

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

While it is common to think of Dummerston as primarily a labor pool for Brattleboro, Dummerston has a wider diversity of employment opportunities and greater number of employers than is generally appreciated. The local economy is based primarily on services, small businesses, tourism, agriculture, forestry, and home occupations. The Economy section of the Community Profile provides some income and occupation data.

Home occupations are those activities that can be carried on within a portion of a residence. They continue to serve an important role in Dummerston by allowing for local economic development, encouraging the creation of new businesses, and providing flexible or accessible working conditions for residents. The Town recognizes the right of residents to use their homes for economic activities. However, this must be balanced with the need to protect the character of its residential areas and to protect neighborhoods from nuisance. Home occupations may evolve into commercial enterprises that are no longer compatible with residential areas.

The Town supports agriculture, forestry, and other forms of light commercial and industrial, institutional, or recreational endeavors. The Town should also support small-scale businesses which meets the needs of local residents and the traveling public.

Telecommunications technology provides opportunities to sustain relatively full employment for residents.

Economic Development Vision

Dummerston will have a number of healthy businesses, including home occupations, small-scale retail, trade, and agriculture and forestry-related businesses. Economic growth will occur with the broader notion of community development as the underlying theme. This will focus on rural-based businesses and services that will enhance the community-well-being and the quality of life for residents.

Goals, Policies, and Action Steps

Goal 1 — Support and promote the town's current economic base to retain existing employment opportunities and increase availability of good quality employment opportunities.

Policy 1.1 Encourage home occupations that support existing neighborhood character.

Action Steps

- a. Expand the home occupation provisions in the Zoning Bylaw to set additional thresholds for occupation activities that would potentially cause disruption to the neighborhood character. (Planning Commission)
- b. Address parking, lighting, signage, noise, traffic and daily business activity to avoid impacts on nearby residential properties. (Planning Commission)

Policy 1.2 Encourage appropriate new businesses to locate in Dummerston.

Policy 1.3 Provide assistance and support to Dummerston's existing businesses.

Policy 1.4 Limit commercial development to the scale and character necessary to protect Dummerston's small town atmosphere.

Action Steps

- a. Establish a maximum square footage requirement for commercial establishments. (Planning Commission)
- b. Investigate strategies for regulating appropriately scaled development (Planning Commission)

Policy 1.5 Encourage tourism activity that takes advantage of Dummerston's farmland, natural resources, history and culture.

Action Steps

- a. Encourage adaptive reuse of unique farm buildings for specialized, commercial operations to help preserve them and encourage tourism that is in character with the neighborhood. (Planning Commission)
- b. Conditionally permit and promote accessory farm businesses to capitalize on their tourism potential. (Planning Commission)

Policy 1.6 Encourage development of high-speed internet service to all properties.