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TOWN OF BARRINGTON



# Economic Development

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Located in the Seacoast region of New Hampshire, Barrington primarily serves as a bedroom community for businesses in other nearby cities. Only 7.4 percent of Barrington residents with jobs both live and work in Barrington. The vast majority of Barrington residents earn stable incomes, and Barrington's median household income of approximately \$79,000 in 2016 was above the county, state, and national figures. Barrington residents are well-educated, with high school and college graduation rates well above national averages.

Barrington residents value their town's sense of community and rural character. The Town seeks opportunities for strategic development that can diversify its tax base that overwhelmingly relies upon residential property taxes while also preserving the natural and cultural resources that set Barrington apart. Opportunities for this development are most likely to occur in the Town's existing Economic Revitalization Zones (ERZs). Three of these ERZs are concentrated at the intersection of Route 9 and Route 125 and would be most suitable for mixed-use town-center-style development. Three additional ERZs are located at the existing Redemption Road business park and at two locations that may be suitable for future business/industrial park development.

Barrington town staff and elected officials have been willing to engage in public-private partnerships in the past to guide and support development opportunities. These public figures will continue to seek additional opportunities to encourage private development and entrepreneurship that is consistent with the Town's vision. Additional branding and marketing efforts, such as changes to the Town's website or distributing educational materials could support this work. Infrastructure improvements and other economic development strategies could be tools to further attract development under certain circumstances.

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# INTRODUCTION

This Economic Development chapter of Barrington's Master Plan provides an overview of economic conditions facing the Town of Barrington and its residents and businesses. This chapter is built upon a foundation created by the Vision and Community Character chapter, which lays out the vision Barrington residents have for their community in the coming decade.

The Economic Development chapter recognizes the emphasis that the Master Plan Vision places on balancing future growth and development with protecting Barrington's abundant natural resources. Barrington prioritizes types of development that will promote a strong sense of community, such as mixed commercial and residential development in the town center. The strategies discussed in this chapter will allow Barrington to focus its development efforts in high-priority areas and prevent commercial and industrial development from negatively impacting Barrington's natural beauty.

This chapter is divided into four sections. Economic Assets and Liabilities consider Barrington's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as they relate to economic activity. The Economic Characteristics section provides a demographic overview of Barrington's residents and labor force. The Economic Development Environment section considers Barrington's resources for encouraging business relocation and expansion. Finally, the Goals and Recommendations outline Barrington's strategy for promoting its economic future.

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# ECONOMIC ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

## Economic Strengths

- Natural resources and rural character attract visitors
- Good school system with school choice at High School level
- Large amounts of undeveloped land
- Good commuter location with access to major roads
- Property is affordable
- Greater Barrington Chamber of Commerce promotes the area and a strong business community
- Strong community involvement and network of community figures
- Good town services (e.g. recreation department, library, etc.) contribute to a high quality of life
- The Town has low levels of debt

## Economic Weaknesses

- Lack of apartment or starter home stock
- No town water or sewer service
- No established downtown
- Transportation is very auto-centric
  - Wildcat service is phasing out
  - Limited bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
  - Most roads are narrow with a high cost to widen or improve them due to environmental constraints
- Aging in place is difficult due to predominance of single-family homes on large lots

## Economic Opportunities

- Branding and signage on major corridors could improve visibility and image of the Town
- Possible locations for a second business park
- Could attract suppliers, distributors, or spin-off businesses related to regional manufacturers and UNH
- Special events or festivals could bring people to Barrington and support or encourage new business opportunities
  - Food trucks are popular and have lower startup costs than brick-and-mortar locations
  - Temporary or mobile businesses could expand into storefront locations in the future
  - A farmers' market could support local agriculture

## Economic Threats

- If not guided carefully, large-scale development could:
  - Alter Barrington's character
  - Negatively impact natural resources
  - Overwhelm existing or future infrastructure
- Town center has conflicting demands of traffic calming to encourage pedestrian safety and efficient travel times along state highways
- Neighboring communities currently have stronger restaurant and entertainment attractions

# ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

According to the American Community Survey (ACS), Barrington’s median household income in 2016 was \$78,956. This exceeded the median for both Strafford County and the State of New Hampshire.

