2 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Overview

Since the mid-1990s, the Town has taken steps toward defining a "Village Center" along the County Road corridor and stretching into Maple Avenue and adjacent mixed-use streets. The Zoning Ordinance now requires buildings to be built near the street, with parking to the side and rear. Commercial signs must be smaller in scale. Less parking, and therefore less pavement, is required for new development. A streetscape improvement project on County Road and a portion of Maple Avenue added granite curbing, decorative street lights, street trees, bus shelters and a "brick" center turn lane.

These changes have helped to restore character to a commercial stretch of County Road that had been an auto-dominated zone typical in suburban communities: parking lots located in front of buildings, signs cluttering views, and sidewalks in disrepair. Today, Barrington's commercial core, while still dependent on automobile traffic, is more walkable and visually appealing. More work is needed, however, to build on this success and help attract investment to the Village Center and Barrington's other smaller commercial districts, in West Barrington and Hampden Meadows.

Existing Conditions

Commercial and Industrial Land Use and Zoning

Barrington's business and industrial areas (see **Map ED-1** and **Table 1** on the following page**)** include:

- County Road from Hilltop Avenue to Rumstick Road, zoned Business.
- Maple Avenue, with parcels zoned Neighborhood Business and Business within an area extending from County Road west and including portions of Waseca and Anoka Avenues.
- The Bay Spring Avenue-Washington Road area, with parcels zoned Neighborhood Busi-

Examples of commercial / mixed-use buildings built since 2010 (through 2013).

ness, Business and Limited Manufacturing. One of the largest vacant Business- zoned properties, an 8.5-acre former elementary school site, was redeveloped as an affordable housing development (Sweetbriar).

- Sowams Road at Kent Street, zoned Neighborhood Business. This area includes a handful of neighborhood-scale businesses.
- Barrington's three Waterfront Business zones include Tyler Point (marina and restaurant) on the Barrington and Warren Rivers, and the Brewer Cove Haven and Lavin's marinas on Bullock Cove. These areas are fully developed.

The Town has no agricultural zoning districts.

Since 2010, the Town Council has adopted several amendments to the Zoning Map affecting commercially zoned property. The changes included the rezoning of the remaining residentially zoned parcels on Wood Avenue to Neighborhood Business. In addition, a 10-acre environmentally sensitive Town-owned parcel east of the Bayside YMCA was rezoned from Business to Open Space-Passive. The Planning Board initiated these revisions to bring the Zoning Map consistent with the Future Land Use Map in the Comprehensive Plan approved by the State in 2010. Changes to size of commercial zones, resulting from the Zoning Map amendments completed since 2010, are shown in **Table 1**.

Throughout town, there are limited opportunities for commercial expansion in the business zones. Due to the scarcity of vacant land within these districts, new most commercial development will necessitate re-use of existing buildings or redevelopment of infill sites.

Commercial Development Trends

During the 1990s Barrington saw robust commercial development take place, with commercial space increasing by nearly 300,000 square feet, representing an investment of more than $40 million. Much of the development related to the Barrington Shopping Center. Since 2000, there have been no large-scale commercial developments. New commercial and mixed-use buildings have involved redevelopment of infill sites, typically one acre or less in area. **Table 2** on the next page lists new projects built since 2010, which have added about 33,000 square feet of building area totaling $5.9 million in assessed value.

Barrington eating establishments generate approximately $130,000 to $140,000 per year for the Town from the meal tax. New restaurant space added in recent years include one at the new Coastal Commons mixed-use development, and two on Maple Avenue – one replacing a consignment furniture store, the other in a converted residential structure. Other new restaurants opened in town replaced establishments that closed, resulting in no net increase in space.

Industrial Development

The closing of the RI Lace Works in the late 1980s likely signaled the end of manufacturing in Barrington. The 1992 Comprehensive Plan laid the groundwork for the conversion of in-

Table 1: Commercial and Industrial Zoning, 2013

Zone	Description	Acreage		Change: Acres
		2010	2013	
Limited Manufacturing	Vacant site on Allin's Cove	4.8	4.8	0
Waterfront Business	On Bullock Cove, Tyler Point	27.0	27.6	0.6
Business	Village Center, Bay Spring	67.5	57.9	(9.6)
Neighborhood Business	Village Center, Bay Spring, Kent Street	76.9	78.3	1.4

Source: Town GIS parcel data

Table 2: New Commercial/Mixed Use Buildings—2010 to 2013

Description	Location	Zone	Year	Building (SF)	Resid. Units	Land Area (SF)	Parking Spaces	Asssessed Value
Bay Spring Crossing[1]	60 Bay Spring Ave.	NB	2010 (Bldg 2)	12,000	6	40,500	42	$1.97 million
TD Bank	231 County Rd.	B	2010	3,775	0	40,000	30	$1.41 million
AAA Building	280 County Rd.	B	2010	4,500	0	22,000	30	$1.25 million
Coastal Commons	10 and 12 Anoka Ave.	NB	2013	13,050	4	23,500	24	$1.33 million
TOTAL				**33,325**	**10**	**126,000**	**126**	**$5.96 million**

[1] First of two buildings was completed in 2006. The first building is the same size as Building 2. Parking and land area for Building 2 is based on 50 percent of the total on site.

