

Note: Below is a largely “clean” version of the Economic Development Element, including comments discussed at the October meeting. There are still a handful of “gray boxes” with notes. Implementation items highlighted in yellow are new as of the October meeting.

2.b Elements: Economic Development

i. Introduction:

South Kingstown is recognized as a predominantly residential community with a limited commercial and industrial base. Although the number of jobs in town nearly equals the number of residents in the work force, most residents commute to jobs outside South Kingstown and significant numbers of employees commute in to town daily. Major employers include the University of Rhode Island (URI), Schneider Electric (formerly American Power Conversion), South County Hospital, and the Town of South Kingstown. Historically, the residential construction sector was a strong component of the local economy supporting a broad range of associated businesses. After the 2008 Great Recession and housing crisis, this sector of the economy has been, and will undoubtedly continue to be, slow for some time. Tourism opportunities continue to play a critical role in the local economy drawing people who want to enjoy recreation opportunities at local fresh and saltwater beaches, harbors, freshwater ponds, salt ponds, and bike paths.



Businesses within the Village of Peace Dale

Like many traditional New England communities, South Kingstown’s local economy is shaped by the community character and quality of life that define the Town. Businesses emerge and thrive in the villages of South Kingstown to provide essential services to the community and to take advantage of the amenities that draw tourists and pedestrian activity to the area. Large mill structures provide unique opportunities to bolster the local tax base and require a sophisticated planning and regulatory framework to be successful. South Kingstown will continue to build upon its strengths to maintain its viable local economy despite statewide economic challenges. Direct engagement of its major employers and support of mill redevelopment represent examples of strategies that directly address individual economic objectives. Equally important, however, are the broader strategies that indirectly support the economy, acknowledging that successful economic development is tied to sound environmental, housing and transportation policies.

ii. Economic Development Vision

The Town of South Kingstown will continue to value and support its business community as a source of jobs and as a means to provide the goods and services required by residents and tourists alike. The Town will continue to support shops and offices located in walkable village settings. These small businesses, many of which are locally owned, help reinforce the “small town” character of South

Kingstown. The charm of the seaside villages of the community will be preserved while attracting development to create appropriately scaled tourism opportunities. The Town will support current businesses and properly sized expansion of commercial and light industrial development, while protecting the quality of the Town's finite natural and cultural resources. This may relieve the current tax burden on residential land use while providing additional tax revenue for municipal services. Future commercial and industrial development must not overwhelm the unique character of the community. Future development should take advantage of multi-modal transportation opportunities at Kingston Station while providing diverse job opportunities for local residents. Opportunities for mill reuse and infill of commercial development through expansion of existing shops and stores (investment in place), construction of new, or renovation of existing out-of-date or inadequate structures, can foster sustainability of the central core while protecting outlying "greenfields" from development pressure. Economic development initiatives intended to improve the economic quality of life for town residents must also protect our natural and cultural resources.

iii. Guiding Principles

The Town of South Kingstown already has many internal policies that inform its work related to economic development. The Town is committed to continue implementing its goals related to economic development with the following guiding principles:

Village Character

- The Town shall work with local "grassroots" community based organizations to promote economic development opportunities that support a sustainable village planning model.
- The Town shall encourage commercial development design that supports active modes of transportation such as walking, biking, and public transit.
- The Town shall review and implement, as appropriate, the recommendations of the study entitled: "Revisions to the South Kingstown Zoning Ordinance to Promote New Urbanism and Traditional Downtown Development and Redevelopment".
- The Town shall support the installation of public art, where appropriate, to enhance the character of streetscapes, neighborhoods and mixed use areas.
- The Town supports the protection of historic resources, landmarks, and scenic landscapes as an important component of the tourist economy.

Partnerships and Collaborations

- The Town shall work with local organizations to promote sustainable economic development opportunities in its villages.
- The Town shall coordinate communications with Commerce RI to identify and develop programs and initiatives that support the local business community at a variety of scales.
- The Town shall actively engage and communicate with state agencies to stay current with regulations and programs that may affect development potential in the community.
- The Town shall maintain an open dialogue with investors, property owners, and Peace Dale residents and business owners to support a viable redevelopment approach for both the Palisades and Peace Dale Mill complexes.
- The Town shall continue to promote a regional approach when addressing state agencies whose policies affect the scenic, cultural, natural, and recreational resources of South County.

