

CHAPTER _ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Survey Results

- ◆ Residents are generally satisfied with the type and amount of commercial development in Woodbury, although there were many suggestions for diversifying the commercial offerings. Respondents would like to see more clothing stores, a grocery store, sporting goods, etc. Residents want new stores and services to complement the existing flavor of Main Street and make Woodbury a destination.
- ◆ Residents are extremely proud of the historic character of Main Street. Woodbury's prominence as a regional antiques center is an important aspect of the Town's image.
- ◆ Residents prefer small retail stores and locally owned restaurants and services. They strongly oppose franchise restaurants, large-scale retail plazas and "big box" warehouse outlets. They wish to exclude businesses that run counter to the distinctive character of Main Street.
- ◆ A majority of respondents were not in favor of finding new areas for additional commercial development.
- ◆ There is strong support for home-based businesses.
- ◆ A clear majority are in favor of providing opportunities to expand small manufacturing and professional services in Woodbury. Professional services that residents desire include medical facilities, dental offices, accountants, etc.
- ◆ Residents do not want the Town to look like communities that welcome a wide variety of commercial activity. Residents believe the Town's historic and cultural assets can serve as a powerful draw to increase tourism and thereby support a broad base of proprietor owned small business.
- ◆ Residents prefer to expand upon existing strengths by encouraging more restaurants, small shops, antique stores, etc., and expanding facilities that offer live entertainment, such as coffee houses and a theater for concerts and plays.
- ◆ Residents indicated a need to obtain some basic services locally such as a laundromat, health club, dry cleaner, small engine repair, etc.
- ◆ Residents favor "clean" businesses, light industry, and professional offices to provide some tax relief without imposing undue impacts on the Town.
- ◆ Some respondents felt the Town should streamline the local approval process to assist small businesses that wish to locate in Woodbury.

Economic Profile

Unemployment Rates

- ◆ Woodbury's unemployment rate is consistently better than the state and the Labor Market Area (LMA) of which it is a part.
- ◆ The U.S. entered a recession at the end of 2007. Unemployment rates have risen dramatically in recent years. Woodbury is not immune to the severity of these

conditions, although its unemployment rate has remained below the state and LMA averages.

**Table
Unemployment Rates**

	Woodbury	Connecticut	Torrington LMA¹
April 2009	6.2	7.8	7.9
Dec. 2008	5.0	7.1	6.2
2007	3.3	4.8	4.4
2006	3.9	4.3	4.1
2005	3.8	4.6	4.7
2004	3.5	4.7	4.9

Source: Connecticut Dept. of Labor

Education of Woodbury's Labor Force

- ◆ Woodbury has a very high percentage of its population with degrees of higher education and outperforms the state as a whole by a wide margin; 49.2% of workers have an Associates Degree or higher.
- ◆ An educated labor force is an important asset that knowledge-based employers seek when searching for new locations.
- ◆ Connecticut has captured a significant share of the innovative technology sector, and Woodbury's educated workers can meet the labor demands to ensure continued growth.

**Table
Educational Attainment of Persons 25 Years Old and Over, 2000**

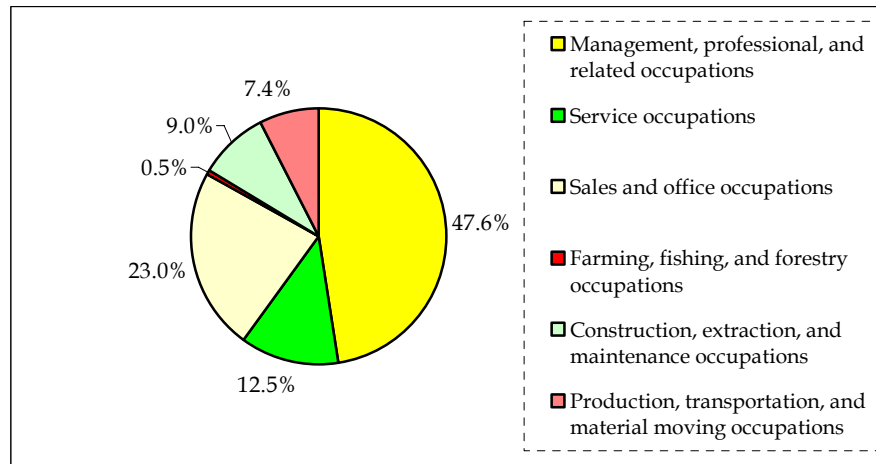
	Less Than 9th Grade	High School		College		
		No Diploma	Graduate	Some College	Associates Degree	Bachelors or Higher
Woodbury	1.4%	8.5%	22.2%	18.8%	7.4%	41.8%
Connecticut	5.8%	10.2%	10.2%	17.5%	6.6%	31.4%

Source: U.S. Census

¹ The Torrington Labor Market Area (LMA) includes Bethlehem, Canaan, Coldbrook, Cornwall, Goshen, Kent, Litchfield, Morris, Norfolk, North Canaan, Roxbury, Salisbury, Sharon, Torrington, Warren, Washington, Winchester, and Woodbury.

