

5. Economic Development & Agriculture

Introduction

Background

Economic Development is actually a broad concept that includes many elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The Economic Development Element Team has defined Economic Development in working, practical, action-oriented terms. Supporting action items are predominantly to be completed within five years, emphasizing the nearer term.

The definition of Economic Development used herein is:

Economic Development is the sustained, coordinated actions undertaken by our community to create a positive environment to help businesses succeed and which enhance Bristol's standard of living and quality of life.

A critical aspect of in most definitions of Economic Development – Human Capital Development – is only partly covered by the Economic Development Element. Our element will address:

- Initial workforce readiness and continuing education and training
- Partnerships amongst business, town leadership, school system, community and various educational organizations to promote the above

The full scope of human capital development in promotion of standard of living and economic health is broader than the scope of this element and equally important. It should be developed as part of the on-going development of this strategic planning process.

Success of Economic Development initiatives over the next decade is vitally critical for fulfillment of the Community's Comprehensive Plan aspirations. It is the financial engine that makes the Comprehensive Plan possible.

As we come out of the latest severe recession and as we look back to the last Comprehensive Plan (2009) we can see there have been profound changes in business environment, products and technology. The pace of change will only accelerate and become more profound. The gap between those left behind and those that succeed will become a wider gulf.

There are emerging trends/ opportunities that can drive, support or limit business growth. As examples:

- New manufacturing technologies such as 3-D Printing that have relevance across Bristol core manufacturing businesses, embryonic businesses, arts and culture;
- New materials technologies such as composites, bio-materials and nano-materials;
- Emergence of “independent workforce” which ranges from independent professionals, consultants, and tradespersons to virtual businesses and home-based businesses¹;
- Collaborative work environment - local, regional and global;
- Obsolescence of workforce skills and career changes; and
- Power of local government, business and educational collaborations.

From an Economic Development standpoint we are at a critical point that requires leadership, activism, and change:

- The business world changed in the past half-decade and will rapidly change in the coming decade;
- Our economy is stagnant; opportunities for our current workforce and future generations are limited without change;
- Stagnation is slow death; growth is the only way to economic development;
- Old ways are long dead and change must be embraced. It is much riskier to maintain the status quo.

¹ Perhaps as high as 20% of the workforce when broadly defined and growing

Two basic realities must be addressed in an Economic Development Growth Plan. Community actions must support:

1. Continued growth among more mature businesses. Restrict growth and business moves out.
2. Support for new businesses relocations to Bristol and for embryonic business start-ups.

Without such supportive environment businesses cannot thrive.

The Town must look forward. The business environment in Rhode Island is difficult, but time and time again in our interviews the Economic Development Element team heard:

- Bristol has incredible resources and assets which are very attractive,
- Bristol aspirations and values are our strength and key selling point for business growth, and
- It is about LOCAL attitude and support!

These values expressed the understanding of business owners that our Town's character, distinctiveness and resources are its greatest strength and selling point to attract and build business. Key attributes to be developed and preserved included:

- A Town of positive action and support; looking for a better future – attitude backed up by action – Getting to “Yes!”
- Vibrant downtown of regional stature
- Strong historic New England coastal town charm
- Family and neighbor oriented
- Conservancy/ stewardship is a given
- Leaving Bristol a better place –opportunities for future generations through education and workforce opportunity

In summary, sustained, concerted and active support of Economic Development initiatives, outlined in this element, is:

- A. Critical to this Comprehensive Plan:
 - It improves the financial condition of our community through more and better paying jobs
 - It provides the funding – viable financial base – for other Comprehensive Plan initiatives

- It provides employment for younger generations to enjoy a higher standard of living
- B. And it must be monitored, measured, managed and updated as a living Strategic Plan as an on-going annual Town-managed process.

Accomplishments

The Town formed the Economic Development Commission in 2010 after adoption of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan which was an action item from that plan. The Town is currently in the process of converting the Downtown Naval Reserve Armory into a Maritime Center for visiting boaters (Action **Item #** from the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update). The Town received a Boating Infrastructure Grant from the US Department of Fish and Wildlife to undertake this renovation which will provide showers, restrooms, laundry facilities, lockers, and other amenities for the visiting boaters. The Roger Williams University Community Partnerships Center also assisted the Town in planning for this project and their work was instrumental in helping the Town receive the grant. The Town is also in the planning and permitting stage of expanding the downtown Church Street Dock which will extend behind the Armory in the area of the donated riparian rights from the Robin Rug property. A transient float for visiting boaters was installed on the west side of Rockwell Dock in 2012 which was funded by a Boating Infrastructure Grant from the US Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The decommissioned school buildings located on High Street, Walley, Byfield, and Reynolds Schools have also seen a recent revitalization. The Byfield and Reynolds Schools have been transitioned into rentals for a variety of uses including non-profit visual and performance art groups, small start-up offices; and, creative arts business such as fabric design. Walley School, in need of more rehabilitation, has not yet transitioned into other uses; however, the Town is moving forward with a plan to complete renovations to allow the building to be rented. It should be noted that these schools are seeing new life due in part to the collaborative work that was done to explore reuse options for the Walley School. The bringing together of various local art groups for a facilitated discussion as part of a Roger Williams University Community Partnerships Center project resulted in an increased interest from local artists in renting spaces in these school buildings.

