growing communities; the need for a regional transit authority and opportunities for shared solutions to water and sewer problems.
- Launched in 2003, *MetroFuture* is a comprehensive series of regional scenarios for the area’s future growth that was the outcome of an extensive public planning process launched and led by MAPC that engaged citizens, local public officials, the business community, and other civic stakeholders. It articulates a regional vision for 2030 and includes a plan, public policy recommendations, a framework for local planning, and short-term implementation plans slated for immediate action. Participants shared their visions for the future of the region and evaluated alternative

scenarios using data and sophisticated computer models provided by MAPC.

Figure 4: Map of the MAPC Region



(Source: MAPC (2010), from <http://www.mapc.org/sites/default/files/Calendar2010MAPCsubregions.pdf>)

The process concluded with the preparation of the MetroFuture Regional Plan that was formally adopted by MAPC in 2008. Through this process, MAPC created demographic and economic projections of the region's future; a set of 65 specific goals for the year 2030, as well as "benchmarks" and indicators to measure progress toward achieving these goals.

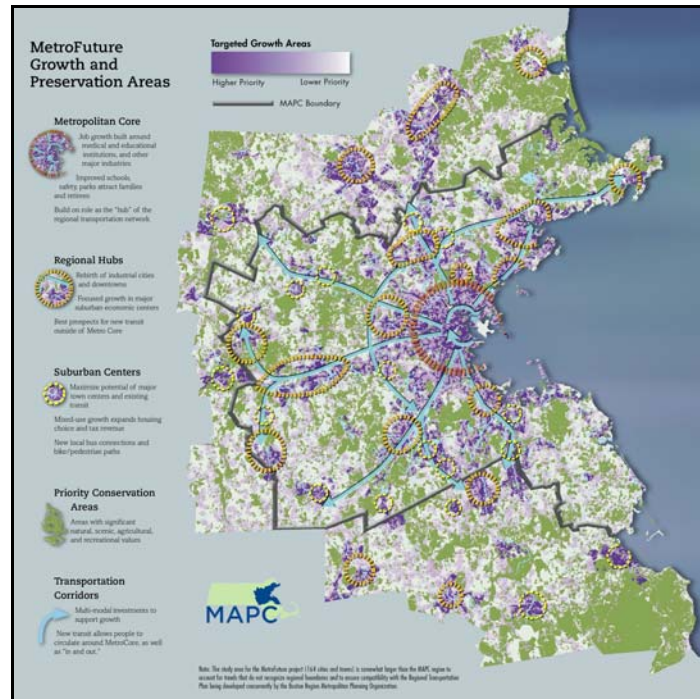
In addition, the MAPC has played an active role in creating collective purchasing consortia serving 40 municipalities. They provide group health insurance and materials purchasing at a reduced cost and sponsor common training courses to improve the efficiency of municipal management.

Non-Governmental Facilitators of Regional and Local Planning

One of the key roles of a regional planning authority is the monitoring of trends affecting the region and developing interventions to ensure its economic competitiveness. In the Boston

region, this role is partially played by MAPC but also involves several private non-profit organisations.

Figure 5: MetroFuture Growth and Preservation Areas



(Source: MAPC (2009), from <http://www.metrofuture.org/content/metrofuture-scenario>).

The Boston Foundation is a coordinating agency for some 900 separate charitable funds that was established by individual donors and serves the Greater Boston area. The Boston Foundation makes grants to non-profit organisations, funds special initiatives to address critical challenges, partners with donors to achieve high-impact philanthropy and acts as a civic 'convener' of collaborative efforts to consider common agendas for the future. In 2007, the Foundation made more than \$92 million in grants.

Since 2000, in partnership with the City of Boston and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, it has funded basic research on the challenges facing Boston and its region. The bi-annual reports published by the *Boston Indicators Project* bring together information and research generated by the region's public agencies, universities, think tanks, and community-based organisations in order to frame the debate about social, demographic and economic issues facing the region, particularly in terms of future policy and planning. The reports will be issued through the year 2030, Boston's 400th anniversary. To date, the Boston Indicators Project has published several reports:

- *The Wisdom of Our Choices* (2000)

- *Creativity and Innovation: A Bridge to the Future* (2003)¹⁹
- *Thinking Globally/Acting Locally: A Regional Wake-Up Call* (2005)
- *A Time Like No Other: Charting the Course of the Next Revolution* (2007)
- *Boston's Education Pipeline: A Report Card* (2009).

