



**PLANNING
DECISIONS**

Research & Planning

**South Berwick
Economic Development Priorities**

**For: The South Berwick Economic Development
Committee**

June 5, 2009

**Planning Decisions, Inc.
P.O. Box 168
Hallowell, ME 04347**

Table of Contents

I.	Summary and Recommendations.....	1
II.	Opinion Leader Survey Results.....	6
III.	Town Workshop Results.....	11
IV.	Economic Facts about South Berwick.....	16
	Appendix: Complete Opinion Leader Survey Results.....	23

I. Summary and Recommendations

This project was undertaken to respond to a problem that had arisen in the Town of South Berwick. The Economic Development Committee had generated several ideas for job growth in the Town, but when those ideas came to a vote, they were defeated. It seemed that there were many ideas about what constituted good economic development in the community.

The Committee hired Planning Decisions, Inc., to assist them in getting a better understanding of what people in the community wanted for economic development, and to provide a strategic direction for the Town. This is the final report of the project.

The research began in the fall of 2008, when Committee members interviewed 27 residents about their in-depth feelings about economic development in the community. The results of the interviews are summarized in Section II of this report, and contained in full in the Appendix.

The next step was to present these findings to a November 12, 2007 community workshop, and to prioritize the results. This process is summarized in Section III.

Finally, the Committee looked at the actual economic development facts of the Town, to see what was realistically achievable in the economic development arena. These facts are contained in Section IV.

The survey and workshop exercises led to these three guideposts for the economic development strategy for South Berwick:

1. Any strategy for South Berwick must be multi-faceted, and address all four community goals:
 - Reduce residential property taxes
 - Create new jobs and economic opportunities for residents
 - Make the community desirable for people to live, shop, and work
 - Create a sustainable community -- energy-efficient, environmentally and economically sound

2. Any strategy must not only be consistent with, but strengthen, the character of South Berwick. Whatever is done cannot take away from the residential attractiveness, the in-town charm, the historic feel, the natural beauty, the quality of schools of the existing community.

3. Any strategy must be realistic, and meet the straight-faced test. People want to see their tax dollars used effectively, no matter what the purpose.

Given the values of South Berwick residents, and the economic environment surrounding the Town, what economic strategies can be pursued to promote responsible economic growth?

The Economic Development Committee believes that a local economic development strategy must build on the recognizable strengths of the community. Among those strengths are:

- An educational core that brings students and teachers and parents into the community center every day;
- A group of professionals, many in the construction and engineering sectors, but including health care and arts, working out of homes and small offices;
- A vital tourism industry nearby on the coast of Maine
- Low-key natural assets, such as a golf course, ski mountain, canoeing and kayaking spot, and walking paths.
- A downtown that is walkable, and has a variety of attractive stores and historic buildings.

There is a synergy among these assets. Students and young people enjoy the area's natural assets. Professionals and self-employed people like a lively downtown. Tourists can be attracted by both of these factors. With these facts in mind, here are three recommended strategies to pursue:

Strategy 1 – Enhance the downtown

This has several components:

1. Encouraging the clustering of professional offices in the downtown area;
2. Attracting visitors to the downtown – looking particularly at nearby Berwick Academy; and
3. Enhancing the general quality of life downtown.

Each will be discussed in turn.

1. Encouraging professionals, small businesses, entrepreneurs to locate downtown.

Professional services are high-paying. They provide internships and models that help to raise the aspirations of young people growing up in Town. Clustering such businesses together provides a market for support services – such as copying, graphics, etc. – and also customers for in-town restaurants and stores. This strategy can add jobs, add valuation to the tax base, and increase the viability of stores and services that all residents can enjoy.

Elements of this strategy involve:

- Creating a Tax Increment Finance District downtown to accumulate funds to promote in-town business development
- Seeking to attract a “business center” facility like that Border Trust developed in Topsham recently that provides common reception, conference, kitchen, and support services to individual professional tenants. (see <http://www.bordertrustbusinesscenters.com/>)
- Supporting the “Business Network” as a way to help entrepreneurs talk with and help out each other.
- Surveying individual professionals about what they’d like to see in Town
- Rezoning the downtown to encourage high-quality professional office space (this effort is already underway)

2. Attracting visitors downtown

Every day 600 students, 50 to 100 teachers and administrators, and dozens of parents arrive at Berwick Academy campus adjacent to South Berwick’s downtown. On parents’ and alumni weekends, the numbers of visitors grow. The Economic Development Committee is exploring ways to create downtown events for the Academy, and to make pedestrian access easier, between the school and downtown. This will both enrich the educational experience of Berwick Academy (and through this the attractiveness of the school to future students and teachers), and enliven the downtown by supporting creative businesses.

This same principle can be used by downtown merchants to create special events, promotions, and festivals that can attract all area residents down

3. Improving the quality of life downtown

The major effort here is already underway – namely, to find a way to slow down and divert commuter traffic from the downtown, so that the area is more pedestrian-friendly and attractive.

The other effort underway involves upgrading the Library. This is a key resource for bringing foot traffic downtown, and its continued vitality is important.

A third piece might be to encourage denser housing in the downtown, particularly for young people and retirees. Residents in the downtown contribute customers to stores, audiences to cultural events, and help the area to feel safer for visitors.

This combination of approaches – adding businesses and residents, creating a special relationship to the Academy, improving the quality of life – will not just create jobs in the town center, it will also improve the quality of life and sense of pride for every resident of the Town.

Strategy 2 – Market South Berwick as a destination for tourist day trips, for student and parent activities, for weddings, and for small business meetings.

This strategy involves linking together, branding, and systematically promoting what mostly already exists in the community – namely, outdoor recreation centers, history, gardens, restaurants and lodges, and bed and breakfast inns.

The benefits of this strategy are increased spending for local businesses; and higher positive name recognition for the Town – which can have spillover benefits in business attraction, attraction of students to the schools, and attracting new residents.

Such a strategy would involve creating a public-private partnership among all institutions that advertise and promote South Berwick to the world – the schools, inns, recreation businesses, arts and crafts, and Town government etc. – that would:

- Agreement on a common “brand” for the Town
- Creation of a web portal that promotes the brand and makes all of the assets of the Town easily available to visiting parents, students, tourists, etc.
- Creating an annual marketing budget, using grants and TIF funds and private contributions
- Providing small business counseling to recreation and crafts and retail

providers in the Town to help them expand services.

This will create jobs indirectly, by bringing visitors and money into the Town's restaurants, shops, and recreational facilities.

Strategy 3: Be ready for the next large employer – create development-ready sites on Route 236.

In the midst of this recession, it is hard to look forward and imagine the day when the demand for new business space will resume in southern York County. But that day is coming. A previous study for the Town indicated a potential for the Town to attract distribution and small manufacturing facilities if a business park site was available. A proposal for the Town to develop such a site was rejected by residents – but this was because people didn't want the Town to be in the development business, not because the idea of a business park itself was bad.

There is privately-owned land on Route 236 that could be appropriate for such business development. The Town should assist interested owners to obtain state grants to bring roads and utilities to business park sites. The park should be designed to have an attractive and professional work, because it will be a gateway and image for the community as a whole, and not just the businesses within. The Town needs to be ready for the next economic recovery.

The three strategies listed above are consistent with the values and desires of residents, and realistic within the economic role that South Berwick plays in the region. They can serve as an agenda for the Economic Development Committee to pursue in the coming years.

II. Opinion Leader Survey Results

Note on opinion leader surveying

Opinion leader surveying is a method for gaining the pulse of a community. It provides greater breadth and depth of community views than traditional survey techniques, and when it is conducted by citizen volunteers as was done in this case, at a much lower cost. This is not a "poll" – the reader can't add up all the people who support one action or another, and generalize that figure to the town as a whole. But the reader can be confident that the responses cover most of the opinions held by residents within the community.

Between August and October, 2008, eight South Berwick volunteers interviewed 27 different opinion leaders in the community about their views about South Berwick's future and economic development. This memo provides a summary of their comments. These comments will be used by the Economic Development Committee, in consultation with the public, to develop economic goals.

Thanks to Mimi Demers, Sue Pullar, Katherine Wolfe, Clifford Cleary, Mike Lassel, John Rudolph, Douglas Leteillier, and Brad Christo,

for conducting the interviews and entering the data into the survey system.

Here are the questions that were asked, and the major themes from the responders.

Question 1: What are the major challenges you see facing South Berwick in the next 5 years?

Keeping property taxes affordable was the major concern among respondents. To this end, many supported business development, or actions to control costs in town and school government.

Traffic congestion, especially in downtown, was the second challenge mentioned.

Other challenges mentioned included maintaining rural character, good education quality, and achieving energy independence.

Question 2: In broad terms, what do you think the town government in South Berwick should be doing to address these issues?

Many respondents mentioned a need for planning – for economic development, for energy independence, for transportation, for land use and zoning.

In preparing such plans, respondents emphasized the need for a sound decision-making

process – for listening to everyone, for developing a consensus, for transparency in decision-making, for seeing the whole picture when deciding on individual items, for civic leadership.

A wide range of specific actions were suggested: traffic changes (road bypass or one-way loops downtown), municipal cost-cutting, regionalizing or consolidating services, researching what other towns are doing, setting up a tax increment financing district to attract business, eliminating parking regulations in the downtown, getting grants, educating the citizenry and elected officials.

Question 3: Is economic development – defined as helping existing businesses to grow and expand, and attracting new businesses to move into the community – an important priority for the community? Why or why not?

