

Northeastern University
Dukakis Center *for* Urban & Regional Policy

REPORT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL (EDSAT)

**EDSAT REPORT FOR THE TOWN OF
HALIFAX, MASSACHUSETTS
JUNE 2015**



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:

Catherine Tumber, Ph.D.

Northeastern University
Dukakis Center for Urban & Regional Policy
310 Renaissance Park
360 Huntington Avenue
Boston, MA 02115
617-373-7868 (v)
617-373-7905 (f)
c.tumber@neu.edu

Christiana McFarland

Center for Research and Innovation
National League of Cities
1301 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Suite 550
Washington, DC 20004
202-626-3036 (v)
mcfarland@nlc.org

Report Authors: Lauren Costello and Catherine Tumber

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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, Clinton will not simply 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 Clinton to the EDSAT questionnaire.

The Dukakis Center 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 final 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 as a single entity in its economic development efforts.

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 	<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 • Jurisdiction’s Website
<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 response with that of Comparison Group Municipalities (CGM).¹ 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. While local and regional regulations or processes affect the review process, 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

<input type="radio"/> E. Airports		
Report of ██████ as compared to all jurisdictions		
Question	██████████	Comparison Group
27: Do you have a local (municipal/ general aviation) airport?	yes	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 Halifax'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 create 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 can 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.

Halifax's Strengths and Potential "Deal-Makers"

The following three lists of Halifax's strengths are its powerful economic development assets. The town should build upon these assets and promote them to prospective businesses and developers. Halifax 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

TRAFFIC: Although residents might consider traffic to be "moderately congested" during a typical weekday rush hour (which is common for the comparison group), the average speed of automobile traffic during rush hour is faster than your peers.

Strengths among *Important* Location Factors

PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS: Halifax has more acreage within its jurisdiction reserved for parks than the comparison group, and a smaller percentage of acreage is presently vacant (not currently occupied).

PREDICTABLE PERMITS: It is considered a strength that Halifax allows for a single presentation of a development proposal to all review boards and commissions with relevant permit authority.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE REVIEW PROCESS: Location specialists consider it a positive attribute that organized neighborhoods slow permitting very little in Halifax. Abutter or neighborhood opposition group rarely deter development proposals, due in part to the fact that officials from Halifax have intervened in the past to rescue a development proposal that was endangered by abutter or neighborhood opposition.

CRIME: While burglary in Halifax remains high, most crime statistics (auto theft, robbery, and homicide) are considerably lower than the CGM. Halifax is fortunate to have had zero homicides in the last year.

HOUSING: The homeownership rate in Halifax is slightly higher than the CGM, and the current vacancy rate is less than 3 percent – lower than the CGM's range of 3 to 5 percent.

LOCAL SCHOOLS: Halifax students fare well in state mandated assessments: 81 percent or more of your jurisdiction's students score proficient or higher in both English and Mathematics. All students in the Halifax school system graduated from high school last year.

STATE BUSINESS INCENTIVES: Like the rest of Massachusetts' communities, Halifax is eligible to many state incentives like investment tax credits, job training tax credits, research and development tax credits, loan guarantees, and workforce training grants.

Strengths among *Less Important* Location Factors

RAIL: The availability of commuter rail service is an asset to your town in attracting commuters and professionals looking to access jobs and services in the Greater Boston area.

Halifax's Weaknesses and Potential "Deal-Breakers"

Despite many advantages, Halifax 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 city 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 Halifax'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 bear in mind Halifax's economic and community development objectives and the resources available for upgrading "deal-breakers" and other weaknesses.

Weaknesses among *Very Important* Location Factors

INFRASTRUCTURE: Halifax currently has unreliable sewer, wastewater treatment, natural gas, and fiber optic / cable / DSL services. In addition, the average retail cost for residential, commercial, and industrial electricity in your town is much higher than your peers.

TIMELINESS OF APPROVALS: The time required from application to completion of the review process for new site plans, zoning variances, and appeals takes considerably longer than the CGM. For existing structures, zoning variances and appeals take considerably longer than the CGM.

RENTS: While there is no Class A office space in your jurisdiction, rents are consistently higher in Halifax than the comparison group. A much larger majority of Halifax's office space is classified as Class C: 85 percent compared to the CGM's 40 percent.

