

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Panel 3: Spatial Analytical Methods and Future Scenarios

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Overview of Presentation

1. Project Background
2. The role and use of scenarios
3. Creating Scenarios for the Boston Region
4. Discussion

1. Project Background

- Increasing global interconnectedness has led to urgent large-scale problems -- clear need for preventative approaches & linking local with global
- Developing scenarios to support regional planning for sustainability by providing tools and methods
- Piloting this approach in Boston region

2. Role of Scenarios

- Scenarios=Future Images + Possible Pathways
- Stories, both qualitative and quantitative, about how the future *could* unfold
- Fire up imagination, inspire and motivate action
- Early warnings about imminent dangers based on current trends
- Generate knowledge to conceive and evaluate alternative pathways
- Provide social legitimacy for early action

Branch Points

← a time for choices →

Sources of Uncertainty

- *Ignorance*
- *Surprise*
- *Volition*

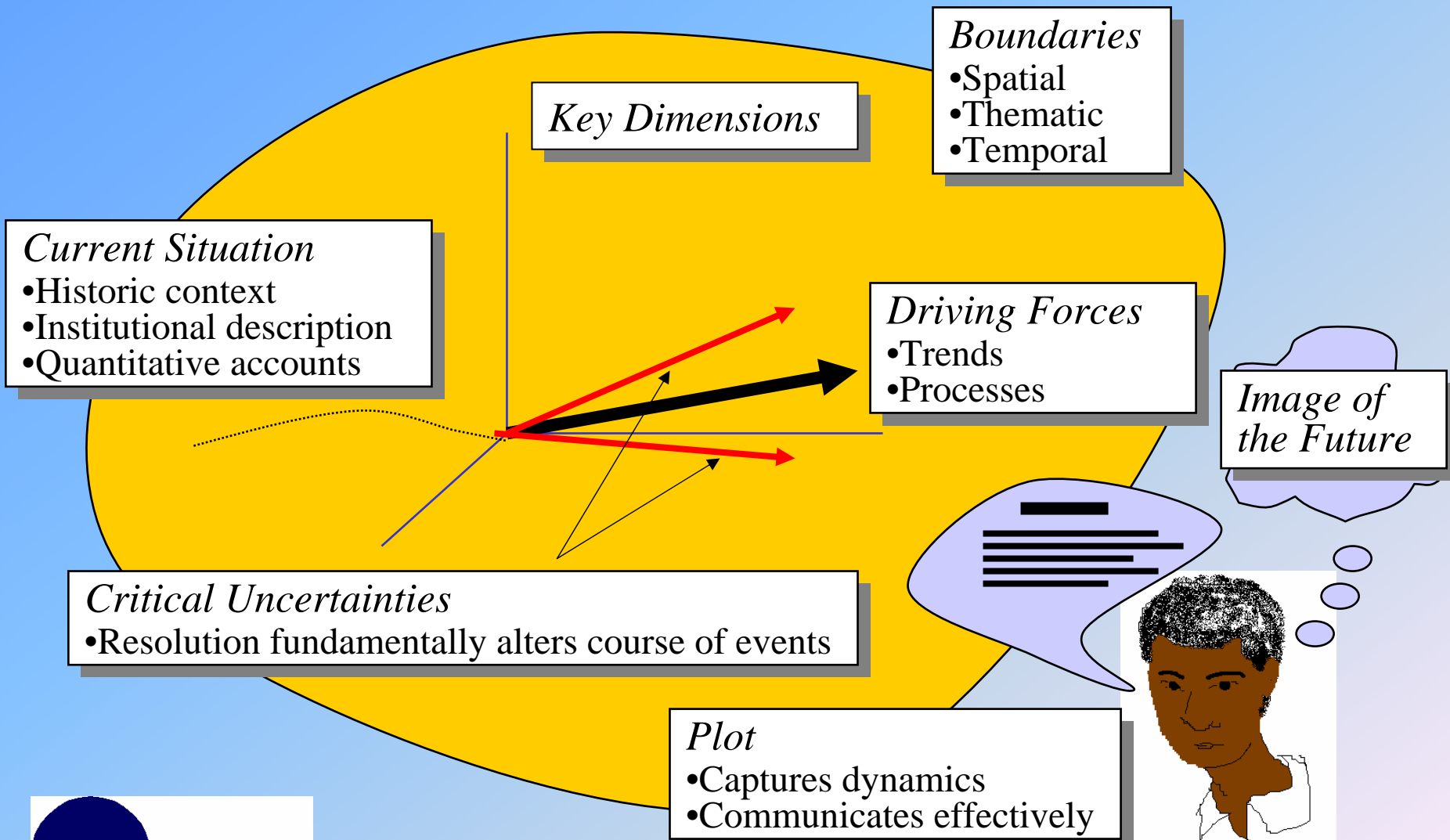
SCENARIOS



Components of Scenarios

- Where do we want to go?
 - *Images* of economy, politics, culture and society that suggest coherent and plausible futures
- How do we get there?
 - *Pathways* to bridge today's conditions with the images of the future
 - *Actions*: gathering resources, motivating people

Anatomy of Scenarios



Global Links: Implications for Local Scenarios

- Local scenarios may connect more tangibly to social change processes than global scenarios
- Enlarges and enriches stakeholder process
- Promotes linkage to initiatives around the world; builds global solidarity
- Introduces exogenous variables that condition local planning and decision-making
- Identifies new goals and indicators

Multi-Stakeholder Processes

- Normative visions and scenarios without broad stakeholder endorsement will never be realized
- On the other hand, stakeholders have difficulties thinking “out of the box”
- Need concrete small steps that can be realized in the short term to demonstrate success
