

Northeastern University
Dukakis Center *for* Urban & Regional Policy

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL (EDSAT)

**EDSAT REPORT FOR THE TOWN OF
STONEHAM, MASSACHUSETTS
MAY 2017**



THE PARTNERS

About the Kitty and Michael Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy

The Kitty and Michael Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University conducts interdisciplinary research, in collaboration with civic leaders and scholars both within and beyond Northeastern University, to identify and implement real solutions to the critical challenges facing urban areas throughout Greater Boston, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the nation. Founded in 1999 as a “think and do” tank, the Dukakis Center’s collaborative research and problem-solving model applies powerful data analysis, a bevy of multidisciplinary research and evaluation techniques, and a policy-driven perspective to address a wide range of issues facing cities and towns. These issues include affordable housing, local economic development, workforce development, transportation, public finance, and environmental sustainability. The staff of the Dukakis Center works to catalyze broad-based efforts to solve urban problems, acting as both a convener and a trusted and committed partner to local, state, and national agencies and organizations. The Dukakis Center is housed within Northeastern University’s School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs.

About the National League of Cities

The National League of Cities is the nation’s oldest and largest organization devoted to strengthening and promoting cities as centers of opportunity, leadership, and governance. NLC is a resource and advocate for more than 1,600 member cities and the 49 state municipal leagues, representing 19,000 cities and towns and more than 218 million Americans. Through its Center for Research and Innovation, NLC provides research and analysis on key topics and trends important to cities, creative solutions to improve the quality of life in communities, inspiration and ideas for local officials to use in tackling tough issues and opportunities for city leaders to connect with peers, share experiences, and learn about innovative approaches to urban governance.

For additional information about the Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT), please visit <http://www.northeastern.edu/dukakiscenter/econdev/edsat> or contact:

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INTRODUCTION

A robust, sustainable, and adaptable local economy depends heavily on public officials who can lead in forming and implementing an economic development strategy. A thorough strategy is developed with an understanding of local business interests and regional resource availability, and a careful assessment of the community’s ability to attract new business investment and jobs. Participating in the Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT) is an important step public officials can take to assess their jurisdictions’¹ strengths and weaknesses for the purpose of planning for viable, long-term economic growth. Through EDSAT, public officials and business leaders collaborate as a team, assessing each of their roles in creating a business-friendly climate.

By participating in this self-assessment, Stoneham will not only better understand its economic development assets and challenges, but learn to build upon strengths and overcome weaknesses. This report contains a thorough analysis of the responses provided by Stoneham to the EDSAT questionnaire.

The Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy will keep all individual-municipality results in this report strictly confidential.

Project Overview

Since 2005, Northeastern University’s Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (Dukakis Center) has sought to identify the “deal-breakers” that impede private investment in local municipalities. Based upon research on the resurgence of older industrial cities, the Dukakis Center has identified two crucial elements in economic development. First is a municipality’s ability to respond opportunely to ever-changing market forces. Second is local government’s skill in working collaboratively with regional agencies, business leaders, and academic institutions to lessen municipal weaknesses and market the city or town’s strengths. These conclusions led to the development of EDSAT, an analytical framework for providing practical, actionable feedback to public officials. In its current form, EDSAT resulted from a partnership between the Dukakis Center and the National League of Cities (NLC).

Methodology

The foundation for the 200-plus questions that make up the EDSAT questionnaire was established when the Dukakis Center surveyed more than 240 members of the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties, now known as NAIOP and CoreNet Global. These leading professional associations represent site and location experts, whose members research new sites for businesses and other institutions. Members were asked to identify those factors that are most important to businesses and developers when evaluating locations. This process generated a set of 38 broad factors relevant to economic growth and development. Examples include highway access, available workforce, and the timeliness of permit reviews. Based on rankings by these location experts, EDSAT factors are identified as *Very Important*, *Important*, or *Less Important* to businesses and developers. We denote these rankings as follows: A filled circle (●) indicates *Very Important*, a half-filled circle (◐) indicates *Important*, and an unfilled circle (○) indicates *Less Important*.

¹ Jurisdictions are usually categorized as individual towns and/or cities. A “jurisdiction” can also consist of several small municipalities, a geographic region, or a county—as long as each plans and strategizes its economic development efforts as a single entity.

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF EDSAT LOCATION FACTORS

<p>Very Important ●</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highway Access • Parking • Traffic • Infrastructure • Rents • Workforce Composition • Timeliness of Approvals • Website/Access to Information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of Available Space • Land • Labor Cost • Industry Sensitivity • Sites Available • Predictable Permits • Fast Track Permits • Citizen Participation in the Review Process • Cultural and Recreational Amenities • Crime • Housing • Local Schools • Amenities • State Business Incentives • Local Business Incentives • Local Tax Rates • Tax Delinquency 	<p>Less Important ○</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airports • Rail • Water Transportation • Proximity to Universities and Research • Unions • Workforce Training • Permitting Ombudsman
<p>Important ◐</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Transit • Physical Attractiveness • Complementary / Supplemental Business Services • Critical Mass Firms • Cross Marketing • Marketing Follow-Up 		

Each question in EDSAT addresses a particular location factor and provides three ways to interpret that factor relative to the response in your own community:

1. The level of importance businesses and developers place on that location factor
2. How other jurisdictions participating in EDSAT have typically responded to that question
3. How your jurisdiction's response compares to the typical response and the importance of the location factor

The EDSAT analysis compares your jurisdiction's responses with those of Comparison Group Municipalities (CGM)—that is, all of the jurisdictions that have completed the EDSAT questionnaire. With regard to the Permitting Process, for example, your jurisdiction may offer significantly shorter review times than the CGM. In this case, the EDSAT analysis suggests that on this measure your jurisdiction may possess a relative advantage in what is a *Very Important* location factor. However, if permit reviews take significantly longer, then your jurisdiction may be at a disadvantage, because businesses are interested in “time-to-market”—the time it takes to get up and running in an ever-increasingly competitive environment.

EDSAT assigns a color code to highlight the results of your jurisdiction compared to the median response among the CGM. Colors—green, yellow, and red—indicate a municipality's relative strength on each specific location factor. Green indicates that your jurisdiction is quantitatively or qualitatively stronger than the CGM response; yellow indicates that your jurisdiction is average or typical; and red indicates a relative deficiency.

SAMPLE RESULT, DRAWN FROM SECTION 1: ACCESS TO MARKETS/CUSTOMERS

<input type="radio"/> E. Airports			
Report of [REDACTED] as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	<i>Comparison Group</i>
27: Do you have a local (municipal/ general aviation) airport?	yes	[GREEN]	no

The interaction between the importance of a location factor and your jurisdiction’s relative strength yields powerful information. With respect to businesses and developers, a comparison yielding “red” for a *Very Important* factor represents the potential for a “deal-breaker,” while a comparison resulting in “green” for a *Very Important* factor represents the likelihood of a “deal-maker.” There are several important considerations to keep in mind when reviewing a jurisdiction’s EDSAT results:

1. If your jurisdiction is at a disadvantage in certain *Very Important* location factors, such as possessing a slow permitting process, a workforce that lacks necessary skills, and infrastructure that lacks the capacity to support growth, it is considered to have three distinct “deal-breakers,” regardless of its geographic location.
2. Your jurisdiction should look at its EDSAT results as an overview, and not focus on a particular location factor. One “deal-breaker” does not mean that your jurisdiction should abandon its economic development efforts. At the same time, your jurisdiction cannot rely solely on one or two “deal-makers.” Economic development is a dynamic process and should be managed in such a way that a community continually responds to the changing needs of local and prospective businesses.
3. The interpretation of comparisons and color assignments depends on your jurisdiction’s context in answering the question and its objectives for economic development. For example, if there are significantly more square feet of vacant commercial space than the CGM median, EDSAT assigns “red” because large amounts of space may indicate outdated facilities in a stagnant local economy. However, the empty space may actually be an asset if your jurisdiction is focusing on attracting businesses that would benefit from large spaces, such as a creative mixed-use complex. Thus, your jurisdiction’s context is important in understanding EDSAT results.