The breakdown of households by income bracket for Barrington and Strafford County is shown in Table 1. Observations include:

- Barrington’s largest income cohort earned between \$75,000 and \$99,999 in 2016.
- Barrington’s four largest income cohorts range from \$50,000 to \$199,999 per year, compared to \$35,000 to \$149,999 for Strafford County as a whole.
- 16.7% of households in Barrington earned less than \$24,999 in 2016, compared to 18.4% of Strafford County households.

This concentration of households in higher income brackets accounts for Barrington’s comparatively high median income. The large concentration of households earning between \$150,000 and \$199,999 (Barrington’s second largest cohort) also has a large influence on Barrington’s comparatively high average income.

This distribution also reflects the makeup of households in Barrington. According to the ACS, 61% of households in Barrington were married-couple families, compared to just 50% in Strafford County in 2016. This would likely result in a larger percentage of households in Barrington with multiple incomes, and lower numbers of single-parent or non-family households.

As shown in Table 2, median household incomes have remained steady over the past five years at the county, state, and national level (all figures expressed in 2016 dollars). Data for Barrington has shown a decline over the same time period, though the scale of such a decline is difficult to measure for a community of Barrington’s size due to high levels of sampling error.

**Table 1: Yearly Household Income, 2016**

	Strafford County	Barrington
Total Households	47,779	3,311
Less than \$10,000	4.3%	2.7%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	4.7%	5.9%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	9.4%	8.1%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	8.5%	6.1%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	13.0%	9.9%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	19.0%	15.6%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	14.6%	17.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	15.7%	13.7%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	6.8%	16.5%
\$200,000 or more	4.0%	4.4%
Median income	\$ 63,533	\$ 78,956
Average income	\$ 78,461	\$ 91,187

Source: ACS

**Table 2: Median Household Income (2016 Dollars)**

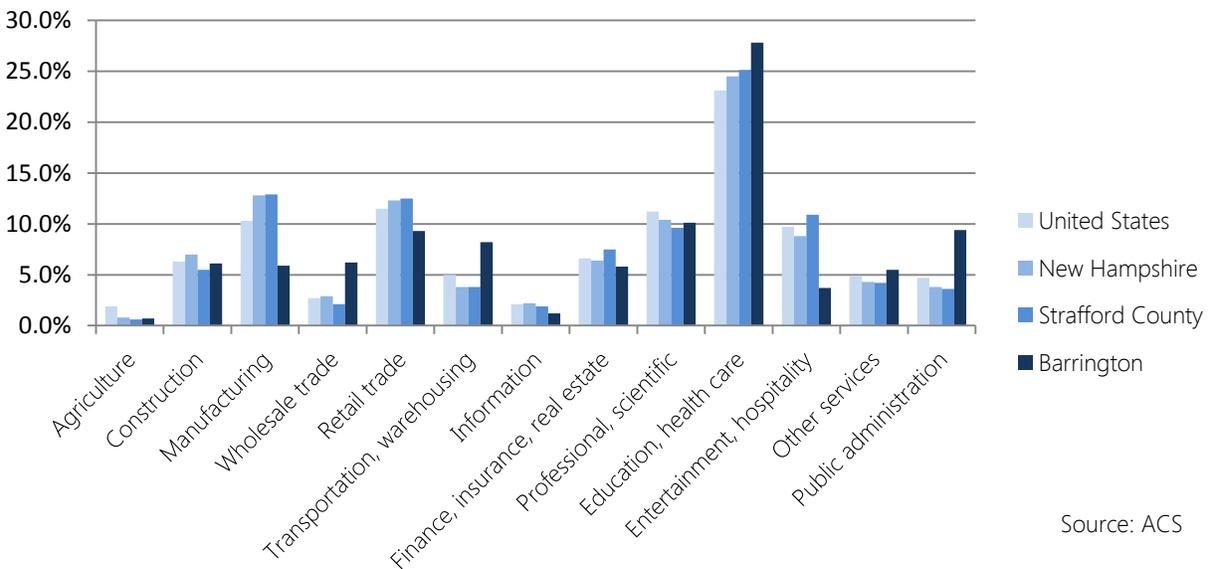
Year	United States	New Hampshire	Strafford County	Barrington
2012	\$ 55,452	\$ 67,870	\$ 61,193	\$ 85,420
2013	\$ 54,651	\$ 66,881	\$ 60,605	\$ 84,016
2014	\$ 54,221	\$ 66,899	\$ 60,403	\$ 83,570
2015	\$ 54,569	\$ 67,621	\$ 61,477	\$ 82,352
2016	\$ 55,322	\$ 68,485	\$ 63,533	\$ 78,956

