



Exclusionary by Design

Investigation into Zoning's Purposes
In the 1970s

Amy Dain, Dain Research

March 2025



Exclusionary *by* Design

An Investigation of Zoning's Use
as a Tool of Race, Class, and Family
Exclusion in Boston's Suburbs,
1920 to Today

By Amy Dain, Dain Research

COMMISSIONED AND ADVISED BY BOSTON INDICATORS



INDICATORS

LAND USE REGULATION AND HOUSING

Residential Land-Use Regulation in Eastern Massachusetts

A Study of 187 Communities

Amy Dain

December 2005



JUNE 2019

The State of Zoning for Multi-Family Housing In Greater Boston

Amy Dain

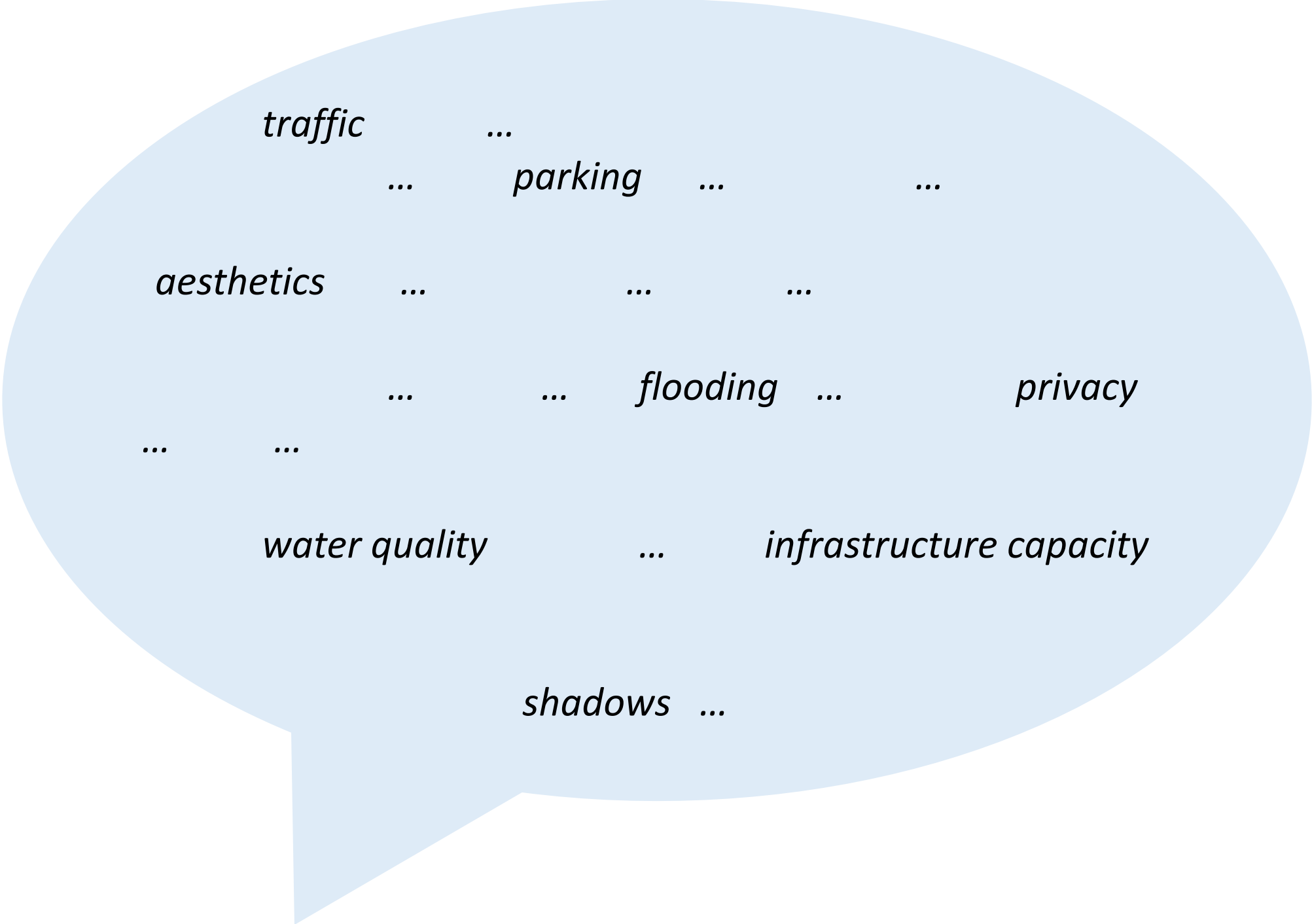


Today

Local zoning laws
significantly ban or
restrict lower-cost
types of housing across
many jurisdictions

“Amy, why do municipalities adopt exclusionary zoning?”