With the help of Community Development Block Grant funds, and the Town's Redevelopment Agency, the Town was able to facilitate the revitalization of the Bristol Industrial Park which is a large, former mill complex that had become a blighted industrial property in the Wood Street neighborhood. The property had gone into receivership and the Town and Mosaico Community Development Corporation were able to work together so that Mosaico could acquire the property in 2010. Mosaico, a non-profit organization, has been able to secure grant funding from the EPA along with the CDBG grants to revitalize the property.

Implementation has begun on the Marine Trade's Route plan recommendations. This project, funded by a RI Statewide Planning Challenge grant, outlined recommendations to define and upgrade the route to the waterfront for the large boat builders and marine businesses in Town. Working with the RIDOT during the

Hope Street Sidewalk project, the Town was able to retrofit signage at a key intersection of Thames Street and Hope Street to allow the large boat trailers to negotiate the curve.

In 2012, RIDOT completed the Hope Street sidewalk project which included the installation of new granite curbs and sidewalks from the Thames Street intersection to Constitution Street. New decorative street lights, benches, bike racks, trash and recycling bins were also installed as enhancements. The Steel Yard was commissioned as part of the project to create the street furniture which helped incorporate public art and place making into the project.

The Town completed a Wayfinding Plan for installation of signage to direct visitors around Bristol. This plan includes signage for parking places, destinations, and directional information that gives the Town a branded identity consistent with the existing “Welcome to Bristol” signs located at the gateways into Town. The theme for these signs is the patriotic red, white and blue which Bristol is so famous for.

Earlier this year, the Towns of Bristol and Warren received a 5-year redesignation of the Mount Hope Enterprise Zone. The Town partnered with the Town of Warren on this redesignation application. It is an important tool in the economic development toolbox and provides an incentive to locate businesses in Bristol by providing income tax deductions for qualifying businesses.

Our Process

About a dozen of the 48 action items from the 2009 Comprehensive Plan survive in this Plan and several are more on-going “Policy Items.”

The team also conducted interviews with businesses to better understand business needs and competitive pressures that manifest themselves in government/business relations. Interviews were organized by business groupings/ segments as follows:

- Destination businesses
- “External Facing” businesses whose customers are predominantly global, national, regional, or state
- Quality-of-life local businesses, and
- Educational and training organizations

Included in Destination businesses were cultural events, museums, other arts and crafts, regionally-known restaurants, hotels, and recreational water sports.

External-facing businesses include commercial fishing, maritime/ composites, light manufacturing, embryonic, individuals, and other.

Quality of life businesses include local trades and services, family services, and agriculture.

Educational businesses include Roger Williams University, private trade schools such as RIMTA and IRYS, and of course supporting high school/ vocational education.

Interviews were conducted to better understand:

- Competitive industry issues where other localities were taking economic development actions to place local businesses at disadvantage or where other localities' best practices could be emulated,
- Emerging industry strategic issues and opportunities where business-educational-governmental relations might be appropriate and beneficial,
- Insights into six common, typical local government/ business areas of interface and the importance of "Bristol Values."

These six common areas included:

- Development/ advertising for customers or markets
- Provision of civic services and utilities
- Developing the workforce
- Funding growth
- Imposition/ management of regulations, approvals, and taxes
- Decision-making on location

The relative importance of each of these areas to the business segments can be seen in Table 1 and will be discussed in subsequent sections but it is important to note here that business is not monolithic: importance of these areas varies by segment. Some areas involve on-going relations and some are intermittent. As a result importance can also just reflect in-the-moment experiences and concerns.

The team conducted about 40 interviews which gives a good understanding of the issues and opportunities. It was not a scientifically valid survey and further surveys can better home-in on sources for betterment. It should be noted, that the business community appreciated the outreach, chance to discuss the issues, and looked forward to continuing dialogue.

Key Findings

Almost all of the interviewees expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Town to address business concerns. They generally expressed admiration for town administrators and services such as police, fire and public works. They felt that by working together much progress and benefit can be achieved.

Each of the Business Segments is an important element for improved standard of living and economic health of Bristol, but with different roles.

