



Economic Development Strategic Plan

Waterbury, VT

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and the

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WATERBURY AREA
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
IN AFFILIATION WITH REVITALIZING WATERBURY

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Note to readers: This document was originally drafted by Darren Winham of Darwin Dynamic Solutions in 2014. It has since been rewritten and reformatted to be accessible for full review as well as condensed review. For this reason, a paragraph summary is written in bold lettering at the beginning of most sections and desired outcomes are written in bold at the end of most sections. Shorter sections do not have these features. The intent of the Plan is to act as a guiding document to help steer the future of economic development in Waterbury, Vermont. Many points made throughout the document are intended to begin conversations about economic development topics. The Economic Development Strategic Plan should not be used as evidence in a regulatory setting.

Additionally, this plan references Article 7, which was passed by the Village voters at the Annual Village Meeting on March 8, 2017. The article stated, “To see if the voters will direct the Trustees to begin the process of developing amendments to the Village charter that will result in the elimination of most or all of the Village’s general government functions, including the

possible elimination of its authority to have a police department and the consolidation of the Boards of Trustees and Water-Sewer Commissioners into one Board that will be the legislative body for the Village that would oversee the Village's remaining functions, and to bring such proposed amendments to a vote of the Village at a Special Village Meeting to be warned and held no later than November 30, 2017."

Part I: Introduction

1.1 An Analytical Summary of Waterbury's Economy

The economy of Waterbury, Vermont is built upon the accumulation of many long-tenured and stable companies. These establishments serve as dependable business examples and have been essential components to Waterbury's economy since their inception. Owing to its accessible location, strong sense of community, and appealing aesthetics, Waterbury draws a unique blend of enterprises, including those that support or are made possible by the following amenities:

- Waterbury, Stowe and the Mad River Valley's outdoor opportunities
- Strategic location on I-89 corridor with close proximity to local and regional markets such as Montpelier, Burlington, Boston, Montreal and other cities along the eastern seaboard
- The Waterbury State Office Complex (WSOC)
- Long-standing international companies such as Ben & Jerry's and Green Mountain Coffee

While Waterbury has been successful thus far in attracting and retaining businesses of all sizes and sectors, the community has the potential to be much more prosperous and economically viable. By carefully considering the suggestions outlined in this Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) and collaborating with knowledgeable and committed partners, Waterbury can reach its full potential. The ultimate goal of Waterbury's economic growth is to ensure a diversified local economy supported by responsible businesses, employers and individuals who provide quality jobs and amenities to the Waterbury community and far beyond. If this goal is to be achieved, the following series of fundamental assumptions should be recognized; doing so will ensure collective movement, progression, and economic health for all parties.

1.2 Assumptions

Summary: In order to achieve successful economic development outcomes, Waterbury should aim to follow the Smart Growth model while remaining adaptable to technological, economic and social changes.

Creating a plan for Waterbury's economic development requires us to look to the past, assess the current economic climate, and envision the future. It involves understanding that we cannot always predict or control what will influence the economy. The following assumptions were used in developing our vision, goals and strategies.

- This EDSP frequently references the term ‘Smart Growth,’ defined by Smart Growth America as the building of urban, suburban and rural communities with housing and transportation choices near jobs, shops and schools. This approach supports local economies and protects the environment. The 2013 Waterbury Municipal Plan reinforces the smart growth principal stating we should “Guide future growth and development by reinforcing Waterbury’s traditional pattern of concentrated settlements surrounded by rural countryside,” (Chapter 11, page 126).
- This EDSP seeks to provide strategies that will increase the opportunities for today’s business, while expanding the possibilities for the next generation of workers and entrepreneurs. It considers opportunities for our grown children to stay in the region and secure nationally competitive jobs.
- The dynamics of the Central Vermont region will continue to change. Washington County will continue to experience growth but land availability will become increasingly scarce and development patterns will become denser.
- The types of high-demand industries and jobs will continue to change. Many of our current jobs or industries were not part of our economy 10 years ago; the rate of change in technology and the global economy will continue this trend of rapid innovation.
- Emerging businesses (those creating the majority of new jobs) will continue to be part of the current knowledge-based economy. These firms develop or find innovative ways to apply technology—whether the enterprise is a high tech firm, a distribution company, or a professional service. As these firms grow, they attract an array of support businesses, from material suppliers to retail services, which provides a multiplier effect to the economy. Waterbury should be poised to accommodate those support businesses, which may assist in creating a reputation for Waterbury as being a convenient, efficient, and effective place to do business.
- This EDSP provides a plan for Waterbury to be developed as a destination for business and pleasure with a well-defined image. It also attempts to promote a central business district, distinct neighborhoods, and lively arts and cultural venues.
- Economies operate most efficiently through free market operations where major government intervention is limited. Capital regulations may be favorable to achieve short-term relief, but will inevitably hinder the natural inflation and maturity of a market. It is through the market’s self-regulating nature that the allocation of resources, prices and the demand for goods are most accurately arranged.

Developing an environment that allows fluid growth is a paramount objective. Economic development champions should consider how businesses interrelate and find ways to connect various partners while leveraging limited resources, including space, employees, and customers. It is therefore important that the community and its leaders foster relationships in the business community and act as a vehicle for smart growth, in turn encouraging a more sustainable economy less affected by market pressures.

1.3 The Team

Summary: Waterbury stakeholders should come together around economic development issues and projects to achieve the most efficient and beneficial result for businesses and the community.

Waterbury Town and Village municipal leadership and the Waterbury Area Development Committee (WADC) should work cooperatively to support economic development endeavors and create a cohesive agenda for this work. Through this collaboration, the team can effectively identify opportunities and create an economic environment most likely to realize smart growth.

Team Members may include the following parties:

- Waterbury Town Select Board
- Waterbury Village Trustees
- Waterbury Planning Commission
- Development Review Board
- Waterbury Conservation Commission
- Waterbury Recreation Department
- Revitalizing Waterbury
- Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation (CVEDC)
- Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC)
- Local businesses
- Developers
- Property owners
- Waterbury residents
- Affordable housing partners
- Local, regional, and state nonprofit organizations
- Energy efficiency partners

The success of this team approach to Waterbury's economic development is dependent upon the group's ability to effectively debate all available options while solidifying the final vision for Waterbury. It is the team's responsibility to discover and pursue the most optimal opportunities for Waterbury and match community needs with these opportunities. This can most effectively be accomplished by tempering personal agendas, desires and biases and by acknowledging that not every decision or action will be unanimous among the team or the public. This should be a

democratic approach that highly values and strongly considers community feedback, and ultimately yields decisions that are in the best interest of the public.

1.4 Vision

The future of Waterbury lies in the nurturing of a sustainable and thriving regional hub that maximizes economic opportunity. Through continuous strengthening of existing businesses and attraction of other commercial enterprises that fit the community and its character, Waterbury can responsibly grow its economy. With its central location in the state off of I-89, easy access to Downtown Waterbury, and connections to the Mad River Valley and Stowe areas, Waterbury is poised to enhance the existing image of being an economic hub.

1.5 Goals

Summary: To achieve responsible and sustainable economic development, Waterbury should work to focus on the goals of providing strong business support, conducting strategic business recruitment, and advocating for public policy changes that streamline processes for the business community as well as the municipality.

- Create and employ state and local economic development tools that are acceptable to the community and effective for businesses.
- Market Waterbury to regional, state, national and international interests.
- Expand retail opportunities.
- Identify and eliminate barriers to entry for potential local businesses.
- Strengthen existing businesses by working with owners and executives to effectively address physical and financial challenges.
- Recruit businesses that support the existing business community and satisfy identified community needs.
- Assist with and support efforts to maintain, improve and expand Waterbury's infrastructure that will create a suitable environment for business establishment.