- Visioning and backcasting together with stakeholders can facilitate social learning

3. Developing Scenarios for the Boston Region

- Three archetype scenarios being developed:
 - **Business-As-Usual (BAU)**: little change in production and consumption patterns; GHG emissions and ecological footprints grow; equity not addressed
 - **Policy Reform**: technological and policy measures emphasized to moderate ecological destruction and social inequality
 - **Deep Change**: changes in values lead to changes in lifestyles and institutions (along with technological innovations) to achieve sustainability with global responsibility

Scenario 1: Business-As-Usual

Boston in 2050 stays the course of Boston in 2005:

- Dominant values (“the American dream”) and consumerism persist
- Income and health inequalities become deeper
- Dependence on imported raw materials increases
- Urban sprawl and car dependence grows
- Increased CO2 emissions and footprints leads to climate change with global as well as local impacts

Scenario 2: Policy Reform

Boston in 2050 has seen government-led policies and technological change to address many of the problems of the BAU scenario:

- CO2 emissions have decreased somewhat
- Income and social inequalities reduced
- Resources are used more efficiently
- Sprawl mitigated to a degree
- Global resource depletion continues
- Climate change and global inequality persist

Scenario 3: Deep Change

By 2050, Boston has seen political engagement towards transformation of values and lifestyles:

- Growing awareness of global connectedness and responsibility
- Deep changes in lifestyles, behavior, and institutions have led to huge reductions in CO2 emissions and footprint
- Quality-of-life (clean environment, sense of community, social equity) replaces economic growth and material consumption as key driver

Business-As-Usual Transportation & Land Use

- Most growth seen in communities outside Rte. 128
- Private car use and VMT greater than in 2005; GHG emissions continue to grow
- Congestion and commuting times worsen
- Large inefficient vehicles continue to dominate
- Modest improvements in public transportation, but transit ridership low