- The Town shall encourage continued cooperation among South County communities and the South County Tourism Council to support, package and expand year-round tourism opportunities in the community.
- The Town shall maintain its inventory of agricultural operations and work with farmers to preserve land in production, where possible, through such initiatives as open space and development rights acquisition in cooperation with the Partnership for Preservation, the State's Farm, Forest and Open Space Program (FFOS), and similar efforts.

Public Infrastructure & Services

- The Town will, through its annual Capital Improvement Program, consider infrastructure upgrades and enhancements that support the economic development needs of the local business community.
- The Town shall continue to actively engage with all state and regional transportation agencies to understand the impacts of future transit development in order to encourage a multi-modal approach to transportation throughout Town as appropriate.
- The Town shall continue to actively engage with South County Hospital to ensure that local policies, infrastructure improvements and regulations do not hinder initiatives that are consistent with local and regional needs.
- The Town shall continue to actively support its safety services including the local fire districts and the municipal public safety function (Police Department and EMS).
- The Town shall continue to compare the adequacy and ability of local and state infrastructure (roads, drainage systems, water, sewer, etc.) to support future economic development with build out analyses developed by the Town. Comparisons will include an assessment of development potential against the capacity of our public water supply and stormwater system.
- The Town shall continue to work with the State, adjacent municipalities, and various conservation groups to promote a comprehensive system of bikeways, walkways, linear parks, and related pedestrian and biking infrastructure and amenities.

Local Regulations

- The Town will actively and continually review the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, and other local development ordinances, regulations, and supporting documents to identify any outdated or confusing language that requires revision.

iv. Description of Existing Conditions

6.1 Introduction

Like many New England communities, South Kingstown's economic heritage is rooted in agriculture. As noted in the Cultural Resources Element, agriculture was traditionally the dominant economic activity and farmsteads are still visible across the landscape of the town. Farming gave way to manufacturing during the nineteenth century. Grist mills and saw mills transformed villages such as Wakefield, Peace Dale and Rocky Brook into thriving communities. Later in the 1800's, textile mills and fulling mills were also established. Following this, the role of the shore gained prominence in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as it developed to serve a growing influx of summer visitors and residents. The Town became the home of a new railroad station and a new State university, two economic components still of notable significance.

From 1980-2000, by virtually every economic performance measurement, it is clear that South Kingstown shared in the general economic expansion and prosperity of the time. The residential and commercial development industries were thriving during this timeframe and the town was in a period of economic growth. This trend has slowed in recent history in South Kingstown, as with many communities across the U.S., due to the national economic decline in the early 21st century. Today, South Kingstown remains poised to take advantage of its economic opportunities such as its growing tourist economy, sustained agriculture and aquaculture activities, available vacant commercial and industrial space, and strong local workforce.

All of these assets and more create a strong “brand” for South Kingstown that needs to be better communicated and celebrated.

6.2 Employment

In 2016, the annual, average labor force in the Town of South Kingstown was 16,503 with employment at 15,701, yielding an average unemployment rate of 4.9%. Statewide, the unemployment rate was 5.3%.

Between 2012 and 2016, employment in South Kingstown increased by 354 (2.6%) jobs. Private sector employers reported a gain of 318 (3.3%) jobs, and the public sector employment also rose slightly by 36 (0.9%) jobs (see Table 15). Statewide, job growth was on a similar trajectory. Overall, jobs increased by 22,144, or 4.9%.

In short, Rhode Island in general and South Kingstown in particular have recently reached a far healthier and robust economy than was the case in the years immediately following the Great Recession.