Part II: Waterbury's Economic Outlook

2.1 Critical Drivers of the Local Economy

Summary: Waterbury should maintain an awareness of its diverse selection of economic sectors and should strive to foster the success of these industries.

Waterbury is fortunate to have a strong core of existing businesses that have grown from humble roots into major contributors to Waterbury's economic success. These firms are vital to the town's future as they offer a level of stability for the local economy while contributing to an economic environment that other Waterbury businesses can enjoy. This trend is a classic economic development scenario in which "a rising tide lifts all boats." The prosperity of one company stimulates economic activity, which creates a more reliable economic ecosystem for newer, less stable businesses to enter a developing market. In addition to these large economic players, Waterbury is home to nearly 300 businesses in a wide variety of sectors. The following are examples of key industries currently housed and operating in Waterbury:

- Agriculture and Food Industries:
 - Green Mountain Coffee, Ben & Jerry's, The Alchemist, The Cabot Annex, Cold Hollow Cider Mill, Evergreen Gardens, Vermont Artisan Coffee, Pete's Greens, Sunflower Natural Foods
- Technological Industries:
 - SunCommon, Edgeworks Creative, VERA Renewables LLC, Sheridan Journal Services
- Tourism and Hospitality Industries:
 - Best Western Plus, Fairfield Inn, Old Stagecoach Inn, Prohibition Pig, Hen of the Wood, Arvads Grill, The Reservoir, Blue Stone Pizza, Blackback Pub
- Niche Industries:
 - WDEV Radio, Little Soap Factory, Ursa Major Skin Care, Rome Snowboards
- Health and Wellness:
 - ZenBarn, Waterbury Integrative Health, CrossFit Waterbury, Waterbury ExpressCare, OPEN Community Acupuncture
- Arts:
 - Axel's Gallery & Frame Shop, The Grange Hall Cultural Center, Seminary Arts, Green Mountain Performing Arts, Waterbury Festival Playhouse, Stowe Street Café

These local unique companies offer stability to Waterbury's industries and can be used as marketing staples to inspire and stimulate new owners, entrepreneurs, and existing enterprises to locate and/or expand their business in Waterbury.

2.2 Demographics and Current Economic Conditions

Summary: Waterbury has the opportunity to utilize the Smart Growth method of development to create more housing in Waterbury Village. This housing could serve the needs of both young professionals moving to the area and older generations looking to minimize their expenses and lifestyle.

Waterbury benefits from its young established professionals by offering healthy wages, a selection of enticing restaurants, unique retail establishments and accessible outdoor activities. Waterbury Village has a higher percentage of young individuals that utilize the rental housing market, while the rest of the Town of Waterbury and Waterbury Center trend towards the more established, higher wage earners who predominantly own their homes. These demographics are encouraging as they mirror the modern trend of young professionals' desire to reside in vibrant villages. Moving forward, Waterbury has the opportunity to cater to this population and accommodate this trend.

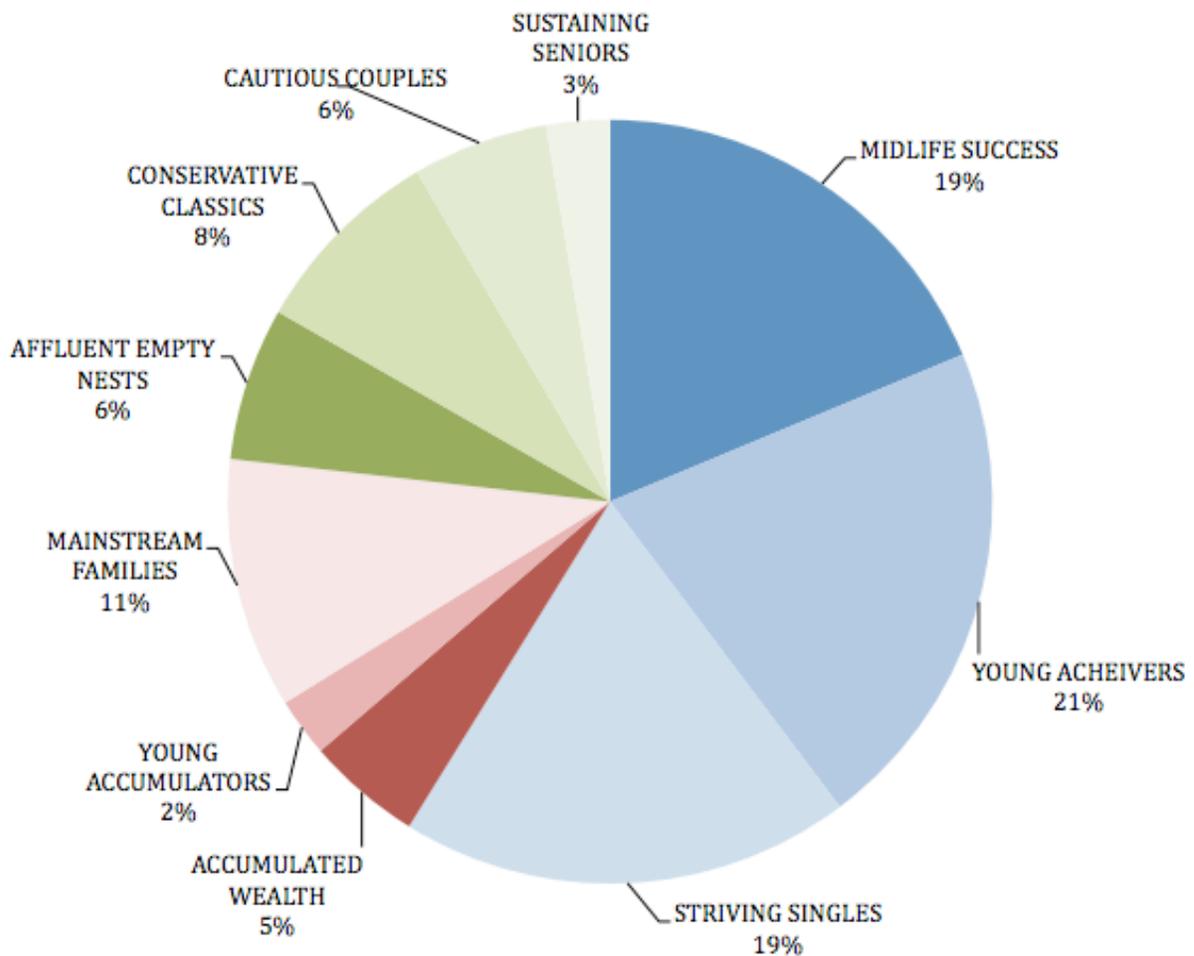
Additionally, some members of older generations have begun to trend towards downsizing their homes and expenses to live more simply while remaining in the communities that they call home. This cohort also tends to seek housing in village settings where transportation needs are minimal and amenities are centrally located. By supporting the creation of dense, Village housing, Waterbury Village can maintain its rich culture and diversified community make-up while serving the wants and needs of both the young and more mature sectors of the population.

