

10.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Tiverton's challenge for the future lies in balancing of residential commercial and industrial development that is economic and environmentally sustainable so that its tax base is strengthened and diversified, and jobs are provided for its residents, while its open spaces are protected and small town character is maintained.

10.1 Economic Environment

The quality of life in a small town coupled with favorable economic factors, make Tiverton an ideal location for knowledge-based enterprises, as well as traditional firms that are committed to commercial and environmental sustainability.

Tiverton is a geographically diverse community of 15,700, with several distinct neighborhoods. It is bounded on the western side by the Sakonnet River. Fall River, Massachusetts borders to the north, and the rural coastal communities of Westport, Massachusetts to the east and Little Compton, Rhode Island to the south. Providence is Rhode Island's largest city, 20 miles northwest, and Newport is a major international tourist destination 14 miles southwest.

Because of its location Tiverton is inherently intertwined with adjoining Massachusetts cities and towns that have developed retail sectors and lower sales tax rates than RI. Yet, because of their larger population and stronger economy, offer attractive commercial and professional services opportunities to enterprises that choose to locate in Tiverton. From Tiverton to the over 3 million population of greater Boston with its information technology, biotechnology, medical and financial industries is less than 70 miles away with the main connection being Route 24.

Tiverton also has ready access to Aquidneck Island with an extensive military presence best exemplified by Naval Station Newport that includes, but not limited to, the Naval War College, the Naval Military Justice School and the Underwater System Command. There is also a community of defense contractors that support the navy installation.

Over decades, Tiverton has evolved into a bedroom community with an increasing percentage of its working sector commuting to Providence and Boston for employment opportunities. Declining State and Federal assistance has impacted many town services. If Tiverton is to remain vibrant in the future, it should look to all its existing and potential resources to generate revenue and jobs for its citizens. This will allow the Town to thrive, support and grow services to all ages.

Tiverton has approximately 2000 acres of commercial and industrial zoned land. The town areas best suited for further development are along Fish Road, Stafford / Crandall Road and the 177-acre Tiverton Business Park, and are in close proximity to the Route 24 corridor. The Real Estate Exemption program Section 74-79 offers businesses within the Enterprise Zone phased in municipal real estate and employment tax credits.

Tiverton has three elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. Fort Barton Elementary, one of the systems three neighborhood schools has received a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Award. The High School has programs designed to introduce students to

various careers and provides them opportunities to participate in local and regional enterprises. Advanced education is available at nearby community colleges and at both public and private universities through the doctorate level.

As in any community there are some challenges for Tiverton, including areas of the commercial and industrial districts that lack full development of their infrastructure. These needs should be addressed as the Town strives to expand its economic base.

10.2 Agriculture, Fishing and Marine-Related Industries

Agricultural activities are a special form of economic enterprise in Tiverton. According to the Rhode Island Division of Agriculture and Marketing, farming output in the Town includes dairy, sheep, hogs, fruits and vegetables, eggs and poultry, and christmas trees. Some residents are actively involved in agriculture of one form or another, and many operate roadside stands from which they sell produce.

Tiverton has been associated with the fishing industry throughout its history, due to its location along the eastern shores of the Sakonnet River and Mount Hope Bay. The local quahoggers, lobstermen and fishermen operate in Mount Hope Bay, the Sakonnet River and up to 100 miles offshore. Some of the enterprises are seasonal, but many operate year-round, selling their catch to various wholesale and retail merchants located along the waterfront. The viability of this fish and shellfish industry is dependent upon maintaining the water quality of the Sakonnet River and the streams which feed into it.

Narragansett Bay and its tributary bays, including Mount Hope Bay and the Sakonnet River provide expansive opportunities for recreational boating, which is an integral part of both the state's image and economy. Tiverton has several marine-related businesses, boat sales and supplies and a number of boatyards and marinas along Riverside Drive and Main Road in the area known as the Tiverton Basin. The boat sales and services include inboard and outboard motor boats, sailboats, canoes and kayaks. The Tiverton Basin located between the Stone Bridge and Sakonnet River Bridge is considered a safe harbor protected from the prevailing southwest winds by the manmade abutments that once formed the Stone Bridge. Railroad abutments on the north end of the basin serves as protection from wave actions as a result of northerly winds. Wind surfing and kite surfing has become a popular draw at Fogland Point, which have been identified as a preeminent area for the sport.



