

# 2 | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Overview

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

These changes have helped to restore character to a commercial stretch of County Road that had been an auto-dominated zone typical in suburban communities: parking lots located in front of buildings, signs cluttering views, and sidewalks in disrepair. Today, Barrington’s commercial core, while still dependent on automobile traffic, is more walkable and visually

appealing. More work is needed, however, to build on this success and help attract investment to the Village Center and Barrington’s other smaller commercial districts, in West Barrington and Hampden Meadows.

## Existing Conditions

### Commercial Development Trends

During the 1990s Barrington saw robust commercial development take place, with commercial space increasing by nearly 300,000 square feet, representing an investment of more than \$40 million. Much of the development related to the Barrington Shopping Center. Since 2000, there have been no large-scale commercial developments. New commercial and mixed-use buildings have involved redevelopment of infill sites, typically one acre or less in area. **Table 1** on the next page lists new projects built since 2010, which have added about 33,000 square feet of building area totaling \$5.9 million in assessed value.



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

**Table 1: New Commercial/Mixed Use Buildings—2010 to 2013**

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

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

Source: Barrington Tax Assessor

The largest non-residential development in recent years, not listed in Table 1, was the expansion of the Bayside Y at 70 West Street.. Portions of the original 15,350-square-foot building were demolished for the expansion, which included construction of a much larger indoor pool. The “new” Y totals approximately 36,000 square feet; the parking lot was expanded as well. The property is tax-exempt.

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

### Industrial Development

The closing of the RI Lace Works in the late 1980s likely signaled the end of manufacturing in Barrington. The 1992 Comprehensive Plan laid the groundwork for the conversion of industrial-zoned properties through recommendations to re-use these sites for senior housing developments—apartments and assisted living facilities. Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance adopted in the mid-1990s permitted Elderly Housing districts to occur in land zoned for commercial or industrial use.

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

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

### Commercial and Industrial Land Use and Zoning

Barrington’s business and industrial areas (see **Map ED-1**) include:

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

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

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

The sizes of the various commercial and industrial zones are listed in **Table 2**.

Since 2010, the Town Council has adopted several amendments to the Zoning Map affecting commercially zoned property. The changes included the rezoning of the remaining residentially zoned parcels on Wood Avenue to Neighborhood Business. In addition, a 10-acre environmentally sensitive Town-owned parcel east of the Bayside YMCA was rezoned from Business to Open Space-Passive. The Planning Board initiated these revisions to bring the Zoning Map consistent with the Future Land Use Map in the Comprehensive Plan approved by the State in 2010. Changes to size of commercial zones, resulting from the Zoning Map amendments completed since 2010, are shown in Table 2.

Throughout town, there are limited opportunities for commercial expansion in the business zones. Due to the scarcity of vacant land within

these districts, new most commercial development will necessitate re-use of existing buildings or redevelopment of infill sites.

**Streetscape Improvements**

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

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

**Design Review**

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

**Table 2: Commercial and Industrial Zoning, 2013**

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

Source: Town GIS parcel data

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

The Zoning Ordinance also prohibits parking to be located in front of buildings, requires sidewalks and bike racks and other features

that make for a more walkable community. In addition, the enforcement of the sign ordinance adopted as part of the 1994 zoning amendments has resulted in signage more appropriate to a pedestrian-scaled area, eliminating over-sized and gaudy commercial signs that had existed for years.

The Town has monitored the effectiveness of regulations in achieving the goals established in the Comprehensive Plan. In 2007 and 2012, for example, the Town Council and Planning Board further revised requirements for signage,

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

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

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

off-street parking and building and site design to create clearer guidelines and simplify some steps of the review process.

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

## Employment

The R.I. Department of Economic Development provides figures of the total labor force made up by residents, and of employment levels within the community itself, for all cities and towns in the State. As indicated by **Table 3** (previous page) and **Table 4** the bulk of em-

ployment within Barrington as of 2013 (second quarter) is in health care and social assistance (779 average employment), government (690), retail trade (295) and accommodation and food service (293), similar to the ranking of the largest employment categories statewide.

Since 1982, the largest loss among industry groups has been in the manufacturing sector, which is consistent with national trends. In 1982, there were 325 manufacturing jobs in Barrington; by 1990, the figure declined to 158, and then to just 47 in 2013. The decline in the 1980s was primarily due to the closing in 1990 of the Rhode Island Lace Works, which once provided about 180 jobs in Barrington. There also are fewer retail jobs compared to previous years (435 in 1990; 295 in 2013).