Source: Barrington Tax Assessor

dustrial-zoned properties through recommendations to re-use these sites for senior housing developments—apartments and assisted living facilities. Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance adopted in the mid-1990s permitted Elderly Housing districts to occur in land zoned for commercial or industrial use.

The first project in an "EH" zone was the renovation of the three-story Pilling Chain Mill building in 1996, for the 60-unit Barrington Cove Apartments. At Bay Spring and Narragansett Avenues, the RI Lace Works site was zoned EH. The large building was replaced with the 126-bed Bay Spring Village Assisted Living complex in the late 1990s.

Today, the only industrially zoned land (Limited Manufacturing) remaining in Barrington is a 4.8-acre area to the south of Bay Spring Avenue abutting Allin's Cove. The development potential of the site is unknown. The property is constrained by its proximity to the water and wetlands and floodplain issues, as well as stringent CRMC requirements due to its proximity to Allin's Cove.

Streetscape Improvements

Streetscape improvements completed in the early 2000s have enhanced the appearance of the County Road and Maple Avenue commercial areas. On County Road, from Sullivan Terrace to Rumstick Road, the State Department of Transportation added a center turn lane with stamped "brick" pavers, installed streetlights and granite curbing, constructed new wood bus shelters and reconstructed sidewalks.

The Town has completed streetscape improvements on Maple Avenue, a Town-owned street. To date, sidewalks, granite curbing and streetlights have been installed on the south side of Maple Avenue from County Road to West Street. Sidewalks and other improvements have yet to be installed on the north side of Maple.

In 2014, Town voters approved a $1.6 million bond to extend sidewalks, street trees and other streetscape improvements to Waseca Avenue, Wood Avenue, Maple Avenue and West Street. Engineering on the project began in October 2014, with construction completion expected by November 2015.

Design Review

A development plan review ordinance, first adopted in the mid-1990s (last revised in 2012), requires building design and site plan review of all new commercial development and redevelopment, as well as site plan review of major residential developments. The Town also has modified and strengthened sign regulations during this period. Advance review on behalf

of the Planning Board is performed by the Technical Review Committee.

The results of the Town's review process and design standards are evident within commercial areas where new development has occurred since the mid-1990s, most of it focused on County Road. Setback standards, for example, contribute to a pedestrian-friendly street by requiring buildings to be located close to the road, with minimum setback at 3 feet and a maximum setback at 15 feet.

The Zoning Ordinance also prohibits parking in front of buildings, requires sidewalks and bike racks and other features that make for a more walkable community. In addition, the enforcement of the sign ordinance adopted as part of the 1994 zoning amendments has resulted in signage more appropriate to a pedestrian-scaled area, eliminating over-sized and gaudy commercial signs that had existed for years.

The Town has monitored the effectiveness of regulations in achieving the goals established in

Table 3: Employment by Sector, Barrington and Rhode Island, 2013

	Barrington		Rhode Island Total	
	Average Employment	% of Total	Average Employment	% of Total
Total Private & Government	3,387	100.0%	459,610	100.0%
Total Private Only	2,697	79.6%	399,481	86.9%
Health Care & Social Assistance	779	23.0%	80,395	17.5%
Government	690	20.4%	60,129	13.1%
Retail Trade	295	8.7%	46,157	10.0%
Accommodation & Food Services	293	8.7%	46,349	10.1%
Other services	242	7.1%	17,421	3.8%
Finance & Insurance	237	7.0%	23,989	5.2%
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	182	5.4%	8,624	1.9%
Educational Services	152	4.5%	18,118	3.9%
Professional & Technical Services	127	3.7%	21,953	4.8%
Construction	121	3.6%	16,324	3.6%
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt.	104	3.1%	25,933	5.6%
Manufacturing	47	1.4%	39,988	8.7%
Wholesale Trade	43	1.3%	16,652	3.6%
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	28	0.8%	5,917	1.3%
Information	19	0.6%	9,003	2.0%
Mining	0	0.0%	201	0.0%
Unclassified Establishments	0	0.0%	67	0.0%
Utilities	0	0.0%	1,060	0.2%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	*	*	713	0.2%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	*	*	11,275	2.5%
Transportation & Warehousing	*	*	9,341	2.0%

Source: RI Department of Labor & Training Quarterly Census of U.I.-Covered Employment and Wages — 2nd Quarter, 2013

the Comprehensive Plan. In 2007 and 2012, for example, the Town Council and Planning Board further revised requirements for signage, off-street parking and building and site design to create clearer guidelines and simplify some steps of the review process.

Overall, the aesthetic improvements from projects built in accordance with the regulations and standards established over the past 20 years have helped to provide the village center a distinct character and a definable edge.

Employment

The R.I. Department of Labor and Training provides figures of the total labor force made up by residents, and of employment levels within the community itself, for all cities and towns in the State. As indicated by **Table 3** (previous page) and **Table 4** the bulk of employment within Barrington as of 2012 is in government (654), health care and social assistance (603), retail trade (293) and accommodation and food service (275), similar to the ranking of the largest employment categories statewide.