For some questions, the red and green color assignments serve to highlight the response for further consideration within the context of your jurisdiction’s objectives and circumstances. Several questions have no comparison at all. They tend to be lists of potential incentives, resources, or regulations associated with the municipality and will be discussed in corresponding sections of the report.

SUMMARY OF RELATIVE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

This section summarizes Stoneham's primary strengths and weaknesses in the realm of economic development. EDSAT does not provide an overall grade for a jurisdiction, but rather assesses a jurisdiction's unique set of strengths, weaknesses, and economic development objectives.

The Dukakis Center staff creates a list of significant or notable responses for each of the *Very Important*, *Important*, and *Less Important* location factors, emphasizing strengths and "deal-makers," which are not organized in any particular order of importance. Dukakis Center staff suggests that your municipality review these lists and use them to highlight, enhance, and market your town's strengths.

Tasks on the weakness and "deal-breaker" lists, however, are prioritized to emphasize the importance of their mitigation. The Dukakis Center staff arranges the tasks according to feasibility, with consideration of the latitude and abilities of local, county, or regional levels of government. For example, in a jurisdiction with limited highway access, building a new highway interchange or connector would likely be cost-prohibitive, time-consuming, and an inefficient use of local resources. However, other tasks are more feasible with modest investments in time and resources. For example, streamlining the permitting process and making related development information readily accessible to both location experts and businesses could be accomplished without significant capital investments. Although location experts rank both highway access and the timeliness of permitting as *Very Important* location factors, in the prioritized list of potential "deal-breakers," the permitting process is given a higher priority due to its feasibility in implementation.

Stoneham's Strengths and Potential "Deal-Makers"

The following three lists of Stoneham's strengths are its powerful economic development assets. The town should build upon these assets and promote them to prospective businesses and developers. Stoneham should first consider those in the *Very Important* group, then the *Important*, and finally the *Less Important* group. Please note that strengths are **not listed in any particular order** within each list.

Strengths among *Very Important* Location Factors

HIGHWAY ACCESS: Stoneham lies just north of the Boston metro's inner-core cities, and it is easily accessible via Routes 93 and 95/128. Notwithstanding typical weekday traffic, access to the big employment and research centers of Boston and Cambridge is a quick, 15-minute drive.

PARKING: Stoneham is well-equipped with parking, with the further advantage of offering parking facilities near development sites. Plentiful parking, combined with strong highway access, comprise good automotive bones for developers and firms interested in such infrastructure.

AVAILABLE LABOR: Stoneham has a relatively well-educated workforce, with up to 50 percent of working adults holding at least a bachelor's degree.

INFRASTRUCTURE: Stoneham has sufficient capacity for growth and reliable service in every present infrastructure system (i.e., water supply, public sewer, wastewater treatment, natural gas, electric power, and data and telecommunications services). This is a tremendous asset to a potential commercial or industrial-scale developer. While energy prices in the Northeast Region of the United States are generally higher than the national average, Stoneham's energy prices appear to be slightly higher than the CGM, although it is impossible to tell based on the price structures provided. For more information on state and national electricity prices broken down into residential, commercial, and industrial uses, visit this link from the U.S. Energy Information Administration:

https://www.eia.gov/electricity/monthly/epm_table_grapher.cfm?t=epmt_5_6_a

Strengths among *Important* Location Factors

PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS: In addition to being a visually attractive town, Stoneham can be proud of its ample park space, and the existence of a system to monitor the timeliness and quality of responses to reported violations within your jurisdiction. Further, a comparatively lower proportion of Stoneham's housing stock, commercial buildings, or industrial space is vacant or in critical need of renovation.

PREDICTABLE PERMITS: Stoneham’s new development handbook, “Guide to Doing Business in Stoneham 2017,” is an asset that will help interested developers and firms wrap their arms around town’s rules of engagement.

CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL AMENITIES: Stoneham is fortunate to be home to the Stoneham Theatre as well as to a publicly available auditorium – both tremendous cultural assets for town residents and location specialists looking for attractive amenities.

HOUSING: Like other communities in the Boston metro region, the cost of housing and rents in Stoneham are very high. That said, the housing market in is strong, with the homeownership rate at 76 % or greater and rental vacancy at less than 3 %. While it should be noted that such low vacancy rates drive up housing prices and rents, it is also an indication of the area’s economic strength. Further, “most” of the major officers of firms located in Stoneham live within the community, which demonstrates the town’s appeal.

LOCAL SCHOOLS: Stoneham schools are strong, reflecting in part the town’s high per-pupil and teacher salary investment (see Labor, Section 4a). A high proportion of Stoneham high school students scored at least “proficient” in Mathematics, and a higher proportion of high school freshman graduate from high school within five years (95% or more).

SITE AMENITIES: Similar to its cultural and physical amenities, Stoneham has ample amenities within one mile of development sites, including fast food restaurants, fine dining, day care facilities and retail shops.

Strengths among *Less Important* Location Factors

AIRPORTS: Notwithstanding traffic concerns, it is a quick commute from Stoneham center to Logan International Airport, approximately 11 miles away.

PROXIMITY TO UNIVERSITIES & RESEARCH: While Stoneham itself does not have any educational institutions within its jurisdiction, most of the 40 higher educational institutions in the Boston metro area are within a ten-mile commute.

Stoneham’s Weaknesses and Potential “Deal-Breakers”

Despite many advantages, Stoneham has a number of apparent weaknesses that can pose a challenge to successful development. The factors in the *Very Important* group are the ones that the town should consider addressing first because they are the most critical potential “deal-breakers.” Again, the town should next consider those in the *Important* group, and finally those the *Less Important* group.

Unlike the above itemization of Stoneham’s strengths, this three-part list of weaknesses is **arranged in order of priority**. We suggest that, while reviewing this prioritized list of challenges, participants keep in mind Stoneham’s economic development objectives and the feasibility (economic and otherwise) of upgrading “deal-breakers” and other weaknesses.

Weaknesses among *Very Important* Location Factors

WEBSITE: Stoneham’s website is difficult to navigate and outdated. Your municipal website is the first window into your town’s identity and an important source for critical information – both cultural and economic. Stoneham should consider a full update of the website with an eye for design and ease of use. Northeastern University will provide a set of “best practices” as it relates to municipal websites.

WORKFORCE COMPOSITION: While Stoneham follows the comparison group closely in terms of workforce composition, it does lag behind the CGM in the percentage of your workforce deemed “technically skilled.”

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL RENTS: While rents across the board are higher than the comparison group, it should be noted that Stoneham’s proximity to Boston, easy highway access, and suburban community environment not only accounts for the higher ticket price, but could arguably ease pressure for location specialists looking for sites outside of the higher-rent area of Boston proper.

Weaknesses among *Important* Location Factors

PUBLIC TRANSIT: Stoneham’s public transit access is fragmentary at best. Entirely reliant on bus service, the system works well for the downtown retail district but services manufacturing and offices properties comparatively poorly. The closest commuter rail stop is in adjacent Melrose, but shuttle services are not available to reach it.

INDUSTRY SENSITIVITY: While Stoneham has a quick response team available when negative data, stories, or incidents about your town make the news, the town does not have a marketing program based on existing core strengths, or enlist local firms to speak on Stoneham’s behalf as a place to do business.

CRITICAL MASS FIRMS: While Stoneham has a newly-established Community Development Corporation, it does not currently have an up-to-date development strategy, an overall economic development plan, or an economic development plan within an updated community master plan. Stoneham is, however, part of a county or regional OEDP or Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy via the regional Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD).