To understand these demographic trends, Arnett & Muldrow Associates studied Waterbury's market segmentation and identified the breakdown of Waterbury's population as seen in the PRIZM Lifestage Distribution chart below. The market segmentation illustrated for Waterbury's primary trade area uses Claritas PRIZM® data. PRIZM® defines every U.S. household in terms of sixty-six demographic and behavioral types to help determine lifestyles, purchasing behaviors, and preferences of the customer base. In the case of Waterbury, the primary trade area's share of the PRIZM Lifestage categories is heavily skewed to "Younger Years" categorizing 59% of the households (as shown in blue in Figure 7). "Family Life" (in red) and "Older Years" (in green) categorize 18% and 23% of households respectively. Within each

Lifestage category, darker shades represent higher socioeconomic status, while paler shades represent lower status. Waterbury has approximately equal shares of households with high, medium, and low socioeconomic status (Retail Market Analysis and Marketing Recommendations, Arnett Muldrow & Associates, April 2013, page 15).

Desired Outcome: Create Affordable, Workforce and Market Rate housing for the growing young professional population of Waterbury and for the mature sector of the population looking to decrease living space and financial commitments.

PRIZM Lifestage Distribution



2.3 Economic Strengths and Areas for Improvement

Summary: Waterbury should take advantage of its strengths, such as the existing employee base, central location, recreational amenities, and strong work-life balance. Areas for improvement include the existing dual municipal structure and limited Workforce housing availability.

Waterbury is uniquely positioned to take ownership of its new level of notoriety as a hub for business and a home for workers. The community has many strengths that have helped Waterbury reach this level of success, but there are areas where there is an opportunity for improvement, expansion, or enhancement. A list of the areas of strength and opportunity are below.

Strengths:

- Proximity to I-89, Chittenden County, Montpelier, and the New England Central Railroad.
- Premier recreational opportunities and access to Stowe and the Mad River Valley.
- A strong employer base providing well-paying jobs and a highly skilled and dedicated workforce.
- Excellent schools and taxes proportionate to the region.
- Quality local commercial property owners.
- An economy that benefits from, but is not solely reliant on, the Vermont tourism industry.
- Village Water and Wastewater systems.

Areas for Improvement:

- Town and Village dynamic:
 - Water and sewer access: With a lack of municipal sewer line access outside of the Village boundaries, development has been made more difficult in the Town. An infrastructure change in this area is costly and requires thorough consideration, but would change the development potential of the Town greatly.
 - Differing priorities: Given that Waterbury currently has two governing bodies (excluding the Water & Sewer Commission), at times there are inefficiencies within the government and it can be difficult to keep priorities in perspective. On occasion an issue is made a priority by one body and not by the other, even though both will be affected by the result. Economic development proponents should work to help elected officials maintain perspective on issues specifically related to economic development, which will affect both the Town and Village.
- Limited availability of downtown commercial property.
- High rental housing costs, compared to other Washington County communities.

Part III: Waterbury's Economic Strategies

3.1 Public Private Partnership

Summary: The priorities of private and public entities should be aligned to create a more productive and effective environment for economic development work.

Successful economic development includes creating a strong public and private partnership between local stakeholders. As such, Waterbury municipal leaders and public citizens should strive to build consensus around economic development goals and empower the aforementioned Team (Sec. 1.3) to work closely with businesses and developers to realize the vision for Waterbury's economic future. While Waterbury's Municipal Plan helps guide these conversations, areas that are less defined in the plan need to be discussed with the public before The Team can take definitive steps towards additional economic development.

Desired Outcome: Achieve consensus among municipal entities and private citizens around economic development goals.

3.2 Redevelopment

Summary: To create optimal land use conditions, underutilized properties should be redeveloped and transformed to fit modern demands. This can create denser development in Waterbury Village and prevent sprawl.

Economic stakeholders need to identify key areas in the community that are ripe for redevelopment. By identifying and transforming these spaces, Waterbury can maintain its historic character while making sure each property is fully utilized. Within the Designated Downtown or Village Center boundaries, property owners or purchasers that choose to redevelop sites that are in disrepair may qualify for the state tax credit program for those improvements. This opportunity incentivizes these property owners to repair what they have rather than building new and potentially creating sprawl in outlying areas of Waterbury. Other local incentive tools can be created as well, such as a tax stabilization policy, to encourage making the best use out of Waterbury's existing structures and enhancing the Town and Village grand lists.

Desired Outcome: Encourage and support redevelopment projects through incentives such as tax stabilization contracts, historic tax credits (in the Designated Downtown and Village Center), and UDAG loans (in the Village).

3.3 Targeted Recruitment

Summary: The success of an existing Waterbury business in a particular industry can be harnessed to attract complementary businesses to the area.

Perhaps the most common economic development strategy is building on the existing success of local industries to generate a hub for a specific type of businesses. This is somewhat easier in Waterbury, due to the notoriety of well-known companies like Ben & Jerry's, Cold Hollow Cider Mill, and Green Mountain Coffee. Building on these brands via targeted business recruitment helps leverage commercial interests and promotes Waterbury as the "Made in Vermont" standard.

Desired Outcome: Use successful existing businesses to attract new businesses of a similar industry or complementary industry to Waterbury.

3.4 Town-Village Economic Vision

Summary: The business community generally prefers to participate in towns with a singular, clear vision of economic development. At times, the dual-governance structure of Waterbury can pose different visions for economic development.

Section note: Technically, there are three governing bodies in Waterbury: Town Select Board, Village Trustees, and the Water & Sewer Commission. However, for the purposes of this section, the two governing bodies referenced are the Trustees and Select Board, as the Water and Sewer Commission exclusively governs the public water and sewer systems.

The Town and Village governance structure can sometimes raise unique challenges in the economic development process. While it is important to honor the history behind the current municipal government structure, it would be beneficial for elected officials and the community to establish ways to ease any strains that there may be on current relations between the two bodies. By continuing efforts to forge strong relationships between the Town and Village and reach consensus on priorities that relate to economic development, businesses can feel at ease knowing that they are participating in a community with a clear, cohesive vision for economic development.

Desired Outcome: Align Town and Village economic development priorities to create a strong environment for doing business in Waterbury.

3.5 Infrastructure

Summary: In order to achieve full development potential, Waterbury should consider an infrastructure expansion. This can only be accomplished with the majority support from the community.

While Waterbury has a fair amount of developable land available, oftentimes infrastructure, or lack thereof, can become a hindrance to development. If it is determined that the community would support smart, responsible development along the Route 100 and Route 2 corridors that are currently not serviced by the municipal sewer line, an infrastructure expansion project should be planned to make these areas more developable. Additionally, a feasibility study should be completed in conjunction with this community conversation to ensure that there is enough developable land to justify an infrastructure expansion. Keeping in mind the cost of a project on this scale, it is only possible to carry out this kind of an endeavor after gaining community support and using creative funding sources to implement infrastructure expansion.

The goals of Smart Growth should not get lost in these discussions. As current Route 100 and Route 2 development stands, there are opportunities for clustering development along both corridors. Depending on the needs of future development, this may be able to be done without infrastructure expansion.

It should be noted that property that is not in the Village can be annexed via petition to gain access to the municipal sewer system. The property owner is responsible for the cost of connecting to the system. While annexation has been successful in the past, it is not necessarily an easy process. A parcel must be adjacent to the Village boundary to be annexed into the Village. Therefore, if the property owner who desires municipal wastewater access is located several parcels away from the Village line, the neighboring properties between the parcel in question and the Village boundary must be annexed into the Village before the parcel in question is eligible for sewer access. In the past this has been trying because becoming part of the Village means paying additional Village taxes. In short, the further away from the Village boundary a parcel is, the more challenging and costly the annexation process can be. However, in light of the recent passage of Article 7 at the 2017 Annual Village Meeting (see Page 3 Note to Readers), much of the Village tax bill may be obsolete soon and therefore annexation could become easier and more attractive.