Table 15. South Kingstown Employment by Sector

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Change 2012- 2016
Total Private & Government	13,536	13,736	13,893	13,757	13,890	354
Total Private Only	9,698	9,934	10,094	9,985	10,016	318
Government	3,838	3,802	3,798	3,773	3,874	36
Accommodation & Food Services	1,394	1,431	1,453	1,447	1,543	149
Administrative Support & Waste Mngmnt.	278	311	325	311	313	35
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	68	73	77	83	97	29
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	217	224	209	225	235	18
Construction	305	325	327	348	376	71
Educational Services	296	304	306	314	308	12
Finance & Insurance	289	277	275	277	293	4
Health Care & Social Assistance	2,609	2,760	2,839	2,806	2,814	205
Information	171	148	155	157	132	-39
Management of Companies & Enterprises	16	*	21	23	32	16
Manufacturing	583	569	579	574	562	-21

Mining	*	*	*	*	*	-
Other services, except Public Administration	722	708	737	705	675	-47
Professional & Technical Services	327	342	357	390	388	61
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	193	201	208	207	209	16
Retail Trade	1,287	1,276	1,273	1,279	1,264	-23
Transportation & Warehousing	136	170	210	154	140	4
Unclassified Establishments	-	-	-	-	*	-

* Some data are not shown due to the possibility of identifying data of a specific employer.

Source: Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training Quarterly Census of U.I.-Covered Employment and Wages, City and Town Report – 2011-2016) <http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/es202/town.htm>

Trends in employment by sector provide clues as to the future investments the Town may consider in supporting the local economy. Which sectors are on the rise, and what does that mean for local residents? Which sectors are declining and need extra support? Which are declining and unlikely to come back?

Health Care & Social Assistance

In raw numbers, jobs in this sector continue to rise, as has been the case throughout the state and around the country, particularly in places with an increasing elderly population. This sector is likely to support an increasing number of local jobs for years to come.

Accommodation & Food Services and Retail

In raw numbers, jobs in this sector continue to rise and are second only to jobs in Health Care & Social Assistance. Generally speaking, these jobs offer lower wages than other sectors. As housing prices continue to rise, it will be more and more difficult for people who work in these jobs to live in South Kingstown. This could lead to more traffic as more people commute from outside of South Kingstown for these jobs. The same can be said about the Retail sector, which is the third largest sector in town. However, retail jobs have been stagnant over the past few years, and are unlikely to grow in the near future, given declining national trends in “bricks and mortar” retail.

Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting

While small in aggregate numbers, jobs in this sector rose almost 43% in five years. In fact, jobs in this sector represented over 9% of all private sector job growth during this period. This is particularly impressive given that agriculture-related jobs made up less than 1% of all private sector jobs in 2016. This is an indication that the demand for agriculture and aquaculture products has been strong, and that the Town’s policies have been allowing this sector to expand. The Town should continue to make sure that local zoning and regulations encourage further growth in this sector, and should look for ways to connect this sector with the growing food services sector.

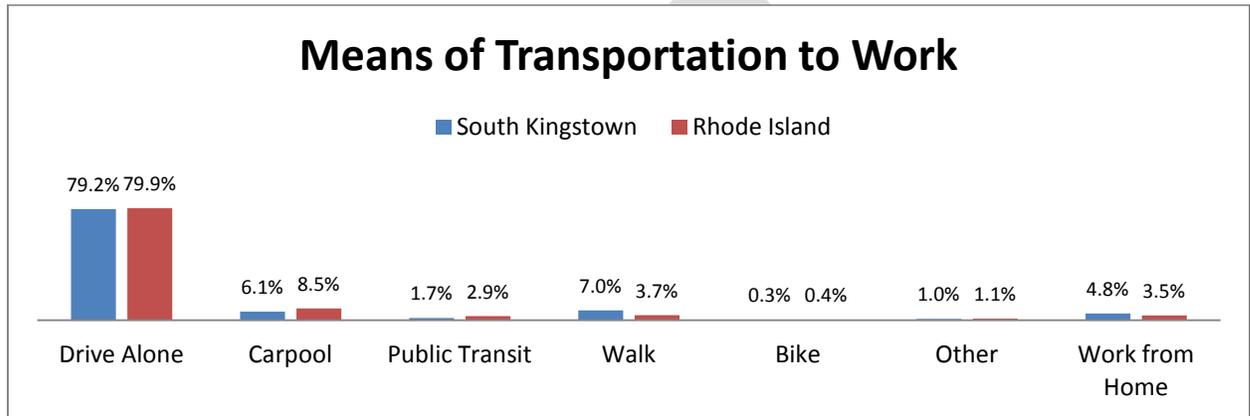
Construction

Construction jobs are up over 23% since 2012, another good sign that the economy is getting stronger and that local firms are building things again.