FAST TRACK PERMITS: Although Stoneham is at par with the comparison group in this category, your jurisdiction fails to use tools that expedite the permitting process. Pre-permitting, the use of an overlay district, and “fast track” permitting are all very attractive to potential developers or firms.

MARKETING FOLLOW-UP: Stoneham does not currently have any marketing follow-up processes as a part of its economic development strategy. While lack of marketing follow-up is common among the CGM, it is considered a deterrent to location specialists.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: Stoneham appears to be a civically engaged town—an asset in most respects. However, during the review process citizen involvement has slowed or stopped potential development in the past. A history of abutter and organized neighborhood groups slowing the permitting process could be considered a deterrent to interested firms.

COMPLEMENTARY / SUPPLEMENTAL BUSINESS SERVICES: Although Stoneham has a moderately active Chamber of Commerce and a new Community Development Corporation, the town is currently incapable of meeting demand for business services for emerging technical and scientific firms, and does not offer incubator space for startups—despite its prime geographic location near innovation-heavy Boston and Cambridge.

STATE BUSINESS INCENTIVES: While Massachusetts provides a robust suite of state-led tax incentives, Stoneham does not take active advantage of these offerings.

TAX DELINQUENCY: Stoneham does not currently have an organized and defined process for auctioning tax title properties and ensuring its success. There does appear to be capacity for this function, however, given that tax delinquent or tax title properties which serve as an impediment to development receive special attention.

CRIME: Residential burglary in Stoneham is somewhat higher than the CGM (397 versus 256 per 100,000 residents last year). Auto theft and homicide are also higher than Stoneham’s peers. Robbery, however, is lower than the comparison group.

Weaknesses among *Less Important* Location Factors

WORKFORCE TRAINING: Stoneham does not currently support public-private partnerships to provide specific workforce training, nor does it offer an adult training program to residents. This could be a lost opportunity to train under-skilled residents for jobs garnered via new development within your jurisdiction.

RAIL: Stoneham does not have freight rail, commuter rail, or intercity passenger rail service available within town borders.

DETAILED ANALYSIS AND QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The following is a ten-part section-by-section analysis of the EDSAT results comparing Stoneham's self-reported responses with the median response among the CGM. Each location factor is ranked with three possible symbols: The shaded circle (●) denotes a *Very Important* factor, the half-shaded circle (◐) denotes an *Important* factor, and the unshaded circle (○) denotes a *Less Important* factor.

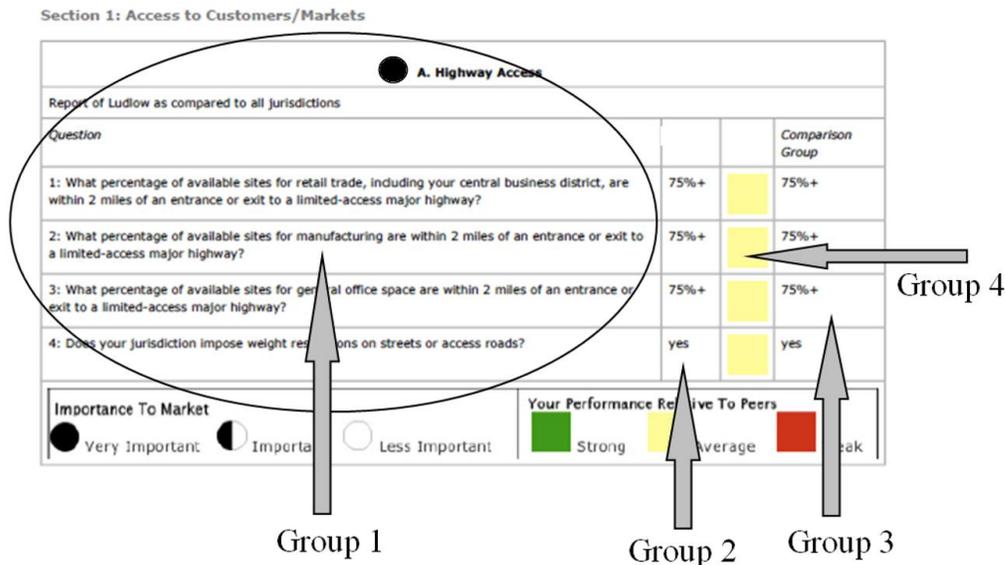
This ten-part portion of the report—its heart, really—is presented in the same order as the questions listed on the EDSAT questionnaire, with the tabular printout of Stoneham's results appearing first, and our narrative summary and interpretation of the results appearing second. The tabular results are displayed in four primary groupings of information:

Group 1 identifies a location factor (such as Highway Access), a circle indicating the relative importance of the location factor, and questions related to the factor that your town has already answered.

Group 2 shows Stoneham's responses to the EDSAT questions.

Group 3 is the median (or majority, for yes/no questions) response among the "comparison group municipalities" (or CGM) that have completed the EDSAT questionnaire.

Group 4 is a series of green, yellow, or red blocks indicating how Stoneham compares to the CGM. A built-in function in EDSAT allows a municipality to compare itself against a subset of the CGM by other criteria such as population, median income, or size of operating budget. For purposes of this analysis, however, Stoneham is compared with all the CGM.



Section 1: Access to Customers/Markets

In order to minimize transportation costs and time-to-market, businesses want adequate access to uncongested transportation corridors for their shipping needs, customers, and employees. Highway access, congestion, and parking are *Very Important* factors in location decisions. Public transportation is *Important*, while proximity to airports, rail, and water transport are *Less Important*. The overall physical attractiveness of public spaces, enforcement of codes, and condition of housing and commercial real estate are *Important*, as they are indications of general economic health and quality of life in a community.

 A. Highway Access			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
1: What percentage of available sites for retail trade, including your central business district, are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	75% or greater		75% or greater
2: What percentage of available sites for manufacturing are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	75% or greater		75% or greater
3: What percentage of available sites for general office space are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	75% or greater		75% or greater
4: Does your jurisdiction impose weight restrictions on streets or access roads?	yes		no

 B. Public Transit			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
5: What percentage of available sites for retail trade are within 1/4 mile of public bus or rail rapid transit?	75% or greater		50-74%
6: What percentage of available sites for manufacturing are within 1/4 mile of public bus or rail rapid transit?	1-25%		26-49%
7: What percentage of available sites for general office space are within 1/4 mile of public bus or rail rapid transit?	26-49%		50-74%
8: Is there a transit-oriented development strategy in your plans for attracting new firms?	no		no
9: Is there a commuter rail or bus stop within 5 miles of your jurisdiction's boundaries?	yes		yes
10: Do you offer any shuttle services to other public commuting stations?	no		no
11: Is public transit service available on nights and weekends?	yes		yes

Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
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C. Parking			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
12: What percentage of available sites for retail trade have on-site parking?	75% or greater		75% or greater
13: What percentage of available sites for manufacturing have on-site parking?	75% or greater		75% or greater
14: What percentage of available sites for general office space have on-site parking?	75% or greater		75% or greater
15: Does your jurisdiction offer parking facilities near development sites?	yes		no
16: Have you used state or federal infrastructure grants to improve parking in your jurisdiction?	no		no
17: How much is typically charged for parking in your central business district? \$/Hourly	0		between 0 and \$1/hour
18: How much is typically charged for parking in your central business district? \$/Daily	0		0
19: How much is typically charged for parking in your central business district? \$/Monthly	20		0

D. Traffic			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
20: Do you have regular access to a traffic engineer or transportation planner, such as one who is on staff or with a regional organization of which your jurisdiction is a member?	yes		yes
21: Do you routinely use the services of a transportation consultant?	no		yes
22: Do you have access to traffic count data for the major roadways in your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
23: Do you require firms or developers to provide traffic mitigation beyond the streets adjacent to the site? (e.g. installing traffic signals, metering flow)	yes		yes
24: How would you rate traffic into and out of your jurisdiction during a typical weekday rush hour?	Extremely congested		Moderately congested
25: What is the average speed of automobile commuter traffic during a typical weekday rush hour?	11 - 25 mph		11 - 25 mph
26: Do you require a traffic impact analysis for large-scale development or redevelopment projects?	yes		yes