Fishing is a traditional economic activity in Tiverton

10.3 Jobs, Services and Industry

Although Tiverton provides 2,413 jobs (first quarter 2014), it is primarily a bedroom community and a net exporter of workers. The 2008-2012 Census counted 8,710 town residents over the age of 16 as employed. Those who commute to work have a mean commute time of 29 minutes. The break-down by employment category is shown in Table 10-1.

TABLE 10-1: Employment by Category, Tiverton Residents

	Number	Percent
Arts and Entertainment	771	9%
“Other Industries” *	396	5%
Self-Employed	783	9%
Education, Health and Social Services	1,903	22%
Professional, Scientific and Waste	815	9%
Public Administration	353	4%
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	636	7%
Manufacturing	974	11%
Wholesale and Retail	954	11%
Agriculture	110	1%
Construction	507	6%
Information Industry	196	2%
Transportation	312	4%
Total	8,710	100%

Source: US Census 2008-2012

*Services Industries not including Public Administration

10.4 Public Finance

In the recent town-wide revaluation of property, the resultant burden shift in municipal taxes was an unsettling experience for some residents, particularly those on fixed incomes. The bulk of the town revenue comes from personal property taxes, particularly residential property, and there is a

need for high quality economic development to offset this tax burden.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015, the Town had a total budget of \$47,892,651. Of this amount, \$38,072,761, or 79.5% of the revenue, was generated from property taxes (including motor vehicle and business inventory taxes, which are being phased out by State law). State funding sources including funding for education and reimbursement for the partial phase-out of the motor vehicle tax and revenue sharing together provide \$7,217,960 or approximately 15.1% of total annual revenue. The rest is generated by various fees, permits and licenses, and other assessments, including for example, payment in lieu of taxes by the Tiverton power plant (\$755,080 for the 2014-2015 FY). Tiverton property tax is levied at 100% of the assessed value, and in 2014-2015, the Town tax rate was \$\$19.30 per \$1,000 assessed valuation.

All Town financial transactions undergo an extensive annual audit by a professional external accounting firm. This is done to ensure responsible handling of public expenditures. Similar attention should be given to the income side of Town finances, the vast majority of which is from real estate taxes. An audit, by an external professional, of the Town's real estate tax system would seek to ensure every tax exemption and special category is still in the Town's interest and is still accomplishing its purpose. A secondary goal would be to determine the effectiveness of the Town's reevaluation system every three years.

Table 10-2 shows the breakdown of property tax revenue for the tax roll year 2014-2015, which clearly shows that the greatest percentage of property taxes comes from residential properties.

TABLE 10-2: Property Tax Revenue, Tax Roll Year 2015

Category	Amount	% of Total
Residential	\$ 31,004,875	82.60%
Commercial	\$ 3,079,703	8.20%
Industrial	\$ 195,191	0.50%
Farm/Forest/Open Space	\$ 981,816	2.60%
Motor Vehicle	\$ 1,439,852	3.80%
Business Tangible Property	\$ 825,487	2.20%
Total	\$ 37,526,924	100.00%

Expenditures for the 2014-2015 fiscal year are shown in Table 10-3. Financing the public school system accounts for the bulk of the Town expenses or, 61.13% of annual expenditures. This is followed by expenses for Municipal Government at 31.58%. Our debt service is 7.29% of our total \$47,892,651 budget.