Occupations

- ♦ The high education attainment of the labor force is apparent in the occupations of residents; 47.6% work in management, professional, and related occupations.
- ♦ The large retail base of businesses along Main Street accounts for the second highest category; 23.0% of Woodbury residents are in sales and office occupations.



Source: U.S. Census

Where People Work

- ♦ Examining commuting patterns, Woodbury is a significant distance from Waterbury and is not within the direct economic sphere of the metropolitan center. More important are the influences of surrounding communities.
- ♦ The highest number of workers in Woodbury comes from Town residents. This implies a certain degree of economic self-sufficiency and an ability to supply employees to area companies from the Town and neighboring communities.
- ♦ Other significant work locations for Woodbury residents include Southbury, Waterbury, Danbury, and Watertown.
- ♦ Given the predominance of small businesses in the retail and service trades in the Town's economy, workers tend to travel shorter distances to jobs in Woodbury than those who commute out of Town.
- ♦ With Woodbury's labor force having high educational attainment, and with a shortage of knowledge-based jobs in Town, residents tend to commute greater distances to employment centers outside of Woodbury than those who commute into Woodbury.
- ♦ Thus, re-location of such companies to Woodbury could find a ready supply of educated workers from within the local market. This implies an economic development strategy of seeking to attract companies that need a professional workforce.

**Table
Commuting Patterns**

Top 10 Locations to and from Woodbury

Commuting into Woodbury From:		Commuting from Woodbury to:	
Woodbury	1,193	Woodbury	1,193
Southbury	203	Southbury	575
Waterbury	179	Waterbury	518
Watertown	156	Danbury	406
Bethlehem	101	Watertown	154
Naugatuck	92	Ridgefield	138
Middlebury	87	Torrington	122
Torrington	79	Newtown	102
Oxford	63	New Milford	96
Danbury	47	Washington	94

Source: 2000 Census

Employment in Woodbury

- ◆ Considering only jobs covered by unemployment compensation, non-government employment in Woodbury consists of about 2,000 jobs.



New Construction in the MQ District

- ◆ Retail trade contains the highest number of private sector jobs (413); however, the actual number may be much greater since small proprietor-run shops and antique stores may not hire employees subject to the payment of unemployment taxes.
- ◆ Accommodation and food services contain the second highest employment total (349 jobs). This is consistent with the prevalence of restaurants along Main Street.
- ◆ The average annual wage in Woodbury in 2007 was \$35,354; however, the two highest private employment categories, retail and accommodation and food services, had wages well below the average at \$28,744 and \$15,456, respectively.
- ◆ In COGCNV's "Economic Profile of the Central Naugatuck Valley" (2005), Retail Trade had the second lowest wage of 11 major economic sectors. Thus, the large retail base in Woodbury yields less disposable income for employees to support local businesses.
- ◆ Woodbury should seek to diversify the business base to bring in higher paying jobs to the local economy.

- ♦ The number of jobs in government exceeds even that of retail trade; the average annual wage, \$44,571, was well above the average of all sectors.
- ♦ Other strengths of the local economy are in Construction (225 jobs), Health Care and Social Assistance (183 jobs), Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (165 jobs), Information (111 jobs), and Manufacturing (84 jobs).

Table
Woodbury Covered Employment² & Wages by Industry, 2007

NAICS Code	Industry	Units	Annual Average Employment	Annual Average Wage
	Total - All Industries	358	2,425	35,354
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	*	*	*
21	Mining	*	*	*
22	Utilities	*	*	*
23	Construction	52	225	48,840
31	Manufacturing	12	84	33,874
42	Wholesale Trade	21	47	45,022
44	Retail Trade	52	413	28,744
48	Transportation and Warehousing	*	*	*
51	Information	10	111	51,838
52	Finance and Insurance	18	70	51,260
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	10	57	44,690
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	51	165	48,381
55	Management of Companies	3	4	13,656
56	Administrative and Support, Waste Mgmt & Remediation Services	23	53	30,940
61	Educational Services	6	25	6,664
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	25	183	31,265
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	5	19	19,137
72	Accommodation and Food Services	20	349	15,456
81	Other Services	28	84	25,406
99	Unclassifiable/unknown industry	*	*	*
	Total Government	13	424	44,571
	Federal Government	1	21	47,089
	State Government	1	2	73,532
	Local/Municipal Government	11	401	44,283

²Covered Employment is employment covered by unemployment insurance.