Desired Outcome: Complete community discussions around potential infrastructure expansions and relationship to desired economic development goals. Determine majority community support for one option. Identify and implement next steps.

3.6 Tourism

Summary: Waterbury is a destination with offerings for all seasons and any type of weather. Though it benefits from being located between major ski areas, Waterbury has become a destination in itself.

While already achieving incredible success over the last six years, Waterbury should consider new opportunities that encourage visitors to stay in the community rather than using Waterbury as a pass-through to the Mad River Valley and Stowe. These opportunities include expanding offerings in the lodging, culinary, retail, arts, entertainment, and recreation industries. Waterbury benefits from existing local/fresh food and craft beer industries and a flourishing restaurant scene. There is an emerging art scene that is continuously gaining exposure. Year-round recreation opportunities abound including offerings at Little River State Park, the Waterbury Reservoir, and the Waterbury Ice Center. However, Waterbury is ripe for a venue with offerings that can provide year-round entertainment for locals and visitors (movie theater, bowling alley, concert venue, etc.), rain or shine.

Waterbury has an eco-tourism and historic tourism component as well. The Waterbury Historical Society maintains a wonderful History Center at the Waterbury Municipal Center. The Society has also created an excellent self-guided Waterbury Historic Tour that takes visitors to a variety of historic sites in Waterbury Village, Mill Village, Colbyville and Waterbury Center. Within Little River State Park is the historic Civilian Conservation Corps camp (CCC camp) that dates back to the 1930s, of which now only chimneys and cement foundations remain from what was a thriving camp of 80 buildings and 2,000 men at its peak (Vermont State Parks, Little River State Park informational site). To access some of the best views in Vermont, many travel the Green Mountain Byway, which stretches from Waterbury through Stowe via Route 100.

The argument can be made that Waterbury's greatest strength is its community. Often, as evidenced by several business owners in town, positive experiences in Waterbury can lead to one taking up residency and even embarking on an entrepreneurial endeavor. This is a clear result of the draw of the wonderful community that is Waterbury. As much as possible, this is a trend Waterbury should encourage by highlighting what it means to not just visit, but also live in Waterbury.

Desired Outcome: Increase amenities for residents and visitors that are available regardless of the season or weather. Foster the growing artistic and creative economy and culture.

3.7 Downtown Parking

Summary: Downtown Waterbury has become a vibrant place to work, live, shop and dine, however finding parking can be challenging at peak times in core commercial areas. Some short-term parking is often occupied by daytime employees for the entirety of their workday. There is limited parking enforcement available in the Village.

The lack of public parking in downtown Waterbury during peak hours has become an issue for residents and business owners alike. Business owners receive complaints on a regular basis from customers that they are unable to find short-term parking spaces to allow them to conduct their business. It should be noted that the upcoming Agency of Transportation Main Street Reconstruction project will not only temporarily prohibit on-street parking in active construction zones, but will ultimately eliminate over twenty on-street parking spaces upon the completion of the project to allow for new features along Main Street. While this reconstruction is certainly a worthwhile project, it is important to be aware of these additional pressures that will be put on the availability of downtown parking.

In 2016 the Village of Waterbury commissioned a professional parking study by Stantec Consulting Services. The study concluded that, as conditions stand in the Village, public parking availability in the downtown parking study area is adequate for the size of the community. It also acknowledges that if people were willing to walk farther from their cars to their destination, parking supply would not be an issue. The study made several recommendations and separated them into high, medium and low priorities. A high priority recommendation is for the municipality to negotiate contracts with private parking lot owners, namely TD Bank and Northfield Savings Bank, to secure public use of private lots after business hours. Examples of medium priority recommendations are the consideration of expanding the supply of 2-hour spaces based on annual parking need evaluations and the consideration of improving lighting conditions in public parking areas. A low priority recommendation is for the municipality to explore acquiring TD Bank's parking lot and conducting a feasibility study related to building a parking structure on the property (Page 3, Waterbury Downtown Parking Study, Stantec Consulting Services, 2016).

There has been an additional effort to educate employees of downtown businesses on available long-term parking areas located within a reasonable walking distance from their employer. There is also parking enforcement in Downtown Waterbury, but the extent of enforcement is limited by the capacity of the police force.

Desired Outcome: Continue to be vigilant of the supply and demand of public parking in Downtown Waterbury. Implement recommendations made in the parking study.

3.8 Revolving Loan Fund

The Village of Waterbury is fortunate to have a revolving loan fund at its disposal. The fund, created in the 1980's via the receipt of an Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG), has helped finance many important projects in Waterbury, most recently the expansion of the Prohibition Pig brewery and Waterbury Sports. The Town of Waterbury also has a revolving loan fund that can be used for affordable housing and economic development projects. The Village Trustees, Town Select Board, and Municipal Manager have enabled the creation of wonderful things in Waterbury via the use of these funds and they continue to be excellent instruments in Waterbury's economic development toolkit.

3.9 Local Tax Stabilization

Summary: A strong tax stabilization policy can be used as a business recruitment tool at no cost to the Town or the taxpayer. These kinds of tools can give Waterbury a competitive advantage when recruiting new businesses.

Per existing local regulations, Waterbury maintains the ability to provide local tax stabilization contracts for commercial expansions, although the Town does not have an official tax stabilization policy and has not implemented the tool in over twenty years. Because Vermont businesses are so heavily taxed, offering local tax incentives is a wise economic choice.

Additionally, it does not cost the municipality anything to offer this kind of incentive; it merely delays some of the additional tax revenue that will eventually come to the Town as a result of private investment. If local leaders are in agreement regarding the merit of this type of action, Waterbury should seek to create, market, and implement a tax stabilization policy that is generous and inviting for prospective qualifying projects. Doing so will give the community a competitive advantage in attracting investment that might otherwise seek opportunity elsewhere. Additionally, the policy can include measures that ensure quality businesses are receiving the incentive.

Desired Outcome: Institute and implement a tax stabilization policy.

3.10 1% Local Option Tax

Summary: A local option tax is a fundraising tool that, in some municipalities, funds projects that benefit the business community. Projections show that if Waterbury had implemented this tax in all available categories, revenues could exceed \$2,000,000 between 2016-2021.

The adoption of a 1% local option tax (LOT) is a tool that has been used by several communities in Vermont and has proven to be an effective funding resource outside of traditional taxes. In Waterbury, projections have shown that if implemented, such a tax could yield revenues of over \$2,000,000 over a five-year period (2016-2021). These projections are based on the assumption that Waterbury would tax all categories available, which includes meals, rooms, retail and alcohol purchases. Some items are exempt from tax including, but not limited to, clothes, shoes, motor vehicles, agricultural supplies, drugs, and medical supplies. Investigating and ultimately implementing this kind of a tax may be worthwhile when considering infrastructure investments like a sewer line extension or additional public parking. Other Vermont municipalities have utilized the funds to create special projects funds, reduce municipal debt, reduce the tax burden on town taxpayers, and fund economic development/marketing offices. Several municipalities divide the revenues among these categories.

An important consideration when embarking on this investigation is to note that the LOT can be implemented through a town charter change, which must be approved by Town and Village voters and then subsequently approved by the Legislature. Waterbury's eligibility must be investigated more thoroughly as it only has a Village Charter and not a Town Charter. This is one more item to consider when discussing the current municipal structure.

Finally, when investigating the LOT, the impact on businesses needs to be seriously considered. Taxes on rooms, meals, alcohol and retail are already considerable (see tax rates below). Adding 1% onto the existing tax rates is likely to be a concern of the business community and should be taken into account when considering the additional tax. There may also be unforeseen consequences for wholesale businesses like Keurig Green Mountain and Ben & Jerry's. The potential effects on these businesses must be researched and considered.

