

## **Chapter 11**

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Introduction**

Unplanned economic growth may create adverse conditions that negatively impact communities. Therefore, Canterbury should plan for economic development in a manner that creates a range of employment opportunities, produces rising incomes, and raises citizens' living standards while considering the impact of such growth on the Town. The following economic development plan provides for economic growth consistent with the goals and policies of the Town of Canterbury as set forth in other sections of the Master Plan.

#### **Past and Current Economic Activity**

Historically, most of the economic activity in Canterbury has been related to agriculture and forestry. Today, sod farming is the biggest agricultural employer, although in recent years the apple orchards have been thriving. Only one active dairy farm remains. To the extent that Canterbury has a "business base" it has shifted to largely home-based service industries: retail, crafts, and technology-related professions. Tourism is an important part of the Town's economy, with increasing numbers of visitors to Shaker Village and the Speedway in Loudon.

Approximately 80 percent of Canterbury's work force commutes to jobs outside of Town. See Table 4-8. For this reason, the state of the regional economy has become the relevant basis on which to judge job opportunities and economic growth in Canterbury.

Future developments in Greater Concord's overall economy and its economic expansion will continue to affect Canterbury significantly in several ways. Expansion in regional commercial, industrial, and government sectors will provide more employment opportunities for Canterbury residents. Any significant economic slowdown in the Concord area could force some Canterbury residents to move away from the Town in search of employment elsewhere, as occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

#### **Industrial/Commercial Development Possibilities**

The only portion of the Town of Canterbury which is zoned industrial is located on the west side of Interstate 93 at Exit 18. The site is irregular in shape and is accessed from West Road. The site has some limitation, but is well suited for development. The Town purchased the site from the State in the late 1960s for a nominal amount, but conditioned on the Town's agreement to use the property for commercial/industrial purposes. Given the long term consequences of site development and its impact on the community's goals for land use, tax base and employment, development of a long range plan is considered an essential first step in the development of the site.

At the March 1996 Town Meeting, the Town established an eight member Economic Development Committee. Since its inception, the Committee has collected and reviewed site data and also considered uses of abutting properties.

Concurrent with these tasks, the Committee surveyed communities throughout the region to better understand how they have approached similar development. Included as part of this analysis was an assessment of the types of users which may be likely to require space and typical site requirements. By developing a better understanding of the amount of competing space available in the region and current demand, optimal site configurations and absorption projections could be developed.

The Committee is also examining the uses allowed by the Zoning Ordinance to assess whether additional or alternative uses should be permitted and will consult with the Planning Board to make recommendations to the voters.

The Committee is also undertaking a review of funding sources which are available to assist the Town with the development of the site. Funds for infrastructure development and financing for businesses which want to construct facilities on the site are being researched.

The results of these analyses will be combined to create a plan for development of the site. The plan will include the sequence and timing of events associated with the development of the site, financing of the development, proposed uses and dimensional requirements and configuration of individual lots as well as the proposed management structure for the development of the property.

The Planning Board's recent survey shows that approximately eighty percent of Canterbury's residents have a strong desire to maintain and preserve the Town's rural character. This is reflected in the goals and objectives stated in other sections of this Master Plan. Most of Canterbury's businesses are evenly distributed throughout the Town, and it is not the intention of this Plan to create additional industrial/commercial districts now or in the foreseeable future, but rather to encourage development in existing districts. Responses to the Planning Board survey strongly support this position.

### **Conclusion**

The Town's long-term goal will be to continue to encourage resourcefulness in the development of small businesses, professional services, and agriculture-related activities that will be consistent with the goals and policies in other sections of this Master Plan.

In developing criteria for evaluation of economic development in Canterbury, consideration should be given to how businesses affect neighbors and the community as a whole. The primary criteria for judging such impact will be performance standards detailed in Town ordinances, with special consideration given to such aspects as public safety, potential danger to community health, pollution, adverse impact on the water table and other natural

resources, drainage and water run-off problems, increases in traffic volume and traffic hazards, noxious fumes, obtrusive lights, and noise pollution.

Equally important criteria will address the impact of commercial development on Town facilities and services, and on its tax structure, and the potential for adverse effect on Canterbury's scenic beauty and rural character.

### **Long-Range Goal**

1. Encourage the development of small businesses, professional services, recreational uses, tourism and agriculture-related activity in a manner which conforms to overall goals of keeping Canterbury rural and residential and which will minimize new Town expenditures on infrastructure.
2. Encourage development of land currently zoned for commercial and industrial uses in order to expand Canterbury's tax base.
3. Encourage the growth of home occupations, craft/artisan businesses, and bed and breakfasts, that do not detract from Canterbury's rural character and improve and diversify the Town's economic, recreational and intellectual resources.