Grand List

2007 Net Grand List

- ♦ Residential property makes up the largest component of the Grand List, accounting for 82% of all values. Woodbury is heavily dependent on residential values to generate property tax revenue to fund municipal services.
- ♦ Commercial and Industrial properties comprise just 6.0% of the Grand List. Their contribution to the Grand List declined by 1.2% between 1997 and 2007.

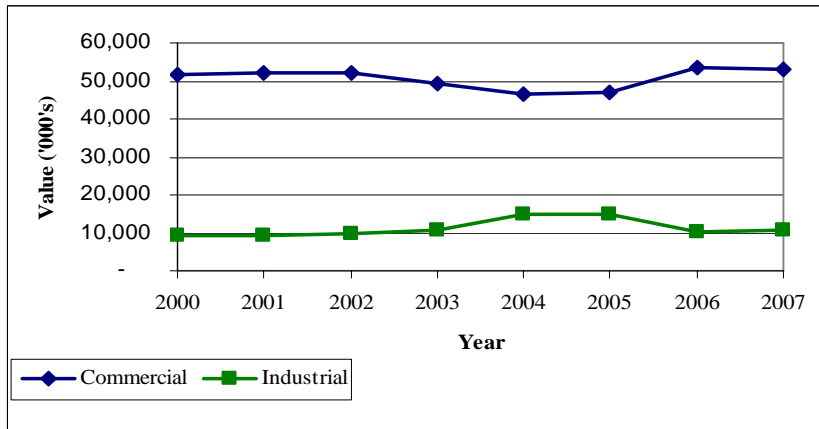
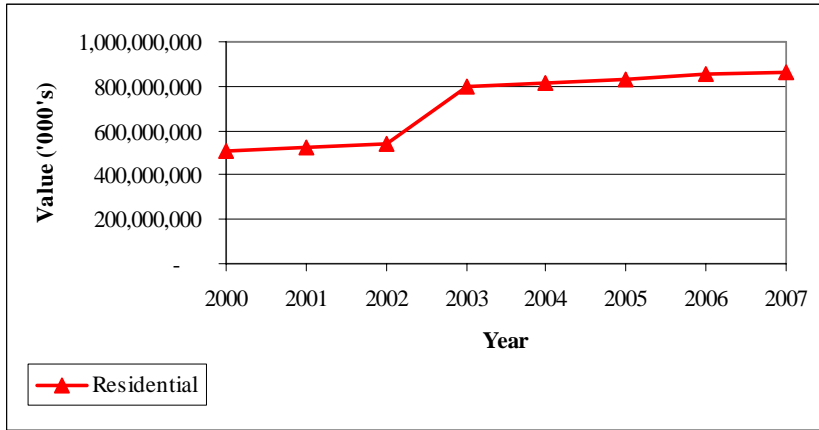
Table
2007 Net Grand List

	1997	2007
Residential	81.0%	82.0%
Commercial/Industrial	7.2%	6.0%
Other	2.7%	2.3%
Motor Vehicle	7.6%	8.1%
Personal Property	1.7%	2.1%
Exemptions	0.2%	0.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Change in the Grand List: 2000 - 2007

- ♦ As shown in the figures below, residential values grew by 68.5% from 2000 – 2007. This period witnessed rapid appreciation in residential property values in the northeast.
- ♦ Industrial property comprises only about 1% of the Grand List and commercial property about 5%.
- ♦ Commercial and industrial values grew at a slow pace during the period:
 - ♦ Commercial 2.5%
 - ♦ Industrial 12.7%
- ♦ The small increase in the commercial sector indicates very little new growth.
- ♦ Non-residential properties are losing ground when compared to inflation. Inflation increased 24.4% from January 2000 to December 2007.

