



Windham Maine

Economic Development Strategic Plan

Vision

To create a business friendly environment that provides a high-quality of life, a vibrant economy, and a welcoming atmosphere, while protecting our town's rural characteristics and natural resources.

Mission

To encourage economic growth and development in a manner that supports increased prosperity in the Town of Windham and improves the quality of life for all of its citizens.

Core Values

Industry Diversity • Innovative Community Building • Sustainable Growth
Expanded Employment Opportunities • Skilled Workforce • Proactive Customer Services

Objectives

Objective 1: Plan for the Future- Identify and implement policies, programs, and initiatives that support the Town's economic and community development needs.

Objective 2: Support Business Growth and Prosperity- Proactively seek opportunities to diversify Windham's economy, create jobs, and strengthen existing business.

Objective 3: Create and Maintain an Efficient Review and Approval Process- Establish review and approval processes that are efficient and in alignment with economic and community development initiatives, as well as provide resources to parties utilizing these services.

Objective 4: Develop a Support System for Economic Development- Ensure the sustainability of economic development initiatives in Windham through collaborative efforts of town officials and departments with the Windham Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), regional agencies, local business groups, and citizens, in addition to identifying and utilizing strategic funding sources.

Objective 1: Plan for the Future

Goal: Engage stakeholders in a planning process designed to identify opportunities to enhance economic and community development in Windham.

Strategies:

- WEDC to host public hearings to gather input from businesses, developers, citizens, and other stakeholders on issues related to the economic and community development needs of the Town
- Incorporate strategies for economic development into the Comprehensive Plan
- Complete the Comprehensive Plan
- Town Council to approve the Comprehensive Plan
- Develop implementation strategies for the 21st Century Downtown Plan
- Develop implementation strategies for the 302 North Corridor Plan
- Develop Town policies for the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF), impact fees, loan programs, and other economic development tools

Goal: Create a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) that supports the economic and community development needs identified in the Comprehensive Planning Process.

Strategies:

- WEDC to make recommendations of short, intermediate, and long-term infrastructure needs to the Town Council on an annual basis
- Town Council to annually approve the CIP and support the Town Manager in its implementation
- WEDC to identify grants, TIF's and other programs available to help fund capital investments

Goal: Define and create a true sense of place in North Windham and other villages within the Town.

Strategies:

- Implement the 21st Century Downtown Plan in a manner creates a true town center
- WEDC to study underground utility upgrades including electric, water, wastewater management, natural gas, and fiber optic cable
- WEDC to engage Windham businesses in a planning process to enhance connectivity through parking and back lots in order to improve both vehicle and pedestrian flow
- Implement a pedestrian and bikeway system that connects to the new Donnabeth Lippman Park
- Implement strategies that leverage the strengths of all villages in Windham

Goal: Implement the 302 North Corridor Plan, including the realignment of the Anglers Road and Whites Bridge Road intersection.

Strategies:

- Support growth in the Enterprise Development District/Quarry Ridge Business Park through planning initiatives
- WEDC to work to ensure appropriate level of industrial, manufacturing, and warehousing space is available to support growth in Enterprise Development Districts
- Support Whites Bridge and Anglers Road intersection improvements through CIP and other planning initiatives.
- WEDC to work with developers to advocate for the infrastructure needs of the corridor within their development proposals
- Coordinate 302 corridor planning and improvements with federal/state DOT programs as well as PACTS to ensure Windham remains the region's central commercial corridor

Goal: Advocate for increased focus on workforce development to meet industry needs in all sectors in order to provide quality employment opportunities for citizens and attract new businesses.

Strategies:

- Identify skill sets required by industry clusters and work to fill gaps
- Collaborate with representative from the Town, WEDC, Chamber of Commerce, St. Joseph's College, and Adult Education to promote resources available to businesses and employees for continued education/training.

Objective 2: Support Business Growth and Prosperity

Goal: Identify industry sectors that will add diversity and create jobs in Windham.

Strategies:

- WEDC to examine current industry sectors to determine their strengths and weaknesses
- Identify specific business sectors deemed central to supporting Windham's economy
- WEDC to identify under-represented business sectors and make recommendations as to how these gaps can best be filled
- Develop a list of prospective businesses to fill the gaps
- Identify specific districts to house the new business sectors
- Develop strategies to create a business campus in Windham

Goal: Develop a marketing plan to attract desired business sectors in order to improve economic diversity

Strategies:

- Identify the strengths of the community that can be used to attract new businesses and residents
- Create a brand for Windham and develop promotional materials designed to solicit new businesses
- Develop a web site for the WEDC to be used to market the Town of Windham
- WEDC to promote commercial vacancies and development opportunities on its website
- Create a Relocation Guide for businesses and residents interested in moving to Windham
- Identify opportunities to promote tourism for Windham's growing hospitality industry
- WEDC to host bi-annual informational and networking events for developers, real estate brokers, and area businesses to discuss how we can work together to bring more business to Windham
- Identify success stories and send press releases to media