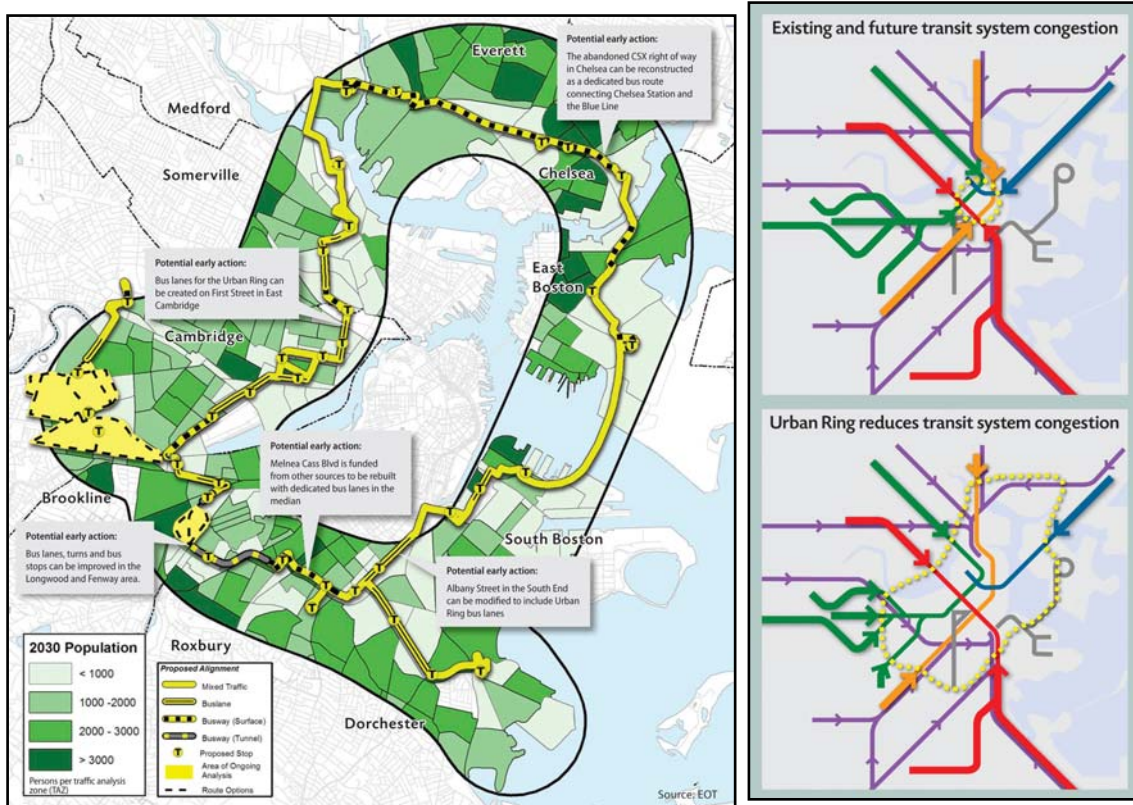
A Better City (ABC) is a non-profit membership organisation that provides the business and institutional leadership to infrastructure and transportation investments needed to improve the Boston area's economy and quality of life.

The ABC Board of Directors has an established history of civic engagement and consists of leaders from over 100 major businesses and institutions in greater Boston and represents a broad range of industries, including financial services, real estate, legal services, construction, higher education, cultural institutions, life sciences, hospitality, utilities, etc.

Building on its successful advocacy and monitoring of the \$14.6 billion Central Artery/Tunnel Project, also known as the "Big Dig," the largest civil engineering project ever undertaken in the United States, ABC has advocated for the construction of an *Urban Ring circumferential transit system* to connect the Boston radial light rail public transit system and improve access to central city jobs. It has argued that the project would spur economic growth and lower the metropolitan carbon footprint. In 2008, the State Legislature passed its first transportation bond bill, which included \$10 million for the Urban Ring. In the subsequent \$1.4 billion bond bill, the line item devoted to rail and transit improvements (pushed by ABC) contained at least \$30 million to keep the Urban Ring project moving forward through 2011. In October 1995, Boston Mayor Thomas Menino and the political leaders of five neighbouring cities signed a *compact* pledging their support for the urban ring project and to jointly plan future economic development along the Ring's proposed corridor. *The Urban Ring Compact of Mayors* succeeded in persuading the state government to launch an extensive public planning process with the aim of proposing a project eligible for federal funding. The Urban Ring Working Group, a non-formal, 'voluntary' collection of state, city, and business leaders who regularly meet to strategise and plan, has effectively advocated for the project and ensured that dedicated rights-of-way would be acquired by the state for the new transit line.

¹⁹ All reports are available on the project's interactive website, www.bostonindicators.org.