Source: ACS

## KEY INDUSTRIES

2016 American Community Survey estimates indicate that the largest share of Barrington residents is employed in the “Educational services, health care, and social assistance” industry. This is a larger share than the county, state, and national figures and reflects the importance of the University of New Hampshire, Frisbie Memorial Hospital, and Wentworth-Douglass Hospital to the regional economy. As shown in Figure 1 below, Barrington also has a comparatively large percentage of residents employed in public administration or transportation and warehousing. Current Barrington residents are less likely to be employed in manufacturing or entertainment and hospitality.

Figure 1: Employment Percentage by Industry, 2016



## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The Housing and Demographics chapter found that Barrington exhibits higher levels of educational attainment than both Stafford County and the state of New Hampshire. A highly-educated workforce such as Barrington’s could help to attract new employers who are seeking the skills those workers can provide. Updated figures for educational attainment among residents 25 years and older as of 2016 are included in Table 3 below.

Level of Degree	United States	New Hampshire	Stafford County	Barrington
Percent high school graduate or higher	87.0%	92.6%	92.3%	93.6%
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	30.3%	35.5%	34.8%	35.8%

Source: ACS

## UNEMPLOYMENT

Data from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that unemployment rates in Barrington have consistently been equal to or better than county, state, and national figures. As shown in Table 4, these unemployment rates have also shown consistent improvement since 2012. While these low regional unemployment rates are excellent for job seekers, they do pose a challenge to businesses who may struggle to find available workers.

Year	United States	New Hampshire	Strafford County	Barrington
2012	8.1%	5.5%	5.4%	4.9%
2013	7.4%	5.1%	4.9%	4.7%
2014	6.2%	4.3%	4.0%	3.5%
2015	5.3%	3.5%	3.1%	3.0%
2016	4.9%	2.8%	2.5%	2.5%

Source: LAUS

## COMMUTERS

Information from the OnTheMap tool created by the US Census Bureau indicates that the vast majority of Barrington residents work in other communities. Similarly, most employees of Barrington businesses come from elsewhere. In 2015, only 294 primary jobs were estimated to be people that both live and work in Barrington. This represents 16.6 percent of jobs located in Barrington, and only 7.4 percent of primary jobs held by Barrington residents. Total inflow and outflow of commuting workers is shown in Figure 2.

In 2015, 34.6 percent of Barrington residents worked in one of the three nearby cities of Dover, Portsmouth, and Rochester. After these cities, only Barrington and Durham (home to the University of New Hampshire) employed more than five percent of Barrington residents.