Tax Rates:

- LOT (sales): 6% sales + 1%= 7% total tax
- LOT (meals): 9% meals tax + 1%= 10% total tax
- LOT (rooms): 9% rooms tax + 1%= 10% total tax
- LOT (alcohol): 10% alcohol tax + 1%= 11% total tax

Desired Outcome: Determine Waterbury’s legal eligibility for instituting a local option tax. Research unintended consequences of the tax. If eligible, engage residents and business owners in discussion about the tax and reach conclusion on the topic.

Part IV: Waterbury's Economic Opportunities

4.1 Waterbury State Office Complex

The completed renovation and restoration of the Waterbury State Office Complex is a crucial component to Waterbury's post-Tropical Storm Irene growth. The critical mass generated by having the complex fully staffed and occupied by a total of 1,100 state workers provides the Waterbury community with a steady base of potential customers for all commercial enterprises. This asset, unlike other large local employers, is much more likely to remain regardless of economic externalities. The dependable quality of the employee base is an attractive component as entrepreneurs and developers consider investment opportunities. Additionally, the State of Vermont's investment in Waterbury of approximately \$130 million is a demonstration of its commitment to the community and the long-term recovery effort.

4.2 Waterbury Center Village

Summary: Waterbury Center Village has had a successful history in economic development, but currently lacks in economic activity. Waterbury Center businesses on Route 100 have continued to great success.

In 2015, Waterbury Center received a Village Center designation from the State of Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development. The boundaries of this designation encompass several commercial properties, a village green, and some residential properties near the intersection of Maple Street, Guptil Road and Howard Avenue (please refer to Map 1 below). This designation creates the opportunity for property owners to apply for tax credits, and it makes the area eligible for specific State funding opportunities, among other benefits. Adjacent to this area on Route 100 is Waterbury Center, which is home to businesses like Cold Hollow Cider Mill, Vermont Artisan Coffee & Tea, and the research and development facility of Green Mountain Coffee.

Unfortunately, some businesses in the Waterbury Center Village area have struggled to survive. There was previously a general store, a retail bakery, an active Grange Hall, a public library, and a public school in the Seminary Building within the designated Village Center. Now, the bakery located in this area is by appointment only, the general store has been closed for several years and was converted into residences.

However, some changes in the area hint at the new economic opportunities that lie ahead. The Grange Hall has been purchased and will be providing similar community engagement opportunities as The Grange Hall Cultural Center. The Seminary Building has been converted

into affordable and market rate housing units and the Seminary Arts Center, offering a gallery and a variety of art classes. The Waterbury Center Post Office is just south of the Village Center on Guptil Road, and an auto body shop is located on Howard Avenue.

Additionally, Cold Hollow Cider Mill, Evergreen Gardens, the Green Mountain Club, and other businesses adjacent to the Village Center are seeing great success, somewhat due to their convenient location. Green Mountain Coffee owns a great deal of undeveloped land in Waterbury Center on Suss Drive, the location of the research and development facility. While that is currently private property, there could be collaborative development opportunities for the Town and Green Mountain Coffee to consider in the future.

There are growth and redevelopment opportunities in Waterbury Center Village. As current zoning regulations stand, there are several commercial operations that could take root in this area. If the regulatory environment expands business opportunities, key properties turn over in use and/or ownership, and the benefits of the Village Center designation are publicized and utilized, Waterbury Center Village could return to its once vibrant and robust economic status. It will be imperative for economic development professionals and town officials to be well versed in the local and state incentives available in this area and to harness them effectively to incentivize redevelopment.

Desired Outcome: Empower the Team to harness the success of Route 100 business in Waterbury Center, local and State incentives, and property development and redevelopment opportunities to attract new businesses to Waterbury Center Village/Waterbury Center.



Map 1: The orange area highlights the designated Village Center area of Waterbury Center.

Route 100 and the related businesses (Cold Hollow Cider Mill, Keurig Green Mountain, Vermont Artisan Coffee & Tea, Evergreen Gardens, etc.) can be seen to the left and above the Village Center area.

4.3 Route 100 and Route 2 Corridors

Summary: Both Route 2 and Route 100 may have additional development potential, however substantial expansion of Waterbury’s infrastructure may have to be made to accommodate this growth.

Decisions need to be made when one considers the future of Waterbury’s economic development. Due to the constraints on Waterbury Village’s boundaries, including I-89, the Winooski River, and the adjacent floodplain, Waterbury Village is approaching the limit of its development potential (please refer to Map 2 below). Therefore, the community and Waterbury’s elected officials are faced with a choice. The principle of Smart Growth mirrors that of Vermont’s philosophy and regulatory policy of development: Communities should be densely developed in designated growth centers and should make substantial efforts to preserve the working landscapes in between those centers. The Route 100 corridor has already seen considerable development, but further development is often limited by the lack of infrastructure, particularly municipal sewer access. This situation is evident in the choice of The Alchemist to build a new

facility in Stowe, when the company's preference was to build along the Route 100 corridor in Waterbury. Development of the Route 2 corridor is limited by both lack of municipal sewer access and floodplain.

If Waterbury determines that it desires additional development along the Route 100 Corridor between Colbyville and the Stowe boundary and along Route 2 between the Waterbury Village and Bolton boundaries, investments in infrastructure should be considered to facilitate this development. However, if the community is not invested in further development along these corridors, then it may not be worth making substantial investments in this infrastructure. The heart of this matter and the future of development must be determined by the community itself. Waterbury's history in development planning needs to be discussed when having these community conversations. The community has always erred on the side of maintaining open landscapes and limiting development along both the Route 2 and Route 100 corridors. However, current development strays away from these planning preferences and more development could follow the trend of building between Waterbury and Bolton on Route 2 and between Waterbury Village, Waterbury Center Village, and the Stowe boundary. These current and potential development scenarios are inherently at odds with the planning preferences and Smart Growth principles Waterbury has set forth as the intended development models. This conflict needs to be acknowledged and openly discussed if these community conversations take place.

This is not to say that if infrastructure is expanded along the corridors that unfettered development should be permitted. Regulatory processes can be implemented through Waterbury's Planning and Zoning Department and the Waterbury Planning Commission to make sure development is thoughtful, strategic and desirable. An example of this regulatory option is the lot coverage rate in the Route 100 zone. Some fear that Route 100 can be developed indiscriminately. However, the current regulations state that the minimum lot size on Route 100 is 5 acres and require 50% of the property to be conserved with a maximum structural coverage of 5% of the entire property. Therefore, in practice if someone owns a 5-acre lot, they can only build a structure with a maximum size of 10,890 square feet. While this is a large facility, it is certainly not the size of the entire lot available. The regulations vary for existing nonconforming parcels.