The Town must focus on growing destination and external-facing businesses. These are the basic, core building blocks for our future. They are the growth engines and provide synergistic growth to other segments. External-facing businesses are particularly important because for each new job created it supports 3-4 local jobs. These tend to be well-paying jobs.

The Town's core manufacturing business of maritime, composites and engineered plastics has many businesses from boat builders to sail makers and spar makers to component manufacturers, distributors, retail and services as well as related materials businesses. Most have branched beyond marine trades to broader markets to sustain growth. Bristol has a potential Center of Excellence in these areas which provide a bases for further development.

Destination businesses bring annually about 35,000 wedding guests and 300-400,000 events visitors to our Town. But, the Town has not optimized the economic growth potential of this market, which requires concerted effort amongst all the constituents to broaden the season and diversify/ broaden the opportunities.

Roger Williams University (and other local universities and colleges) is important both as the Town's largest employer but also as an important partner with the Town, businesses, and other local educational institutions. In addition to being the largest employer RWU brings thousands of people to Bristol every year. Universities can mentor, partner, and seed embryonic and small business in a symbiotic relationship. Small businesses and embryonic businesses become the longer-term engines for growth and higher paying jobs. The Town must also focus on developing embryonic business for our long-term growth.

Bristol needs to create a sustained pro-business environment. It really is about local attitude and getting to "yes" within the constraints/ benefits of Bristol Values. Town government needs to foster and lead business growth. This requires significant partnership with business and educational institutions.

Since these partnerships are critical and economic development results from community action, partnership action items are included in this Economic Development element.

Regulatory, permitting and fee structures need updating and streamlining to reduce the cost, effort and time to fit 21st century business needs. Without metrics and best-practices it is impossible to recommend specific actions, but it is a significant legitimate concern of most businesses surveyed. Other localities have tackled these issues with creativity that protects all interests and Bristol should leverage these efforts. Small businesses and non-profits are particularly disadvantaged. It must also be noted that both business applications and town processes must improve for there to be realized benefit.

There are areas where judicious town investment can yield significant benefits: three areas in particular, hiring of an economic development officer, and advertising/ promotion of destination business; and, promoting a Center of Excellence for composite/marine trades technologies.

The summary of the economic development strategy is therefore a singular goal for the sustained, viable growth of business to provide for improved standard of living and economic health of Bristol. It is important that such pursuit be built upon Bristol Values.

Action items herein are organized by groupings of:

- A. Town Organization and Processes
- B. Regulations, Permitting and Approvals
- C. Development, Marketing and Advertising
- D. Civic Services and Utilities
- E. Developing the Workforce
- F. Other, Including Mandated Agriculture Section

Statement of Goals and Actions

The Economic Development goal is the sustained, viable growth of business to provide for improved standard of living and economic health of Bristol. It is important that such pursuit be built upon Bristol Values.

Based on the critical issues described in the Introduction and the overarching goal stated above, this section presents the actions developed by the Town of Bristol to guide its Economic Development activities. These goals align with goals expressed in the other elements of this plan.

Goal 1. Foster the local economic base.

Policies to Implement Goal 1:

- A. Build on the Town's manufacturing base.
- B. Encourage small retail and service businesses that meet local needs.
- C. Encourage high value businesses.
- D. Keep options open for growing firms to find the type of space they need at a price they can afford.
- E. Promote Bristol as a good business location.
- F. Encourage businesses that will last and flourish because their specialties create defensible market niches.
- G. Play a more active role in guiding economic development, such as using the powers authorized by State Law for the Redevelopment Authority to promote redevelopment of blighted structures and marketing the Town as a good place to do business.

- H. Provide a high quality infrastructure system that supports continued economic growth.
- I. Don't permit the rezoning of manufacturing and commercial land for residential purposes.

Goal 2. Work for a mutually supportive relationship between activities and other aspects of town life.

Policies to implement Goal 2:

- A. Understand, develop, and promote the skills of Bristol residents in conjunction with the University, continuing education and the Bristol-Warren School System.
- B. Keep a business base that lets residents walk to work.
- C. Strengthen the amenities that make the Town attractive to business, to include: a good education system, homes affordable to employees, good municipal services.
- D. Encourage new businesses that complement those already in Bristol.
- E. Attract businesses that don't threaten the environment.
- F. Encourage the reuse and rehabilitation of old industrial buildings and sites, either by incentives to the private sector or action by the Redevelopment Authority using powers authorized by State Law.
- G. Buffer commercial and industrial activities from adjoining uses where possible to alleviate incompatibilities.
- H. Strike a workable compromise between some types of businesses' need for visibility, and the Town's policies regarding open space, landscape preservation and signage.
- I. Promote tourism that complements the Town's environmental, scenic and historic resources as a means for economic development.