**Table 4: Private Sector Employment by Sector—Change (2012 to 2013)**

Category	2002	2013	Change 2002-2013
<b>Total, Private Sector</b>	2,160	2,697	537
<b>Health Care &amp; Social Assistance</b>	352	779	427
<b>Financial Activities</b>	81	237	156
<b>Accommodation &amp; Food Services</b>	153	293	140
<b>Administration &amp; Waste Services</b>	70	104	34
<b>Educational Services</b>	119	152	33
<b>All Other Employment</b>	25	56	31
<b>Arts, Entertainment, Recreation</b>	158	182	24
<b>Professional &amp; Technical Services</b>	114	127	13
<b>Information</b>	17	19	2
<b>Other Services</b>	257	242	-15
<b>Manufacturing</b>	76	47	-29
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	82	43	-39
<b>Construction</b>	196	121	-75
<b>Retail Trade</b>	459	295	-164

Source: RI Department of Labor & Training

Employment data reveal the extent Barrington is a bedroom community, with many more working residents in Barrington than there are jobs within town. There are 8,216 Barrington residents in the labor pool, as of 2013 (see **Table 5** on the next page), compared to 3,387 jobs available within town. The number of Barrington residents who work in town is unknown, but it is clear that the average job within town does not pay enough to cover local housing costs. The Housing Network of Rhode Island states that in 2012, the average private sector wage for a job in town was \$36,400. Income needed to pay the average rent of \$1,154 per month for a two-bedroom apartment is about \$46,100 a year. Almost \$98,000 is needed to afford the median house price in 2012 totaling \$334,000. (Housing issues, including affordable housing strategies, are discussed in detail in the Housing & Neighborhoods element.)

Table 5 shows statistics on the labor force in Barrington from 1990 to 2013, including totals on employed and unemployed. From 1990 to 2000, Barrington's total labor force increased slightly, coinciding with the town's increase in population. Since 2000, however, the total la-

**Table 5: Labor Force—Barrington, 1990-2013**

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

Source: Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

bor force has dropped to below 1990 levels. In 1990 the labor force represented 52.4 percent of the population; in 2010, the percentage was about 51.7 percent.

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

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

This housing-employment imbalance is reflected in commuting patterns from the 2000 census. In Barrington, just 26% of those in the labor force went to work in Bristol County (much lower than the figure of 40% all of Bristol County's working population). The town's

proximity to a major employment center, Providence, which has a much larger economy compared to Bristol County, is likely a factor influencing the high number of out-of-county commuters from Barrington.

## Issues and Opportunities

### Land Available for New Commercial Development

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

- Approximately 4 acres of wooded land zoned Limited Manufacturing, located to the south of Bay Spring Avenue and abutting Allin's Cove. The development potential is limited by environmental constraints including the proximity to the water and possibly other issues.
- A 5.1-acre vacant parcel (a portion of which includes a pond) to the north of Bay

Spring Avenue, east of the Bike Path, zoned Business. The amount of developable land is unknown; however, the presence of the pond and other factors impact the amount of upland available for development.

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

One of the challenges with redevelopment of existing properties in the Maple Avenue and Bay Spring Avenue areas is the proximity of commercially zoned sites to adjacent residential properties within and adjacent to the commercial zones. It is not just the impact of commercial development on residences on Maple Avenue and adjacent areas, but also the fragmentation of business properties along Maple Avenue which perpetuates the use of the automobile. Efforts to enhance the pedestrian environment of Maple Avenue will be ineffective without greater continuity of the retail district, along with clearly identified and convenient public parking enabling people to park and walk.

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

### **Defining the “Village Center”**

In recent years, the addition of sidewalks, streetlights, curbing, bus shelters and other improvements on County Road have helped improve pedestrian circulation. The reconfiguration of the Barrington Shopping Center also

was a major milestone in providing a visually appealing and walkable commercial center. In-fill projects such as the new TD Bank on an old auto dealership lot and the Coastal Commons mixed-use buildings at Anoka and Wood Avenues—all buildings built close to the sidewalk edge — have also improved the visual appeal and pedestrian-friendliness of the area.

The Zoning Ordinance and Village Guidelines (drafted in the mid-1990s to support the objectives of the Zoning Ordinance’s design review standards) have helped to promote more pedestrian-friendly projects. The Zoning Ordinance, however, is most effective as a tool to discourage development the Town does not want—such as buildings with large parking lots in front.

