

SECTION 1—INTRODUCTION

Economic development is a critical component of Brookline’s vision for the future. This chapter begins by outlining that vision and offers an economic summary of Brookline along with other municipalities in the Nashua Region and Massachusetts to provide context. It then highlights desired economic development in Brookline as well as the Town’s strengths, opportunities, challenges, and threats to economic growth. The chapter ends with economic development goals, strategies, and recommendations.

SECTION 2—BROOKLINE’S ECONOMIC VISION

An important component of the overall vision for Brookline is a community that supports local business opportunities. Yet residents are apprehensive about Brookline’s current lack of commercial development. A primary concern is high taxes for the school system and municipal operations, which may result in residents being unable to afford to stay in Brookline. Expanded business development is seen as a way to offset the high tax burden placed on residential property owners. It will also help the community to achieve its vision of becoming more self-sustaining.

At the same time, economic development should not take place indiscriminately. Brookline residents are attracted to the Town’s traditional New England look and feel. Therefore, any decisions about Brookline’s economic development must be made in the context of maintaining and enhancing its quaint, rural community character. Big box stores and chains, for example, should not be encouraged. Instead, Brookline should support a simple, walkable town center and should encourage additional businesses to open in Town, such as a grocery store, cleaners, restaurant, carwash, laundry mat, hardware store, garden store, and toy shop. Providing these retail amenities will limit the number of trips Brookline residents must make out of Town and will help support the local economy.

SECTION 3—ECONOMIC SUMMARY OF BROOKLINE

3.1 ~ Employment and Wage Data

Inflation Adjusted Annual Income, 2009

- Per capita income = \$34,705
- Median 4-person family income = \$105,262
- Median household income = \$99,221

- Median male earnings (full time, year round workers) = \$78,992
- Median female earnings (full time, year round workers) = \$38,232

Source: American Community Survey 2005-2009

Location of Employment

- Percentage of working residents working in community of residence = 15%
- Percentage of working residents commuting to another NH community = 61%
- Percentage of working residents commuting out-of-state = 25%

Source: 2000 Census

Labor Force

Annual Average	1999	2009
Civilian Labor Force	1,979	2,667
Employed	1,932	2,515
Unemployed	47	152
Unemployment Rate	2.4%	5.7%

Source: NH Employment Security, Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau, Community Profiles

Employment and Wages

Annual Average Covered Employment	1999	2009
<i>Goods Producing Industries</i>		
Average Employment	352	166
Average Weekly Wage	\$706	\$1,371
<i>Services Providing Industries</i>		
Average Employment	196	210
Average Weekly Wage	\$532	\$899
<i>Total Private Industry</i>		
Average Employment	548	376
Average Weekly Wage	\$644	\$1,107
<i>Government (Federal, State, and Local)</i>		
Average Employment	124	201

Average Weekly Wage	\$349	\$612
<i>Total, Private plus Government</i>		
Average Employment	672	577
Average Weekly Wage	\$589	\$935

Source: NH Employment Security, Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau, Community Profiles

Summary

A majority of Brookline residents work outside of Brookline. Employment opportunities in Brookline have not kept pace with growth in the labor force and unemployment rates have more than doubled from 1999-2009. Average weekly wages have risen across all industries since 1999, however, total average employment has fallen in Brookline.

3.2 ~ Tax Data

Property Taxes

- 2009 Total Tax Rate (per \$1000 of value) = \$23.24
- 2009 Equalization Ratio = 109.8
- 2009 Full Value Tax Rate (per \$1000 of value) = \$25.50
- 2009 Percent of Local Assessed Value by Property Type
 - Residential land and buildings = 95.2%
 - Commercial land and buildings = 3.5%
 - Public utilities, current use, and other = 1.3%

Source: NH Dept. of Revenue Administration

3.3 ~ Inventory of Existing Businesses in Brookline

Largest Businesses in Brookline

Business Name	Product/Service	Employees	Established
Bingham Lumber Inc.	Lumber	38	1969
Donavan Engineering	Construction of process mechanical systems	35	1934
Superior Steel Fabrications	Steel pre-fabrication	12	1992