Policy Reform

Transportation & Land Use

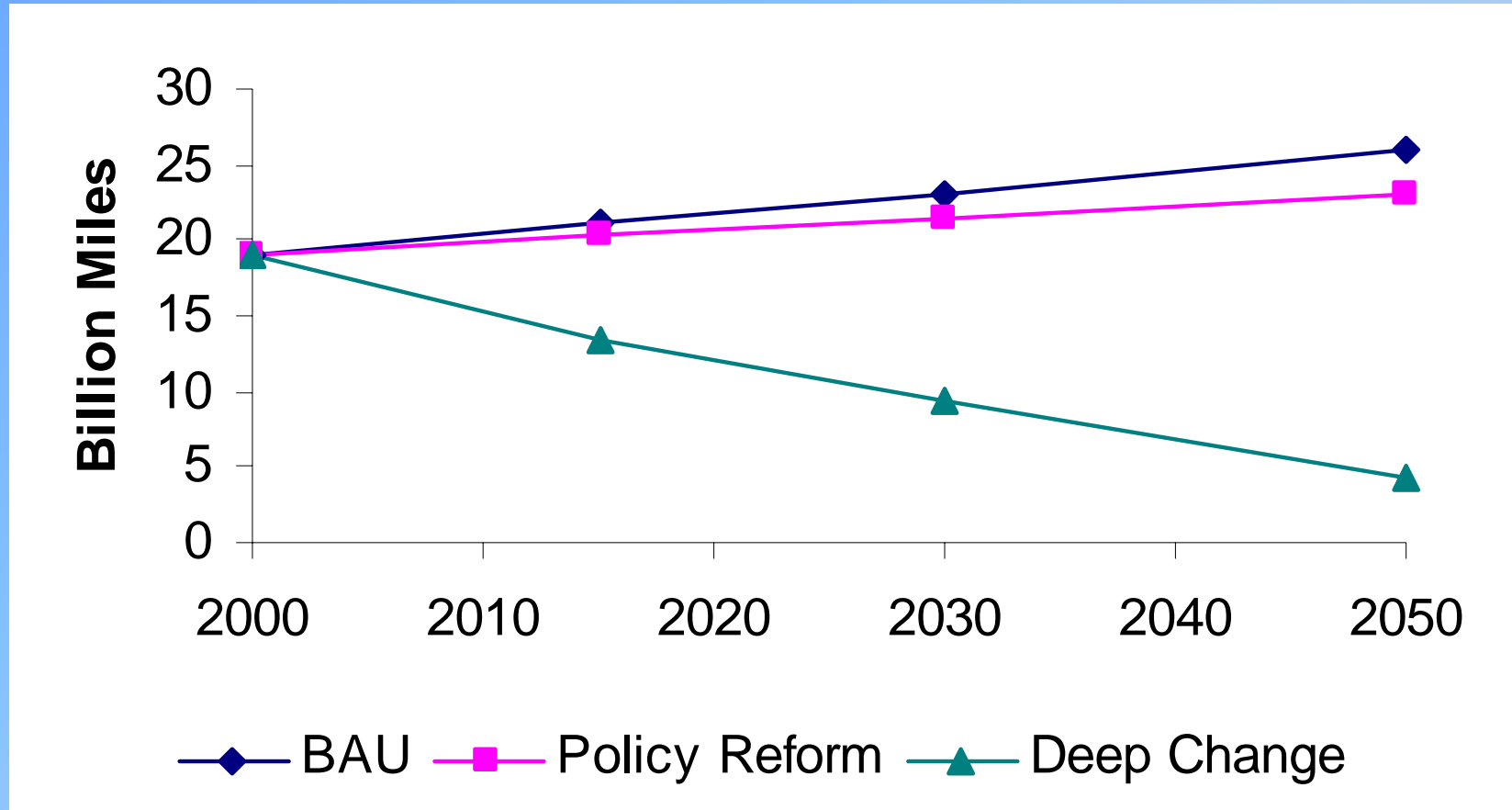
- High fuel and vehicle taxes curtail private vehicle use; VMT reduced modestly
- Congestion and commuting time stabilized at 2005 levels
- Transport-related GHGs reduced moderately through efficiency improvements
- Improved rail and transit links (e.g., North & South Stations)
- TOD popular in much of the inner core communities
- Lack of regionally coordinated land-use planning; sprawling development in outer ring

