

Minutes of Economic Development Chapter
Sub-Committee of Planning Commission

Members Present: Walter Clark, Michael Knoras, George McNaughton

Meeting Opened at 5:30 pm on September 19, 2015 at the Selectman's Room of the Springfield Town Hall and meeting concluded at 6:30.

The first matter taken up was the fact that SWCRPC's Director had refused to provide maps to illustrate the commercial areas discussed in the Chapter. SWCRPC has taken the position that it was hired by the Town to write the Town Plan, and that apparently their view is that the Town Plan Commission is to only act in an advisory role to them, rather than vice versa. The Sub-Committee then reviewed maps provided by the Listers and a sample provided by the Town Zoning Administrator. It was determined that that the aerial photo map provided by the Zoning Administrator would work nicely to illustrate what the plan is discussing. George McNaughton was directed to meet with Bill Kearns to procure similar photos for each area, and to ask Bill Kearns to expand the photo of the 106 Area both South to the McDonald's intersection and North to past the former Dufresne-Henry Buildings, and to enlarge the pictures.

The next matter taken up were the objections raised by the Director of SWCRPC to the paragraphs on the 106/Black River Commercial Area. After studying the maps and photo at hand, it was determined that this area did not constitute a "strip development". The Sub-Committee unanimously approved the changes to the paragraphs in accordance with the submittal to the Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee then took up the issue as to the sentence in the Downtown District discussion which was tabled at the Plan Commission earlier in the month. Consensus was reached that:

- a. There should not be an unqualified discouragement of residential in the downtown area.
- b. That the Plan should not specifically name the Housing Authority in the qualification, because there might be another developer proposing a project that the Town might find suitable.

It was then suggested by George McNaughton that the last half of the sentence be modified to refer to a developer that had been reviewed and approved by the Selectboard as part of a renovation and redevelopment of a downtown project. This was acceptable to all, and George McNaughton was directed to draft the sentence in accordance with that suggestion and circulate the redraft for approval. The language being confirmed the comment was to be removed.

The Sub-Committee then took up the issue of list of employers Table 10-2. The Plan Commission had requested that Dan Potter supply them with a revised Table 10-2 which listed all the Springfield Employers having more the 25 employees. Neither Commission, nor the Sub-Committee ever received the revised Table 10-2. The Commission did, however, have a revised Table 10-2 which listed the Springfield Employers having more than 50 employees. It was

decided that we would continue to ask for the revised Table, but that we would not allow the failure to deliver to hold up the approval by the Plan Commission and the submission of the Chapter to the Selectboard. As a result, George McNaughton was to plug in the revised Table 10-2 which Dan Potter had already provided into the draft.

The Sub-Committee feels that we should try to have Chapter 10 discussed and approved by the Plan Commission at the next meeting, along with any comments or amendments that Plan Commission members may have. The goal being to have at least Chapter 10 submitted to the Selectboard in October.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned

Meeting concluded at 6:30 p.m.

Chapter 10 Economic Development

In this chapter, “Economic Development” is more than creating business, jobs, housing, airports and infrastructure. The term is used in the broadest sense. It is a process of building a community’s capacity for shared and sustainable improvements in the economic health and quality of life of the residents of Springfield. As Springfield moves forward we must look to the past to realize our successes and failures. While regional and area economic development plans are important, this plan focuses upon the Town of Springfield. Where such regional and area plans are not inconsistent with this plan, they may be resorted to for guidance; where they are specifically inconsistent with this plan, then this plan should be considered dominant.

Our forefathers saw the value of the rivers and the industrial growth began. This growth demanded housing and services for the townspeople. This growth also allowed for the outlying areas of the town to look to agriculture to augment the industrial growth.

The industrial growth continues with the machine tool industry dominating the scene until its decline in the 1970's and 1980's. This decline should give us pause as we move forward in our endeavors.

Service industries (retail), hospitality and health care are now the mainstay of our economy. The town must look into the 21st century and move toward technology to raise pay scales and opportunities, thus stopping so-called brain drain from the area.

The waterpower from the Black River encouraged industrial growth next to the river. Around those industries essential housing and public and private services for workers were established. In outlying areas, agricultural growth occurred. With increased mobility, residential areas developed in North Springfield and other outlying locations.

