DIGHTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN



SRPEDD
Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the residents and officials from the Town of Dighton for your contributions.

Board of Selectmen

Peter Caron | Chairman

Nicole Mello | Clerk

Leonard E. Hull, Jr. | Member

Town Staff

Michael P. Mullen, Jr. | Town Administrator

Development & Industrial Committee

Daniel Higgins | Chairman

Paul Reynolds | Clerk

Laura Smith | Agriculture Representative

Rafael Delfin | Member

Joseph Figueiredo | Planning Board Representative

Jon Geggatt | Taunton Area Chamber of Commerce Representative

Barbara Catabia | Member

Leonard E Hull, Jr. | Board of Selectmen Liaison

SRPEDD Staff

Grant King | Deputy Director

Lizeth Gonzalez | Director of Economic Development

Phillip Hu | Assistant Director of Planning

Chris Welch | Senior Comprehensive Planner

Kevin Ham | Senior Comprehensive Planner



Figure 1. Old Town Hall

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 4

Existing Conditions 6

Local Economy 16

Dighton's Key Sites 22

Key Sites and Development Scenarios 26

Key Corridors 36

Town-wide Recommendations 40

Implementation Table 68

INTRODUCTION

A Balanced Approach to Dighton's Economy.

The town of Dighton is a scenic rural community with a rich history. Located in Bristol County along the Federally designated Wild and Scenic Taunton River, Dighton is a lovely small town. Like many of its rural neighbors, the community finds itself at the center of the push and pull between economic growth and the desire to maintain its quiet, small town character.

Today, while its residents take advantage of economic opportunity in nearby urban centers, such as Providence, Fall River, and Taunton, the Town also recognizes the need for homegrown economic development – growth that complements Dighton's character and culture, occurs in appropriate locations, expands the local commercial tax base, contributes to maintaining and improving municipal services and facilities, and strikes a balance between a growing economy and the needs of a small town.

This Dighton Economic Development Plan includes data, trends, and goals and strategies that can help the town understand how to bring about that balanced vision for its economy. In 2022, the Dighton Board of Selectmen initiated this project through the Baker-Polito Administration's Community Compact Cabinet (CCC) Best Practices Program. The project is also directly supported by the Dighton Development and Industrial Commission (DDIC). The plan is funded – at no cost to the citizens of Dighton – through the CCC and the Commonwealth's District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) program administered by SRPEDD.

The stated purpose of this plan is to explore economic opportunity in Dighton through potential redevelopment of key sites, grants and strategies for infrastructure investments and brownfield remediation, program participation and zoning amendments, and collaborative and neighborly community engagement. As current Board of Selectmen Chair Peter Caron stated at Dighton's 2023 Spring Town Meeting, "Moving forward, I believe there are several key issues that we must address. One of the most pressing issues is the need for better infrastructure...we must invest in these critical assets if we are to continue to attract businesses and families to our town...I believe our town has a bright future, but we must work together to realize its potential. By addressing these issues and engaging in our community, we can build a stronger, more prosperous, and sustainable town for generations to come."[1]

The information and ideas provided in this report provide a menu of options that can help realize that potential and guide Dighton to a bright, balanced economic future.



Figure 2. Bristol County Agricultural High School



Figure 3. Berkeley-Dighton Bridge

EXISTING CONDITIONS

A guide to questions and recommendations.

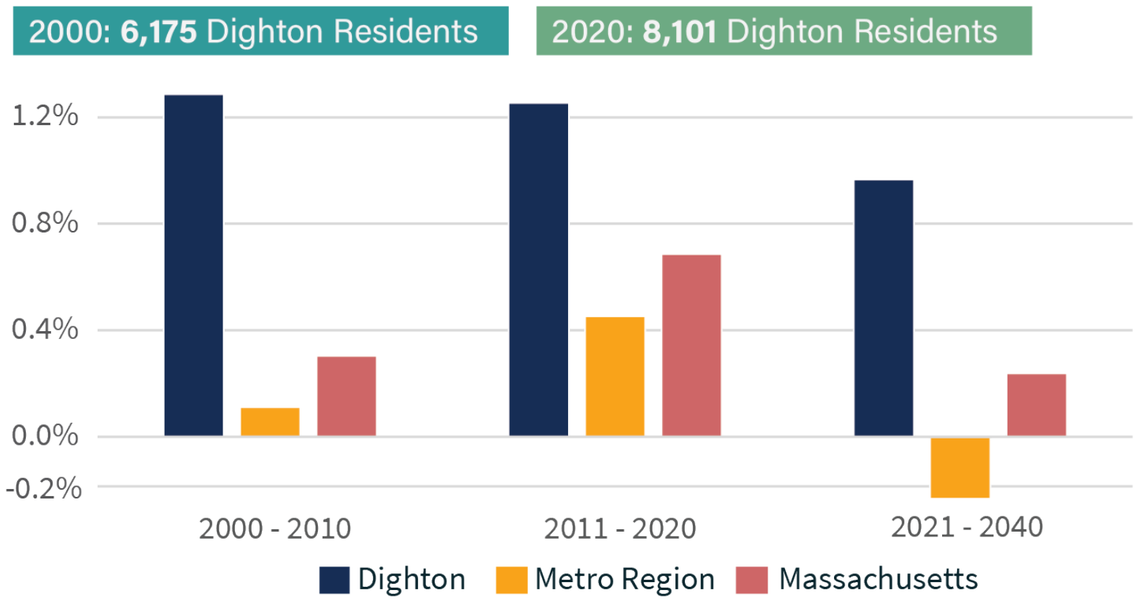
This plan compiled information to guide the questions and recommendations for the project. The project team made every effort to include data that is necessary, sufficient, and not excessive – an attempt to recognize that the planning must be accurate but must also be driven as much by residents' goals and aspirations as it is by facts and figures.

The main "Take-Away" Messages of this analysis are :

1. Dighton saw high job growth in the last decade; industry trends show there is still room to grow in targeted areas such as retail and manufacturing.
2. Though tax rates are structured to ensure commercial and industrial activities bear a greater tax burden, Dighton residents account for the majority of tax revenues.
3. Infrastructure limitations throughout Town limit potential growth.

How fast is Dighton growing?

Population Percentage Change



Source: ACS 5-Year Data, RI Statewide Planning, Donahue Center

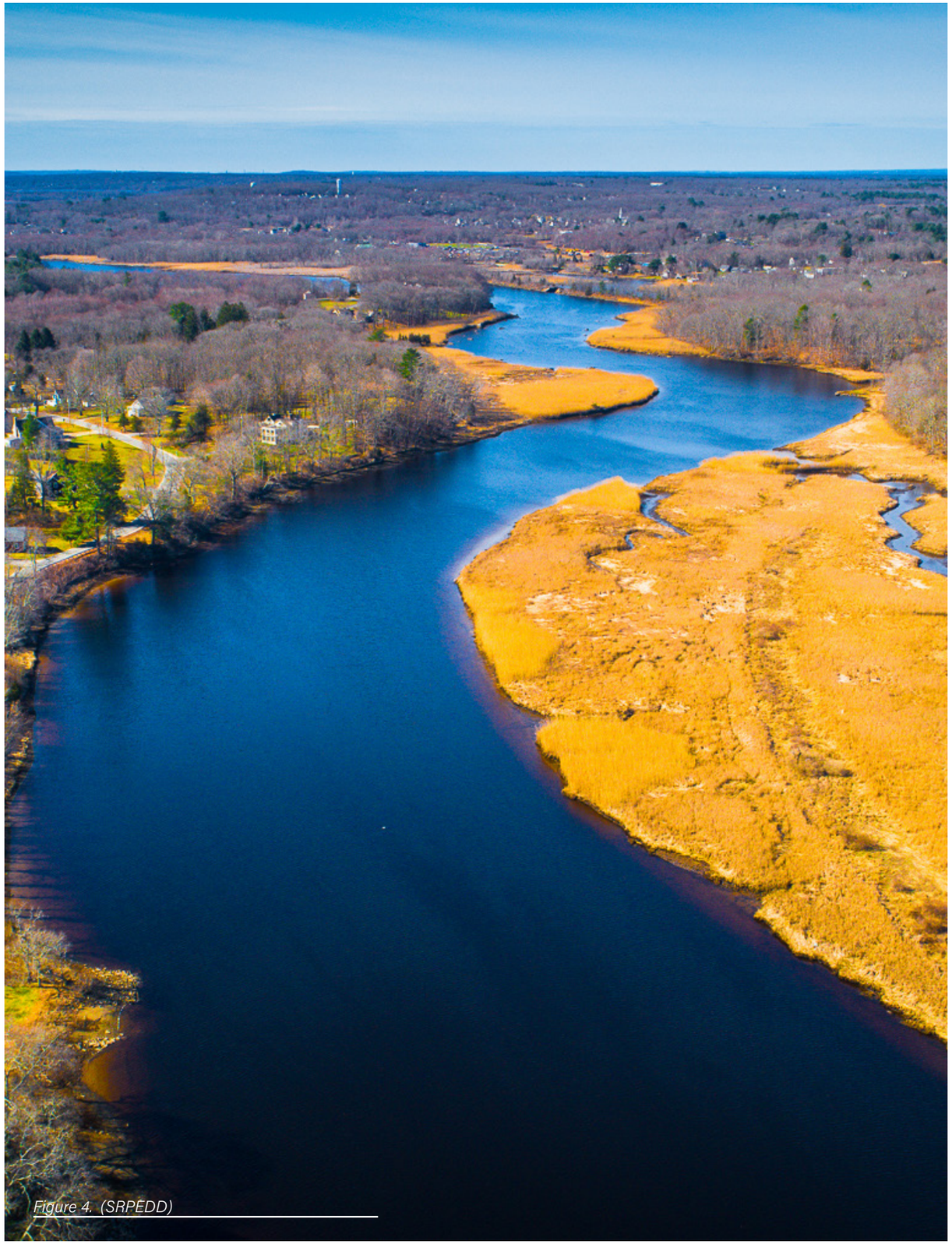


Figure 4. (SRPEDD)

EXISTING CONDITIONS

A guide to questions and recommendations.

Land Use

To understand Dighton's existing and future economic development potential, this study considers first land use and zoning. Land use analysis reflects existing development patterns and natural spaces. Zoning, on the other hand, is the towns legal requirements for the kinds of allowed uses and intensities (such as heights and lot coverage) in specified areas in town, as well as design and permitting requirements. Together, planning and zoning are powerful tools to guide economic development activities.

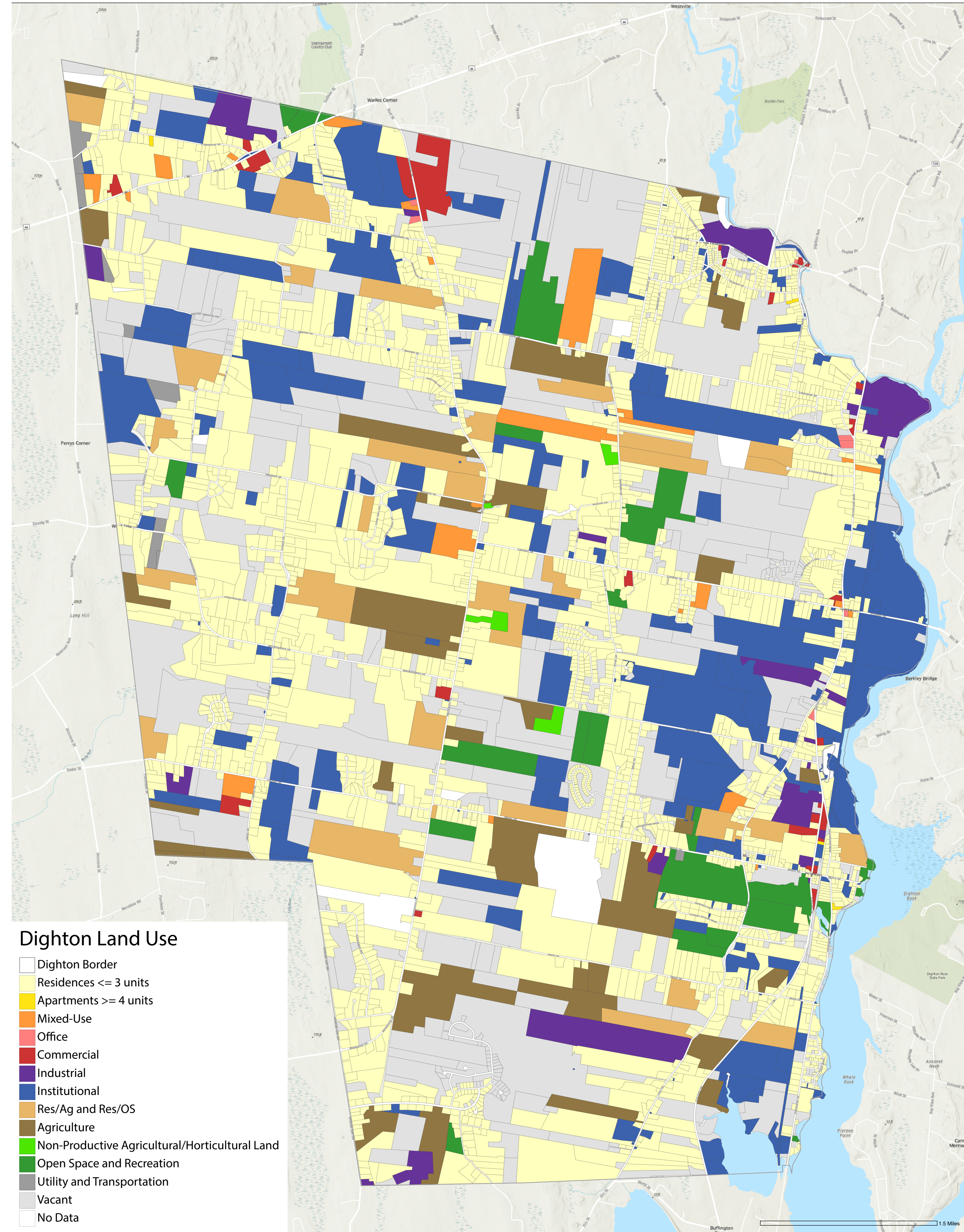
Land use in Dighton is predominantly residential. Commercial and industrial land uses constitute the smallest portion of land use in Town. Residential uses have grown dramatically; assessments from the 2014 Master Plan show that residential uses accounted for 13% of total acreage in Dighton in 1999, compared to 72% in 2022.[2]

Dighton has nine zoning categories, each of which serves a distinct purpose. The intensity of uses across each zoning type ranges from Open Recreation and Conservation, Residential, to Industrial, and Business Zoning.

Dighton also has special districts including:

- Village District – Designed to enhance mixed-use and small commercial/retail opportunities along Route 138.
- Mixed-Use District – Implemented to expand mixed-use development opportunities along Route 138 and 44, Williams Street, and Cedar Street.
- Marijuana District – Developed to manage the growth of cannabis dispensaries in town.
- Medical District – Development to encourage growth among medical and laboratory facilities.


Figure 5. Solar Field (SRPEDD)



EXISTING CONDITIONS

A guide to questions and recommendations.

Infrastructure

Dighton's infrastructure capacity significantly impacts growth potential. The Town is served by two Water Districts and most of Dighton is served by municipal water. Those outside the service areas rely on the use of private wells.

Sewer service, however, is limited and concentrated around the town center and to the north, along the Three-Mile River. Currently, the Town utilizes only about 10 percent of its contracted capacity with the Taunton wastewater treatment facility. Residents tied into the sewer system are charged based on 80 percent of water consumption. In other areas of town where special treatment facilities are not integrated into new development, properties must rely on septic systems.

