

## **XV. NOTICING CHANGE AND TAKING ACTION: INDICATORS AND IMPLEMENTATION**

The 2020 Vision Charrette and Regional Growth Management Plan is part of a longer-term effort to engage our communities in a dialogue about regional growth management. The Charrette participants set the agenda, bringing the varied concerns of urban, suburban, and ex-urban communities to the table for discussion. The small group sessions, discussions of tasks to accomplish, barriers and opportunities, and potential actions, as well as the questionnaire results, all helped identify the issues with broadest support.

The 2020 Vision Plan will be our baseline for many years to come. The Northern Middlesex Council of Governments will use this plan to measure progress towards the plan goals and the 2020 Vision, and it will also consult the plan in developing new programs to assist member municipalities in coping with growth management dilemmas.

### **The Northern Middlesex Indicators and Case Study Project**

Starting in 1999, NMCOG will produce an annual report of indicators at the time of the annual meeting in September which will publicize the state of the region in relation to the 2020 Vision goals. The indicators will measure the changes that have taken place in certain key areas such as:

- acres of land preserved by acquisition or easement
- acres of “greenfields” developed
- significant industrial and commercial redevelopment sites (brownfields or other)
- preserved or lost historic sites
- employment statistics
- vehicle miles traveled
- public transportation ridership
- residential building permits
- significant mixed-use or cluster development sites
- water quality and water supply changes

In addition to the indicators, there will be one case study every year of the effect of a growth management effort, either on the municipal or regional level. For example, if a community has chosen to put a cap on building permits for several years, the case study could examine what the initial goals were, how the system has functioned, what the results have been (both locally and regionally), and whether members of the community are satisfied with the results. In this way, communities can share experiences on a regional level.

### **Implementation of the Plan**

Because most land use decisions are made on the municipal level, the implementation of this plan must take place through inter-municipal actions and complementary changes. The Northern Middlesex Council of Governments will first encourage the municipalities in this region to sign memoranda of agreement on two or three issues of broadest appeal with a mechanism for inter-municipal consultation.

NMCOG will also use this plan to develop new programs to assist member municipalities. The issues identified by the charrette, such as regional open space planning, and assistance with model cluster and mixed-use zoning and subdivision regulations, will guide the Council in its pursuit of funding for projects to benefit the region.