--Multiple reporters



traffic

...

...

parking

...

...

aesthetics

...

...

...

...

...

flooding

...

privacy

...

...

water quality

...

infrastructure capacity

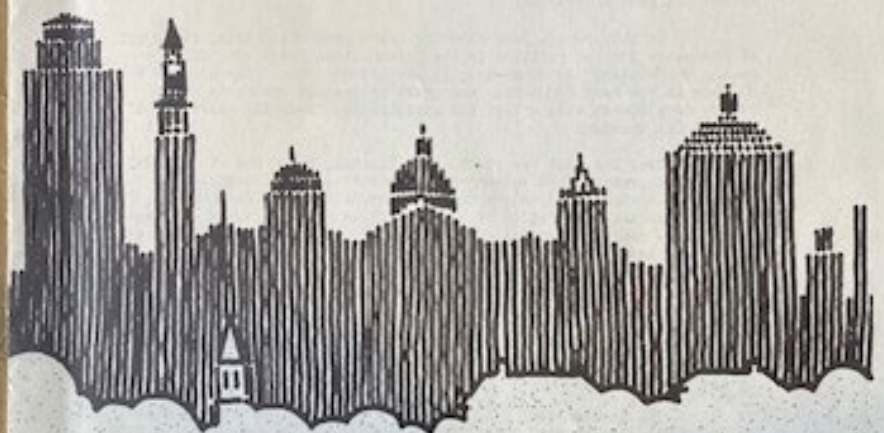
shadows ...

Why do municipalities adopt zoning that is exclusionary – and causes segregation?

- A)** Exclusion is side effect, not intent, of zoning?
- B)** Social class elitism?
- C)** Social class elitism and racism?

Penn
352.7M31:2
N37: P69c

THE CITY
COMES TO



NEEDHAM

STATE LIBRARY
OF
MASSACHUSETTS

NEEDHAM ^{Mass.} PLANNING BOARD · 1955 ·

Metcalf and Eddy, engineer

IPSWICH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

IPSWICH, MASSACHUSETTS

June 1964

PREPARED FOR
IPSWICH PLANNING BOARD
AND

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF COMM

STURBRIDGE, MASS.



LEGEND

- SEWER STUDY RATE
- - - 1945-1955 GROWTH RATE - OPTIMISTIC (46.3%)
- . - . 1955-1965 GROWTH RATE - PESSIMISTIC (20.8%)
- (red) — COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROJECTION

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT ZONING ASK MELROSE HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS

Civics Freshmen Have Made a "Present Use" Map in Such Detail It Shows Every One of the
600 Private Garages and 263 Henhouses



Mrs. Eva G. Osgood



George A. McPheters, Instructor, Civics



Photo by
KEYSTONE

1924

Mid-Century Apartment Debate

Zone for apartments?

PRO:

- Need the housing
- Fiscal benefits

CON:

- Socio-economic position/
ranking in class hierarchy

“It’s a small town, and you can’t say let’s lump everything here. It’s ultimately going to take the town down a notch.”

The Boston Globe
12 Oct 1960, Wed · Page 31

Some town planners want to establish an "executive belt" of estate zoning.



Mid-century apartments,
Framingham



The Big Downzone

Why?

Why did the whole region downzone all at once?

Why?