A. Town Organization and Processes

The following action items are proposed to enable Town leadership to assume its leadership role in the Economic Development effort. Strategic planning is an essential part of successful private business management's annual effort, and it is no less important for public administration in pursuit of the Economic Development Element's overarching goal. The Town must be a partner to local businesses and work to create a positive environment for the start-up, expansion, and attraction of new businesses.

As described in the introduction the basic building blocks of an economic development growth plan are:

- Growing the “external facing” businesses, especially Bristol’s core businesses
- Growing destination businesses through marketing and through integrated efforts to broaden the season and broaden the offerings
- Develop local embryonic and new businesses as the longer-term engines of growth

One of the most important action items in this Element is to hire an Economic Development Officer (EDO). It must be created with appropriate organizational stature, visibility, responsibility and accountability. The roles and accountabilities of the whole town organization for Economic Development must also be defined, aligned and understood – from Town Council, Town Administrator through the supporting departments.

#	ACTION	IMPACTED BUSINESS SECTORS	TIME FRAME ²				RESPONSIBLE AGENT
			S	M	L	O	
ED-A-1	Hire an Economic Development Officer to be liaison with the Town and State and businesses, promote the town and its businesses. (In conjunction with hiring process define success metrics).	All	√				Town Administrator
ED-A-2	Adopt an annual Economic Development Strategic Planning process that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Reports on Economic Development Plan progress and changes in business climate b) Measures performance, achievement, and business demographics & defines success. c) Identifies best practices/ other community’s success stories and opportunities for improvements d) Enables Town leadership to fulfill its Economic Development role 	All	√				Town Council, Town Administrator, Department of Community Development
ED-A-3	Leverage retired business leaders, the business community and Roger Williams University to assist in planning and implementing Economic development strategic planning activities (the EDC) to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Flesh out Strategic Plan outlined in the introduction b) Measure performance 	All	√				Town Council, Town Administrator, Department of Community Development

² S: short-term; M: medium-term; L: long-term; O: ongoing

#	ACTION	IMPACTED BUSINESS SECTMENT	TIME FRAME ²				RESPONSIBLE AGENT
			S	M	L	O	
	c) Identify best practices and opportunities						
ED-A-4	Set up an annual training program for Town departments that are on the “front line” for administrative processes. Create a “Getting to Yes” plan and implement a continuous improvement approach for more streamlined permitting and processes without foregoing Bristol’s values.	All	√				Town Council, Department of Community Development
ED-A-5	Define and align responsibilities, accountabilities, expectation and culture for economic development success: from Town Council, Town Administrator, Community Development, to supporting town organizations.	All	√				Town Council, Town Administrator

B. Regulations, Permitting and Approvals

As noted in the introduction, regulatory, permitting, and fee structures need updating and streamlining to reduce the cost, effort, and time. Without metrics and best-practices it is impossible to recommend specific actions, but the need to improve these areas reflects a significant legitimate concern of most businesses surveyed.

A number of communities across the nation have creatively addressed this area, as have university public administration departments. These can be sources of best-practices. There is no need to re-invent the wheel.

This area represents a potential critical impediment to the establishment of new businesses in Bristol and restriction on growth for existing businesses. This area directly impacts on the overarching objective for this element. The current regulatory, permitting and fee structure can impose a significant diversion of resources from pursuit of core business activities and growth.

It is a heavy imposition on small businesses, new business, and embryonic business. For established businesses is very costly and time consuming.

It must also be noted that both business applications and town processes must improve for there to be realized benefit. Getting to “Yes” on the part of both parties is critical.

#	ACTION	IMPACTED BUSINESS SECTMENT	TIME FRAME				RESPONSIBLE AGENT
			S	M	L	O	
ED-B-1	Review zoning regulations and amend as necessary to encourage business growth; to include land use standards, guidelines for industrial areas, reuse or rehabilitation of existing buildings amongst the improvement options. Optimize growth opportunities in business and industrial zones and make provisions for new, more nontraditional, business workspaces such as office spaces in coffee shops. Review and amend, as needed, the signage section of the zoning ordinance including the number, size and location of signs for different business uses in different areas and zoning districts	All	√				Town Council, Planning Board, Department of Community Development
ED-B-2	Continue to encourage creation of flexible industrial space with a streamlined approval process;	All				√	
ED-B-3	Develop performance metrics and fact-based insight into opportunities for Town approval processes. Together with insight gathered from published best practices and local government success stories, develop approaches to decrease cost, time and complexity of approval processes.	All	√				Town Administrator, Department of Community Development
ED-B-4	Establish as an objective that approval processes be simplified enough and standardized enough that administrative approvals can be delegated to lowest level. Maintain adequate staffing levels for review and issuance of permits at the administrative level.	All	√				Town Administrator, Town Council
ED-B-5	Use existing “incentives” like the Enterprise Zone, Tax Stabilization Ordinance, and Community Development Block Grants to attract and/ or assist small businesses in Bristol	All	√			√	Town Council, Town Administrator, Department of Community Development
ED-B-6	Establish a well-advertised, single point of contact (especially for new and small businesses) for information dealing with town and state permits and approvals.	All	√				Town Council, Town Administrator, Department of Community Development
ED-B-7	Review all taxes and fees to create an exhaustive list and assess appropriateness.	All with inventories	√				Town Administrator,