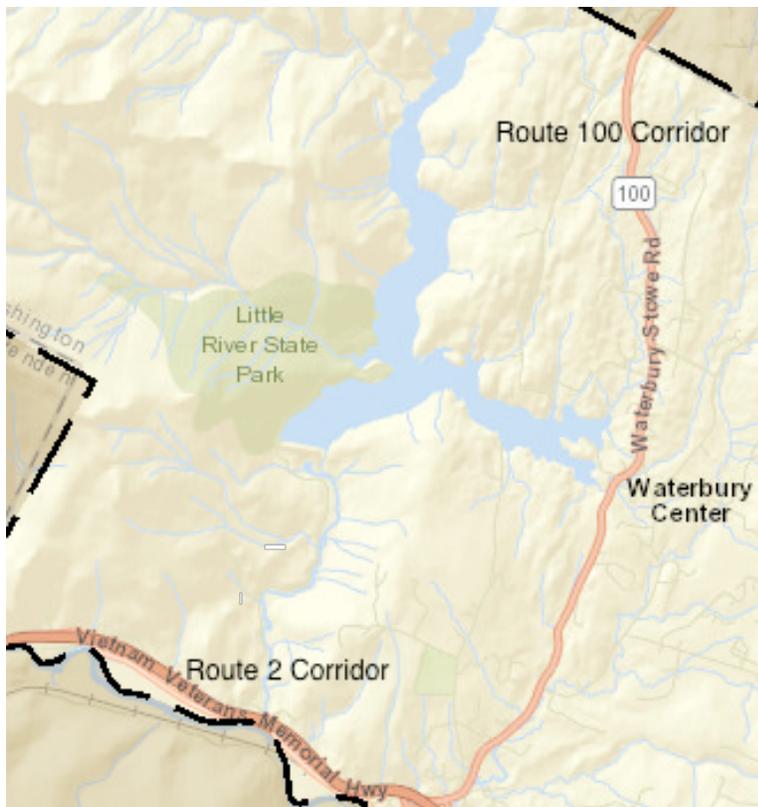
A third scenario exists in which infrastructure is not expanded, and businesses that do not require municipal sewer line access continue to develop or redevelop parcels along these corridors. This is the current environment and new businesses have found ways to develop in these areas without additional public infrastructure. While this puts the onus on the business to

invest in private septic systems, it relieves the public and private developers from funding an infrastructure expansion. However, it also limits the kind of business that can develop in these areas and the extent to which they can develop. Septic systems are reliant on certain kinds of soil, which may not be available in all developable Waterbury locations. This scenario too requires an acknowledgement of the conflict between Smart Growth principles and potential continuous development of both corridors.

If the community expresses interest in development along the Route 100 and Route 2 corridors, Waterbury could expect to see significant growth in jobs and grand list values, as well as a substantial opportunity for the continued diversification of Waterbury’s economy.

Waterbury’s development history, planning objectives, and economic future all need to be recognized and discussed when determining a path forward.

Desired Outcome: Engage and involve the community in a conversation around additional development along the Route 2 and Route 100 corridors.



Map 2: The Route 100 and Route 2 corridors can be seen on the map to the left. Route 2 runs adjacent to the Winooski River and eventually intersects with the Bolton town border. Route 2 is primarily within the Industrial and Medium Density Residential zoning districts.

Route 100 runs perpendicular to Route 2 and continues through the Waterbury-Stowe border. This is also known as Waterbury-Stowe Road. Route 100 lies within several zoning districts including Town Commercial, Village Commercial, and Route 100.

4.4 Magnet Companies

Summary: Waterbury is home to several larger companies that provide a substantial employee base and help Waterbury's reputation as a hub for business in the Central Vermont region.

Green Mountain Coffee, Ben & Jerry's, Cold Hollow Cider Mill, and The Alchemist are labeled as magnet companies due to the thousands of customers and many ancillary businesses they attract. These household brands enhance the perceived status of Waterbury and create a multiplier effect that ripples through the local economy via increased wages, property values and entrepreneurial interests. It is therefore important for Waterbury's economic development entities to maintain relationships with these companies and continually reinforce Waterbury's appreciation for their presence. The community cannot take these magnet companies for granted.

Additionally, Waterbury must make every effort to support these magnet companies as they transition. For example, both Ben & Jerry's and Green Mountain Coffee have undergone ownership and leadership changes throughout the years and are both now owned by international entities, but continue to identify Waterbury as their headquarters. Maintaining awareness of these evolutions, remaining supportive throughout these changes, and offering additional opportunities as companies contract or expand is key to the retention of these enterprises.

Desired Outcome: Ensure that magnet companies feel supported and valued.

4.5 Other Individual Sites

Summary: Waterbury possesses raw land and potential redevelopment sites. At times, existing zoning regulations obstruct the path for redevelopment.

While Waterbury has a significant amount of undeveloped land, existing conditions make it challenging or prohibitive to develop. The majority of these sites are along the Route 100 and Route 2 corridors. As mentioned earlier in this plan, if the Waterbury community would like to see these sites developed, changes must be made to the existing infrastructure to accommodate this growth. However, if the community and elected officials do not feel that those kinds of changes lend themselves to the type of development the community would like to see, landowners should determine the future of those sites.

Within the boundaries of Waterbury Village, there are sites that could support denser development, however the current zoning maps preclude certain types of development to be permitted on these sites. An example of this is the area at the intersection of Foundry Street and Bidwell Lane. As was identified in the 2013 VDAT Report prepared by Arnett & Muldrow

Associates, the so-called “Stone Shed” could present an opportunity for redevelopment into dense downtown housing, a need identified in the 2013 Waterbury Municipal Plan (please refer to Map 3 below). However, the site currently lies within the industrial zone, which does not allow for housing of any kind. Regulations should be strategically changed to accommodate responsible development that meets identified community needs and goals.

Desired Outcome: Identify potential redevelopment sites and make reasonable and thoughtful changes to the zoning regulations to facilitate redevelopment.

Map 3:



The graphics above are both of a physical aerial image of the “Stone Shed” as well as its location on a parcel map.

4.6 Outdoor Recreation

Summary: Waterbury’s recreation amenities have become a major attraction for visitors and are major resources and contributors to the local and state economies.

Like many Vermont communities, Waterbury is gifted with natural and semi-natural resources that draw locals and visitors throughout the seasons to take advantage of the many recreational offerings. These resources consist of the following amenities: The Waterbury Reservoir, Little River State Park, and the Perry Hill Trails. Protecting and building on this foundation of appealing recreation opportunities will only help Waterbury’s economy continue to blossom and reach new heights as visitors discover all that it is to live in Waterbury.

The Waterbury Reservoir is located within the Waterbury State Park and is a resource that cannot be neglected. The reservoir spans 850 acres and provides an opportunity for boating, kayaking, canoeing, swimming, and more in the summer. Camping, mountain biking,

snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and VAST trails are all available at Little River State Park. When coupled together, these natural resources provide ample activities for residents and locals no matter the time of year. Beyond providing scenic and recreation assets, the reservoir and Little River State Park have a notable economic impact. Over the last several years, park attendance has increased to over 40,000 day-park users in 2016, generating revenues of over \$270,000 in the park alone. This does not count the dollars that are spent by park visitors in the State of Vermont, which is estimated to be over \$5 million. Currently, the reservoir is maintained by the State of Vermont and stewarded by The Friends of the Waterbury Reservoir, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that is committed to protecting, improving and enhancing the ecological, recreational, and community values of the Waterbury Reservoir. The group works to engage the Waterbury community and visitors alike in educational opportunities about the Reservoir such as invasive species and how to responsibly use the asset.

Vermont generally, and the Waterbury-area specifically has seen an explosion in trails-based visitation in recent years. Trails cater not only to mountain bikers but also runners, walkers, and outdoor enthusiasts of all types. The Waterbury area is home to three primary nodes where trail-related development occurs – C.C. Putnam State Forest (Perry Hill), Little River State Park, and the Dowsville Block of the Camel’s Hump State Forest. Between the three parks/forests there are over 15 miles of trails. These trails are maintained by the Green Mountain Club, the State, and the Waterbury Area Trails Alliance (WATA), founded in 2015 with the vision of building and maintaining recreational trails for a healthy, vibrant, sustainable community.