Figure 6: Proposed Urban Ring Circumferential Transit System (left) and Congestion Diagrams (right)



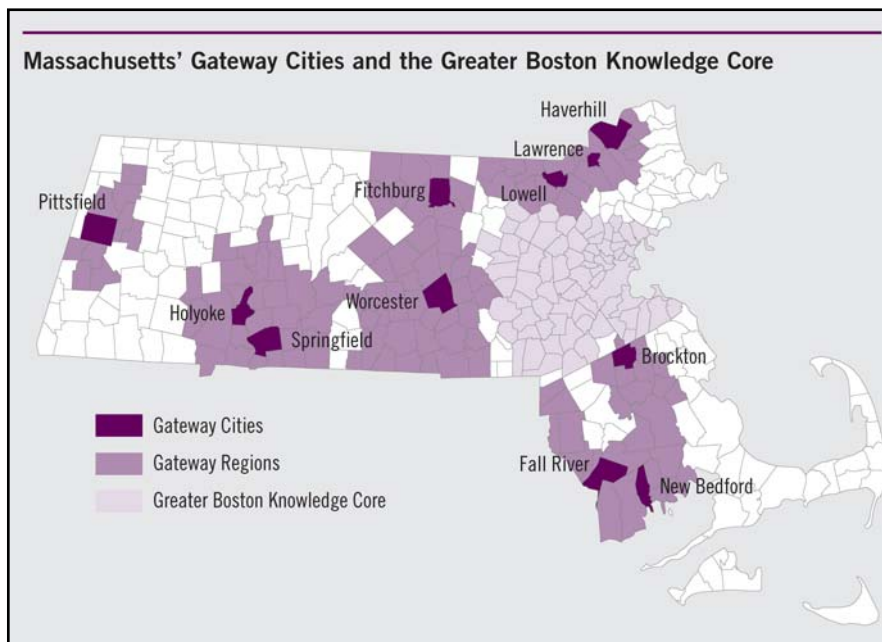
(Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) map, *ABC Urban Ring informational brochure*, January 2009, http://www.abettercity.org/pdf/ABC_UrbanRing_FINAL.pdf.)

MassINC is an independent think tank, founded by civic and business interests, to stimulate debate and shape public policy. Its mission is to promote a “public agenda for the middle class and to help all citizens achieve the American dream.” Its stated purpose is premised on “the conviction that better outcomes would be achieved if policy makers and opinion leaders were armed with credible data and analysis about key issues surrounding quality of life in Massachusetts.” Its Gateway Cities Initiative focuses on revitalizing eleven key older cities in the state by developing innovative social, civic and economic strategies that will make them competitive in the 21st century economy.

MassINC and the Brookings Institution jointly published a report, *Reconnecting Gateway Cities: Lessons Learned and an Agenda for Renewal*, detailing the challenges facing Gateway Cities and offered a blueprint for increasing their economic vitality. The report generated an unprecedented response from local officials and civic activists around the state who asked MassINC to help them forge a common agenda. The University of

Massachusetts/Dartmouth took on the challenge and launched a programme, the *Urban Initiative*, focusing on advancing the Gateway Cities policy. In May 2008, eleven mayors and chief executives signed a compact to cooperate on initiatives to celebrate the unique assets of the state's Gateway Cities and advance local economic efforts. A major accomplishment of the Gateway Cities initiative is the recent issuance by the State of "Gateways Plus Action Grants" to provide funds for planning and neighbourhood revitalization.

Figure 7: Map of the Eleven Gateway Cities



(Source: MassINC map in *Reconnecting Massachusetts Gateway Cities* (February 2007), p. 11, from <http://www.massinc.org/Research/Gateway-Cities.aspx>)

The Pioneer Institute is an independent, non-partisan, privately funded think tank. The Institute advocates limited and accountable government, the expanded application of free-market principles to public policy to achieve economic prosperity and streamlining state and local governments.

Its *Middle Cities Initiative* was launched to help cities in Massachusetts improve performance in delivering key services, particularly post-industrial cities that have lost their economic base and suffered from severe disinvestments. The Initiative has developed a system that tracks objective, verifiable data for the purpose of formulating solutions to difficult public policy problems.

In its 2007 report, *Rehabbing Urban Redevelopment*, it concluded that Massachusetts's older

industrial cities are politically and economically in limbo between the traditional power base of greater Boston and the burgeoning political force of the suburbs, and between their former industrial role and newer market function. It recommended that the state create benchmarks for city performance in education, economic development, public safety and fiscal management.