Deep Change

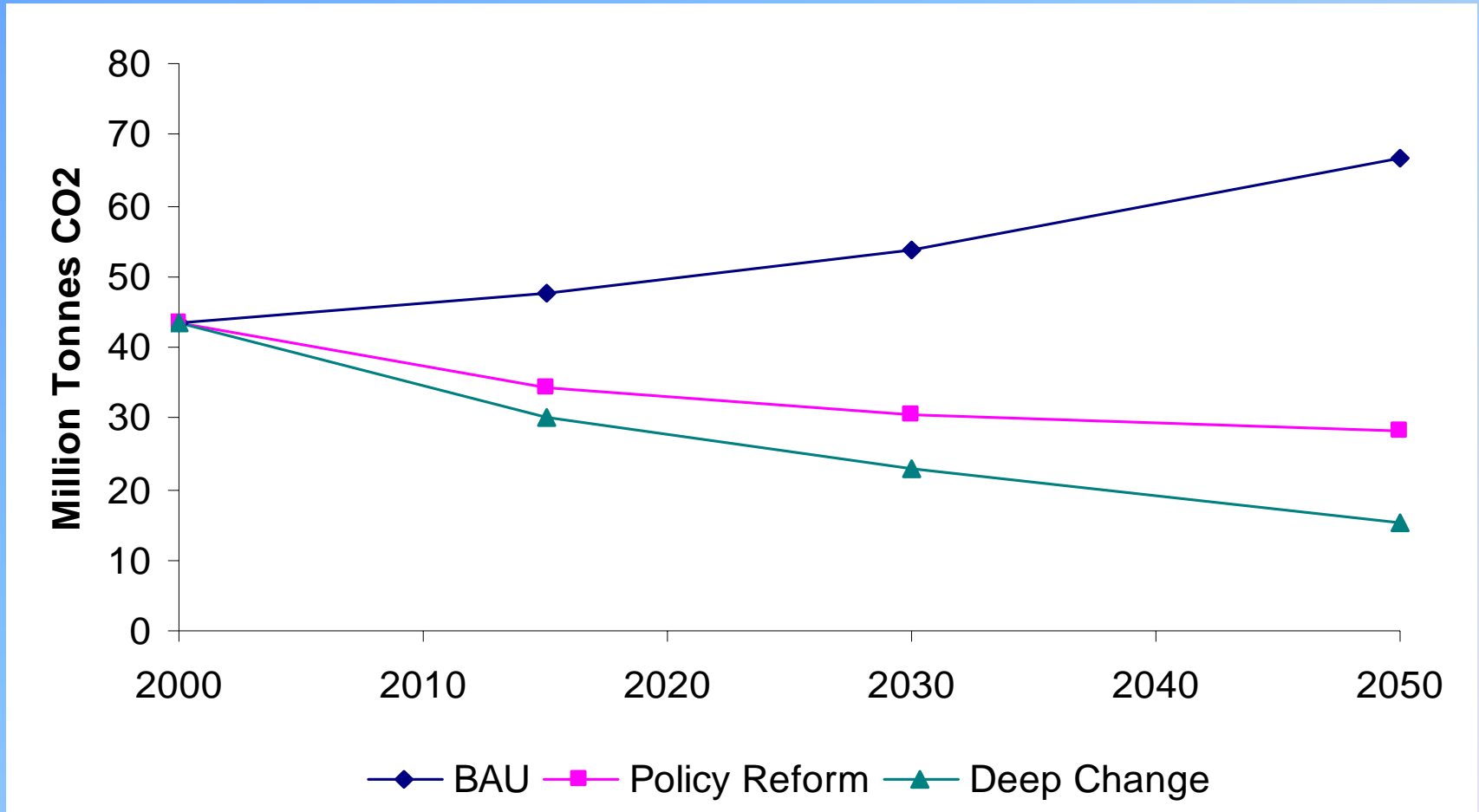
Transportation & Land Use

- GHG emissions from transportation reduced by 70%
- New regional governing body coordinates land-use decision-making; promotes density, transit, and healthy lifestyles and mixed use
- Private car use reduced significantly; transit and alternative modes dominate
- Major roadways redesigned to accommodate alternative modes
- Congestion and commuting time markedly reduced
- Parts of downtown Boston closed to private vehicles; served by free transit and other modes

