

Usefulness Outlived:

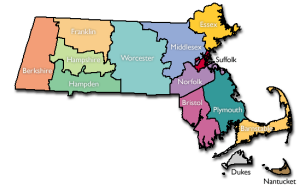
The collapse of county government in Massachusetts

A report presented to the Executive Board of the Essex County Committee to Change County Government

By Senator Richard T. Moore
Massachusetts Senate

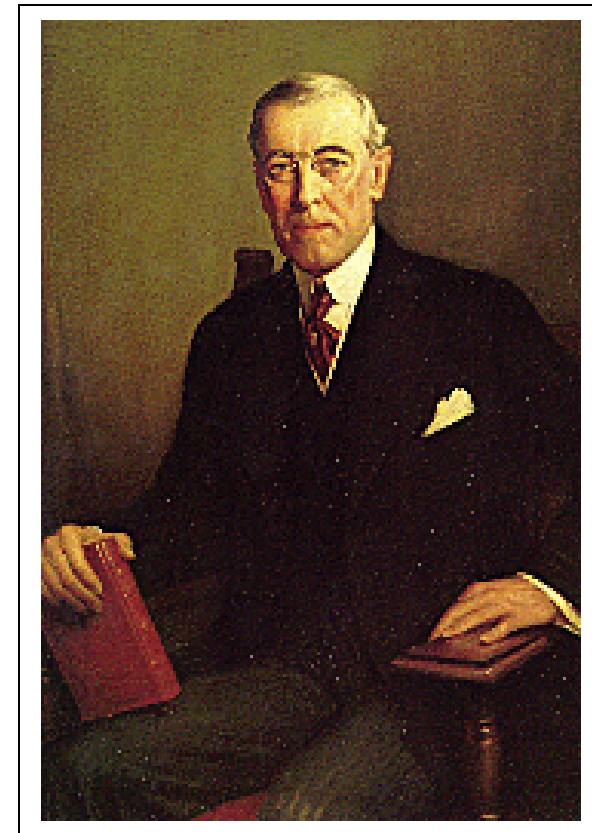
November 30, 2005

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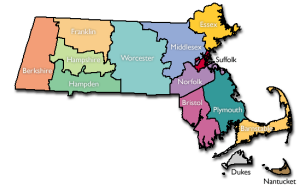
“If you want to make
enemies, try to change
something.”

Woodrow Wilson



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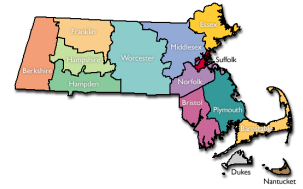
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The Events Leading to County Government Abolition and Reform

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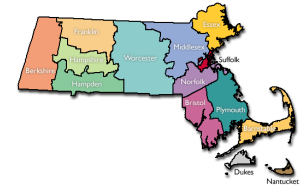
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Events Leading to County Government Reform

- End of Legislative Control of County Budgets – 1974
- Court Reform – 1978
- Proposition 2½ – 1980
- Legislative efforts to reform or abolish county government
- Financial Deterioration of County Government – 1997

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Counties Abolished or Re-Invented

Barnstable County: Reformed in 1990 with establishment of Cape Cod Commission and further reformed by passage of the Cape Cod Land Bank – 1998.

Middlesex County: July 1, 1997 and state takeover of all county jails, court houses, and registries of deeds (eliminating a large portion of county operations.) – Chapter 48 of the Acts of 1997

Franklin County: authorized to transition to a Regional Council of Governments – July 1, 1998. – Chapter 34 of the Acts of 1998

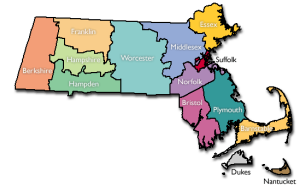
Worcester and Hampden Counties: July 1, 1998 – Chapter 48 of the Acts of 1997