Importance To Market Very Important Important Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers Strong Average Weak No Comparison
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E. Airports

Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
27: Do you have a local (municipal/ general aviation) airport?	no		no
28: The closest regional airport is how many miles away?	11-20 miles		11-20 miles
29: The closest major/international airport is how many miles away?	11-20 miles		20-30 miles
30: Is the major/international airport accessible by public transportation?	yes		yes
31: How long does it take to drive to the major/international airport from your town center?	21 minutes to 60 minutes		21 minutes to 60 minutes

Importance To Market Very Important Important Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers Strong Average Weak No Comparison
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F. Rail

Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
32: Do you have rail freight service available?	no		yes
33: Do you have intercity passenger rail service? Check all that apply.			
- Commuter	no		no
- Intercity/Interstate(Amtrak)	no		no
- None	yes		no

Importance To Market Very Important Important Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers Strong Average Weak No Comparison
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G. Physical Attractiveness			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
34: To what extent do you enforce codes and regulations on abandoned properties, abandoned vehicles, trash disposal within your jurisdiction?	Moderately		Moderately
35: To what extent does your jurisdiction maintain streets, sidewalks, parks, etc., near available development sites?	Weakly		Moderately
36: Is there a hotline available for reporting code violations and maintenance needs within your jurisdiction?	yes		no
37: Is there a system for monitoring the timeliness and quality of responses to reported violations within your jurisdiction?	yes		no
38: Do you involve the arts community in the design of open space (street furniture, murals, etc.)?	yes		no
39: What percentage of the acreage within your jurisdiction is reserved for parks?	21% or greater		6-10%
40: What percentage of your housing stock is considered dilapidated?	0-5%		0-5%
41: What percentage of your commercial buildings are boarded up or closed down and would need renovations to reopen?	0-5%		0-5%
42: What percentage of commercial space is presently vacant (not currently occupied)?	0-5%		6-10%
43: What percentage of your industrial buildings are boarded up or closed down and would need renovations to reopen?	0-5%		0-5%
44: What percentage of industrial space is presently vacant (not currently occupied)?	0-5%		6-10%

H. Water Transportation			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
45: Do you have water based transportation facilities within your jurisdiction? Check all that apply.			

<p>Importance To Market</p> <p> Very Important Important Less Important</p>	<p>Your Performance Relative To Peers</p> <p> Strong Average</p> <p> Weak No Comparison</p>
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Section 2: Concentration of Businesses (Agglomeration)

Agglomeration refers to the number of complementary and supplemental services and related firms—including academic institutions—that are available within a jurisdiction to support new or existing companies. A concentration of similar or supporting companies creates a critical mass of businesses within an industry, making it easier for that industry to thrive in the local community, regionally, or on the state level. The scale of agglomeration within a jurisdiction can be enhanced by the intensity of its efforts to attract companies, its coordination of marketing plans with regional or state efforts, cross marketing among stakeholder organizations, and follow-up with existing and potential businesses.

 A. Complementary/Supplemental Business Services			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
1: Is your local chamber of commerce or business association actively involved in the economic development activities of your jurisdiction?	Moderately		Moderately
2: Does your jurisdiction have an active volunteer economic development committee or nonprofit center for economic development?	yes		yes
3: Is there an incubator or other form of cooperative space for start-up businesses in your jurisdiction?	no		no
4: Are there CPA, business advisory or financial services firms in your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
5: Are there law firms in your jurisdiction specializing in commercial law, intellectual property rights, or patents?	yes		yes
6: Are there branches of major commercial banks in your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
7: To what extent are the business services (e.g. venture capital, business planning, specialized recruiting, etc.) in your jurisdiction capable of working with emerging technical and scientific firms?	Not capable		Moderately capable

			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
8: Does your jurisdiction have an up-to-date development strategy, an overall economic development plan (OEDP), or an economic development plan within your community master plan?	no		yes
9: Is your jurisdiction part of a county or regional OEDP or Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs)?	yes		yes
10: Does your state have a development strategy or economic development plan?	yes		yes
11: If yes, are there firms within specific industry types or sectors that are targeted in your jurisdiction's, your county's or your state's development strategy?	yes		yes
12: If yes, what specific industry types or sectors are targeted by your municipality's development strategy? Other, please specify (Your Municipality)			
13: If yes, what specific industry types or sectors are targeted by your region/county's development strategy? Other, please specify (Regional/County)			
14: If yes, what specific industry types or sectors are targeted by your state's development strategy? (State)			
15: Which of the following jurisdictions have development specialists to assist in interpreting the needs of these clusters? (Choose all that apply)			
- Your Municipality	no		yes
- Regional/County	yes		no
- State	yes		no
16: How aggressive is your industrial attraction policy?	Don't have one		Moderate

			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
17: Do you actively enlist the services of firms already resident in your jurisdiction to assist in attracting new firms?	no		no
18: Do you engage local and regional business organizations to participate in marketing your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
19: Do you engage regional planning and development organizations to participate in marketing your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
20: Do you engage state agencies and organizations to participate in marketing your jurisdiction?	yes		yes



D. Marketing Follow-Up

Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions

<i>Question</i>	<i>Stoneham</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
21: Is there a formal de-briefing process with firms that chose to locate in your jurisdiction about what made the difference?	no		no
22: Is there a formal de-briefing process with firms that chose not to locate in your jurisdiction about what made the difference?	no		no
23: Do you have a formal procedure for contacting existing local firms about their satisfaction with your jurisdiction?	no		no
24: Do you have a formal procedure for intervening when early news surfaces about firm dissatisfaction with your jurisdiction?	no		no



E. Proximity to Universities & Research

Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions

<i>Question</i>	<i>Stoneham</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
25: How many public or private four-year college or universities are located within your jurisdiction?	0		0
26: How many public or private four-year college or universities are located within 10 miles of your jurisdiction?	40		2
27: How many community colleges are located within your jurisdiction?	0		0
28: How many vocational/technical schools are located within your jurisdiction?	0		1

Section 3: Cost of Land (Implicit/Explicit)

The cost of land to a firm includes two *Very Important* factors: Infrastructure and Rent. Updating civil, utility, and telecommunications infrastructure is costly, and firms do not like to incur these expenses. Therefore, if a municipality does not already have adequate capacity in place, a potential firm could decide to locate somewhere else with stronger capacity. Likewise, Rents are *Very Important* as they contribute heavily to operating expenses. Location experts consider the quality of available space and amount of available land for development *Important* factors.