TABLE 10-3: Appropriated Expenditures, FY 2014-2015

Category	Appropriated	% of Total
General Education	\$ 29,244,435	61.06
Schools, Capital Expenditures*	\$ 31,004	0.07
School Department, Total	\$ 29,275,439	61.13
General Government	\$ 1,141,613	2.28
Financial Administration	\$ 4,826,988	10.08
Protection to Persons & Property	\$ 5,838,255	12.19
Public Works	\$ 2,192,256	4.58
Grants and Health **	\$ 507,751	1.06
Parks and Recreation	\$ 119,738	0.25
Associated Activities ***	\$ 124,830	0.26
Municipal, Capital Expenditures	\$ 425,409	0.89
School Resource Officer-School Share	(\$ 50,400)	(0.11)
Municipal Government, Total	\$ 15,126,440	31.58
Debt Service (Principal & Interest		
Fort Barton School	\$ 800,044	1.67
Pocasset School	\$ 861,763	1.80
Ranger School	\$ 847,750	1.77
High School	\$ 294,775	0.62
TIF Area Sewer Debt	\$ 686,440	1.43
Debt Service Total	\$ 3,490,772	7.29
Total	\$ 47,892,651	100

* Does not include capital expenditures paid from prior year's School surplus funds.

** Includes library services, payments to social service organizations.

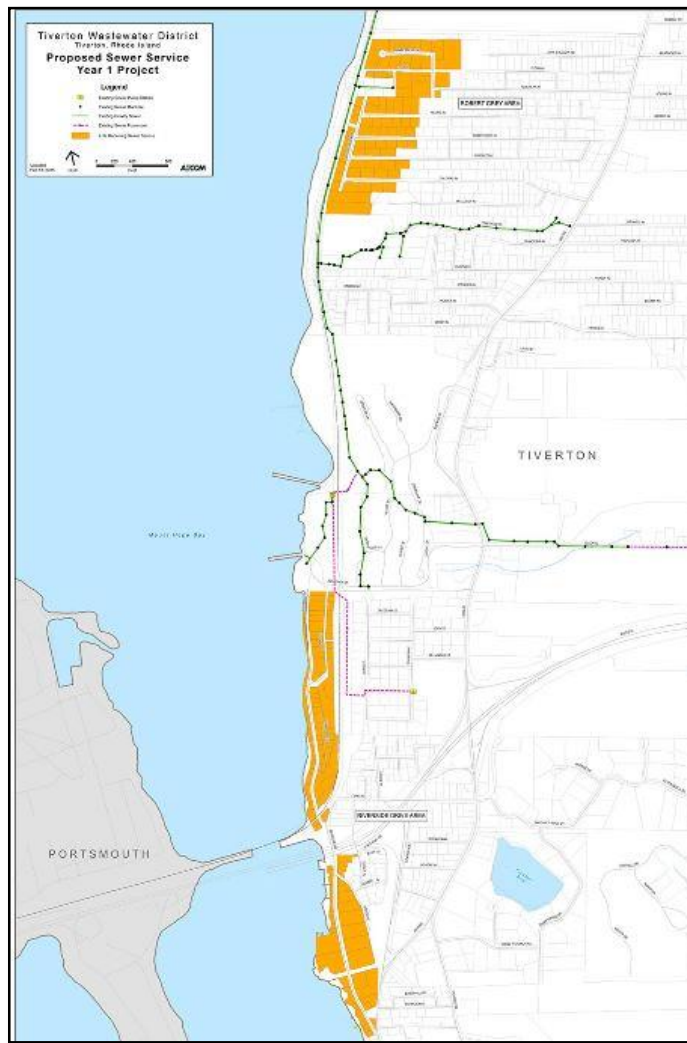
***Includes senior services and payments to various (non-regulatory) commissions.

Town expenditures in the two general categories, municipal and education, shown in Table 10-4 for five recent fiscal years show a steady and significant increase in expenditures.

TABLE 10-4: Expenditures, FY 2010-2015

YEAR	MUNICIPAL	EDUCATION	TOTAL
2010-2011	\$17,281,980	\$25,520,782	\$42,802,762
2011-2012	\$17,725,862	\$26,936,506	\$44,662,368
2012-2013	\$17,943,888	\$27,917,397	\$45,861,285
2013-2014	\$18,419,880	\$28,729,425	\$47,149,305
2014-2015	\$18,617,212	\$29,275,439	\$47,892,651

At the time of the original printing of the Comprehensive Community Plan (1992), budget data from the fiscal year ending in June 1990 was provided; for fiscal year 2015 the total budget was \$16,664,000 (rounded up to the nearest thousand), with 4,676,000 (or 28%) appropriated to municipal expenses and 11,968,000 (or 72%) appropriated to education. Over the fifteen-year period (1990-2005), the Town's budget has nearly doubled, with the municipal expenses growing at a faster rate than the education expenses.