Hampshire County: Sept. 1998 – Chapter 300 of the Acts of 1998

Essex County: July 1, 1999 – Chapter 300 of the Acts of 1998

Berkshire County: July 1, 2000 – Chapter 300 of the Acts of 1998

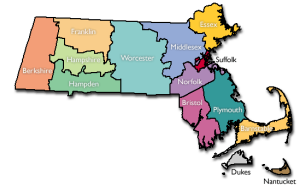
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Conditions for Reform

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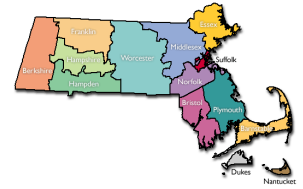
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Conditions for Reform

- Antiquated boundaries
- Lack of public interest and low visibility
- Unstable fiscal conditions of counties
- Corruption, patronage, and mismanagement
- New legislative leadership and political will
- Co-opting of politically powerful opposition

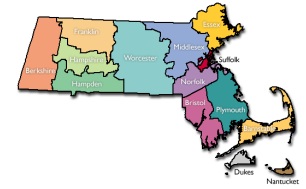
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County Government Reform Efforts

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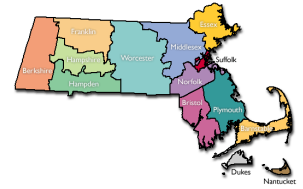
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County Government Reform Efforts

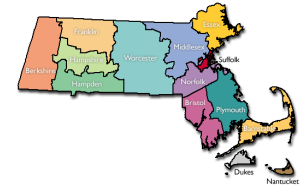
- County Advisory Boards
- Proposition 2 ½

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Drive for Abolition of County Government

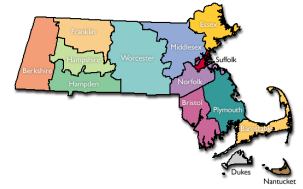
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Drive for Abolition of County Government

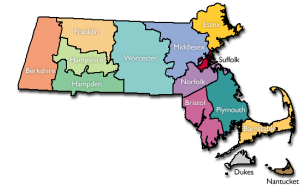
- Poor credit rating
- Limited revenue options
- Crumbling empire
- Orderly shut down
- County phase out
- Pension costs and unfunded pension liability
- County Charter movement

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Models of Regional Government

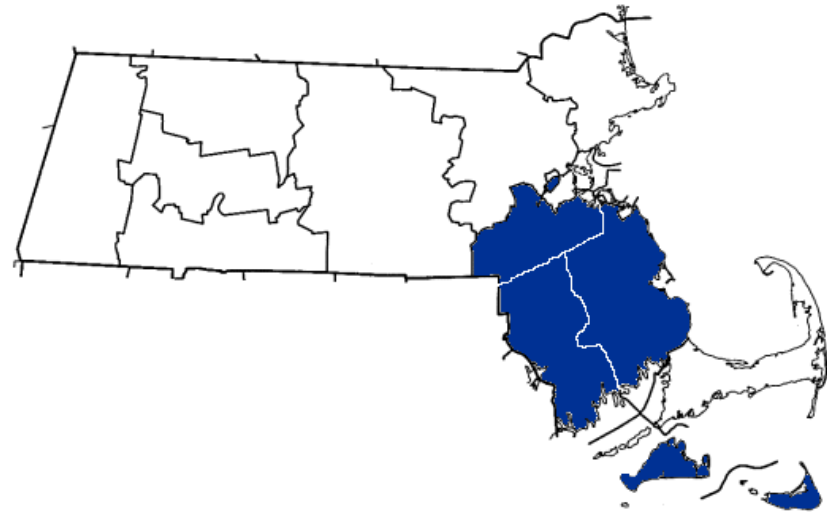
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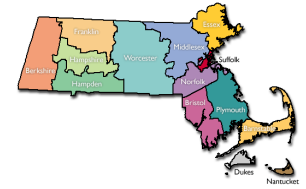
Models of Regional Government