Source: NH Employment Security, Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau, Community Profiles

Goods and Services Available in Brookline

A variety of goods and services are available in Brookline, including: architecture, auction gallery, auto sales/service and towing, banking, black smith, camping/RV Park, catering, child care, children’s camp, computer and web design, construction/carpentry/roofing/siding, counseling, consulting, convenience stores, electricians, engineering, excavation, floral design, function hall, gasoline, gift shop, holistic care/nutrition, interior design, landscaping, liquor, lumber, massage, metal recycling, painting, piano technician, photography, plumbing/ heating/air conditioning, real estate services, repairs, restaurants, septic, snow plowing, stables, and self-storage.

SECTION 4—REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMPARISON

4.1 ~ Employment and Wage Data

Inflation Adjusted Annual Income, 2009

Municipality	Per Capita Income	Median 4-person Family Income	Median Household Income
Amherst	\$43,768	\$119,353	\$104,745
Brookline	\$37,705	\$105,262	\$99,221
Hollis	\$54,847	\$128,125	\$116,168
Hudson	\$31,388	\$85,059	\$80,778
Litchfield	\$32,215	\$98,134	\$97,591
Lyndeborough	\$30,234	\$81,845	\$80,784
Mason	\$32,776	\$82,792	\$78,403
Merrimack	\$35,209	\$95,351	\$88,371
Milford	\$28,920	\$80,317	\$69,788
Mont Vernon	\$34,445	\$98,571	\$96,932
Nashua	\$32,019	\$79,398	\$64,219
Pelham	\$36,117	\$100,283	\$90,949
Wilton	\$42,622	\$75,833	\$62,132

Source: American Community Survey 2005-2009

Location of Employment

Municipality	% of working residents working in community of residence	% of working residents commuting to another NH community	% of working residents commuting out-of-state
Amherst	23%	60%	17%
Brookline	15%	61%	25%
Hollis	15%	54%	30%
Hudson	22%	44%	34%

Litchfield	6%	72%	22%
Lyndeborough	11%	78%	11%
Mason	16%	50%	34%
Merrimack	24%	61%	16%
Milford	34%	55%	11%
Mont Vernon	11%	77%	12%
Nashua	47%	26%	26%
Pelham	14%	31%	55%
Wilton	21%	71%	9%

Source: 2000 Census

Annual Average Labor Force, 2009

Municipality	Civilian Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
Amherst	6,266	5,944	322	5.1%
Brookline	2,667	2,515	152	5.7%
Hollis	4,058	3,840	218	5.4%
Hudson	14,876	13,864	1,012	6.8%
Litchfield	5,219	4,914	305	5.8%
Lyndeborough	1,057	998	59	5.6%
Mason	822	773	49	6.0%
Merrimack	16,417	15,454	963	5.9%
Milford	9,071	8,521	550	6.1%
Mont Vernon	1,327	1,262	65	4.9%
Nashua	49,248	45,762	3,486	7.1%
Pelham	7,182	6,570	612	8.5%
Wilton	2,314	2,159	155	6.7%

Source: NH Employment Security, Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau, Community Profiles

Employment and Wages, 2009

Municipality	Goods Producing Industries		Service Providing Industries		Government (Local, State, Federal)	
	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wage	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wage	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wage
Amherst	770	\$895	3,183	\$744	610	\$906
Brookline	166	\$1,371	210	\$899	201	\$612

Hollis	606	\$981	865	\$978	511	\$799
Hudson	4,628	\$1,260	4,901	\$698	918	\$877
Litchfield	188	\$1,129	287	\$556	347	\$730
Lyndeborough	37	\$724	34	\$506	47	\$523
Mason	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	30	\$521
Merrimack	3,253	\$1,594	11,117	\$1,350	1,160	\$787
Milford	1,912	\$936	3,588	\$564	791	\$792
Mont Vernon	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	81	\$577
Nashua	8,087	\$1,604	35,595	\$837	4,762	\$1,092
Pelham	499	\$1,032	1,117	\$633	466	\$742
Wilton	738	\$788	488	\$659	466	\$749

Source: NH Employment Security, Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau, Community Profiles

Summary

Of the thirteen communities in the Nashua Region, Brookline has the 4th highest per capita income and the 3rd highest median household income. Brookline and Hollis are ranked 8th for having the lowest percentage of working residents that are employed in the community where they live. Only four communities in the Nashua Region have lower unemployment rates than Brookline. Brookline has the 3rd highest average weekly wages in both the goods and services industries. However, Brookline ranks 9th for its average weekly wages among government jobs.