#	ACTION	IMPACTED BUSINESS SECTMENT	TIME FRAME				RESPONSIBLE AGENT
			S	M	L	O	
	The benefits to the Town must be balanced with the impact on existing and new businesses.						Town council, Finance Department
ED-B-8	Designate a liaison to state agencies related to regulatory, permitting and fee structure issues.	All	√				Town Administrator

C. Development, Marketing and Advertising

This set of actions continues and expands on-going development activities for the destination businesses.

These action items also recognize the interrelated cause, effect and benefit of Bristol's destination marketplace in which the destination season must be lengthened (year round) and destination offerings and accommodations strengthened and diversified to entice more visitors to linger and spend more in Bristol. Bristol's museums, arts and cultural communities have been through a rough decade but have significant potential to benefit Bristol both economically and culturally. The value of local patronage cannot be overlooked. In fact, the value proposition builds outward from Bristol to East Bay to Rhode Island to southeast New England and beyond. These actions are proposed as a win-win for Bristol and the Town, and can be accomplished to sustain Bristol Values.

Exploratory actions are proposed for two other business segments.

Bristol has a substantial core business of maritime, composites and advanced materials businesses with trained workforce and supportive educational programs that can form the nucleus of even larger business base. One action item is to explore whether Bristol can leverage or market this into opportunity as a Bristol-based Center of Excellence especially in the maritime trades and composites sectors.

#	ACTION	IMPACTED BUSINESS SECTMENT	TIME FRAME				RESPONSIBLE AGENT
			S	M	L	O	
ED-C-1	Complete adaptive re-use of the Downtown Naval Reserve Armory into a Maritime Center	Recreational and commercial marine activities, Destination Bristol businesses	√				Department of Community Development, Harbor Department, Harbor Commission, Town

#	ACTION	IMPACTED BUSINESS SECTMENT	TIME FRAME				RESPONSIBLE AGENT
			S	M	L	O	
							Council, Town Administrator
ED-C-2	<p>Incorporate latest Harbor Management Plan into the Comprehensive Plan. Emphasis for success on establishing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Welcoming environment/ organization that spreads Bristol Harbor as a destination by word-of-mouth b) Utilities at waterfront c) Accessible moorings, slips, anchorage; easy access and egress from mooring field d) Establishing Bristol harbor launch/ water taxi services e) Easily accessible local marine suppliers, repairs, and lifts. 	Recreational and commercial marine activities, Destination Bristol businesses	√				Department of Community Development, Harbor Commission, Harbor Department, Town Council, Planning Board
ED-C-3	Continue to work with the owner of the Robin Rug property to encourage and facilitate the completion of the development proposal that is currently pending for a mixed use development – residential and commercial	All	√			√	Town Administrator, Town Council, Planning Board, Department of Community Development
ED-C-4	Maintain a vibrant downtown by 1) continuing public improvements in the downtown area for pedestrian facilities, such as: sidewalks, walkways, landscaping, street furniture, lighting, and signage; 2) keeping civic and cultural uses in the downtown as an anchor; and, 3) encouraging a mix of residential uses, retail and restaurants.	Destination business, Retirement, Quality of Life	√			√	Town Council, Planning Board, Town Administrator, Department of Community Development
ED-C-5	Develop a comprehensive tourism marketing/ advertising strategy and implement promotion. This needs to involve state, regional and local advocates with a more active local destination business community. More active participation of destination businesses in regional promotion (updated '09ED#33).	Destination Business	√			√	Department of Community Development, Town Administrator, Town Council
ED-C-6	Rationalize (reduce, consolidate, eliminate overlaps in missions, and etc.) the many business advocacy groups (Bristol Merchants, Explore Bristol, East Bay Chamber, etc.) and make them more effective. Economic	All	√			√	Town Council, Town Administrator