Manufacturing

In communities throughout Rhode Island, the number of manufacturing jobs has been plummeting for many years. While South Kingstown's manufacturing jobs decreased by 3.6% during this period, manufacturing is holding steadier here than elsewhere and still accounts for 5.6% of all private sector jobs. This may indicate that manufacturing has a future in South Kingstown, and the Town should make sure that sufficient land remains available to support the expansion of manufacturing and related production industries. For example, if a local start-up brewery wanted to expand, would it have places to go? Or do such businesses eventually have to move out of town?

6.3 Travel to Work



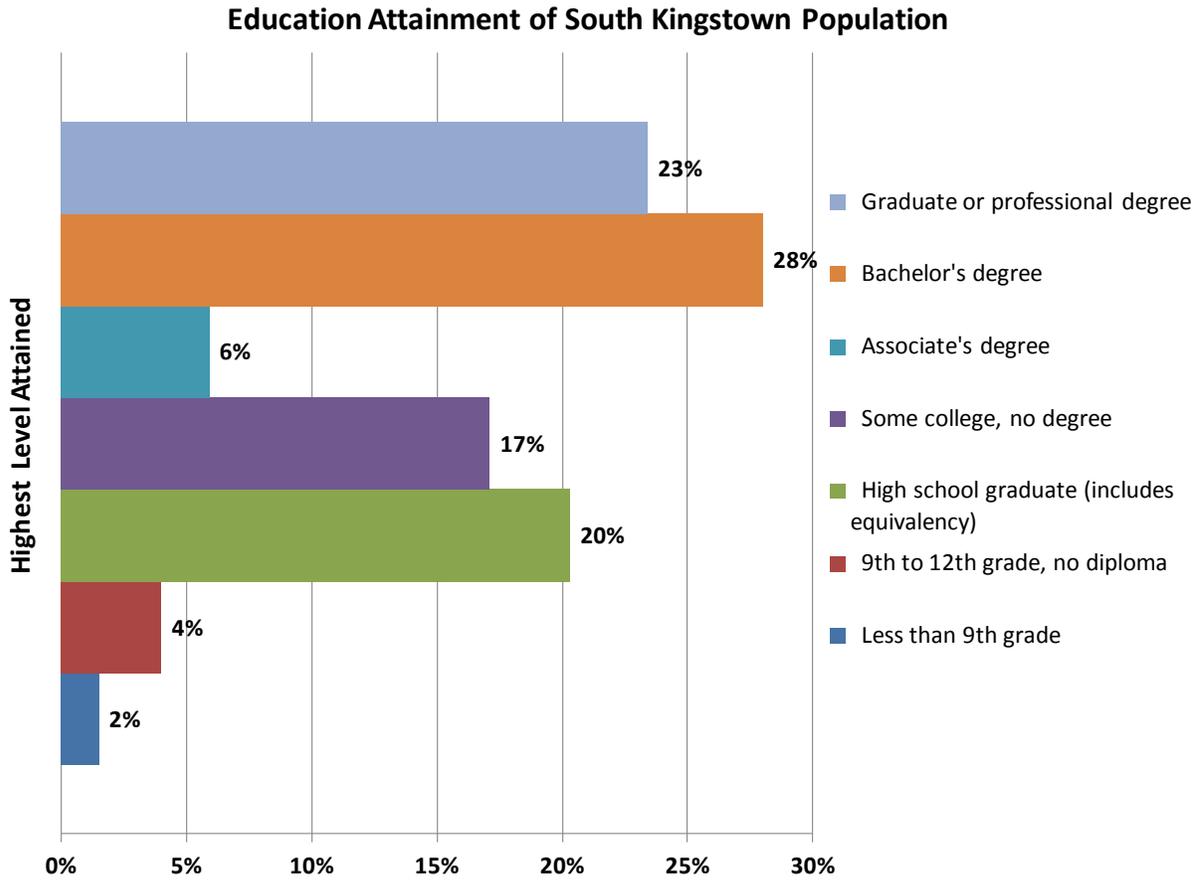
Source: American Community Survey 2015 estimates

By and large, the commuting types for South Kingstown residents are very similar to those of the state overall. Perhaps the most notable difference is that 7% of residents walk to work – nearly twice the percentage statewide. This suggests that South Kingstown has done a good job at making sure jobs and homes are located in proximity. It is therefore surprising to see that the share of bicycle commuters is so low, and may suggest that South Kingstown has an opportunity to decrease the overall percentage of commuters driving alone by investing in better bicycle infrastructure. Among those who commuted to work, it took them on average 24.4 minutes, a slight increase of 1.5 minutes from 2009.