4.2 ~ Tax Data

Among communities in the Nashua Region, Brookline has the 2nd highest total tax rate behind Mont Vernon and the 4th highest percentage of local assessed value from residential land and buildings.

Property Taxes, 2009

Municipality	Total Tax Rate (per \$1000 of value)	Percent of Local Assessed Value by Property Type		
		Residential Land and buildings	Commercial Land and buildings	Public utilities, current use, and other
Amherst	\$20.19	86.1%	12.0%	2.0%
Brookline	\$23.24	95.2%	3.5%	1.3%
Hollis	\$20.74	94.8%	4.6%	0.6%
Hudson	\$15.34	79.5%	16.6%	3.9%
Litchfield	\$15.72	93.8%	3.3%	2.9%
Lyndeborough	\$19.98	96.2%	2.1%	1.6%
Mason	\$18.75	98.2%	0.2%	1.5%
Merrimack	\$19.17	80.0%	19.0%	1.0%

Milford	\$19.21	80.7%	18.3%	0.9%
Mont Vernon	\$24.30	98.4%	0.8%	0.8%
Nashua	\$19.82	66.7%	30.8%	2.5%
Pelham	\$19.57	91.3%	6.3%	2.4%
Wilton	\$16.88	90.3%	8.6%	1.0%

Source: NH Dept. of Revenue Administration

4.3 ~ Inventory of Existing Businesses

Brookline does not have any businesses with more than 50 employees.

Largest Businesses in Nashua Region (over 50 employees)

Business Name	Municipality	Product/Service	Employees
Fidelity Investments	Merrimack	Financial services	6,000
BAE Systems North America	Nashua	Tactical communications, surveillance	2,960
Nashua School District	Nashua	Education	2,068
St. Joseph Hospital	Nashua	Health care services	2,031
Southern NH Medical Center	Nashua	Health care services	1,844
PC Connections, Inc.	Merrimack	Computer resale	1,077
BAE Systems	Merrimack	Defense systems	816
City of Nashua	Nashua	Municipal services	811
Merrimack School District	Merrimack	Education	800
BAE Systems	Hudson	Signal analysis & jamming technology	678
Anheuser-Busch, Inc.	Merrimack	Brewery, distribution	531
Hitchiner Manufacturing	Milford	Ferrous, non-ferrous castings	500
Kollsman Instrument Company	Merrimack	Electra optics	500
US Post Office	Nashua	Postal services	481
Amphenol	Nashua	Backplane connection systems	472
Hudson School District	Hudson	Education	467
Federal Aviation Administration	Nashua	Air traffic control	434
Milford School District	Milford	Education	431
Axsys Technologies	Nashua	Optics	339
APW Enclosures	Hudson	Sheet metal fabrication &	300