Public sewer availability will be key component of future economic growth opportunities.

10.5 Economic Growth Opportunities

In order to enhance the Town’s tax base while maintaining the character and quality of life of Tiverton that is valued by its citizens, it is important that commercially and environmentally sustainable enterprises are entertained. Firms may be from the traditional sector of the economy that now exist in Tiverton or from new growth industries such as information technology, biotechnology, medical technology, cyber security and the hospitality industry. Any new developments should be evaluated on their impacts to public water and sewer, traffic and parking, schools, public safety and surrounding neighborhoods. The town should seek enterprises with the greatest positive tax revenue, creation of job opportunities and sustainable environmental impact.

Recommendations from the economic development studies done by Edwards and Kelsey and the Cecil Group in 2003 and 2004 focused on protecting and promoting agriculture and maritime industries, fully utilizing the Town’s Enterprise Zone designation, developing town-wide design

review standards, strengthening the various commercial and industrial areas in town through physical enhancements and zoning modifications, developing a small business assistance program, service related and industry and exploring tourism potential.

The development of the Tiverton Business Park, waterfront, northern Main Road, Riverside Drive and Bliss Four Corners were identified as specific projects to be promoted.

Business Park

Tiverton has actively worked to develop its Business Park, located to the east of Route 24 near the Fish Road exit. Recently Tiverton approved an overlay district to promote and encourage development on the 177-acre parcel.

The presence of the Algonquin Natural Gas Pipeline spur which runs through the site has made it possible for a 290-megawatt combined cycle natural gas turbine to be built. According to ISO New England, which operates the New England electricity grid, demand for electricity will rise 10 percent over the next 10 years. Most of this increased demand will be generated by natural gas sources and wind turbines. The potential growth for future power-generating industries should be pursued for this location.

Villages on Mount Hope Bay

Construction is ongoing in the final phase of the residential portion of the Villages on Mount Hope Bay project. This age-restricted development includes a mix of townhouses and large multi-family dwellings restricted to residents aged 55 and older. The waterfront features dock space, a restaurant and public access area, with future plans for an inn, mooring field and retail / mixed-use space.

Souza Road & Fish Road/ Route 24 Corridor

The Souza Road and the Fish Road/Route 24 corridor offers a unique potential for Tiverton to expand its commercial and industrial tax base. Easy access to Route 24 allows for tax base growth when paired with development tools protecting the character of Town. Vacant property north of Souza Road holds the potential for a large number of new residential dwelling units.

Tiverton Four Corners

Tiverton Four Corners is home to a National Historic Register District, a recognized arts district and a thriving village commercial district. An eclectic mix of art and artisans, shops and eateries offer local goods, agricultural products and unique finds. By legislative act, original art sold within the district is exempt from State sales tax. The area is also categorized by historic homes and community facilities such as the Union Public Library.

Northern Main Road

The northern Main Road corridor contains three distinct zoning districts, most recently established as part of a comprehensive zoning reorganization for the area. The three zoning districts are categorized as: Traditional Main Street, Pedestrian-Friendly and Neighborhood Business, and reflect the local character and development patterns while expanding allowed uses and encouraging redevelopment of vacant or underutilized parcels through a hybrid Form-Based Code. Design standards for new development and for the public realm have been adopted and promoted.

Riverside Drive

Riverside Drive is an ideal area to enhance marine trades, retail and hospitality. Tiverton has approved introducing water and sewer lines along the length of Riverside Drive, which in return offers additional opportunity to create a waterfront environment for residents and guests.

Stone Bridge

The Stone Bridge abutment rehabilitation and renovations to Independence Park will commence in 2016. The abutting Seaside Gas station and Grinnell's Beach will be part of an overall revitalization strategy. Numerous retail and service-related businesses line water's edge in the area. The Planning Board has recognized the importance of this area and has prioritized the inventory, evaluation and revision of the current zoning in order to enhance economic development opportunities.

