

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

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- largest ever

In Pittsfield, the \$60M+ downtown mall (including a \$14.2M UDAG) has been a difficult struggle involving historic preservation issues. We have now reached an understanding incorporating some limited design modifications. The final hurdle will be to secure the anchor store commitments. The mall has sparked tremendous private sector activity supporting downtown Pittsfield. We are working with this group and the city on a range of economic development issues including saving a rail spur for the industrial park, securing a jet fuel supplier and storage facility for the airport and improving the airport's access road.

The economic future of Pittsfield ^w will largely depend on the success of its downtown mall. It will be important to continue the active participation of the private sector on projects that will assist the existing commercial sector and visibly exhibit development activity in the city. This would help stem the tide of abandonment by the area's young people (Pittsfield has experienced a significant decline in population in recent years). Improvements to Rte. 7, the city's major access route will be important to facilitate industrial growth, including tourism.
Importance of stabilization of GE.

Springfield is in the midst of a major downtown revitalization effort largely orchestrated by a unique private business group - Springfield Central. They have several mortgage pools available with flexible financing for downtown investment. Complementing this activity in the private sector two UDAG grants over 400 units of CBD housing rehab, an urban transit mall, a \$15M federal building, a river-front park and a state heritage park are all in varying stages of development. With capable planning staffs in place and projects well along, our efforts have been focused on industrial expansion, housing and neighborhood revitalization. A key component to the industrial growth is the Skills Center. We have provided support for its expansion and renovations, as well as improvements for the industrial park with assistance from EDA.

Our future role in Springfield will involve neighborhood revitalization projects with the Upper State Street Development Corp., continued support for the downtown including river-front projects which are still in the early stages, and industrial expansion with a particular focus on high tech industries, as Springfield is extremely well situated for air and highway access.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - WEST

Community activity in GREENFIELD has seen new life with the award of the \$2.2M CDBG. Three major employers have left the town and this, coupled with other factors, was threatening Greenfield's position as the social and economic center of the County. The Block Grant has triggered several projects including plans for the rehab of an unused downtown theatre, 110 units of elderly housing (downtown), expansion of state and federal office space which we are working to keep downtown, and the formation of a coalition of bankers who stand ready to participate in the revitalization process. An RTA has been formed to provide the County with a transportation network. We have strongly supported all of these efforts and I think we have developed a unique position of leadership in this community. - PET's visit

The priorities for Greenfield must be to work on involving the cautious downtown merchants and financial sector in the revitalization process, locate tenants to fill the available industrial space, improve Rte. 2 which is the major east-west access route and perceived in the community as a barrier to future economic development. Greenfield could be a model for rural community revitalization. Unique group of people

STATE ISSUE

The proposed diversion of the Connecticut River is an issue of great significance to the state and also raises the issue of the adequacy of municipal water supplies in Massachusetts and the entire Northeast. While most of national water policy has been focused on the needs of our western states, urban water distribution systems have been left to decay causing purity and supply problems. Our position on the Ct. Diversion (which is very similar to nuclear power) is that conservation, development of ground water resources and system rehab must be looked to first before we consider a water diversion project. Water is an essential resource to all community development efforts and no longer can we assume its easy supply. Communities should assess their water supplies, examine their management practices for improved conservation, and look more to regional solutions. To respond to this problem will require some legislation to broaden existing programs (eg the Army Corps, HUD EDA).