		integration	
Wakefield Engineering	Pelham	Aluminum extrusion	300
Alene Candles	Milford	Candles	280
PVA-EPVA, Inc.	Wilton	Greeting cards	260
Pelham School District	Pelham	Education	258
Brookstone, Inc.	Merrimack	Mail order marketer, retailer	256
St. Gobain	Merrimack	PTFE coated fabrics	253
Presstek	Hudson	Printing, imaging technology	230
Town of Merrimack	Merrimack	Municipal services	215
St. Gobain Igniters	Milford	Industrial ceramics	212
The Telegraph	Hudson	Daily newspaper	211
Vectron Technologies	Hudson	Noise filter components	200
Wal-Mart	Amherst	Retail store	200
Label Art, Inc.	Wilton	Pressure sensitive labels	195
Hampshire Hills Sports & Fitness	Milford	Health & Fitness Club	180
Cirtronics	Milford	Electromechanical Assemblies	164
Sun Health Care	Milford	Elder care services	152
GT Solar, Inc.	Merrimack	Equipment for photovoltaic & semiconductor industries	150
Source Electronics	Hollis	Integrated circuits	150
Airmar Technology Corporation	Milford	Ultrasonic transducers	145
H&M Metals, Inc.	Amherst	Steel metal fabrication	130
Hendrix Wire & Cable	Milford	High voltage power cables	120
Hampshire Paper Corporation	Milford	Paper	105
Diamond Casting & Machine	Hollis	Machined aluminum	99
Diacom Corporation	Amherst	Fabric-elastomer diaphragms	93
Hannaford Brothers	Pelham	Supermarket	85
Bur-Bak Machine Corporation	Wilton	Injection molding	80
Morins Landscaping	Hollis	Landscaping contractor	80
NE Small Tube	Litchfield	Manufacturing	70
Quality Assured Cable	Pelham	Cabling	70
Puritan Press, Inc.	Hollis	Commercial printing	60
Jennings Excavation	Hollis	Commercial & residential contracting	55
Resin System	Amherst	Custom cast thermoset plastic	52

Corporation			
Chunky's Cinema Pub	Pelham	Cinema, restaurant	50
Kimball Physics, Inc.	Wilton	UHV electron	50

Source: NH Employment Security, Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau, Community Profiles

4.4 ~ Economic Development Strategies in Surrounding Communities

Amherst, New Hampshire

Economic Development Goals

- Encourage higher value commercial development
 - Encourage higher value redevelopment in existing commercial and industrial areas to enhance fiscal benefits to the Town.
 - Preserve the character of Route 101 corridor.
- Improve design of commercial areas
 - Encourage redevelopment that enhances the appearance of existing commercial and industrial areas.
- Encourage mixed-use area
 - Encourage redevelopment of mixed-use nodes in limited locations along the Route 101A corridor.
 - Allow limited expansion of small-scale mixed-use development around existing commercial nodes outside major corridors.
- Diversify tax base
 - Continue industrial development on the few remaining industrially zoned parcels south of Route 101A.
 - Support low-impact commercial recreation activities that are based on and respect the Town's natural, rural, agricultural, and heritage resources.

Economic Development Recommendations

- To encourage higher value commercial development:
 - Provide infrastructure support for higher-value economic development (roads, sewer, etc.).
 - Provide adequate access for development of the Industrial Park.
 - Participate in marketing programs to attract the following types of firms: health services; information technology; financial management; alternative energy; and professional, scientific, and technical services.
- To improve design of commercial areas:
 - Ensure that future commercial development will adhere to principles of good planning and design.
 - Adopt design standards and guidelines and apply more rigorous site plan review for commercial development.
 - Adopt design guidelines for signs and landscaping to help assure designs that will be consistent with Amherst's historic character.

- To encourage mixed-use areas:
 - Expand and diversify existing commercial areas, e.g., Amherst Village (very limited and selective commercial activities) and at the intersection of Route 101 and Horace Greeley Road in North Amherst, and the intersection of Route 101 and Route 122.
 - Encourage increasing the height of existing buildings in commercial and industrial areas, thus filling up the zoning envelopes that already exist.
- To diversify tax base:
 - Support potential commercial recreation properties such as horse stables, pick-your-own berries and fruit farms, agricultural and antiques fairs, etc.

Source: Amherst Master Plan, 2010

Hollis, New Hampshire

“We are a Town with a clear vision and philosophy of how our own economy should be maintained and developed. The Town should actively plan to retain the features of the community that have established Hollis as a desirable community in which to live and work.

1. Maintenance of Small Business—the Town should seek to maintain small businesses in the Agricultural and Business District, the Commercial District, and the Industrial District.”

Source: Hollis Master Plan, 1998

Mason, New Hampshire

“Mason should continue to promote home-based business and support a diverse economic development strategy, which may include the creation of a commercial zone. Mason could partner with local and regional leaders, economic development organizations, government, and private sector businesses interested in maintaining a sustainable economy.”