The manufacture of machine tools dominated the town’s economic picture from the early 1900s to the mid-1980s. As a result, during most of the 20th Century the major resource and economic engine of Springfield was its residents, highly skilled engineers and precision machine tool operators, who made up the manufacturing work force. Much of the industry that sustained this town for all those years is gone, yet some companies, and their skilled workers, remain. Because of this loss, the challenge is to rekindle the economic growth of the town’s and the region’s economy and provide opportunity, advancement, sustained growth and retirement security for its population.

The economic history of the Springfield region is very different from the rest of Vermont and much of New England for that matter. Deep business cycles, and steep growth centered on the war years dominate the picture. In 1970, the Town’s population was 10,063. It then showed a slight increase to 10,190 in 1980 when the machine tool industry was still fairly strong. In 1990 the population dropped to 9,579, and in 2000 it

dropped further to 9,078. In spite of the decrease in population, the number of households increased from 3,877 in 1990 to 3,886 in 2000. This may reflect the aging of the population in Springfield (See Table 6.1 in the Education Chapter). When Springfield's growth was leveling off and then decreasing, the State's growth was accelerating.

Social, economic and political factors, many of them beyond the control of local interests, have caused the local capital goods industry and employment by the private sector to diminish. A corresponding increase in other economic activity has provided alternative employment and has added greater diversity to Springfield's economy. The loss in the number of jobs between 1980 and 1990 has been reversed and employment opportunity has increased. However, the quality, and pay scale, of the additional employment opportunities, in retail and hospitality for instance, are not on a par with the jobs that have left the community.

In addition, the increase in the population, the number of jobs, and the per capita income of Springfield and the southern Windsor County region has not kept pace with the increase in the state or the rest of Windsor County. This has been accompanied by an uptick in anti-social behavior and criminal activity.

The economic well being of the people of Springfield, both individually and collectively, depends heavily on a moderate steady growth of job opportunities with rising salaries and reduced sensitivity to business cycles, and an increased perception of economic opportunity by those who have recently graduated from college

A number of economic trends have emerged over the last decade. Understanding these trends and their effect on the local economy is essential to developing a viable economic development plan.

The area has a substantial amount of facility assets that are available for development without affecting open land assets.

The town has fostered a number of home businesses. Economic development policies should look at this trend as positive opportunities.

Current Key Industries in the Local Economy

Developing an understanding of why these sectors may have or may have not been successful in the region holds the key to building the competitiveness. For successful parts of the economy, the task of this plan is to find ways to build on and potentially replicate this success. For struggling sectors, there is a need to develop a job retention strategy to defend (and potentially re-invent) the region's current employment base. In

addition to the firms listed above, a number of local businesses not listed above are also important to Springfield’s economy. Table #10.2 lists the largest employers in Springfield . However, too much focusing on existing businesses may cause planners to fail to identify voids which could be filled.

Table 10.2 – Largest Employers in Springfield

Employer	Number of Employees
Springfield Medical Care Systems/Springfield Hospital	530
State of Vermont	325-350
Black River Produce/Vermont Packinghouse	215-225
Health Care and Rehabilitation Services	200
Jeld-Wen	160-175
Springfield School District	140
Precision Valley Communications	125
Town of Springfield	90
PCM-Image-Tek	70-80
Vtel	65-75
Ivek	60-75

Number of Employees is reported in Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

Economic Development Resources Inventory Assessment

The area is home to a mobile work force that has to travel some distance for quality job opportunities. The economy in the area has not kept pace with the statewide average growth. Entrepreneurs, motivators, and developers have not been sought out and asked to embrace the new vision for the town.

The purpose of this assessment was to inventory what Springfield currently has that supports economic development and business growth, and determine what our strengths were, and/or what we are lacking or needs improvement. Overall, it was determined that Springfield is in fairly good shape in terms of our resources. However, there are a few significant exceptions. A summary of the results of this assessment are:

Strengths:

- An available workforce
- Access to very good quality and affordable educational resources at secondary level.
- Available , affordable and high speed telecommunications
- Good environmental quality and access to recreational resources
- Available industrial and commercial sites
- Good access to health care
- Good quality of life for families/business
- Good access to major market areas
- Good access to capital revolving loans for job creation
- Incentives for business expansion