HIGHWAY ACCESS: Halifax is largely inaccessible via major regional highways, making it difficult for commercial trucks and automotive commuters to reach your community. There are no available sites for retail trade, manufacturing, or general office space that are within two miles of an entrance or exist to a major-access highway.

Weaknesses among *Important* Location Factors

COMPLEMENTARY / SUPPLEMENTAL BUSINESS SERVICES: Halifax scores below the comparison group due to the lack of an engaged local chamber of commerce or volunteer economic development committee or nonprofit.

CRITICAL MASS FIRMS: In addition, Halifax does not have an up to date development strategy, an overall economic development plan, or an economic development plan within its master plan. Your jurisdiction does not use the services of development specialists to assist in interpreting your economic development needs, and it does not currently have an industrial attraction policy.

CROSS MARKETING: While it is common across the comparison group to not enlist the services of firms already resident in your jurisdiction to attract new business, Halifax falls short of its peers in failing to engage local business organizations to participate in marketing activities or engaging with regional or state planning agencies to participate in marketing the jurisdiction.

LOCAL BUSINESS INCENTIVES: Although Halifax has access to many state business incentives, your jurisdiction does not currently pursue state or federal programming designed to assist in attracting and

retaining businesses. Your town also does not currently use Tax Increment Financing (TIF) or other programs to provide tax breaks to businesses.

SITES AVAILABLE: Halifax does not maintain an active relationship with commercial real estate brokers, developers, or agents with sites in your jurisdiction, which is uncommon across the CGM. In addition, land use regulations do not currently protect land zoned industrial from encroachment by residential or other incompatible uses.

PUBLIC TRANSIT: Less than a quarter of available sites for retail trade, manufacturing, and office space are within one-quarter mile of a public bus or rapid-transit service. While there is a commuter rail station located within your jurisdiction, Halifax does not have a transit-oriented development strategy to attract new firms.

AMENITIES: Halifax has less access to fast food restaurants, fine dining, day care, and retail shop facilities than its peers.

QUALITY OF AVAILABLE SPACE: A much higher percentage of available sites in Halifax is considered to be a vacant or severely underutilized shopping center: 36 to 50 percent compared to the CGM's 11 to 20 percent.

TAX DELINQUENCY: Halifax does not have an organized and defined process for conducting auctions for tax title properties.

Weaknesses among *Less Important Location Factors*

WEBSITE: The town website does not provide permit applications available for download on the website, and it does not list all local development policies and procedures, including a list of available land and building sites.

PERMITTING OMBUDSMAN: Halifax does not currently have a local official empowered to ensure the efficiency of local permitting processes, and there is no development team to review major developments. Local licensing for businesses in Halifax takes 1 to 4 weeks longer than the CGM.

WORKFORCE TRAINING: Halifax does not currently support public-private partnerships to provide specific workforce training, and there are no adult education programs readily available to the residents of your town.

AIRPORTS: The closest full-service airport, Boston's Logan International, is located approximately 40 miles away, and it takes between 61 to 90 minutes to travel there from Halifax's town center. Halifax does not have a local municipal airport, which is common for the comparison group.

The weaknesses that surfaced in Halifax's EDSAT analysis should help community leaders develop a framework through which the town can improve its ability to attract businesses and build its tax base.

DETAILED ANALYSIS AND QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The following is a ten-part section-by-section analysis of the EDSAT results comparing Clinton’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.