 A. Infrastructure			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
1: Are there significant limitations to any of your existing infrastructure systems? - Water Supply	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
2: Public Sewer	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
3: Wastewater Treatment	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
4: Natural Gas	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
5: Electric Power	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
6: Data/Telecommunications - Land Lines	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
7: Data/Telecommunications - Cellular	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
8: Data/Telecommunications - Fiber optic / Cable / DSL	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service

9: What is the average retail cost in cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for residential, commercial, and industrial end users in your municipality? Residential	Monthly charge of 6.43 plus 10.75 per kWh		16.23
10: What is the average retail cost in cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for residential, commercial, and industrial end users in your municipality? Commercial	Monthly charge of 8.14 plus .0988 per kWh (under 12 kW in any month)		15.20
11: What is the average retail cost in cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for residential, commercial, and industrial end users in your municipality? Industrial	Monthly charge of 8.14 plus .0988 per kWh (under 12 kW in any month)		13.03

 **B. Rents**

Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
12: What is the current average square foot cost for existing retail space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)?	17.50		12
13: What is the current average square foot cost for existing retail space in your highway business district (Triple Net/Lease)?	22.50		13
14: What is the current average square foot cost for existing manufacturing space (Triple Net/Lease)?	10		6
15: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)? CLASS A	19		between 15 and 16.00
16: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)? CLASS B	15		12.00
17: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)? CLASS C	12.50		9
18: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your highway business district (Triple Net/Lease)? CLASS A	19		between 15.50 and 16
19: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your highway business district (Triple Net/Lease)? CLASS B	15		12.50
20: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your highway business district (Triple Net/Lease)? CLASS C	12.50		9.00
21: Of all the available office space in your jurisdiction, what percentage is: CLASS A	10		10
22: Of all the available office space in your jurisdiction, what percentage is: CLASS B	50		between 40 and 44
23: Of all the available office space in your jurisdiction, what percentage is: CLASS C	40		between 35 and 40

Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
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C. Quality of Available Space

Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
24: Approximately what percentage of available sites in your jurisdiction would be considered contaminated or brownfield sites?	0-10%		0-10%
25: What experience does your jurisdiction have with the redevelopment of contaminated or brownfield sites?	Limited		Limited
26: Approximately what percentage of available sites in your jurisdiction would be considered vacant or severely underutilized shopping centers?	0-10%		11-20%
27: Approximately what percentage of available sites in your jurisdiction would be considered unused open land or greenfield sites?	0-10%		21-35%

Importance To Market



Very Important



Important



Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers

 Strong

 Weak

 Average

 No Comparison

D. Land (space)

Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
28: Approximately how much vacant developable land in your jurisdiction is currently zoned for commercial/industrial uses?	1-150 acres		1-150 acres
29: Approximately how much vacant useable industrial or warehouse space exists in commercial/industrial buildings in your jurisdiction?	1-250,000 sq. feet		1-250,000 sq. feet
30: Approximately how much vacant useable office space exists in commercial/industrial buildings in your jurisdiction?	1-250,000 sq. feet		1-250,000 sq. feet
31: What proportion of the parcels available for industrial development or large scale commercial development are of 5 acres or more?	0-10%		11-20%

Importance To Market



Very Important



Important



Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers

 Strong

 Weak

 Average

 No Comparison

Section 4: Labor

The effect of labor factors on location decisions runs somewhat contrary to popular belief. An available labor force that is adequately trained (Workforce Composition) is a Very Important factor, while the cost of labor is Important and the presence of strong unions is Less Important. Conventional wisdom often holds that higher labor costs and strong unions negatively affect a firm's location decision. However, if the workforce is adequately skilled, these factors are not as detrimental as the conventional rule of thumb suggests. Workforce training resources is Less Important relative to other location factors. However, having a technically trained workforce whose skills align with the industries a municipality wants to attract is a valuable selling point.

A. Labor Cost			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
1: What is the prevailing average hourly wage rate for semi-skilled, blue-collar manufacturing workers?	\$12.26-\$17.25		\$12.26-\$17.25
2: What is the prevailing average hourly wage rate for mid-level clerical workers?	\$17.26-\$22.25		\$12.26-\$17.25
3: What is the prevailing average annual salary for public high school teachers?	\$70,001 or more		\$60,001-\$70,000
4: Is there a local minimum or living wage statute?	no		no

B. Workforce Composition			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
5: What percentage of your workforce is Unskilled?	1-25%		1-25%
6: What percentage of your workforce is Semi-skilled	1-25%		1-25%
7: What percentage of your workforce is Technically skilled	1-25%		26-49%
8: What percentage of your workforce is Managerial	1-25%		1-25%
9: What percentage of your workforce is Professional	1-25%		1-25%
10: What percentage of your workforce are current English language learners?	0-10%		0-10%

C. Unions			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
11: Have any employers in your jurisdiction had a major strike or work stoppage within the last three years?	no		no
12: Has there been a major union organizing drive among public or private workers in the last three years?	no		no
13: Do labor unions have a significant presence in the labor market of your jurisdiction?	Somewhat		Somewhat

<input checked="" type="radio"/> D. Labor (available)			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
14: What percentage of residents age 25 or older have earned at least a high school diploma?	85% or greater		85% or greater
15: What percentage of residents age 25 or older have earned at least a bachelor's degree?	36-50%		21-35%

<input type="radio"/> E. Workforce Training			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
16: Which of the following workforce training resources do you interact with to respond to skill development needs of firms?			
- Regional employment board or state employment services department	no		
- Area High schools	no		
- Voc-tech schools or community colleges	yes		
- Human service or nonprofit career training centers	no		
17: Do you support public-private partnerships to provide specific workforce training?	no		yes
18: Is there an adult education program readily available to residents of your jurisdiction?	no		yes

Importance To Market <input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important <input type="radio"/> Important <input type="radio"/> Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers Strong Average Weak No Comparison
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Section 5: Municipal Process

The municipal process section covers several themes relating to marketing and permitting. Public officials who aggressively market their jurisdictions strengths and collaborate with firms already located in their town or city may have significant advantages in attracting new investment. Local firms can speak firsthand about their own experiences and market conditions to interested companies and investors. Likewise, they can advise municipal leaders about industries with which they are intimately familiar. Additionally, municipalities that have established transparent and efficient permitting processes, minimizing startup time and costs, are also ahead of the game. Among the factors examined in this section, the timeliness of approvals is *Very Important* to location experts and all but one of the remaining factors (Permitting Ombudsman) are ranked *Important*.

			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
1: Does your jurisdiction have a marketing program based on the needs identified by industrial or office location specialists?	no		no
2: Does your jurisdiction have a marketing program based on existing core strengths, identified opportunities, or industry concentrations?	no		no
3: Do you have a quick response team available when negative data, stories, or incidents about your jurisdiction make the news?	yes		no
4: Do you actively engage local business spokespersons to speak on behalf of your jurisdiction?	no		no
5: Do you have a strategy for engaging your jurisdiction's racial or ethnic populations in unique businesses, festivals, etc., as a way to attract regional niche shopping?	no		no

Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
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B. Sites Available

Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
6: Does your jurisdiction own sites that it is currently marketing for development?	no		no
7: Is there a readily accessible, up-to-date, complete list of sites that are available for development in your jurisdiction?	no		no
8: Do you maintain an active relationship with commercial real estate brokers, developers, or agents with sites in your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
9: Do your land use regulations protect land currently zoned industrial from encroachment by residential or other incompatible uses?	yes		yes
10: Do you have an active strategy for reclaiming or land banking tax delinquent and tax title properties?	no		no
11: Do you have an active strategy for reclaiming vacant or underutilized shopping plazas?	no		no

Importance To Market



Very Important



Important



Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers

Strong

Weak

Average

No Comparison

C. Timeliness of Approvals			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
12: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for new projects?: Site plan review	9-12 weeks		5-8 weeks
13: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for new projects?: Zoning variance	5-8 weeks		5-8 weeks
14: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for new projects?: Special permit	9-12 weeks		9-12 weeks
15: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for new projects?: Building permit	0-4 weeks		0-4 weeks
16: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for new projects?: Appeals process	5-8 weeks		5-8 weeks
17: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for existing structures?: Site plan review	0-4 weeks		5-8 weeks
18: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for existing structures?: Zoning variance	5-8 weeks		5-8 weeks
19: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for existing structures?: Special permit	9-12 weeks		9-12 weeks
20: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for existing structures?: Building permit	0-4 weeks		0-4 weeks
21: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for existing structures?: Appeals process	5-8 weeks		5-8 weeks

D. Predicable Permits			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
22: Do you provide a checklist of permitting requirements to prospective developers?	yes		yes
23: Do you provide a flowchart of the permitting process to prospective developers?	no		no
24: Do you provide a development handbook to prospective developers?	yes		no
25: Do you allow for a single presentation of a development proposal to all review boards and commissions with relevant permit authority?	no		no