It has three components:

- *The Middle Cities Mayors' Coalition* brings together Mayors and managers of the cities on a formal basis to discuss education, economic development, public safety, and fiscal management and share their practices and experience, review data and hear about research on urban policy.
- *The Local Citizen Advisory Committees*: the Institute organizes citizen advisory committees in each participating Middle City to discuss with the community what data local citizens believe should be tracked as benchmarks. By presenting high-quality, up-to-date, factual information, it tries to provoke public dialogue about the cities' economic well-being.
- *MassCityStats* is a website which gives the public access to municipal data for 14 Middle Cities across Massachusetts. It consistently tracks objectives with verifiable data in order to formulate solutions to difficult public policy problems. Using this data, the Institute produces fact sheets, policy briefs, papers and "benchmarks" reports for the *Middle City Mayors' Coalition* and the *Local Citizen Advisory Committees*.

Through its interactions with the broad civic community, the Project also works to develop a shared civic agenda reflecting the perspectives of thousands of participants—from school children and engaged residents to academic and community-based experts to public officials and policymakers. The Project convenes Greater Boston's business and civic leaders to focus on and respond to regional competitiveness issues and sponsors seminars to bring people together across the city and region, with an emphasis on new and emerging leaders.

Inter-Jurisdictional Cooperation in Metropolitan Boston

Cooperation among communities can range from participation in loose networks voluntary regional compacts to more formal agreements among abutting municipalities to undertake specific projects. The first is generally driven by the economies of scale that can be obtained by contracting for services on a larger scale, a point that was made by Boston's *Regionalization Commission Report (1997)* that strongly advocated cooperative municipal services. The report stated: "One of the greatest structural impediments to municipal fiscal health is the efficiency of providing certain municipal services on a small scale"²⁰.

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council has been instrumental in organizing collective purchasing consortia serving 40 municipalities, which provide group health insurance, materials purchasing, and municipal management training. For example, the Town of Bedford, a municipality in the Boston Metropolitan region, is a member of several metropolitan service consortia that provide it with specific services, including: the North East Solid Waste Committee, the Eastern Middlesex Mosquito Control District, the Greater Boston Police Council, the Minuteman Library Network, the Educational Collaborative of Greater Boston and the Salt Purchasing Collaborative (for snow removal).

Undertaking complex development projects, particularly when the site straddles municipal boundaries – a frequent case in the redevelopment of vacant industrial sites – can often be successfully undertaken only by joint action. The redevelopment of 200 acres of blighted industrial land in the cities of Everett, Malden and Medford (combined population 142,000) located within Metropolitan Boston's heavily urbanized inner core is an interesting example of *ad hoc* cooperation. In March 1995, the three mayors signed an agreement to redevelop the site as a large-scale office and research campus for the telecommunications field, along with open space and river access. This was a departure from the conventional mode of local governance in Massachusetts, as the three cities had traditionally been locked in fierce economic competition for new investment. It is doubtful whether these cities, acting independently, could have had the capacity to leverage the resources and state political support to make this project a success.

The State Legislature followed by creating the Mystic Valley Development Commission (MVDC), a quasi-public agency to oversee the redevelopment of the site. It also enacted an

²⁰ O'Connell, 59.

innovative tax-sharing agreement and consolidated system to jointly administer zoning decisions and grant the building permits, in effect “erasing” municipal boundaries in the project area. One of the municipalities took the lead and planned the project with significant input from the other two and that of various community groups, and obtained state and federal funding for planning, land takings and environmental testing. The state also vested the MVDC with the powers eminent domain to acquire the land from 75 private owners.

Figure 8: Phase 1 map of River’s Edge (left); Figure 9: Aerial View of River's Edge, 2010 (right)



(Source: ESRI map in *The Boston Globe* article “Rebirth at the River’s Edge,” January 2008, from <http://www.riversedgema.com/news/archive.html>;
Photo from <http://www.riversedgema.com/location.html>)

Lessons for Inter-Jurisdictional Cooperation in the Island of Ireland

The political culture of Metropolitan Boston is complex and regionalism, in the conventional sense, is not an easily accepted concept as a result of a historic political parochialism that privileges the autonomy of local government and resists state-mandated regional governance. There has also been an absence of administrative ‘mechanisms’ at the state level to facilitate cooperation among local governments in the Boston metro region. However, the ability of non-governmental organisations to become advocates of regional cooperation, to provide the necessary data to demonstrate its advantages and, as a result, the willingness of individual municipalities to cooperate may offer some lessons worth considering as

Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland adapt and transform their respective spatial planning systems²¹.