- Home of Vermont Interactive Television and also the Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative

Weaknesses:

- High Tech Skills
- Lack of flexibility of much of our workforce
- Limited capital resources particularly for technology related companies
- Varying perceptions of educational quality in the region.
- A widely perceived problem with the predictability and ease of obtaining state approvals and permits (much of this is beyond the scope of our region to address and needs leadership from State political office holders.)
- The challenges associated with Springfield’s emergence as a low income bedroom community (i.e. having more residential than commercial or industrial development can have a negative impact on the tax base. This can also have a negative impact on retail businesses because their customer base is leaving town on a daily basis).
- Perceived deficiencies in the criminal justice system (much of this is beyond the ability of local leadership and needs leadership from the State and Federal political office holders.)
- Segmented and insular local associations pursuing economic development

Ideas for the Future — What is Important to Springfield?

As we develop our strategies for our economic future we must keep in mind those values important to local residents. Below is an overview of some of the concerns, values, and ideas for the future that local residents expressed at public meetings held during the SEDP process.

Economic Health

It is safe to say that most residents in the area believe that economic health is a necessity to a high quality of life. We must have a healthy economy with plenty of well-paying jobs and benefits for local residents. This economy should be diverse and limit its vulnerabilities as much as possible. A healthy economy creates a healthy tax base to support priorities in the community such as education, human services and maintenance of our aging infrastructure. Although there are many ways to reach economic health, there are many other values held by local residents that should guide our actions toward that end.

The manufacturing sector has been a strong presence in town and residents would like to ensure the viability of this sector. Although some of the macro- and micro-trends reviewed before suggest this industry must adapt to survive, this is a viable goal. Adaptations must include shifting from machine and large product production to high-tech manufacturing.

In addition to maintaining this sector and the jobs it holds, there is a growing desire among residents to develop new types of business. As echoed by comments at public meetings, local businessmen have recently gathered and expressed interest in developing renewable energy technologies. Capitalizing on this emerging industry was expressed as an important goal for both our environmental and economic health. In addition, much interest was voiced for further developing high-tech/internet based business and expanding our recreation, tourism and cultural opportunities along with our marketing efforts. Throughout the comments, there was a common desire for the local economy to be developed through local, small businesses.

The large manufacturing sector of the past is gone. The town must shift to high tech manufacturing and associated industries along with additional emphasis on developing renewable energy technologies.

Much interest has been shown to expanding our recreation, tourism and cultural opportunities. Our marketing efforts must be coordinated among the entities (SRDC - SOM - Chamber of Commerce) that have economic development as part of their mission statement. We must use VTEL as an example of what is necessary to bring Springfield growth into the 21st century.

100 River Street is partially developed and the Town government need to assure that this resource is fully utilized by uniting in a concentrated effort to complete its development.

VTel has deployed high-capacity fiber in their service area over which allows for additional technology growth.

The redevelopment of the former machine tool facilities has been a major challenge. Since the last Town Plan, the former North Springfield Fellows Gear Shaper plant has been purchased and successfully redeveloped. Plans are ready for the J & L Plant 1 project and work is beginning on the former Bryant facility.

Slowly but surely J & L plant 1 and Bryant's plant are nearing final status. Soon this will require the efforts of all entities to work together to develop these properties to a useful return to service as a contributor to the tax roles.

Education and Employment

Two other themes, undeniably linked to one another, emerged through the public comments: education and employment. As our population ages, local residents are concerned with maintaining a high quality of education in our primary, secondary and post-secondary schools. Successful educational institutions will empower younger generations to embrace the challenges ahead and make Springfield a community of

success. Residents also noted that educational opportunities should not be limited to classrooms. Mentoring programs, leadership roles for young people and safe, attractive, recreational opportunities are all ways people identified to contribute to improving education for our young people.

After school, students should not only have local opportunities for a job but also, more importantly, a successful career. Graduates should know that there are jobs available in Springfield even though they may choose to work elsewhere. Many residents agreed that graduates should have to turn down a Springfield job before taking a job outside the area. Obviously, a good job market depends on healthy, expanding businesses adequately diversified and buffered from external threats.

In addition to opportunities for graduating students, any economic growth should immediately provide employment opportunities to local residents. Lack of a full service undergraduate collegiate campus or graduate school in Springfield is a serious impediment to economic growth, Town leadership should always be on the look out for opportunities to recruit such an institution to Springfield.