The overwhelming answer here is yes. But the motivations for this are varied:

- reduce residential property taxes;
- create new jobs and economic opportunities for residents;
- make the community desirable for people to come live, shop, and work; and
- as part of a holistic effort to create a sustainable community -- energy-efficient, environmentally and economically sound.

A few of the respondents were skeptical, again for a variety of reasons:

- Because there's no way for the Town to compete with New Hampshire;
- Because it would endanger the small-town quality of life;
- Because the Town's strength is its residential neighborhoods, and this should be what the future community is about.

Question 4: Here are some reasons for economic development. Which matter the most to you?

The answers to this question followed the lines described above. Easing the tax burden is the first reason, but creating an innovative and interesting community is also on the agenda.

Here are some reasons for economic development. Which matter the most to you?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
a) To keep tax rates down?	64%	16
b) To provide job opportunities for young people?	36%	9
c) To have a lively and interesting downtown?	44%	11
d) To encourage economic innovation and prosperity?	56%	14
e) Other?	16%	4

Question 5: If you were to pick two or three ideal economic development projects for South Berwick, what might they be?

The list of ideas proposed was endless, among them being:

- Support downtown businesses
- Expand business in the Norton Street area
- Bring back “the point” – lower Main Street
- Professional/service/hi-tech
- Software, biotech
- Light manufacturing
- A new library downtown
- A town common in downtown
- An alternative energy industry that would design, manufacture, install solar, wind and geothermal energy systems
- Elderly, over 55 housing
- Small steel buildings with light industrial units or storage
- Medical
- Industrial park with contract zoning
- Extend sewer and water down 236
- Parking downtown
- Regional tourism marketing
- Foster more cultural and recreation events

Question 6: What should be the Town’s role in economic development? Should it participate financially in regional efforts to promote economic development? (why or why not?):

What should be the Town’s role in economic development? Should it (why or why not?):		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Market the community and/or region through brochures, web sites, etc.?	60.9%	14
Apply for grants to help businesses or business park developers who ask for it?	65.2%	15
Provide tax increment financing districts for businesses or business park developers that ask for it?	26.1%	6
Develop a town-owned business park through a combination of grants and town money?	17.4%	4
Develop a package of financial tools for businesses in South Berwick, such as revolving loan fund and TIF districts, as ways to encourage businesses to grow and expand?	52.2%	12
Participate financially in regional efforts to promote economic development?	47.8%	11
Other?	21.7%	5

Respondents generally felt that the Town should encourage economic development through marketing and applying for grants, but that it should not expose itself to risk by either owning a business park or directly subsidizing developers. While tax increment financing was not widely supported, several noted that they didn’t understand how it works. Streamlining regulations, consolidating municipal services with neighbors, and promoting tourism were also mentioned.

Question 7: What is the easiest way for the Committee to communicate with you and other citizens going forward (i.e., mailing, website, post at transfer station, email, etc.)

Besides the items listed above, respondents also mentioned the 236 diner blog, the local Quamphegan newspaper, and continued face-to-face meeting discussions.

Question 8: Do you have any final comments or suggestions for the Economic Development Committee?

Most of the responses to this question had to do with communicating, listening, creating a consensus, keeping a sense of community, maintaining public support, proceeding carefully, and following through. But there were also several specific ideas, such as:

- Renovate downtown with underground utilities, refurbished store fronts, more retail;
- Lower water and sewer costs
- Pursue downtown and industrial zone improvements at the same time, using public/private partnerships

III. Town Workshop Results

A. Goal Priorities for Economic Development

Twenty-two South Berwick citizens attended a November 12, 2008 workshop at Town Hall to review economic development survey results, and to discuss priority goals and strategies arising from the Town's situation.

In the first exercise, participants were given 100 points to distribute across four goals. The four goals were phrased by the consultant to reflect what people reported on the earlier opinion leader survey. Those goals were:

- Reduce residential property taxes
- Create new jobs and economic opportunities for residents
- Make the community desirable for people to live, shop, and work
- Create a sustainable community -- energy-efficient, environmentally and economically sound

Participants were also given the opportunity to add goals, and four members suggested the following:

- Farming/agriculture coop
- Recreational
- Have a vibrant town center for commerce
- Make most of our gateways by re-zoning to allow mixed use business/residential
- Maintain desirable attributes of the community

The result of the exercise was that the participants favored economic development goals that enhanced the Town's "quality of place" – its desirability with regard to living, shopping, and working – as well as those that supported the creation of a "sustainable community" in the future.

In one respect, this was a slightly different set of priorities from the 27 community opinion leader surveys, where the desire for economic development to offset property taxes was the most frequently mentioned rationale. In another respect, however, the two results were compatible – in that there was substantial support for a diversity of goals in both the opinion leader survey and among workshop participants. It seems that the citizens of South Berwick want an economic development strategy that achieves multiple goals, not one at the expense of the other.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AS RANKED BY SOUTH BERWICK WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS ON 22 NOVEMBER 12, 2008		Average Points
1	Make the community <u>desirable for people to live, shop, and work</u>	29
2	Create a <u>sustainable</u> community -- energy-efficient, environmentally and economically sound	28
3	Create <u>new jobs</u> and economic opportunities for residents	20
4	<u>Reduce</u> residential property <u>taxes</u>	17
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Farming/agriculture coop ○ Recreational ○ Have a vibrant town center for commerce ○ Make most of our gateways by re-zoning to allow mixed use business/residential ○ Maintain desirable attributes of the community 	5
	TOTAL	100

B. Strategy Priorities

The second exercise tested eleven development strategies that came up in the opinion leader surveys against the goals. In this case, participants distributed points across each goal to try and answer the question --- which strategy was best positioned to achieve the stated goal?

Again, there was diversity in the strategies selected. The top seven strategies were:

1. Support downtown businesses
2. Promote light manufacturing
3. Support public improvements downtown – new library, town common, parking
4. Support new businesses in neighborhoods abutting downtown – Norton Street, lower Main Street
5. Promote professional/service/hi-tech/biotech/software/medical offices and businesses

6. Promote green businesses that design, manufacture, install solar, wind and geothermal systems
7. Reduce Town costs through consolidation, efficiencies

Town residents want downtown improvements, but they also want to promote job development and green businesses, and to help the Town operate more efficiently. The detailed results of the strategies workshop are shown on the next page.

On the last page are notes from the general discussion. It shows that while people value the ideas of green development, culture and the arts, etc., they also want to be realistic. Will the strategy work, is it right for South Berwick, is the question.

South Berwick Economic Development EXERCISE 2: Possible Strategies

	Goal	2	1	3	4	5	
		Sustain – able Comm'ty	Good place to live, shop, work	New jobs + economic opps	Reduce property taxes	Other	TOTAL
		5,012	3,765	3,155	1,983	850	14,765
1	Support downtown businesses	480	460	379	251	115	1,685
2	Promote light manufacturing	585	343	315	222	65	1,530
3	Support public improvements downtown – new library, town common, parking	500	390	345	192	75	1,502
4	Support new businesses in neighborhoods abutting downtown – Norton Street, lower Main Street	480	485	252	107	105	1,429
5	Promote professional/service/hi-tech/biotech/software/medical offices and businesses	437	397	290	178	70	1,372
6	Promote green businesses that design, manufacture, install solar, wind and geothermal systems	422	308	373	191	60	1,354
7	Reduce Town costs through consolidation, efficiencies	463	436	199	56	105	1,259
8	Extend sewer and water to new parts of the community to allow business growth	290	171	277	216	30	984
9	Foster more culture and recreation	320	301	198	64	80	963
10	Create a new business park	360	152	215	116	60	903
11	Promote the area for tourism	245	145	197	81	30	698

Selected comments from Group discussion

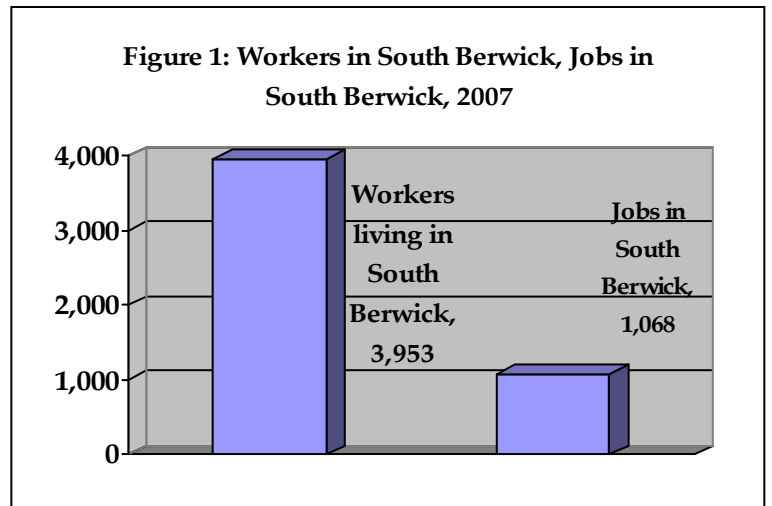
- promote downtown businesses
- make public improvements
- professional offices
- promote green business
- light manufacturing -- some high pay/some low
- utilities -- mid-range -- didn't help
- promote tourism
- clean up river restock salmon
- culture and recreation? Be realistic, they are not South Berwick
- promote what we have
- be a place to come inland when foggy
- trolley
- outlook and spring hill -- weddings, small inns, restaurants
- support bakeries, farms, limo, florist
- inventory existing businesses for their needs
- promote golf course -- community tournament, attraction
- promote schools
- create incubator – attract those working out of home
- opportunity to grow and stay
- crafts people – create a visible brand
- strawberry festival
- small business counselor?
- town newsletter
- work with greater york regional chamber
- work with SCORE
- promote working farms
- no farm zones in ordinance -- tax problem; soils problem
- set up farmer's market
- conservation activities related to open space
- promote open space, snowmobiling, rec.
- nothing to keep people in-town
- promote so people know market
- brochures
- play to strengths
- town bulletin boards, as well as library
- should there be a balance?
- downtown plus business park?
- position ourselves to take advantage of opportunities

IV. Economic Facts about South Berwick

A. Economic Facts

Economic fact 1: South Berwick is primarily a bedroom community

For every four workers in South Berwick, there is only one job. In 2000, only 464 of 3,508 South Berwick workers were employed within the Town limits of South Berwick. More worked in Kittery (539) and Portsmouth (511); many also worked in Dover (291), York (195), Newington (123), Eliot (119), and Somersworth (95). On the other side of the coin, 701 workers within South Berwick commuted from neighboring towns.