Since 1982, the largest loss among industry groups has been in the manufacturing sector, which is consistent with national trends. In 1982, there were 325 manufacturing jobs in Barrington; by 1990, the figure declined to 158, and then to just 45 in 2012. The decline in the 1980s was primarily due to the closing in 1990 of the Rhode Island Lace Works, which once provided about 180 jobs in Barrington. There also are fewer retail jobs compared to previous years: 391 in 2006 compared to 293 in 2012, a loss of 98 in just six years.

Employment data reveal the extent Barrington is a bedroom community, with many more working residents in Barrington than there are jobs within

Table 4: Private Sector Employment by Sector—Change (2006 to 2012)

Establishment Employment	2006	2009	2012	Change 2006-12
Total Private & Government	3,133	2,993	2,991	-142
Total Private Only	2,410	2,270	2,338	-72
Government	723	723	654	-69
Health Care & Social Assistance	453	506	603	150
Retail Trade	391	343	293	-98
Accommodation & Food Services	288	265	275	-13
Other Services	280	259	267	-13
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	155	166	170	15
Educational Services	124	141	148	24
Professional & Technical Services	108	103	138	30
Construction	218	153	135	-83
Finance & Insurance	87	85	77	-10
Admin. Support & Waste Management	58	60	69	11
Wholesale Trade	84	52	46	-38
Manufacturing	79	51	45	-34
Real Estate & Rent al & Leasing	36	27	27	-9
Information	23	24	17	-6
Transportation & Warehousing	3	2	*	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	*	*	*	

Source: RI Department of Labor & Training

Table 5: Labor Force—Barrington, 1990-2013

Year	Total Labor Force	Total Employment	Total Unemployment	Unemployment % Barrington / R.I.
1990	8,306	7,973	333	4.0% / 6.1%
2000	8,465	8,202	263	3.1% / 4.2%
2010	8,427	7,688	739	8.8% / 11.7%
2013	8,216	7,687	529	6.5% / 9.1%

Source: Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

town. There are 8,216 Barrington residents in the labor pool, as of 2013 (see **Table 5**), compared to 2,991 jobs within town.

The number of Barrington residents who work in town is unknown, but it is clear that the average job within town does not pay enough to cover local housing costs. The Housing Network of Rhode Island states that in 2012, the average private sector wage for a job in town was $36,400. Income needed to pay the average rent of $1,154 per month for a two-bedroom apartment is about $46,100 a year. Almost $98,000 is needed to afford the median house price in 2012 totaling $334,000. (Housing issues, including affordable housing strategies, are discussed in detail in the Housing & Neighborhoods element.)

Table 5 shows statistics on the labor force in Barrington from 1990 to 2013, including totals on employed and unemployed. From 1990 to 2000, Barrington's total labor force increased slightly, coinciding with the town's increase in population. Since 2000, however, the total labor force has dropped to below 1990 levels. In 1990 the labor force represented 52.4 percent of the population; in 2010, the percentage was about 51.7 percent.

In general, the Town's unemployment levels follow the same pattern as the overall state levels of unemployment, although the percentages are lower, indicating that Barrington residents are employed in industries more insulated from downturns in the economy (see Table 5). For 2013, the town's unemployment rate on average was 6.5 percent, 2.6 percentage points lower than the state's. Though higher than recent historical levels, the town's employment numbers have improved significantly since 2010 when unemployment stood at 8.8 percent in Barrington (11.7 percent statewide).