Basic General Strategy Rules:

1. Seek to attract more capital to Springfield than is exported from Springfield.
2. Favor community economic self-sufficiency, or in other words, seek to supply as many needs as possible from local sources and suppliers.
3. Seek to have cash turn over as many times as possible within the community before it leaves the community.
4. Seek to raise the income and increase opportunities for locals to start their own businesses and farms.
5. Seek to retain middle-class residents, and lure back young people who have left Springfield to obtain college and professional degrees, and encourage people of talent and creative entrepreneurial capabilities to relocate to Springfield.
6. Seek to discourage criminal elements from migrating or remaining in Springfield.
7. Develop environmental and development requirements which are specifically tailored to Springfield , rejecting off the shelf requirements inconsistent with real needs of the Springfield community and its existing architecture and topography.
8. Understand and apply different strategies for differing commercial and industrial areas in the community.
9. Town leadership must look for opportunities to attract a full service undergraduate/graduate college to the town.

Health and Rehabilitation Industry

Springfield's largest non-government employer is Springfield Medical Care Systems, Inc. when this institution's employment is considered along with the various

other entities offering nursing home, rehabilitation, therapy and counseling services in Springfield it becomes apparent that the health and rehabilitation sector plays a massive role in the community's social and economic environment. The sector covers a large economic spectrum from some of the highest paid professionals, to some of the community's "working poor".

The Health and Rehabilitation Industry is poised to become the basis of significant economic growth for the Town if its political, social and economic clout can be harnessed as an economic stimulus. If the Town is able to procure a full service undergraduate or graduate post-secondary institution in the Town it is most likely to be based upon this particular industrial sector. The availability of "clinical" at the hospital, various agencies providing counseling and therapy, and the correctional facilities should be treated as an economic resource and used to induce the location of training facilities in Springfield.

In addition, the Health and Rehabilitation Industry has vast needs for suppliers of both products and services. Investigation as to how these needs may be fulfilled by local businesses should be a major priority.

Unfortunately, the local industry does in certain sectors such as Licensed Nursing Assistants and caseworkers have a very low pay scale. Attention needs to be directed towards improving the pay scale of these entry level workers with the understanding of the important services that they render to the community.

In addition to the industry itself, the health of the community and its reputation as a healthy location is important to the economic development of the Town. One of the primary factors used to develop rankings of healthy communities is the number of the recreational facilities including primarily their pedestrian and bike pathways. The length in miles of such pathways figures prominently in professional rankings of Towns and Cities. As a result, the extension of the current pedestrian and bike pathways should be promoted.

Specific Goals regarding the Health and Rehabilitation Industry

1. This sector needs to be acknowledged and recognized in the community as one of the major employers in the community having a significant impact on the social and economic well being of the community.
2. Efforts should be made to attract the higher paid employees of this industry to choose Springfield as their residence.
3. Recognition of the importance of "clinical" opportunities as a resource needs to be made in order to make sure that Springfield is not simply a consumer of services, but a training hub for professionals and students in this field of endeavor.
4. Efforts should be made to encourage the location of suppliers and support services for this industry to be located in Springfield.

5. Where possible, encourage the upgrading of the pay levels of the entry level workers in this area to a livable wage.
6. Encourage the thoughtful development and extension of pedestrian and bike pathways in the community.

Downtown: Central Business Area

The downtown area is susceptible to high volatility with respect to change, a few significant changes could promote significant improvement in the general ambience and character, outlook, and employment opportunities within the downtown as a result the comments made here could remain valid or become outdated quickly. With a few notable exceptions the private sector has been unable to fill the downtown area storefronts and the downtown is plagued by a failure to understand the development market for its buildings. The Black River divides the downtown area running from the Street intersection to 100 River Street pedestrian bridge. The western side of the river in this area is dominated by the State Office Building and a variety of either unoccupied or partially occupied buildings industrial or institutional buildings (Parks and Woolson and Park Street School). The eastern side of the river consists of primarily retail and professional office space with a high percentage of unoccupied storefronts.