It is WATA’s intention to create a world-class destination for outdoor recreation enthusiasts. This has been done in many other small, rural towns in the United States and Canada and the economic multipliers from trail networks are many, from hotel rooms and restaurant meals, to purchases made at local shops and businesses. Additionally, having these resources locally provides a healthy, attractive environment for residents and serves to attract new residents, all of which contributes favorably to the local year-round economy.

Desired Outcome: Support recreation and stewardship of our wildlife areas by local area non-profits. As these groups are primarily volunteer-driven, make certain that there are tools available to continue this work into the future. Continue to recognize the economic value in recreational amenities and continue to expand recreational offerings in Waterbury.

4.7 Natural Resources

Waterbury is set in the Green Mountains and enjoys vistas, forests, wildlife, river access, and much more that is a result of this location. While economic development is an important component of maintaining a thriving community, precious natural resources need to be preserved whenever possible, financially feasible, and worthwhile. We must always be working to strike a balance between responsible development and thoughtful preservation and conservation. Continually engaging with the Waterbury Conservation Commission will ensure that Waterbury's development interests and conservation interests are well balanced.

Additionally, the success of Waterbury's outdoor recreation industries is dependent on the preservation of natural resources. As stated in the 2013 Waterbury Municipal Plan, "Healthy forest resources protect water and soil quality by filtering, cooling, slowing and absorbing waters. Forestlands provide habitat for many birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles expected to be found within the town. In addition to ecological health, forestland contributes to Waterbury's tourism economy through forest-based tourism like recreation, hunting, scenic and wildlife viewing. Forests are an integral part of the ecological, economical and social health of upland communities. Protecting forest resources is important to Waterbury's community," (Waterbury Municipal Plan, page 54).

Vermont's economy and history is also rooted in agriculture. Waterbury's 2013 Municipal Plan notes, "Efforts to maintain Waterbury's agricultural land base should focus, in part, on protecting prime agricultural soils to ensure their availability for future agricultural enterprises. The Town of Waterbury adopted subdivision regulations, which seek to prevent undue adverse impacts to prime agricultural soils when considering the subdivision of land," (Waterbury Municipal Plan, page 53). As the economy continues to ebb and flow, protecting finite and irreplaceable resources whenever possible is a key component of long-term economic development.

Connecting with each conservation and recreation organization and continuing to learn more about their work and the resources they passionately protect is imperative. Through this education, economic development professionals can be better poised to respond to issues and to avoid development that may threaten Waterbury's amenities.

Desired Outcome: Support conservation organizations and continue sustainable use of Waterbury's resources. Maintain awareness of natural resource economic value and conservation efforts.

Part V: Areas for Consideration and Action

5.1 Workforce Housing

Summary: Waterbury’s rental housing stock is fairly limited. There is a statewide need for workforce housing, and Waterbury is a prime location for this kind of development.

While it is challenging to find an official definition, workforce housing has been loosely defined as multifamily housing, without rent subsidies, that is affordable for households with low- to moderate-incomes. Workforce housing is located everywhere – from the urban core to suburban communities to tertiary towns. Considering the fact that Waterbury is home to almost 300 businesses, several of which have an employee base of over 50 workers, Waterbury is a prime location for workforce housing development. There are some Affordable Housing options, however they are relatively few and only one available to workforce age people is in the Village of Waterbury. Additionally, some may find that they do not meet the qualifications for Affordable Housing and yet cannot afford market rate housing. Even market rate rental housing is in short supply in Waterbury. As businesses grow and employees (especially young professionals) want to live close to their place of work in a convenient Village location, demand for workforce housing will only rise. This demand is positive as it not only increases the number of people living in Waterbury and contributing to the community, but it also creates a natural group of potential home buyers when renting is no longer preferred or necessary.

As the Waterbury Planning Commission conducts the comprehensive zoning regulation rewrite, it would be beneficial to explore these opportunities in the regulatory arena to more easily facilitate dense housing development in the future.

Desired Outcome: Take steps to facilitate dense downtown workforce housing development.

5.2 Floodplain

Summary: The presence of the floodplain makes development in some parts of Waterbury more challenging, risky and costly.

When discussing Waterbury’s floodplain, it is important to consider existing development, potential development, and other areas for growth. Much of Waterbury Village is located within the 100-year floodplain. Due to flood insurance costs and local floodplain regulations, developing land in the floodplain can be expensive and risky.

In considering future development in relation to this information, it is important to identify areas outside of the floodplain that may be eligible for development. This process is

underway with the Waterbury Planning Commission's study of future land use in Waterbury Village.

When working with landowners of floodplain property, it is key to acknowledge the associated challenges with floodplain development and provide relief where possible and appropriate. Currently, Waterbury is a member of the Community Rating System, which provides discounts for flood insurance premiums. This is an example of the kind of relief that Waterbury can provide floodplain property owners.

Desired Outcome: Alleviate challenges associated with floodplain development whenever possible and consistently present reasonable development alternatives located outside of the floodplain.

5.3 Waterbury's Reputation: Business Friendly

Summary: Waterbury has experienced great success in attracting businesses and residents alike. However, Waterbury can make changes to be more accommodating for businesses. These changes need to be clearly communicated to the public.

Waterbury has done an excellent job in securing strong, stable businesses that have made this community their home base. However, Waterbury and its economic development entities can do more to foster this success and grow the reputation of Waterbury as being business friendly. This plan has made recommendations that could become a "toolkit" for Waterbury's economic development. These items include the creation of a consistent tax stabilization policy, maintaining access to the Village UDAG fund, mitigating the cost of responsible floodplain development, creating access to consistent assistance from "The Team" to work through development challenges, continuing efforts to nurture the environment created by magnet companies, and implementing major infrastructure improvements.

While the implementation of these policies would help in continuing the business-friendly attitude Waterbury possesses, the community needs to be involved in these conversations. Change can be challenging to achieve and the community has experienced significant change since Tropical Storm Irene. The Economic Development Director and others who work to promote the business environment in Waterbury need to be sensitive to this change and connect with the community on an individual basis to discuss new transitions. Some may be fearful of change, others may simply like the area that they live in and do not see the need for greater development. Others are fully supportive of responsible development. The key is that no one entity is wrong; people have the right to oppose change if they feel it will negatively effect

their everyday lives and entities tasked with economic development have the duty to do everything in their power to encourage growth. However, the gap in these mindsets needs to be bridged constructively. It is the responsibility of economic development proponents to strive for consensus and to achieve strong communication with the Waterbury community. Without this key component of development work, the community will face impasses much more frequently than if lines of communication are clear and functional.

Additionally, community members that have an interest in Waterbury's development must get involved. Development requires several layers of review and permitting, locally and at times at the State level. Therefore, community members that would like to express an opinion regarding development should take the opportunity to engage in the discussion. This can be done via volunteering for boards and/or attending relevant meetings, such as meetings of the Waterbury Planning Commission and Development Review Board. Even if one cannot attend the actual meeting, reviewing meeting minutes is a great way to stay engaged in the work of the municipality.

Desired Outcome: Actively work to establish the elements of the Waterbury Economic Development "Toolkit." Achieve strong communication with the Waterbury community about development. Engage community members in conversations about development before projects are complete.

5.4 Zoning Regulation Consideration

As the Waterbury Planning Commission undergoes a review of the existing regulatory code in 2017-2018, it will be productive for Waterbury's economic development proponents to be involved in the process as actively as possible. The Commission will be identifying areas for denser development, investigating growth center designations, and much more. It is important for the Town's planning and economic development efforts to work towards alignment around a common community vision.