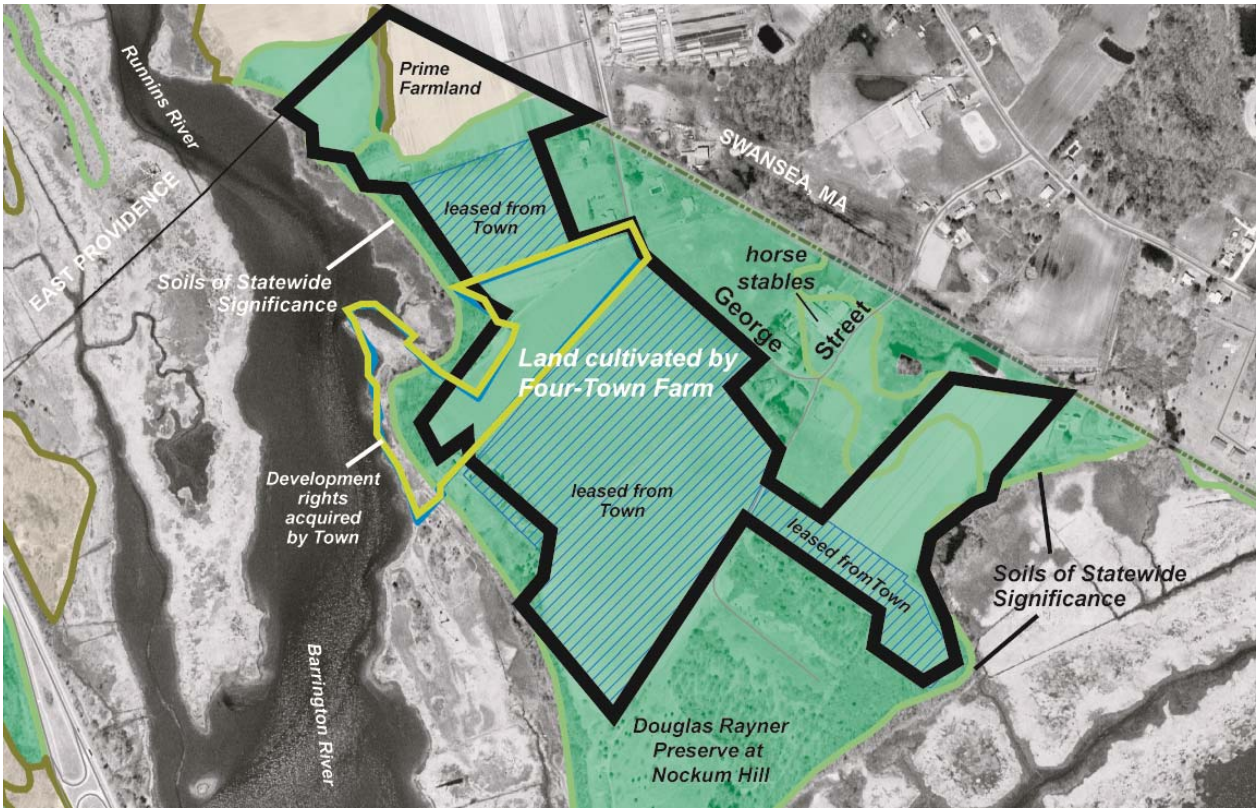
The number of jobs in town compared to the size of the labor force comprised of people who live in Barrington reflects an emphasis of residential development over commercial and industrial growth. In 2006, Barrington, for example, the town had a total private sector employment of 2,410, or 0.28 jobs for every Barrington resident in the labor force. In comparison, within Bristol there were 0.47 private sector jobs for every Bristol resident in the labor force in 2006; the ratio in Warren was 0.61.

This housing-employment imbalance is reflected in commuting patterns from the 2000 census. In Barrington, just 26 percent of those in the labor force went to work in Bristol County (much lower than the figure of 40 percent all of the county's working population). The town's proximity to a major employment center, Providence, which has a much larger economy compared to Bristol County, is likely a factor influencing the high number of out-of-county commuters from Barrington.

Farming Operations

In recent decades, agriculture has comprised a small, and shrinking, share of the labor force in Barrington. According to the Census Bureau, employment in the agriculture sector in the period of 1982 to 2009 has fluctuated in the range of 25 to 33; overall, the share of the total labor

Figure 1: Farmland and Agricultural Soils—George Street Areas



Sources: RIGIS, Town GIS

force has declined from about 1.4 percent in the 1980s to just 0.3 percent in 2009. The data do not specify where those employed in the agricultural sector work, but in Barrington, there is only one area with active farms remaining: the George Street area.

Farms on George Street include Dane Farm—a horse farm—and fields cultivated by Four-Town Farm based next door in Seekonk. (See **Map NCR-5** in the Natural & Cultural Resources element**)** for the location of farms with active cropland in town – Four-Town Farm in the George Street area and Johannis Farm on Sowams Road.)

The Town has partnered with Four-Town Farm with the goal of maintaining farmland in active production—leasing 40 acres in Nockum Hill, and acquiring development rights from Four-Town to ensure additional acreage remains in agricultural use.

Figure 1 depicts land farmed by Four-Town Farm in the George Street area, including land leased from the Town. Also shown in Figure 1 is the parcel where the Town acquired development rights as part of a 20-year lease agreement with Four-Town Farm in the early 1990s. In 2012, the lease of 40 acres adjacent to the Douglas Rayner Preserve was extended another 20 years, expiring on June 30, 2032, in exchange for an annual payment of $10,000 to the Town.

According to RIGIS data, almost all of the land in the George Street area is suitable for farming. About 117 acres – including all of the land actively farmed – are categorized as agricultural soils of statewide importance, and 4.6 acres are considered "prime farmland." The only other active farmland in town — not including community gardens — is the Johannis Farm property on Sowams Road, where about 7.8 acres out of a much larger parcel acquired by the Land Conservation Trust remains in agricultural use under

terms of the property transaction. Long-term, the Johannis Farm fields, which are in the 100-year flood zone, likely will be impacted by sea level rise (see discussion in Natural Hazards element), as coastal wetlands migrate inland due to increased inundation.

Another farm site is the old "Vitullo Farm," an old dairy farm on Wampanoag Trail that was acquired by the Town in the early 2000s. Sections of the property continued to be farmed by the former owner until 2013, under an agreement with the Town. In 2014, that agreement ended and the farm fields nearest the Trail became the site of the Barrington Community Garden, established through a volunteer effort.

Issues and Opportunities

Parking and Infrastructure in Commercial and Mixed-Use Areas

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan identified multiple issues limiting the potential commercial vitality of the Village Center within the blocks adjacent to County Road, including:

- Lack of on-street parking for customers.
- No off-street public parking lots.
- Poor sidewalk connectivity and areas with sidewalks in poor condition.
- Lack of directional signage.
- No crosswalks outside of County Road.