Redevelopment of the western side of the river has been stymied because of the size of the dominant structures which either blight or lend uncertainty as to its future direction. The eastern side of the river has in part been successfully occupied by a few private sector developers particularly on the east side of main street. The west side of main street has struggled to maintain occupancy. The primary difference between the success on east side of main street and the west side of main street appears to be the utilization of the upper floors of the retail spaces. On the east side of main street the major multi-level buildings either have their upper floors occupied by professional offices or very tightly monitored housing susceptible to local political pressure. The occupied portion of west side of main street is either single storied, or has the upper levels occupied primarily by some form of business enterprise.

Specific Strategies Downtown: Central Business Area

The focus for the central business area development should be to provide professional office space, retail support for downtown offices and consumer/tourism in the form of artisan and specialty shops which draw out of town customers. Artisan and specialty shops particularly appropriate for a post-industrial “maker’s” motif and entertainment should be heavily recruited along with a variety of “eateries”. The central business district should be the community’s display and entertainment parlor. Residential units should be discouraged unless it involves a developer and a development which the Town Selectboard has reviewed and approved as part of an overall renovation and redevelopment project relating to a downtown building

Clinton Street Industrial Strip (CSIS)

The Clinton Street Industrial Strip consists primarily of industrial and commercial properties. Pressure on redevelopment of this area should be maintained. The major industrial areas on this strip are primarily held by SRDC and the redevelopment of this area is dependent upon the resolution of environmental issues and the demolition of existing buildings and/or resolution of environmental issues. The redevelopment of this area is of critical importance to the Town, and the attention of the Town should be concentrated on getting the brownfields cleaned up or otherwise resolved and the properties placed in productive use. Pressure should also be exerted to include the former J & L property within the Opportunity Zone so that the same is eligible for New Market Credits.

This area also contains certain recreational potential if access to the Black River and State imposed buffer zones are overcome. A portion of this area is home to the Toonerville Trail which is a heavily used pedestrian and bike path, it is the intent that this path be extended to at least the current location of the Edgar May Center.

Specific Strategies for CSIS

The focus for CSIS should be light industrial employing skilled workers where workplace ambience plays a role and easy access to the interstate is of significance. This would include among other things, light assembly, high tech, food processing, and breweries. Planning emphasis being to solicit out of town or new industries to this location.

100 River Street and Plaza Commercial Area

Specific Strategies for 100 River Street

Efforts here are to recruit for this mall industrial and commercial activities which are consistent with the use of a portion of the mall for medical related purposes. It is anticipated that this would house upscale commercial facilities which can utilize the regional draw effect of the existence of the out-patient medical offices located within the Mall.

The Plaza is the Town's most active retail district used by locals and visitors from surrounding towns. It competes directly with retail facilities in Claremont

Specific Strategies for the Plaza

Efforts here are to maintain full occupancy with retail establishments catering to the daily needs of locals and adjacent towns.

106/Black River Commercial Area

This area which extends northerly from the intersection of Rte 11 to Rte 10. This area is an established commercial area which also contains numerous institutional employers associated with the local health/assisted living/rehabilitation industry. This area is an established commercial corridor with a defined location with space for expansion of existing businesses and in-filling. In addition, the Black River which bounds the Western side of this strip is already channelized and protected by the North Springfield flood control dam, as such riparian buffer zones should be minimized to what is absolutely needed to protect the water quality of the Black River. This area is considered to have high potential for further commercial development, retail development which is not appropriate for the Downtown or 100 River Street should be encouraged in this area. Because the Plaza area may have non-competition provisions in its store leases, this area should be considered a prime area for the development of retail stores which would provide competition to Plaza establishments in order to keep consumer prices competitive.



Specific Strategy for 106/ Black River Commercial Area

This area is to be developed as a moderate priced commercial district serving the needs of the residents and various local businesses. It is also the preferred location for discount stores and retail enterprises which may be excluded from the Plaza due to non-compete covenants in leases at the Plaza, and which are not appropriate for the Downtown Area or 100 River Street

Airport Commercial Area

There is potential industrial and commercial acreage existing adjacent to the Hartness Airport.

Specific Strategy for the Airport Commercial Area

This area needs to have municipal water and sewer extended to the area for development. The utility lines are creeping nearer to the area and the Town given the proper opportunity should consider grants to complete the extension.