Bliss Four Corners

Bliss Four Corners also received a recent zoning update in 2014 with the adoption of the hybrid Form-Based Code. The District was rezoned as a Pedestrian-Friendly District. A major transportation improvement project has been proposed by the RI Department of Transportation for complete reconstruction roadways at the intersections of Stafford, Crandall and Bulgarmarsh Roads. These transportation improvement project will only cement the trend of economic growth in this area with the new Tiverton Public Library and Sandywoods Farm artist community as solid anchors.

Traditional Economic Activities

Agriculture is one of the economic activities in Tiverton which is most reflective of the town's rural and historic character. Its family farms contribute to the unique visual quality of the town, and preserve open space and natural resources while providing economic and quality of life benefits. Another example, the Pardon Gray Preserve, land acquired in 2000 by the Tiverton Land Trust, is being used by a local farmer as part of its management plan. This serves to maintain its economic and scenic contribution to the community. Supporting agriculture by protecting existing farmland and engaging in creative partnerships is a critical component of Tiverton's future. Chapter 9.0 of this Plan details the efforts and priorities for land preservation.



Farming: An economic activity that is a way of life in Tiverton

The establishment of a Waterfront District in 2001 as part of comprehensive amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and map, and its application to waterfront land from Nanaquaket Bridge north to the State border, provides a regulatory means to encourage marine-related uses. The opportunity exists to provide such uses and appropriately scaled development along Tiverton's waterfront that would enhance both the local economy and preserve the Town's maritime traditions.

The Main Road commercial area from Souza Road north to Fall River is the closest thing to a "Main Street" in Tiverton. The storefronts which line Main Road, particularly along the northerly end near Fall River, are a great resource for the establishment of small businesses which require low overhead and active street life. At the southerly end of this commercially-zoned section of Tiverton's major commercial corridor, particularly in the areas close to the Villages on Mount Hope Bay, opportunities exist for the redevelopment of vacant or underutilized parcels into new commercial retail and service development. In 2014, a Form-Based Code was adopted for this area creating new zoning districts and guidelines for development and redevelopment.

Lastly, over the years Tiverton has developed a reputation for the arts, much of it focused on the historic Four Corners area, where crafts, performing arts, and nationally known art galleries combine with unique retail to provide successful economic center that enhances the character of the town. The development of the arts, as a component of tourism, can be another opportunity for economic growth that complements the town's character. State law exempts original and limited edition works of art from state sales tax, further encouraging development of this facet of the economy.



Many opportunities exist for redevelopment on Main Road's commercial corridor.

Economic development must complement the Town's character



10.6 Economic Development Goals and Objectives

Goals

Expand economic opportunities in Tiverton, through the pursuit and support of development that will contribute an economic benefit while protecting the environment and character of individual neighborhoods. The diversification of commercial, industrial and mixed-use development expands the tax base, and contributes to creating new employment opportunities at living wages.

Promote commercial and industrial development standards

Work with State legislators on the Tiverton Enterprise Zone to increase the benefits, the ease of participation, as well as an adequate rate of return for sustainable businesses.

Promote streetscape improvements in the North Tiverton commercial areas.

Complete a fiscal health and planning study.

Complete a future earnings study.

Perform a comprehensive analysis of Town real estate tax income, to evaluate its overall effectiveness as the Town's major revenue source.

Objectives

- Explore whether the local zoning regulations accurately reflect the goals and desires as stated in the Comprehensive Community Plan for future commercial and industrial development, particularly in terms of location and categories and intensities of uses.
- Plan for and support commercial and industrial development that provides net tax benefits and is at a scale and design that is consistent with the character of that area of the town.

- Ensure that all new commercial and industrial development is well designed, aesthetically pleasing, does not result in significant site and traffic impact and complements the character of the surrounding neighborhood.
- Maximize the economic opportunities of the Tiverton Business Park.
- Encourage small business development and revitalization.
- Preserve and promote agricultural activities.
- Promote the utilization of Tiverton's waterfront for marine-related uses that would enhance the local economy and the Town's maritime character.
- Promote and support the arts as an economic activity that enhances the quality of life in Tiverton.
- Conduct a professional analysis of the Town's real estate tax income to accomplish two major objectives:
 - a) Evaluate effectiveness of tax exemptions with regard to whether they are accomplishing their intended purposes, and whether the purpose is worth the loss of revenue,
 - b) Evaluate ability of the Town's property assessment system in terms of its capability to accurately determine property values.