Figure 2: Streetscape Concept—Maple Avenue and West Street

The *Village Center Connectivity Study* included a concept to reconfigure parking at Vienna Bakery to create room for realigned sidewalks, signage and other improvements.

- Use of public sidewalk areas (on Maple Avenue specifically) for parking vehicles and other pedestrian obstructions.

The Town is in the process of addressing many of these issues through a $1.6 million streetscape improvement bond approved by voters in 2014. The request for bond funding was based on streetscape and wayfinding signage concepts in a "Village Center Connectivity Study," completed in 2013 (see **Figure 2** on the previous page). Construction is scheduled for completion by the end of 2015.

While infrastructure in the project area will be improved with the bond project, the condition of infrastructure in other commercially zoned areas is subpar—such as sections of sidewalk on Maple Avenue west of West Street, and within the Kent Street Neighborhood Business district.

Another ongoing issue is a lack of adequate public parking in the Village Center, where public spaces outside the Town Hall/Library are almost nonexistent. The Town will need to identify and secure additional public parking—on-street and off-street—in the Village Center to provide an option to park once and walk to the various establishments—and realize the benefits of the planned streetscape improvements.

As our village center becomes a more attractive place to visit and shop, the Town will need to better manage parking. While much parking is available, it is disjointed and mostly privately owned, causing many visitors to continually jump in and out of their cars to make short trips between stores and to "rove" for parking. The Town should take steps to encourage more "park once and shop" activity in the village area. By clearly designating and directing drivers to convenient parking, we can limit the amount of traffic circulating through town. Encouraging customers to walk and explore our growing village area will also benefit downtown merchants. The Town should pursue the shared use and/or acquisition of existing surface parking lots within the village area and open them up to local shoppers and visitors. Underutilized lots along Wood Street, Waseca and Maple Avenue have the potential to be used in this way and to encourage more pedestrian activity along these local streets.

A measure added to the Zoning Ordinance in 2012, allowing the use of shared parking where spaces can be leased off-site to provide some of the required spaces, has the potential to encourage parking once and walking to multiple destinations. However, this option has not been utilized, and should be re-evaluated to determine whether revisions are needed to encourage its use.

Land Available for Economic Development

Today, as with residentially zoned land, Barrington is approaching build-out of properties zoned for mixed-use and commercial use, as the amount of vacant or under-utilized land zoned for commercial development is in limited supply. Two major parcels zoned Business—the Sweetbriar site and the 10-acre parcel between the YMCA and the Barrington Shopping Center (both discussed previously)—no longer represent opportunities for new commercial or mixed-use development. This leaves a handful of vacant or under-utilized parcels zoned for non-residential development.

Due to the lack of vacant, developable land in the Business and Neighborhood Business zones, future additional non-residential development in town is likely to be in the form of redevelopment within existing commercial zones.

One of the challenges with redevelopment of existing properties in the Maple Avenue and Bay Spring Avenue areas is the proximity of commercially zoned sites to adjacent residential properties within and adjacent to the commercial zones. It is not just the impact of commercial development on residences on Maple Avenue and adjacent areas, but also the fragmentation of business properties along Maple Avenue

which perpetuates the use of the automobile. Efforts to enhance the pedestrian environment of Maple Avenue will be ineffective without greater continuity of the retail district, along with clearly identified and convenient public parking enabling people to park and walk.

Overall, there are few opportunities to expand zoning to permit additional non-residential and mixed-use development in areas not currently zoned Neighborhood Business or Business, without rezoning residential land. One new opportunity area that could support modest non-residential development is the Zion Bible Institute site. (Guidance for the creation of new zoning for the property is included in Appendix II.)

Tourism Opportunities

As a value-added marketing opportunity, tourism is increasingly important to community economic health and diversification. Tourism is recognized as a leading industry in Rhode Island and holds potential for Barrington. Development of tourism would provide additional support for local business. B&Bs can play a major role in encouraging and promoting tourism. In smaller communities B&Bs are an important component of a tourism strategy.

B&Bs are small and flexible enough to gear their facilities to specific visitor interests (outdoor recreational activities, antiques, farming, etc.) In addition Barrington's unique location between Providence and Newport make it an ideal location for visitors. Allowing B&Bs would enable the Town to benefit from increased revenue. Currently Barrington is one of the only municipalities in the state to receive no room tax revenue. Tourists generally also spend money on food and beverages. While this revenue source has grown in recent years, further improvement of the business district along with the inclusion of B&Bs should increase the meal tax revenue for the Town. Another potential benefit of allowing B&Bs is historic preservation. By allowing the creation of income-producing properties, B&B zoning could help to preserve some of the larger historic structures.

Town regulations should try to address neighborhood concerns and at the same time provide regulations that do not unduly hamper or discourage the formation of potentially important local businesses. Some localities have B&B classifications; the most common are: the B&B home (the smallest establishments of two or fewer guest bedrooms), the B&B inn, and the B&B hotel. (**Figure 3** is an example of inclusion of a classification of a B&B in a use table.)