#	ACTION	IMPACTED BUSINESS SECTMENT	TIME FRAME				RESPONSIBLE AGENT
			S	M	L	O	
	Development Officer to be central facilitator/ coordinator/ advocator.						
ED-C-7	Working with Explore Bristol, the Newport Visitors and Convention Bureau, and the East Bay Chamber of Commerce, develop a comprehensive destination economic development plan that broadens the destination business season, broadens and diversifies destination offerings and events, and provides infrastructure to create economic opportunity. An integrated, umbrella solution is required to include all aspects of destination business and all constituencies.	Destination Business	√				Town Administrator
ED-C-8	Provide welcoming environment: Welcome Center(s) and kiosks, website & literature, promotion of cross-selling.	Destination Business	√			√	Town Administrator
ED-C-9	Working with the local groups such as Explore Bristol, Newport Visitors and Convention Bureau, and the East Bay Chamber of Commerce promote and package large cultural events with other arts & crafts, recreational marine and destination businesses along with better scheduling of activities, coordination of open-shop times, de-conflicting calendars and etc.	Destination Business	√			√	Town Administrator
ED-C-10	Working with the local museum organizations, work to incorporate Bristol's architecture, historic events such as Revolutionary War, Industrial Revolution, King Phillip's War, local notables and Civil War, the slave trade, cultural diversity, Mt. Hope Farm/ Wampanoag Indians and Haffenraffer Collection into meaningful destination opportunities and exhibits. Explore a new museum in Bristol to display the Haffenraffer collection, and to teach the importance of Bristol in early American history (as home to Wampanoags and their role in settlement of Plymouth, King Phillip's War, slavery and commerce etc.), and relevance today.	Destination Business	√				Town Administrator
ED-C-11	Develop and implement a museum/cultural arts plan to provide for expansion of venues,	Destination Business	√				Department of Community Development

#	ACTION	IMPACTED BUSINESS SECTMENT	TIME FRAME				RESPONSIBLE AGENT
			S	M	L	O	
	expansion of an arts community and promotion.						
ED-C-12	The Town should work with local businesses to maintain an active downtown commercial area, to include strategic recruitment of new businesses).	Destination businesses, Quality of Life Businesses	√				Town Administrator
ED-C-13	Redouble efforts to have “Bristol Buys Bristol.” Since Bristol is a significant bedroom community, introduce new residents to Bristol owner and civic organizations.	Destination and Quality of Life Businesses	√				Town Administrator
ED-C-14	Continue to monitor the properties in the Franklin Street Corridor Redevelopment Plan, including the Bristol Industrial Park, to continue implementation of the plan and move forward with redevelopment	All	√			√	Town Council, Redevelopment Agency, Department of Community Development
ED-C-15	Explore marketing and branding Bristol as a maritime/ composites/ materials Centers of excellence.	External-facing business	√				Town Council, Town Administrator
ED-C-16	Leverage Roger Williams University as a partner to promote economic development The Town should continue to work closely with the Business Engagement Center and the Community Partnership Program.	All	√			√	Town Administrator, Town Council, Department of Community Development
ED-C-17	Promote Rogers Free Library as a central source of information on history and economic development). The library should augment the visitor’s center resources.	All	√				Town Council, Rogers Free Library
ED-C-18	Bristol is fortunate to have a strong spirit of volunteerism that should be nurtured and promoted.	All	√			√	Town Council
ED-C-19	Create an advertising/marketing campaign to promote Bristol for business and help to create a positive outlook. Establish a program with regular workshops that include civic leaders for networking and to keep them engaged and to help build confidence in the business environment.	All	√				Town Council, Town Administrator
ED-C-20	Create and Maintain a Town Web site that provides relevant and current information and resources.	Downtown business, Destination business,	√			√	Town Administrator

#	ACTION	IMPACTED BUSINESS SECTMENT	TIME FRAME				RESPONSIBLE AGENT
			S	M	L	O	
		Marine Center					

D. Civic Services and Utilities

This topic should no longer be limited to traditional public works, telecommunications or marine facilities. The introduction notes a sample of emerging trends which Bristol can embrace as a generational change. While these are noted as business trends, proposed solutions have broad personal, community, education, and arts and cultural applicability as well. This Economic Development Plan proposes three basic building block public services as a foundation for enabling such change in a business/ educational/ government partnership:

- Technology collaboration centers
- Professional services centers
- University-led Business Development Centers

All three have broad applicability and community benefit beyond just economic development.

The solution for increased traffic to downtown businesses cannot be expressed solely as increased parking but must be a more holistic approach. For example: many customers and visitors are older so parking must also be convenient and well-advertised; success downtown will mean more business and necessitate more robust solution; success with the maritime center and destination businesses also requires a more holistic approach.

Bristol business from bedroom community commuters to destination and manufacturing businesses rely on adequate access and egress to Rhode Island, Southern New England and Boston areas. This infrastructure is critical.