FIGURE
CHANGE IN GRAND LIST VALUE
2000 - 2007



Grand List Projections for 10-Year Planning Period

- ◆ Assuming a 3% annual growth in the Grand List, the total valuation will amount to about \$1.54 billion in 2020.
- ◆ Simply maintaining a 6% participation in the Grand List for commercial and industrial property, the value of this component will need to increase by \$29.0 million.
- ◆ To increase this component to 7% of the Grand List, Woodbury would need to add about \$15.5 million in new commercial and industrial value by 2020 above the 3% assumed annual increase needed just to maintain its 6% share of the Grand List. Woodbury would need to reverse the trend from 1997 to 2007 to achieve this goal.
- ◆ This modest 1% increase will not be enough to reduce residential taxes but could help to minimize the amount of the increase on homeowners.

Regional Economic Initiatives

The “Regional Plan of Conservation and Development” (2008) of the COGCNV contains numerous goals and policies to promote the orderly growth of the Region. The following policies have a particular relevance for Woodbury.

- ◆ The Central Naugatuck Valley is a center for precision manufacturing. Woodbury may attract new growth in this sector by providing good industrial land and offering assistance through a combination of state and local incentives.
- ◆ COGCNV will encourage appropriate types of economic development in locations designated on its future land use policy map. The Plan identifies the Route 6 Corridor as a Community Center where Woodbury should promote compact businesses.
- ◆ To satisfy the work force needs of area industries, the Region should advocate education and training programs that provide residents with the skills needed by businesses in the region, especially school-to-career programs geared to metal manufacturing.

Conclusions

- ◆ The Town’s economic base is heavily dependent upon retail services and public accommodations. To avoid economic cycles that affect these sectors particularly hard, Woodbury should strive to diversify the local economy.
- ◆ Woodbury maintains a high degree of economic self-sufficiency with most workers for area businesses coming from Woodbury itself. Waterbury does not have a great influence on the Town, except as an employment center for professional jobs.
- ◆ Sectors that would be logical candidates for Woodbury include professional offices, scientific services, research and development, light assembly, conference facilities, health care, and commercial recreation.
- ◆ The Town has special strengths as a tourist community with its many antique shops, restaurants, historic Main Street ambiance, and open space sites for passive recreation.
- ◆ The lack of sewers limits high employment uses or manufacturing with process water discharges. Woodbury should consider low intensity uses on large lots in campus like settings. Office parks may be a suitable use that fit with the Town’s character.
- ◆ The Main Street Design District is effective in retaining the historic appearance of Main Street while allowing low intensity commercial development. With small lots and little vacant land, redevelopment of older commercial sites is a strong possibility. Performance standards will help to insure that new growth fits with existing historic character and improves the visual appearance of commercial property.
- ◆ Woodbury is heavily reliant on residential property to fund local services. To help ease the tax burden on residents, local officials should make a concerted effort to expand the tax base with high value economic activity.
- ◆ The survey results indicate that residents are generally satisfied with the location and type of commercial activity. Residents desire land use controls that keep out big-box discount retail uses and franchise operations that might drive out locally owned shops and restaurants.

- ◆ Woodbury can capitalize on its tourist themes through greater promotion of its historic assets. Such efforts will help support existing businesses and insure full occupancy of Main Street properties.
- ◆ Residents indicate approval for home occupations and small-scale craft and artisan activities. While such operations will not generate significant tax revenue, home produced goods can contribute to the tourist economy by offering a greater mix of merchandise that appeals to a wider audience.
- ◆ Support of local agriculture is a low cost way to help preserve farming. Interested residents can develop “buy local” campaigns to purchase produce from area farmers, and expansion of farmers’ markets days will contribute to farming viability. Woodbury will benefit from such efforts by forestalling development on farmland since it costs the Town very little to provide municipal services to open space properties.
- ◆ Woodbury has substantial trap rock operations. When the resource is depleted, these sites will provide opportunities for carefully planned industrial or office parks with sufficient area to provide a substantial buffer from surrounding neighborhoods.

Economic Development Goals

1. Increase the share of Commercial and Industrial values in the Grand List from 6% to 7% by 2020.
2. Diversify the local economy by promoting development in Woodbury of professional services, light industry, offices, and clean industries.
3. Retain the preeminence of locally owned small businesses in Woodbury. Deter development of large shopping centers and big box retail outlets. Discourage corporate franchises to preserve Woodbury’s individuality with its appealing mix of retail stores and commercial services.
4. Continue to promote tourism in Woodbury with antique shops, restaurants, boutiques, and locally produced crafts as the mainstay of the economy.
5. Evaluate alternative uses for Earth Excavation districts for eventual depletion of the trap rock resource.
6. Work to develop vacant lots in Planned Industrial zones by assessing market demand in Woodbury for office and light industrial uses, preparing conceptual development layouts based on low intensity, high amenity designs, and offering incentives to prospective employers to choose Woodbury as their business home.