The examples described in this paper demonstrate how local governments and non-jurisdictional entities can play an effective role in advancing a regional agenda even when the capacities of higher levels of government are weak or uncertain. While other US metropolitan areas have successfully made the transition to a regional approach to manage growth and improve their ability to compete in a globalised economy, Boston is a disappointing example of state-initiated regional planning. However, it represents an alternative paradigm: a negotiated multi-party arrangement in which local governments are able to enter into negotiated inter-jurisdictional agreements motivated by shared interests with other municipalities. Of particular interest is the fact that this *ad hoc* regionalism was largely initiated and led by non-governmental organisations, business groups and research institutions.

While some centralisation of the regional planning function is necessary, particularly to programme and finance major infrastructure investments, delegating the finer grain of development standards to clusters of local governments sharing a common environment and similar views of a desirable future is an intriguing alternative. Since successful interventions generally depend on a commonality of objectives, the formal involvement of local governments in the regional planning process should be encouraged.

In this respect, Boston has been successful in marshalling the resources, however fragmented, to support the metropolitan area's economy. Although perhaps counter-intuitive, empowered and independent local governments might be more effective in advancing regionalism than a super-imposed regional government if there are robust non-governmental and business organisations to support local government as advocates and facilitators and provide objective, non-politicised data based on sound research to both local governments and the state. This is the role that has been played effectively in Boston by ABC, the Boston Foundation, MassINC, and the Pioneer Institute while MAPC, as a semi-public agency, has been able to influence the public investment policies of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and provide support to inter-municipal alliances.

Furthermore, negotiated political "compacts" among municipalities have often improved their

²¹ The role of local governments is being re-examined in both jurisdictions: The Review of Public Administration (RPA) in Northern Ireland and the adoption of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill 2009 and the anticipated White Paper on Local Government Reform in the Republic of Ireland will result in significant changes in the relative roles of local governments and the central administrations.

ability to compete jointly for state or federal funding for investment projects that benefit all cities within the 'compact'. This ability to secure federal funding for public transportation, major infrastructure projects and economic development through competitive processes has proved to be a strong incentive for inter-jurisdictional cooperation. Given the need for participating communities to arrive at a consensus on the specifics of the project for which state or federal funding is sought, inter-jurisdictional cooperation clearly benefits from the active involvement of a neutral party as a *consensus-builder* that facilitates this negotiated arrangement; this is a role that is best be filled by a non-governmental entity whose objectives are an improved economic and social climate for the region as a whole rather than political.

In spite of significant successes in maintaining its economic competitiveness²², Metropolitan Boston clearly suffers from the lack of alignment among the myriad "regional planning-like efforts" led by non-governmental actors and the concurrent *de facto* regional planning interventions of existing special purpose agencies such as the state Highway Department and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, the agency responsible for public transit.

Currently, one of the gaps in the responsibilities of the state government is the alignment and calibration of this fragmented regional planning. The short-lived precedent of the Massachusetts Office for Commonwealth Development referenced earlier provided an opportunity to coordinate Massachusetts's capital spending programmes that affected spatial development patterns. In its attempt to ensure consistency with the state's Sustainable Development Principles, the OCD's role as a facilitator and *ombudsman* for the multiple concurrent programmes and initiatives provided an example of how to link state spending programmes and municipal economic development and land use planning decisions.

In both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, this level of regional coordination is much better developed. Notwithstanding the current economic downturn that is placing severe pressures on public finances, there are structures and processes in place to link spatial planning and infrastructure improvements at the regional level. The National Spatial Strategy and the National Development Plan in the Republic are linked through the Gateway Initiative Fund and Regional Planning Guidelines. In Northern Ireland, the current review of the Regional Development Strategy is being done in coordination with the Investment

²² Metropolitan Boston has the lowest unemployment rate among all metropolitan areas in the country in spite of the current economic crisis.

Strategy for Northern Ireland as well as other sectoral reviews such as proposed transportation investments.

Local governments in both jurisdictions are finding that in a context characterised by a competitive economic environment and constrained central government transfers, they have to move into a leadership position to promote economic opportunities and mobilise resources to provide essential services. There is also recognition that cooperation across administrative boundaries can offer significant opportunities for achieving both aims. Within the Republic of Ireland, the metropolitan approach adopted by local governments in the Cork region is offered as a good example within a larger city region.

The case of Metropolitan Boston illustrates how within a functional region, stretching across multiple administrative boundaries, local governments, non-statutory bodies, research organisations and the business community can become advocates for their region and achieve consensus on non-statutory regional development strategies and key projects to drive cooperation. The Boston case is also relevant to cross-border cooperation where local governments within the border region are identifying projects and structures for working together in the absence of a formal framework for cooperation in spatial planning and regional development among the two governments.