#	ACTION	IMPACTED BUSINESS SECTMENT	TIME FRAME				RESPONSIBLE AGENT
			S	M	L	O	
ED-D-1	Explore and facilitate the creation of technology collaboration centers/ cooperatives with simple computing, CAD software, telecommunications, and manufacturing equipment such as milling machine, laser cutter, and 3-D printer. These have proven important for embryonic and small businesses around the world. Often these are educational institutions/business	All		✓	✓		Town Council, Town Administrator

#	ACTION	IMPACTED BUSINESS SECTMENT	TIME FRAME				RESPONSIBLE AGENT
			S	M	L	O	
	partnerships with town leadership. They are equally applicable for individual, community, arts, and educational purposes. MIT's fab center concept is a global example.						
ED-D-2	Explore and facilitate the creation of professional service collaboration centers; again as business/ educational partnership with town leadership. As telecommuters, home-based professionals and virtual business teams become more prevalent there will become greater demand for local domiciles, telecommunications, and etc. (Centers may also be applicable for individuals, community, arts and educational purposes).	Tele-commuters, independent contractors	√				Town Council, Town Administrator
ED-D-3	Lead effort to establish university and business partnerships to collaborate to foster embryonic technical and service businesses. These may also include partnerships with institutions or individual benefactors. Roger Williams University and, other local universities, and local technical training institutes to include the Bristol International Yacht Restoration School, a model and resource for workforce development opportunities. In all cases Town leadership and sponsorship is required. As a source for long-term growth and opportunity for the next generation of Bristolians, the Town needs to exert its leadership.	Embryonic		√			Town Council
ED-D-4	Continue to provide small business advisory services/ collaborative with Roger Williams University and the Business Engagement Center for mutual benefit of students, interns, and small businesses.	All	√			√	Town Administrator
ED-D-5	Continue to work for improved parking conditions in downtown area to include improved signage and lighting, as well as sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities.).	Downtown business, Destination business, Marine Center	√				Town Administrator, Town Council
ED-D-6	Install the linkages along the Downtown Harbor Boardwalk which are on the Town owned property. Implement the recommendations from the Roger Williams	All	√	√			Department of Community Development, Town

#	ACTION	IMPACTED BUSINESS SECTMENT	TIME FRAME				RESPONSIBLE AGENT
			S	M	L	O	
	University Community Partnerships Center Master Plan for the area along the boardwalk such as interpretive signage, benches, and low-level lighting.						Administrator, Town Council
ED-D-7	Explore opportunity for downtown/destination jitney; collaboration with Roger Williams University transportation; extend sidewalk/bikepath to Blithewold, Mount Hope Farm, and Roger Williams University.	Downtown business, Destination business, Marine Center, RWU		√	√		Town Council, Town Administrator
ED-D-8	Complete the boat ramp improvement project at Independence Park and continue implementation of the Marine Trades Route Plan.	Maritime business, commercial fishing and recreational marine		√			Harbor Department, Harbor Commission, Recreation Department
ED-D-9	Create a small yard-space near the fishing piers to store gear in-transition.	Commercial Fishing	√				Harbor Department, Harbor Commission
ED-D-10	Implement the Town's recently created Wayfinding Signage plan for consistently designed signage that will be placed at key locations to clearly direct visitors to cultural and recreational areas and downtown shopping and parking.	Downtown business, Destination business, Marine Center	√			√	Department of Community Development, Department of Public Works
ED-D-11	Facilitate access and use of an advanced fiber optic network to attract new businesses and help existing businesses increase capacity.	All		√	√		Town Council

E. Developing the Workforce

This Economic Development grouping will address:

- Workforce readiness and continuing education and training
- Partnerships amongst business, town leadership, school system, community and various educational organizations to promote the above

But the full scope of education (human capital development) in promotion of standard of living and economic health is broader than the current scope of this element and should be addressed as an on-going effort.

An adequate supply of trained and willing workers is a fundamental prerequisite for a strong manufacturing and trades/services base. Properly trained and motivated workers have a good chance of finding well-paying jobs.

An effective workforce development program requires the following elements:

- Business and community assessment;
- Collaboration with community resources (primarily education) and employers: flexibility to shift to market changes; and
- Financial support to those in need.

An effective work force development effort can be either sector based or place based or both. In Bristol the sector approach should be based on the Marine Trades and Composites clusters as they have the potential to be centers of excellence. The educational flow should start in the middle school, through high school and International Yacht Restoration School (Marine Systems and Composites) to employers.

A necessary ingredient of work force development is to broaden the exposure of secondary school students to varied employment opportunities. For example, local internships foster business skills, increased understanding by students of the relevance of the whole school curricula to business opportunity, and local hiring of interns. Similarly, mentorships and tutorials can also emphasize the relevance/ importance of the total educational experience to their future business careers.