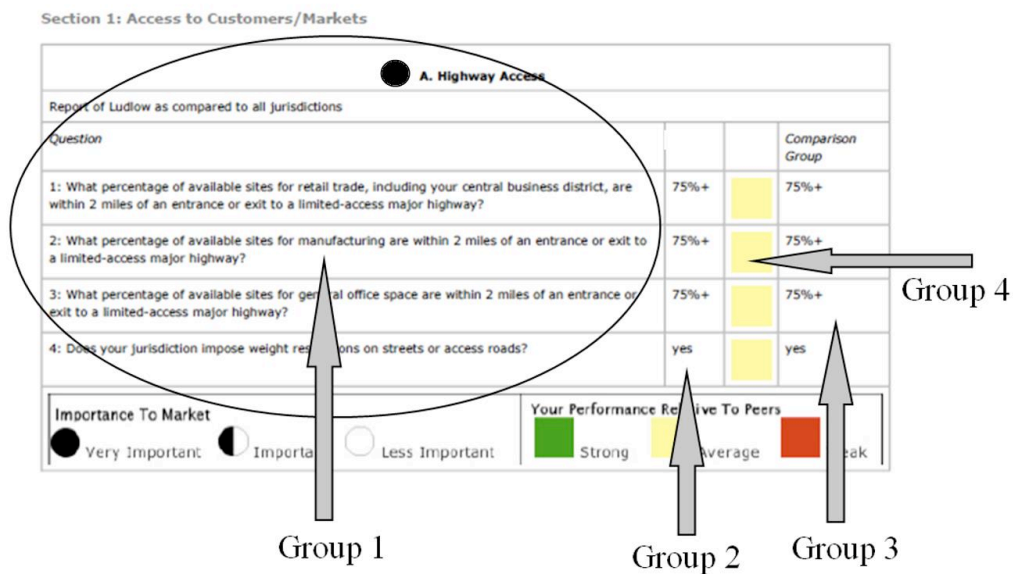
This ten-part portion of the report—its heart, really—is presented in the same order as the questions listed on the EDSAT questionnaire, with the tabular printout of Clinton’s results appearing first, and our narrative summary and interpretation of the results appearing second. The tabular results are 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 Clinton’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 Clinton 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, Clinton 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 as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			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?	0%		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?	0%		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?	0%		75% or greater
4: Does your jurisdiction impose weight restrictions on streets or access roads?	yes		no

Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
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● B. Public Transit			
Report of as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			Comparison Group
5: What percentage of available sites for retail trade are within 1/4 mile of public bus or rail rapid transit?	1-25%		50-74%
6: What percentage of available sites for manufacturing are within 1/4 mile of public bus or rail rapid transit?	1-25%		between 26-49% and 50-74%
7: What percentage of available sites for general office space are within 1/4 mile of public bus or rail rapid transit?	1-25%		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

C. Parking			
Report of as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			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		0
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	0		0.00

Importance To Market Very Important Important Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers Strong Average Weak No Comparison
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D. Traffic			
Report of as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			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		between yes and no
21: Do you routinely use the services of a transportation consultant?	yes		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?	Moderately congested		Moderately congested
25: What is the average speed of automobile commuter traffic during a typical weekday rush hour?	36 - 44 mph		11 - 25 mph
26: Do you require a traffic impact analysis for large-scale development or redevelopment projects?	yes		yes

E. Airports

Report of as compared to all jurisdictions

Question			Comparison Group
27: Do you have a local (municipal/ general aviation) airport?	no		no
28: The closest regional airport is how many miles away?	31 miles or more		11-20 miles
29: The closest major/international airport is how many miles away?	31 miles or more		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?	61 minutes to 90 minutes		21 minutes to 60 minutes

Importance To Market <input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important <input type="radio"/> Important <input type="radio"/> Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/> No Comparison
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F. Rail

Report of as compared to all jurisdictions

Question			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	yes		no
- Intercity/Interstate(Amtrak)	no		no
- None	no		no

Importance To Market <input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important <input type="radio"/> Important <input type="radio"/> Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/> No Comparison
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G. Physical Attractiveness

Report of as compared to all jurisdictions

Question			Comparison Group
34: To what extent do you enforce codes and regulations on abandoned properties, abandoned vehicles, trash disposal within your jurisdiction?	Weakly		Moderately
35: To what extent does your jurisdiction maintain streets, sidewalks, parks, etc., near available development sites?	Moderately		Moderately
36: Is there a hotline available for reporting code violations and maintenance needs within your jurisdiction?	no		no
37: Is there a system for monitoring the timeliness and quality of responses to reported violations within your jurisdiction?	no		no
38: Do you involve the arts community in the design of open space (street furniture, murals, etc.)?	no		no
39: What percentage of the acreage within your jurisdiction is reserved for parks?	11-15%		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)?	6-10%		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%

Importance To Market <input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important <input type="radio"/> Important <input type="radio"/> Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/> No Comparison
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H. Water Transportation