A. Environment, traffic, growth pains...

B. Class elitism?

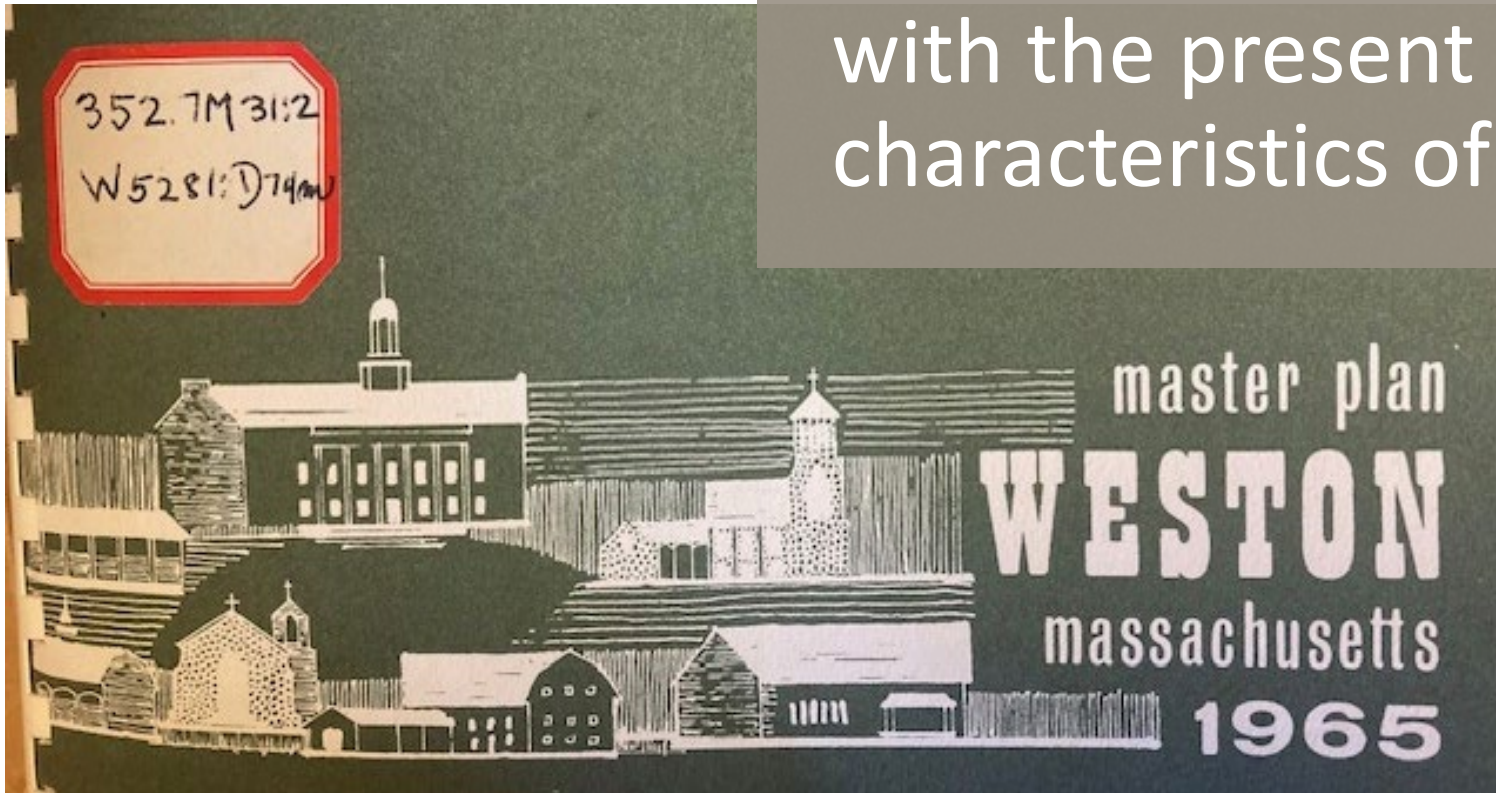
C. Racism?

✓ **A.** Environment, traffic, growth pains...

? **B.** Class elitism

? **C.** Racism

“Social Goal: Accommodate further moderate population growth in a manner consistent with the present characteristics of Weston.”





2. Regional Goal

Assist Weston to become properly integrated into its region; cooperate with other cities and towns, state agencies, public authorities and private groups to the extent advisable to achieve the town's other goals; and resist any regional trends and influences substantially adverse to the town's efforts to achieve its other goals.

3. Social Goal

Accommodate further moderate population growth in a manner consistent with present characteristics of Weston.

4. Physical Goal

Reach realistic decisions about the future use of land, recognizing it as a scarce resource to be conserved rather than exploited; create and maintain a balance of land use activities compatible with and complementary to a predominantly residential community; provide a residential environment having the qualities of comfort, safety, convenience and aesthetic satisfaction; preserve and enhance the visual character and features of the natural and man-made physical environment and reduce or remove unsightly features from the community; and provide for orderly growth of the community while preserving and extending a measure of diversity among its neighborhoods.

“...segregation of the North is a new form of slavery.” –MLK, 1965



1965.]

HOUSE — No. 4155.

9

In a real sense segregation, whether it is de jure segregation of certain sections of the South or de facto segregation of the North, is a new form of slavery covered up with certain niceties of complexities.





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City of Newton's 1968 Housing Report



“Inherent in the controversy, but not often openly articulated, is the notion that to open a community's low-income housing developments to other than local residents signals a major influx of black families fleeing the oppressive conditions of the core city ghettos.”