References

- Bruegmann, R. (2005). *Sprawl: A Compact History*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Cullingworth, B. & Caves, R. (1997). *Planning in the USA: Policies, Issues and Processes, 2nd Edition*. New York: Rutledge.
- Flint, A. (2002). Planning the Fragmented Metropolis: Acting Regionally and Locally. *Governing Greater Boston: the Politics and Policy of Place*. Cambridge, MA: the Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston.
- Gillham, O. (2002). *The Limitless City: a Primer on the Urban Sprawl Debate*. Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Lewis, R., Knaap, G.J. & Sohn, J. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 75(4), 457-478.
- O'Connell, J.C. (2002). Thinking like a Region: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives. *Governing Greater Boston: the Politics and Policy of Place*. Cambridge, MA: the Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston.
- Orfield, M. (2002). *American Metropolitics: the New Suburban Reality*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Sohn, C., Reitel, B. & Walther, O. (2009). "Cross-border metropolitan integration in Europe: the case of Luxembourg, Basel, and Geneva." *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 27(5), 922–939.
- Vigier, F., Driscoll, J. & Lee-Chuvala, C. (Spring 2006). 'Ad Hoc' Regionalism: Managing Growth through Spatial Planning– Learning from the American Experience. *Journal of Cross Border Studies in Ireland No. 1*. Armagh: Centre for Cross Border Studies.

Useful Websites

A Better City (ABC) Urban Ring project

<http://www.abettercity.org/projects-urban-ring.html>

Boston Indicators Project

<http://www.bostonindicators.org/Indicators2008/>

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organisation

<http://www.ctps.org/bostonmpo/index.html>

MassCityStats

<http://www.masscitystats.org/>

MetroFuture

<http://www.metrofuture.org>

Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

<http://www.mapc.org/>

Middle Cities Initiative

http://www.pioneerinstitute.org/programmes_mci.php

Reconnecting Massachusetts Gateway Cities: Lessons Learned and an Agenda for Renewal (2007, February), available on the MassINC website

<http://www.massinc.org/Research/Gateway-Cities.aspx>.

Rehabbing Urban Redevelopment

http://www.pioneerinstitute.org/pdf/07_urban_development.pdf

River's Edge project

<http://www.riversedgema.com/>

Appendix I: The International Centre for Local and Regional Development

A registered charity based in Armagh, Northern Ireland, the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) is a North-South-US partnership established in 2006 to explore and expand the contribution that planning and the development of physical, social and economic infrastructures can make to improve the lives of people on the island of Ireland and elsewhere. The partner institutions began working together in 2004 and currently include: the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA) at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth; the School of the Built Environment at the University of Ulster; the Institute for International Urban Development in Cambridge, Massachusetts; and the Centre for Cross Border Studies in Armagh.

Each of these partners brings together complementary expertise and networks on both a North-South and East-West basis – creating a unique, all-island and international centre. ICLRDR continues to expand its collaboration with other institutions and has built up close working relationships with individual faculty and researchers from Harvard University, Mary Immaculate College Limerick, Queens University Belfast and the Athlone Institute of Technology. It is also developing its international linkages, particularly with those organisations that have an interest in cross-border cooperation and collaboration; for example, Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT) in France.

What does the ICLRDR do?

- Provides independent joined-up research and policy advice on cross-border and all-island spatial planning and local and regional development issues (economic development, transport, housing, the environment, service provision, etc.);
- Offers professional education and capacity building programmes for communities and local, regional and national government representatives and officials;
- Assists local governments / communities in translating policy into ‘on the ground’ action;
- Acts as a catalyst to bring relevant public and private actors, North and South, together to work on common goals;
- Promotes international cooperation and exchanges.

The ICLRDR uses a variety of strategies to undertake this work, including engaging in action research with local governments, communities and central agencies; undertaking and

publishing case study research to evaluate and develop good practice models; hosting conferences and workshops on key themes; and developing and delivering training modules for key stakeholders in the physical, social and economic development of the island of Ireland.

Why is this work important?

The ICLRD's work is important in relation to four key processes on the island of Ireland:

- Cross-jurisdictional commitment to spatial planning and infrastructure projects;
- Peace and reconciliation, and the regeneration of local communities in the Border area;
- Economic competitiveness and growth on the global stage;
- Multi-level governance and compliance with planning, economic and environmental directives from the European Union.