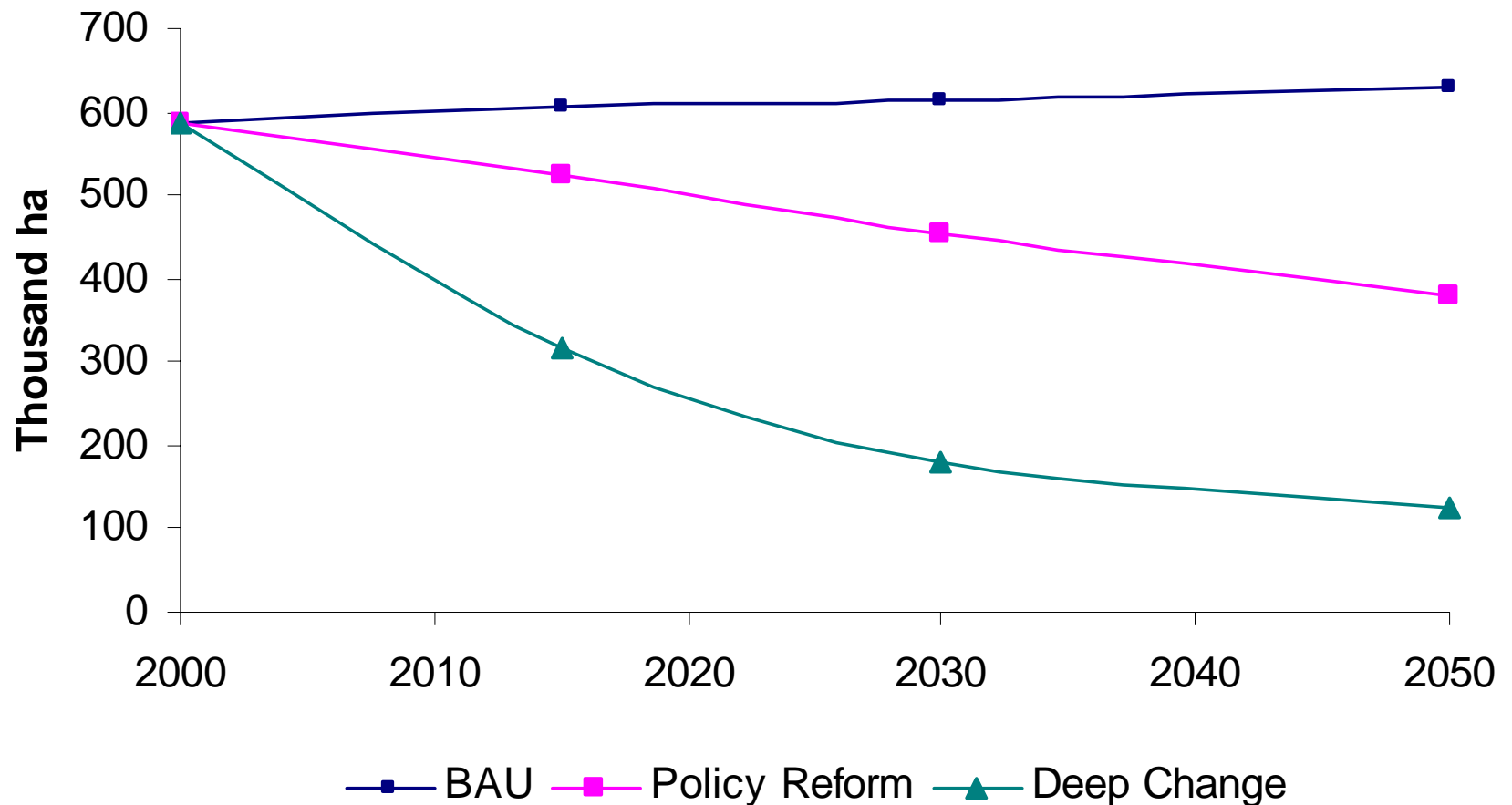
Annual Miles Traveled in Personal Vehicles



CO₂ Emissions



Land Area Required for Food



Business-As-Usual Poverty & Inequality

- New employment opportunities mostly outside inner core
- Little attention to poverty reduction; poverty rate persists
- Growing income gap between skilled and unskilled jobs
- Inequality continues to increase