Traditional County Government – Remaining

- Bristol County
- Norfolk County
- Plymouth County
- Dukes County
- Nantucket County
(one town/county)



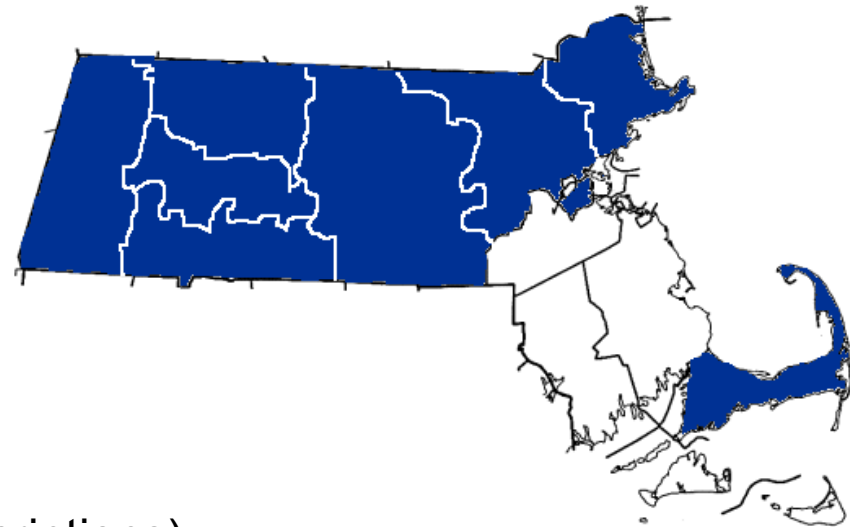
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Models of Regional Government

Abolished Counties

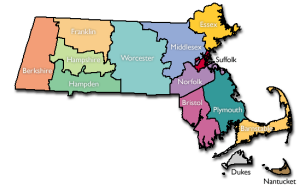
- Berkshire County
- Essex County
- Hampden County
- Hampshire County
- Middlesex County
- Suffolk County
- Worcester County



(Exist only on map and in deed descriptions)

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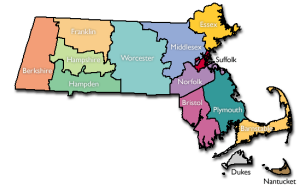
Models of Regional Government

Regional cooperation through non-profit structure

- Municipalities Organized for Regional Effectiveness (M.O.R.E)

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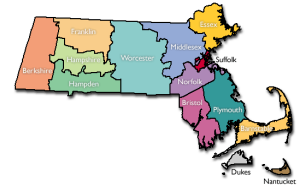
Models of Regional Government

Regional Council of Governments

- Franklin County

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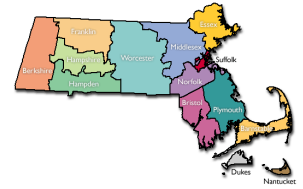


Models of Regional Government

Commission

- Barnstable County (Cape Cod)

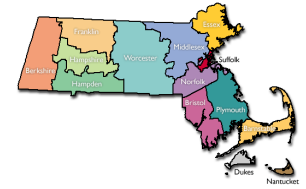
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Resources for Further Study

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Resources for Further Study

Municipalities Organized for Regional Effectiveness

319 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01608

Telephone: 508-799-7169, Fax: 508-799-4720

<http://www.wrrb.org/MORE/>

Franklin Regional Council of Governments

425 Main Street, Greenfield, MA 01301

Telephone: 413-774-3167, Fax: 413-774-3169

info@frcog.org

Cape Cod Commission

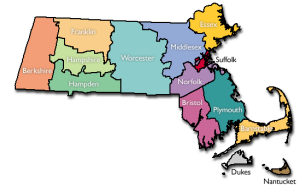
3225 Main St. PO BOX 226

Barnstable, MA 02630-0226

Telephone: 508-362-3828, Fax: 508-362-3136

frontdesk@capecodcommission.org

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