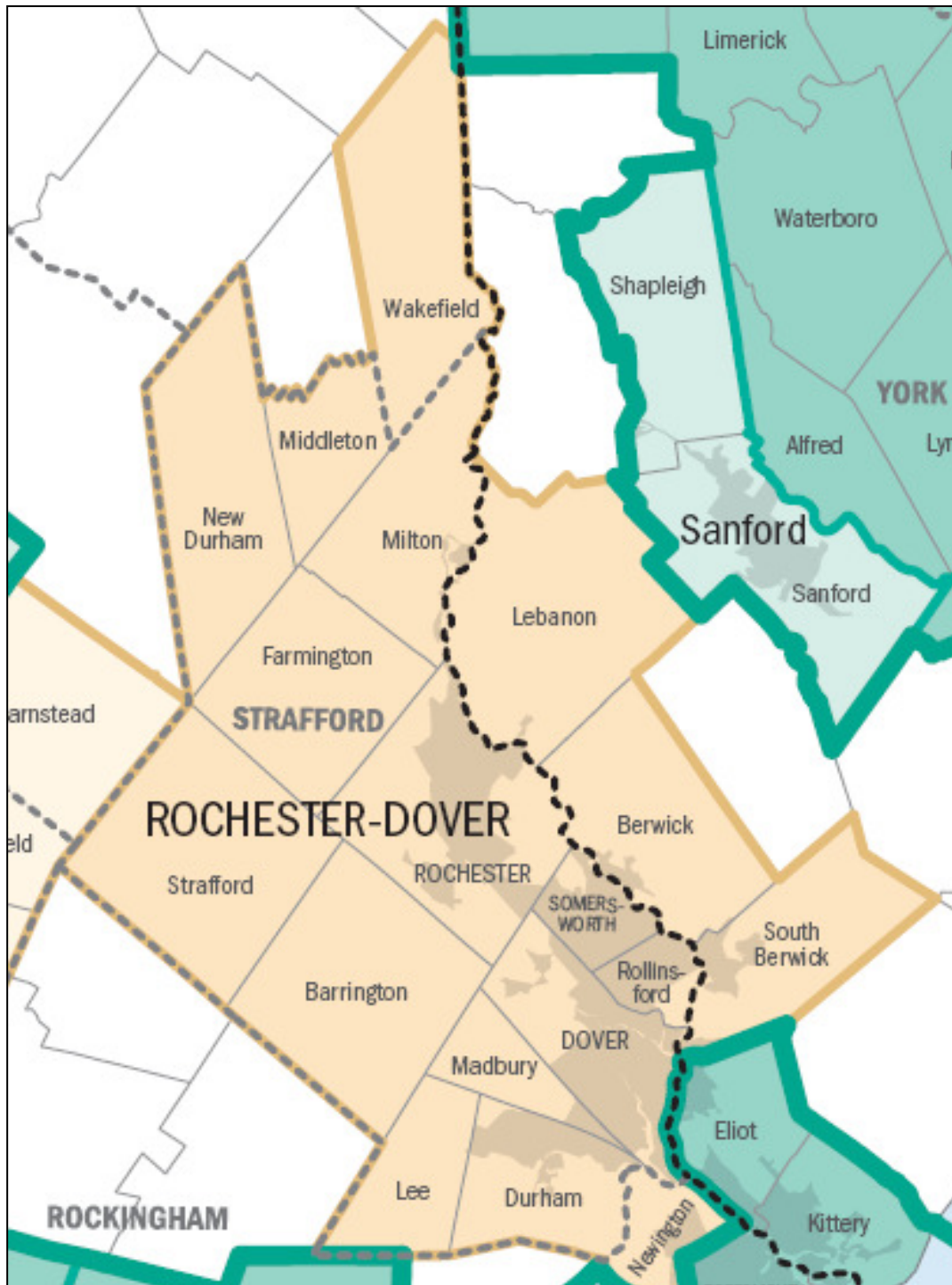


Economic fact 2: South Berwick is part of a larger economic area called the Rochester-Dover New England City and Town Area (NECTA).

The U.S. Census has placed South Berwick within a larger interdependent economic region known as the Rochester-Dover NECTA (see map on next page).

The larger area has a labor force of 84,600 – of which 4,017, or 4.7%, are South Berwick residents (as of January, 2009). There were 56,700 jobs in the larger area in 2007, of which 1,068, or 1.8%, were located in South Berwick.

As everywhere in the country, unemployment is rising rapidly in the area – from 3.7% in September, 2008, to 6.7% in January, 2009.



Economic fact 3: South Berwick has had a growth in service employment.

South Berwick's employment grew by 13% from 2001 to 2007, faster than the Rochester-Dover NECTA (10%), and faster than York County (6%). Most of the growth is in the services area, and most of that is in the area of education.

Table 1: Covered Employment, Town of South Berwick

		2001	2007	% Change
10	Total, all industries	944	1,068	13%
<u>101</u>	<u>Goods-Producing Domain</u>	<u>91</u>	<u>92</u>	<u>1%</u>
1011	<i>Natural Resources and Mining</i>	--	***	--
1012	<i>Construction</i>	65	74	14%
1013	<i>Manufacturing</i>	26	17	-35%
<u>102</u>	<u>Service-Providing Domain</u>	<u>853</u>	<u>976</u>	<u>14%</u>
1021	<i>Trade, Transportation and Utilities</i>	121	153	26%
1022	<i>Information</i>	***	***	--
1023	<i>Financial Activities</i>	32	22	-31%
1024	<i>Professional and Business Services</i>	72	80	11%
1025	<i>Education and Health Services</i>	410	471	15%
1026	<i>Leisure and Hospitality</i>	166	198	19%
1027	<i>Other Services</i>	8	10	25%
1028	<i>Public Administration</i>	***	***	--

Economic fact 4: South Berwick is a town of small businesses

The Town tax records list 260 businesses in the community. Most are self-employed. There are only eleven businesses or organizations that record having more than 20 employees in the community, according to the Department of Labor. Of these, three are schools or school systems: Berwick Academy, the public school system, and Seacoast Christian School. Of the remainder, several are construction or engineering-related, and several are health care-related.

Table 2: Top 30 employers in South Berwick

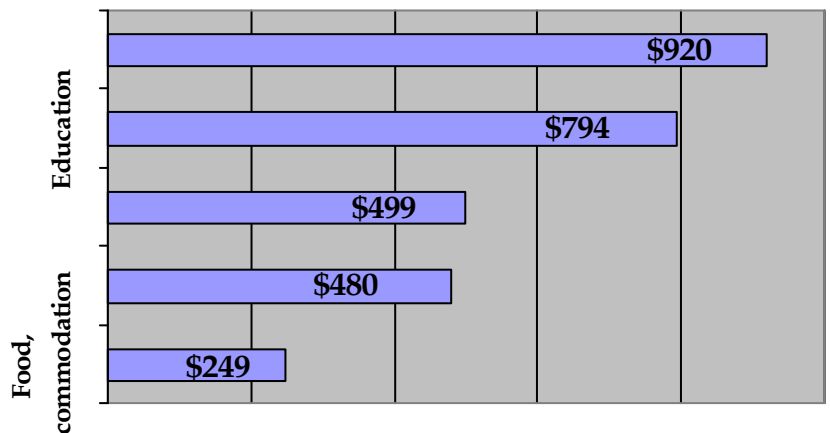
	Company	Employees	Type of business (and NAICS code)
1	Berwick Academy	100-249	611110 - Elementary and Secondary Schools
2	Marshwood, SB schools	100-249	611110 - Elementary and Secondary Schools
3	Town of South Berwick	100-249	921120 – Legislative bodies
4	Fogarty's Restaurant	50-99	722110 - Full-Service Restaurants
5	Berwick Estates	20-49	623311 - Continuing Care Retirement
6	Bridges of Maine	20-49	621999 - Ambulatory Health Care Svc
7	Civil Consultants	20-49	541330 - Engineering Services
8	Dunkin' Donuts	20-49	722213 - Snack and Nonalcoholic Beverage Bars
9	Nature's Way Market	20-49	445110 - Supermarkets and Grocery Stores
10	Seacoast Christian Schools	20-49	611110 - Elementary and Secondary Schools
11	SB Emergency Rescue	20-49	621910 - Ambulance Services
12	Divers. Electrical Services	10-19	238210 - Electrical Contractors
13	ERA Masiello Group	10-19	531210 - Offices of Real Estate Agents & Brokers
14	Great Works Family Practice	10-19	621111 - Offices of Physicians
15	Medical Care Development	10-19	623312 - Homes for the Elderly
16	P Gagnon & Son Inc	10-19	443111 - Household Appliance Stores
17	Pepperland Café	10-19	722211 - Limited-Service Restaurants
18	Red Barn	10-19	722310 - Food Service Contractors
19	Redimix Co	10-19	444190 - Other Building Material Dealers
20	Renaud Trucking	10-19	562119 - Other Waste Collection
21	Roaring Brook Consultants	10-19	541330 - Engineering Services
22	SB Family Practice	10-19	621111 - Offices of Physicians
23	SB Medical Services	10-19	622110 - General Medical Hospitals
24	SB Physical Therapy	10-19	621340 - Offices of Specialty Therapists
25	SB Veterinary Hospital	10-19	541940 - Veterinary Services
26	Spring Hill Lodge	10-19	722211 - Limited-Service Restaurants
29	US Post Office	10-19	491110 - Postal Service
30	Wakefield Materials Corp	10-19	444190 - Other Building Material Dealers

Economic fact 4: Professional and educational services pay the highest weekly wage in South Berwick.

