

Economic Development and Community Planning
Annual Report
FY2022

The Department of Economic Development and Community Planning mission is to continuously improve the quality of life and promote economic growth, stability and vitality in Uxbridge by supporting existing and new businesses and facilitating investment and economic development that is beneficial to the Town, its neighborhoods and business districts, and that meet or exceed community expectations.

The Department is staffed primarily by the Economic Development and Community Planning Director with limited assistance from the Land-Use administrative staff whose primary functions lie with the Planning Board (part-time) and Board of Appeals (part-time) respectively, as well as interns, work co-op students and Senior Work-off Program participants.

During the first half of the Fiscal Year the impacts of the COVID 19 Pandemic were still being felt. During the latter half of the fiscal year, the restrictions were beginning to be relaxed and a new normal was becoming apparent. The Pandemic taught us several things, including the value of remote meetings and remote work. As we turned to the new normal both have been integrated into the way we do business. Though slowed businesses growth and development continued to move Uxbridge forward.

The Department continued to look for collaborative opportunities with other Town departments as well as the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce, Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, regional neighbors, local non-profit organizations, and historic preservation groups. The EDCP continued to take the lead in a number of studies and strategies intended to move the community forward. The pivotal project remains the repurposing of the McCloskey Building as the Uxbridge Municipal Campus. The McCloskey Building Study was completed, and as the year ended, the strategy was moving forward to the next important step of bringing the proposal forward to the elected and appointed officials as well as Town Meeting.

The Main Street Comprehensive Community Plan continued to be developed. EDCP staff are creating the strategy and plan in-house with the assistance of other Town Departments and CMRPC. When complete the Plan will prepare decision makers with a clear path to bringing the Main Street corridor forward. A daylong “Idea Uxbridge” community-planning workshop was conducted during October 2021 that centered on all things Main Street.

The Project Review Team under the auspices of EDCP met with a variety of new businesses, including a variety of cannabis cultivation and production developers/operators including Apple Guy Flowers, Cannabonics, Coastal Roots, and Natural Bliss. In addition, the Team worked with the developers of the Big Y Supermarket.

EDCP worked with the site and logistics planners for a Netflix movie, “Mothership”. The movie starring Halle Berry will air sometime during the 2022-2023 TV season. A variety of Massachusetts communities were used as settings for the filming.

Economic Development and Community Planning has benefited from a team of student interns and co-op students, special employees, and senior volunteers. Over the past several years. The Town’s Senior Work-off Program has provided the Department with outstanding support of the past several years. The volunteer has been a tremendous asset in the effort to complete research about the local businesses, land-use and values, and historic properties.

Among those that provided assistance were Matthew O’Brien (Suffolk University/Harvard University) and Kennedy Keville-Wagner (University of Vermont) and Thomas “Randy” Fields (Senior Volunteer). Of note, Melissa Shelley from the Land Use Department provided immeasurable professional support during the year.

Because of all of the above, the Department of Economic Development and Community Planning continues to be recognized for outstanding economic and community planning programming and efforts by State agencies, developers, site-planners, business owners, and funding organizations.

During FY22 the Director of Economic Development and Community Planning, Michael Gallerani continued in his role as Director on a part-time basis.

The staff and future volunteers, interns and work co-op students as well as temporary staff, look forward to working with other Town Departments, local businesses, the Commonwealth of MA, regional planning organizations, and the local education and workforce organizations to continue make Uxbridge a community ready for tomorrow and the challenges and opportunities that may present themselves

Michael Gallerani, CEcD
Director