- *B & B Home (limited to 1-2 guests).* Zoning for a home is usually not a problem because owner/operators have a minimal investment, generate a small income, and attract little community attention. Lodging in a B&B home is a personal matter between guests and the host.
- *B & B Inn.* The B&B inn, or mid-sized operation, may be situated in a private home maintained by an on-premise owner; yet they are, to a degree, small home-based businesses. The owners intend to recoup some investment costs and generate income and profits. They may see a B&B as a way to maintain and possibly restore an older historic structure. State codes should prevail here.
- *B& B Hotel.* The B&B hotel is generally not a problem because its commercial nature requires that it be located only in areas with

Figure 3: Sample Zoning Town of Orleans

RESIDENTIAL	R	RB	LB	GB	VC[5]	I	CD[6]	SC	MB
The renting or leasing of not more than 2 rooms, nor to more than 4 persons, by a family resident in a dwelling unit [ATM 5/8/84 Article 8]	P	P	P	P	P	O	O	O	P

more traffic than is characteristic of a residential neighborhood. Also, B&B hotels usually are required to meet all regulations for a food and lodging operation.

Need for Improved Design Guidelines

In recent years, the addition of sidewalks, streetlights, curbing, bus shelters and other improvements on County Road have helped improve pedestrian circulation. The reconfiguration of the Barrington Shopping Center also was a major milestone in providing a visually appealing and walkable commercial center. Infill projects such as the new TD Bank on an old auto dealership lot and the Coastal Commons mixed-use buildings at Anoka and Wood Avenues—all buildings built close to the sidewalk edge — have also improved the visual appeal and pedestrian-friendliness of the area.

The Zoning Ordinance and Village Guidelines (drafted in the mid-1990s to support the objectives of the Zoning Ordinance's design review standards) have helped to promote more pedestrian-friendly projects. The Zoning Ordinance, however, is most effective as a tool to discourage development the Town does not want—such as buildings with large parking lots in front. Standards could be written to more explicitly encourage quality design in keeping with the Town's vision for a "village center." For example, illustrated design guidelines is a common tool used to clearly state the Town's objectives for building and site design, such as building scale and orientation to the street, signage and awnings, site circulation, landscaping and public amenities (benches, street lights, bike racks). Other strategies are available, including form-based zoning that stresses design over use.

Promoting the Local Economy

As discussed previously, the employment figures for Barrington show an overall decline of 142 jobs within town from 2006 to 2012 (see Table 4 on Page 29). This period includes the recession of 2007-2009, when unemployment in Rhode Island topped 10 percent. The 2012 job numbers show a rebound in private sector employment in town in the three years after 2009, though those gains were offset by a loss in government jobs. The health care sector has seen the largest growth in employment—increasing by 150 jobs, or 33 percent, from 2006 to 2012. Sectors where employment declined by 25 percent or more during this period include retail (a loss of 98 local jobs), construction (83) wholesale trade (38) and manufacturing (34).

Organizations such as the Barrington Business Association have worked to promote businesses in town, such as through new banners on the decorative light poles on County Road and Maple Avenue. Efforts to improve the aesthetics, infrastructure and signage within the Village Center could help attract new commercial development as well as draw more people to the area. Additional steps to strengthen the retail and the accommodation/food services sectors—critical for promoting a walkable retail environment—will require further study, including working and/or consulting with the Business Association, the East Bay Chamber of Commerce and other similar organizations and agencies.

An issue that should be evaluated is the potential impact on local businesses of mobile businesses. Food trucks, for example, have been operating in private parking lots and at public events. The Town also has plans to provide space for food trucks at the planned park at "Police Cove" to help attract users to the public space.

Evolving Workplace

Changes in the way Americans work and conduct business since the 1990s have been significant. Professional & Technical Services and General Services are the two leading private employment sectors (followed by Construction, Wholesale Trade and Health Care) and make up 30 percent of all private sector employment.
The rise in telecommuting and knowledge and

service based industries require that Barrington refocus its economic development activities to encourage services and activities that support these populations. As the town's population ages, the number that work part-time or in a consulting capacity will only increase. People working from home not only need services, but a sense of community to support their activities. Town and neighborhood centers can support gathering places that can allow for networking and ease the isolation of working from home.

In Barrington, the percentage of workers working from home is nearly double the percentage for all of Rhode Island. In 2000, approximately 355 people worked from home in Barrington, or 4.5 percent of the total workforce (7,805). This represents a 70 percent increase in home-based workers in town. Statewide, the change was less dramatic. In 2000, 2.2 percent of all workers worked from home, compared to 2.1 percent in 1990. The growth in home-based workers in town is consistent with national trends. Census data reveal 4.2 million people nationwide worked at home in 2000, up from 3.4 million in 1990—a 23 percent increase.

Bay Spring Avenue—Zoning

Bay Spring Avenue is a densely developed mixed-use area in West Barrington. The street, from Washington Road to Narragansett Avenue, has been the focal point of some of the largest development projects in Barrington. These include the conversion of the Pilling Chain Mill in 1996 from an industrial use to 60 senior apartments (Barrington Cove Apartments); the redevelopment of the R.I. Lace Works site at Bay Spring Avenue and Narragansett Avenue into a 126-bed assisted living facility; and the development of Sweetbriar—the 50-unit affordable housing development—was built in 2010 on what was the largest remaining vacant commercially zoned parcel in the area.

