

5.1 Economic Development

5.1.1 Introduction

Economic Development, for Exeter residents, can have several meanings; employment, tax base stabilization and growth. This element of the Comprehensive Plan seeks to describe Exeter's virtues for economic development and the parameters for a pro-active strategy to achieve goals to meet local economic needs.

The purpose of this element is to present data relative to economic development in Exeter and to examine its relationship to economic development in the State. This element presents general information on State and local economic trends and conditions, employment overview and municipal fiscal trends. The material contained in these elements is presented in support of the goals and policies laid out in Section 4.2 of this Comprehensive Plan.

The Economic Development element, according to the Rhode Island Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulation Act, "shall include the identification of economic development policies and strategies, either existing or proposed by the municipality, in coordination with the land use plan element. Such policies should reflect local, regional and statewide concerns for the expansion and stabilization of the economic base and the promotion of quality employment opportunities. The policies and implementation techniques must be identified for inclusion in the implementation program element." (Rhode Island Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulation Act).

5.1.2 Existing Economic Trends

5.1.2a State of Rhode Island Economic Trends

Rhode Island has been a state of transition throughout the 1980's and 1990's. In 1982 the State of Rhode Island saw unemployment increase to 10.3% and then fall dramatically to 3% by the end of 1988. In June of 1999 the unemployment rate for the state was 4.3% according to the Rhode Island Department of Employment and Training.

From 1980 to 1988 total employment grew by 58,000 jobs, a 14.5% increase. The bulk of this growth occurred in the mid 1980's according to the RI Department of Economic Development figures. Women entered the labor market in record numbers. Consumption of goods and services increased along with the average Rhode Island wage. From the middle of 1984 the State experienced a dramatic turnaround in terms of new investment, housing construction, and employment. Incomes rose rapidly and unemployment plummeted.

This shift in employment and the in-migration of families seeking alternatives to the escalated home prices of Massachusetts put upward pressure on both wage rates and

home prices in Rhode Island. This phenomenon also put negative pressures on the blue-collar worker whose incomes did not keep pace with that of the "new" Rhode Islander and who have seen the manufacturing job market shrink dramatically.

The trend of reduced manufacturing employment in Rhode Island has continued, and although there have been a mild influx of technological manufacturing companies moving to Rhode Island manufacturing will no longer be a major source of income for the state. In an article entitled "The 1990's: Boom, Bust and Perestroika" (Ocean State Business, December 18-31, 1989), economists Michael Evans of Evans Economics of Washington D.C., and Pat Norton of Bryant College predicted that Rhode Island would lose 2% of its remaining manufacturing jobs each year between 1989 and 2000, a 90,000 job loss. On the other hand they expected other employment segments to grow by 85,000 for the same period. The question for the next decade will be what type of jobs will be created.

The shift from manufacturing to a service sector/retail economy is clearly indicated through 1980 and 1990 census numbers. A comparison of the data shows that the manufacturing segment lost over 14,000 jobs during this time frame. Primary metals and jewelry manufacturing suffered the largest losses. On the positive side of the job equation, the service industry grew exponentially to surpass manufacturing for the first time as the leading employment segment of the Rhode Island economy.

With all of the activity that has occurred, Rhode Island is still characterized by small businesses. Ninety-five percent of all Rhode Island businesses have 50 or fewer employees according to the U.S. Department of Commerce. This represents 26,057 of 27,499 firms in the State in 1987. A full 56% of all Rhode Island firms have only one to four employees.

5.1.2b Local Economic Trends and Conditions

In 1988 Exeter had a total employment figure of 2,191 - a 6% increase over the 1980 figure of 2,060 jobs. In 1990 Exeter's overall employment represented less than 1% of all Rhode Island employment and approximately 7% of all employment in Washington County.

While Exeter's economy is rural in nature, it has some striking similarities to that of the State as a whole. Like the State, manufacturing employment has decreased while the service sector has shown significant gains. In June of 1999 the unemployment rate of 2.6 percent in Exeter was half of the state's adjusted unemployment rate (4.3 percent).

The service sector of the economy now makes up the largest sector of all private employment in Exeter. This mirrors the general trend in the statewide and regional economies where similar gains have been experienced. The Agricultural, Forest and Fisheries segment represents 12 percent of all Town employment in 1990.

Construction firms and retail trade establishments represented the largest segment of the businesses located in Exeter. There were 15 construction companies and 15 retail/restaurant style businesses in 1990. In terms of total employment, the service sector had the highest number of employees with the Agricultural category second. The largest annual 1990 payroll belonged to agricultural related industries at over \$1.3 million dollars.

5.1.3 Development Trends

From 1980 through 1988 there was limited commercial and industrial construction in Exeter. A review of the Town's building permits for 1988, 1989 and 1990 indicated that 24,456 sq. ft. was added to the tax rolls. A total of 10,800 square feet represents additions to Carbon Technology, Inc., located on South County Trail.

Limited economic growth in the community during the late 1980's and early 1990's could be the result of factors including but not limited to:

1. Lack of demand for expanded services (slow economy)
2. Inappropriately zoned or inaccessible land available for development
3. Competition from neighboring communities
4. The lack of adequate utilities and/or services
5. The price of land and the general cost of development
6. The unwillingness of owners to develop their land
7. Local opposition to development/overly restrictive controls
8. Large tracts of undevelopable land

Because of one or a combination of these factors, Exeter had a limited commercial and industrial tax base during this time period.

As the Town enters the next century there is the potential for future economic growth. As a result of the Route 4 extension to Route 102 in neighboring North Kingstown, Exeter is now a more accessible community to commute to. The road network can be used as promotion of Exeter as an attractive location for new development. As residential development increases in the eastern part of Exeter, there will be increased interest in providing services to these commuters traveling on Routes 2, 4 and 102.