Economic development is not just about creating jobs. It's about creating the kinds of jobs that allow a person to support a family. South Berwick is in one of the most expensive places to live in Maine, largely due to housing costs.

It is notable that two areas in which South Berwick has shown an ability to attract jobs, professional services and education, both provide higher than average pay levels in South Berwick.

Figure 2: Average Weekly Wage, South Berwick, 2008

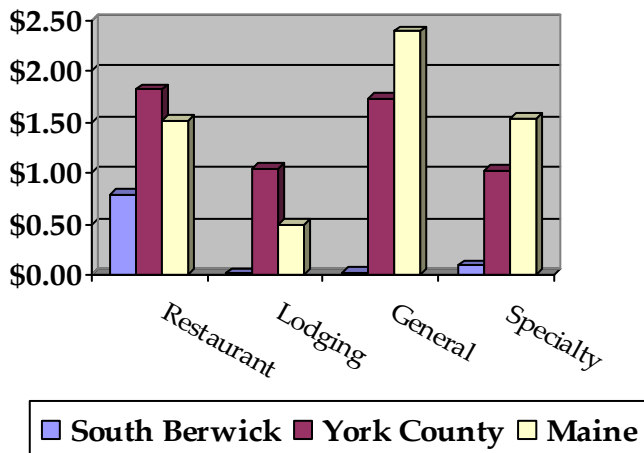


Economic fact 5: South Berwick currently gets very little of the retail dollar.

Currently, South Berwick stores capture very little of the retail dollar being spent by residents. Local restaurants do the best, getting 79 cents per resident. But this is well

below the state average of \$1.51 per capita, or the York County average of \$1.82 per capita.

Figure 3: Per capita retail spending, 2008



Overall, there is \$1.78 per capita of retail spending in South Berwick, compared to \$10.12 in York County, and \$13.36 in Maine as a whole.

Economic fact 6: The fastest-growing sectors in Maine are also sectors that do well in South Berwick.

According to the Maine Department of Labor, total job growth from 2004 to 2014 in York County should total 11.7%. Given the current recession, this figure is undoubtedly too high, but it serves as a benchline for comparison in individual sectors. Among the sectors projected to grow faster than average are:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| ▪ Professional and technical services | 17.2% |
| ▪ Educational services | 13.4% |
| ▪ Health services | 24.1% |
| ▪ Arts, entertainment, and recreation | 18.4% |
| ▪ Accommodation and Food Services | 16.4% |

These are among the sectors that South Berwick already does relatively well at. Manufacturing, on the other hand, is projected to decline by 5.5%.

Economic fact 7: The office space market in the Rochester-Dover area is experiencing a high rate of vacancies.

According to CB Richard Ellis's January, 2009 Commercial Real Estate Market Survey for New Hampshire:

- The City of Dover has 470,000 square feet of office space available, a 24.4% vacancy rate. And 800,000 square feet of industrial space available, for a vacancy rate of 35.7%
- Rochester has 200,000 square feet of office space available (44.5% vacancy), and 110,000 of industrial (6.2%).
- Overall, in the seacoast area there is 1.4 million square feet of office space available (18.5%), and 200,000 of industrial (21.7%).

Two and a half years ago, before the recession, RKG Associates projected a potential absorption rate of 10,000 to 25,000 square feet of light industrial, flex and distribution

space per year in a South Berwick business park.^a This may be possible again in the future; but in the current market, with a large backlog of available space, it is unrealistic.

^a Preliminary Market Summary, October 5, 2006; available on the Town of South Berwick Economic Development Department web site.

Appendix: Complete Opinion Leader Survey Results

Between August and October, 2008, eight South Berwick volunteers interviewed 26 different opinion leaders in the community about their views about South Berwick's future and economic development. This memo provides a listing of all of the comments they received in their interviews (with the exception of comments directed at specific individuals, which have been deleted). At our meeting on Wednesday, I will present a memo summarizing themes from the interviews, and we will discuss how these findings can be used to establish goals for economic development in South Berwick. Thanks to Mimi Demers, Sue Pullar, Katherine Wolfe, Clifford Cleary, Mike Lassel, John Rudolph, Douglas Leteillier, and Brad Christo, for their excellent work in conducting these interviews, and entering the information into the survey system.

Question 1: What are the major challenges you see facing South Berwick in the next 5 years?

Respondent 1:

Education: We need to do a better job of preparing our youth for the 21st century

Economy: This means greater emphasis on critical thinking in math, the humanities and science, also effective and early foreign language instruction.

Environment: We need to help each and every business and residence make significant reductions in energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. We also need to find ways to implement alternative energy (i.e. solar, wind, geothermal) systems throughout our community. We are entering a new era in which the cost of fossil fuels will continue to rise and the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions will become mandatory. Communities that respond to these challenges early will have a better chance of thriving.

Transportation: Roads leading into town are at or near capacity. We need to work on regional transportation strategies that get people out of their cars to the greatest degree possible. This means public transportation, development of more local shopping facilities and greater opportunities for working locally through telecommuting and home businesses.

Respondent 2:

1. Best use of the Town owned property (church on Young Street) (the Day property).
2. Promote the 236 Industrial Zone.

Respondent 3: Too much traffic. What to do about commercial/industrial development-I prefer to see none. How to maintain small-town, rural flavor.

Respondent 4: Taxes are too high Limit residential development and increase business development which may have a direct tax impact Fewer kids in school

Respondent 5: Broadening the tax base. We have to cut the budget, can't keep going back to the taxpayers for more money.

Respondent 6: Control of taxes and services.

Respondent 7: It is becoming very expensive to live in South Berwick. People who have lived here all their lives are considering leaving and the young people who have grown up here are in many cases unable to stay and raise their own families.

Respondent 8: Taxes-we need to take care of the tax base. We need business. Industry. I prefer to see multi-business (diversity).

Respondent 9: Deliver services people expect within a budget people can live with

Respondent 10: Traffic, high taxes, lack of economic and commercial development and lack of leadership in Augusta.

Respondent 11: Taxes have increased dramatically. Neighboring communities are doing better. Downtown Traffic is bothersome, and is the bottleneck of the entire area.

Respondent 12: Trying for 30 years bringing new business and jobs to town. New business and jobs. Smaller tax hikes of 1-2% not 11% jumps. Provide good quality of life, education and security for citizens.

Respondent 13: Growth, controlled growth.

Respondent 14: Conflict between increasing commercial development and how it may affect town character, traffic

Respondent 15:

1. We need to change our way of thinking towards getting new business in town and out of town.
2. Make changes in traffic problems.
3. We need lower taxes.

Respondent 16: Retain small town character while supporting a strong local economic base

Respondent 17: traffic/parking affordable housing elderly housing

Respondent 18: "The continued traffic in the downtown." - "A Council working for the good of South Berwick."

Respondent 19: "Are we adequately prepared for certain growth to come?"

"Reduce polarity or polarizing influences between interest groups (we aren't working together toward accepted goals)."

Define economic development and relationship to community development."

"Support and encourage more citizen based activities to deepen our volunteer forces."

Respondent 20:

"Stable tax base and ability to provide/acquire capital maintenance and costs."

"Keeping Downtown (DT) viable/successful/vibrant with good business drawing people."

"Maintaining quality of education

" Keeping good teachers because of the challenges associated with New Hampshire's tax system.

Respondent 21: "Keeping municipal and school budgets under control."

Respondent 22: I can see three things happening that will severely affect the town.

First, an increasing # of people will be leaving the Northeast because of the high cost of heat. These are the ones without strong roots in the community.

Second, many of the people from Massachusetts who moved here because of the lower housing costs will rethink that decision because of the cost of gas and mind numbing commute. People will move closer to where they work over time.

Third, seniors will be moving back in with their children because they will not be able to support a house alone. Maybe not a bad thing, These responses to economic conditions will increase the # of houses on the market, lower property values and erode the tax base.

Respondent 23: Higher Taxes, Traffic problems downtown.

