

LAND USE

An analysis of the existing land use patterns in Sterling is included in this section of the report.

Only 13.85 square miles of Sterling land area of 30.52 miles is in use at the present time (see figure). Most of this is in diversified agricultural use, over 65% of the agricultural land is devoted to grazing - hay and grains. Orchards, a primary source of income to Sterling farmers occupy almost 16% of all agricultural land. Livestock raising, poultry and gardening account for the remainder.

Residential development comprises 20% of the land used in 1961. Residential use strings out along the main lines of communication Route 140, Route 12, Route 62 and the interconnecting street system. Residential uses are concentrated in the town core at the junction of the North-South and East-West highways and in West Sterling. New sub-divisions are beginning to appear near Route 12 at the Sterling Leominster line.

The main business and shopping area is located in the center of town. Roadside business uses catering to automobile traffic are predominant along Route 12 and 140. Business uses range from Banking and general retail stores at the center to restaurants, inns, taverns and gas stations along principal highways. Clinton, about 5 miles to the east, is a primary shopping area for personal services and specialty goods. Sterling center is relatively undeveloped serving primarily convenience goods shopping except for banking services.

Institutional uses are for the most part concentrated in the town center, school, churches and library are on or near the common, focal point of town activities.

Industry, approximately 139 acres, is scattered about the town. Primary activity centers around the cider mill in the town center along the old railroad and the trap rock quarry on Route 12. A major power distribution center is located at Pratt's Junction in the northeastern quadrant of Sterling. Other industrial activities include scrap metal, lumber milling, sand and gravel and peat extraction.

Public land is located largely in the southeastern quadrant, where large land holdings of the Metropolitan District Commission make up part of the Wachusett Reservoir watershed.

TABLE 2

LAND USE 1961STERLING, MASSACHUSETTS

<u>USE</u>	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>% TOTAL</u>
Residence	667.75	3.41
Business	55.10	.30
Industry	138.84	.71
Transportation	221.40	1.20
Water Area	738.08	4.00
Public Land	<u>1403.39</u>	<u>7.16</u>
Sub total	3269.5	16.76%
Agriculture:		
Orchards	883.28	4.62
Livestock	371.27	1.90
Poultry	134.00	.68
Gardening	525.50	2.69
Hay & Grain	<u>3673.00</u>	<u>18.75</u>
Sub total	5587.05	28.64%
Vacant or Wooded Land	<u>10,676.19</u>	<u>54.60%</u>
TOTAL	19,482.80 acres	100.00%

LAND USE 1961

LEGEND

- RESIDENCE
- BUSINESS
- INDUSTRY
- OPEN SPACE
- ORCHARDS
- INTENSIVE FARMING
- PUBLIC LAND
- UNDEVELOPED



PLATE III

EXISTING LAND USE
STERLING PLANNING BOARD

MAP SCALE

STERLING PLANNING BOARD