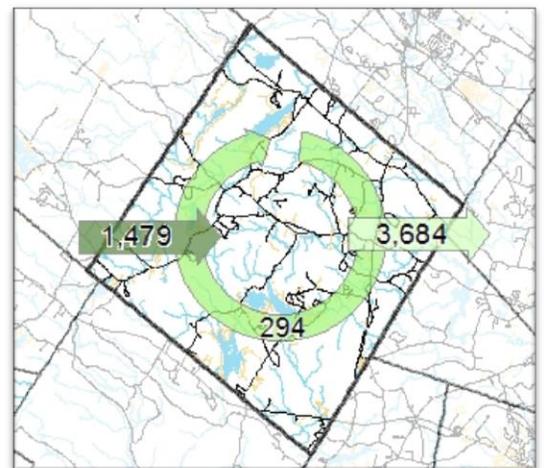


Figure 2: Inflow/Outflow of commuting workers for Barrington in 2015. Source: OnTheMap

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# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENT

## ROADS AND ACCESS

Barrington has convenient access to regional transportation corridors. The town's principal roadways include Route 125, which travels from Rochester to Lee, and Route 9, which provides easy access to Dover. The intersection of these two highways forms Barrington's de facto town center, and has been identified as a location for future mixed use development. Route 4 connects Barrington to employment centers in Concord, Durham, and Portsmouth. The nearby Spaulding Turnpike is also easily accessible via Route 9, Route 125, and Route 202. This network of regional corridors provides an opportunity for businesses to attract customers along these routes or to establish distribution facilities to move products throughout the seacoast. This easy access is also important for connecting Barrington residents to jobs in other communities.

## ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF HOUSING

Local housing markets can have a variety of economic implications. Retail markets depend upon the size of a local consumer base to ensure that businesses will be profitable. Industrial businesses need access to an available workforce with the necessary skills to fill job openings. Relocating firms often consider the quality of life when choosing a new community, particularly if they hope to encourage existing employees to relocate to a new location. Finally, entrepreneurs tend to start businesses close to where they live, possibly even operating the business out of their home until it is stable enough to move into a larger facility. All of these factors mean that Barrington's housing stock may influence Barrington's ability to attract and expand businesses.

The Housing and Demographics chapter analyzed a variety of housing trends and their relationship with the demographic makeup of Barrington residents. That chapter concluded that, while Barrington's rental market was limited by a lack of housing stock, the town as a whole was relatively affordable in a regional and statewide context. Since that chapter was adopted in 2016, housing costs in Barrington and throughout the region have continued to rise. For example, the Housing and Demographics chapter cited data from the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS 2006-2010) to show that approximately 28 percent of all Barrington households were cost-burdened (i.e. paying greater than 30% of household income in housing costs). CHAS data from 2010-2014 indicates that 33 percent of Barrington households are cost burdened. Barrington should continue to monitor the trends discussed in the Housing and Demographics chapter to ensure that it remains an affordable and desirable community to live in.

[Source: CHAS 2010-2014]

## WATER AND SEWER SERVICE

The Town of Barrington currently does not provide municipal water or sewer service to its residents or businesses. Adding town water and sewer to key areas could support commercial and industrial development in existing or future business parks or town center style development at the intersection of Route 9 and Route 125.

According to information from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, communities should consider three primary factors when exploring the possibility of installing a new water system:

1. Identify the water source and the capacity level it is able to provide
2. Determine whether the identified source meets necessary drinking quality standards
3. Determine whether the proposed system will be limited to domestic use, or whether it will also be used for fire protection

Barrington's most likely source of water would be groundwater wells. Due to its rocky soils, any water system would need to test for contaminants such as radon or arsenic that are common in New Hampshire bedrock. Capacity, meanwhile, would be heavily influenced by the decision to use the system for fire prevention or domestic use only. Systems that are used for fire protection need to be able to provide a much higher capacity than those used for domestic use to ensure the availability of water in an emergency regardless of other usage patterns. As a result, fire protection systems typically cost more to construct. If Barrington opted not to provide fire protection, commercial or industrial users would need to compensate for the lower system capacity by including on-site storage tanks or cisterns to protect their own property.