6.4 Education

The ACS 2015 estimates show that South Kingstown adults are highly educated. 94% of people 25 years and over in South Kingstown had at least graduated from high school and 51% had a bachelor's degree or higher, see Figure 4. Approximately 6% had not graduated from high school. In comparison, just 31.9% of Rhode Island adults had a bachelor's degree or higher. This gives South Kingstown an advantage in attracting businesses that need access to a highly educated workforce.

Figure 4. Education Achievement in South Kingstown Population



Source: American Community Survey 2015 5-Year Estimates (2011-2015)

v. Needs & Opportunities

The following section summarizes the needs and opportunities related to Economic Development that emerged from discussions with and feedback from the public, as well as data and research. These comments and ideas have been clustered into five common themes. Each theme discusses, as relevant, opportunities to support local businesses, the services and infrastructure needed to support local business, related regulatory issues, and relevant local Economic Development plans, programs and incentives.

Building on the Village-Scale Business Model

South Kingstown is a town of villages. Since its inception, South Kingstown's economic activity has largely been centered in its villages, with the exception of agriculture. However, building and construction is generally easier outside the village areas. Infill development within the villages is more complex, and potentially more expensive. The Town has an opportunity to make infill development

more attractive for developers by investing in infrastructure and providing guidance on the scale and quality of design desired.

Town government is not alone in this effort. There are many community-based organizations focused on the economic development and general improvement of the villages. These organizations are critical for filling in needs that the government is unable to provide. There are many sources of funding available for village improvement and revitalization, and sometimes it is more competitive for local non-profits, rather than local government, to pursue these funding opportunities. There are also increased opportunities when the Town and all the members of such organizations communicate regularly and share information on potential resources. The Town can serve as the “hub” of communication and coordination among all of these groups who are striving for the same ends.

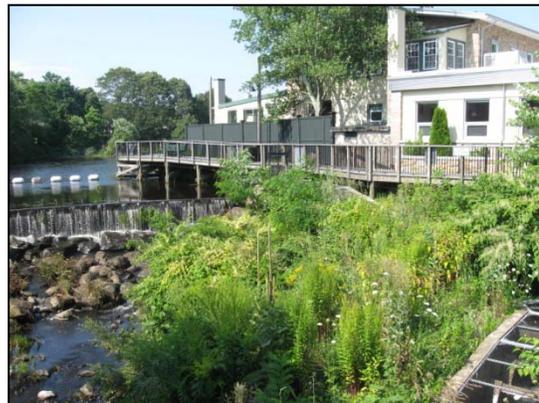
The existing building stock in the villages is a major opportunity for reuse. Reuse and revitalization of mill buildings, commercial buildings, homes, and civic buildings can help provide distinctive locations for businesses, and provide the diversity of homes needed to house our workforce.

South Kingstown has sought over many years to develop a growing economy based on its unique assets and places, rather than on development that could be “Anywhere, USA.” The town needs to more actively express to residents and the development community its values for commercial and industrial development, and the existing limitations in zoning that help prevent sprawling development (e.g., size limits on commercial construction that prevent big box retail uses). In an environment, nationally and regionally, where “bricks and mortar” retail is in decline, South Kingstown needs to continue to build on what makes it special, including the small-scale commercial spaces in its villages that provide opportunities for “mom and pop” businesses.

Maintaining South Kingstown as a Tourist Destination

South Kingstown is a beautiful place, and its beauty will continue to attract visitors to its beaches, rivers, salt and freshwater ponds, and other natural resources, as well as its historic villages, the University of Rhode Island, and cultural resources. South Kingstown needs to continue protecting all of these resources in order to maintain a healthy tourism sector.