Respondent 24:

a. The national economic situation will have an impact on the town and on individuals in town. The Town will need to respond by using resources wisely. There will be a lot of pressure to hunker down and not do anything new or to start new initiatives. I think this is the wrong thing to do at this time. I believe this is the time to think about what kind of future South Berwick wants and begin moving forward on it so that when the economy improves we are

ahead of the curve.

b. South Berwick is in a unique position of being in the middle of a very economically and culturally healthy region yet we have not been over developed. It will be a shame if we mindlessly develop so that we become like “anywhere” USA. We need to think about how we can develop but keep our unique identity.

c. Our dependence on fossil fuels will be a growing challenge that will be seen in higher costs for transportation, home heating, food, and consumer goods. We must think about how to make South Berwick and our region less dependent on fossil fuels. We should be looking at renewable energy options for Town buildings and commercial and residential users. We should be looking at how to improve the energy efficiency of Town buildings as well as the housing stock in town. If we want to support the small businesses that are here, and attract new ones, we should be assisting in making sure that commercial buildings are energy efficient. Economic development efforts should focus on development that reduces the need to drive everywhere like creating more businesses and services so that more residents can shop, work, and recreate in town as well as creating public transportation options for getting to work and shopping. We also should be encouraging telecommuting and recognizing that we already have many people who do work at home via the internet.

Respondent 25: To provide services including education without a tax rebellion.

Respondent 26: Try to find direction for growth. Find how to mature as a town, eg, get a new library!

Question 2: In broad terms, what do you think the town government in South Berwick should be doing to address these issues?

Respondent 1: We should develop a town-wide energy strategy. We should work closely with/MDOT and surrounding towns in ME & NH on transportation strategies. We should make high speed internet available throughout the entire town. We should begin revamping the curriculum at MSAD 35 schools.

Respondent 2: 1. Proper evaluation. 2. Good judgment. 3. Common sense. All in the interest of the Citizens they represent.

Respondent 3: Listening to the people. Take a more bottom-up approach. People need to be heard and feel respected (even if their ideas don't end up being used)-otherwise, they get angry. Be fiscally responsible, as far as possible, within this vision.

Respondent 4: Need a more effective economic development director

Respondent 5: We have to involve quality of life with what we can raise in taxes. SB has been doing the same as the state, hasn't done anything to attract growth, business. Business doesn't have to mean big chimneys, we can have smaller business and industry, 2-100 employees.

Respondent 6: Thinking outside of the box. A master plan in conjunction with the comp plan could set a path for the Town to follow regardless of who's elected or change in Town Manager. The MP could lay out a time frame with cost estimates that the Town could then properly plan from and budget for.

Respondent 7: Something needs to be done to keep costs, like keep taxes down. The solution to lower taxes should not come out of the pockets of taxpayers in a different form.

Respondent 8: Better marketing of ideas--educating the public--around broadening the tax base. Town should be proactive rather than defensive. Get information (about project ideas) out sooner, because once the wrong information goes out, you can't get it back.

Respondent 9: I'd like to see the broader issues coming forth, like, what will the town look like in 5-10 years. Gather ideas about how to get there. We need to work on zoning ordinances since they affect what goes forward. We need to take a more holistic view instead of going with isolated ideas.

Respondent 10: A lot of the current mess is out of our hands. Created by the State of Maine. Taxes funneled down to towns and businesses. Be Pro Business!

Respondent 11: All services should review for cost cutting. The bypass is the only long term solution.

Respondent 12: Everything they can do to bring new business to town. Set up a TIF zone to attract businesses.

Respondent 13: Make good planning decisions, based on the comp plan. Take advantage of SB's assets: picturesque downtown, good school system, "a great place to live".

Respondent 14: talking to the community and its leaders is good listening to all the town voices opportunity for townspeople to express their ideas and concerns is fundamental

Respondent 15: Hire a good town manager and give him the guide lines and tools to work with and let him do his job! Make it possible to get rid of council members who have their own

agendas.

Respondent 16: encourage, support and attract small independent businesses that support the community support recreation and public cultural events eliminate parking regulations in the downtown open store hours no trucks walkable community

Respondent 17: More public input less closed door decisions open government

Respondent 18: -"A feasibility study for a one way loop." Essentially, creating an in-town by pass to help deal with traffic. -"Portland St. 'roundabout'/constrictor to slow traffic."

Respondent 19: The response was using a drawing of a pyramid showing four layers. Movement is from the base (1) to the peak (4). Layer 1: Inventory and Survey with maximum public output Layer 2: Sift, filter, and allow what makes sense to bubble up. Layer 3: Categorize what has formed from below. Layer 4: Ordinances evolve to help define the vision. "Adhere to the process."

Respondent 20: -"Long term planning, i.e., zoning ordinances revisited, good in-fill development." -"Economic Development (ED) must be regional." -"Promote visions on how to improve DT, i.e., Historic District work, grant monies, etc." Establish programs to attract desired business within the vision.

Respondent 21: Combining services between towns, eg. "Fire fighting equipment and solid waste disposal". There seems to be "a natural progression of government becoming bigger. Consolidate jobs across towns"

Respondent 22: There are many people who would like to move forward on projects that can change the way we live and start building the communities of tomorrow but because they are not cost effective at this time, they lack the resources necessary to move forward and continue to think and invest for the short term. It's up to government to break this cycle.

Respondent 23: Stop spending and borrowing. Ease ordinances to allow new development. Build a by-pass.

Respondent 24: The Town government should be providing leadership on these issues. By that I mean that both elected and appointed government officials should be thinking ahead toward the future, seeking information and examples of what other towns have done, informing and educating citizens about promising options, building consensus among citizens about how to move ahead and then advocating and seeking approval for well thought out plans that are

backed up by data, research, and community input. In the past, it has seemed like a very small group of people have made decisions and tried to push things through based on their own interests without a lot of knowledge or communication resulting in angry citizens who then voted things down. Specifically regarding the challenges facing South Berwick I think government should begin having a “plan ahead” mentality instead of just reacting to change; the Town should begin being more proactive and select our future and make plans to move toward it. Also the Town government should be taking the lead on making the town more energy independent. All the other towns around us are doing innovative things.

Respondent 25: Develop a different property base.

Utilize people who can assist the town in developing a plan to change the tax base.

Remove the politics from the planning.

Respondent 26: The town council needs to get educated. Needs to understand the Charter, maybe get the MMA to put together a short course. Town Council form of government is a good one, but lately they break all the rules, run the town any ole way they want. T council is responsible for very important issues, need to get busy with the bigger issues.

Question 3: Is economic development – defined as helping existing businesses to grow and expand, and attracting new businesses to move into the community – an important priority for the community? Why or why not?

Respondent 1: Yes. It's important to encourage business growth that is in keeping with the town's size and character. We need to be clear that under the current state tax structure economic growth will not reduce local property taxes for many years. But a thriving economy has other benefits, such as providing jobs for town residents.

Respondent 2: Yes. So. Berwick needs to be business friendly to present businesses and to potential new business that have interest to locate in So. Berwick.

Respondent 3: I prefer no new business; support what's here. Businesses have to feel supported, just as individuals do. Should have their needs addressed when the council is making decisions.

Respondent 4: Yes, We want to encourage them. With no control of traffic we will have no control of downtown. Not enough space to develop downtown and there are too many zoning restrictions.

Respondent 5: Yes, an important priority. Get some business, others follow. E.g., Liberty Mutual brought downtown Dover back to life.

Respondent 6: Yes. Sustainability. All entities can not continue to provide the existing services without increasing taxes or user rates. Residential dwellings/subdivisions do not cover the true costs of providing these services. Without diversity, services are reluctantly diminished or costs have to go up.

Respondent 7: Yes, it is because not only would it stabilize taxes, but such growth would provide employment opportunities for residents and would encourage others to come into our town to live, shop and work.

Respondent 8: Yes! I've seen how the town has helped existing businesses, eg, by providing parking, not putting in a street light so they didn't lose any parking. (Parking is a hindrance though; perhaps the St Michael's property will introduce more parking.

Respondent 9: Yes, but not in terms it's ordinarily thought of. I mostly want to see less interaction with the town rather than more. The town should get out of the way. The role of government in E.D. is to provide infrastructure. The regulatory structure (zoning) should be more purpose-driven rather than rule-driven. Allow the planning board more movement within the zoning ordinances, but require it to justify its decisions. Eg, expand conditional use permitting.

Respondent 10: Yes, residential only does nothing to off set tax base. It is a problem that this town has had for years. Houses do not cover the cost of schools/town services.

Respondent 11: Light- non polluting industry is fine.

Respondent 12: Can't afford to live here without new jobs.

Respondent 13: It IS, but the right type of econ dev. No huge GE plant in the middle of SB.

Respondent 14: yes balance to find the right kind of growth Research true tax impact in the region

Respondent 15: Yes, We need to be able to attract new businesses. The historical part of town is important, but should not be top priority.

Respondent 16: yes, if they are a scale and nature of business we want in town and a service to the community mixed use housing and businesses

Respondent 17: Yes help town to prosper growth is good if down correctly

Respondent 18: The definition is OK. -"Its important to attract new business." -"Help business to grow and expand." Need parking, public lots, etc. -"Run water and sewer to Industrial Zone." Float bond?

Respondent 19: Does not agree with definition. No to the question. "First role of government is to protect the citizens. Government should assess needs of community and address them." Assess strong and weak points to shift and support strong ones. "Economic development is a low priority."

Respondent 20: -"Yes, but what is appropriate?" -"Yes, but regional development will provide the most benefit to the Town."

Respondent 21: "OK with definition" No. Because South Berwick (SB) is too close to New Hampshire (NH). Specifically, " because of the tax structure and available development sites already in NH." Existing available space in SB is limited. The return on the investment will not benefit the Town.

Respondent 22: I guess the answer depends on what kind of community we want. Do we want to keep on growing and alter our lifestyles or do we want to remain a small town and have a simpler life. I personally live here because I don't want to live in a larger community. I've been there, done that. What we have here is something very special that doesn't exist anywhere else in the country. We have seen growth because others see what we have and want to be part of it but in the process are changing it. I want to be able to know and trust my neighbors. I don't want to be put out of business by a major corporation. I certainly don't want to work for one. Once again, been there, done that. Yes, attracting businesses can generate tax revenue to give municipal leaders more money to spend. But what's the real cost.