Source: Mason Master Plan, 2007

Milford, New Hampshire

Goal 1—Establish a proactive business support and business development policy at the Board of Selectmen level.

Goal 2—Maintain existing municipal infrastructure facilities and services, and wisely plan for and implement construction of necessary new and expanded facilities and services to cost-effectively and fairly distribute the cost so there is no undue burden on either the business/development community or the taxpaying citizens of Milford.

Goal 3—Continue to support and implement economic development initiatives that strengthen Downtown/The Oval as the physical, historic, and symbolic hub of community economic activity.

Goal 4—Undertake a town-wide analysis of existing land uses and overlying zoning districts to identify areas for future commercial and industrial development, redevelopment, and workforce housing in relation to land development capacity, needed infrastructure improvements for the transportation network, utilities, stormwater management, municipal facilities, physical and natural constraints, neighborhood compatibility, and protection of open space and Town character.

Goal 5—Increase, through all available and cost-effective marketing opportunities including an enhanced state-of-the-art website, local, regional, and national awareness of Milford as a community that is a welcoming and business-friendly environment affording superior quality-of-life.

Goal 6—Enhance communication and program development between School District, Business Community, and the Town in matters of joint economic development and in particular those matters that focus on budgeting and capital improvements.

Source: Recommendations to Foster Economic Development in Milford, 2009

Pepperell, Massachusetts

Economic Goals and Recommendations

- Focus development in established areas to protect Pepperell's rural character and encourage the revitalization of Railroad Square.
- Ensure that commercial activity does not adversely impact Pepperell's abundant natural resources.
 - Limit commercial activity to agriculture-related uses within the flood zone.
 - Focus development in Railroad Square and existing industrial parks.
- Improve the Railroad Square business area.
 - Utilize the Mixed Use Overlay District as incentive for revitalization.
 - Adopt design standards to reinforce the Square's historical character.
 - Utilize the presence of the Nashua River and the Nashua River Rail Trail.
 - Facilitate mill revitalization by ensuring funding of consultant support to the Planning Board for ongoing project review of engineering and design issues.

- Encourage policies that support agriculture.
 - Protect prime agricultural land through land acquisition, purchase by land trust, or by encouraging land owners to place agricultural preservation restrictions on their land.
 - Encourage the Agricultural Advisory Board to work with the farms and the Town to identify incentives that will foster protection and enhancement of local agriculture.
 - Promote eco-tourism.
- Encourage mixed use development to provide a greater variety of housing options located closer to services.
 - Consider overlay districts to establish mixed use village centers in the Historic District and along Hollis Street to the Brookline Street intersection.
- Ease unduly limiting restrictions on home-based businesses to allow those that are not intrusive in residential neighborhoods, such as artists, agriculture, consultants, and hospitality.
- Determine whether the Town wants to focus on industrial uses at its industrial park or to continue allowing commercial and service uses.
 - Consider modifying the zoning to prohibit commercial uses in order to encourage appropriate industrial uses.

Source: Pepperell Comprehensive Plan Update, 2007-2016

Townsend, Massachusetts

Economic Goals

- Expand the sources of town revenue.
- Develop marketing strategies and implementation tactics that will appeal to the integration of additional businesses to enhance the community.
- Provide a balanced budget that is consistent with revenue and funds needed for appropriate delivery of services.

Strategies for Economic Development

- Implement the recommendations of the Zoning District Change Committee to encourage appropriate business development in the Rt. 119 and Rt. 13 corridors.
- Encourage appropriate business development in the Town Common area.
- Market the town as a viable and attractive location for businesses.

- Explore professional assistance in the marketing effort.
- Calculate the true costs of development (residential, commercial, and industrial).
- Utilize the true cost data in the development strategies.
- Hire a grant writer (or commissioned firm) to maximize grant opportunities (most be revenue positive).
- Shape the pattern of residential growth to be fiscally neutral or positive while following the other objectives of the Master Plan.