South Kingstown has an opportunity to expand tourism in a sustainable way by making sure that there is land zoned near tourist attractions for supporting, complementary businesses and increasing tourist revenue. One major example of this is the food economy. Many tourists want to taste the best of what the area has to offer, which means ready access to farm stands, farmers’ markets, restaurants that source locally, and local producers of prepared foods and beverages. Linking these local businesses with visitors has arguably the primary benefit of keeping them economically viable so that they are available to residents as well. Another major draw for tourists is the



*View of the Saugatucket River Walkway,
Saugatucket River Falls (and fish ladder)*

arts community. Artists and artisans have a strong presence in South Kingstown, but more can be done to help coordinate and market their work to visitors.

Supporting Housing Diversity to Develop a Local Workforce

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the increasing cost of housing in South Kingstown, including rental and ownership opportunities, makes it difficult for many people who work in town to live here. This is particularly problematic when you consider that 28% of the jobs in South Kingstown are in Accommodations & Food Service and Retail, with relatively low wages. Not to mention that an additional 28% of the jobs are in Health Care & Social Assistance, a sector that generally includes more lower-paid nursing aides, senior care givers, and social workers than higher-paid doctors and other medical professionals. A diverse housing stock plays an important role in maintaining a strong, vibrant and sustainable local economy. Offering a diverse array of housing options near major employment hubs in town can help ensure that the people who work here and serve our residents can be residents themselves.

Small scale “cottage” housing and multi-family housing, whether market rate or Low-Moderate Income (LMI), are needed to attract and support our workforce. All of South Kingstown’s policies and actions in the Housing chapter are intimately linked with the health of the Town’s economy.

Protecting Community Character to Attract New Business

Again, South Kingstown is not “Anywhere, USA” and it does not want to look like “Anywhere, USA,” or attract businesses that don’t care about what makes South Kingstown special. In order to maintain and enhance its special character, the Town needs to communicate with developers that design and appearance matter. Construction needs to respect scenic roadways and landscapes, including our working farmland. The Town needs to explore more sophisticated standards regarding the aesthetic features of development within commercial zoning districts such as architecture, scale and massing of structures, signage, and appropriate landscaping.

Providing a Clear Regulatory Path for Business Investment

More than anything, business owners and developers are looking for clarity and consistency in local regulations and permitting processes. It is a good thing for South Kingstown to have high standards and expectations for business and development, but these should be clearly expressed, evenly enforced, and executed in a predictable timeframe. The Town has an opportunity to establish a good working relationship with developers and business owners by continuing to revise and develop regulations that are clear and easy to interpret by local boards and applicants.

The Town already has a number of tools to assist local business, including a tax incentive program/ordinance, and needs to do a better job of advertising these tools. South Kingstown has an opportunity to make its expectations and standards even clearer by developing things such as: a Commercial Development Design Manual to illustrate and clarify preferred design standards for

commercial development; specific standards for transportation design to address items like traffic calming; and standards for reviewing and analyzing existing regulations for clarity.

vi. Economic Development Action Plan

To follow a path of balanced economic growth having the following attributes: a) protection of sensitive environmental areas; b) provision of economic opportunities; c), protection of the public health, safety and welfare; d) high quality of design in commercial development; and e) stabilization of an affordable municipal tax rate.

Goal 1: To foster a local economy that provides opportunities for a diverse collection of business and industry.

Policy 1.1 The Town shall focus supportive efforts toward the local business community to reinforce existing investment and our traditional economy, employment opportunities and the provision of goods and services to our residents and visitors to the community.

Policy 1.2 - The Town shall continue to pursue partnerships and collaborations that will provide technical expertise and resources to strengthen and diversify the Town's economy.

Policy 1.3 - The Town shall take full advantage of the diverse contributions of URI to the local and regional economy, including research and development activities which may be related to engineering/robotics, bio-technology, plant and soil science, environmental resources, oceanography, coastal management and technology.

Implementation

- Town Boards, Committees and staff will work together to develop a strategic economic development work plan that focuses on light industry, research/development and commercial offices.
- The Town shall identify specific initiatives for which URI can serve as a resource and engage the University in an effort to implement these initiatives.
- The Town will work to improve communication with and provide supportive services to the local business community and institutions such as the South Kingstown Chamber of Commerce, URI, South County Hospital, and others.

Note: Ask the EDC the following . . . To what end? What kind of information are you trying to get across? What services are you providing?

- Identify specific staff at Commerce RI with whom to schedule monthly check-in meetings to discuss new economic development needs and opportunities.

