

ANNUAL REPORT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY PLANNING FY19

In mid-September 2018, the Department of Economic Development and Community Planning was staffed and began operations. During its inaugural year the Department operated within the direct supervision of the Town Manager, and was funded within the Town Manager's budget appropriation.

The office is staffed primarily by the full-time Economic Development and Community Planning Director with limited assistance from the Land-Use administrative staff whose primary functions lie with the Planning Board (full-time) and Board of Appeals (part-time) respectively.

During FY19, the Department collaborated with other Town departments on a variety of projects, studies, programs and grant applications. In addition, new frameworks were crafted for even more collaborative efforts, including a quality of life video (Uxbridge Community Access), and the Blackstone Valley Bike Trail (a consortium of regional planners).

Economic Development and Community Planning was also directly involved in several community planning impact projects, including the **McCloskey Building Repurpose Study**, a study and recommendation for the former Uxbridge High School; the **Town Owned Property Study**, a review of Town-owned parcels to determine current municipal uses and what, if any, can be declared surplus property and returned to the tax rolls via sale.

The Department is also active in the development of a number of economic development and community planning tools and initiatives including the **Uxbridge Main Streets Initiative**, which is a program intended to bring together the interests of the property and business owners with those of the Town in order to craft an economic development framework that can exist within a Main Street Master Plan. The Initiative will also serve as the vehicle for the delivery of technical assistance to current and prospective Main Street businesses.

Several grant funded programs involved Economic Development and community Planning in various ways. Applications for a **Regional Emergency Operations Center** feasibility study and the installation of the Town's first **Electric Vehicle Charging Station** were successful. In addition, the staff played a role in the

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Municipal Vulnerabilities Preparedness project, **Green Communities** and the development of a comprehensive **Emergency Management Plan**. The later was made possible by the efforts of a student intern, Shane Keville-Wagner, from the Massachusetts Maritime Academy.

The Department also worked with the Planning Board to develop improved sections of the Zoning By-law. Spring Annual Town Meeting endorsed the updates as presented.

Key to building a strong economic development and community planning effort is information that can be made readily available to citizens, business decision makers and investors. To that end, the Department has crafted several tools including the **Uxbridge Business Guide**, **Uxbridge Resource Guide**, **Uxbridge Quick Facts** and the **Ready, Set, Go** technical assistance program for new small businesses start-ups.

The **Project Review Team** (PRT) was instituted during the fiscal year. The PRT brings together key Town Departments in order to conduct and initial review of proposals for the siting of a new business in the community. The Team worked with more than a dozen new businesses during the year.

The professional staff of the Department of Economic Development and Community Planning wishes to thank the other Town Departments for their support and willingness to collaborate, the businesses, Boards and Committees that have looked to this office for support and information, the Central MA Regional Planning Commission for their support and expertise, the aforementioned Shane Keville – Wagner from MMA, Randy Fields from the Senior Work-Off Program, and Lynn Marchand and Melissa Shelley from the Land Use Department.

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