Bay Spring Avenue features a mix of uses from Washington Road to Narragansett Avenue – including two vacant parcels previously cited – the Business-zoned site north of Bay Spring Avenue east of the bike path, and the parcel south of the street abutting Allin's Cove, zoned Limited Manufacturing and Residence 10. Within the Residence 10 zone on Bay Spring Avenue, west of the bike path to Narragansett Avenue, there are several legal nonconforming commercial uses, including an auto repair garage and a commercial building at Lake Avenue.

Further study is needed regarding an issue identified by the Planning Board, specifically the potential to allow for a mix of small-scale, neighborhood-oriented uses and different types of housing in Bay Spring.

Limited Manufacturing Zone—Status

Another question is the future use of the Limited Manufacturing-zoned parcels on Allin's Cove, the last area in Barrington zoned for industrial use. Two of the three parcels in the LM zone have non-industrial uses: a house on a 19,800-square-foot parcel on Bay Spring Avenue, and a portion of a cemetery to the immediate west of the house. The largest, a vacant 242,000-square-foot parcel on Allin's Cove (about a third of which is zoned Residence 10), cannot be fully developed due to coastal setback requirements and possibly other constraints.

The Zoning Ordinance permits a wide range of uses within the LM zone, including offices, restaurants, and boatyards. Housing and retail are two uses not permitted within the LM zone. However, the Zoning Ordinance allows for the creation of an Elderly Housing district in the LM zone, which was done to permit the development of the Barrington Cove Apartments and the Bay Spring Assisted Living facility. Conversion of the property on Allin's Cove to Elderly Housing would eliminate the last vestige of Light Manufacturing zoning in town.

Supporting Local Farms

Town leases at Nockum Hill/George Street have helped maintain a farming presence in town. The farms preserve community character in rural areas, helping limit the spread of development to the outskirts of town. Their viability also brings benefits supported by the burgeoning "local foods" movement. Specifically, the farm products produced and sold locally provides an alternative to purchasing food that often is shipped long distances. In short, local farms promote a more sustainable community.

Extending the leases allowing farming on Town land in the George Street area locations is a matter of policy. There is greater uncertainty as to the long-term viability of farming on private property, in particular in the northeast corner of Barrington near Four-Town Farm, an area that lacks city water and sewer. However, pressure to develop housing in this area, utilizing well water and septic tanks, will grow as the remaining "in-town" parcels fill in with development.

The Town has taken steps to create opportunities for agriculture, though on a limited scale. In 2014, volunteers established a community garden on the former "Vitullo Farm" property on Wampanoag Trail. The Town was examining the potential to designate two areas at the site as leased farmland, for use by an organic farm or an orchard.

The Town has also permitted farmer's markets in recent years through the special use permit process, subject to Zoning Board of Review approval. The market at the Congregational Church on County Road at Massasoit Avenue, established with the past five years, attracts a variety of vendors. New opportunities could also arise from the kitchen incubator in the neighboring town of Warren, Hope & Main, which could increase the demand for farmer's markets in Barrington.

Goals, Objectives, Policies and Actions

Goal ED-1: Continue shift from an auto-dependent, suburban shopping center form of development toward walkable retail zones in the Village Center and neighborhood business districts.

Policy ED-1.1.1: Support "walkable retail" development in the commercial/mixed-use zones.

Policy ED-1.1.2: Invest in infrastructure needed to incentivize businesses to locate in the Business and Neighborhood Business zones.

Policy ED-1.1.3: Promote well-designed, compatible mixed-use and commercial development, enhancing public spaces and expanding multi-modal access.

Actions

A. Implement recommendations of the 2014 Connectivity Plan to create a user-friendly commercial district with new sidewalks, street trees, directional signage, crosswalks and other enhancements.
B. Extend wayfinding signage and streetscape concepts to commercial districts outside the Village Center.
C. Adopt revisions to Land Development & Subdivision Regulations to add design guidelines to the review process.

Goal ED-2: Better manage parking in commercial areas to support economic development and to make these districts more attractive places to visit and shop.

Objective ED-2.1: Secure 30 to 40 additional on– and off-street public parking spaces within the Village Center by 2020.

Policy ED-2.1.1. Provide public parking in strategic locations within commercial areas and explore creative strategies to balance need for off-street parking and a walkable retail environment.

Policy ED-2.1.2: Support parking management policies that encourage drivers to "park once" in the village areas, reducing short trips between stores and to reduce traffic activity in downtown.

Policy ED-2.1.3: Limit encroachment of on-street parking for businesses into residential zones.

Actions

A. Conduct a parking study for the Village Center that includes an inventory of existing parking and provides recommendations on the following:
   - Managing existing on and off-street parking and improving the effectiveness of the Town's existing shared parking options to make better use of existing parking capacity.
   - Identifying new sites for public parking, both on-street and off-street.
   - Establishing a funding mechanism to finance public parking lot site acquisition, development and operations.
   - Establishing incentives (e.g. public snow removal, etc.) to private lot owners willing to accommodate public use.
   - Establishing a menu of potential parking-in-lieu options such as provision of bicycle facilities or payment into a public parking fund, to allow developers to opt out of providing a portion of the required off-street parking.
   - Modifying parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance to regulate maximum as well as minimum number of parking spaces, and to encourage shared parking where differences in peak hour demand allows.