Source: Townsend Master Plan, 2008

Wilton, New Hampshire

Economic Strategies and Recommendations

1. Commercial Parcel Inventory—an inventory of commercial parcels, ownership status, and a variety of other characteristics relative to the potential development of sites would enable the identification of commercial sites more likely to be developed. It would aid understanding of the opportunities to coordinate development and guide it to the most optimal locations. If the Planning Board considers it a high priority, this type of information could be used in recruiting business to existing commercial land located outside the downtown, such as by the Route 101/31 intersection.
2. Wilton Main Street Program—in addition to improving the streetscape of Main Street, WMSA should focus on finding a new tenant or an adaptive reuse for the former Harwood's Grocery Store. The WMSA should also produce a detailed market analysis to define the local retail trade geography and potential strategies for expanding the current mix of retail and service business. Once the market analysis is complete, WMSA should attempt to attract one or more businesses (5,000 square feet of commercial building development per year) that match the ideal business characteristics identified.
3. Potential Zoning Changes and Improvements—there is limited area for future commercial development. The Planning Board should investigate the feasibility of expanding the downtown commercial zones and also evaluate whether the performance standards for each commercial zone function as intended. The Planning Board should complete its research into the optimal design of a mixed-use district, an addition to the office park district, or development of a campus style research park district.
4. Commercial design in the Route 101 and Route 31 corridors—the majority of the limited commercial development in Wilton is located in visible locations on the most heavily traveled local roads. The

Planning Board should study how site planning and community compatibility guidelines may be used to promote additional commercial development in character with Wilton's rural environment.

Source: Wilton Master Plan, 1999

SECTION 5—DESIRED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN BROOKLINE

Vision Chapter

Economic development in Brookline should be guided by a desire to maintain the Town's traditional New England look and feel and its rural community character. Big box stores and chains, for example, should not be encouraged. Additional businesses that should be supported include a grocery store, cleaners, restaurant, carwash, laundry mat, hardware store, garden store, and toy shop. The Town should also promote a simple, walkable town center with local businesses and gathering places for residents.

2010 Brookline Master Plan Survey

The 2010 Brookline Master Plan Survey¹ asked respondents to rate how important they felt it was to attract particular types of businesses to Brookline. According to this survey, small retail, such as a pharmacy, florist, or butcher, is the most important type of business to bring into Town. 92% of respondents stated it was somewhat or very important to attract small retail to Brookline. Small office-based businesses, such as a dentist, CPA, lawyer, and insurance, were viewed as the second most significant type of business to attract. 88% of respondents stated it was somewhat or very important to attract small office-based businesses to Brookline. Child care and early learning was viewed as the third most important business type, with 76% of respondents stating that it was somewhat or very important to attract to Town. Other key business types that were identified as somewhat or very important to attract according to survey respondents include nursing homes and assisted living facilities (67%), bed & breakfasts and inns (65%), industrial (65%), entertainment (64%), and service businesses (60%).

Large retail, such as strip malls, Target, Wal-Mart, and Home Depot were not viewed as important businesses to attract, according to 61% of survey respondents. Furthermore, 50% of survey respondents stated that it was not important to attract franchised restaurants to Brookline.

¹ See Appendix for additional information on surveys referenced in this Master Plan, including total number of respondents.

2010 Master Plan Forum, Economic Development Breakout Session

Participants in the Economic Development Breakout Session of the 2010 Master Plan Forum were asked what types of businesses they would like to see in the future in Brookline. Responses were consistent with those given in the 2010 Master Plan Survey. Overall, participants wanted to see small scale, local business options. They envisioned small retail, such as a grocery store and drug store as well as restaurants and small professional offices. Participants were also interested in education and arts facilities, for instance a music school or pottery studio that offered classes for all ages. Quiet, clean, light industry was also desired, including small contracting and construction firms.

2008 Brookline Route 13 and 130 Vision Plan

Written responses to the Town Center Survey of the 2008 Route 13 and 130 Vision Plan stated that additional professional services and gathering places such as a coffee shop, small restaurant, gazebo for concerts, a park, and retail shops would create a more vibrant town center and a destination unto itself.