The Town of Bow, NH installed a \$14 million municipal water and sewer system beginning in 2012 to support anticipated industrial park development. This system is capable of delivering approximately 1 million gallons per day to a service area of less than two square miles using roughly five linear miles of distribution pipe. This investment also included sewer infrastructure, though additional investment is needed before the sewer system is fully functional.

Figure 3 outlines a hypothetical service area of about two square miles centered over Barrington's anticipated town center. The red line illustrates the roughly 1.25 miles of distribution pipe that would be needed to connect service at the center of this district to the existing Redemption Road business park. The blue and green lines illustrate the 1.5 and 2.5 miles to possible future business park development at Old Green Hill Road and Pierce Road, respectively. While it is reasonable to expect that a water and sewer system covering this hypothetical service area would be of a similar scale, and therefore cost, to Bow's system, further study is necessary to gauge specific costs and feasibility for Barrington. A feasibility study should consider the expected costs and benefits to the Town in greater detail, and could provide analysis of multiple alternatives, such as installing a water system without sewer service, or limiting the water system to domestic use rather than fire protection.

[Source: NH DES; Town of Bow, NH]

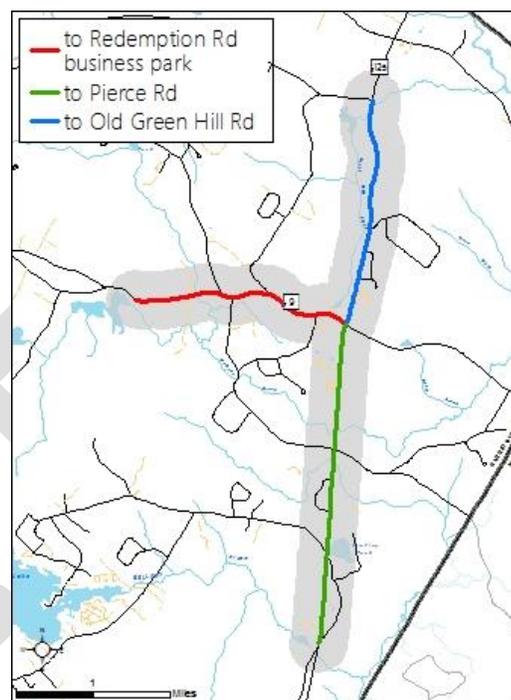


Figure 3: Possible water distribution lines and service area connecting the town center with current and potential business park locations.

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## COMMERCIAL ZONING DISTRICTS

There are five primary zoning districts in Barrington, three of which permit commercial or industrial activity. The boundaries of these commercial areas are identified in Figure 4 at right.

The Regional Commercial district permits most commercial and industrial uses by right. This zoning district is concentrated along Route 4 and Route 125, reflecting the importance of transportation access to commercial and industrial end users. The Village and Town Center districts are located near the intersection of Route 9 and Route 125. Both are mixed use districts that permit a variety of commercial activities. The Village district permits some light industrial uses, while the Town Center district mostly prohibits industrial uses. These zoning districts and their associated permitted uses should be reviewed periodically to ensure that they accommodate appropriate commercial and industrial development and are consistent with the community's desire to direct such development to major transportation corridors.

The Highway Commercial Overlay district, which is located along Route 9, Route 202, and Route 126 permits some commercial uses that would not otherwise be allowed in the underlying residential zoning districts. Most of these uses require a Conditional Use Permit from the Planning Board, and are not permitted by right.

Finally, Barrington allows residents to conduct certain types of commercial activities as either Home Businesses or Home Occupations. Home Occupations are contained entirely within a single-family home and have restrictions on outdoor display of products or equipment to prevent negative impacts upon abutting residential properties. Home Businesses allow more intensive use of an accessory building or portions of the property but require an approved site plan and adequate screening from neighboring properties. Home Occupations are permitted by right in all zoning districts, while Home Businesses require a Conditional Use Permit from the Planning Board. Both of these designations are important tools that empower entrepreneurs to start and maintain a business in their home. These businesses may eventually expand into larger commercial facilities.