Importance To Market Very Important Important Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers Strong Average Weak No Comparison
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E. Fast Track Permits

Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
26: Do you pre-permit development in certain districts?	no		no
27: Are there any publicly or cooperatively owned industrial parks in your jurisdiction that have their own expedited permitting authority?	no		no
28: Do you have an "overlay" district that allows expedited permitting of certain uses?	no		no
29: Do you market "fast track" permitting to potential developers or firms?	no		no

Importance To Market

 Very Important  Important  Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers

 Strong  Average
 Weak  No Comparison

F. Citizen Participation in the Review Process

Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
30: To what extent do abutters slow the permitting process in your jurisdiction?	Very much		Somewhat
31: To what extent do organized neighborhood groups slow the permitting?	Very much		Somewhat
32: To what extent do elected officials in your jurisdiction expedite development by facilitating dialogue with community groups?	Somewhat		Very little
33: Do you establish a specific time frame and procedure for abutter or neighborhood response in the initial stage of the process?	yes		yes
34: Do interested parties get multiple opportunities for review and comment during the various development review processes?	yes		yes
35: Has a development proposal in your jurisdiction been stopped by abutter or neighborhood opposition in the past 5 years?	yes		yes
36: Have officials from your jurisdiction intervened to rescue a development proposal that was endangered by abutter or neighborhood opposition in the last 5 years?	yes		no

Importance To Market

 Very Important  Important  Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers

 Strong  Average
 Weak  No Comparison

G. Permitting Ombudsman			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Stoneham</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
37: Does the chief executive officer of your jurisdiction play a significant role in ensuring the efficiency of your local permitting process?	no		no
38: Are there other local officials empowered to ensure the efficiency of your local permitting process?	yes		yes
39: Is there a "development cabinet" or "development team" that is convened to review major developments?	no		yes
40: Do you have an established training program for development staff that regularly identifies critical adjustments in policy or regulation to accommodate changing needs of firms?	no		no
41: Do you have an established training program for boards, commissions, authorities, districts, and elected officials that regularly identifies critical adjustments in policy or regulation to accommodate changing needs of firms?	no		no
42: Is your jurisdiction involved in the process for businesses that require state or federal permitting or licensing?	yes		yes
43: Do you provide technical assistance for businesses in the state or federal permit or license application process?	no		no
44: Does your jurisdiction require any local licenses for specific businesses or industries?			
- General license for all businesses	yes		no
- Auto dealership	yes		no
- Barber shop	yes		no
- Bar/Tavern	yes		no
- Beauty salon	yes		no
- Child care services	no		no
- Construction contractor	no		no
- Home health care	no		no
- Massage therapist	yes		no
- Real estate agent/broker	no		no
- Restaurant	yes		no
- Skilled Trades (electrician, plumber, etc)	no		no
- Other, please specify	yes		no
45: Approximately how long (in weeks) is your local licensing process for businesses?	0-4 weeks		0-4 weeks

Section 6: Quality of Life (Community)

The quality of life within the community is an *Important* location factor because companies want to be able to offer employees a safe community with affordable housing, good schools, and a rich selection of cultural and recreational opportunities.

A. Cultural and Recreational Amenities			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
1: Is there a professional sports team resident within your jurisdiction?	no		no
2: Is there a major art, science or historical museum?	no		no
3: Is there a professional repertory theater company?	yes		no
4: Is there a civic center, arena or major concert hall?	yes		no
5: Is there a golf course within your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
6: Is there a symphony orchestra, opera, or ballet company?	no		no
7: Are there public beaches or boating activities within 5 miles of your jurisdiction?	yes		yes

Importance To Market Very Important Important Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers Strong Average Weak No Comparison
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B. Crime			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
8: What was the residential burglary rate per 100,000 residents last year in your jurisdiction?	397		256
9: What was the auto theft rate per 100,000 residents last year?	98		80
10: What was the robbery rate per 100,000 residents last year?	14		between 28 and 29
11: What was the homicide rate per 100,000 residents last year?	5		1

Importance To Market Very Important Important Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers Strong Average Weak No Comparison
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 **C. Housing**

Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
12: What was the median sale price of a single-family home in your jurisdiction last year?	\$451,000 or greater		\$251,000-\$350,000
13: What was the median rent for a two-bedroom apartment in your jurisdiction last year?	\$1251 or greater		\$1001-\$1250
14: What is the homeownership rate?	76% or greater		66-75%
15: What is the vacancy rate for rental housing?	Less than 3%		3-5%
16: What percent of homes are for sale?	Less than 3%		Less than 3%
17: Approximately what proportion of the major officers of firms located in your jurisdiction live in the community?	Most		Some

Importance To Market

 Very Important  Important  Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers

 Strong  Average
 Weak  No Comparison

 **D. Local Schools**

Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions

<i>Question</i>	<i>Stoneham</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
18: What is the average K-12 per pupil expenditure in your jurisdiction last year?	\$14,001 or greater		\$12,001 - \$14,000
19: Does your state mandate an assessment or proficiency test as a prerequisite for high school graduation?	yes		yes
20: If yes, what percent of students in your jurisdiction tested at least "proficient" in English?	81% or greater		81% or greater
21: If yes, what percent of students in your jurisdiction tested at least "proficient" in Mathematics?	81% or greater		66-80%
22: If yes, are the tests used as a measure of performance within your local school district for teacher assessments or teacher evaluations?	no		no
23: What percentage of your jurisdiction's K-12 students are eligible for free or reduced-cost lunch last year?	1-25%		1-25%
24: What was the average combined (reading, math, and writing) SAT score last year?	1126 or higher		
25: What was the average composite score (English, math, reading, and science) for the ACT last year?	N/A		
26: What percentage of high school freshmen normally graduate within 5 years?	95% or more		81%-94%
27: What is the high school dropout rate last year?	1-25%		1-25%
28: Are there any schools in your jurisdiction that are currently deemed "underperforming?"	no		no
29: What percentage of high school graduates from last year's class went on to a four-year college?	50-74%		50-74%
30: Are there any charter schools in your jurisdiction?	no		no
31: What types of private schools are there in your jurisdiction?			
- Parochial	yes		
- Non-sectarian	no		
- Boarding	no		

Section 7: Quality of Life (Site)

This section reviews the amenities and services available within one mile of existing development sites. Having a variety of amenities, restaurants, stores, and services near employment centers enhances the location, adds convenience, and allows employees more social opportunities.

 A. Amenities			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
1: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Fast food restaurant	Most		Most
2: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Fine dining	Most		Some
3: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Day care	Most		Most
4: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Retail shops	Most		Most

Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
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Section 8: Business Incentives

When companies are evaluating various jurisdictions for site location, business incentives (mainly subsidies and tax credits) are *Important* considerations. However, contrary to conventional wisdom, these incentives are not the first factors on which an investor makes a location decision—nor are they decisive. Factors such as infrastructure, workforce composition, and timeliness of permitting are of the utmost importance and can all too easily become “deal-breakers.” A municipality must be at least adequate in these areas before a company will advance negotiations. While investors value a broad portfolio of business incentives as possible “deal-closers,” they might not initially attract them.