Report of as compared to all jurisdictions








Question			Comparison Group
45: Do you have water based transportation facilities within your jurisdiction? Check all that apply.	None		between Sea port and None

Importance To Market <input type="radio"/> Very Important <input type="radio"/> Important <input type="radio"/> Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers <input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/> No Comparison
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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 as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			Comparison Group
1: Is your local chamber of commerce or business association actively involved in the economic development activities of your jurisdiction?	Not at all		Moderately
2: Does your jurisdiction have an active volunteer economic development committee or nonprofit center for economic development?	no		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?	no		yes
5: Are there law firms in your jurisdiction specializing in commercial law, intellectual property rights, or patents?	no		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








Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
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B. Critical Mass Firms								
Report of as compared to all jurisdictions								
Question			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)	No Targets							
13: If yes, what specific industry types or sectors are targeted by your region/county's development strategy? Other, please specify (Regional/County)	Travel and Tourism; Other Life Sciences, including Biotech; Healthcare; Alternative Energy							
14: If yes, what specific industry types or sectors are targeted by your state's development strategy? (State)	Alternative Energy; Travel and Tourism; Information Technology; Traditional Manufacturing; Other Life Sciences, including Biotech; Healthcare							
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					
<table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="3"> Importance To Market Very Important Important Less Important </td> <td colspan="2"> 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					

C. Cross Marketing			
Report of as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			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?	no		yes
19: Do you engage regional planning and development organizations to participate in marketing your jurisdiction?	no		yes
20: Do you engage state agencies and organizations to participate in marketing your jurisdiction?	no		yes

Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
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D. Marketing Follow-Up			
Report of as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			Comparison Group
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










Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
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<input type="radio"/> E. Proximity to Universities & Research			
Report of as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			Comparison Group
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?	3		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








Importance To Market <input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important <input type="radio"/> Important <input type="radio"/> Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/> No Comparison
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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 as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			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	Unreliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
3: Wastewater Treatment	Unreliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
4: Natural Gas	Capacity for current needs only		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	Inadequate capacity for current needs		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	19		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	19		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	19		13.03













Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
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Detailed rates are listed below:²





Halifax Comparative Electricity Rates (cents per kilowatt hour)








Location	Type of Space		
	Residential	Commercial	Industrial
Halifax	19.00	19.00	19.00
Median CGM	16.23	15.20	13.03
Massachusetts	17.12	14.51	12.77
New England	17.67	14.6	11.86
United States	12.53	10.78	7.11





² State, Region, and U.S. rates are those available as of September 2014 and obtained from the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). North Reading rates do not include demand charges, which fluctuate.








● B. Rents			
Report of as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>			<i>Comparison Group</i>
12: What is the current average square foot cost for existing retail space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)?	13		12
13: What is the current average square foot cost for existing retail space in your highway business district (Triple Net/Lease)?	13		14
14: What is the current average square foot cost for existing manufacturing space (Triple Net/Lease)?	7		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	NA		16
16: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)?: CLASS B	13		12
17: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)?: CLASS C	13		9.00
18: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your highway business district (Triple Net/Lease)?: CLASS A	NA		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	13		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	13		9.50
21: Of all the available office space in your jurisdiction, what percentage is: CLASS A	0		15
22: Of all the available office space in your jurisdiction, what percentage is: CLASS B	15		between 40 and 44
23: Of all the available office space in your jurisdiction, what percentage is: CLASS C	85		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 as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			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?	None		Limited
26: Approximately what percentage of available sites in your jurisdiction would be considered vacant or severely underutilized shopping centers?	36-50%		11-20%
27: Approximately what percentage of available sites in your jurisdiction would be considered unused open land or greenfield sites?	51% or greater		21-35%

Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
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D. Land (space)			
Report of as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			Comparison Group
28: Approximately how much vacant developable land in your jurisdiction is currently zoned for commercial/industrial uses?	451 acres or more		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?	51% or greater		11-20%

Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
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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 as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			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?	\$12.26-\$17.25		\$12.26-\$17.25
3: What is the prevailing average annual salary for public high school teachers?	\$60,001-\$70,000		between \$50,001-\$60,000 and \$60,001-\$70,000
4: Is there a local minimum or living wage statute?	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. Workforce Composition			
Report of as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			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%