CroSPlaN

In cooperation with the Centre for Cross Border Studies, the ICLRD has started an exciting new programme to develop a cross-border planning network. This initiative has been made possible through funding from the EU's INTERREG IVA Programme; administered through the Special EU Programmes Body. Commencing in 2009 for three years, the new network (CroSPlaN) will undertake the following activities:

- Two action research projects per year that will enhance emerging cross-border activities and expertise in the vital area of spatial planning;
- One executive training programme per year for at least 20 central and local government officials, councillors and community leaders to assist them in both delivering and supporting these activities;
- An annual conference and technical workshop; the dual function of which is to facilitate networking and address identified areas of need.

Appendix II: Profile of Metropolitan Boston

The Economy of Metropolitan Boston

The economic base of Metropolitan Boston is concentrated in the following sectors: high technology; finance; professional and business services; defence; and educational and medical institutions. The City of Boston is a centre for professional, business, financial, governmental, higher educational institutions and medical services, as well as for transportation, communications, manufacturing, wholesale distribution, and cultural and entertainment activities. The City is the capital of the Commonwealth and is host to several federal regional offices. As the Metropolitan transportation hub, it is a major national and international air terminus, a seaport, and the centre of New England's rail, truck and bus service. It is served by three limited-access interstate highways, parts of the national interstate highway system that connect it to Portland, Maine to the north, and New York City and Washington, D.C. to the south.

The **bioscience industries** are a primary economic engine of Metropolitan Boston and represent approximately 30% of the jobs in the City of Boston. Greater Boston's teaching hospitals and medical schools employ over 97,000 workers and its research universities employ another 50,000. For over a decade, Boston has consistently been the highest-ranking city in the United States for National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant awards, receiving more than \$1.6 billion in research grants during fiscal 2008.

The City of Boston's medical and educational institutions are an important component of its economy, providing employment opportunities for residents of the City and Metropolitan Boston. Expenditures by the institutions' patients, students and visitors are important contributors to the City's trade and service sectors. In 2009, there were 120,515 health services jobs in the City. Health services represent 18% of the City's labour force.

Education. The City's 34 universities, colleges, and community colleges have a combined enrolment of nearly 154,000 students. These numbers include the professional and graduate schools of Harvard and Tufts Universities, whose principal campuses are in Cambridge and Medford, respectively. Based on total graduate, undergraduate, and professional school enrolments, Boston University is the largest university in Boston with 32,735 students in the fall of 2007.

Tourism and Culture. According to the Greater Boston Convention and Visitors Bureau, an estimated 18.3 million domestic and international visitors came to the Boston metropolitan area in 2008, up by 2.2% from the previous year. Together, they spent \$7.2 billion. The City's 24 major museums in Boston attracted 9,173,425 visitors in 2008. Boston has proven to be an attractive and competitive destination for conventions, meetings, and trade-and-gate shows. The 1.6 million square-foot Boston Convention and Exhibition Center can host large national conventions and, together with the smaller Hynes Convention Center, hosted about 700,000 attendees in 2009, generating approximately \$420 million in visitor expenditures.

Sports. Metropolitan Boston is home to four major professional sports teams including the Major League Baseball's Boston Red Sox, the National Basketball Association Celtics, the National Hockey League Bruins and the National Football League Patriots whose stadium is located in Foxborough, Massachusetts 21 miles from Boston. The TD Garden, opened in 1995, home to the Celtics and Bruins, is a privately financed, multipurpose arena in Boston. It generates approximately \$229 million in direct annual spending and approximately \$24.6 million in direct taxes.

Transportation. The Metropolitan Boston transportation system was developed incrementally over many years. In the 1950s and 60s, the construction of two limited access circumferential highways and of several high capacity radials provided access to the rapidly developing residential suburbs while the inner part of the area was served by a combination of radial subways and streetcars initially built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The region's roadway system consists of 23,237 lane-miles of interstate highways, other arterial highways, collector roads, local roads and bridges.

Since its completion, metropolitan development trends and limited improvements to the system have progressively weakened its efficiency.

- Suburbanisation put increasing peak time demands on the system.
- Dispersed employment is creating longer commuting trips, making it harder to provide alternative transportation modes.
- Increases in congestion may be able to be slowed through changes in land use patterns.
- Available funding and resources are insufficient to improve the system and provide alternative public transportation.
- Finally, both urban and suburban development are expanding beyond the metropolitan area and spilling over into bordering states. The lack of cooperation

among state planning organisations in eastern Massachusetts, southern New Hampshire, Maine and Rhode Island hamper efforts to improve the system.

Development trends in Metropolitan Boston will increasingly require a highly integrated transportation system of roads, highways, bridges, public transit service, freight rail lines, bicycle routes, pedestrian facilities, and ferry routes. Planning, funding and maintaining integrated transportation network that supports regional economic growth and new private-sector investment in emerging industries is proving to be one of the most difficult challenges to Boston's continuing competitiveness in the global economy. The high construction costs of typical transportation projects, often hundreds of millions of dollars, are beyond the means of local or regional authorities and require the support of both State and Federal governments, a somewhat elusive aspiration at a time of severe budget constraints.