 A. State			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
1: Are businesses in your jurisdiction eligible for any of the following special state tax incentives? Check all that apply.			
- Investment tax credits	yes		no
- Job training tax credits	yes		no
- Research and development (R&D) tax credits	yes		no
- Low (subsidized) interest loans	yes		no
- Loan guarantees	yes		no
- Equity financing	no		no
- Workforce training grants	yes		no
- Other, please specify	no		no
2: To what extent does your jurisdiction actively take advantage of any special state business incentives?	Very little		Somewhat
3: Does your state allow for priority funding for distressed economic areas?	yes		yes

<p>Importance To Market</p> <p>  Very Important  Important  Less Important </p>	<p>Your Performance Relative To Peers</p> <p>  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison </p>
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B. Local

Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions

<i>Question</i>	<i>Stoneham</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
4: Does your jurisdiction offer existing businesses property tax abatement?	yes		no
5: If yes, what proportion of existing businesses are offered abatements?	1-25%		1-25%
6: Does your jurisdiction offer new businesses property tax abatement?	no		no
7: If yes, what proportion of new businesses are offered abatements?	1-25%		1-25%
8: Who negotiates the tax abatement?	Other, please specify		Legislative
9: Does your jurisdiction offer any of the following incentives for businesses to locate in your jurisdiction? (Check all that apply)			
- Revolving loan fund	no		no
- Loan guarantees	no		no
- Revenue bonds	no		no
- Equity participation	no		no
- Business district group loans	no		no
- None	no		no
- Investment tax credits	no		no
- Job training tax credits	no		no
- Research and development (R&D) tax credits	no		no
- Low (subsidized) interest loans	no		no
- Workforce training grants	no		no
- Other, please specify	no		no

10: Does your jurisdiction actively pursue federal and/or state programs designed to assist in attracting and retaining businesses?	no		yes
11: Does your jurisdiction use Tax Increment Financing (TIF) or other programs to provide tax breaks to businesses?	yes		yes
12: Does your jurisdiction grant TIFs or similar programs for retail development?	yes		no
13: Does your jurisdiction assist in securing financing for businesses with commercial lenders or state industrial finance mechanisms?	no		no
14: Do you actively try to attract local, state, and federal facilities to your jurisdiction?	no		no
15: Is any part of your jurisdiction in a designated Enterprise Zone?	no		no
16: Do you participate in a regional brownfield revolving loan fund or offer your own?	No brownfields funds utilized		No brownfields funds utilized

Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
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Section 9: Tax Rates

Municipalities often think that if tax rates are too high, they will have a hard time attracting businesses—that high taxes are a “deal-breaker.” Like financial incentives, however, the tax rate is not one of the *Very Important* location factors. If the *Very Important* factors are satisfied, then a business will likely request a more favorable tax rate during later-stage negotiations. Yet negotiations are unlikely to get to that point if the *More Important* location factors have not been satisfied.

 A. Local									
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions									
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group						
1: What types of taxes are collected by your jurisdiction to pay for local services?									
- Property tax	yes		yes						
- Local sales tax	yes		no						
- Local income tax	no		no						
- Hotel room tax	no		no						
- Meals tax	yes		no						
2: Of the potential commercial and industrial property tax revenue your jurisdiction could collect, what percent is currently abated?	0%		1%-10%						
3: Does your jurisdiction tax property in industrial or commercial uses at a different rate than residential properties?	yes		yes						
4: If yes, what is the tax rate on industrial/commercial property? \$ /\$1,000	23.21		between 19.89 and 20.20						
5: If yes, what is the tax rate on residential property? \$ /\$1,000	12.39		between 11.37 and 11.38						
6: If no, what is the tax rate on all property?									
7: What % of your tax revenue is derived from: Industrial %	1.22								
8: What % of your tax revenue is derived from: Commercial %	13.79								
9: What % of your tax revenue is derived from: Residential %	82.42								
10: Does your jurisdiction impose impact fees on new commercial or industrial development?	yes		no						
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Importance To Market</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Your Performance Relative To Peers</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>  Very Important  Important  Less Important </td> <td>  Strong  Average </td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>  Weak  No Comparison </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Importance To Market	Your Performance Relative To Peers	 Very Important  Important  Less Important	 Strong  Average		 Weak  No Comparison
Importance To Market	Your Performance Relative To Peers								
 Very Important  Important  Less Important	 Strong  Average								
	 Weak  No Comparison								

B. Tax Delinquency

Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions

<i>Question</i>	<i>Stoneham</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
11: What proportion of residential property in your jurisdiction is more than one year delinquent in taxes?	0%-3%		0%-3%
12: What proportion of commercial property in your jurisdiction is more than one year delinquent in taxes?	0%-3%		0%-3%
13: What proportion of industrial property in your jurisdiction is more than one year delinquent in taxes?	0%-3%		0%-3%
14: How many properties are tax defaulted or subject to the power of sale?	0-50		0-50
15: When do you choose to auction tax title properties?	5-10 years		1-5 years
16: Do you have an organized and defined process for conducting such auctions and ensuring that they are successful?	no		yes
17: Do you auction the "right to foreclose" on tax delinquent properties?	no		no
18: Do you seek tax abatement on tax title properties to allow the liens to clear for new owners?	no		no
19: If a tax delinquent or tax title property serves as an impediment to development, does the property receive special attention?	yes		no

Importance To Market

 Very Important
  Important
  Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers

 Strong
  Average
 Weak
  No Comparison

Section 10: Access to Information

A town's website could offer a business location expert his or her first impression of what the area has to offer. In today's digital age, a location expert could use a municipality's website to gather initial information, and if it is not available, easy to find, and easy to understand, the researcher may reject the town as a potential location without further consideration. While a town's website may rank *Less Important* as a factor in decision making, it can be this initial source of information that entices a location expert to probe deeper and to contact a municipality to seek additional information. At that point, the municipality's economic development leader or permitting ombudsman has an opportunity to step in and develop one-on-one rapport with the developer or company representative.

● A. Website			
Report of Stoneham as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Stoneham		Comparison Group
1: Does your jurisdiction's website list all local development policies and procedures?	no		yes
2: Does your website have contact information for key officials?	yes		yes
3: Does your website have general information about your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
4: How frequently is your website updated?	Weekly		Weekly
5: Does your website include an explicitly designed economic development tool aimed at businesses and developers?	no		no
6: Is there a development permit checklist or flow chart on the website?	no		no
7: Are permit applications available for downloading on the website?	no		yes
8: Are applications and other forms date certified to ensure that they are the most recent versions (i.e. the same versions that you would get in person)?	no		no
9: Is it possible to file permit applications electronically?	no		no
10: Is there a list of available land and building sites on the website?	no		no

11: If yes, check the types of information available about each site. (Check all that apply)			
- :Owner	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Square footage of vacant land	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Square footage and quality of existing buildings and structures	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Abutters	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Zoning	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Assessed value	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Tax rate	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Current tax status (e.g. paid up, delinquent)	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Contamination	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Aerial photos	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- GIS links	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Other, please specify	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
12: Is there a posting of current hearings available on the website?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
13: Is there a posting of pending applications available on the website?	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
14: Is there a listing of current members of development review boards and staff contact information?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes

15: Are there links to other local development resources? (Check all that apply)					
- State finance agencies	no		no		
- State permitting agencies	yes		no		
- Regional planning agencies	yes		no		
- Regional development organizations	yes		no		
- Workforce training organizations	no		no		
- Local public or quasi-public financing resources	no		no		
- Demographic information	yes		no		
- Economic development agencies	yes		no		
- Other, please specify	no		no		
16: Are there links to other locally-based private or non-profit organizations?					
- Colleges and universities	no		no		
- Chambers of Commerce	yes		no		
- Community development corporations	no		no		
- Arts and cultural organizations	yes		no		
- Sports and recreation venues	yes		no		
- Convention and tourist organization	no		no		
- Other, please specify	no		no		
17: Is there a designated webmaster or staff person responsible for maintaining the website?	no		yes		
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison </td> </tr> </table>				Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison				

NEXT STEPS

Stoneham is a physically attractive suburban community of just over 21,000 residents as of the 2010 census. Located in Middlesex County, Stoneham is bordered by Woburn, Medford and Wakefield, among others. The town is located just nine miles north of Boston and conveniently accessed via Routes 93 and 128, making it a highly desirable and easily-accessible suburban community. Unlike many suburban communities, Stoneham has a dense, walkable central business district and municipal center, with populated storefronts and even a local theater, which should appeal to the next so-called millennial generation of families and homeowners.