[Source: Town of Barrington]

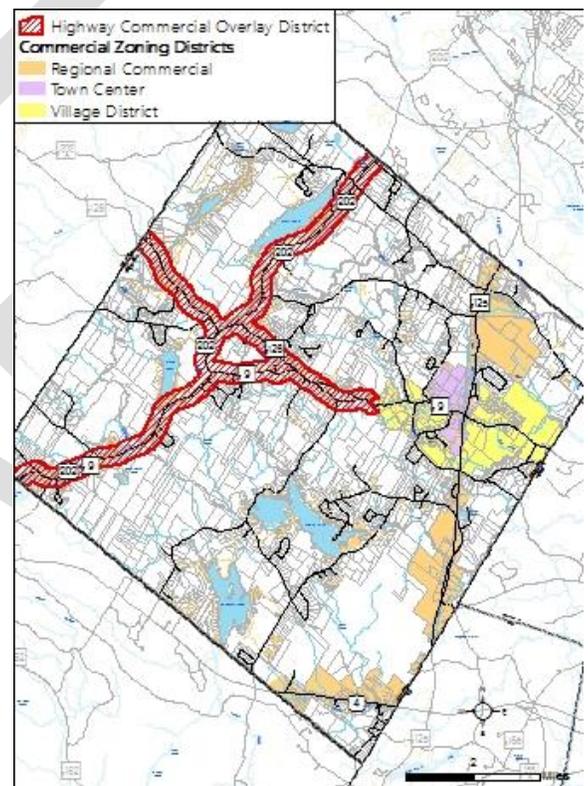


Figure 4: Commercial Zoning Districts in Barrington.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

As indicated in the Vision and Community Character chapter, Barrington residents value the town's existing rural character. However, residents also expressed interest in attracting additional commercial and industrial development in order to diversify the Town's property tax base and reduce dependence upon residential property taxes. This development is most likely to be concentrated along major highways, such as Route 125, Route 9, or Route 4. Locating in these areas would serve a dual purpose of providing high visibility and easy access to the transportation system, while simultaneously preserving more rural areas of town, particularly if future development is designed to be compatible with Barrington's rural character.

Barrington has established seven Economic Revitalization Zones (ERZs), shown in Figure 5. Businesses that make infrastructure investments and create jobs within these ERZs are eligible to apply for tax credits to offset their state business profits tax. Barrington's ERZs are concentrated near the existing Redemption Road business park and the future town center. Other ERZs near Pierce Road and Old Green Hill Road could provide opportunities for future business park development.

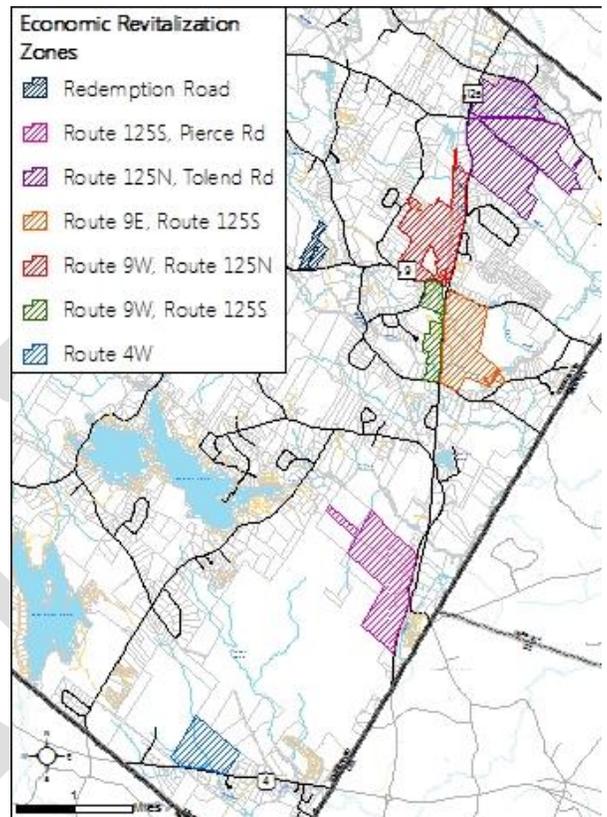


Figure 5: Barrington Economic Revitalization Zones.