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



Report of as compared to all jurisdictions

Question			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

Importance To Market <input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important <input type="radio"/> Important <input type="radio"/> Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers <input type="radio"/> Strong <input type="radio"/> Average <input type="radio"/> Weak <input type="radio"/> No Comparison
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D. Labor (available)

Report of as compared to all jurisdictions

Question			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?	21-35%		21-35%







Importance To Market <input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important <input type="radio"/> Important <input type="radio"/> Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers <input type="radio"/> Strong <input type="radio"/> Average <input type="radio"/> Weak <input type="radio"/> No Comparison
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<input type="radio"/> E. Workforce Training			
Report of as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Area High schools	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Voc-tech schools or community colleges	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Human service or nonprofit career training centers	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17: Do you support public-private partnerships to provide specific workforce training?	no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	yes
18: Is there an adult education program readily available to residents of your jurisdiction?	no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	yes

Importance To Market <input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important <input type="radio"/> Important <input type="radio"/> Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/> 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*.

 A. Industry Sensitivity			
Report of as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			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?	no		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  Weak  Average  No Comparison
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B. Sites Available











Report of as compared to all jurisdictions

Question			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?	no		yes
9: Do your land use regulations protect land currently zoned industrial from encroachment by residential or other incompatible uses?	no		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

<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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C. Timeliness of Approvals

Report of as compared to all jurisdictions

Question			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	9-12 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	9-12 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	5-8 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	9-12 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	9-12 weeks		5-8 weeks

Importance To Market



Very Important




Important



Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers

 Strong

 Average

 Weak

 No Comparison

Permitting Process	New Project (Time difference in weeks)	Existing Structure (Time difference in weeks)
Site plan review	4 Slower	Same
Zoning variance	4 Slower	4 Slower
Special permit	Same	Same
Building permit	Same	Same
Appeals	4 Slower	4 Slower

D. Predicable Permits			
Report of as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			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?	no		no
25: Do you allow for a single presentation of a development proposal to all review boards and commissions with relevant permit authority?	yes		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 as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			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
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F. Citizen Participation in the Review Process

Report of as compared to all jurisdictions

Question			Comparison Group
30: To what extent do abutters slow the permitting process in your jurisdiction?	Somewhat		Somewhat
31: To what extent do organized neighborhood groups slow the permitting?	Very little		Somewhat
32: To what extent do elected officials in your jurisdiction expedite development by facilitating dialogue with community groups?	Very little		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?	no		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

 Weak

 Average

 No Comparison

G. Permitting Ombudsman

Report of as compared to all jurisdictions

Question			Comparison Group
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?	no		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?	no		yes
43: Do you provide technical assistance for businesses in the state or federal permit or license application process?	no		between yes and 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	no		no
- Bar/Tavern	yes		no
- Beauty salon	no		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	no		no
45: Approximately how long (in weeks) is your local licensing process for businesses?	5-8 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 as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			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?	no		no
4: Is there a civic center, arena or major concert hall?	no		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 as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			Comparison Group
8: What was the residential burglary rate per 100,000 residents last year in your jurisdiction?	288.4		between 277 and 288
9: What was the auto theft rate per 100,000 residents last year?	91.8		between 91 and 93
10: What was the robbery rate per 100,000 residents last year?	26.2		33
11: What was the homicide rate per 100,000 residents last year?	0		2

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 as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			Comparison Group
12: What was the median sale price of a single-family home in your jurisdiction last year?	\$251,000-\$350,000		\$251,000-\$350,000
13: What was the median rent for a two-bedroom apartment in your jurisdiction last year?	\$1001-\$1250		\$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?	Some		Some

D. Local Schools			
Report of as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			Comparison Group
18: What is the average K-12 per pupil expenditure in your jurisdiction last year?	\$12,001 - \$14,000		between \$10,001 - \$12,000 and \$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		66-80%
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?	yes		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?	1051-1125		
25: What was the average composite score (English, math, reading, and science) for the ACT last year?			
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?	0%		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	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Non-sectarian	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Boarding	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>




<p>Importance To Market</p> <p> <input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important <input type="radio"/> Important <input type="radio"/> Less Important </p>	<p>Your Performance Relative To Peers</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/> No Comparison </p>
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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








A. Amenities			
Report of as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			Comparison Group
1: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Fast food restaurant	Some		Most
2: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Fine dining	None		Some
3: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Day care	Some		Most
4: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Retail shops	Some		Most

<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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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 be initially attracted by them.