Standards could be written to more explicitly encourage quality design in keeping with the Town’s vision for a “town center.” For example, illustrated design guidelines is a common tool used to clearly state the Town’s objectives for building and site design, such as building scale and orientation to the street, signage and awnings, site circulation, landscaping and public amenities (benches, street lights, bike racks). Other strategies are available, including form-based zoning that stresses design over use.

### **Infrastructure**

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

- Lack of on-street parking for customers.
- No off-street public parking lots.
- Poor sidewalk connectivity.
- Use of public sidewalk areas (on Maple Avenue specifically) for parking vehicles and other pedestrian obstructions.
- Lack of directional signage.
- No crosswalks outside of County Road.

**Figure 1: Limited Manufacturing Property on Allin's Cove**

The Town's last remaining Limited Manufacturing-zoned parcel abuts Allin's Cove

The 2010 Plan emphasized the need to focus on first improving the retail environment on commercially zoned areas on Maple and Waseca Avenues closest to County Road. The streetscape enhancements would include new and rebuilt sidewalks and curbing, crosswalks, street trees, lighting, street furniture and improved drainage.

In 2013, the Town hired a consultant to develop streetscape and wayfinding signage concepts in a "Village Center Connectivity Study." The project, initiated by the Planning Board as part of the Comprehensive Plan implementation, also explored options to provide a vehicular connection between Wood Avenue and the Shopping Center. The cost estimate for completing the entire plan totaled more than \$1.5 million. (These concepts are discussed in greater detail in the Circulation element.)

### Bay Spring Avenue

Bay Spring Avenue is a densely developed mixed-use area in West Barrington. The street, from Washington Road to Narragansett Avenue, has been the focal point of some of the

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

The two largest vacant parcels on Bay Spring Avenue, both have significant development constraints, including coastal zone setbacks. The two sites are:

- A 5.5-acre vacant parcel to the south of Bay Spring Avenue, of which a portion is zoned Residence 10 and the remainder Limited Manufacturing. This site abuts Allin's Cove, which represents a constraint limiting the potential development intensity that could be permitted. **Figure 1** shows a portion of the property on Allin's Cove.
- A 5-acre vacant, former mill site on O'Ban-

non's Pond, to the north of Bay Spring Avenue, zoned Business. A portion of the site includes the pond. A rambling wooden mill building that once occupied the site was destroyed by fire in the early 1990s.

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

### **Industrial Zoning—Status**

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

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

### **Evolving Workplace**

Changes in the way Americans work and conduct business since the 1990s have been significant. Professional & Technical Services and General Services are the two leading private

employment sectors (followed by Construction, Wholesale Trade and Health Care) and make up 30% of all private sector employment.

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

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

### **Tourism**

As a value-added marketing opportunity, tourism is considered increasingly important to community economic health and diversification. Tourism is recognized as a leading industry in Rhode Island and holds potential for Barrington. Development of tourism within the town will provide additional support for local business.

B&Bs can play a major role in encouraging and promoting tourism. In smaller communities the

B&B approach is an important part of the tourism strategy.

B&Bs are small and flexible enough to gear their facilities to specific visitor interests (outdoor recreational activities, antiques, farming, etc.) In addition Barrington’s unique location between Providence and Newport make it an ideal location for visitors.

Currently Barrington is one of the only towns in the state to receive no room tax revenue. The addition of B&Bs will allow the Town to benefit from increased revenue. Tourists generally also spend money on food and beverage. While this revenue source has grown in recent years, further improvement of the business district along with the inclusion of B&Bs should result in additional meal tax revenue for the Town of Barrington.

Town regulations should try to address neighborhood concerns and at the same time provide regulations that do not unduly hamper or discourage the formation of potentially important local businesses.

Some localities have B&B classifications. The most common are: the B&B home (the smallest establishments of two or fewer guest bedrooms), the B&B inn, and the B&B hotel. **Figure 2** is an example of inclusion of a classification of a B&B in a use table.

B & B Home (limited to 1-2 guests)

Zoning for a home is usually not a problem because owner/operators have a minimal investment, generate a small income, and attract

little community attention. Lodging in a B&B home is a personal matter between the guest and the host. B & B zoning could help to preserve some of the historic properties in Barrington, for example the two oldest town properties: (currently for sale and in danger of being torn down) Peck House on Wampanoag Trail and Martin House, Martin Avenue).