5.5 Legislative Updates

Summary: Economic development professionals need to maintain an awareness of topics being discussed by the Vermont Legislature as they have the potential to impact development in Waterbury.

The economic, social and regulatory landscape of Vermont is constantly evolving. The cost of living and relatively high tax rates are a seemingly permanent topic of conversation among

Vermonters. It is imperative that economic development professionals stay engaged with topics the State government contemplates.

An example of an important topic for engagement is when considering the proposal to conduct recreational marijuana reform. While legalizing recreational marijuana could generate considerable tax revenues, there are other facets of the topic to consider. This kind of a legislative decision has the opportunity to have a substantial cultural impact in Vermont and Waterbury. Like many Vermont communities, Waterbury prides itself on its traditional yet unique downtown with wonderful locally owned small businesses, a vibrant craft beer industry, and excellent culinary offerings. The introduction of a recreational marijuana retailer (or several) may influence how Waterbury sees itself, and may impact how others view the town. This is not to advocate for or oppose recreational marijuana, but to bring light to the fact that elected officials and economic development professionals should remain aware of these topics. It will also be important to engage the public in this conversation in the event that recreational marijuana is legalized.

Another statewide topic to monitor is the Vermont Designated Downtown and Village Center Program. At this time, the Program is well supported and well funded. With having a Designated Downtown and Village Center, Waterbury receives many benefits of being part of the program, such as access to certain tax credit programs, grant opportunities, a strong network of community development professionals, educational conferences, and much more. However, support for this program can change with the political tides. Whenever possible, Waterbury must advocate for this program to its elected officials.

Desired Outcome: Maintain awareness of State government programs and be proactive in anticipating effects of regulations in Waterbury.

Part VI: Agency of Transportation (VTrans) Projects 2017-2020

6.1 Route 100 Pavement Rehabilitation Project

Summary: The Route 100 Pavement Rehabilitation Project will pose challenges to Route 100 businesses, Waterbury residents, and tourists. The term of the construction is relatively brief and VTrans plans to work almost exclusively at night to alleviate the inconvenience of the work.

The Route 100 Pavement Rehabilitation Project is a Vermont Agency of Transportation project that will remove the dated concrete road base and construct a new sub-base in order to improve the structural integrity of the roadway and reduce maintenance costs. Construction is intended to begin during mid-summer of 2017 at the intersection of Route 100 and Shaw's and get as far north towards Stowe before the winter weather sets in. At this time roadwork is anticipated to begin in Stowe in the spring of 2018 and be completed by the fall of 2018.

It is well known that Route 100 is one of the most heavily traveled roads in Vermont and that this construction must be done with as little interruption as possible. For this reason, VTrans plans to conduct the majority of construction work at night from 6 PM to 6 AM and will not conduct weekend work (Saturday morning through Sunday afternoon). Construction will be segmented and should last approximately 10 days in each segment.

Waterbury has hired a Community Transportation Liaison whose role is to communicate between the Town, the State, the Waterbury residents, and other stakeholders. Revitalizing Waterbury (RW) will continue its strong relationship with the Liaison to ensure the smoothest construction process possible and will be responsible for business support.

It must be acknowledged that this construction will be inconvenient for at least one construction season and may impact businesses during this time. For this reason, the economic development director and RW will work to support Route 100 businesses before, during and after this construction project. This support can be accomplished in a few ways:

- Conduct individual check-in meeting with each business owner
- Create shopping programs (such as Wrap It Up & Win)
- Continuous progress updates and communications
- Conduct marketing efforts to ensure that people know "Waterbury is open for business!"

Desired Outcome: Develop a business support plan that addresses the concerns of businesses to lessen the impact of Route 100 construction on businesses. Introduce program over the spring of 2017 for summer 2017 construction.

6.2 Main Street Reconstruction Project

Summary: The Main Street Reconstruction project will likely have substantial impacts on Waterbury businesses during the construction period. The municipality, Revitalizing Waterbury, and other support entities must work closely with business owners to prepare for and endure the construction process.

The Main Street Reconstruction project is an intensive construction endeavor that will pose many challenges in the short-term but will yield many rewards in the long-term. This is intended to be a 2-year construction project, with the possibility of a third construction season being used to complete cosmetic work. While timelines are flexible, construction is tentatively scheduled to begin in April 2018 and will begin on Main Street from the southern side of the train trestle near Dascomb Rowe Fields south, terminating at the south end bridge on the Waterbury/Duxbury line. In 2018 and 2019, Main Street will be dismantled, water and sewer lines will be replaced, storm drains will be replaced, and many electrical lines will be buried underground. Period style lighting will be installed in the downtown core. In 2019/2020, the road will be repaved, and new sidewalks and bump-outs will be installed. Reconstruction is estimated to be completed in 2020 with the installation of a wayfinding system, final landscaping, and other work needed to complete the project. VTrans intends to maintain one-lane, two-way traffic along Main Street during construction and the work is estimated to be completed in 500-foot sections. Construction will take place during the daytime.

Many business owners have expressed concerns about the ability of their business to thrive or survive through reconstruction. The feedback Revitalizing Waterbury has received when investigating the impact of these projects in other towns is that it will be difficult during the construction period, but ultimately the downtown and community will benefit tremendously from the improved infrastructure and streetscape, which attracts more visitors, residents, and improves the infrastructure for decades to come. It is also worth noting that from the experience of other communities, consumers may change their habits when faced with inconvenience. This will be especially challenging for Waterbury businesses, as there are few detour options in the downtown, and VTrans is not planning to create any official detour routes at this time.

The VTrans Community Liaison will continue to work with Revitalizing Waterbury through the completion of the Main Street Reconstruction project. Revitalizing Waterbury will continue to be responsible for supporting Waterbury businesses before, during and after reconstruction. As noted earlier, this communication and support will take several forms:

- Hold workshops for downtown businesses that teach preparation strategies:

- Examples: budgeting for new costs such as window cleaning (from dust), minimizing staffing costs, limiting inventory, investing in marketing, considering alternate hours of operation.
- Conduct individual check-in meeting with each business owner to follow-up from workshops
- Create construction mascot for marketing and promotion
- Consider special events like pop-up sales outside of construction zone
- Create shopping programs (like RW's Wrap It Up & Win)
- Continuous progress updates and communications

Waterbury will be receiving \$132,550 for marketing and business support costs from the State of Vermont and the Town of Waterbury. These funds will be crucial in expanding staff capacity during Main Street Reconstruction, executing marketing and promotional campaigns, holding support and celebratory events, and much more.

Desired Outcome: Support Downtown Waterbury businesses prior to and throughout the reconstruction process. Lessen the impact of construction on downtown businesses in any way possible.

Part VII: Defining Success

7.1 Plan Implementation

- This Economic Development Strategic Plan should be a fluid document, changing with attitudes, climates, and the community. Should this plan be adopted, it would be done with the understanding that it should be updated every five years by economic development and municipal entities.
- If this plan is truly to be implemented in a timely manner, continuous reference to the plan and dedication to its components must be achieved by the Economic Development Director and related stakeholders.

7.2 Proposed Timeline

- Town and Village endorsement of EDSP: April 2017

7.3 Project Champion

Economic development professionals should take on the role of champions of the following projects:

- Propose a Tax Stabilization Policy
- Participation in zoning regulation review
- Research, define and understand the opportunities and challenges associated with the 1% Local Option Tax
- Assembly and implementation of Pre-Project Review Board
- Engage the public in a discussion about the future development of Waterbury
- Propose a process for determining future infrastructure improvement priorities