10.7 Economic Development Implementation Actions

Commercial and Industrial Zoning Fact Check Planner

Action 1: Evaluate the existing and potential uses of land zoned for commercial and industrial uses, and consider options for adjusting the land areas and intensity of uses so that future commercial and industrial development can occur provided it is compatible with the character of the neighborhood.

Commercial and industrial land uses in Tiverton are primarily located in northern part of Tiverton. Although most of the commercially used areas were developed before the town was zoned, these areas generally correspond to the General Commercial, Highway Commercial, Traditional Main Street, Pedestrian Friendly, Neighborhood Business or Waterfront Districts. The Highway Commercial District is in place at the Route 24 - Fish Road interchange, and at the north end of Stafford Road near the border with Fall River. The Waterfront District is in place along the shoreline of the Tiverton Basin, the site of the Villages at Mount Hope Bay, and at the very northwest corner of town along Mount Hope Bay (see Figure 5-2).

The planning studies and development proposals that have occurred since the 2001 comprehensive zoning ordinance and map changes have led to further consideration of the Town's commercial zoning. In particular, two issues have arisen. One is the continuous commercial zoning along Main Road north of Souza Road. The commercial land uses along this corridor are separated in certain areas by residential land uses which have maintained their integrity despite being part of a "strip" commercial district, and actually serve to break the strip into distinct nodes. In 2014 these nodes

were recognized with the adoption of a Form-Based Code reflecting the character of the various parts of the corridor. The other issue is whether or not it is desirable to have a commercial district that promotes highway dependent and regional commercial uses. The Town may be better served by modifying zoning so that it more accurately reflects the goal of the comprehensive plan, particularly this Economic Development Chapter, in terms of the preferred type and scale of new Commercial and industrial development.

In addition, Tiverton currently has one Industrial District totaling about 1,400 acres, located along both sides of Route 24, generally from the Route 24 - Fish Road interchange north to the Massachusetts border. Much of this land remains vacant, although there has been recent Business Park development along the east side of Fish Road.

New Commercial, Industrial and Mixed Use Development

Action 2: Support and promote innovative retail and mixed-use commercial development that reflects and/or compliment the unique character of that area and the Town.

It is the stated goal of this element to provide for economic development in Tiverton which provides a benefit in terms of net tax revenue and jobs. The Town's geographic location and highway access make it very attractive to development, including retail development of a regional nature. The Town must balance the rights of property owners to develop with the desire of the community at large to manage such development so that it considers the town's character.

The planning studies undertaken on behalf of the town in recent years emphasize high end and niche retail, waterfront related retail, and retail that responds to local needs such as a grocery store. New retail development should respect the public's desire to retain the town's distinctive character through a development pattern which reflects the predominance of natural conditions and characteristics over human intrusions and avoids auto-urban development influences. Also recommended is residential, commercial, industrial and mixed-use including housing over stores. A retail center could be developed as a mixture of store types and sizes arranged in a traditional main street pattern, with two-story buildings that include residences and offices over retail. Providing for such a relatively dense mixed use development in Tiverton will require amendments to the zoning ordinance to specify the mix of allowable uses as well as site and design standards.

Commercial Design Guidelines

Action 3: Adopt and refine building and site design standards for new commercial and industrial development and redevelopment in Tiverton that encourages a distinctive visual appearance.

The Tiverton Zoning Ordinance requires design and site plan review for new industrial and commercial development that meets a certain threshold requirement and all new development within the Village Commercial District. Concern with guiding the aesthetics of new development, particularly commercial development along Tiverton's main business corridors, Main Road and

Stafford Road, led to a comprehensive zoning project funded through the State's Planning Challenge Grant program with financial support provided by the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. The project utilized an experienced consultant team and an extensive public input process to evaluate the development potential of certain sections of Main Road and Bliss Four Corners and to create a Form-Based Code. The utilization of the Form Based Code zoning resulted in the creation of three new Zoning Districts, a revised commercial area boundary and a design guidelines booklet created to assist property owners and developers in their plans for new development and redevelopment in the commercial districts. The guidelines address such issues as building design and placement, parking, buffers and landscaping to encourage a distinctive visual appearance. Additional guidelines were drafted for the public realm, including proposed roadway improvements and pedestrian facilities.