- The Town shall actively engage local businesses and employers to better understand the housing needs of their employees, in order to gain evidence of the types and price points of housing most needed to support the local work force.
- The Town shall work with URI to support research expansion and potential spin off of new businesses, utilizing the State of Rhode Island’s incentives for research and development.
- The Town will work with URI to promote local mill complexes as potential business incubators for small business startups that evolve out of the University.
- The Town will explore the potential for the URI Cooperative Extension Service to provide programs, services, and resources that will enhance the skill and knowledge levels of the local workforce.
- The Town shall work with URI to determine and assess gaps in the local food processing and distribution network.
- The Town shall work with local and regional partners to evaluate opportunities to expand direct-to-consumer sales opportunities for local agriculture and aquaculture operations.
- The Town shall evaluate and implement the findings presented in the State’s comprehensive Food Strategy, Relish Rhody, including but not limited to the identification, prioritization and reduction in regulatory challenges for food enterprises.

Goal 2: To identify constraints to economic development that must be considered by local boards and commissions, the local business community and/or future investors.

Policy 2.1 – The Town shall work with URI to continue and expand transportation opportunities for students and staff to access local commercial and service areas.

Policy 2.2 – The Town shall promote a well-connected pedestrian network to increase access to businesses in village areas, provide an equitable transportation system for all shoppers and workers, and support active modes of transportation.

Policy 2.3 – The Town supports balancing economic development with the need to protect natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources throughout the community.

Implementation

- The Town will research and pursue funding to assess drainage problems that regularly occur during heavy rain events.
- The Town shall explore the redevelopment of a summer “Trolley Program” by assessing the potential economic, transportation, and social benefits to be gained, and evaluating the amount of municipal support necessary, as informed by the experiences of Narragansett and Westerly.

- The Town shall inventory those local natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources that may limit future development opportunities and make this information readily available to developers and property owners.
- The Town shall establish and support a network of volunteers whose work implements the plans and enhances the values the Town seeks to protect.

Goal 3: To actively support economic development within our existing villages that contributes to a high quality of life.

Policy 3.1 - The Town encourages the revitalization of its Central Core Villages of Wakefield and Peace Dale, the adjacent commercial areas, such as the Route 108 corridor, Dale Carlia Corner, and the Old Tower Hill Road corridor, as well as the Villages of West Kingston and Matunuck.

Policy 3.2 – The Town recognizes the redevelopment potential of the historic mill complexes in the community and policy efforts will focus on providing a regulatory environment that fosters appropriate reuse and economic opportunities.

Implementation

- The Town shall conduct a vacant or underutilized parcel assessment to better understand infill and redevelopment opportunities in its Central Core Villages and adjacent commercial areas.
- The Town shall explore ordinance and regulatory amendments for its Central Core Villages and adjacent commercial areas to encourage innovative commercial design, such as adopting form-based codes, commercial design standards, or developing a commercial development design manual for appropriate areas to support pedestrian-oriented building design, the integration of a mix of uses, and the reuse of underutilized or vacant structures and parcels.
- The Town shall engage the community to define a vision for Old Tower Hill Road and Dale Carlia Corner. This effort will focus on strategies for increasing pedestrian access and improving building and site design aesthetics as well as opportunities for providing incentives for the redevelopment of commercial property and infrastructure improvements within the existing state right-of-way.
- The Town shall evaluate, prioritize, and implement findings of the West Kingston, and Matunuck Village Plans to promote appropriate economic growth within each unique village.
- The Town shall conduct an audit of the Kingstown Road Special Management District to determine if changes are needed to accommodate appropriate business growth and development.

- Explore any necessary modification of the zoning ordinance needed to implement the recommendations of the “Palisades Mill Reuse Feasibility Study.”

Goal 4: To provide the business community with a clear framework for maintaining, building, occupying and expanding operations in town.

Policy 4.1 - Pursue the Town’s economic development goals by establishing and enforcing high quality, transparent local regulations.