North Springfield

North Springfield has the largest available acreage for industrial development within the Town. Residential development within the industrial development should be discouraged in order to decrease potential conflicts between the residential sector and the industrial district. Emphasis and priority should be placed upon recruiting and locating industry for this industrial area tied to grants or financing of an improved truck access route to the industrial site.

Specific Strategies for North Springfield

North Springfield is developing a strong industrial sector with regards to food processing, while all industrial potentials should be encouraged in the industrial park, specific industries related to food processing and ventures which are seen as a specific support for such industries should be seen as a specific strategic target. It is also understood that renewable energy is becoming a critical factor in luring certain types of industry to the area, and that North Springfield in particular is being developed with renewable energy in mind, this trend should be encouraged.

North Springfield also has buildings once associated with local neighborhood businesses. Where feasible, the re-occupancy of such facilities should be encouraged to provide local convenience to the neighborhoods.

Correctional Center Industrial Park

In accordance with an agreement with the State, the Town was to receive a certain industrial area for redevelopment near the existing correctional center. The Town has not taken ownership of that area due to concerns with respect to a small brownfield area and more importantly maintenance of the switchback road to the correctional facility. This industrial park could become a significant contributor to the economic development of the Town.

Specific Strategy for Correctional Center Industrial Site

Its location would be especially suitable for industries that for a variety of reasons might not be suitable for other industrial sites. For example it may make a suitable location

for windpower development, industrial composting, commercial greenhouses, and animal auction facilities.

I-91 Interchange

Is an area located on the western side of Interstate 91 between the Interstate Highway and the Black River.

Specific Strategy for I-91 Interchange

This area has businesses that are geared towards accommodating the traveling public and to maintaining major highway systems. It is the intent of the district not to compete with other districts for small businesses not related to this accommodation.

Meeting Waters

Is an area located to the west of the I-91 Interchange encompassing the general location of the former Meeting Waters YMCA Camp.

Specific Strategy for Meeting Waters

Said area if rezoned, would be aimed at shipping, warehousing, and bulk transportation related facilities which would not be suitable to other Districts within the Town and/or might create an undue burden on the highway facilities closer to the downtown area, and which are not inherently connected with cohesive development of the Town.

Neighborhoods and Neighborhood Businesses

Springfield's residential and commercial sectors are principally divided by the high grounds above the valley floor with the commercial sector located along the valley floor. In the past, the neighborhoods were served by small neighborhood groceries and businesses. Park Street in particular had and continues to have a small business district, and Wall Street had a small business district, as did North Springfield. Most of the neighborhood groceries have closed with the exception of one located on South Street.

Given the topography of Springfield noted above, the policies pertaining to promoting pedestrian or non-motorized traffic for the citizens in their general day to day business are for the most part irrelevant and impractical. A potential exception to this would involve a revival and resurgence of local neighborhood stores in certain parts of the community. As a result, some consideration should be given to developing such potential via conditional use provisions in certain areas of the neighborhoods.

While Springfield has numerous neighborhoods which appear to be holding their own or thriving with regards to land value preservation, certain areas have become blighted and have become impaired. There appears to be a correlation between the location of group homes and multi-family homes in a neighborhood and blight or impairment of land values within such neighborhoods. Neighborhoods most susceptible to such blight

are working class neighborhoods with large older homes which may have been at one time boarding houses. These homes have been allowed to be carved up into smaller apartments, sober houses, half-way houses, transition housing, and group homes. If properly monitored these may not in reality cause actual anti-social issues in the neighborhood, however, even when properly monitored they can by their mere existence degrade property values.

Since middle-class and skilled workers considering moving into a Town are likely to visit areas surrounding public schools, it is absolutely essential that the neighborhoods surrounding or in the immediate vicinity of public schools be well maintained and blight free. It is important that the school leadership understand that as a major landowner in the Town of Springfield, they play an important role in economic development and with respect to land management. Before any school is proposed to be closed, the Town should insist that the School have a well developed plan for the reuse of the school building. In addition, the School system needs to understand that school policies have an impact on community development, for example moving from neighborhood elementary schools to grade segregated schools had an impact on neighborhood cohesion. It is anticipated that other decisions could have similar impacts.