Until 2009, the transportation system had been maintained and operated by a number of different state agencies, including the Massachusetts Highway Department, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, the Massachusetts Port Authority, the Department of Conservation and Recreation and local entities. In 2009, recognizing the need for a more integrated transportation system, the State Legislature merged and re-organized these agencies into a multi-functional organisation, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDot). In 2007, it was estimated that there would be a funding gap of \$15 to \$19 billion over the 20-year period from 2007-2027 to maintain the existing transportation system, including the 100-year old public transit system and the 50-year old interstate highway system.

Roads and Highways. Highways define modern Metropolitan Boston. Its fastest growing cities and towns are located along corridors served by newer highways. Older towns that have evolved into generic "bedroom suburbs" still have village centres, characteristic of historic New England and are often served by a commuter train line. Highways and arterials are intended to provide a high level of mobility at a relatively high speed for long, uninterrupted distances with limited access.

Metropolitan Boston's aging infrastructure is in desperate need of repair. Business leaders are concerned that, without comprehensive investment strategies, neglected and obsolete infrastructure potentially erodes the ability of Metropolitan area industries to be economically competitive. "The average age of the bridges in the region is 40 years. Most of the interstate highways were built between 1950 and 1970. The major arterial roads

connecting regional centres have been in use since the early 1900's. The condition of MA bridges and roads is generally considered among the worst in the nation.

Public Transit. Metropolitan Boston's public transportation system is a hub-and-spoke network of streetcars, light rail vehicles, rapid transit metro rail, express buses, commuter rail, and commuter boat lines. Buses and "trackless trolley" (electric buses) serve the heavily congested urban core communities between the "spokes" and provide feeder service to the commuter rail stations serving the suburbs.

The "quasi-public" Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) provides commuter rail, subway, local bus and express bus services to 175 cities and towns in eastern Massachusetts, serving a population of almost 4.7 million people in an area of 3,200 square miles. The MBTA, the fifth largest mass transit system in the USA as determined by ridership, currently serves about 1.24 million passengers per day. Its capital investment programme is approximately \$3.68 billion for the 2010-2014 period, averaging about \$736 million per fiscal year. It consists of reinvestment in infrastructure; accessibility improvements; enhancement of existing service; and system expansion. The MBTA plans to issue approximately \$1.0 billion of revenue bonds and fund the balance with state funds, pay-as-you-go capital funding and project financing as well as federal stimulus funds.

High Speed Inter-City Rail. Since 1991, Amtrak, the US nationalized passenger rail company, has spent \$1.8 billion on a multi-year high-speed rail infrastructure project to provide better ride quality, permit faster train speeds and increase capacity for passengers on the rail corridor between Boston and New York. Ridership between the two cities has grown significantly as a result of the new high-speed service, despite the general downturn in the economy. In fiscal year 2007, Amtrak carried 975,826 passengers between New York and Boston, an increase of 41% over the pre-Adela year of 2001.

Seaport and Airport. The Massachusetts Port Authority ("Massport") is responsible for the development and management of the City's major air and sea transportation centres. A self-financing quasi-public agency, it is currently expanding Boston's Logan International Airport and the Port of Boston. New expansion projects through June 2009 exceeded \$4.11 billion, \$3.51 billion in the airport and \$605.2 million invested in maritime development and other capital projects.

In 2009, Logan Airport served a total of 25.5 million passengers, a 2.3% decrease from the 26.1 million passengers served in 2008. It is ranked as the 19th most active airport in the United States in terms of total air cargo volume and the 45th most active in the world.

The Port of Boston serves the six-state New England region as a natural deep-water port supporting import and export of containerized bulk and general cargo and providing ship repair supply services, customs and international freight forwarding services intermodal cargo warehouse facilities, and other maritime support services. The Port of Boston is also a major cruise port serving 275,407 cruise passengers in fiscal 2009. It is the 10th largest container port on the U.S. Atlantic Coast in terms of container volume.

Published by International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD)
39 Abbey Street
Armagh BT61 7EB
Northern Ireland

2010

The International Centre for Local and Regional Development is part-financed by the European Union's European Regional Development Fund through the EU INTERREG IVA Programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund
Investing in your future



Special EU Programmes Body
Foras Um Chláir Speisialta An AE
Boord O Owre Ocht UE Projects

Copyright © ICLRD
ISBN No: 978-1-906879-04-4