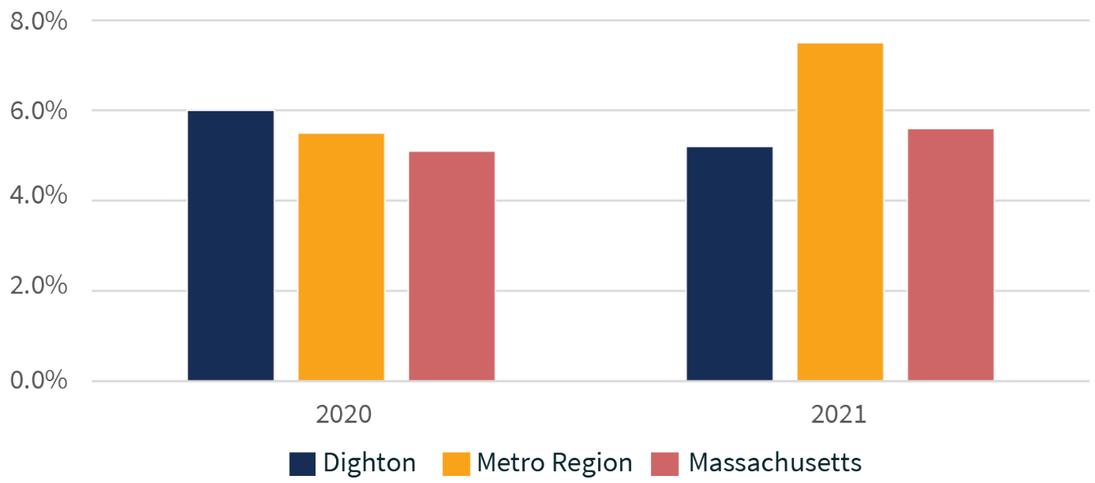
Areas of town without sewer service, in particular parcels slated for new housing production, must carefully comply with Title V standards, and consider water quality issues, which – while essential to maintaining a healthy natural environment – contribute to higher development costs.

In short, the current state of Dighton's infrastructure creates barriers to entry for higher and more intense uses, such as industrial or light industrial. That said, infrastructure improvements can be costly and logistically difficult. As such, the Town should facilitate growth at a pace that will not burden local infrastructure, especially local services, expanding infrastructure strategically and through grants, where appropriate.

Unemployment Rate

By year and compared to region and state

Dighton has a low, healthy unemployment rate.



Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Data, 2021 ESRI



Figure 6. (SRPEDD)

EXISTING CONDITIONS

A guide to questions and recommendations.

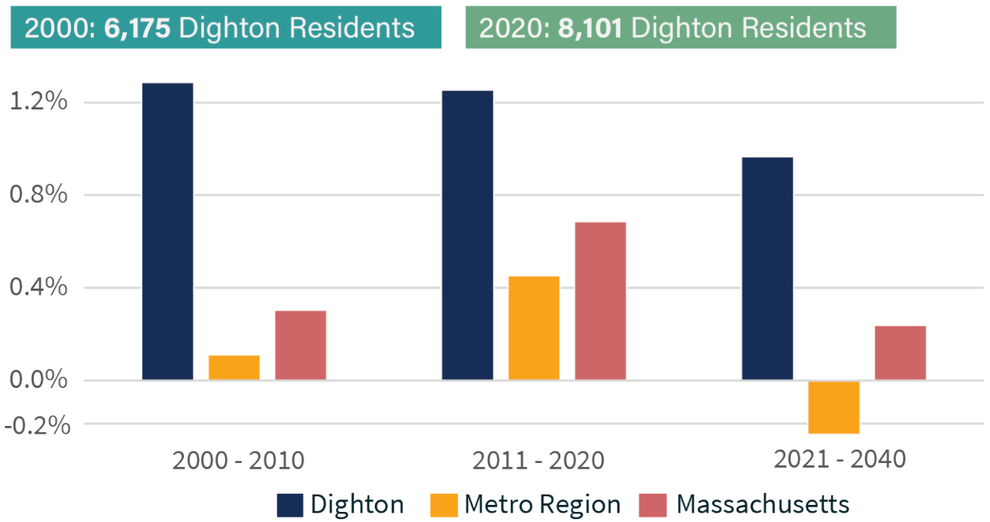
Demographics

Dighton's demographics offer insights into who the town is serving, who makes up the workforce, and the town's consumer spending power based on income and education. Today, Dighton has a population of 8,100 - up 12% in the last ten years. Like many communities in the Commonwealth, Dighton's population is aging and household sizes are decreasing. In fact, the median age in Dighton is 5 years greater than that of the State and Dighton's greater metropolitan region, the Providence Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which encompasses Rhode Island and all of Bristol County, MA. Compared to the State and the metropolitan region, Dighton is an affluent community, where the average household makes $96,627 per year. Educational attainment in Dighton closely mirrors trends in the greater Metro Region though compared to the State, Dighton has a smaller share of residents with "Higher Level" education.

Population Growth

By year and compared to region and state

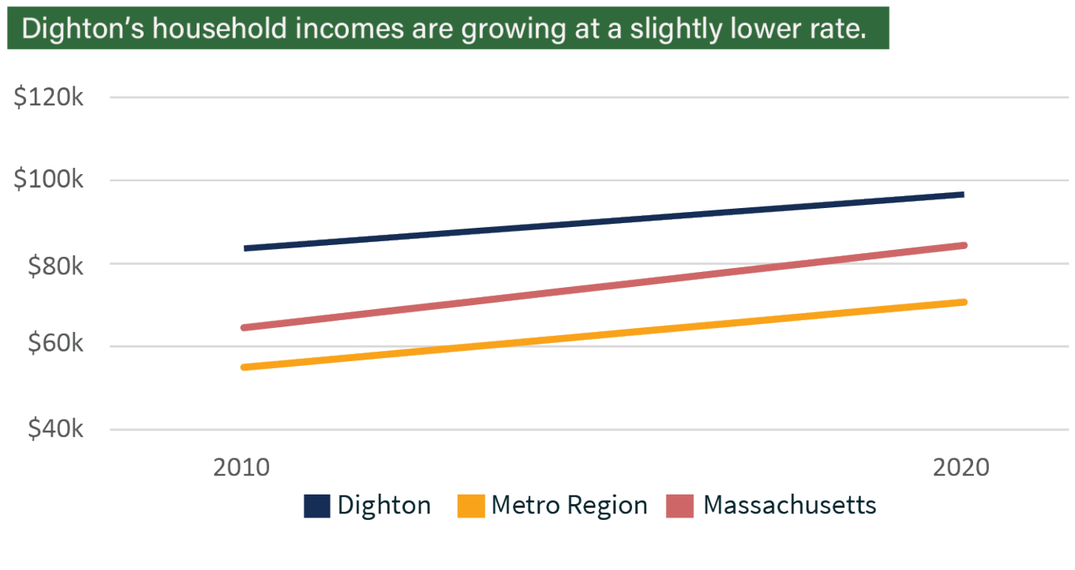
Population Percentage Change



Source: ACS 5-Year Data, RI Statewide Planning, Donahue Center

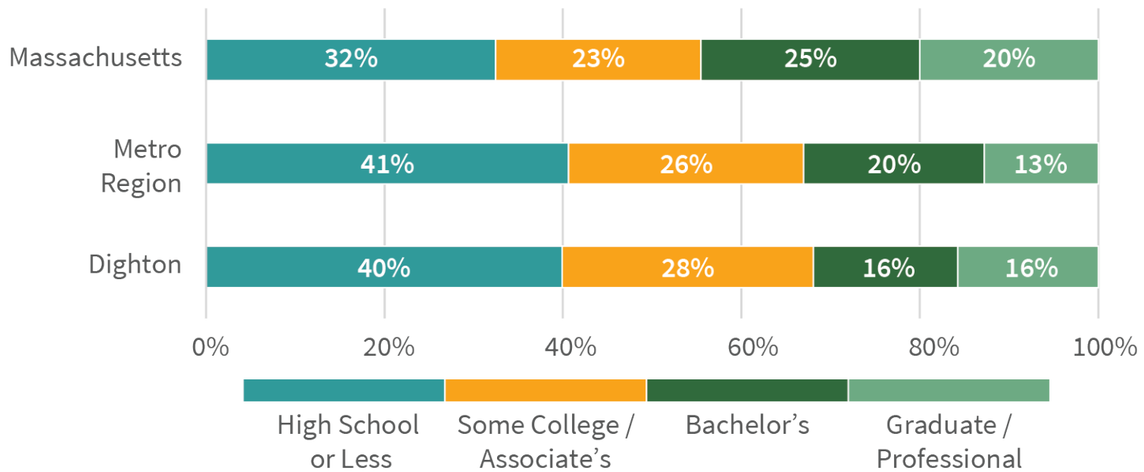
Median Household Income

By year and compared to region and state



Educational Attainment

By year and compared to region and state



EXISTING CONDITIONS

A guide to questions and recommendations.

Housing

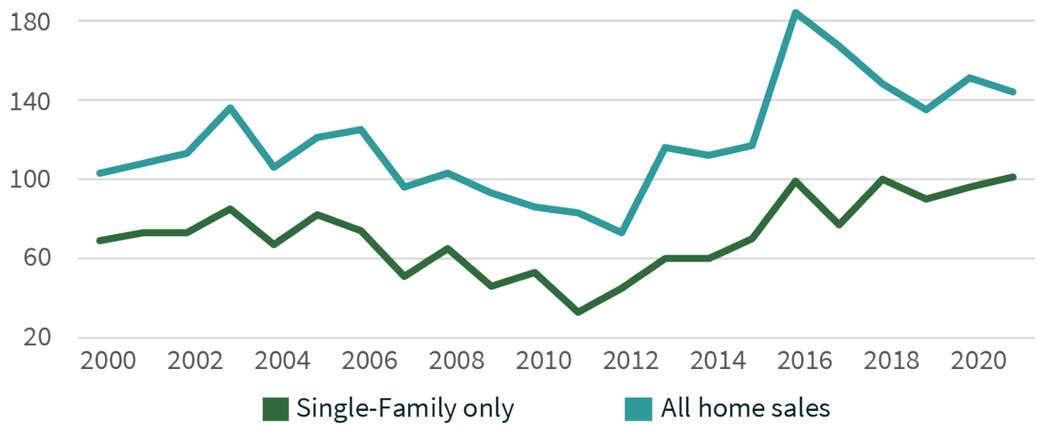
Like many cities and towns across the Commonwealth, Dighton's housing values and costs are rising. Since 2010, the median home price rose consistently year to year. Despite the high cost of homes, sales in Dighton continue to be high, growing steadily since 2010, reflecting a competitive housing market.

The Dighton Economic Development Plan is not a forum to discuss or recommend housing - the Town's Housing Production Plan is expected to explore this in further detail in 2024! However, these trends show that Dighton is considered a desirable community to live in. As such, mixed-use zoning, which combines residential and commercial uses, is a well-known vehicle for economic growth and its application is assessed in existing and new sites and corridors throughout the plan. Dighton already allows mixed-use development through the Mixed-Use and Village Overlay District, however any changes to these bylaws or their application as recommended throughout this plan must be approved by Dighton's residents at Town Meeting.

Home Sales Volume

By year

Home sales lagged between 2006 and 2011 but picked up again.

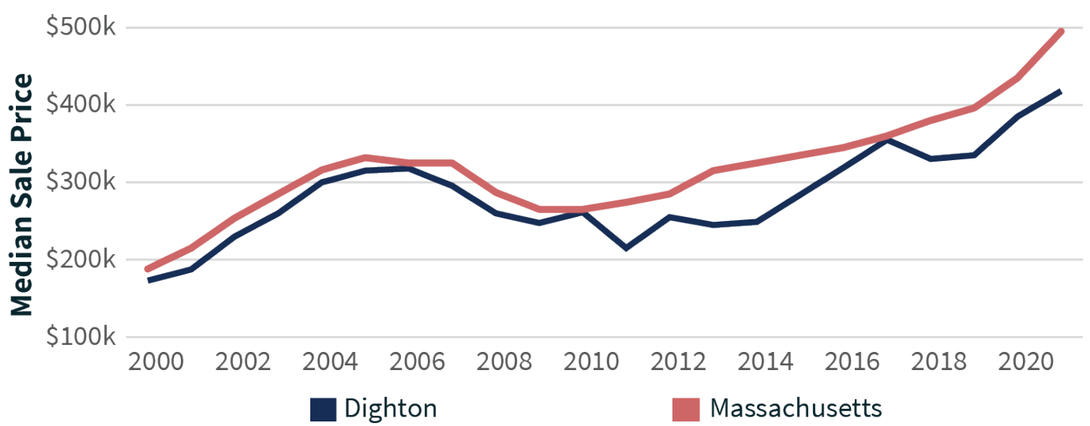


Single-Family Median Sale Price

By year and compared to state

Single-family sales prices have nearly doubled over 10 years.

Cumulative inflation of 14.92% over 10 years.



Source: Warren Group Data

LOCAL ECONOMY

Dighton's strengths and weaknesses

Taxes & Revenues

The state of Dighton's local economy is one important factor in understanding and guiding the potential for future growth. Analyzing Dighton's tax revenue, while comparing it to those of neighboring geographies, can provide insights to the Town's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.

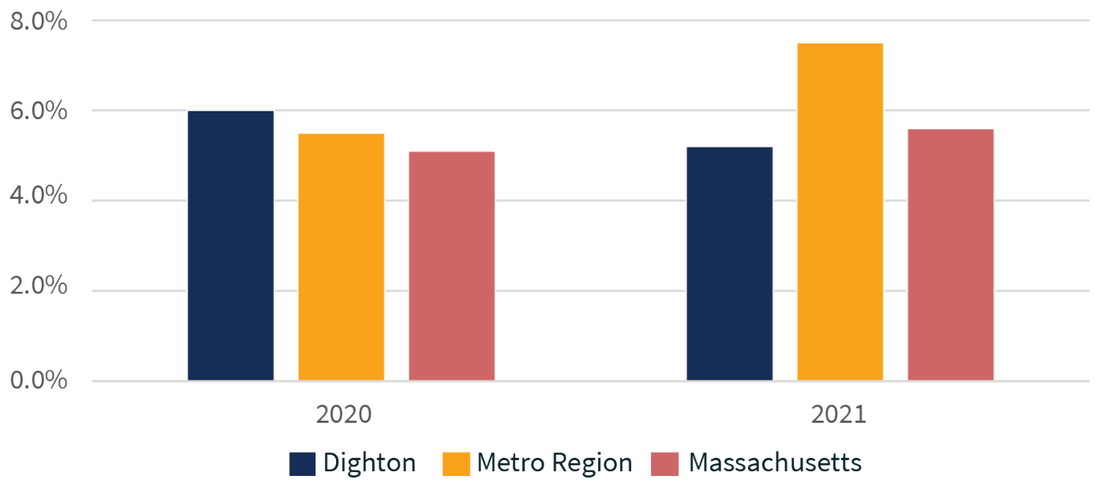
Like all communities, Dighton generates revenues and operating funds through local property taxes. Compared to its neighbors, Dighton's tax rates are high. Notably, Dighton has the highest residential tax rate of its neighbors and second highest commercial rate. Despite its split tax rate, Dighton's commercial tax base is narrow – only 8% of the total levy. This indicates that Dighton increasingly relies on residential tax revenues over commercial tax revenues, which includes retail and industrial activities, to fund local operations and programming. In line with this observation, residential development contributes to most new growth in value in Dighton, while commercial and industrial development lag.

Another indicator of Dighton's economic prospects is unemployment. Fortunately, Dighton experiences low unemployment compared to the State and its greater metropolitan region. This correlates to high job growth over the last decade during which over 600 new jobs located or grew in town (45% growth rate).

Unemployment Rate

By year and compared to region and state

Dighton has a low, healthy unemployment rate.



Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Data, 2021 ESRI

Unemployment rate

By year and compared to state and region

Location	2020	2021	2022
Dighton	6.0%	5.2%	
RI/Bristol MA MSA	5.5%	7.5%	
MA	5.1%	5.6%	

Tax Rate

Compared to nearby communities

Town	Residential	Commercial, Industrial, Personal Property	"Split"
Dighton	14.29	26.17	11.88
Taunton	13.18	28.87	15.69
Rehoboth	12.67	12.67	0
Berkley	13.75	13.75	0
Somerset	13.29	25.81	12.52
Swansea	13.05	21.21	8.16

New Tax Growth

By year and compared by class

Class	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Residential	$ 23,486,100	$ 2,277,700	$ 12,758,500	$ 9,249,570	$ 12,998,330
Open Space	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Commercial	$ 124,000	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 264,300
Industrial	$ 1,200	$ 608,100	$ -	$ -	$ -
Personal Property	$ 3,580,290	$ 3,079,450	$ 13,184,280	$ 3,430,950	$ 3,394,610
Total	$ 27,191,590	$ 5,965,250	$ 25,942,780	$ 12,680,520	$ 16,657,240

LOCAL ECONOMY

Dighton's strengths and weaknesses

Local Industry

Dighton's economy is part of the larger regional, state, national, and even international market. Greater market trends in industry growth and share impact the local market. Analyzing Dighton's employment rates and industry share reveal trends that guide future decision-making to build on local strengths and address relative weaknesses.

A closer look at the data reveals that Manufacturing and Educational Services experienced net losses in employment over the last decade. These industries continue to represent major economic drivers in Dighton; however declining trends, particularly in these high-wage and skilled industries, are a cause for concern as their footprint in Town becomes smaller over time.

Considering Dighton's industries today, the industries with the greatest share of employees include:

- Wholesale Trade (27.4%)
- Educational Services (16.7%)
- Manufacturing (11.2%)
- Other Services (8.4%)
- Retail Trade (6.3%)

Location Quotient

The best way to determine the meaning of industry trends requires comparison to larger markets. In Dighton's case, the project team looked to the State and nearby Providence Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which encompasses Rhode Island and Bristol County, MA.

Industry (EOLWD)	Dighton						MA						MSA					
	Employees				Percent Change		Employees				Percent Change		Employees				Percent Change	
	2012		2022		2012-2022		2012		2022		2012-2022		2012		2022		2012-2022	
11 - Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	-	-	15	-	-		7,175	0.2 %	6,383	0.2 %	-11 %		2,226	0.3 %	1,264	0.2 %	-43 %	
21 - Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	-	-	16	0.8 %	-		882	-	1,905	0.1 %	116 %		210	-	1,264	0.1 %	180 %	
23 - Construction	85	6.5 %	98	5.1 %	15 %		126,714	3.9 %	150,688	4.0 %	19 %		10,072	1.5 %	31,262	4.3 %	210 %	
31-33 - Manufacturing	244	18.7 %	217	11.2 %	-11 %		252,006	7.8 %	256,213	6.8 %	2 %		40,786	6.2 %	8,092	1.1 %	-80 %	
22 - Utilities	40	3.1 %	47	2.4 %	18 %		13,896	0.4 %	13,519	0.4 %	-3 %		40,844	6.2 %	1,577	0.2 %	-96 %	
42 - Wholesale Trade	-	-	532	27.4 %	-		121,883	3.8 %	143,649	3.8 %	18 %		27,272	4.1 %	28,887	4.0 %	6 %	
44-45 - Retail Trade	54	4.1 %	123	6.3 %	128 %		346,147	10.7 %	436,516	11.6 %	26 %		79,832	12.1 %	108,625	15.0 %	36 %	
48-49 - Transportation and Warehousing	77	5.9 %	21	1.1 %	-73 %		97,094	3.0 %	81,705	2.2 %	-16 %		15,957	2.4 %	13,773	1.9 %	-14 %	
51 - Information	-	-	15	0.8 %	-		92,435	2.8 %	136,399	3.6 %	48 %		13,110	2.0 %	13,208	1.8 %	1 %	
52 - Finance and Insurance	24	1.8 %	24	1.2 %	-		166,367	5.1 %	204,091	5.4 %	23 %		27,963	4.2 %	48,858	6.7 %	75 %	
53 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	-	-	21	1.1 %	-		41,032	1.3 %	108,823	2.9 %	165 %		7,415	1.1 %	15,840	2.2 %	114 %	
54 - Professional and Technical Services	36	2.8 %	51	2.6 %	42 %		270,371	8.3 %	321,952	8.6 %	19 %		27,462	4.1 %	39,949	5.5 %	45 %	
55 - Management of Companies and Enterprises	-	-	3	0.2 %	-		63,309	2.0 %	8,857	0.2 %	-86 %		14,241	2.2 %	585	0.1 %	-95 %	
56 - Administrative and Waste Services	36	2.8 %	77	4.0 %	114 %		164,870	5.1 %	110,651	3.0 %	-33 %		32,638	4.9 %	17,542	2.4 %	-46 %	
61 - Educational Services	382	29.2 %	323	16.7 %	-		331,466	10.2 %	332,566	8.9 %	-		36,151	5.5 %	72,046	9.9 %	99 %	
62 - Health Care and Social Assistance	189	14.5 %	81	4.2 %	-15 %		541,241	16.7 %	650,397	17.4 %	20 %		116,253	17.6 %	150,502	20.7 %	29 %	
71 - Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	-	-	9	0.5 %	-		55,954	1.7 %	87,781	2.3 %	57 %		10,539	1.6 %	21,092	2.9 %	100 %	
72 - Accommodation and Food Services	107	8.2 %	23	1.2 %	-79 %		275,610	8.5 %	291,918	7.8 %	6 %		63,795	9.6 %	67,107	9.2 %	5 %	
81 - Other Services, Except Public Administration	33	2.5 %	163	8.4 %	394 %		141,755	4.4 %	238,466	6.4 %	68 %		29,029	4.4 %	47,069	6.5 %	62 %	
92 - Public Administration	-	-	95	4.9 %	-		134,320	4.1 %	166,106	4.4 %	24 %		65,955	10.0 %	38,172	5.3 %	-42 %	
Total, All Industries	**1,307**		**1,939**		**48 %**		**3,244,527**		**3,748,585**		**15.5 %**		**661,750**		**726,039**		**9.7 %**	

LOCAL ECONOMY

Dighton's strengths and weaknesses

To analyze growth beyond job numbers, this study utilized Location Quotient (LQ) analysis which compares the industry's share of local employment with its share of regional employment. Industries with a high LQ are typically export-oriented industries, which are important because they bring money into the community, rather than circulating money that is already in play, like most retail stores and restaurants. Industries with both high LQ and relatively high total job numbers typically form a community's economic base. These industries are important for the jobs they provide, but also for their multiplier effect – the jobs they create in other dependent industries.

Compared to the State and MSA, Dighton's top industries held a larger share of the market, except for Retail Trade. Though this industry continues to grow in Dighton, it holds a lower share of employment compared to the State and MSA.

Dighton's top industries that experienced growth and exhibit higher LQs than the State and MSA include Wholesale Trade, Retail Trade, and Other Services.

Industry (EOLWD)	Dighton-MA			Dighton-Metro		
	LQ		Percent Change	LQ		Percent Change
	2012	2022	2012-2022	2012	2022	2012-2022
11 - Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	-	4.54	-	-	-	-
21 - Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	-	16.24	-	-	10.17	-
23 - Construction	1.67	1.26	-25 %	4.27	1.17	-73 %
31-33 - Manufacturing	2.4	1.64	-32 %	3.03	10.04	231 %
22 - Utilities	7.15	6.72	-6 %	0.5	11.16	2150 %
42 - Wholesale Trade	-	7.16	-	-	6.9	-
44-45 - Retail Trade	0.39	0.54	41 %	0.34	0.42	24 %
48-49 - Transportation and Warehousing	1.97	0.50	-75 %	2.44	0.57	-77 %
51 - Information	-	0.21	-	-	0.43	-
52 - Finance and Insurance	0.36	0.23	-37 %	0.43	0.18	-58 %
53 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	-	0.37	-	-	0.50	-
54 - Professional and Technical Services	0.33	0.31	-7 %	0.66	0.48	-28 %
55 - Management of Companies and Enterprises	-	0.65	-	-	1.92	-
56 - Administrative and Waste Services	0.54	1.35	148 %	0.56	1.64	194 %
61 - Educational Services	2.86	1.88	-34 %	5.35	1.68	-69 %
62 - Health Care and Social Assistance	0.87	0.24	-72 %	0.82	0.20	-76 %
71 - Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	-	0.20	-	-	0.16	-
72 - Accommodation and Food Services	0.96	0.15	-84 %	0.85	0.13	-85 %
81 - Other Services, Except Public Administration	0.58	1.32	129 %	0.58	1.30	125 %
92 - Public Administration	-	1.11	-	-	0.93	-

However, the proliferation of Artificial Intelligence, automation, and e-commerce threaten employment within industries such as Wholesale and Retail Trade. In 2022, the US and EU commissioned a study to assess the impacts of automation and artificial intelligence on the workforce. The study revealed that increased productivity does not translate into real wage value for the workforce, particularly where AI automates tasks instead of augmenting employee capabilities.

Though not considered part of Dighton's economic base, other industries show signs of industry growth while capturing a greater share of the industry compared to the State and Metro. Based on growth trends between 2012-2022, in addition to promising LQ analyses, Construction, Utilities, and Administrative and Waste Services are up and coming industries in Dighton and should be considered in the future growth strategy.

DIGHTON'S KEY SITES

A vision for growth

Establishing a vision for economic growth is the first step in charting a path for implementation. Current and past planning efforts, such as the 2014 Master Plan , the 2013 Community Priority Development Areas Report, the town Zoning bylaws, and goals and activities of the DDIC have helped clarify and refine this vision, including where and how growth might take place in Dighton. As a result, the following sites represent key corridors, parcels or clusters of parcels, and neighborhood areas that the town has identified as appropriate for different types of economic growth.

It is important to pause to emphasize the previous phrase, "different types of economic growth." Dighton's vision for growth is varied – and so are this plan's recommendations. There is no one size fits all approach; rather, a portion of key sites may support industrial and light industrial growth that will grow employment in manufacturing and wholesale trade, while continuing to attract high-wage local employment opportunities; another selection of key sites may foster mixed-use development, which addresses both a diverse housing gap, as well as start-up spaces where local home-grown and home-based businesses can expand into brick and mortar; lastly, another portion of sites may enhance and capitalize on the town's character as an agricultural and rural community, building on the heritage of Dighton's farmers, makers, and artisans while drawing connections to the town's riverfront and abundant natural resources.

Another point of emphasis is that these development scenarios, while identified as among the most plausible potential futures, are just that – potential. In that sense, this plan is not necessarily prescriptive. It's not telling Dighton that it must pursue these futures. Instead, it identifies a vision based on prior plans and public input; it describes that vision in words and graphics; it explores what actions (for example, brownfield clean-up or zoning amendments) would be necessary to make that vision real;[3] and it details the potential benefits, costs, and timelines for the proposal. It's up to the town to take the next steps!

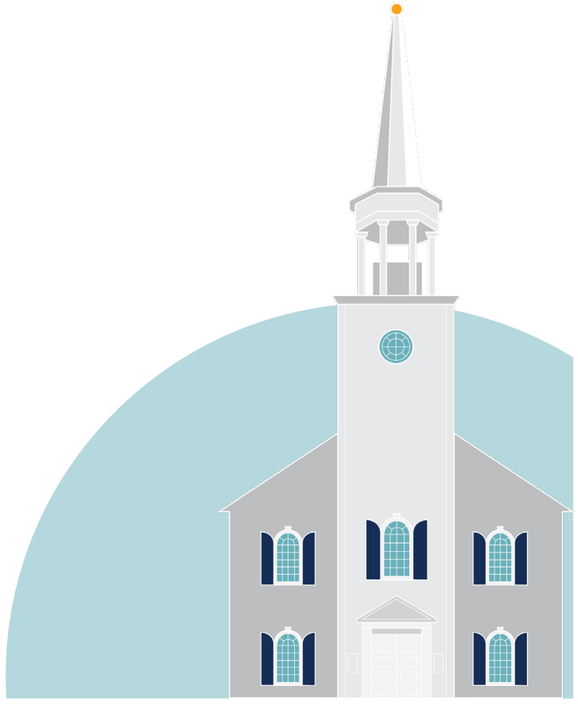
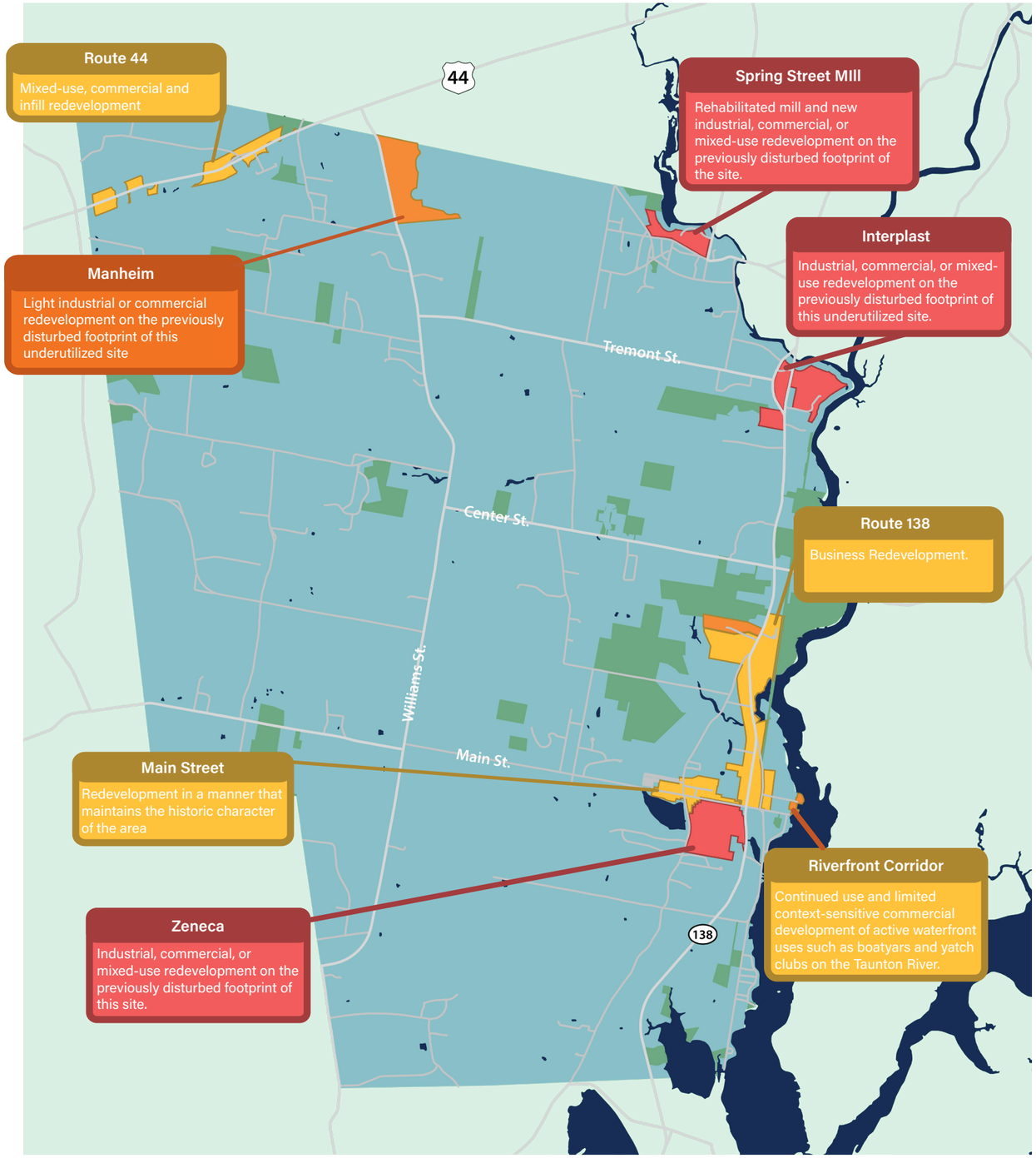


Figure 7. Spring Street Mill



DIGHTON'S KEY SITES

A vision for growth

Key Sites & Development Scenarios

In partnership with the Town Administration and the Dighton Development and Industrial Committee (DDIC), the Dighton Economic Development Plan explored the future redevelopment potential of key sites in town. The following Key Site Profiles explore how redevelopment might generate employment, broaden the town's commercial tax base, generate wealth in the community, and otherwise contribute to economic development that is compatible with town goals and priorities .