Light manufacturing and engineering firms, trades and services companies, and family services companies expressed concern that students entering the workforce were not adequately prepared for the business world. These deficiencies were often cited as STEM or soft skill deficiencies in light manufacturing/ engineering firms. Most of the jobs are technical/ technician/ trade skill jobs or administration requiring a strong, broadly-based foundation in high school/ vocational education/ technical school curricula. Soft skills deficiencies most often included written and oral communication and importantly business department. This topic also suggests that solutions need to involve all secondary school Bristol residents (and earlier grades) whether high school or technical school enrolled.

With the evermore rapid evolution of technology and a greater propensity for career changes, continuing education will become more of a personal requirement. Though adult education and technical/ trade skills were once taught in the high school, it is more realistic to believe this education can only be achieved in the future through personal attention with community, business and educational partnerships.

Many small businesses and embryonic businesses felt they could strongly benefit from business and technical skills workshops and mentoring.

#	ACTION	IMPACTED BUSINESS SECTMENT	TIME FRAME				RESPONSIBLE AGENT
			S	M	L	O	
ED-E-1	Develop comprehensive town approach for (a) preparing Bristol’s high school and vocational education graduates for the workforce and (b) for continuing education with a focus on Marine Trades and Composites.	All		√			Town Council, School Department
ED-E-2	Establish a sustainable business/ education partnership starting with business/ private training institutes/ education roundtable to define ongoing collaboration at the primary and secondary school level. Key objective for the roundtable is to find ways to incorporate “business readiness” into the “life readiness” mission for the local education system.	All		√			Town Administrator, Town Council
ED-E-3	Expand local internship programs for high-school students	All	√				Town Council, School Department
ED-E-4	Expand and deepen student mentorships, business skills workshops, business mentoring, and tutorial programs with businesses, community, and RWU.	All		√			Town Council, School Department
ED-E-5	Provide trades classes/ training as an after school high-school activity. Provide business soft-skills seminars as part of the secondary school curricula and tie into the Center for Excellence and the programs at the Quinta Gamelin Community Center.	All	√				Recreation Department, School Department

F. Other, Including Agriculture

Local agriculture includes several small farms and local farmers’ markets. Local farms face pressures from large “industrial” farms yet provide a source for locally grown or organic and specialty produce. A vibrant local farm to table connection benefits both growers and restaurants. Commercial fishing as a form of agriculture will face similar pressures from aquaculture farming. Both are an important part of the fabric of our community. Sustaining local farms also improves the quality of life by preserving open space and by offering opportunities for all to be closer to the earth. Local agriculture is an important source of local produce and should be support by the Town as practical.

#	ACTION	IMPACTED BUSINESS SECTMENT	TIME FRAME				RESPONSIBLE AGENT
			S	M	L	O	
ED-F-1	Implement zoning and tax provisions that promote existing and future farmlands.	Agriculture	√				Town Council, Planning Board, Department of Community Development, Finance Department
ED-F-2	The town, in collaboration with Roger Williams Marine Sciences should promote the future development of aquaculture on its shores. While perhaps not in control of this development it can be an influencer and protector of local fishing and shore line interests.	Fishing and boating	√				Town Council
ED-F-3	Support local commercial fishing boat-to-table and farm-to-table farmers' markets.	Fishing and Agriculture	√				Recreation Department, Department of Community Development, Town Administrator, Town Council
ED-F-4	Explore locating a local farmers/fisherman's market in the downtown area either at Rockwell Park/Downtown Naval Reserve Armory or at Independence Park.	All	√				Recreation Department, Harbor Department

Appendix: Tables, Graphs and Charts

Table 1: Importance of Town Services and Support in Business Success

<u>Level of Importance</u>	DESTINATION				EXTERNAL FACING						QUALITY OF LIFE				EDUCATION			
	Culture/ Museum	Other Arts/ Crafts	Restaurants/ Hotels	Retirement	Recreational Marine	Commercial. Fishing	Maritime/ Composites	Other Manufacturing	Embryonic	Individuals	Other	Trades/ Services	Local Merchants	Family Services	Agriculture	RWU	Schools	Private
Critical 5																		
Very High 4																		
Moderate 3																		
Some 2																		
Little/ None 1																		
Markets & Customers	5	5	4	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	1		1
Civic Services/ Utilities	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	2	5	4	4	1	1	3	3	3		3
Developing Workforce	1	1	2	1	1	1	5	4	5	3	4	4	1	3	1	1	2	5
Funding Growth	2	1	2	1	5	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	5	3
Regs./ Approvals/ Taxes	4	2	4	2	4	3	4	5	5	2	4	4	5	3	3	3		3
Business Location	1	3	3	1	1	4	3	1	3	4	3	2	4	3	1	1		1
Bristol Values	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	5	3	5	5	3	1