Federal Fair
Housing Act
of 1968



E

Boston Sunday Globe, March 22, 1970

B-53

Big question of the 70's:

Will suburbs see light, rezone for apartments?

By Anthony J. Yudis, Globe Staff

A Guide to Executive Order No. 215



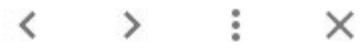
GOVERNMENT DOCUMENT
COLLECTION

DEC 02 1988

University of Massachusetts
Depository Copy



WBUR



It Was Like A War Zone': Busing In Boston | WBUR News

Creator: J. Walter Green

[Visit >](#)



13 volumes of
Local Growth
Policy Statements,
1976



Local Growth Policy Statements: **“No Growth”**



“At this time, and in the foreseeable future, there is little or no advantage in believing our mission is growth.”

-- Natick

Liabilities:

1. Some slummy housing.
2. At least our share of poor people.



A) Environment, traffic, growth pains...



B) Class elitism



C) Racism

✓ **A)** Environment,
traffic, growth pains...

✓ **B)** Class elitism

? **C)** Racism

Holliston's Local Growth Policy Statement, 1976

“Town should continue to
maintain **socio-economic status**
as at present.”

“Town should continue to maintain
socio-economic status as at present.”

Quincy's Local Growth Policy Statement, 1976

“In the recent past, Quincy attracted many new residents, especially from the South Boston and Dorchester areas due to their perception of the City [of Quincy] as being less metropolitan and more residential in character. The most direct impact of this condition upon the City has been the development of a strong sentiment on the part of old and new residents to limit the growth of the community thereby maintaining this residential quality.”

Melrose's Local Growth Policy Statement, 1976

“The city [of Melrose] will gradually become more urbanized. The social structure is becoming more urbanized with faster turnover in houses and increasing numbers of persons moving out from Boston. [...]

Basically, Melrose needs maintenance, not growth.”

Milton's Local Growth Policy Statement, 1976

Under the heading “major growth-related issues,”

“The pronounced changes in the areas contiguous to Milton”

[...and...] “Crime and the apparent breakdown of our society.”



Belmont's Local Growth Policy Statement, 1976

2:27 In what respects and for what reasons, is this "desired future" preferable?

To maintain the present status of Belmont as a desirable place to live. Being only 9 miles from downtown Boston it exists as an almost unique community with its tendency to resist apartment, commercial and industrial development.

Belmont's Local Growth Policy Statement, 1976

“The continuing protective attitude and desires of the residents, with their attendant political power, will tend to protect the status quo, [...] and prevent change in the town from its single family-two-family character. [...]

This town will remain a relatively expensive place to live and so will attract only those families so economically situated.”

Needham's Local Growth Policy Statement, 1976

“Needham’s goals may be defined as preventing major changes to the physical character of the community as a whole.”

Needham's Local Growth Policy Statement, 1976

- “Appendix A represents the efforts of certain members of the Congregational Church of Needham and **does not represent the consensus** opinion of the committee nor is said appendix endorsed by the Growth Policy Committee.”

- **Appendix A:**

“The moral and human costs of segregation are intolerable. Opening up our town and others like ours is in the interest of all citizens. [...]”

“We picture Needham offering a broad spectrum of housing, from multiple-family dwellings to single-family homes of various sizes and values so that it may have a more heterogeneous population.”

Newton's Local Growth Policy Statement, 1976

Goals:

“the development of varied densities of housing for all income and age groups; [...]

the commitment of the City to achieve the development of a sufficient number of housing units to meet the projected demand for housing[....]”

Scituate's Local Growth Policy Statement, 1976

“In addition changes in attitudes of many townspeople would be necessary before the ‘desired future’ could be achieved. As an example, many townspeople have in the past voted against most proposals to permit apartments...”

✓ **A)** Environment, traffic, growth pains...

✓ **B)** Class elitism

✓ **C)** Racism

Increase in all those problems shared by urban areas

A Guide to Executive Order No. 215



GOVERNMENT DOCUMENT
COLLECTION

DEC 02 1988

University of Massachusetts
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In the Face of a Growing Housing Shortage

793/214

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Communities and Development

1979

The Boston Globe
10 Apr 1999, Sat · Page 77

**'We're facing a
daunting problem
because there hasn't
been enough housing
built.'**

**ROBERT BOWYER, Lexington planning
director**

1999



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By Amy Dain, Dain Research
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 Racial Wealth Equity
resource center

 BOSTON INDICATORS



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