See the Implementation element for information on implementation schedule, priorities, estimated costs, responsibilities and action types.

B. Highlight on-street parking in desired locations using painted markings and signage to outline spaces.
C. Direct the Town Manager to negotiate with private owners and develop public/private partnerships to allow "public" parking in private downtown lots to encourage visitors to park once and walk in downtown area. If negotiation is unsuccessful, determine if potential purchase of lots would be feasible (e.g. underutilized private lots along Maple Avenue).
D. Update village center signage and mapping to direct drivers to new "public" parking lots to "park once" for local shopping trips. [See also Circulation Goal C-2, Action A]
E. Develop criteria and Town-wide policy regulating establishment of on-street parking on residential streets and in commercial/ mixed use areas.

Goal ED-3: Expand the non-residential tax base while preserving community character, with an emphasis on infill development and building re-use over expansion of commercial zoning.

Objective ED-3.1: Adopt by 2017 zoning and development standards for a broader table of non-residential uses that are compatible with the community.

Policy ED-3.1.1: Encourage appropriate neighborhood-scale uses.

Actions

A. Allow limited non-residential uses within a "Senior Residential Village" zone, as recom-

mended for the Zion Bible Institute property, per Developer Guidance (Appendix II); establishment of the new zone is subject to application by the property owner.

In establishing the new zoning district, the Town shall include the following:

- Zoning and design standards, such as design guidelines or form-based zoning, for promoting a mix of uses of a scale and location that avoids impacting adjacent neighborhoods.
- Standards requiring non-residential development in Belton Court to respect the historic qualities of the building and grounds.

B. Examine development standards for Business and Neighborhood Business districts in terms of limiting impacts (such as noise, lighting, stormwater runoff) of development on adjacent residential zones. [See also Housing & Neighborhoods Goal HN-2, Actions C and D]

C. Evaluate adding bed and breakfast inns as a permitted or special use in residential zones, with standards to include location, parking and related accessory uses.

Goal ED-4. Strengthen the Town's commercial base with a focus on promoting existing local businesses and economic sustainability.

Policy ED-4.1.1. Work toward productive working relationship between the Town and the local business community.

Actions

A. Form a task force consisting of residents and local business owners to:
   - Investigate and evaluate strategies for developing a sustainable, locally owned and run economy.
   - Provide a supportive community and networking opportunities for the growing number of business people who work either full-time or part-time from their homes.
   - Increase awareness of business development opportunities in addition to retail activity.
   - Evaluate impacts of and recommend policy related to food trucks and other mobile business activity.

B. Support efforts of the Business Association to promote the district through a banner system, maps and other "marketing" activities.

C. Identify restrictions in the use table and other regulations in Zoning Ordinance that act as barriers to home-based businesses and necessary support services; revise and/or eliminate regulations that are overly restrictive, while protecting neighborhoods from adverse impacts.

D. Investigate potential space in public buildings that could help support home-based businesses, such as common use meeting space.

E. Conduct study of options, such as zoning ordinance amendments, to permit uses that encourage the provision of services and amenities that will support creative and knowledge based businesses and consulting activity, including the expansion of live-work opportunities.

F. Conduct market study evaluating retail and office environment in the Neighborhood Business and Business zones, including an evaluation of existing commercial space.

Goal ED-5: Promote desired commercial activities in mixed-use areas.

Policy ED-5.1.1: Support economic development objectives in strategic areas, including the Neighborhood Business zone near County Road and on Bay Spring Avenue. Community input will be needed to determine the type of development desired for these areas, if different than existing zoning.

Actions

A. Evaluate zoning strategies to promote a more cohesive retail environment in the Village Center. This could include creation of a new zoning district, modifying the Neighborhood Business or Business zone.

B. Complete a parcel/zoning study of the Bay Spring area to identify options to promote the type of economic development desired by the community in the area. The study should address the following:

- An evaluation of table of uses pertaining to the Light Manufacturing zone, taking into consideration environmental constraints and neighborhood impacts.
- The feasibility of encouraging "live-work" units, where the business operator lives above first-floor office or retail space, in the Bay Spring Avenue area from Narragansett Avenue to Washington Road.

Goal ED-6: Support agriculture as a vital component of the local economy.

Policy ED-6.1.1: Support farming as a use within historically farmed areas of Barrington.

Policy ED-6.1.2: Work with community partners to promote local agricultural products.

Actions

A. Evaluate whether revisions to restrictions in the Zoning Ordinance are needed related to agricultural uses, to include uses such as farms, farm stands and farmer's markets.

B. Revise Zoning Map to establish agricultural zoning districts where appropriate, in areas with historic agricultural use (including George Street) to include performance standards.

C. Evaluate Town-owned open space formerly used for farming for opportunities to lease portions to organic farming operations on a limited scale.

D. Continue to develop the community garden at the former Vitullo Farm site.

E. Review and revise local purchasing requirements to require the purchase of regionally produced foods when possible.