The study provides a Vision Statement for each Key Site, detailing a vision for growth and outlining major activities and outcomes. Each Vision Statement is accompanied by Town-wide recommendations that specify actions the Town should take in order to implement the vision.

In developing the Vision Statement, the study highlighted three Key Sites in town that represent the greatest redevelopment potential: Spring Street Mill, Interplast, and Zeneca. Largely underutilized, these sites could redevelop and expand the existing building footprint. Utilizing parcel area maps, the project team estimated the potential build out and redevelopment on these sites.

Together with the DDIC, the project team used guidance from the Existing Conditions and Local Economy to identify and explore examples of regional developments that are plausible for future use on the three Key Sites. Basing future "Development Scenarios" on these regional examples allows Dighton's vision to remain grounded in a range of real-world expectations (e.g., availability of relevant expertise in the regional labor pool, expected job densities per use type, realistic values per S.F. of built space, and anticipated infrastructure needs).

The Dighton Economic Develop Plan samples several key characteristics to model potential development. In other words , by applying an example development's Building Value per S.F. to target parcels, this plan estimates a potential building value based on build-out potential, which leads to projected tax revenue. Additionally, utilizing Jobs per S.F., this study projects estimated jobs based on the potential build out potential of the three major development scenarios.

Development	Scenario Type	Intensity	Location	Building Area
Hope and Main	Agricultural Incubator	Low	Warren, RI	18,404
Farm Fresh		High	Providence, RI	61,076
Padanaram Village	Mixed-Use	Low	Dartmouth, MA	14,000
Windswept Village		High	Mattapoisett, MA	20,318
Gotham Greens	Agricultural Production	Low	Providence, MA	95,713
Little Leaf Farms		High	Devens, MA	207,645
Naukabout Brewery	Artisan Manufacturing	Low	Mashpee, MA	4,740
Trillium		High	Canton, MA	141,373
Berkshire Innovation Center	Commercial/Office	Low	Pittsfield, MA	22,487
UMass Center for I & E		High	Fall River, MA	60,358

Lot Size	Stories	Building Value	Building Value per S.F.	Land Value	Jobs Estimate	Jobs per S.F.
42,819	2	$ 802,100	$ 43.58	$ 152,100	15	0.8
140,302	1	$ 5,746,400	$ 94.09	$ 386,300	57	0.9
10,890	2	$ 1,357,200	$ 96.94	$ 413,000	5	0.8
148,539	2	$ 2,097,200	$ 103.22	$ 415,700	10	0.9
276,776	1	$ 1,113,800	$ 11.64	$ 864,938	60	05
618,552	1	$ 11,183,500	$ 53.86	$ 816,200	100	0.6
60,984	1	$ 209,400	$ 44.18	$ 299,200	5	1.1
850,422	1	$ 14,753,600	$ 104.36	$ 5,217,100	150	1.1
519,976	2	$ 2,467,000	$ 109.71	$ 542,200	20	0.9
166,835	2	$ 4,415,000	$ 73.15	$ 1,229,200	150	2.5



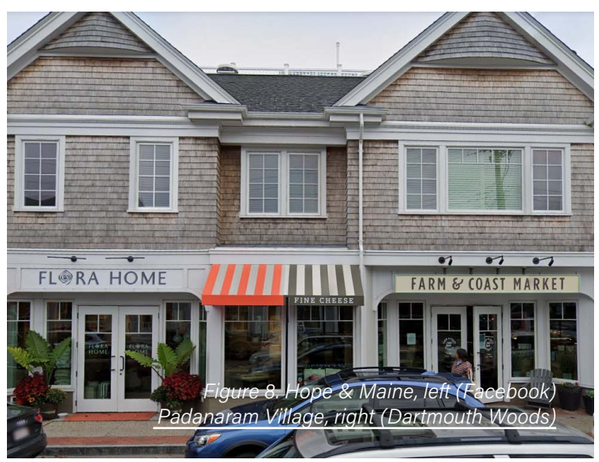


Figure 8. Hope & Maine, left (Facebook) Padanaram Village, right (Dartmouth Woods)



Figure 9. Gotham Greens, left (Gotham Greens) Trillium (Hazy and Hoppy)



SPRING STREET MILL

Existing Conditions

Current Zoning	Industrial
Current Overlay Districts	Industrial Overlay
Active Use	Light Manufacturing, Warehousing, Office; portions of the site underutilized since early 2000s
Size	35 Acres
Constraints	Water Moratorium, Existing Brownfields, Existing Neighborhood
Potential for Redevelopment	High

Vision Statement

Remediation at the Spring Street Mill enables redevelopment of existing spaces, while enabling new opportunities. The vision for Spring Street Mill rehabilitates the former footprint of the site since demolition in 2007 (see below).

Due to its proximity to neighborhoods and the Three Mile River, this site could incorporate a Riverfront Park and new pedestrian connections. Town officials should explore whether Spring Street Mills could accommodate mixed and artisan uses enabled by new zoning, as well as an industrial inspired event space for public and private functions.

New developers would be able to take advantage of state programs for Brownfield Remediation incentives. The Town would encourage the preservation of existing businesses already in operation at this site, by encouraging continuing rental agreements through redevelopment.

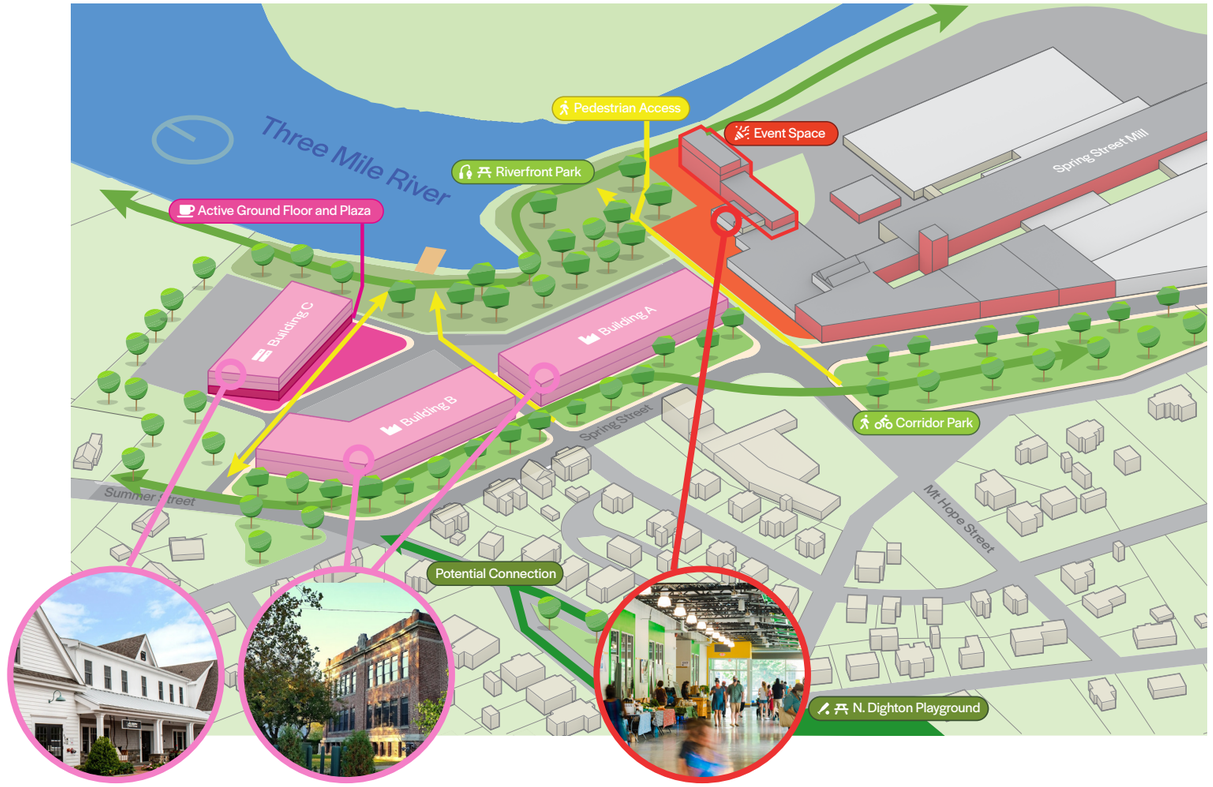
Town-wide Recommendations

Zoning Amendments: 3, 6

Rural Economy: 1, 2, 3, 4

Infrastructure: 4

Brownfield Remediation: 1, 2, 3



Development Scenarios						
Building	**A**		**B**		**C**	
Use	Commercial/Industrial		Commercial/Industrial		Mixed Use	
Building Footprint	35,000		38,000		22,000	
Total S.F.	70,000		77,000		44,000	
Stories	2		2		2	
Potential Growth	**Low**	**High**	**Low**	**High**	**Low**	**High**
Development	Hope & Main	Farm Fresh	Hope & Main	Farm Fresh	Padanaram Village	Windswept Village
Jobs	57	65	63	72	18	21
Building Value	$ 3,050,804	$ 6,586,024	$ 3,355,885	$ 7,244,626	$ 4,265,486	$ 4,541,628
Dighton Revenue	$ 79,718	$ 172,093	$ 87,689	$ 189,302	$ 55,729	$ 59,336





Figure 10. Satellite Imagery from 2007 (left) and 2023 (right) (Google Earth)

INTERPLAST

Existing Conditions

Current Zoning	Industrial
Current Overlay Districts	Medical Overlay
Active Use	Light Manufacturing, Warehousing, Office; portions of the site underutilized
Size	44 Acres
Constraints	Water Moratorium, Existing Brownfields, Existing Neighborhood
Potential for Redevelopment	High

Vision

Redevelopment of this site enables greater and higher value uses that will enhance tax revenues. Due to its proximity to neighborhoods and the Three Mile River, this site could incorporate a Riverfront Park and new pedestrian connections. Interplast could accommodate mixed-use and artisan/light manufacturing enabled by new or amended zoning.

Much like Spring Street Mill, the Plan recognizes the existing businesses in operation at this site. The Town would encourage any future development preserve and maintain local businesses by including tenants in the development process as well as continuing rental and operating agreements.

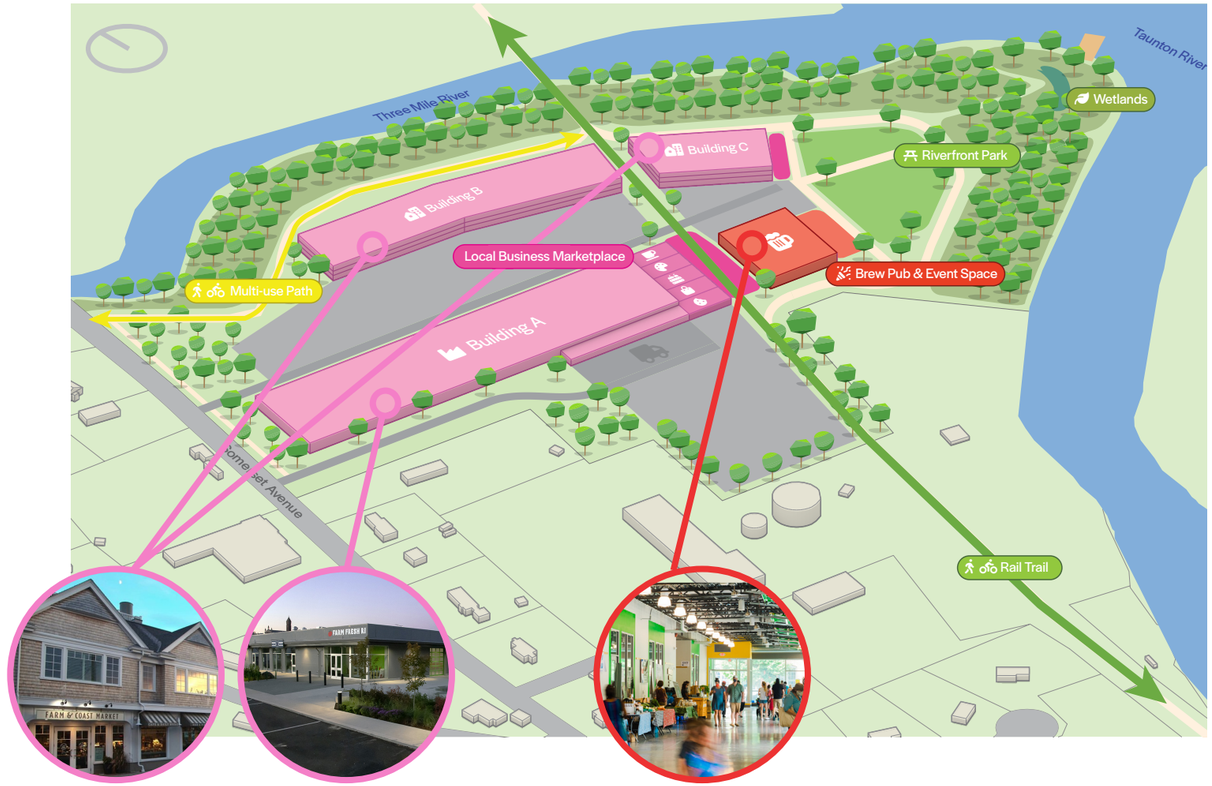
Town-wide Recommendations

Zoning Amendments: 3, 6

Rural Economy: 1, 2, 3, 4

Infrastructure: 1, 4

Brownfield Remediation: 1, 2, 3



Development Scenarios								
Building	**A**		**B**		**C**		**Brew + Retail**	
Use	Commercial/Industrial		Mixed-Use		Mixed-Use		Artisan - Retail	
Building Footprint	35,000		38,000		22,000		47,000	
Total S.F.	70,000		77,000		44,000		47,000	
Stories	2		2		2		1	
Potential Growth	**Low**	**High**	**Low**	**High**	**Low**	**High**	**Low**	**High**
Development	Hope & Main	Farm Fresh	Padanaram Village	Windswept Village	Padanaram Village	Windswept Village	Naukabout	Trillium
Jobs	130	147	64	74	24	56	50	50
Building Value	$ 6,973,267	$ 15,053,769	$ 15,316,971	$ 16,308,574	$ 5,816,571	$ 6,193,129	$ 2,076,329	$ 4,904,891
Dighton Revenue	$ 182,211	$ 393,355	$ 200,116	$ 189,302.09	$ 75,994	$ 80,913	$ 54,254	$ 128,165

ZENECA

Existing Conditions

Current Zoning	Industrial
Current Overlay Districts	Village Overlay; Mixed-Use Overlay
Active Use	None; significant brownfield contamination; portions of the site were occupied and active until the early 2000s.
Size	71 Acres
Constraints	Water Moratorium, Sewer Infrastructure, Existing Brownfields, Existing Neighborhood
Potential for Redevelopment	High

Vision

Located along the town's designated Village District, Zeneca presents an opportunity to expand the Main Street identity of Dighton, while tapping into light industrial activities.