Recommendations

1. With Woodbury’s reliance on small businesses, it can be perplexing for inexperienced entrepreneurs to navigate through the local approval process. Woodbury can provide technical assistance to inform owners of the steps required to open a business and remove uncertainty regarding Town requirements. Specifically, the Town will:
 - a. Prepare a Development Guidebook that explains the functions of various land use boards and infrastructure authorities in Woodbury. The Guidebook can explain in narrative form or with flow-charts the steps needed to obtain local permits.

- b. Prepare checklists of requirements for opening a business and for submitting plans to obtain permits.
 - c. Designate a local official as an ombudsman, one who can guide business start-ups through the approval process and advocate on the business's behalf when concerns arise over local permitting issues.
2. Tourism is the most important economic activity of the Town's economy. With numerous antique shops, restaurants, small retail stores and cultural assets, Woodbury attracts visitors from a wide region. To insure the vitality of businesses that depend on this trade, Woodbury will take the following actions:
- a. Continue to work with Northwest Regional Tourism Board and regularly update the list of Town attractions and services.
 - b. Promote cultural/historic assets as an added reason for visiting the Town to entice those with other interests besides antiquing and shopping.
 - c. Improve marketing of the Town's key assets such as open space, antique shops, the Pomperaug River, B&B's, historic walks, etc.
 - d. Prepare visitor guides and build kiosks to provide useful information to shoppers and tourists. Place brochures in state tourism centers and highway rest areas.
 - e. Pursue designation of an antiques trail with ConnDOT and neighboring towns along Rt. 6.
 - f. Work with the business community to promote community events and improve the business climate in Woodbury.
3. The majority of residents strongly desire to preserve the Town's identity by excluding national chains and franchises. Such companies would jeopardize the viability of Main Street businesses as numerous studies have documented a high failure rate of existing businesses from national chains. The Zoning Commission will research appropriate techniques that can accomplish this end, including:
- a. Prohibit corporate logos and building styles that national chains use throughout the country to provide a recognizable symbol of the products they offer.
 - b. Require custom-designed buildings and site layouts that incorporate elements of Woodbury's architectural themes. Big box retail outlets, for example, typically have flat roofs, large windowless facades, little architectural detail, and enormous parking lots that impede pedestrian activity.
 - c. Specify desired exterior materials and color schemes that achieve a fresh appearance.
 - d. Adopt size limits of individual businesses or shopping plazas.
 - e. Require new construction to contain multi-story buildings. Upper floors could contain offices or apartments.
 - f. Require an economic impact review for projects over a certain size. Such a study would document the full costs to the Town for serving large projects and the impact on existing businesses. Failure to achieve specific standards could be grounds for denial.

- g. Determine the legality of banning formula businesses and restaurants based on Connecticut law.
4. Woodbury has two Planned Industrial (PI) districts that have significant potential for new commercial and industrial growth. Lack of water and sewer infrastructure impedes development of these areas for large employee businesses and intensive industrial operations. Nevertheless, the districts can satisfy the local need for professional services. The Town will undertake the following actions:



Bacon Road PI District

Nevertheless, the districts can satisfy the local need for professional services. The Town will undertake the following actions:

- a. Conduct preliminary testing to identify areas with potential for water supply, on-site septic disposal, and soils suitable for development.
- b. Develop office park concept plans that display locations of roadways, lots of various sizes to meet a range of company needs for land, septic and well locations, and conceptual architectural drawings.
- c. Develop an inventory of available lots with development information pertaining to each; market the locations on the Town’s website to demonstrate the attractiveness of the zones for new business activity.
- d. Zoning Regulations for PI districts allow light industrial and research uses, and dimensional standards allow reasonable development at an appropriate scale for Woodbury. The Zoning Commission may wish to consider changes to allow buildings with heights greater than 30’ (typically two stories) and allow other uses such as medical or veterinary offices and clinics, professional, financial, and technical offices, museums, colleges or technical schools (taxable), for-profit indoor recreational facilities, and construction companies with controls on exterior storage.