Fiscal Impact

Action 4: Require an appropriate data based development impact assessments of commercial, industrial and mixed use developments to determine the impact on the town's tax revenue versus cost of services.

Well-designed commercial, industrial and mixed use development at an appropriate scale benefits the citizens of Tiverton by providing employment opportunities, increasing net tax revenue. In general, commercial entities require fewer town services.

While integration of development design standards in the zoning code will assure quality development, resulting in higher quality employment opportunities and increased project value, it would also be in the Town's best interest to have an independent evaluation of the annual tax revenue generated by a development as compared to the expected cost of services. Such a fiscal impact analysis should be done for any commercial, industrial or mixed-use development as part of a comprehensive land development project.

Business Park

Action 5: Promote the development of the Business Park for suitable use.

Action 6: The Tiverton Economic Development Commission and Town Council should work proactively with Commerce RI and the Newport County Chamber of Commerce to aggressively pursue opportunities for new electricity generation in the Business Park and other suitable locations.

The Tiverton Business Park, serviced by water and sewer, remains available for development. This land could be used for a range of non-residential uses, including light manufacturing and clean technology, office and associated uses, with the proper densities, design controls and mixture of uses.

Small Business Development

Action 7: Support the Small Business Association in assisting in the revitalization of businesses along Main Road in north Tiverton, and in other areas of the Town.

Creation of a Tiverton Small Business Association to assist the business owners locate and obtain financial, educational and consultative resources could help local businesses survive and thrive. The Tiverton Economic Development Commission could assist in the creation of such a group. An office of economic development or a full-time town planner would assist in this goal. The Newport County Chamber of Commerce is working toward a regional economic development group consisting of five communities. A full-time position would be afforded to Tiverton within the scope of the initiative shared by all participating communities.

Tiverton's small businesses are very important to the town.



Action 8: Evaluate the benefits from the Enterprise Zone designation. Continue to support efforts to re-establish the Enterprise Zone as a tool for small business growth and development.

The northern half of Tiverton is within the Tiverton/Portsmouth Enterprise Zone. This designation provides for Town and state tax benefits to commercial enterprises which expand, relocate or locate in the Town. The impact of these benefits must be recognized when studying new development. The Town should schedule workshops to educate the business owners and provide a conduit for requests for assistance. Changes to the State's program in 2010 significantly curbed the benefits of the program to the detriment of many smaller businesses. Efforts are ongoing to encourage the State legislature to reestablish the Enterprise Zone benefits to assist smaller businesses.

Action 9: Evaluate zoning ordinance regulations addressing mixed uses and modify where needed to allow for the diversification and strengthening of the commercial areas in Tiverton.

Amendments to the Tiverton Zoning Ordinance since 2001 address restrictions impacting small and home-based businesses. One amendment dealt with "mixed-use residential", a residential use and a commercial use in the same structure, totally separated; this use is now allowed by right in

the several districts and by special use permit in the Village Commercial and Waterfront Districts. This would typically consist of a residence above a first floor business, and is seen as a way to make commercial areas more vibrant and interesting and to make businesses more viable by adding another source of income (as well as providing housing). It could also include multiple residences over larger retail areas or businesses.

Agriculture

Action 10: Promote expansion of agricultural activities in the Town through the efforts of the Small Business Association and the Eastern RI Conservation District.

To support family farming, farmers will be targeted as prospective members of the proposed Small Business Association, and as such will be eligible for the grants, low interest loans, educational assistance and consultative services that will be made available by the association. The Economic Development Commission has also connected with the Eastern Rhode Island Conservation District office to provide education and resources for Tiverton farmers, particularly those with smaller acreage, to provide education and resources to maximize revenues.

A seasonal farmer's market has been established and other outlets in Town for the sale of local agricultural products. Agricultural activities continue to be an important facet of the Tiverton economy. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues based on sound public policy, the best available science, and efficient management.