B & B Inn

The B&B inn, or mid-sized operation, may be situated in a private home maintained by an on-premise owner; yet they are, to a degree, small home-based businesses. The owners intend to recoup some investment costs and generate income and profits. They may see a B&B as a way to maintain and possibly restore an older historic structure. State codes should prevail here.

B& B Hotel

The B&B hotel is generally not a problem because its commercial nature requires that it be located only in areas zoned for more traffic than is characteristic of a residential neighborhood. Also, B&B hotels usually are required to meet all regulations for a food and lodging operation. Zoning for bed and breakfast uses may entail simply adding them to a zoning district, or it could include quite a list of regulations. The rising popularity of B&Bs is a real boon to small towns.

**Agriculture**

Town leases at Nockum Hill and Vitullo Farm have helped maintain a farming presence in Barrington. The farms preserve community

**Figure 2: Sample Zoning Town of Orleans**

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

**Figure 3: Four-Town Farm—George Street**

Four-Town Farm's operations are based in Seekonk, but its fields extend into Barrington. Above: The Four-Town Farm store on George Street in Seekonk.

character in rural parts of Barrington, helping limit the spread of development to the outskirts of town, their viability brings additional benefits supported by the burgeoning “local foods” movement. Specifically, the farm products produced and sold locally provides an alternative to purchasing food that often is shipped long distances. In short, local farms promote a more sustainable community.

In recent decades, agriculture has comprised a small, and shrinking, share of the labor force in Barrington. According to the Census Bureau, employment in the agriculture sector in the period of 1982 to 2009 has fluctuated in the range of 25 to 33; overall, the share of the total labor force has declined from about 1.4 percent in the 1980s to just 0.3 percent in 2009. The data do not specify where those employed in the agricultural sector work, but in Barrington, there is only one area with active farms remaining: the George Street area.

Farms on George Street include Dane Farm—a horse farm—and farm fields cultivated by Four-Town Farm based next door in Seekonk (see **Figure 3**). The Town has partnered with

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

Extending the agricultural leases at these locations is a matter of Town policy. There is greater uncertainty as to the long-term viability of farming on private property, in particular in the northeast corner of Barrington near 4-Town Farm, an area that lacks city water and sewer. However, pressure to develop housing in this area, utilizing well water and septic tanks, will grow as the remaining “in-town” land fills in with development.

To preserve the rural agricultural character of the area, the Town in 2012 changed the Residence 40 zoning on George Street—a zone for single-family houses with 40,000-square-foot lot minimums—to R40-Conservation Development. The R40-CD zone allows for smaller lot sizes in exchange for permanent protection of critical open space areas—including agricultural landscape features, land in farm production, environmentally sensitive areas and other factors.

The R40-CD zone has some limitations in reducing development pressure, as it does not reduce overall density in the area, allowing for the same net density as the R40 conventional zoning. In addition, the zone does not preclude a developer from submitting a comprehensive permit application seeking density increases and housing types, such as townhouses and multi-family developments, that are not in keeping with rural character.

Increased residential development is a threat to the continued viability of farming in Barrington. Farm operations create dust and noise that could impact nearby residences—a concern that would only mount should more George Street parcels be converted to housing, especially relatively dense housing. The spread of development also would likely drive up land values, putting pressure on owners of large lots in the area to subdivide or sell to developers.

The Town has taken steps to create opportunities for agriculture, though on a limited scale. In 2014, the began the process of establishing community gardens on the former “Vitullo Farm” property on Wampanoag Trail. The Town was examining the potential to designate two areas as leased farmland, for use by an organic farm or an orchard. The Town has also permitted farmer’s markets in recent years through the special use permit process. The market at the Congregational Church on County Road at Massasoit Avenue, established with the past five years, attracts a variety of vendors. The new kitchen incubator in Warren, Hope & Main, could increase the demand for farmer’s markets in Barrington.

## Goals, Objectives, Policies and Actions

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

**Policy 1.1.1:** Support “walkable retail” development in the commercial/mixed-use zones.

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

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

### Actions

- A. Implement recommendations of the 2014 Connectivity Plan to create a user-friendly commercial district with new directional signage, crosswalks and other enhancements.
- B. Extend wayfinding signage to commercial districts outside the Village Center.
- C. Support efforts of the Barrington Business Association to promote the district through a banner system, maps and other “marketing” activities.
- D. Develop illustrated guidelines for projects in the Business and Neighborhood Business zones to ensure consistent, pedestrian-friendly development and streetscape.
- E. Adopt revisions to Land Development & Subdivision Regulations to add design guidelines to review process.