 A. State			
Report of as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			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?	Somewhat		Somewhat
3: Does your state allow for priority funding for distressed economic areas?	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. Local

Report of as compared to all jurisdictions

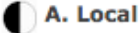

















<i>Question</i>			<i>Comparison Group</i>
4: Does your jurisdiction offer existing or new businesses property tax abatement? Existing businesses	no		no
5: If yes, what proportion of existing businesses are offered abatements?			
6: Does your jurisdiction offer existing or new businesses property tax abatement? New businesses	no		no
7: If yes, what proportion of existing businesses are offered abatements?			
8: Who negotiates the tax abatement?	Legislative		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	yes		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?	no		yes
12: Does your jurisdiction grant TIFs or similar programs for retail development?	no		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		between No brownfields funds utilized and Regional

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.

			
Report of as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			Comparison Group
1: What types of taxes are collected by your jurisdiction to pay for local services?			
- Property tax	yes		yes
- Local sales tax	no		no
- Local income tax	no		no
- Hotel room tax	no		no
- Meals tax	no		no
2: Of the potential commercial and industrial property tax revenue your jurisdiction could collect, what percent is currently abated?	0%		between 0% and 1%-10%
3: Does your jurisdiction tax property in industrial or commercial uses at a different rate than residential properties?	no		yes
4: If yes, what is the tax rate on industrial/commercial property? \$ /\$1,000			20.48
5: If yes, what is the tax rate on residential property? \$ /\$1,000			11.38
6: If no, what is the tax rate on all property?	18.67		between 13.50 and 13.91
7: What % of your tax revenue is derived from: Industrial %	2		
8: What % of your tax revenue is derived from: Commercial %	10		
9: What % of your tax revenue is derived from: Residential %	88		
10: Does your jurisdiction impose impact fees on new commercial or industrial development?	no		no

B. Tax Delinquency

Report of as compared to all jurisdictions

Question			Comparison Group
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?	16 or more 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?	no		no

Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
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Section 10: Access to Information

A town's website could offer a location expert researching potential business sites 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.

<input type="radio"/> A. Website			
Report of as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			Comparison Group
1: Does your jurisdiction's website list all local development policies and procedures?	no		no
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)?	yes		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

15: Are there links to other local development resources? (Check all that apply)			
- State finance agencies	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- State permitting agencies	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Regional planning agencies	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Regional development organizations	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Workforce training organizations	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Local public or quasi-public financing resources	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Demographic information	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Economic development agencies	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Other, please specify	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
16: Are there links to other locally-based private or non-profit organizations?			
- Colleges and universities	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Chambers of Commerce	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Community development corporations	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Arts and cultural organizations	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Sports and recreation venues	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Convention and tourist organization	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Other, please specify	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
17: Is there a designated webmaster or staff person responsible for maintaining the website?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes

NEXT STEPS

Halifax is a beautiful small community with a number of strengths based on its agricultural history and land availability. The Dukakis Center’s Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT) creates a snapshot of Halifax’s economic revitalization efforts at a critical moment in the town’s development history. The following is an overview of Halifax’s current assets and where improvements can be made. Outlined below are the top recommendations and their respective priority levels for your economic development efforts.

Recommendations	Priority
Address critical infrastructure needs in the areas of sewer, wastewater treatment, natural gas, and fiber optic / cable / DSL services.	High
Streamline permitting processes to reduce approval time for site plan reviews, zoning variances, and appeals. Provide a central checklist for interested parties, and a flowchart outlining the process by which permitting steps must occur.	High
Take steps toward the formation of a local area chamber of commerce and a volunteer economic development organization. These entities can work with regional development agencies to engage Halifax in a regional economic development strategy.	Medium
Construct a strategic economic development plan, and consider building transit-oriented development around your commuter rail stop.	High
Look to state and federal resources for business incentive programs to support the growth of new and existing businesses in your jurisdiction.	Low

CORE STRENGTHS

Halifax is fortunate to have a strong public transit system with **commuter rail linkages** to Boston and the surrounding areas. The Kingston-Route 3 Line of the MBTA's commuter rail service passes through the northeastern corner of town, with a station just west of Route 36. The route provides service between nearby Kingston and Plymouth and South Station in Boston.