Respondent 23: Yes, helps keep taxes lower.

Respondent 24: I believe economic development should be part of overall community development that includes the development of the people, the natural environment, and the cultural environment. I think a community is a holistic system where all the parts have to work together. Economic development as defined here should both reflect and support the people who live here. Economic development should not harm the natural environment but be a reflection of the place we live. Economic and cultural assets (i.e. schools, recreation, libraries, nonprofits, the built landscape) work synergistically so that we have to nurture both. So, yes I do believe economic development is an important priority, however I think if it is the only

priority we will end up in failure -there are too many small towns across the country who in a single minded quest for economic development have sold out the soul of their town, resulting in ugly strip development, ghost town main streets, and even worse economic despair than when they started.

Respondent 25: Yes - To insure a vitality in South Berwick and to have services available to community members. Development will provide for the distribution of the property tax burden.

Respondent 26: I don't believe it should be. Every town does not need to be mixed use. We should do what we're good at--be a residential community. Pay attention to things that are important to res. communities--library, sidewalks, community centers. Then get more upscale housing which pays for itself, tax-wise. Keep it rural, using 5 acre zoning and cluster zoning. Force this, if need be.

Question 4: Here are some reasons for economic development. Which matter the most to you?

Here are some reasons for economic development. Which matter the most to you?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
a) To keep tax rates down?	62.5%	15
b) To provide job opportunities for young people?	33.3%	8
c) To have a lively and interesting downtown?	41.7%	10
d) To encourage economic innovation and prosperity?	54.2%	13
e) Other?	16.7%	4
	Comments	21
	<i>answered question</i>	24
	<i>skipped question</i>	2

Respondent 1:

- To keep tax rates down - It won't, this is a false choice.
- To provide job opportunities for young people. To have a lively and interesting downtown. To encourage economic innovation and prosperity. - All important.
- Other? - to provide opportunities for people to work close to home.

Respondent 2: : no comment

Respondent 3: : no comment

Respondent 4: need concept and assistance but let the private sector take the risk
Downtown is not a viable growth area, no expansion options

Respondent 5: #4, econ. prosperity, covers all of them. It's what we all want. We all have to make a living. You make relationships where you work; where you live is not just where you hang your hat at night. You support the other businesses where you work. Businesses in a town are important. When you need donations for the football program or whatever, you don't go to residences, you go to the businesses.

Respondent 6:

Not to confuse the issue, an expanded business/industrial zone will further enhance the existing down-town and make it even more vibrant.

Respondent 7: no comment

Respondent 8: Tax rates most important. I know people who are moving out of SB because they can't afford to live here any longer. I have family members that can't afford to build. A lot of people work out of town; perhaps they could work from home. If we want good quality of life we have to deal with taxes. If we don't people who can afford it will move here. That's fine, we need new ideas, but we want old residents here too, as they can pass on the history of the place-that's important. Older residents can also help make good, careful decisions when change needs to happen.

Respondent 9: E.D won't keep taxes down. Job opportunities for everyone, cross out the "young people". A lively downtown is not so much a purpose as a result. It's not about the money. We want to increase the vitality of the community as a whole.

Respondent 10: Taxes 1st, innovation 2nd, jobs 3rd, and downtown 4th.

Respondent 11: downtown 1st, innovation 2nd, and taxes 3rd.

Respondent 12: Middle class will have to move out without jobs. We need jobs. Downtown can have business like Freeport.

Respondent 13: Don't believe econ dev will do much to keep taxes down. We have jobs, and we have young people, not a problem. Take advantage of the area, encourage independent business, eg Stonewall Kitchen. Don't be trying to attract huge factories.

Respondent 14: both are related

Respondent 15: : no comment

Respondent 16: create a diverse community minimize travel to work and retail, walkable community that will protect the environment

Respondent 17: create jobs that can support families

Respondent 18:

- a. Rated 3. "Unless you get a Pratt & Whitney, you're not going to offset tax rate."
- b. Rated 1. "If you bring new business, especially retail/restaurants; its work for kids. But none for adults, really."
- c. Rated 2. "Downtown fits my needs."
- d. Rated 4. "No."

Respondent 19:

- a. Rated 5: "False Premise."
- b. Rated 4: "No way can South Berwick deliver on this."
- c. Rated 2. "Private sector thing."
- d. Rated 3. "Not government but private sector."
- e. Rated 1. "Encourage tourism and eco-tourism based activities."

Respondent 20:

- a. Rated 1. "Of course it does."
- b. Rated 4. "This is not a high priority. Not an issue for us here."
- c. Rated 1. "It would attract good development."
- d. Rated 1. "Yes, needed to keep stuff rolling."

Respondent 21:

- a. Rated 4. "No. Doesn't matter, not attainable."
- b. Rated 1. "Matters. If not in SB, then in Maine."
- c. Rated 3. "No, ridiculous."
- d. Rated 2. "Important."

Respondent 22: Economic development for the sake of economic development doesn't make much sense to me. What makes sense is developing a community with a purpose. Our world has changed because of the automobile and the ease of transportation. Our community was built before the automobile and has been able to stay somewhat intact. People used to be able to

walk to church, to the store, to school. We need to get that back.

Respondent 23: To keep tax rates down.

Respondent 24: Well planned economic development could have positive impacts on all the reasons listed and any development effort should be assessed for what it adds to the community and what its potential “costs” are so that we can pursue options that, on balance, add to the community. For me personally, my priority is living in a town where I can work, shop, engage in recreation and cultural activities is really important so I would like to see development that brings businesses, shops, restaurants, and cultural institutions that make this a vital and nice place to live. I would like to see more mixed use development in the downtown area adding to and using the existing built environment to see a more vital downtown. I know there is a big cry for lower taxes, but for me, lowering taxes is not the highest priority if it means sacrificing the people, natural environment, and cultural assets of the town. I do not have a high income but I am willing to pay a little more in taxes if it means that I can live in a nice place and can do most of my living in South Berwick. It would be a shame if South Berwick gets transformed into one of those Maine towns that has a strip development with a bunch of second string national chains and a dead Main St. because all of the independent businesses have been driven out.

Respondent 25: To provide a place for our children to work and remain in this community as adults.

Respondent 26: Downtown is the only one here I'd buy into, because we are talking about commercial, not industrial. Encourage walk-in businesses, not offices, which only have employees who aren't supporting the downtown businesses, who take up the parking spaces all day.

Question 5: If you were to pick two or three ideal economic development project for South Berwick, what might they be?

Respondent 1: Establish an alternative energy industry which could include design, manufacture and installation of solar, wind and geothermal energy systems in our region. Expand the mixed-use zone in the downtown area.

Respondent 2: Light manufacturing.

Respondent 3: Support downtown business. Build a new library. Make the town more walkable. Somehow engage young people (15-30 year olds). I see keeping/making the town a

livable community, a place that people want to spend time in, as economic development because it helps the town stay lively.

Respondent 4: No strip or shopping malls, small scale steel buildings with various light industry, condo industrial units, elderly, over 55 housing

Respondent 5: Expand business in the Norton St area, by the old Cummings Mill, town garage, and the old ballfield, much of this area already town-owned. Funnel traffic down Norton St (allow no left turn onto Portland St from Main, coming up from Fogarty's, instead have traffic make their left onto Norton, then right past vet clinic back onto Portland, with a light both there and at the main intersection). Purchase of St Michael's was a good idea. Use that area for parking and additional businesses. Maybe turn Central School area into a larger business.

Respondent 6: Professional/service type business/industry. Light industry, innovative, hi-tech companies.

Respondent 7: Affordable shopping area, professional buildings like medical and business.

Respondent 8: Contract zoning. Industrial park. Traffic light in downtown. Deal with traffic problem in general.

Respondent 9: Extend sewer and water down 236. Put together a master vision for downtown.

Respondent 10: Industrial Park, and re-zone R-1 to B-1 from Dunkin to Bridge.

Respondent 11: High tech manufacturing, light manufacturing.

Respondent 12: industrial commercial development on 236, fast food restaurant for kids to work at. Small Mall for offices, stores, and jobs.

Respondent 13: Finding ways to foster growth of small, diverse businesses. Finding ways to preserve the unique charm of downtown SB. Develop "Lower" Main St.

Respondent 14: not living in the area long enough to speak to this

Respondent 15: Attract small businesses, of many kinds, such as, dentists, doctors, lawyers. Larger businesses, such as, machine shops, construction, rite aid, hardware, developers.

Respondent 16: Renovation of the downtown business block to become more attractive and economically vibrant with more retail create a mixed use are with library and community center

in the center of town increase recreation activity around powder house hill, ice skating and other sports

Respondent 17: library parking problem not third item

Respondent 18: -"Develop 'gully' into elderly housing or low economic housing." The 'gully' is land filled adjacent to Railroad Ave. and opposite Cummings Mill. -"New library built on purchased property."

Respondent 19: "South Berwick should define reasonable goals. My preference is to take advantage of our geography and augment/supplement activities that establish our town as an unique destination."

Respondent 20: -"High Tech Business Park." -"A business with a capital intense infrastructure creating a high tax assessment."

Respondent 21: "Storage facility. To encourage economic development SB should run sewer line down Rt. 236 to Industrial Zone." Plan this as a future capital investment, but it seems a real commitment is needed by developer.