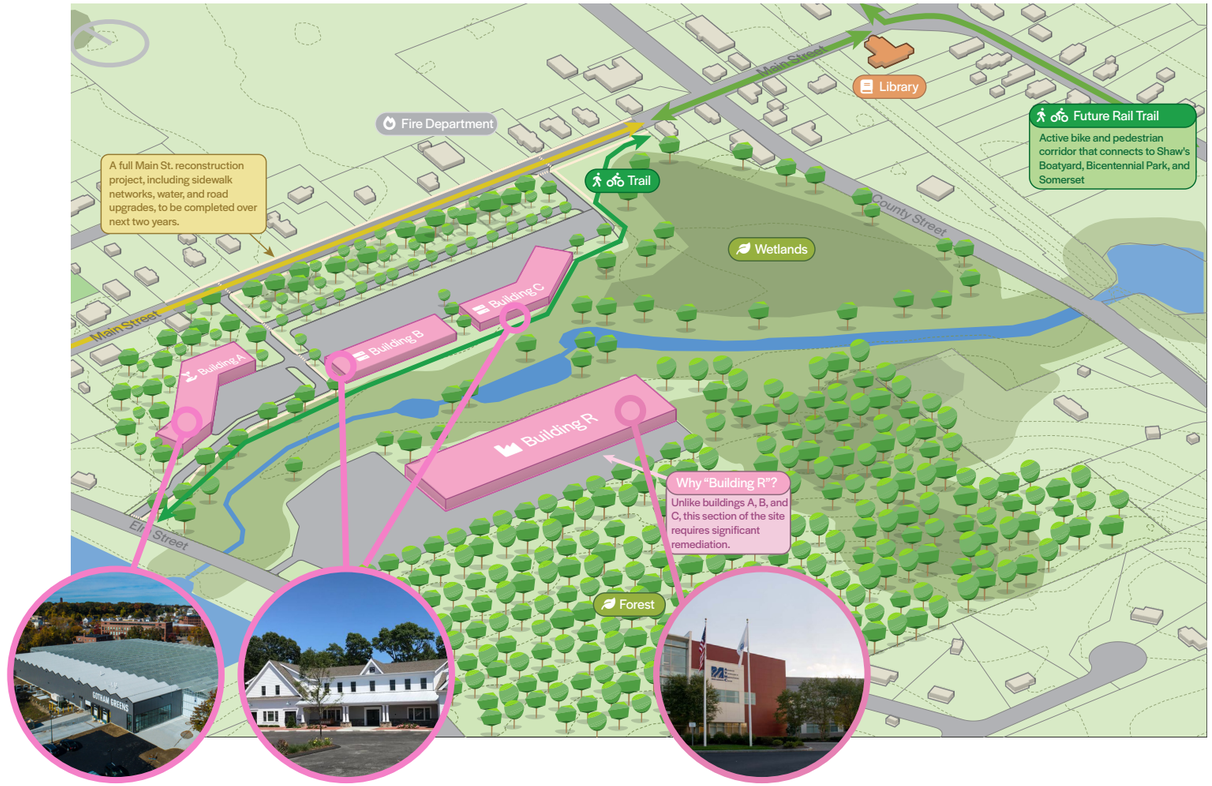
Pursuing Brownfield Remediation would be essential to the redevelopment of the site. Based on the extent of cleanup and determined future uses, Zeneca provides a stage to encourage reinvestment that includes mixed-use development and light industrial. Given the sheer size of the site, frontage to Main Street would emphasize walkability and public spaces, while the rear of the parcel would enable modern light industrial uses, flexible lab space, or incubator space. The Town could offer incentives to encourage development including 43D designation, density bonuses, and flexibility in the uses to be allowed on the site. Any future redevelopment should acknowledge proximity to the Muddy Cove PPA and enhance public recreational access to the Cove .

Town-wide Recommendations

Zoning Amendments: 3

Infrastructure: 1, 4

Brownfield Remediation: 1, 2, 3



Development Scenarios								
Building	**A**		**B**		**C**		**"R"**	
Use	Agriculture		Mixed-Use		Mixed-Use		Industrial	
Building Footprint	29,000		22,000		24,500		86,000	
Total S.F.	58,000		33,000		36,750		86,000	
Stories	2		1.5		1.5		1	
Potential Growth	**Low**	**High**	**Low**	**High**	**Low**	**High**	**Low**	**High**
Development	Gotham Greens	Little Leaf	Padanaram Village	Windswept Village	Padanaram Village	Windswept Village	Berkshire Innovation Center	UMass Center for I&E
Jobs	30	35	13	31	15	17	76	214
Building Value	$ 674,939	$ 3,123,807	$ 3,199,114	$ 3,406,221	$ 3,562,650	$ 3,793,292	$ 9,434,873	$ 6,290,633
Dighton Revenue	$ 17,636	$ 81,625	$ 41,796	$ 44,502	$ 46,546	$ 49,559	$ 246,533	$ 164,374

MANHEIM

Existing Conditions

Current Zoning	Industrial
Current Overlay Districts	None
Active Use	Auto Auction
Size	162 Acres
Constraints	Water Moratorium, Sewer Infrastructure, Existing Active Business
Potential for Redevelopment	Low

Vision

The Manheim Auto auction is an active and successful Dighton business. This plan does not currently propose redevelopment scenarios due to its active expansion but continues to recognize the significance of this site to future economic development. The town should reevaluate this position in the event of distress or closures.



Figure 11. Manheim (SRPEDD)

DIGHTON POWER & LOOSE LEAF

Existing Conditions

Current Zoning	Industrial
Current Overlay Districts	None
Active Use	Utilities; Light manufacturing
Size	18 Acres
Constraints	Water Moratorium, Existing Active Business
Potential for Redevelopment	Low

Vision

Located adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas, Dighton Power and Loose Leaf is an active and successful business. Currently undergoing upgrades and investment, this plan does not propose redevelopment scenarios upon this site. It does continue to recognize its significance to future economic development. The town should reevaluate this position in the event of distress or closure.



Figure 12. Dighton Power & Loose Leaf (SRPEDD)

ROUTE 138

Existing Conditions

Current Zoning	Business, Industrial
Current Overlay Districts	Medical Overlay; Village Overlay; Mixed-use Overlay; Industrial Overlay
Active Use	Retail, Service, Light industrial
Size	165 Acres
Constraints	Water Moratorium, Sewer Infrastructure, Existing Brownfields, Existing Neighborhoods
Potential for Redevelopment	Medium

Vision

Incentivize small business growth and infill development along Route 138 by expanding sewer infrastructure.

Dighton should encourage more mixed-use development, small-scale multi-family residential, and local retail and service businesses such as shops, offices and restaurants.

Town-wide Recommendations

Zoning Amendments: 3

Infrastructure: 4



Figure 13. Route 138 (SRPEDD)

ROUTE 44

Existing Conditions

Current Zoning	Business
Current Overlay Districts	Mixed-use Overlay; Industrial Overlay
Active Use	Residential, Light Commercial
Size	54 Acres
Constraints	Water Moratorium, Sewer Infrastructure, Surface Water Protection District, Segregansett Aquifer, Existing Neighborhoods
Potential for Redevelopment	High

Vision

Enable growth along the Route 44 corridor that is both friendly for businesses and consumers by expanding water and sewer capacity. The town would should lift the water moratorium to enable construction of 3 miles of sewer infrastructure following an Inter-municipal Agreement with a neighboring community.

As a major gateway into Town, Route 44 will provide small-scale commercial spaces for bakeries (such as Dighton's recently opened Jessie's Diner, which is located on Route 44), shops, and specialty artisans along the frontage. In addition, Route 44 will provide safe and accessible pedestrian improvements to encourage foot traffic. Industrial uses will be reserved for the rear of parcels and for easy loading and transportation.

Town-wide Recommendations

Zoning Amendments: 3

Infrastructure: 1, 4



MAIN STREET

Existing Conditions

Current Zoning	Residential
Current Overlay Districts	Village Overlay; Mixed-use Overlay
Active Use	Residential, Institutional, Small Business
Size	36.5 Acres
Constraints	Water Moratorium, Existing Brownfields, Existing Neighborhood
Potential for Redevelopment	Medium

Vision

Incentivize small business growth and infill development along Main Street. Dighton should encourage more mixed use development, small-scale multi-family residential, and local retail and service businesses such as shops, offices, and restaurants.

The Town should leverage new development, such as the library, and connections to Shaw's Boatyard within the Riverfront Corridor to encourage further investment and visitors.

Town-wide Recommendations

Zoning Amendments: 3

Infrastructure: 1, 4



Figure 14. Main Street (SRPEDD)

RIVERFRONT CORRIDOR

Existing Conditions

Current Zoning	Open Space and Recreation, Conservation
Current Overlay Districts	None
Active Use	Private boatyard and yatch club
Size	Acres
Constraints	Environmental Flood Zone, Existing Neighborhood, Infrastructure
Potential for Redevelopment	High

Vision

On the edge of the Three Mile and Taunton River, Dighton's riverfront offers several opportunities for commercial growth and development. Activating the riverfront in strategic locations such as Shaw's Boatyard, Taunton Yacht Club, and Shawomet Yacht Club targets growth in existing active sites. Dighton may apply waterfront district zoning and design guidelines to enable and manage commercial development that is compatible with the existing marina use and the historic waterfront neighborhood to include coffee shops, restaurants, and water-based recreational sales. In addition, Shaw's Boatyard could act as a waterfront extension of Main Street, tied into the character of the existing area.

Town-wide Recommendations

Zoning Amendments: 7

Rural Economy: 1, 2, 4

Infrastructure: 4



Figure 15. Shaws Boatyard (SRPEDD)

TOWN-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

Strategies for implementation.

In addition to site-specific ideas and proposals, the Dighton Economic Development plan includes strategies for economic development at the town level. Even though they clearly complement and support redevelopment (and are highlighted when and where they do so on key sites), these important actions have the potential to benefit the entire community. These strategies are explored in this section and organized into the following themes:

- **Zoning Amendments**
- **Rural Economy**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Brownfield Remediation**
- **Character & Placemaking**



Figure 16. Araujo Farm



Figure 17. Main Street (SRPEDD)

ZONING AMENDMENTS

Influencing and managing town-wide development

1. Complete a thorough review and comprehensive update of the zoning bylaw to address formatting, land uses, dimensional regulations, parking requirements, and supplemental development regulations

Often, the zoning code cannot anticipate for special cases, or sometimes it ignores the realities of existing buildings. Though nonconforming buildings can be "grandfathered" in, renovations can run into regulatory issues if the existing building does not meet zoning standards. Periodically "cleaning up" and updating the zoning can help to identify "pinch points" and reduce unnecessary ZBA cases. One instance one of these pinch points includes integrating right-to-farm laws into the Town's zoning bylaw. The Town should conduct a thorough diagnostic of the entire code, using the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals' experience working with local businesses and developers as a starting point; and referencing this Economic Development Plan's goals and strategies as a guide to recommending solutions.

Responsible Party : Planning Board

Priority Level: High

Case Studies: Numerous communities across Massachusetts have worked to "recodify" their zoning, including Andover, Arlington, Duxbury, Falmouth, Mattapoisett, Somerset, and Wrentham.

2. Create a user-friendly Development and Permitting Guide to encourage new business, home-base business, and existing business growth.

Many communities across Massachusetts create user-friendly economic development and permitting guides. These documents can take the form of concise handbooks, topic specific brochures, marketing campaigns, E-Government webpages, or a coordinated combination of all the above. These "Permitting Guides" use graphic design, flow charts, and simple diagrams to help describe and simplify required procedures, to identify departmental points of contact, and to highlight fees, resources, and timelines needed to obtain various permits in town. Dighton's Guide should also prominently feature the many assets that make it an attractive place to live and do business, such as its agricultural character, and its proximity to Route 44 and 138.

The City of Taunton and the Towns of Mansfield and Middleborough recently created Economic Development Guides through the Community Compact Program and the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Program.

Responsible Party: Town Administrator, all permitting disciplines, DDIC

Priority Level: Medium

Case Studies: The City of Taunton and the Towns of Mansfield and Middleborough recently created Economic Development Guides through the Community Compact Program and the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Program.



Figure 18. Main Street (SRPEDD)

ZONING AMENDMENTS

Influencing and managing town-wide development

3. Clarify mixed-use zoning regulations to facilitate redevelopment, reuse, and infill development along key corridors and neighborhoods.

In the last 10 years, Dighton created new zoning overlay districts with the explicit goal to encourage redevelopment, promote the full use of existing structures, and facilitate infill development. These goals were particularly germane to the Route 138 Corridor and neighborhoods at the intersections of Center and Main Street at Route 138. As such, Dighton created the Mixed-Use (2015) and Village Overlay District (2016) to achieve these goals. However, in the wake of their adoption, the town has seen little to no development that promotes compact building form, protects and enhances the value of land and buildings, and provides for a variety of business and residential uses. This Plan compares the two overlay districts to better understand why they have failed to produce the type of development Dighton expressly desired along these key areas.

Uses allowed by right and special permit within both districts fail to meet the spirit of the town's desired outcomes. Both the Mixed-Use Overlay and Village Overlay Districts allow their underlying districts uses by-right. For the Mixed-Use Overlay this includes Residential and Business, while the Village is limited to the Residential district. Both overlay districts also utilize the underlying districts dimensional regulations, which means that the minimum lot sizes within the Mixed-Use district must be 18,750 and 35,000 s.f. respectively in areas with an underlying Business District and Residential districts. Both Overlay districts require a special permit for mixed-use and infill development, while single family housing is allowed by right. Furthermore, utilization of underlying districts dimensional requirements prevents infill and village-style development patterns given challenges presented by minimum lot size, frontage and set back requirements, as well as the allowed maximum building coverage. All these factors combined may prevent the desired development outcomes Dighton set out to facilitate by adopting these overlay districts in the first place.

Mixed-use is a tool for economic development, particularly for small business growth. To support this type of economic development, Dighton should revisit both the Mixed-Use and Village Overlay District to tailor the dimensional requirements to their desired development outcomes. Within the Village Overlay District, this may include reducing the minimum lot size, frontage, and setbacks, while increasing maximum building coverage. Amendments to the Mixed-Use Overlay District may also include reducing the minimum lot size but keeping frontage and setbacks to ensure consistency with existing surrounding developments. In addition, the Town should explore allowing mixed-use by right in Village and Mixed-use overlay disricts to support infill and village-style development.

Responsible Party: Planning Board and DDIC

Priority Level: High

Dighton's economic strategy entails the adoption and extension of new mixed-uses along key sites and corridors:



Route 44

To elevate uses and enhance the character of Route 44, Dighton may consider establishing a new mixed-use overlay district in this area. Scattered with auto retailers and machinery, the corridor lacks character. As the gateway to Dighton, Route 44 should represent a welcoming corridor. Mixed-use would support demands for walkability, diverse housing, and new small business opportunities.



Interplast

Currently zoned Industrial, with a Medical Overlay, Interplast has not produced the expected medical activities the town sought. Though there is some industrial activity, the site is largely underutilized and vacant. The town should consider expanding mixed-use and artisan zoning to support infill and redevelopment as envisioned in this plan.

ZONING AMENDMENTS

Influencing and managing town-wide development

4. Support the continued operation and growth of Home-Based businesses.

Almost 200 Dighton residents operate home-based businesses, which contribute to a community of makers. Review of the Town's zoning bylaws addressing home-based business operations revealed that Dighton allows home-occupations as accessory uses by right and special permit. According to the American Planning Association, municipalities should regulate home-based businesses by factors related to the business and not the business type itself. Dighton follows this best practice and considers floor area, parking, number of employees, and signage. Food establishments are required to acquire permits through the town, however other home-based occupations are not explicitly regulated. In 2023, Dighton implemented an online permitting system, that is envisioned to help facilitate the acquisition of permits for all businesses, including home-based businesses.