SECTION 6—STRENGTHS, OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND THREATS TO ECONOMIC GROWTH

6.1 ~ Strengths and Opportunities

2010 Brookline Master Plan Survey

Brookline's school system was viewed as the greatest strength and opportunity for Brookline's economic development; 70% of respondents stated the school system is a strength and 24% said it is an opportunity. Safety services were also considered an asset to economic development, with 49% of respondents citing them as a strength and 34% as an opportunity. Likewise, 45% of respondents viewed Brookline's roads as a strength for economic development and 35% as an opportunity.

Rural character was seen as a strength and opportunity for economic development, but to a lesser degree than the school system, safety services, and roads. Forty one percent of respondents stated rural character is a strength and 16% thought of it as an opportunity. At the same time, 39% viewed rural character as a challenge and 1% as a threat. Employment opportunities also received mixed reactions; 34% of respondents stated employment opportunities are an opportunity for Brookline, 15% a strength, 35% a challenge, and 15% a threat.

2010 Master Plan Forum, Economic Development Breakout Session

Participants in the Economic Development Breakout Session of the 2010 Master Plan Forum identified a number of assets to Brookline's economic development, including its strong school system and safe, family-friendly atmosphere. Lake Potanipo and Melendy Pond were also discussed, along with Camp Tevya, which helps to bring non-residents into Brookline.

6.2 ~ Challenges and Threats

2010 Brookline Master Plan Survey

Respondents to the 2010 Master Plan Survey overwhelmingly identified the tax rate as a threat and challenge to Brookline's economic development; 47% of respondents stated the tax rate is a threat and 43% a challenge. Public infrastructure was also a concern, with 49% of respondents stating public infrastructure is a challenge and 24% identifying it as a threat. In addition, 54% of respondents stated zoning is a challenge and 11% stated it is a threat to economic development.

Opinion was more mixed regarding transportation options; 41% of respondents stated transportation options are a challenge and 11% a threat, yet 30% viewed it as an opportunity and 17% a strength. As mentioned above, employment opportunities also received mixed reactions with 35% stating it was a challenge and 15% a threat.

2010 Master Plan Forum, Economic Development Breakout Session

Comments made by participants in the Economic Development Breakout Session of the 2010 Master Plan Forum on threats and challenges to Brookline's economic development can be divided into five major categories. The first is a lack of destination. Forum participants noted that people pass through Brookline along Route 13 without having any reason to stop in Town.

Zoning is the second overarching theme identified by Forum participants. They noted that there is limited zoning for commercial growth and questioned where additional commercial development would go. They also felt that Brookline residents might not support a change in zoning to allow more commercial development.

Forum participants also focused on physical and infrastructure limitations to Brookline's economic development. Terrain was identified as a limiting issue, as was the lack of Town water and sewer.

Loss of local businesses was the fourth overarching theme. Participants noted the loss of Grant Plastics and Riverside Restaurant and commented that the empty buildings in Brookline create a depressing atmosphere. There was also concern that development at the former military base in Devens, Massachusetts has not provided the regional economic opportunities it promised.

Lastly, participants identified a passiveness and lack of organized effort on the part of Brookline to pursue business development opportunities.

SECTION 7—ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

7.1 ~ Growth Management

In 1994, Brookline adopted a Growth Management Ordinance to “flatten the rate of growth in the Town” in order to meet the demand for schools, prevent an unacceptably high tax rate, allow the Town to absorb an increase in municipal services in an orderly way, and ensure that Brookline accommodated a fair share of the regional population growth. The ordinance was based on an analysis of growth data in the 1990 Brookline Master Plan, which recommended an annual growth rate “cap” of three percent. The overall goal was to slow growth to no more than 3% by limiting the number of building permits that could be issued in any calendar year for new residential dwellings.