Respondent 21: All I here is we need more parking. What we need is less of a need for cars. Start thinking along that route. How can people live in a city and not need a car? Because most of their needs are fulfilled within walking distance and there is low cost transportation when they need it. Build a small city. Change setback and density requirements to better utilize the land. Offer incentives to tear down, old houses that are energy inefficient and build state of the art multi-family dwellings. Take a look at any place where land is at a premium and learn from it. As we move forward we need shorter driveways to shovel, smaller lawns to mow and less space to heat. It's not going to happen overnight but it has to start happening soon. Make recycling easy. How inefficient is it to have every single household go to the transfer on a weekly basis. If you want to encourage people to recycle, pick up the recyclables, Make them go to the transfer station with their waste or better yet, make them pay someone to come pick it up. We also need a local composting alternative, As much as I applaud the efforts to teach people to compost on their own, people are lazy and only a handful will continue it for the long haul. Encourage local farming. I'm not sure how, but it's a shame to see it disappearing.

Respondent 23: no response

Respondent 24:

a. South Berwick as a regional tourist destination: First, I think South Berwick has an opportunity that it has not made the most of. If you ask people in this region what they think of

South Berwick, they mention that it is a pretty little town and they know about places like Sobo Books, Pepperland, Hamilton House, hiking to Orris Falls, and Fogarty's. We will probably never be a national tourist destination, but I believe we have an opportunity to become a regional destination for people who want to experience a small town in a lovely natural setting where they can patronize local independent restaurants and shops. If you draw a twenty mile radius around South Berwick, the number of people is nearly 200,000, we could draw many more of those people here to spend a day or a few hours. There are many people in this area who will drive a small distance to get away from the hustle and bustle of route one in the summer or to get away from the same old chain restaurants and stores. I would like to see:

- 1) a marketing effort that presents South Berwick as a regional destination,
- 2) an effort to try to lure more independent restaurants and shops to the area, and
- 3) an effort to foster more cultural and recreation events in South Berwick.

If we can build our reputation as a good place to visit, we could bring dollars to town using the resources and assets we already have. I think we could also build on the concept of South Berwick as a regional destination for weddings. With Springhill, Outlook, and Hamilton House, South Berwick is hosting weddings nearly every weekend. Restaurants and shops are probably already reaping the benefits of this. If we had more lodging options like B&Bs and small inns we would see more people coming to spend a whole weekend in South Berwick to attend weddings, giving us the opportunity to capture more tourism dollars. Also, if we became a wedding destination it might lure and benefit local wedding related businesses (bakeries, caterers, photographers, wedding planners, musicians, florists, etc).

b. Bring back "the point" – Lower Main St. already has many assets including Fogarty's, Monkey Business Bakery, Margaux, and Lassel Architects. I would like to see a focus on increasing the mix of small businesses and restaurants in that area. It would be great to try to seek out public or private funding to beautify the streetscape, address parking, and market that area to small businesses. It is a nice link between downtown South Berwick and downtown Rollinsford. With the Salmon Falls Mills that area is starting to get a reputation for arts and artists. We could build on that reputation to try to attract creative businesses like architects, web and graphic designers, and other designers. The point used to have its own identity and was a vital economic area. We should work with the historic development commission, OBHS and others who support conservation and preservation to figure out how we can honor that past and have sensible discussions about what to preserve, how to bring in new buildings that retain the character of the point, and how to accommodate current needs like parking. We could build the point back to what it used to be: a distinctive location known as a center for business and commerce.

Respondent 25: To provide opportunities for our number one resource ... our very bright children. Software firms, biomedical etc.

Respondent 26: Development of town common (near the mill bldg) eg. park, gazebo. Work on

creating a physical center point. Put the library on the Day property, expand the downtown that way. Capitalize on what we already have, stop trying to make SB what it isn't.

Question 6: What should be the Town's role in economic development? Should it participate financially in regional efforts to promote economic development? (why or why not?):

What should be the Town's role in economic development? Should it (why or why not?):		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Market the community and/or region through brochures, web sites, etc.?	60.9%	14
Apply for grants to help businesses or business park developers who ask for it?	65.2%	15
Provide tax increment financing districts for businesses or business park developers that ask for it?	26.1%	6
Develop a town-owned business park through a combination of grants and town money?	17.4%	4
Develop a package of financial tools for businesses in South Berwick, such as revolving loan fund and TIF districts, as ways to encourage businesses to grow and expand?	52.2%	12
Participate financially in regional efforts to promote economic development?	47.8%	11
Other?	21.7%	5
	Comments	24
	<i>answered question</i>	23
	<i>skipped question</i>	3

Respondent 1:

I'm not in favor of establishing a business park. Our future lies in strengthening our village business district.

Develop a package of financial tools for businesses in South Berwick, such as revolving loan fund and TIF districts, as ways to encourage businesses to grow and expand - Possibly.

Participate financially in regional efforts to promote economic development - Only if we approach this differently that the last time.

Respondent 2: no comment

Respondent 3:

Market, especially for tourism and historical programs. Maybe don't use town resources (staff time) to apply for grants, but have town be available to businesses as a resource for this.

Don't know anything about TIFs or loan funds.

Wouldn't strongly favor regional efforts because of possible NIMBY problems.

Also, would want to know: what's the reality of the impact on my taxes? Will I really save?

How much? Worthwhile?

Respondent 4: The town should absolutely not create an industrial park. Why should we as tax payers pay for the development of a park and then give the business a tax break. Let the private sector take care of this. WE should as town support through grants and TIFs this type of development. Once again it is the requirement of a economic development director to take the initiative and work on these ideas.

Respondent 5: Up to the town manager to actively solicit businesses to come to town. SB has to put out feelers, vibes, to get business to come, has to court business. Business has to feel like it has a chance. Has to feel welcome. Don't know much about TIFs. Town shouldn't necessarily own business park, look for a developer. Regional efforts fine. We have to try all avenues.

Respondent 6: We have the opportunity to do some unique/creative things if we can all come to agreement/compromise. Partnering with the larger land owners/developers can bring about those ideals if handled correctly. We are currently not in that position although, we are hopefully working in that direction.

Respondent 7: Take baby steps. Say what you mean, mean what you say. Earn the respect and trust of the townspeople and they'll trust and support your decisions. Leave ego and self serving at the door.

Respondent 8: Marketing not so important. I don't think the town should be a landlord. Ideally, a developer would come in and do a big project. Though I would have been in favor of the town buying the industrial park land then selling it to a developer. I don't know much about TIFs.

Respondent 9: These mostly favor big business. For example, contract zoning will appeal only to larger businesses that have what it takes to go through the process. So it makes an uneven playing field. I favor small business over big business, though I wouldn't discourage larger

business. Large business can be a mixed blessing. It can go away at any time and leave a big hole. I'm not big on the town having a large role in E.D. The town can help business by streamlining zoning townwide, eg, fix discrepancies between subdivision rules and zoning, and fix the parking regulations to make it easy for businesses downtown. Make it easy for businesses to comply with town regulations. Don't ask small business to actively participate in E.D. activities as this takes away from small business' daily work.

Respondent 10: no marketing, no need. Need project to market. TIF provide jobs and future economic benefits for town. Not necessary for current businesses. Build industrial park first and attract larger businesses.

Respondent 11: Don't know who to market to, or know enough about any business plan. TIF maybe case by case. Don't support regional project, each town has different needs.

Respondent 12: Vaughan Woods Park, old town forest tours, and biking and hiking on Mt. A. marketing. B&B development, small hotel. Help developers. Don't think regional park will work.

Respondent 13: We don't need to be looking at a business park. We don't have the space for it down on 236. I don't see how it would work, or fit in with the town's character. It's not the way to develop SB or SB's tax base. I do like the idea of TIFs for small businesses. We had a good opportunity to develop near downtown with the old Cummings mill bldg, but we lost that when the bldg became apts. SB can get involved with regional efforts, but SB is not a good location for a big project. York is a good example of a place with a busy business climate without big industry. Nothing wrong with being a bedroom community; it does not mean higher taxes.

Respondent 14: Marketing is desirable to focus on what the community has to offer Partnering with other communities is good

Respondent 15:

1. This would attract more businesses.
2. This would attract more business.
- 3 This would attract more business.
- 4 This would be expensive for the town.
5. This would attract more business.
6. This might not help the town of South Berwick.

Respondent 16: Attract not only tourists to town but also residents who live regionally the

town should not be in the business of business

Respondent 17: any help to support new business development is good help start ups

Respondent 18:

- a. "No. I think it markets itself. We have a little utopia here. Yes, if we want to help merchants in downtown."
- b. "Yes. We have in the past, and should continue this."
- c. "No. I think if you give them TIFs they come and then they leave."
- d. "No. Too much upfront money and it takes too long to see any real return." Too close to NH and the tax associations.
- e. "No."
- f. "No."

Respondent 19:

- a. "Yes, tourism and eco-tourism."
- b. "Not a blanket yes. Not unless these activities blend effectively with planning activities." Goals need establishing...
- c. "No, but perform pro-actively, i.e. urban compact with Maine Dept. of Transportation (MDOT) controls our streetscape. Change this."
- d. "No and No Again!"
- e. "No. The proven payoff for the initial risk."
- f. "No. Bad memories take time to heal."
- g. "Non-profit activity?"

Respondent 20:

- a. "Yes, but only with regionalism."
- b. "Yes, but needs to be done regionally."
- c. "Yes, but through a regional authority."
- d. "Yes, but through a regional authority."
- e. "Yes, but Town should participate in a regional authority to accomplish this"
- f. See a-e.

