

Land Bank

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My father once told me that one of the biggest problems they had in WW II was to convince soldiers that it was really a war and that they had to fight a real battle.

Once that had sunk in, the fight had a chance.

The Land Bank is like that. The Cape is in a battle against time right now, a battle against too many people and too many new homes. The Land Bank is our best weapon at this point.

In case you don't have a grasp on the number of new homes here's a few statistics:

According to Bob Mumford, Transportation Program Manager for the Cape Cod Commission, the average home generates about 12,000 miles of travel per year.

According to Marilyn Fifield, Research Analyst for the Cape Cod Commission, Cape Towns issued permits for over 1,000 new homes in the first half of 1998. That's roughly 12 Million new car miles added to our roads *in the first 6 months of this year*

The land is important as conservation land but has a second, perhaps more crucial, importance: it's the crown of the Sagamore Lens, the water supply for the towns of Bourne, Sandwich, Mashpee and Falmouth.

From 1990 through 1997 there were nearly 12,000 new residences constructed sending 144 Million more car miles onto the byways of this 88 mile peninsula.

Let's total it up: The last U.S. census taken in 1990 counted 135,192 housing units on Cape Cod. Add to that the 12,000 built between 1990 + 1998 and the 1,000 permits issued to mid 1998 and the total annual traffic our roads are handling is now 1.766 Billion Car Miles.

No wonder people are complaining about the traffic.

When the quality of a thing slowly declines it's hard to perceive the erosion. Like a little more traffic all the time. Like a little less woods, a few less birds, a longer line at the post office and the phone book looks like an encyclopedia.

Have you happened to have seen a phone book from the 70's lately ?

The imperceptible erosion of the qualities of life is directly related to the number of people here. There's just too many. The Land Bank can help slow it down.

Do you find yourself wondering why traffic in January looks like July on a rainy day ? Did you ever wonder where all the cars came from at the Mall on a Tuesday in February ?

It's cause they don't just come for the summer anymore - they come to live here now.

On the other hand, back a few years, do you remember the deafening stillness on the Day after Labor Day ?

Things have changed. And they've changed at such an indiscernible pace that you hardly noticed it happening. What's made it even harder to notice is that most of the building these days is on streets that you don't really see from the main roads.

You can slow down the onslaught of new homes. You can put a check on the gridlock traffic. You can vote for the Land Bank.

As you stand in the voting booth remember this quote: Bob Mumford observed that "There is enough available land for the traffic to double if it were all developed."