Action 11: Continue the use of tax alternatives/incentives that encourage preservation of agricultural land for farming use.

Existing farms in areas zoned for residential use are liable to be pushed out when development pressures rise, thereby destroying the rural quality of Tiverton. A tax assessment system that allows farmers to be taxed at a rate appropriate to the current agricultural use of the land can help ensure that Tiverton's farms remain, and the Town's visual character maintained. Rhode Island has a long-standing law allowing for lower taxation of agricultural and open space land; information about this Farm, Forest and Open Space Program should be disseminated throughout the farming community.

Action 12: Partake in regional planning for agricultural activity and support together with East Bay townships, southeastern Massachusetts towns and State agencies.

The importance of regional agricultural planning for the preservation of farms is recognized and encouraged at the state level. Regional cooperation ensures that the implications and decisions about issues impacting on agricultural activity in the region are fully understood. It would seem only natural to avail the town of the expertise of the highly successful Southeast Massachusetts Coastal Agricultural Cooperative by facilitation of membership of town farmers, fishermen and merchants of town grown consumables.

Waterfront Opportunities

Action 13: Promote local fishing and marine-related businesses by developing and rehabilitating appropriate support facilities.

A new public boat launch would enable local fishermen to launch their boats more quickly and efficiently, allowing business expansion and increased employment opportunities. This pertains to recreation sport fishing more than commercial fishing.

While boat sales and services are in place along the waterfront, recreational fishing and boating could also be encouraged and expanded through the development of more slips and/or an establishment with docking facilities.

Supporting these maritime uses and protecting an important part of Tiverton's economy require maintaining the old Stone Bridge abutment which is slated for repair beginning in 2015. Along with the abutment repair, new docks will provide transient boat traffic to load and offload gear and use the facilities on land.

Action 14: Adopt a long-term waterfront plan incorporating marine-related and service related uses, particularly focusing on the area from Nanaquaket to the State line.

Several parcels of land along Tiverton's waterfront, particularly north of Nanaquaket Pond, are vacant or underdeveloped. In addition, several acres of land will become available with the relocation of the bridge (See Circulation Chapter 8). The Town should work in conjunction with the R.I. Department of Transportation to ensure the relocation of water-dependent businesses that are displaced as a result of the Sakonnet River Bridge realignment, as well as on plans for the redevelopment of the available parcels. This work could be done as part of a larger study of Tiverton's waterfront which includes a review of current land use, regulations and controls to guide future development in a manner that promotes water dependent uses while maintaining public access to the waterfront.

Arts and Culture

Action 15: Continue to support the arts and promote the development of the arts as another form of economic activity.

In addition to the arts activities ongoing in Tiverton Four Corners, Sandywoods Farm, an arts community off Roosevelt Avenue west of Bliss Four Corners provides affordable housing for artists and other resident families, along with an art gallery and community center / performance venue. Future phases could include a café, bed and breakfast and retail space. This is one means of promoting Tiverton as a community for artists and the arts. The South Coast Artists, Inc. (SCA) is a Federally-approved 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation encouraging and fostering artistic growth and recognition among Massachusetts and Rhode Island Artists. Through its programming, SCA gives access to the work of visual artists living and working in the townships of Dartmouth and Westport, MA and Tiverton and Little Compton, RI by producing annual open studio tours and

related events in the south coast region of Rhode Island and Massachusetts.



Tiverton Four Corners is a unique and attractive village shopping area focusing on the arts

Municipal Support for Economic Prosperity

Action 16: Enhance commercial prosperity by the Economic Development Commission through collaboration with the Town Planner and the Planning Board.

Tiverton's economic growth needs to involve ongoing communication between three participating components of local government, the Economic Development Commission, the Town Planner and the Planning Board. Each department has distinct roles to play in mapping out the Town's economic future, and common goals can be effectively identified through this partnership. The departments will unite to address issues of rezoning, develop building standards, and identify areas of the Town that are underutilized or underserved. Through direct collaboration, the departments should structure Tiverton's developmental transition to not only encourage economic growth, but to also better the quality of life and prosperity for its residents.