Barrington has a history of working proactively with private companies to support development projects in the town. A partnership between the Town and TURBOCAM International established the Redemption Road business park. Barrington recently entered into an agreement with an excavation company to prepare site for future development at the Pierce Road ERZ, which could be an opportunity for business park development once excavation and site work are complete.

Barrington should consider additional opportunities to promote collaboration between the Town and private companies. Additional branding, such as an "open for business" section on the Town's website that connects businesses and entrepreneurs to resources and information about Barrington could encourage these partnerships in the future.

Other financing tools could help Barrington to attract new development. For example, Tax Increment Financing is a tool that sets aside funding to support infrastructure improvements related to development in a particular location. The increase in local property taxes as a result of construction is then used to pay off the costs of these improvements. RSA 79-E tax credits encourage building improvements allowing a property owner to continue paying taxes based upon a lower pre-development local property assessment for a set period of time. After the credit expires the property is then immediately taxed at the assessed value of all improvements. Both of these incentives are tools that communities can use to promote specific high-priority projects that will benefit their residents long-term.

[Source: NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs; Town of Barrington]

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# GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Serving as the implementation section of the Economic Development component of the Barrington Master Plan, this section presents goals and recommendations based on the data and trends presented in the preceding sections of this document. These goals and recommendations are intended to form the foundation for future land use regulation or general procedural change. In a broader sense, they should provide direction to the town's future economic development decisions and initiatives and the Benchmarks for Success identified in the Vision and Community Character chapter. It is important to note that these goals and recommendations are not prioritized and may not fall into the purview of the Planning Board alone.

## GOAL: ENSURE DEVELOPMENT IS COMPATIBLE WITH BARRINGTON'S COMMUNITY CHARACTER

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Guide development along existing commercial corridors and away from environmentally sensitive areas.
- Review permitted uses and building standards in the Town Center to ensure that future development meets the town's goals.
- Seek additional occupants of the Redemption Road business park and consider opportunities for future business parks in existing Economic Revitalization Zones.

## GOAL: EFFECTIVELY PROMOTE BARRINGTON TO POTENTIAL BUSINESSES, VISITORS, AND RESIDENTS

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Create an "open for business" section to the Town's website with resources for starting or locating a business in Barrington.
- Engage with state and regional economic development partners such as the New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs, New Hampshire Commercial Investment Board of Realtors, Strafford Economic Development Corporation and the Greater Barrington Chamber of Commerce to identify interested businesses and track evolving business needs.
- Continue to seek opportunities for public-private partnerships that will promote suitable development in Barrington.
- Create an economic development committee to lead economic development initiatives on behalf of the Town.

## GOAL: IMPLEMENT APPROPRIATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOLS AND INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS TO SUPPORT FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Consider a feasibility study to evaluate the anticipated costs and benefits of public water and sewer improvements and identify future service areas, including areas with opportunity for future growth.
- Promote existing Economic Revitalization Zones to potential and existing businesses considering expansion or relocation.
- Promote existing alternative energy tax credits adopted by the Town to support renewable energy sources and improve sustainability.
- Consider the use of Tax Increment Financing to support future infrastructure improvements in the town center or a future industrial park.
- Consider the use of RSA 79-E for eligible building rehabilitation projects that promote economic development.
- Identify necessary infrastructure improvements in the town center to promote pedestrian safety and accessibility.
- Investigate local Broadband access and feasibility of the Town upgrading Broadband infrastructure.