Despite Dighton's regulatory ease for managing the operations of home-based businesses, certain restrictions may create barriers to small business operation. For example, home-based businesses must operate within a building or structure that has been in existence for at least 5 years. The Town may consider revisiting this particular requirement, which prevents home-based businesses from creating dedicated, modern spaces within and separate from their home in a barn or studio to carry out their home-based businesses. Eliminating this regulation but incorporating conditions to manage construction or extension of structures, should continue to meet the spirit of Dighton's approach to home-occupations, while mitigating impacts to the surrounding community.

Responsible Party : Planning Board and DDIC

Priority Level: Intermediate

Case Studies: The Town of Maynard has a dedicated page on their Town website detailing important information about the process of starting a home-based business and detailing which types are allowable.



Figure 19. Bayberry Farm & Floral Co. (Taunton Gazette)

5. Provide clear expectations for rural landscape design to enhance and maintain Dighton's rural character particularly along industrial and sub-division developments.

With demand for housing and commercial developments increasing throughout the region, rural towns such as Dighton will experience inevitable growth. But growth doesn't necessarily have to mean changed or lost small town character! In addition to ensuring that key sites – such as Zeneca, Interplast, and Spring Street – are the areas where the town wants to allow and attract redevelopment, Dighton can preserve its rural character through landscape design guidelines in other prominent locations. Research and public feedback indicate that developments that highlight protected open space or vegetation along public ways are perceived more favorably.[4] Rural character and development can be complementary with the proper guidelines in place.

Dighton's Zoning Bylaws include General Landscaping Requirements, and it is a required element of the Town's Site Plan Review. Though Dighton seeks to utilize landscaping to "preserve or improve the visual and environmental character of [Town]", the details of the landscaping requirements are vague. In its overhaul of town-wide zoning, Dighton should revisit its landscape design guidelines, providing clear and visual representations of the types of rural landscaping most appropriate for the community. To make implementation of these guidelines clear, the Town may integrate them into the site plan review process. Rural landscape design guidelines will preserve natural features and accessory buildings, such as barns, to maintain the traditional landscape in town, particularly along major roadways.

Responsible Party : Planning Board and DDIC

Priority Level: Medium

Case Studies: The City of Peabody provides a clear case study in the implementation of landscape design guidelines. By defining the general purpose of providing landscape guidelines, and providing specific conditions based on development types, the City ensures compliance and continuation of visual character for both residents and visitors.



Figure 20. Solar Field (SRPEDD)

ZONING AMENDMENTS

Influencing and managing town-wide development

6. Integrate Artisan Zoning into bylaws to provide space for small-scale manufacturers that produce little to no vibration, noise, fumes, or other nuisances, meaning they can fit within a wide variety of industrial, commercial, and even residential districts.

Manufacturing is one of the top industries in Dighton; however the industry itself is changing and evolving. When municipalities think of manufacturing, and attracting employers in this industry, they no longer think of factories, smoke stacks, and assembly lines. In fact, as the trend to purchase hyper-local and artisan products continues to rise, municipalities may see an increase in local makers and manufacturers specializing in craft goods. This is a potential area for growth – especially in a rural, agricultural community such as Dighton. Zoning is a critical barrier to ensuring producers such as bakers, brewers, woodworkers, and other specialty artisans have access to affordable spaces and growing a diversified and scaled economy.[5]

Artisan Zoning is an innovative solution touted by the Urban Manufacturing Alliance to enable small-scale manufacturers. Given constraints to water and sewer infrastructure, as well local interest for smaller and moderate scale developments, artisan zoning promotes activities that produce negligible vibrations, noise, and fumes, which makes these activities suitable for communities like Dighton that seek to increase tax revenues and small business opportunities without compromising local character. Artisan Zoning strategies support neighborhood revitalization, giving new life to vacant or underutilized sites. In Dighton, these types of zoning changes would be most impactful at Interplast and Spring Street Mill.

Responsible Party: Planning Board and DDIC

Priority Level: High

Case Studies: The City of Framingham has developed bylaws meant to encourage "artisan" uses, which facilitate light manufacturing activities within compact spaces such as a coffee roastery like Saxonville Mills Cafe & Roastery.



Figure 21. Saxonville Mills Cafe & Roastery (Saxonville Mills Facebook)

7. Adopt a riverfront overlay to support riverfront dependent uses, to ensure the long-term sustainbility of these industries, and to promote commercial access to the waterfront.

Dighton is bordered by the Three Mile and Taunton River along the north and eastern edge of town. These areas support limited riverfront uses such as marinas, yatch clubs, and boatyards. Though the riverfront is undoubtedly a natural asset, this plan considers the economic potential of tapping into attractive riverfront sites that would continue to support water based uses while enhancing complementary commercial activities.

Dighton's most prominent riverfront activities take place in the south at Shaw's Boatyard, Shawomet Yatch Club, and the Taunton Yatch Club. Currently zoned for Open Space and Recreation, the current zoning does not support commercial uses that would complement the activities at these sites including restaurants, coffee shops, as well as water based service retailers.

According to the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), by enabling the comingling of water-based activities and compatible commercial uses where appropriate, while protecting and ensuring access to the waterfront, coastal and waterfront communities can provide the basis for more sustainable growth that allows residents and businesses to thrive.[6] Dighton should explore nearby overlay districts focused on enhancing the commercial activity of the waterfront districts. Nearby communities like Dartmouth incorporate a variety of uses that may be suitable for Dighton's riverfront sites.

Responsible Party : Planning Board and DDIC

Priority Level: Medium

Case Studies: The Town of Dartmouth implemented the Waterfront Overlay District in their Padanaram Village. The Overlay district allows marinas and water-based activities by right. Alternative, but complementary uses such as restaurants and retail require a special permit to manage potential growth in sensitive and scenic areas.



Figure 22. Shaws Boatyard (SRPEDD)

RURAL ECONOMY

Promoting and protecting Dighton's natural resources

1. Enhance access and connections to the Wild and Scenic Taunton and the Three-Mile Rivers.

Dighton benefits from having access to some of the most scenic and well recognized rivers in the region, but key areas around the Wild and Scenic Taunton and Three-Mile Rivers are underutilized. These underutilized areas represent an opportunity for the Town to provide improved access to Dighton's coastline and, where feasible and desired, encourage developments that complement the natural environment and enhance Dighton's great natural beauty.

According to the most recent Open Space and Recreation Plan for the Town and the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan of 2017, residents have shared through survey responses or through discussions at workshops that one of their most requested recreational facilities in Town were water/beach access. The increased demand for this type of recreational facility comes at an auspicious time due to the redevelopment potential of several of the notable sites, including Interplast and Spring Street Mill, which sit on the edge of these important bodies of water. To capitalize on redevelopment with improvements to water access would solve several problems simultaneously, while enhancing the overarching goals of this project.

Enhancing physical access to the rivers is one step; the town should also emphasize the presence of these access points via signage and branding. Providing signage indicates a connected network and also improves visibility of resources and access points throughout town

Responsible Party : Town Administrator, Planning Board, private partners and landowners

Priority Level: High

Case Studies: In 2022, Norton developed a Water Access Master Plan in conjunction with SRPEDD. This plan is meant to enhance recreational activities and access on Norton's bodies of water.



Figure 23. Taunton River (SRPEDD)

2. Prioritize connections and investment to the Taunton River Trail, partnering with local advocacy groups.

As the Dighton Economic Development Plan recommends investment and revitalization of key sites along the waterfront, it also recommends prioritizing connections to the Taunton River Trail. The proposed route of the trail will run through the eastern portion of Dighton and is currently slated as an on-road path. Dighton should encourage bike-friendly accommodations at new developments along the proposed trail, particularly within the Village and Shaw's boatyard, but also key sites outlined in this study including Interplast and Spring Street Mill. Furthermore, Dighton should encourage the bike trail to continue along the former rail in Dighton and run through several key sites in this study. Redevelopment at these sites capitalizes on connections to the Taunton River Trail and planned investments at Sweets Knoll State Park. The Town should work closely with the Taunton River Trail and Dighton Pathways Committee to develop the trail and adjacent areas accordingly.

Responsible Party: DDIC, Conservation Commission, Dighton Trails Committee, Taunton River Trails Committee

Priority Level: High



Figure 24. Taunton River Trail (Department of Conservation & Recreation)

RURAL ECONOMY

Promoting and protecting Dighton's natural resources

3. Enhance agricultural economy through the development of agricultural or incubator space .

Though agriculture plays a smaller role in Dighton's economy than it once did, farming is still an important part of the town's character and culture. This is true for many former agricultural towns; however, Dighton can enhance its agricultural economy through incubator space meant to support the industry's growth and modernization. The town benefits from stakeholders invested in the agricultural outcomes of the community including the Agricultural Commission, Bristol Agricultural High School , and the Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP). Establishing an agricultural incubator would develop partnerships among Dighton and regional agribusiness representatives, researchers, and educators committed to establishing programs that will stimulate interest in and respect for food systems and agriculture as a mainstay in the area economy.

Facing similar trends, Hope & Main in Warren, RI was created to support new and growing food businesses. Hope & Main provides manufacturing and co-packing services to start-up food businesses. Partnerships with local farms produce jams, sauces, pickles, and purees. In addition to these services, Hope & Main offers educational courses, supporting young entrepreneurs in the agricultural and food industries with business planning, product development, regulatory compliance, food safety and more. Since 2014, Hope & Main launched over 300 businesses ranging from food trucks, catering companies, and specialty food manufacturers among other. In addition, Hope & Main opened a downtown marketplace where all goods made in the incubator space can be sold.

The model presented by Hope & Main would support Dighton's agricultural economy, particularly at sites such as Spring Street Mill or Interplast. An incubator space would provide a venue for students from Bristol Aggie and entrepreneurs across the region to explore the industry before establishing their own private brick and mortar shop, while creating opportunity to centralize the sale of local goods in once space.

Responsible Party: Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, DDIC, private developers and landowners, local partners

Priority Level: Medium

Case Studies: Hope & Main



Figure 25. Kitchen Demonstration, Hope & Main (Coastal Resource Center)

4. Update zoning and create design guidelines to encourage waterfront businesses that promote boating, fishing, recreation, and related services.

Running along the eastern side of Dighton, the Taunton River and the Three-Mile River represent untapped opportunities for economic development and complementary activity. However, public access to the rivers is limited, and businesses and residents do not currently use the river's economic and recreational potential. Dighton should consider creating and adopting Riverfront Design Guidelines for Industrial and Business zones along the river to establish standards for the visual quality of any future development; the town could also revisit these zoning districts to ensure that they allow the full range of uses and activities desired. These design guidelines should simultaneously protect sensitive natural areas, while encouraging low impact connections, such as waterfront dining opportunities, trails, parks, and recreational activities that attract visitors and residents alike.

Municipalities with similar riverfronts recognize this asset as a catalyst for development. For example, Dover, New Hampshire implemented Waterfront Design Guideline[7] in 2008 to manage development along the Cochecho River. Dover emphasized the integration of riverfront access and circulation, providing specific guidance for waterfront facing private development, common spaces, and pedestrian access. Adopting riverfront design guidelines will ensure that new developments on the river, such as those envisioned for Interplast, Spring Street and Shaw's Boatyard, will enhance connections to the Taunton and Three-Mile; these activities can include outdoor dining, value added agriculture and agri-tourism, and marinas, boating, and recreation.

Responsible Party: Planning Board, DDIC, Conservation Commission, private developers and landowners

Priority Level: High

Case Studies: In 2020, the Town of Swampscott developed a Harbor and Waterfront Plan to help guide the process of redeveloping the area as well as to expand recreational access to their major harbor. The plan also provides recommendations for the enhancement and protection of natural and man-made resources on the waterfront.



Figure 26. Finz Restaurant, Swamscott (Finz)

INFRASTRUCTURE

Improving local infrastructure and maintenance

1. Pursue additional Inter-Municipal Agreements for Wastewater Service with nearby communities.

Dighton's water and sewer service areas are limited to portions of North Dighton (sewer) and areas along major roadways (water). Even though the town only uses a portion of its current sewer capacity allotment from Taunton , industrial growth along Route 44 is constrained by the lack of available water and sewer lines, themselves. Dighton should pursue further Inter-Municipal Agreements (IMAs) with Somerset, Taunton, or Fall River to provide sewer service to key development sites such as Zeneca, Main Street, and Interplast. These agreements can set the table for the design and construction of the infrastructure.

IMAs are a common solution for Massachusetts communities to address concerns with both drinking water and sewer facilities and their use. In fact, Taunton already provides sewer service to portions of North Dighton through an IMA signed in 1973.[8] According to the State's guidance , IMAs present a series of benefits that should encourage residents to support implementation.[9] Benefits include lower costs for cooperating communities and improved efficiencies with permitting, administration, and billing. These efficiencies often result in lower rates for users overtime due to the larger service areas covered by consolidated facilities and administration. Generally, communities interested in expanding water and sewer capacity will implement formal written contracts to set the terms of the agreement between both communities. Tonw executives and Boards of Selectmen are responsible for approval of IMAs.

This Plan identified partnerships with Fall River, Taunton, or Somerset given existing relationships, as well as proximity to infrastructure that would facilitate connections. Implementing the IMAs will enable growth, particularly among industrial and commercial uses that generate higher tax revenues.

Responsible Party : Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, Water District, Sewer Commission

Priority Level: High

Case Studies: In 2021, the Towns of Swansea and Somerset entered into an inter-municipal agreement for sewer services. As part of the agreement, the Town of Swansea receives sewer services along the Route 6 corridor to establish increased economic development while the Town of Somerset receives additional funding that the town can use to support upgrades to their previously existing sewer infrastructure.

2. Pursue grant funding to engineer and construct infrastructure improvements.

Expanding water and sewer capacity is key to facilitating growth and increasing revenues. Unfortunately, infrastructure improvements are cost-prohibitive to many communities, like Dighton. As such, the town should strategically plan these improvements to prepare for future grant opportunities.

State-funded water and sewer infrastructure grants are limited; they also award grants to projects that promote economic development and present shovel ready plans. Dighton should plan to fund design and engineering along major corridors which they wish to connect to new or expanded infrastructure. As a rural community, USDA offers Water & Waste Disposal Predevelopment Planning Grants that are tied exclusively to population size. Alternatively, the Community One Stop for Growth Grant Program through the State provides predevelopment funding through MassWorks that would support design and engineering activities. In this way, the Town generates interest along prime corridors and sites, signaling to developers they are pursuing improvements, while making future construction applications more attractive.

With design and engineering complete, the town can prepare to submit grants to support construction. Depending on the ultimate goal of development – industrial, rural development initiatives, or residential – Dighton should consider sources for funding. The following organizations provide infrastructure construction grants:

- MassWorks – The MassWorks Infrastructure Program is a competitive grant program that provides the largest and most flexible source of capital funds to municipalities and other eligible public entities primarily for public infrastructure projects that support and accelerate housing production, spur private development, and create jobs throughout the Commonwealth.
- EDA Public Works - EDA's Public Works program assists distressed communities revitalize, expand, and upgrade their physical infrastructure. This program enables communities to attract new industry, encourage business expansion, diversify local economies, generate local investment, and create or retain long-term jobs through infrastructure improvement projects that establish or expand industrial or commercial enterprises.
- CDBG – Community Development Block Grants provide funding for a variety of activities that benefit underrepresented groups, and that includes water and sewer expansion.
- USDA – USDA's Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program provides funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and storm water drainage to households and businesses in eligible rural areas.