Implementation

- The Town shall maintain a current inventory of any commercial and industrial buildings or properties that are underutilized or vacant. This inventory should be available to potential developers or business interests.
- The Town will develop a policy initiative to actively promote the use of its ‘Tax Treaty’ program as a means to attract new business uses and expansion of existing businesses.
- The Town will evaluate and consider amendments to the use code table in the South Kingstown Zoning Ordinance that will modernize existing language and provide increased flexibility and utility of the ordinance from an economic development perspective.
- The Town will review the feasibility of expansion of limited commercial zoning (office and service type uses) in the Old Tower Hill Road corridor (between Old Tower Hill Road and Narragansett Avenue West).
- Develop a system and standards for reviewing and analyzing existing regulations for clarity and ease of use.

Goal 5: To encourage a high quality of design in commercial development.

Policy 5.1 - The Town recognizes that high quality design and community character issues are an essential component of future development proposals in non-residential areas.

Policy 5.2 - The Town encourages the clustering/village concept and scale for commercial development to prevent commercial strip design and support a healthy, walkable environment.

Implementation

- The Town will explore the formation of a commercial development design manual for commercial development in all areas of town. This manual may be used to develop design guidelines or standards for different districts or neighborhoods within the community to ensure a proper fit of commercial/industrial uses in the surrounding community and provide an efficient and effective permitting process.

- The Town shall revise the parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance for commercial and industrial projects to avoid over-paving yet include appropriate parking ratios, to require buffering and landscaping of parking areas and to include provisions for street trees.
- The Town shall ensure that improved and flexible standards for parking, setbacks, use and other essential Zoning Ordinance elements will be adopted to address the unique purpose of each commercial and industrial district.

Note: In what ways are the current standards not working? What is it that needs to be fixed?

- The Town will review regulatory standards that apply to transitional areas between commercial, industrial, and mixed-use zoning districts and adjoining residential neighborhoods and identify design and performance standards that will ensure compatibility between these uses across district lines.
- The Town shall amend the regulations for the Commercial Highway, Commercial Downtown, and Commercial Neighborhood Districts to address standards for building scale, architectural elements, pedestrian access and connectivity, signage, landscaping, and street trees.
- The Town shall amend the zoning ordinance to encourage the clustering/village concept and scale for commercial development to prevent commercial strip design
- The Town will review the zoning ordinance to better nurture and promote business orientation to and access from the William C. O'Neill Bicycle Path.
- The Town shall amend regulations to require the installation of attractive bicycle parking facilities for any commercial development requiring development plan review.

Goal 6: To identify and foster those business models that help to define South Kingstown's unique character and history.

Policy 6.1 - The Town supports the use of land for agricultural purposes including accessory uses and related operations and encourages a local healthy food system by providing opportunities for local farmers to sell their products locally.

Policy 6.2 - The Town supports the continued emergence of an "arts identity" in the community through arts-based industry and commerce.

Policy 6.3 - The Town supports the existing tourist economy both on a local and regional scale by working to preserve and enhance those features of our community that attract tourists.

Implementation

- The Town shall conduct an audit of existing policies and land use ordinances regarding agricultural activities for consistency with the Rhode Island Agricultural Partnership's Five

Year Strategic Plan and recommendations from “South Kingstown: Designing a Healthier Community” to ensure the viability of farming activities and to support a local food system.

- The Town shall inventory all existing healthy food resources throughout the community such as farmers’ markets, community gardens, sites available for small-scale agriculture, community kitchens, food pantries, food-based business incubators, locally owned grocery stores, roadside stands, and compost facilities. This inventory shall be made available to the public to increase awareness of healthy food resources and promote linkages between local growers, processors, distributors, institutions (e.g., URI and South County Hospital) and other food stakeholders.
- The Town shall continue to work with the State, adjacent municipalities, and various conservation groups to promote a comprehensive system of bikeways, walkways, linear parks, and related pedestrian and biking infrastructure and amenities.
- The Town Council, Planning Board, Economic Development Committee, Sustainability Committee, Recreation Commission, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee shall work collaboratively to prioritize and implement recommendations of the Saugatucket River study.
- The Town will assess the feasibility of using Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) as a regulatory tool for protecting agricultural lands.
- The Town shall review local codes to ensure that arts-based commerce, including light industry, and supporting uses are appropriately allowed in the community.
- The Town shall identify funding sources and potential locations for the installation of public art.
- The Town shall explore the possibility of providing financial incentives to artist operations such as "tax free" districts that allow artists to sell their wares without a sales tax.