**Goal 2:** Expand public parking within the Village Center.

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

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

**Policy 2.1.2.** Limit encroachment of on-street parking for businesses into residential zones.

**Actions**

- A. Conduct a parking study for the Village Center that includes recommendations on:
  - Sites and strategies for establishing public parking lots and on-street parking and utilizing shared parking within the commercially zoned portions of Maple Avenue and County Road and adjacent streets
  - Managing on-street and off-street spaces.
  - Establishing shared parking options to meet off-street parking requirements and to eliminate curb cuts and improve safety on Maple and adjacent streets in the Business and Neighborhood Business zones.
  - Establishing a funding mechanism to finance public parking lot site acquisition, development and operations.
- B. Evaluate potential revisions to the Town's shared parking program necessary to increase utilization of the option.

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

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

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

**Actions**

- A. Allow limited non-residential development as part of a "Mixed Use Village" recommended for the Zion Bible Institute property, per Developer Guidance (Appendix III).
- B. Establish zoning and design standards, such as design guidelines or form-based zoning, for promoting a mix of uses in the mixed-use village zone recommended for

the former Zion Bible Institute site, of a scale and location that avoids impacting adjacent neighborhoods.

- C. Establish standards requiring non-residential development in Belton Court to respect the historic qualities of the building and grounds.
- D. Examine development standards for B and NB districts in terms of limiting impacts (such as noise, lighting) of development on adjacent residential zones.
- E. Evaluate adding bed and breakfast inns as a permitted or special use in residential zones, with standards to include location, parking and related accessory uses.

**Goal 4:** Promote desired commercial activities in mixed-use areas.

**Policy 4.1.1:** Revise zoning to achieve economic development objectives in strategic areas, including the Neighborhood Business zone near County Road and on Bay Spring Avenue. Community input will be needed to determine the type of development desired for these areas, if different than existing zoning.

**Actions**

- A. Evaluate zoning strategies to promote a more cohesive retail environment in the Village Center. This could include creation of a new zoning district, as a modification of the NB or B zone.
- B. Complete a parcel/zoning study of the Bay Spring area to identify options to promote the type of economic development desired by the community in the area. Study should address the following:
  - An evaluation of table of uses pertaining to the Light Manufacturing zone, taking into consideration environmental constraints and neighborhood impacts.
  - The feasibility of encouraging "live-work" units, where the business operator lives

above first-floor office or retail space, in the Bay Spring Avenue area from Narragansett Avenue to Washington Road.

- C. Revise zoning regulations to encourage economic development by, for example, reducing parking requirements and limiting new single-family residential housing in the Neighborhood Business zones.

**Goal 5.** Strengthen the Town's commercial base with a focus on promoting local businesses and economic sustainability.

**Policy 5.1.1.** Work toward productive working relationship between the Town and the local business community.

**Actions**

- A. Appoint a task force consisting of residents and local business owners to:
  - Investigate and evaluate strategies for developing a sustainable, locally owned and run economy;
  - Provide a supportive community and networking opportunities for the growing number of business people who work either full-time or part-time from their homes.
- B. Explore policies that ensure a healthy mix of uses needed for a vibrant town center.
- C. Conduct study of options, such as zoning ordinance amendments, to permit uses that encourage the provision of services and amenities that will support creative and knowledge based businesses and consulting activity, including the expansion of live-work opportunities.
- D. Conduct market study evaluating retail and office environment in the Neighborhood Business and Business zones, including an evaluation of existing commercial space.

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

**Objective 6.1:** Expand amount of land used for farming within Barrington.

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

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

**Policy 6.1.3:** Support the protection of prime agricultural lands through acquisition of land or development rights.

**Actions**

- A. Explore opportunities to acquire open space properties with agricultural values, with an emphasis on properties under greatest threat from development pressure.
- B. Establish a program for purchasing or transferring the development rights of prime agricultural lands.
- C. Evaluate whether revisions are needed to restrictions in the Zoning Ordinance related to agricultural uses, to include uses such as farms, farm stands and farmer's markets.
- D. Revise Zoning Map to establish agricultural zoning districts where appropriate, in areas with historic agricultural use, to include performance standards.
- E. Develop the community garden at the former Vitullo Farm site.
- F. Review and revise local purchasing requirements to require the purchase of local foods when possible.
- G. Evaluate Town-owned open space formerly used for farming for opportunities to lease portions to organic farming operations on a limited scale.