Halifax is a **physically attractive community**, with more acreage within its jurisdiction reserved for parks than its peers, and a smaller proportion of vacant properties. Crime is relatively low, and local schools perform exceptionally well on standardized tests and graduation rates. Halifax's housing market is strong as well, with a higher homeownership rate than the comparison group and a lower vacancy rate.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Perhaps the most pressing area for improvement is your jurisdiction's current **infrastructure** system. Little can be done in the short term to address highway access; the two major routes through town are Routes 58 and 106, which meet just east of the town center and south of the Monponsett Ponds. The town's sewer, wastewater treatment, and natural gas systems, however, do not meet current capacity needs. While Halifax's population is relatively low compared to other towns in the Commonwealth, limitations in infrastructure capacity will severely limit any business development growth.

Halifax should also work to develop an **economic development strategy**, and this EDSAT report can be used as a starting point for that purpose. Establishing a volunteer chamber of commerce and/or volunteer economic development organization will allow the town to develop a strategy that caters to its specific development goals. Crafting an economic development strategy with an economic development team, while involving both businesses and residents, will build buy-in and allow the entire town to help shape the vision for Halifax. Doing so will allow for more cohesive and collaborative economic development. Additionally, through forming an economic development strategy and subsequently identifying targeted industries, Halifax will be in a more strategic position to identify and capitalize on pertinent regional, state, and federal grants and incentives programs, and shape relevant recruiting and marketing efforts. In this regard, your commuter rail stop is a strong asset, and should form the basis of a transit-oriented development strategy—in whole or in part.

Improvements to your town's **approvals process** are strongly recommended. Currently, Halifax's permitting process times is slower for both new projects and existing structures. All other things being equal, a business would likely choose a municipality in the comparison group over Halifax to reduce "time to market" lost to longer approvals. Your jurisdiction should provide both an approval flowchart and a handbook to prospective developers. Given Halifax's limited available land for retail, manufacturing, and industrial developments at present, devising an overlay district or other type of pre-permitting arrangement could assist development.

Existing firms and local business organizations can work together with public officials to attract targeted industries through **cross-marketing efforts**. Halifax should work to develop a better working relationship with firms already resident in the town to assist in attracting new firms. Halifax could amplify this effort by developing a marketing follow-up strategy. Jurisdictions like yours could benefit from a formal de-briefing process with firms that chose to locate (or not to locate) in your town. Gathering information about what made the difference for interested or uninterested firms, and accurately recording the level of satisfaction within your business community can greatly improve your ability to tailor your marketing plan and development strategy. In addition to identifying the future marketing needs of your jurisdiction, having a marketing program based on existing core strengths, identified opportunities, and industry concentrations should be a part of your industrial attraction policy. Actively engaging local business spokespersons to speak on behalf of your jurisdiction can help this effort enormously.

Rents in your jurisdiction are, on average, higher than those of your peers. Although average square foot costs for existing retail space is either on par or better than the CGM, average square foot costs for existing manufacturing space is higher. In addition, there is no Class A office space in your town, and a much higher

proportion of available office space is categorized as class C. Rents are a very important location factor, and can make or break a firm's decision to locate in your jurisdiction.

Workforce composition is a very important factor for location specialists. While Halifax's workforce is fairly evenly distributed, the town has fewer technically skilled workers than the CGM, and it lacks adult education programming to address the deficit.

The Town of Halifax's **website** does an excellent job covering basic information about the municipality, and commendably dedicates staff time to refreshing the site on a weekly basis. However, it provides almost no information of specific interest to prospective businesses and developers. The website should provide a list of development policies and procedures; downloadable permit applications; a permit checklist and flowchart, lists of developable sites and pending permit applications; links to key state and local development resources; and a means of filing permit applications electronically. It is critical that Halifax work to shape a stronger "cognitive mapping" of the town's economic goals and strategic planning efforts. Your jurisdiction's website usually provides location specialists their first impression for your town, and can make an impressive difference in his or her decision whether to proceed or look elsewhere.