Respondent 21:

- a. "Not necessary. No big enough potential."
- b. "Yes. If done by staff. No matching grants."
- c. "No. I think it would cost taxpayers money."
- d. "No. I think it would cost taxpayers money. People (developers) would not come." See #3.

e. "No. Same as above." See #3.

f. "No." See #3.

Respondent 22: We are not a big enough community to undertake such a large project on our own, We should be looking at economies of scale in all town services with other communities, How many police cars, and fire trucks are there between the Berwicks, Why does each community need its own manager, planner, tax assessor, code enforcement officer, public works director or economic development committee. Maybe its time to stop thinking about how we can get more money to spend and start thinking about how we can live within our means.

Respondent 23: No comments.

Respondent 24: In general I think the town should be a leader, advocate, and promoter of development by being in the forefront of planning and consensus building toward economic development.

a. Market the community Yes, I think this is a role for the Town to play, however I think it should be done in coordination with the York Chamber of Commerce and other entities that are also doing this. I think local businesses and nonprofits should take a bigger ongoing role in this than the Town, but the Town could help stimulate and coordinate efforts.

b. Apply for grants Yes, if it is for public/ private partnerships or in support of private development.

c. Provide TIF districts I think South Berwick should be wary of giving big tax breaks or other incentives to lure businesses here. If we provide TIF districts we should carefully assess the benefits and risks before committing.

d. Develop a town-owned business park I do not think there should ever be initiatives where South Berwick is the owner of a business or industrial park. I believe those efforts should always be public/private partnerships.

e. Develop a package of finance tools for businesses in South Berwick Yes. I wish we had a loan fund for businesses that need to increase the energy efficiency of their businesses. For some small businesses this can be a make or break issue.

f. Participate financially in regional efforts to promote ED Yes, absolutely, especially with Eliot, N. Berwick, and Berwick and Rollinsford.

g. Other: Here's a few more:

- Develop Zoning and Design Review standards that allow for more mixed use development in the downtown core and preserves the character of the built environment by limiting size of buildings, encouraging adaptive re-use of buildings, encourages an esthetically pleasing streetscape, and increases the walkability of the downtown area.
- Develop a plan for the St. Michael's property that enhances the downtown core and links that site to the rest of the community. Provide leadership in getting a new library.

- Continue pursuing a downtown by-pass that does not take traffic too far away from the downtown core but alleviates some of the through traffic pressure on the 236 and 4 intersections.
- Encourage more cluster housing. Encourage senior housing options (low and moderate income and market).
- Promote public transportation efforts. Promote walking and biking options.

Respondent 25: Develop a package of financial tools actually answered as a maybe - would need to know more about where the money is coming from Interviewee sees a missed opportunity to target an audience that would appreciate the connection to Sarah Orne Jewett - author dinners, literary tours.

Respondent 26: Yes, market SB as a livable community. No big business, no business park! No TIFs! Sure, regional okay. Don't take on new projects, having trouble enough trying to do what's already in front of us.

Question 7: What is the easiest way for the Committee to communicate with you and other citizens going forward (i.e., mailing, website, post at transfer station, email, etc.)

Respondent 1: All the above.

Respondent 2: Website, email.

Respondent 3: Email, bulk mailings (postcards), 236 diner blog

Respondent 4: mailings, email website

Respondent 5: -

Respondent 6: Mailings are the most productive. Web-site and e-mail are also a good communication tools but, so as not to hinder transparency, a mailing in conjunction with electronic communication reaches the broadest of the public.

Respondent 7: Mailing, website and email.

Respondent 8: transfer station, Quamphegan It's important to be proactive and get the word out! People should be contacted personally when they will be affected. E.g., no one out in the R5 zone knew about the comp plan proposal to require 5 A lot minimum. Advertise, and use the

words, whatever the subject is. Talk peoples' language if you want them involved.

Respondent 9: -

Respondent 10: Sentinel newspaper, 236diner.com, mailings.

Respondent 11: email.

Respondent 12: Website.

Respondent 13: email (I forgot to ask for an email address-will call and get back with that-M)

Respondent 14: email and weblink

Respondent 15: Mailing.

Respondent 16: postage and email

Respondent 17: email postings downtown and at transfer station

Respondent 18: website

Respondent 19: email, newspapers

Respondent 20: email, newspaper articles

Respondent 21: Email

Respondent 22: Walk across the street and talk to me

Respondent 23: no response

Respondent 24: For me, web site and email but I also think it is vitally important for the town to have ongoing face to face opportunities to talk about these issues. I wish we could have discussions on economic development where we could bring in people from other communities that are doing economic development projects to talk about their experiences. I think some of the polarization that has arisen in our community come from people not having an idea about the full range of options so we end up fighting about false choices like development/no development and keep the old buildings/bulldoze the old buildings. There is a middle way if

we will take the time to explore all of our options.

Respondent 25: email

Respondent 26: town newsletter (Quamphegan)!

Question 8: Do you have any final comments or suggestions for the Economic Development Committee?

Respondent 1: Let's improve what we already have, which is a wonderful town center. I would like to see a renovated downtown with underground utilities, refurbished store fronts, more retail outlets (hardware store, clothing stores, etc.) and an expanded mixed use zone around the current B1 Zone.

Respondent 2: Communicate ideas and info to Council in report form.

Respondent 3: Whatever decisions are made, keeping a sense of community is huge. Because of the way of the world, we are too disconnected, too isolated. Feeling heard and respected, feeling like we belong, is an important value.

Respondent 4: Lower water and sewer costs, these are seen as too high for many developers. Engage a new economic development director, this was repeated several times over the course of the interview, it seems there were some personal issues that arose during a past project.

Respondent 5: I love living here, always have, all my life. I love living in the country. I like going to the dump. I don't expect lots of services. We can't base the need for services on what 5% of the population expects and can afford; we have to look at what most of the people can afford. Have to find a balance between econ dev, housing. Sometimes it seems that the people who make legislation are basing their decisions on what they can afford, not what most people in town can afford.

Respondent 6: Public/Private partnerships with the availability of TIF's, Pinetree Zones and possibly CDBG's and or other funds. A master plan for the business/industrial zones would be helpful. High tech, innovative and professional/service orientated businesses would be a great addition to the Town which in turn will bring other business/industry. There appears to be two distinct "zones". The downtown and the industrial zone. Both can be pursued together. Enlarging our business portfolio with the augment of TIF's and Pinetree zones for tax sheltering purposes and off-sets to SAD 35 funding appears to be a win/win situation. We are currently behind the curve and need to start this process now rather than later.

Respondent 7: Just listen to the people. Be a welcoming, people friendly committee. Leave your differences inside the boardrooms. Respect people's opinions and their right to voice them.

Respondent 8: No comment

Respondent 9: Give a higher profile to the comp plan.

Respondent 10: This town is very divided, pro and anti-development, find a majority support for any economic development or will be pushing a large rock uphill.

Respondent 11: Surveys, focus groups, and follow up.

Respondent 12: This town needs business and jobs. Do whatever you can to attract business.

Respondent 13: It would be good for the town to expedite the process for opening a small business. Look at the current regulations, look at creating more parking, perhaps behind the downtown businesses. Think about doing some more work with historic districts: controversial, but can really add to the value of an area.

Respondent 14: Great step to building consensus using this survey

Respondent 15: 1. Be open minded to any new business, large or small. 2. Work with the town manager and council.

Respondent 16: glad to see that the town leaders has shifted their priorities and invite public input and thoughts and inclusion in town governance glad to see open public discussion on the economy

Respondent 17: survey is good idea this will help get the ideas and the word out

Respondent 18: -"I enjoy seeing your picture in the paper for ribbon cuttings."

Respondent 19: See James Skerritt's comments from January 1969 and his drawings. Hope to supply. "In other words, make South Berwick a more beautiful and attractive place and business shall take care of itself."

Respondent 20: "One step at a time. Get support for your program. This is driven by Town government."

Respondent 21: - "No."

Respondent 22: I can't begin to tell you how many surveys I've filled out over the years. For the most part they've all been exercises in futility. When you start thinking that growth and development is a good thing, take a drive up route 4 and look at the mess that Sammy Mick has created. It brought a tear to my eye to see so much waste and destruction in the name of greed and progress. Growth will come. We don't need to encourage it, we need to control it.

Respondent 23: no response

Respondent 24: Just a couple of thoughts that don't fit elsewhere:

1.. Route 236 south of town offers opportunity for bringing some business or industry to South Berwick. However if the development is not thought out it could end up creating more negatives than positive consequences for South Berwick. I hope approval or promotion of development would take into account the number of curb cuts, the roadside esthetics, the impact on the environment and traffic of any development-I would not want the South Berwick part of Route 236 to end up looking like the Eliot stretch of Route 236 (numerous dangerous driveways and side roads, ugly parking lots, ugly buildings, and ugly signage).

2. If South Berwick tries to lure businesses here I hope that we will target businesses of the future, like green technology, internet based companies, medical services, all businesses that have been identified as growing in the future. I also think we should target businesses that are environmentally "clean" and ones that provide jobs that pay a living wage.

Respondent 25: We should not pay a town manager for not working.

Respondent 26: To keep taxes down, stop adding more staff at the town hall.

Stop voting, at town meeting, to over-ride the state tax cap for the schools.

The traffic light downtown: don't do it. Will just bring more traffic, encourages traffic, makes pedestrians the smaller player. Having no light, crosswalks, traffic cop, makes pedestrians equal players.