Specific Strategy for Neighborhoods and Neighborhood Businesses

Blight must be contained, restrained, and reversed. Careful review of fair housing laws should be undertaken to determine whether the inability to restrain conversion of homes has been overstated. Definitions contained within the regulations should be reviewed and where appropriate modified to grant greater control over conversions. The Town Government, including the Planning Department, should work closely with Neighborhood Associations to improve land values in neighborhoods and make the same more attractive to middle-class purchasers.

Rural Areas

The rural areas of Springfield are the location of many former working farms which are no longer used or inhabited by full-time or even part-time farmers. These farms are also frequently the location of barns and former agricultural related outbuildings. The preservation of these structures are important to maintaining the Vermont ambience and nature of these areas.

Specific Strategies for Rural Areas

District requirements should be carefully scrutinized and where appropriate Conditional Uses should be expanded to allow the conversion of the barns, agricultural related outbuildings, and larger older homes to uses which preserve the outward appearance of such buildings and which encourage the development of businesses within such structures which are not unduly incompatible with the neighborhood and do not result in extensive subdivisions of said property. In particular, such endeavors would include:

film production, value added agricultural projects or woodcrafting projects, art or artisan studios, education facilities, and similar projects.

The Black River within Developed Portions of Springfield

Currently other than certain hydro-electric facilities and a few recreational access areas, the Black River, which dominates the geography of Springfield, is at least non-helpful to its economic development, and in many cases a deterrent to the same because of attendant environmental and riparian buffer zone requirements. The riparian buffer zones frequently become debris strips with dying trees, poisonous vines, and invasive species.

Specific Strategies regarding the Black River within the developed portions of Springfield

Experiments and innovative trials should be encouraged aimed at expanding hydro-electric development of the river, and modification of the use and planting activities allowed within the mandated riparian buffers. Current mandated debris strips along the river should be replaced with colorful ornamental or fruit bearing permaculture serving the same environmental safeguards, but creating a unique landscape feature capable of drawing people to Springfield on a seasonal basis and enhancing its recreational use. Public access to the river should be increased and more flexible grooming of the buffer zones should be allowed. In addition, the construction of municipally controlled pedestrian and bicycle pathways should not be impeded by the existence of buffer zones, but should be encouraged to allow for greater human appreciation of the river.

Overall Vision for Springfield

Create a safe economically stable community with a sustainable growing grand list value which is attractive as a residence and employment center for middle-class residents. The Town should exude a virile, robust industrial Yankee town aura in its aesthetics and development patterns. In pursuing environmental protections and remedies consideration should be given to the fact that the developed portion of the Town reflect human alteration of nature and that fact should remain noticeable and celebrated. Planning should be molded around evidencing an ongoing entrepreneurial and productive ethic for the entire Town while maintaining a clean and tidy appearance.

Goals

1. In the development of marketing plans for the community consider the potential to build on mutually beneficial relationships with existing industrial and commercial sectors in Springfield.
2. Aggressively recruit businesses which can form symbiotic relationships with existing businesses, fill supplier voids, and can utilize local strengths such as over-capacity of our municipal water system and high speed internet.

3. Enhance and expand access to affordable capital and facilities.
4. Develop a pro-active approach to state and local permitting, push back politically against arbitrary regulations meant to solve problems in other portions of the State which may not have application to Springfield
5. Create a strategic partnership collaborative to enhance work force skills and grow new local businesses which have the potential of creating jobs with livable wages.
6. Promote and enhance a globally competitive workforce.
7. Promote excellence in education and work-based learning, including development of magnet schools
8. Develop incubators in strategic business sectors, including development of maker's spaces and community or cooperatively owned facilities for small shops
9. Promote and enhance "quality of life" and a tax base to sustain it in Springfield.
10. Consider the economic impact on neighborhood land values in the making of housing decisions in neighborhoods.
11. Promote and enhance commercial and industrial development in Springfield consistent with each commercial and industrial strategy set forth in this Chapter.
12. Recognize the significant positive impact that institutions of higher learning and research have on economic development.
13. Promote a holistic understanding of the economic development impact of decisions made in the health, housing, criminal justice and education sectors.