The Growth Management Ordinance was written with a sunset clause, allowing it to expire at Town Meeting unless the Planning Board, upon annual review, determined that the population and growth data, in conjunction with the Capital Improvement Plan, justified its continued application. In 2011, the Planning Board did not vote to extend the Ordinance. A warrant article to delete the Growth Management Ordinance was placed on the 2011 Town Meeting ballot and was approved by voters. The Planning Board will continue to review the former ordinance each fall and make a recommendation on whether it should be reinstated at the following Town Meeting. Other communities in the Nashua Region that had previously adopted growth management ordinances have also allowed them to expire.

7.2 ~ Findings/Results

2010 Brookline Master Plan Survey

72% of respondents to the 2010 Brookline Master Plan Survey stated they would be in support of appointing an Economic Development Committee in Brookline to plan for and promote the achievement of the economic goals set forth in the Master Plan.

2010 Master Plan Forum, Economic Development Breakout Session

Participants in the Economic Development Breakout Session of the 2010 Master Plan Forum recommended creating a business-savvy, economic development committee to help bring business into Brookline. They also discussed developing vacant lots along Route 13, which would provide incentive for people traveling across the Massachusetts/New Hampshire border to stop in Brookline.

2008 Brookline Route 13 and 130 Vision Plan

The creation of an Economic Development Group was recommended as a key action item with a 1-3 year timeframe.

7.3 ~ Goals and Recommendations

Goal 1—Reduce the high tax burden on residential property owners.

Recommendations:

- Develop a Tax Base Diversification Plan to examine strategies for broadening Brookline's tax base.
- Expand business development to diversify Brookline's tax base and supplement residential property tax revenues.

Goal 2—Expand retail and service opportunities in Brookline to make the Town more self-sustaining and self-supporting.

Recommendations:

- Encourage additional small retail businesses such as a grocery store, pharmacy, florist, butcher shop, and restaurant.
- Encourage small office-based businesses such as a dentist, CPA, lawyer, insurance company.

Goal 3—Encourage economic growth that maintains and enhances Brookline's traditional New England look and rural community character.

Recommendations:

- Adopt a size cap ordinance to prohibit the construction of retail stores larger than a specified size.
- Support economic development initiatives that create a simple, walkable town center that serves as a destination onto itself and attracts people to local businesses.
- Focus new business development into existing buildings to decrease sprawl and maintain Brookline’s green space and rural character.

Goal 4—Create a business-friendly atmosphere and actively pursue economic development and growth opportunities in Brookline.

Recommendations:

- Create an Economic Development Committee to coordinate economic development opportunities on behalf of the Town and to serve as a liaison between the business community, Board of Selectmen, and Planning Board. Duties of the Economic Development Committee should include, but are not limited to:
 - Prioritize and pursue business types deemed as desirable to Brookline residents, including small retail, small office, child care and early learning, nursing homes and assisted living facilities, bed & breakfasts and inns, industrial, entertainment, and service businesses.
 - Market Brookline’s strengths and opportunities, including its school system, safety services, road network, and overall quality of life.
 - Examine Brookline’s zoning to ensure it allows for adequate economic growth.
 - Creating an economic development page on the Town of Brookline website.
- Establish infrastructure to areas of Town identified as desired locations to support commercial and industrial development. Ensure costs are distributed between the business/development community and Brookline tax payers so neither group is unfairly burdened.

7.4 ~ Implementation and Timeframe

Task	Responsible Department or Group	Timeframe
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Create an Economic Development Committee	Board of Selectmen	1 year
Develop a Tax Base Diversification Plan to examine strategies for broadening Brookline's tax base.	Economic Development Committee	1-3 years
Expand business development to diversify Brookline's tax base and supplement residential property tax revenues.	Planning Board, Economic Development Committee	3-5 years
Encourage additional small retail and small office-based businesses.	Planning Board, Economic Development Committee	3-5 years
Adopt a size cap ordinance to prohibit the construction of retail stores larger than a specified size.	Planning Board	1-3 years
Support economic development initiatives that create a simple, walkable town center.	Planning Board, Economic Development Committee	3-5 years
Focus new business development into existing buildings.	Planning Board	1-3 years
Establish infrastructure to areas of Town identified as desired locations to support commercial and industrial development.	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen	3-5 years