Goal: Promote Windham as the retail and service center for the Sebago Lakes Region

Strategies:

- Continue to cultivate the Retail project that began in 2012
- Continue Windham's "Buy Local" campaign
- Encourage local and regional market choices for shoppers through expanded promotion of Windham serving as the "Marketplace of the Sebago Lakes Region"

Goal: Capitalize on the strengths of Windham's agriculture industry to encourage continued growth

Strategies:

- Develop an understanding of the existing agricultural industry to identify potential for growth in the areas of production, processing, and distribution of products
- Establish a "working farms" index to measure the vitality of the local agriculture industry compared to regional performance
- Establish a high end farmers market in the town center

Goal: Continue to develop the manufacturing industry in Windham

Strategies:

- WEDC to identify opportunities to develop additional industrial, manufacturing, and warehouse space
- Promote development opportunities in Enterprise Development Districts

Objective 3: Create and Maintain an Efficient Review and Approval Process

Goal: Examine all Town services to measure impact on economic development goals and activities and to simplify and streamline the review processes to the extent possible

Strategies:

- Review services to ensure they align with desired objectives and efficiently serve the customer
- WEDC to engage in communication between departments, committees, and boards that are involved in the review and approval process to identify methods of improving current methods
- WEDC to gather feedback from local businesses related to current practices
- Identify State and other municipalities review processes that can be adopted by Windham (e.g. DEP site plan review)
- WEDC to recommend changes to current practices to the Town Council

Goal: Develop communication strategies and resources to guide businesses and individuals through the approval and review process

Strategies:

- Establish clear expectations for review and approval processes and communicate to the public
- Create a *Guide to Doing Business in Windham* with licensing, permitting, and start up information
- Provide on line tools to guide parties through the approval process and link to state and regional resources
- WEDC to shepherd parties through the approval process
- Implement a means of gathering feedback from parties that have completed the approval and review process and use as a method of evaluating current practices

Objective 4: Develop a Support System for Economic Development

Goal: Establish the WEDC as the champion for economic development activities/issues in the community

Strategies:

- WEDC to advocate for the business community and economic development issues
- Invite Town officials to WEDC meetings to discuss relevant topics
- WEDC to provide quarterly updates to the Town Council
- Establish an Annual Report of Windham's economic development efforts and the ongoing work of the WEDC

Goal: Develop strategic partnerships in order to leverage resources available for economic and community development

Strategies:

- WEDC to proactively seek partnerships with businesses, organizations, regional agencies, and citizens to collaborate on economic and community development initiatives
- Provide businesses, real estate brokers, and developers with relevant economic, demographic, and psychographic information and educate them on how to use this to impact their bottom lines
- Establish a business visitation plan to proactively solicit feedback from the business community in municipal and economic development issues

Goal: Identify strategic funding mechanisms to enhance investment in economic development initiatives

Strategies:

- Identify sites that are best suited for TIF, inclusion in the CIP, and State programs to assist in development
- Town to develop a TIF Establishment and Usage Policy
- Town to set up and manage Development Districts as needed
- Town to develop an Impact Fee Establishment and Usage Policy
- WEDC to identify grants and other programs available to assist in investments
- Seek private investment and develop guidelines for a Business Loan Fund
- WEDC to keep Town up-to-date on relevant incentive programs used in other communities
- Continue funding of the WEDC initiatives that support strategic objectives

Goal: Ensure that economic development initiatives remain a consistent and ongoing focus

Strategies:

- Establish annual work plans designed to accomplish the objectives outlined in the strategic plan
- Establish specific benchmarks to measure success, and adjust strategies as necessary
- Review this Economic Development Strategic Plan every three years

Performance Measurements

Objective 1: Plan for the Future

1. Update the Town's Comprehensive Plan
2. Adopt a TIF Plan
3. Adopt a CIP Plan
4. Implementation of the 21st Century Downtown Plan as measured by adopted and funded initiatives, ordinance changes, capital investments, and new development/Re-development of existing downtown properties
5. Complete realignment of Anglers Road
6. Increase employment opportunities as measured by total jobs in Windham
7. Increase the number of quality jobs as measured by median income

Objective 2: Support Business Growth and Prosperity

1. Improve retail marketplace vitality as measured by annual retail sales
2. Retail sector sustainability as measured by maintaining stable vacancy rates
3. Industrial sector vitality as measured by increasing inventory, maintaining stable vacancy rates, and increasing jobs in this sector
4. Professional/office sector sustainability as measured by improving vacancy rates and increasing jobs in this sector

Objective 3: Create and Maintain an Efficient Review and Approval Process

1. Adopt regulatory reform
2. Satisfactory feedback from parties completing the review and approval process

Objective 4: Develop a Support System for Economic Development

1. Satisfactory completion of objectives contained in the WEDC's annual work plan
2. Funded TIF
3. Establish a Downtown District
4. Establish an Incentive Program for business relocation
5. WEDC to create an Annual Report/Economic Scorecard