Route 6 North PI District

- e. Determine the feasibility of establishing an Eco-Industrial Park³ in these districts. This concept refers to a community of businesses and industries that seek to develop

³ The distinguishing feature of eco-industrial parks is their use of ecological design to foster collaboration among firms in managing environmental and energy issues. In an eco-industrial park setting, company production patterns, as well as overall park maintenance, work together to follow the principles of natural systems through

- a unified park in an environmentally sustainable manner through reduction of pollution, greater recycling, efficient use of energy, and green development of park infrastructure.
5. New economic development does not take place in isolation and is heavily dependent on regional forces. Woodbury will capitalize on the strengths of the state and regional economy and attract appropriate growth by engaging in the following activities:
 - a. Participate in the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) process of the COGCNV. This process seeks to promote the regional economy through the cooperation of member municipalities. Participation makes Woodbury eligible for grant assistance from the U.S. Economic Development Administration for development of industrial parks.
 - b. Cooperate with neighboring communities on regional economic activities and open space initiatives that can increase tourism. These could include regional bicycling and hiking trails, regional tourism initiatives, the Pomperaug River Greenway Plan, and the Route 6 Antiques Trail.
 - c. Target precision manufacturing companies that have a strong presence in the regional economy.
 - d. Develop a strategy to attract companies in the growing energy services sector. Cultivate a network of relationships to identify needs and essential capacities to foster growth of companies that fit with Woodbury's character.
 - e. Provide educational opportunities for Woodbury students to learn skills in metal manufacturing to supply the skilled workers needed to support the precision manufacturing sector.
 - f. With state initiatives seeking to improve Connecticut's ability to compete for companies in the innovative technology cluster, the EDC should discuss with state officials local actions the Town can take to provide suitable locations for small or start-up companies that fit with the state's economic development strategy. These include companies in the nanotechnology, bioscience, and software/IT clusters.
 6. Excavation at one or more trap rock quarries may end during the ten-year period of this Plan. These parcels contain an extensive area under single ownership, and offer special opportunities for development. In order to prepare for this eventuality and maximize the economic benefit to the Town, Woodbury will undertake the following activities:
 - a. Contact the property owner regarding future reuse and site restoration plans. Such plans should seek to restore the land to an environmentally clean condition and contribute to the ecological health of the community.
 - b. Engage abutters in future site planning discussions. Options to consider include industrial development, Planned Residential Development (in accordance with Section 6.4 of the Zoning Regulations), a recreational/conference center, or a mixed-use development district with a variety of residential and commercial uses allowed.

cycling of resources, working within the constraints of local and global ecosystems, and optimizing energy use. Smart Communities Network, <http://www.smartcommunities.ncat.org/business/ecoparks.shtml>

- c. Determine the cost of extending water mains and evaluate the feasibility of on-site sewage treatment options to allow compact development in certain areas while leaving a high percentage of the site as open space.
7. One approach for small-scale economic growth is to expand the permissions for residents to conduct gainful activities in their home. Woodbury currently employs adequate safeguards that allow home occupations in residential areas without causing unwanted impacts on the neighborhood. The Zoning Commission may consider provisions for cottage industries that allow limited light manufacturing activity in conjunction with a residential use provided it does not create a nuisance or adversely affect surrounding properties. Such a use may occur by special permit in large lot residential districts in the primary residence or in an accessory building on the lot.
8. Woodbury has witnessed little economic growth in recent years. The Town does not actively seek new industry; rather, it seems content to manage proposals in its commercial districts where a strong demand exists for small-scale shops and services. Recent actions of the Economic Development Committee reflects a change in course as members seek to reach out to business owners to learn of concerns and address weaknesses that slow new growth. Woodbury's image as a carefully planned community with a high quality of life is an asset that will interest emerging technology companies. To attract new business and industry to Woodbury, the Town will take the following steps:
 - a. Identify incentives Woodbury can offer to entice clean industry to locate in Town. Officials should explore measures such as tax reduction strategies, below market rate loans, assistance with state work force and emerging technology grants, and other state and local assistance programs to innovative companies that become available in the future.
 - b. Unleash the creativity and innovative capacity of the private sector in economic development planning and create public-private partnerships to leverage scarce public resources. The EDC will host an Economic Development Roundtable to invite leaders in the private sector to identify opportunities for greater collaboration and strategies for promoting growth in the innovative technology sector.
 - c. Seek infrastructure grants for roads and utilities to lower the development costs of serving Planned Industrial zones.
 - d. Survey business owners to identify steps the Town can take to sustain the local economy. Conduct "exit interviews" with businesses that leave to determine why they left.