Policy Reform

Poverty & Inequality

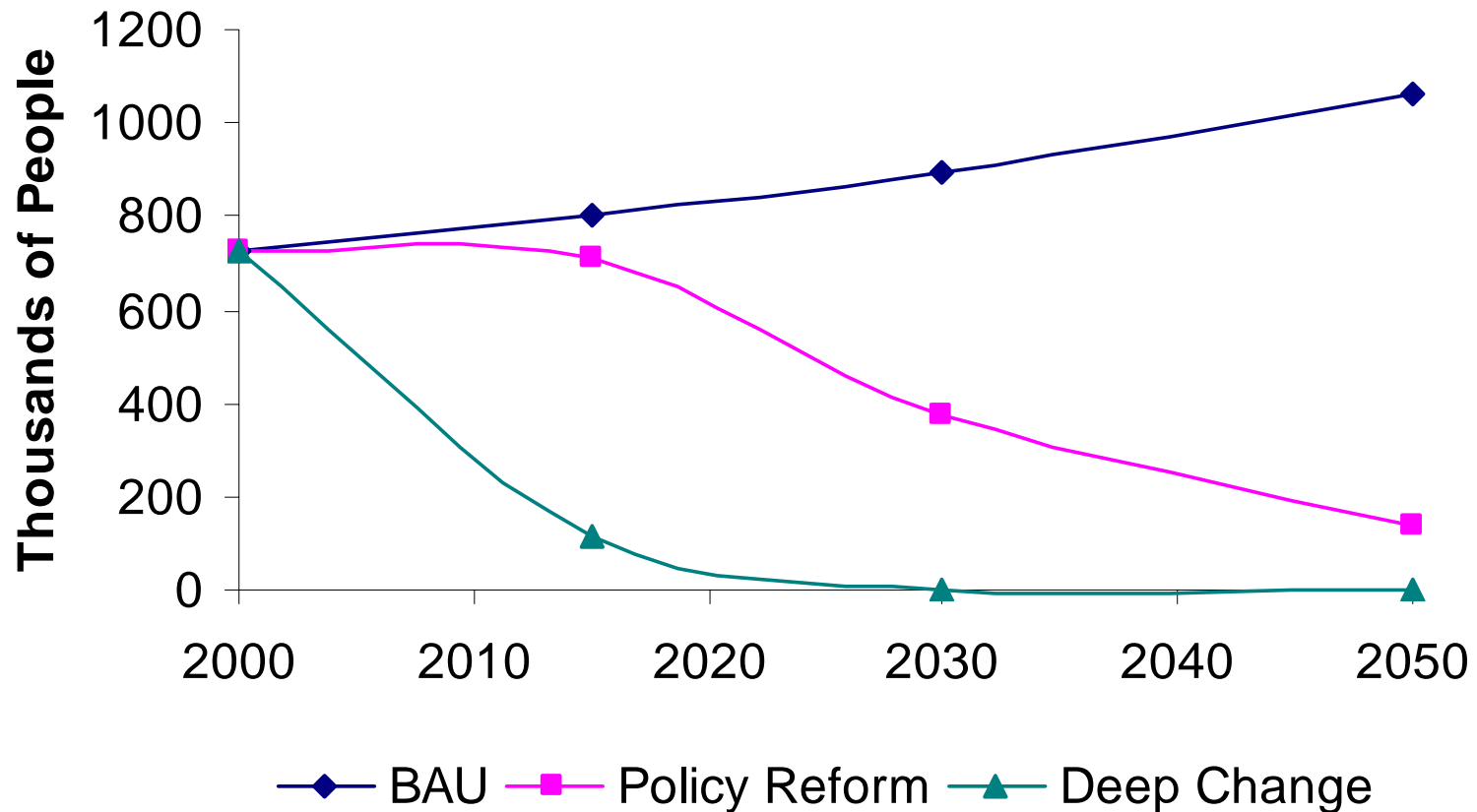
- Employment centers develop near transit nodes (diverse opportunities: from service to professional)
- Policy initiatives raise the minimum wage, increase job training opportunities
- Poverty stabilized but remains concentrated in inner core
- Inequality improves slightly