Responsible Party : Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, Water District, Sewer Commission

Priority Level: High

Case Studies: The City of Taunton applied successfully for MassWorks grant funding totaling in $3.1 million during the 2010's to develop infrastructure at the Myles Standish Industrial Park.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Improving local infrastructure and maintenance

3. Work with the Dighton Water District to collaborate and enhance efficiencies.

First established in 19XX, the Dighton Water District provides water to residents throughout Dighton. The District sources water from a total of three wells; one along Cedar Street and two off Walker Street. Governed by a Board of Commissioners, the District operates under their own set of bylaws and rules and regulations, separate from the Town government, but elected by Dighton residents. Over the years, this type of independence has resulted in missed opportunities for collaboration with the Town and operational efficiencies.

As in many small towns, Dighton's residents appreciate fiscal responsibility and a fair tax burden. To address these common demands, the Town of Dighton has worked to adopt various financial best practices in recent years, placing emphasis on the relationship between the Town of Dighton and the Dighton Water District. The Town's financial departments are regularly involved with the Water District's rate-setting and collection process. However, residents would benefit further from additional collaborative planning and coordination across the organizations, representing potential cost savings. The Town Administration seeks to balance the needs of overall municipal operations with water system capital and infrastructure improvements, utility upgrades, and community development issues. The Dighton Water District continues to see regular transitions in staff leadership positions, which further highlights to need to identify and integrate opportunities for collaboration and efficiency including:

- Organizational Structure (Legal, Statutory, Institutional and Governance Matters)
- Technical Issues (Engineering, Planning, Design, Construction Standards, Regulatory Requirements, Resource Challenges, Staffing, Standard Operating Procedures, Emergency Operations, System Configurations and Interconnections)
- Financial Issues (Tax and Customer Base, Rate and Fee Structures, Tax Equity, Retained Revenues and Free Cash, Levy Capacities, Debt Schedules, Costs of Operations, Budgeting, Accounting Standards, Valuations and Assessments, Billing and Accounts Receivable, Asset Accounting and Management).

To assess the District's needs, challenges, and opportunities, the town should pursue the development of a feasibility study to identify existing overlapping organization structures between the Town of Dighton and the Dighton Water District, and to evaluate opportunities for potential consolidation and efficiency. By enabling a neutral third party to carry out the feasibility study, the consultant would work with both entities to assess and make recommendations on the current structure and relationship between them.

Responsible Party : Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, Dighton Water District

Priority Level: Medium

Case Studies: In 2022, the Town of Plainville developed a Water Treatment Plant Feasibility Study to determine the best course of whether to expand or replace their current plant at Turnpike Lake.

4. Pursue pedestrian improvements along major corridors to enhance connections to natural resources and increase economic viability.

In the last update of Dighton's Open Space and Recreation Plan, prepared in 2021, the Town demonstrated the need for developing a system of continuous bikeways, walkways, and trails. Currently, most of the Town lacks bicycle accommodations, such as bicycle lanes and properly marked or signed roads for bicycle use. The Massachusetts Rural Policy Plan (2019) emphasized recommendations to increase multi-modal opportunities in rural communities, and couple this with funding.[10] A 2012 Study by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy dispelled the notion that walking and biking were big city demands; more individuals want to be able to walk or bike around their community – even in rural communities such as Dighton.[11]

In 2017, Dighton partnered with SRPEDD to develop the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan that generated a list of roadway infrastructure projects. As a result, Dighton today is considered a Tier 3 community which makes the town eligible for capital funding to implement identified projects.

So far, Dighton received $277,500 to fund the Center Street sidewalks, the Pearl Street crosswalk and walkway improvements and the installation of bicycle signage throughout the town. Dighton should continue to pursue capital funding for remaining priority projects that will benefit key sites such as Spring Street Mill and mixed-use corridors such as Main Street and Route 138. Should Dighton choose to go beyond these efforts, the Town may consider development of a Bike & Pedestrian Plan, which has a broader range of applications. A town-wide Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan may identify gaps in the system and propose solutions for a safe and visible bicycle and pedestrian network between neighborhoods, schools, parks, community centers, and employment centers. The plan identifies opportunities to tap into funding sources and partnerships, including MassDOT and Community One Stop for Growth. More importantly, this plan will allow residents and business owners to identify areas of concern and help communicate investment priorities moving forward.

Dighton also completed a Pavement Management Plan to guide infrastructure maintenance and improvements. The Town should continue these complementary efforts. For example, Dighton secured $2.5 million from the 2022 Federal Omnibus Appropriations Act for the replacement of the Pleasant Street Bridge. These funds followed the town's approval of $500,000 in upfront feasibility, engineering and design costs. The Pleasant Street Bridge serves as an important link along the Pleasant Street riverfront area and provides important connections to properties included in the Route 138 Village Overlay District.

Responsible Party: Town Administrator, Highway Superintendent

Priority Level: High

Case Studies: In 2021, in the City of Watertown develop a Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan in order to identify areas of need in the city as well as to take stock of their current relevant infrastructure.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Improving local infrastructure and maintenance

5. Pursue drinking water and infrastructure protection MassDEP grants.

Nearby communities in the region struggle with water quality issues that impact both quality of life and economic outcomes.[12] In Dighton, increasing carcinogens and other harmful substances in sources of drinking water threaten water resources. In 2023, the Dighton Water District distributed public notices announcing elevated disinfection byproduct of trihalomethanes in the system. Since 2022, Dighton has seen steady increases in trihalomethanes as a result of the aging infrastructure of the system and particularly the Elm Street Water Tank.[13] Chronic water quality issues can deter prospective developers and residents hoping to move or establish a business in Town. Dighton should approach water quality proactively to protect its current and future resources. To meet these needs, Dighton may pursue funding to update, maintain, and improve water quality infrastructure. MassDEP has several grant programs for enhancing infrastructure and to mitigate the impacts of PFAs, including the following:

- Gap Energy Grant Program - The Massachusetts Gap Energy Grant Program provides state grant assistance to Municipal and District drinking water and wastewater treatment facilities for installing energy efficiency measures (e.g., variable speed drives,; pumping, aeration, and HVAC upgrades etc.) and clean energy generation projects (solar photovoltaic, in-line hydro-power, water source heat pumps etc.) at their plants and pumping stations.
- Interim PFAS6 Response Program – MassDEP has made $2 million available to help offset the cost of emergency response to MCL exceedances of "PFAS6" (the sum of six per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) contamination in drinking water.
- PFAS Treatment Grant - MassDEP offers a grant program to support the design of systems for treatment of drinking water in PFAS-impacted communities. The grant program also includes reimbursement for costs and expenses already incurred by impacted communities for the design of treatment systems for PFAS.
- Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant Program – A Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services grant program to provide financial assistance to purchase land to protect MassDEP approved drinking water sources.

Responsible Party: Water Districts

Priority Level: Medium

Case Studies: In 2022, the Town of Chicopee applied successfully for Gap Energy Grant Program funds in order to purchase and install a new water treatment system at the Water Pollution Control Facility.



Figure 27. Three Mile River (SRPEDD)

BROWNFIELD REMEDIATION

Revitalizing underutilized and abandoned properties

1. Immediately pursue environmental assessment and remediation for Brownfield sites.

Dighton is home to several brownfield sites – a legacy to its successful industrial past. Today, these sites no longer contribute to the town's character or taxes in the way they once did – in fact, some sites are eyesores producing significantly reduced value to the town than they did as recently as the early 2000s, when both sites still hosted more active uses.

All the same, these former industrial sites represent great economic development potential and clear opportunities for a new vision of activity and investment in town. Dighton should pursue environmental assessment and remediation for both Spring Street Mill and Zeneca. Remediation is not a one step process, particularly when both parcels are privately owned. Brownfield redevelopment scenarios typically take the form of one of three types of structures: private, public, or public-private partnership.

As part of the SRPEDD regional planning area, Dighton is eligible to participate in the organization's Brownfields Community Assessment Grant awarded through the EPA. This grant enables SRPEDD to conduct Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA), Phase II ESA, and Site Clean Up Plans. In addition, SRPEDD will engage with communities with qualifying brownfield sites to conduct reuse planning activities based on the findings of the assessments.

Dighton should pursue close partnerships with the owners of both Spring Street Mill and Zeneca to pursue the following activities:

Phase I ESA – Assessment of current and historical uses of a property to determine impacts of use upon soil or groundwater beneath the property. This report required a site visit to observe current and past conditions and uses of the property and adjacent properties; review of historical records, such as aerial photographs, fire insurance maps (Sanborn maps), historical city directories, and historical topographic maps.

Phase II ESA - Evaluate the presence of petroleum products or hazardous substances in a site's subsurface. This typically entails a subsurface investigation test for soil, soil gas and/or groundwater to identify sources of environmental impacts.

Responsible Party : Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, Building Commissioner, Planning Board, DDIC

Priority Level: High

Case Studies: The City of Taunton received $200,000 from the State's Brownfields Redevelopment Fund to remove petroleum from the soil on the parcels at 5-7 Nickerson Ave., which the city owned since 2013. Funding is intended to kick-start a redevelopment process that ultimately results in new development with the goals of stabilizing neighborhoods, adding jobs and homes, and increasing the City's tax base.

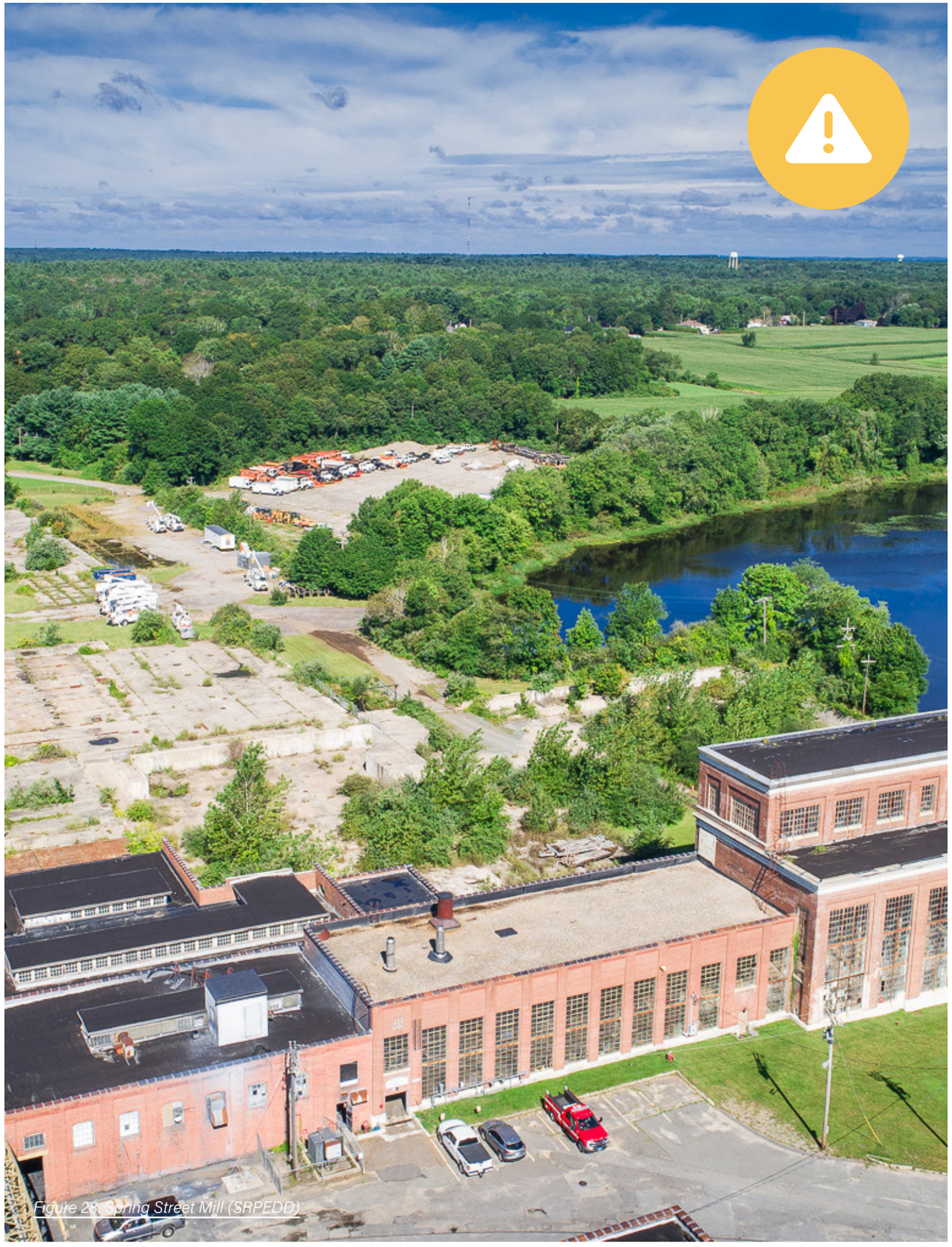


Figure 28: Spring Street Mill (SRPEDD)

BROWNFIELD REMEDIATION

Revitalizing underutilized and abandoned properties

2. Establish a brownfields redevelopment working group to steer assessment, remediation, and subsequent development (contingent on findings).

The Town of Dighton should immediately begin the process of determining if sites in Town, such as Spring Street Mill and Zeneca, are applicable for brownfield site remediation and redevelopment. If these sites are determined to be eligible, the Town should begin to organize a Brownfields Remediation and Redevelopment Working Group. This group should include Town staff, including the Town Administrator, as well as representatives coming from the Development & Industrial Commission, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and at-large members, etc. Since State and Federal funding are a possibility with this project, it would be beneficial to include a representative from the regional planning agency and MassDEP.

Responsible Party : Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, Building Commissioner, Planning Board, DDIC

Priority Level: Medium

Case Studies: The City of Attleboro organized the Brownfields Task Force to steer the remediation and redevelopment of brownfields within the city, resulting in the construction of the TOD district and open space. The committee includes local and state officials, regional partners, and members of the Redevelopment Authority.

3. Pursue 43D Expedited Permitting upon former brownfield sites to facilitate and promote industrial development activity in town.

Chapter 43D Expedited Permitting is one program that facilitates future high value commercial, industrial, or residential growth on priority sites. Several brownfield sites in Dighton, such as Zeneca and Spring Street Mill, would benefit from 43D Priority Development Site (PDS) designation to facilitate permitting and enable meaningful and swift development.

To expand Chapter 43D participation to these brownfield sites in town, Dighton should work with current property owners to designate them as 43D Sites. The Town should apply through the Community One Stop for Growth portal and reference the Municipal Self-Assessment Checklist to determine Dighton's preparedness for designation. Ultimately, designation takes place through Town Meeting.

With official designation, these sites achieve priority consideration for the MassWorks Infrastructure Program and brownfield remediation funding through the state and MassDevelopment. The goal is to support their redevelopment to tax generating entities.

Responsible Party: Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, Building Commissioner, Planning Board, DDIC

Priority Level: High

Case Studies: In 2008, the City of Gardner was approved for 3 sites to go through 43D Expedited Permitting. As a part of this approval, the City received a $60k grant from the State for technical assistance.



Figure 29, Zeneca (SRPEDD)

CHARACTER & PLACEMAKING

Enhancing Dighton's small town identity and neighborhoods

1. Develop a coordinated wayfinding and signage model for town-wide, multi-use conservation and recreation properties, assets, and marketing opportunities.

While most people have smartphones with a digital map, physical signage plays an important part of orienting visitors and residents as they navigate any community by car, on foot, or by bike. Standardized wayfinding signage can also help establish a Town identity and "branding" through direct marketing. It can also help direct people to landmarks and key locations, such as Town Hall, schools, Bristol Aggie, Sweets Knoll, the new Library, and other key nodes Dighton seeks to highlight. Wayfinding will also connect Dighton's recreational pathways and open spaces.

