



Metropolitan Area Planning Council

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Serving 101 cities and towns in metropolitan Boston

ALERT!

February 12, 1996

TO: Chief Elected Officials and MAPC Representatives
FR: David C. Soule, Executive Director
RE: Open Space Bond Bill

RECEIVED
MAYOR'S OFFICE
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
96 FEB 14 AM 11:23

Good news! On Monday, February 12, 1996 Governor Weld signed H-5763, "*An Act Providing for an Environmental Enhancement and Protection Program for the Commonwealth*," known commonly as the "Open Space Bond Bill." The \$399.2 million environmental bond bill is the first major expansion of public lands in nine years, and provides funding to buy and protect forests, wetlands, watersheds and open space. In addition, the funds can be used to convert railbeds to biking and hiking trails, preserves habitat for endangered species, and allows for the state purchase of land near public water supplies. The bill also provides \$30 million in funding for Title 5 loans for low-income homeowners, \$50 million in "Self-help" and "Urban Self-Help" programs to assist cities and towns to acquire and maintain their own open space, \$65 million for Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) projects, and \$25 million for farmland protection.

Also included is a \$10 million allotment for the development of local, regional, and statewide comprehensive land-use planning, of which \$6 million will be allotted to municipalities, \$2 million to regional planning agencies, and \$2 million to the state.

Another \$20 million was provided for geographical information systems (GIS). GIS is computer technology capable of assembling, storing, manipulating, and displaying "geographically referenced information", or data identified according to its spatial location (mapping). GIS is intended to provide more accurate land-use planning. Through language inserted into the bill by MAPC, a portion of said funding will be allocated to municipalities and regional planning agencies in the form of grants for the creation or improvement of current GIS capabilities.

The *MAPC News* will provide information on assessing the bond bill's funds as they become available. For additional information, please contact Lori Prew at extension 2042.

We would like to extend our thanks to all of you who responded to our previous "action alerts" by contacting your legislators. We also appreciated the many letters that you copied to us. Thanks again for your efforts-- the payoff was definitely worth it!

William G. Constable, *President*

Richard A. Easler, *Vice-President*

Grace S. Shepard, *Secretary*

Leland G. Wood, *Treasurer*

David C. Soule, *Executive Director*

Consent Communication #4

5-93

Communication was received from
David C. Soule, Executive Director,
Metropolitan Area Planning Council,
transmitting information on the
Open Space Bond Bill.

In City Council February 26, 1996

Referred to City Manager for
a report back within one
month.