Stoneham has considerable strengths typically associated with a tight-knit, mature suburban community. A demonstrated interest in engaging the existing business community in future economic development efforts often leads to sustainable economic development success, and Stoneham is in the early stages of leveraging its already ample resources. The recent establishment of the Stoneham Community Development Corporation (CDC) and the rollout of the “Guide to Doing Business in Stoneham 2017” are indications that Stoneham is poised for sound and thoughtful economic development.

Similar to many suburban communities of its size, approximately 82 percent of Stoneham’s tax revenue is derived from homeownership. This, in conjunction with easy highway access and proximity to the Greater Boston area presents a challenge and an opportunity for Stoneham to continue to grow sustainably while keeping focus on the needs of what is a predominantly residential community, with good urban design.

The Dukakis Center’s Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT) creates a snapshot of Stoneham’s economic development and planning efforts at a critical moment in the town’s development history. The following is an overview of where Stoneham is getting it right, and where improvements can be made. Outlined below are the top recommendations and their respective levels of priority for your economic development efforts.

CORE STRENGTHS

Stoneham has some valuable strengths that can persuade firms and developers to locate – or remain – in town. Among Stoneham’s greatest strengths are in its ample **parking** near development sites and its easy highway access via the 93 corridor and Route 28. Commuter rail in adjacent communities, a regional airport, and proximity to Logan International Airport accessed via Route 93 make Stoneham a highly accessible town (despite reported morning traffic and congestion). Sufficient capacity for growth and reliable service across all **infrastructure systems** (i.e. water supply, public sewer, wastewater treatment, natural gas, electric power, and data/telecommunications) is a boon for interested firms looking to locate in your jurisdiction.

Through the practical and quality-of-life lenses of economic development, Stoneham has a great deal of **physical attractiveness**, with strikingly rich **cultural and recreational amenities** for a municipality of its size and type. Stoneham’s available sites also offer a full spectrum of nearby **site amenities**, although maintenance of nearby sidewalks, streets, parks, and so on leaves much to be desired, thus compromising site attractiveness. The town could also improve its enforcement of codes and regulations on abandoned properties or vehicles and boost maintenance of streets and sidewalks, though this could take place through the build out and refinement of an existing (albeit imperfect) system for monitoring the timeliness and quality of responses to reported violations. Stoneham’s hotline for reporting violations and maintenance needs offers an opportunity for healthy and productive civic engagement and should be considered an asset to both residents and town leadership.

Stoneham’s **labor** force is highly educated, with up to 50 percent of residents age 25 and older having earned a bachelor’s degree. This is further evidence of a strong **school system** and a workforce consisting of a high proportion of residents in the managerial / professional occupations. Stoneham’s **housing** market is strong and will likely remain strong for the foreseeable future, an indication that the town’s proximity to Boston with a suburban community feel is attractive (and competitive) asset to residents.

An oft-overlooked resource for economic development is a city or town’s network of **universities and research centers**. Although location specialists once regarded such assets as “less important,” companies considering expansion or relocation, as well as small-business start-ups, are increasingly looking at their potential as economic collaborators in terms of research and development assets, the proximity and size of their pool of local talent, and the availability of high-quality education for employees’ families. Stoneham’s proximity to Boston allows for direct access to the city’s world-class universities and research institutions, as well as to a major **airport**: Logan International.

There appears to be a growing network of economic development resources already present in the town of Stoneham. Most notable is the recent establishment of a Community Development Corporation, and the existence of a quick response team available to address any negative data, stories, or incidents that may arise. Stoneham's permitting processes are largely at parity with the CGM and could likely be improved, though the release of your development handbook will provide clarity and **predictable permitting** to developers looking to do business in your jurisdiction.

This is a strong network of resources available to potential developers in Stoneham, and surely these are strengths. These strengths, however, are at present disparately coordinated elements of what should be a cohesive economic development strategy. Institutionalizing these resources through a comprehensive economic development plan via the Chamber of Commerce and the newly established Stoneham CDC, will bolster both existing strengths, and increase Stoneham's ability to attract new firms.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The Stoneham municipal **website** provides the first impression of your jurisdiction. Now more than ever, location specialists, developers, and residents alike go online to find critical information. Stoneham's website is functional, but could be improved significantly with an eye for design and ease of use. While much of the information residents might look for is listed on your website (demographic, economic development, chamber of commerce, and arts and cultural organization information), an update should include tools designed specifically for developers and firms: local development policies and procedures, downloadable permit applications, permitting checklist or flowchart, lists of available land and building sites for development, and the functionality to file permit applications electronically. Designating a sole webmaster or staff person responsible for site maintenance would ensure that information stays up to date and relevant.

Permitting reviews take – for the most part – about as much time as other municipalities your size, though the review process itself and development strategies could be streamlined. Stoneham does not own sites that it is currently marketing for development, though your jurisdiction could compile a readily accessible, up-to-date, **complete list of sites that are available for development**. Build on your existing relationship with commercial real estate brokers, developers, and agents in your jurisdiction as a means to populate this list and feature a clearly-designed home page portal as a one-stop-shop for information of interest to prospective developers. While Stoneham does offer a checklist of permitting requirements to prospective developers via the town's handbook, the additional use of a **flowchart** can clarify the required steps for development. Further, the use of **pre-permitting, overlay districts, and fast-track permitting** is highly attractive to prospective developers.

The recent incorporation of the Stoneham Community Development Corporation is an opportunity for sound and strategic planning. Stoneham should use this new entity as an opportunity to develop an **economic development strategy**, overall economic development plan, or an updated economic development plan *within* your community master plan. Engaging existing resources like the state's economic development resources, planning entities like MAPC and MOBD, and other regional entities will help alleviate capacity concerns. The town should also target specific industries and cultivate industry-specific **critical mass of firms**, with a clearly articulated industrial attraction policy. With proximity to Boston and Cambridge, and a highly educated workforce, Stoneham might pursue information technology and healthcare, for example, as was suggested at our workshop.

Stoneham's **lack of adequate business services** (i.e. venture capital, business planning, recruiting) should be addressed in an effort to build out a more welcoming business environment, particularly if your jurisdiction seeks to attract high-tech or big science industries. The development of an innovation district or incubator might attract these types of business services to your jurisdiction and make Stoneham more competitive for targeted firm types.

Stoneham should also work to leverage the resources present in the existing Stoneham business community. The Stoneham CDC can play a critical role in **cross marketing** efforts. Actively enlisting the services of firms already present in your jurisdiction to assist in attracting new firms can amplify your marketing strategy. The town should build out a formal de-briefing process with firms that chose to locate in your jurisdiction in order to glean information on what factors led them to locate to your town specifically. Engaging in consistent dialogue with your business community will offer insight into the needs and existing assets of your community.

Stoneham is a town with high civic engagement, which is not uncommon in close-knit suburban communities. **Citizen participation** in the development process should be welcomed, but managed. In addition to a robust economic development strategy, the provision

of clear and fair opportunities for resident input on development projects and a go-to contact or entity for resident concerns will be critical to maintaining a positive relationship between Stoneham’s economic development efforts and community organizations.

Outlined below are our top recommendations and their respective levels of priority for your economic development efforts.

Recommendations	Priority
<p>In conjunction with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the Stoneham Community Development Corporation, develop an economic development strategy or plan to assist in coordinating the town’s existing and future economic development and planning resources.</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Craft an industrial attraction policy that targets specific types (or a type) of industry, and organizes incentives, land-use, workforce development, and marketing programs around its implementation.</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Update the Stoneham town website for design and ease of use, and include a one-stop portal to forms, policies, procedures, and organizations relevant to business development—featured prominently on the home page.</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Investigate the feasibility and business community interest in the development of an incubator space or innovation district to attract target-industry firms and new talent to Stoneham.</p>	<p>Medium</p>