Deep Change

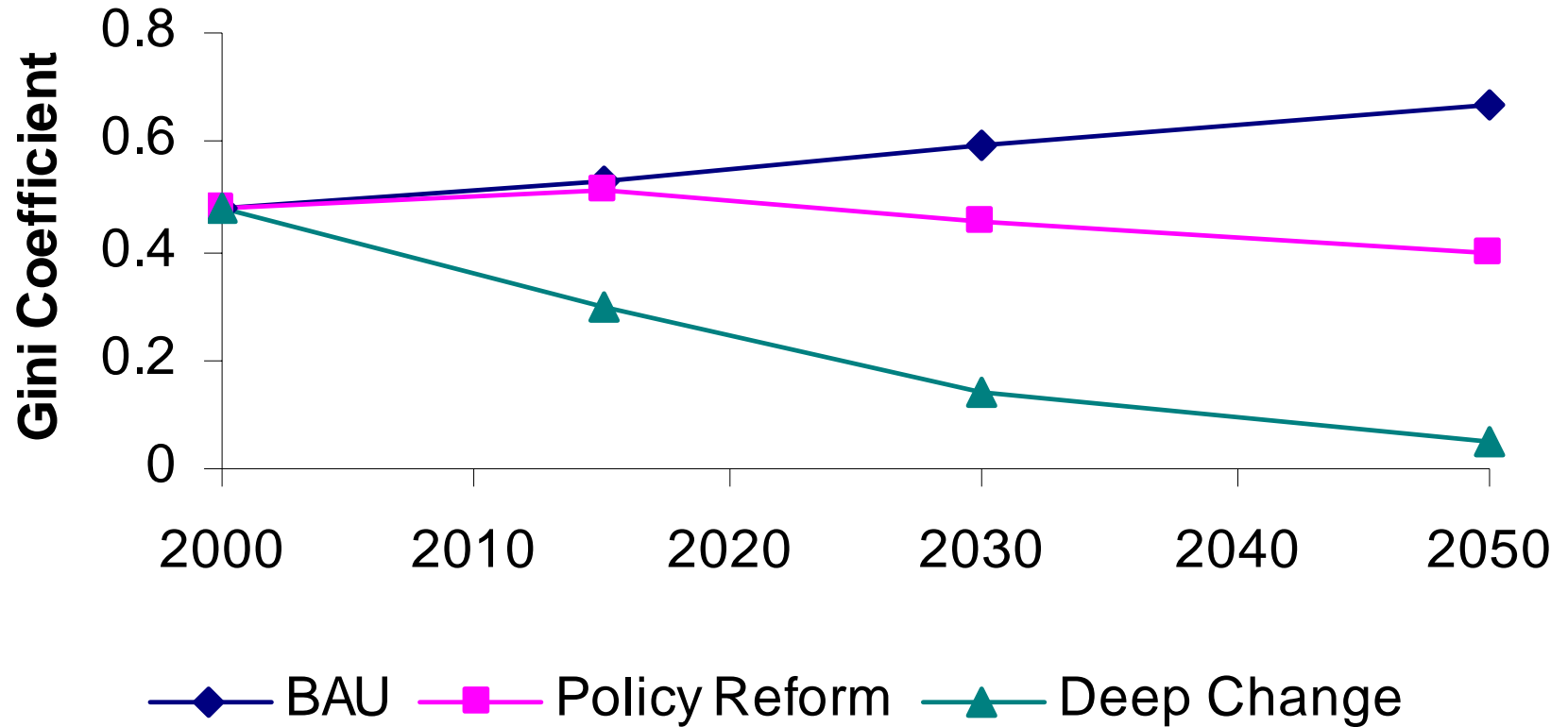
Poverty & Inequality

- Poverty reduction and equality among key values adopted and acted upon
- Shorter work week leads to reduction in unemployment
- Affordable housing and universal health care reduce the financial burden on poor households
- “Living wage” adopted and poverty significantly reduced
- Considerable improvement in income equality

Population Below the Poverty Line



Income Inequality



4. Discussion

- What does it mean for the Boston region to pursue a sustainable future when the rest of the country/world is not?
 - Boston could serve as a model for other regions
 - We could assume that similar deep changes are taking place throughout the country and beyond
- What role can scenario development processes play in informing planning and bringing about coherence and a sense of direction?

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