Wayfinding signage should be coordinated with the final designs for the Taunton River Trail to identify entrances and also direct visitors to rest stops and local businesses. Signage should be easily readable, consistent in color palette and shape, highly visible, and include times and distances. Signs should be limited and consolidated to avoid clutter and decrease confusion. Signage should be located at key intersections and gateways. Non-traditional options, such as murals, sidewalk markings, and digital offerings can also help as part of a broader wayfinding strategy. Depending on resources available, a small community engagement process could be useful to solicit feedback on design, locations, and color palette. Dighton could tap into state funding resources to pursue the implementation of this recommendation.

Responsible Party : Planning Board and DDIC

Priority Level: Medium

Case Studies: In 2019, the Town of Bristol successfully developed wayfinding signage to direct visitors and residents to key amenities and activities in town.



Figure 30. Town of Bristol (Facebook)

2. Expand programming and resources to strengthen the economic vitality through small business technical support, specifically among home-based businesses.

According to the State's Rural Policy Plan, rural communities like Dighton rely on small, independent locally owned businesses that often lack major networks of support and assistance. Due to the proliferation of home-based businesses in town, Dighton's small business community is particularly vulnerable to economic downturns. Dighton's small business advocates and committees should facilitate connections with the town and other resources to enhance their sustainability and resilience.

Given the high concentration of home-based businesses in Dighton, many of its small businesses fly under the radar of visitors and residents. Though the state requires all small businesses to register with their local clerk (M.G.L. Ch. 110, Section 5) Dighton has no way to enforce this to identify and keep track of home-based businesses in the community. The City of Lowell regulates home-based businesses through their zoning bylaws, like Dighton. However, the City's bylaw states that all home-based businesses must register with the city clerk.

Utilizing a registration or permitting system, Dighton could highlight the role of home-based businesses in Dighton's economy by establishing a formal network of Dighton Small Businesses. In effect, this would highlight businesses with brick-and-mortar locations and those who operate exclusively from their homes. If consumers are more aware of home-based businesses – especially local ones – they know to visit their retail website to purchase directly or find stores that sell their goods. Furthermore, the DDIC could establish a process to host "ribbon-cuttings" for home-based businesses that are established or mark significant periods in Dighton. This would signal to home-based business owners that Dighton is aware of their presence and available to provide resources when needed.

Building connections and partnerships between small and home-based businesses and local organizations that provide support and technical assistance will enhance the town's resilience and strengthen small business overall. The Taunton Area Chamber of Commerce is a resource to the Town, hosting local business events. Though the Chamber does require membership, there are other regional resources that come at no cost including the South Eastern Economic Development (SEED) Corporation, SCORE, and the Massachusetts Small Business Development Center. These organizations provide business planning, mentorship, and technical assistance. Importantly, these organizations are also key resources to connect to state and federal small business funding opportunities.

Coupled with opportunities to test business ventures such as the proposed agricultural and food-base incubator, Dighton should implement infrastructure and resources to strengthen its small business community.

Responsible Party: DDIC

Priority Level: High

Case Studies: The City of Lowell enables and manages home occupations by incorporating language in their zoning bylaw to allow Home Occupations by right or special permit that requires their registration as a business with the City Clerk. This increases transparency and enables the City to conduct targeted outreach as needed.

CHARACTER & PLACEMAKING

Enhancing Dighton's small town identity and neighborhoods

3. Promote Agri-tourism and farm diversification to preserve Dighton's rural character and diversify economic viability of local farms.

Within the last half century, the number of farmers declined in the region and Dighton. The declining population of farmers is attributed to many factors, including innovations in mechanized farming, increased efficiency, cost of maintenance, and other employment opportunities. Without intervention, this trend will likely continue. To mitigate the further decline of this industry in Town, Dighton should take steps to facilitate farm diversification and promote technical and financial support.

In 2018, Dighton adopted the Right to Farm to its General Bylaws. In doing so, the Town cemented its support for the pursuit of agriculture and the economic opportunities that it entails. The bylaw facilitates and allows, by right, agricultural activities that would be challenging to pursue in its absence. In addition, the Town established an Agricultural Commission which advocates for issues that impact agricultural activity in town, and enhances coordination between Town Departments and Commissions, such as the Board of Health, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals.

Dighton's Right to Farm bylaw incorporates agri-tourism, which promotes farm-diversification to enable off-season activities. With additional streams of income throughout the year, farmers can enhance their financial stability. However, the definition of agri-tourism is limited to activities that market the agricultural output of the farm or its services.[14] These activities include tours of a working farm, "pick-your-own-fruit," and farm stays (bed & breakfast), among others. It is unclear whether this includes weddings or events that can be the most lucrative farm-diversification activity. Dighton may consider clarifying the steps farms can take to pursue these types of activities on their properties to enhance future viability.

Dighton should consider aligning its goal to maintain the town's agriculture character with enhancing the diversity and stability of the farming industry.

Another means of mitigating the decline in farmers is to spread awareness of grant opportunities and provide technical assistance. Providing educational materials or referring farmers to the proper resources to help navigate processes for farm viability grants, land trust deals, MA Farm Viability Enhancement, and Entrepreneurial Business Training Program. Dighton should establish closer partnerships with members of SEMAP and local representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Dighton already benefits from an Agricultural Commission to guide these activities in town. However, they stand to play a greater role as the future of farming is most precarious during sales or transfers. The Agricultural Commission may consider emphasizing farm transfer planning to ensure agricultural land remains in the hands of farmers. Land for Good provides resources to begin this planning process and could be facilitated by the Agricultural Commission through trainings.

Responsible Party: Agricultural Commission, DDIC, SEMAP, Bristol Aggie

Priority Level: Medium

Case Studies: Established in 1888, the Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Association offers technical assistance to get farms in regulatory compliance, sponsoring professional development seminars and organizing association activities.



Figure 31. Bristol Aggie (SRPEDD)

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

A quick guide for all town-wide strategies and their relevant development opportunities.

To best navigate the various town-wide strategies in the Dighton Economic Development Plan, the following table serves as a guide to implementation. Summarizing the strategies, responsible parties, priority, and relevant case studies this provides an easily navigable tool to track implementation. The Implementation Table also provides the Key Sites that would most benefit from implementation. However, some strategies are not exclusively beneficial to one site, and thus indicates town-wide benefits.

Zoning Amendments	Responsible Party	Priority	Case Study	Key Sites
1. Complete a thorough review and comprehensive update of the zoning bylaw to address formatting, land uses, dimensional regulations, parking requirements, and supplemental development regulations.	Planning Board	High	Numerous communities across Massachusetts have worked to "recodify" their zoning, including Andover, Arlington, Duxbury, Falmouth, Mattapoisett, Somerset, and Wrentham.	Town-Wide
2. Create a user-friendly Development and Permitting Guide to encourage new business, home-base business, and existing business growth.	Town Administrator, all permitting disciplines, DDIC	Medium	The City of Taunton and the Towns of Mansfield and Middleborough recently created Economic Development Guides through the Community Compact Program and the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Program.	Town-Wide
3. Clarify mixed-use zoning regulations to facilitate redevelopment, reuse, and infill development along key corridors and neighborhoods.	Planning Board and DDIC	High		Spring Street Mill Interplast Zeneca Route 138 Route 44 Main Street
4. Support the continued operation and growth of Home-Based businesses.	Planning Board and DDIC	Medium	The Town of Maynard has a dedicated page on their Town website detailing important information about the process of starting a home-based business and detailing which types are allowable.	Town-Wide
5. Provide clear expectations for rural landscape design to enhance and maintain Dighton's rural character particularly along industrial and sub-division developments.	Planning Board and DDIC	Medium	The City of Peabody provides a clear case study in the implementation of landscape design guidelines. By defining the general purpose of providing landscape guidelines, and providing specific conditions based on development types, the City ensures compliance and continuation of visual character for both residents and visitors.	Town-Wide
6. Integrate Artisan Zoning into bylaws to provide space for small-scale manufacturers that produce little to no vibration, noise, fumes, or other nuisances, meaning they can fit within a wide variety of industrial, commercial, and even residential districts.	Planning Board and DDIC	High	The City of Framingham has developed bylaws meant to encourage "artisan" uses, which facilitate light manufacturing activities within compact spaces such as a coffee roastery like Saxonville Mills Cafe & Roastery.	Spring Street Mill Interplast
7. Adopt a riverfront overlay to support riverfront dependent uses, to ensure the long-term sustainbility of these industries, and to promote commercial access to the waterfront.	Planning Board and DDIC	Medium	The Town of Dartmouth implemented the Waterfront Overlay District in their Padanaram Village. The Overlay district allows marinas and water-based activities by right. Alternative, but complementary uses such as restaurants and retail require a special permit to manage potential growth in sensitive and scenic areas.	Riverfront Corridor

Rural Economy	Responsible Party	Priority	Case Study	Key Sites
1. Enhance access and connections to the Wild and Scenic Taunton and the Three-Mile Rivers.	Town Administrator, Planning Board, private partners and landowners	High	In 2022, Norton developed a Water Access Master Plan in conjunction with SRPEDD. This plan is meant to enhance recreational activities and access on Norton's bodies of water.	Spring Street Mill Interplast Riverfront Corridor
2. Prioritize connections and investment to the Taunton River Trail, partnering with local advocacy groups.	DDIC, Conservation Commission, Dighton Trails Committee, Taunton River Trails Committee	High		Spring Street Mill Interplast Riverfront Corridor
3. Enhance agricultural economy through the development of agricultural or incubator space .	Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, DDIC, private developers and landowners, local partners	Medium	Hope & Main in Warren, RI was created to support new and growing food businesses. Hope & Main provides manufacturing and co-packing services to start-up food businesses. Partnerships with local farms produce jams, sauces, pickles, and purees. In addition to these services, Hope & Main offers educational courses, supporting young entrepreneurs in the agricultural and food industries with business planning, product development, regulatory compliance, food safety and more. Since 2014, Hope & Main launched over 300 businesses ranging from food trucks, catering companies, and specialty food manufacturers among other. In addition, Hope & Main opened a downtown marketplace where all goods made in the incubator space can be sold.	Spring Street Mill Interplast
4. Update zoning and create design guidelines to encourage waterfront businesses that promote boating, fishing, recreation, and related services.	Planning Board, DDIC, Conservation Commission, private developers and landowners	High	In 2020, the Town of Swampscott developed a Harbor and Waterfront Plan to help guide the process of redeveloping the area as well as to expand recreational access to their major harbor. The plan also provides recommendations for the enhancement and protection of natural and man-made resources on the waterfront.	Spring Street Mill Interplast Riverfront Corridor

Infrastructure	Responsible Party	Priority	Case Study	Key Sites
1. Pursue additional Inter-Municipal Agreements for Wastewater Service with nearby communities.	Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, Water District, Sewer Commission	High	In 2021, the Towns of Swansea and Somerset entered into an inter-municipal agreement for sewer services. As part of the agreement, the Town of Swansea receives sewer services along the Route 6 corridor to establish increased economic development while the Town of Somerset receives additional funding that the town can use to support upgrades to their previously existing sewer infrastructure.	Zeneca Route 44 Main Street
2. Pursue grant funding to engineer and construct infrastructure improvements.	Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, Water District, Sewer Commission	High	The City of Taunton applied successfully for MassWorks grant funding totaling in $3.1 million during the 2010's to develop infrastructure at the Myles Standish Industrial Park.	Town-Wide
3. Work with the Dighton Water District to collaborate and enhance efficiencies.	Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, Dighton Water District	Medium	In 2022, the Town of Plainville developed a Water Treatment Plant Feasibility Study to determine the best course of whether to expand or replace their current plant at Turnpike Lake.	Town-Wide
4. Pursue pedestrian improvements along major corridors to enhance connections to natural resources and increase economic viability.	Town Administrator, Highway Superintendent	High	In 2021, in the City of Watertown develop a Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan in order to identify areas of need in the city as well as to take stock of their current relevant infrastructure.	Spring Street Mill Interplast Route 138 Route 44 Main Street Riverfront Corridor
5. Pursue drinking water and infrastructure protection MassDEP grants.	Water Districts	Medium	In 2022, the Town of Chicopee applied successfully for Gap Energy Grant Program funds in order to purchase and install a new water treatment system at the Water Pollution Control Facility.	Town-Wide

Brownfield Remediation	Responsible Party	Priority	Case Study	Key Sites
1. Immediately pursue environmental assessment and remediation for Brownfield sites.	Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, Building Commissioner, Planning Board, DDIC	High	The City of Taunton received $200,000 from the State's Brownfields Redevelopment Fund to remove petroleum from the soil on the parcels at 5-7 Nickerson Ave., which the city owned since 2013. Funding is intended to kick-start a redevelopment process that ultimately results in new development with the goals of stabilizing neighborhoods, adding jobs and homes, and increasing the City's tax base.	Spring Street Mill Zeneca
2. Establish a brownfields redevelopment working group to steer assessment, remediation, and subsequent development.	Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, Building Commissioner, Planning Board, DDIC	Medium	The City of Attleboro organized the Brownfields Task Force to steer the remediation and redevelopment of brownfields within the city, resulting in the construction of the TOD district and open space. The committee includes local and state officials, regional partners, and members of the Redevelopment Authority.	Spring Street Mill Zeneca
3. Pursue 43D Expedited Permitting upon former brownfield sites to facilitate and promote industrial development activity in town.	Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, Building Commissioner, Planning Board, DDIC	High	In 2008, the City of Gardner was approved for 3 sites to go through 43D Expedited Permitting. As a part of this approval, the City received a $60k grant from the State for technical assistance.	Spring Street Mill Zeneca

Character & Placemaking	Responsible Party	Priority	Case Study	Key Sites
1. Develop a coordinated wayfinding and signage model for town-wide, multi-use conservation and recreation properties, assets, and opportunities.	Planning Board and DDIC	Medium	In 2019, the Town of Bristol successfully developed wayfinding signage to direct visitors and residents to key amenities and activities in town.	Town-Wide
2. Expand programming and resources to strengthen the economic vitality through small business technical support, specifically among home-based businesses.	DDIC	High	The City of Lowell enables and manages home occupations by incorporating language in their zoning bylaw to allow Home Occupations by right or special permit that requires their registration as a business with the City Clerk. This increases transparency and enables the City to conduct targeted outreach as needed.	Town-Wide
3. Promote Agri-tourism and farm diversification to preserve Dighton's rural character and diversify economic viability of local farms.	Agricultural Commission, DDIC, SEMAP, Bristol Aggie	Medium	Established in 1888, the Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Association offers technical assistance to get farms in regulatory compliance, sponsoring professional development seminars and organizing association activities.	Town-Wide

ENDNOTES

1 Selectman Caron also addressed the importance of healthy schools and community engagement at the June 6, 2023 Town Meeting.
2 Town of Dighton Master Plan, Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District. (2014) Town of Dighton.
3 On some sites, many of these actions would be necessary for any type of redevelopment, not only the type envisioned in this plan.
4 Ryan, R. L. (2002). Preserving rural character in New England: Local residents' perceptions of alternative residential development. Landscape and Urban Planning, 61(1), 19–35.
5 Local Progress, & Urban Manufacturing Alliance. (2017). Artisan Zoning.
6 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. (2009). (rep.). Smart Growth for Coastal & Waterfront Communities.
7 Dover Waterfront Design Guidelines
8 Woodward & Curran, Dighton, MA Sewer Extension Feasibility Report, 2020
9 Inter-Municipal Agreements: A Best Practice
10 Rural Policy Advisory Commission, Rural Policy Plan for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (2019). Franklin Regional Council of Governments.
11 Loh, T. H., & Walljasper, J. (2010). Active Transportation Beyond Urban Centers - Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. Rails-to-trails Conservancy.
12 Norton well water shown to have high levels of manganese, The Sun Chronicle, July 15, 2021
13 Public Notice, 10/11/2023
14 Dighton General Bylaws



DIGHTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

SRPEDD
Southeastern **Regional Planning** & **Economic Development** District