Objectives

1. Focus on building sustainable community economic self-sufficiency while emphasizing assisting industrial development in sectors paying a livable wage, and/or having substantial local ownership or headquarters located within the Town or its immediate vicinity.
2. Pursue strategic partnerships with local and regional development organizations and State and Federal agencies where beneficial to the citizens and businesses of the Town of Springfield.
3. Work with partners to create and retain jobs which pay a livable wage in the Region.
4. Undertake development and implementation of recruitment-retention effort focused on building on Springfield's current sources of economic success and diversifying the local economy.
5. Build local capacity to efficiently and cost-effectively access sufficient sums of capital to and facilities for: (1) providing Springfield with options to support entrepreneurial activity, new business development, and expansion of the current business base, and (2) developing alternatives for protecting against potential job losses associated with acquisitions of locally owned firms.
6. Create and/or partner with investment capital pools.
7. Supplement existing public and private funding sources.
8. Create opportunities to expand businesses which pay a livable wage, and retain

- monies expended by said businesses to out of the community suppliers.
9. Create alternatives to outside capital sources and possible outside influences.
 10. Identify additional suitable sites for growth and development.
 11. Review permit process and requirements to reduce unnecessary delay and impediments for developers seeking to invest in areas where economic development is encouraged.
 12. Offer local technical assistance to businesses seeking to develop in growth areas.
 13. Encourage development of the following key regional industries (not in priority order) in Springfield:
 - Specialty food products including both agricultural crops and processing facilities and distribution facilities
 - High value-added specialty products, including but not limited to those related to agricultural and forestry raw materials
 - Engineered products and design support
 - High value-added professional, scientific and technical services (including information science.)
 - Internet based or support industries.
 - Remanufacturing including automotive restoration and customization and general artifact upscaling or retro-fitting.
 - Artist/Artisan design related services and products.
 - Emerging regional industry – Renewable Energy
 14. Expand the efforts of the School District, the Three River Valley Business Education Partnership and the Howard Dean Education Center Partners to improve student local career awareness, local career exploration and the knowledge, abilities, aptitudes and skills needed for success in the moderneconomy. Advocate for any Dean Education Center Partner to make the Dean Center a regional “hub” educational center for their entity.
 15. Support new and existing “School-to-Work” initiatives particularly in fields having reasonable expectations of resulting in a livable wage.
 16. Take advantage of existing web pages offered by the Chamber of Commerce and Springfield on the Move, and other sites including profiles of the schools, community, and amenities of Springfield in order to attract new businesses.
 17. Support the innovative, but sensible, efforts of Springfield on the Move in maintaining and enhancing the Designated Downtown and Main Street programs, encouraging meaningful interaction between Springfield on the Move with the Town Government (including the Planning and Zoning Department) and the various education, housing and health related entities within the Town in order to develop a unique non-generic marketing plan for full occupancy of the central business storefronts.
 18. Encourage the development of business incubators to generate entrepreneurial activity and new business development focusing on businesses which would increase the community self-sufficiency of the town, or which assist local citizens in the start-up of new economic enterprises.

19. Work to improve the quality of life in Springfield by creating opportunities for young people including young working adults; protecting and increasing the human utilization of natural, scenic and historic resources; improving recreational opportunities, and providing educational and other projects which would encourage middle-class individuals to locate within the Town.
20. Improve the living environment in the area by carefully monitoring, and where necessary and feasible restricting, housing options which degrade land values and increase social costs . Emphasis should be placed on having subsidized or other similar affordable housing placed as much as feasible and lawful under the jurisdiction of the local housing authority so that a rational and coherent approach is achieved. The Town Charter designates the Springfield Housing Authority as the primary consultant on housing issues, and it should be consulted on any project that would potentially degrade property values.
21. Advocate for and seek to recruit and/or create full service post-secondary and graduate schools to set up full service educational campuses within Springfield.
22. Carefully review all subdivision, lot, amenity and building standards or requirements which apply to the commercial and industrial districts in the Town. Where appropriate to facilitate the location of businesses and industries create Conditional Uses for desirable facilities which may not conveniently comply with such requirements, rather than prohibit such facilities or force the facilities to meet difficult to achieve Variance requirements.
23. Aggressively enforce ordinances which are intended to eliminate unsightly outside storage, debris, trash, or dilapidated structures.
25. Encourage the Selectboard to enter into Memoranda of Understanding with the two economic development agencies funded in the Town Budget which provide for goals, priorities and periodic review.