The second impact stems from the re-use of the Ladd Center, less than two miles south of the Route 2-102 intersection. The master plan for this facility needs to be integrated into the overall economic well being of Exeter, and the Town should take an active part in the redevelopment and use of this property.

Given these situations and the overall growth experienced in Washington County over the last ten years, there is real potential for future economic growth in Exeter. It is important for the Town to take a proactive role in determining where and what type of growth the town wishes to see in its future, and how can it be controlled as not to have a negative impact upon the character of the community.

5.1.4 Exeter Labor Force

The Exeter labor force grew from 2,159 employees to 2,247 employees between 1980 and 1988, a 4% increase. On the average the State's labor force grew by 12% for the same time period.

The 1980 Census provided detailed information concerning the occupations of employed persons over 16 years of age by place of residence. Ten categories of employment were listed covering a wide variety of occupations during this time frame. Exeter residents held positions ranging from white-collar executives and professionals to farmers, painters, teachers and health care providers.

With regard to employment categories, Exeter has had, in the recent past, a strong representation in the white-collar occupations with numbers higher than the State in general. It is anticipated that in the future the occupations of Exeter residents will start to reflect those of its newer residents who moved into Town over the past eight to ten years. This should result in even stronger representation in the "white collar" employment classifications, given the expense associated with the purchase of newer homes in Exeter.

5.1.5 Municipal Fiscal Trends

In order to develop a complete picture of the Town's economic profile it is not enough just to look at development trends, employment and physical growth. An understanding of the fiscal health of the community is also required. In this section of the report an analysis will be made of several items relative to Exeter's fiscal trends from 1982 through 1988.

5.1.5a Tax Rates

Table 5.1.A traces Exeter's Tax Rate from the 1982 through 1992. Actual effective tax rates are presented when available. Tax rates expressed as the rate per \$1,000 of the property's assessed valuation.

Table 5.1.A

Exeter Tax Rate Trends 1982-1992

<u>Year</u>	<u>Actual Rate</u>	<u>Effective Rate*</u>
1982	64.50	15.19
1983	29.90	17.28
1984	N/A	N/A
1985	32.70	18.10
1986	30.12	15.79
1987	32.54	14.16
1988	34.80	11.84
1989	35.52	9.33
1990	44.85	11.50
1991	49.27	N/A
1992	51.56	N/A

* The effective tax rate is calculated by dividing the actual market value of all property in the community by the total tax levied during that year.

Source: RI Department of Administration, Office of Municipal Affairs: Annual Reports on Local Government Finance and Tax Equalization 1984-1992

The tax rate for the Town of Exeter was stable during the presented time frame and has remained relatively stable through 1999. This statement is based upon the Effective Tax Rate that has fluctuated since 1982 and was thirtieth overall among the 39 cities and towns in Rhode Island.

The actual tax rate on the other hand has increased from a low of \$29.90 in 1983 (1982 tax roll) to its 1992 position at \$51.56/\$1,000 valuation, an increase of \$21.66/\$1,000 valuation.

A major impact on the tax rate, particularly the rate since 1990, has been the cost of the new Exeter-West Greenwich Junior/Senior High School. The indebtedness associated with that facility has been much higher than the estimated \$800,000 per year originally envisioned, due to cuts in State aid. The Town's share of costs in the mid1990's came to over \$4 million annually.

5.1.5b Property Tax Composition

Table 5.1.B presents a comparison between 1983 and 1988 of the percentage tax composition of Residential, Commercial Industrial, Motor Vehicles, Utility - Railroad and Other revenues. The purpose of this comparison is to trace the trends of these

revenue contributors to provide a picture as to the changes that have occurred over this six-year period.

Table 5.1.B

Percentage of Tangible Property

(*All number represent %)

Category	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
Residential	75.08	74.34	73.36	72.21	71.53	69.28
Commercial	6.61	6.14	6.09	5.83	5.37	5.56
Industrial	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Utility/Rail	3.90	4.11	4.13	4.05	3.87	3.47
Motor Vehicle	11.55	12.06	13.63	14.67	16.24	19.05
Other	2.86	4.35	2.79	3.24	2.99	2.0

Source: Annual State Report on Local Government Finances & Tax Equalization, RI Department of Administration, 1983-1989

Both the Residential and Commercial contributions declined steadily from 1983. The industrial contribution is, as one might expect, negligible. What is clearly evident is that residential property owners historically have provided 70% of all tangible contributions with less than 6% being provided by other types of land uses such as commercial or industrial properties. This clearly places the brunt of the tax burden on the residential property owner in terms of taxing their homes and motor vehicles. With motor vehicles representing 19.05% of all tangible property during the aforementioned time period, the average homeowner was responsible for between 87-89% of all taxable property.

5.1.6 Potential Impact of Economic Diversification in Municipal Revenues

As municipal budgets grow tighter, due to declining state and federal revenues, towns that have not diversified their economies find that they must rely more heavily on their residential tax base to fund municipal services. In rural communities like Exeter, the residential base can account for that 80-90% of their total revenues. As costs increase the tax rate must increase incrementally to cover these costs with the burden of these costs falling squarely upon the homeowner.

Benefits the Town receives by diversifying its tax base with the promotion of more commercial and service industries, must be balanced with its desire to increase municipal tax revenue, and the impact these uses have on the character and environment of the community.

This is not to say that retail, service or industrial centers do not generate demands on local government; they do. This can take the form of requests for increased public safety services, improved roads, and in some cases requests to actively market the Town as a location for further growth.

While economic diversification will provide for the diffusion of the tax burden, it will not likely result in the rebate of taxes to local residents. What it can do is lessen the impact of increased costs by minimizing tax rate increases.

5.1.7 Existing Commercial/Industrial Profile

Commercial activities in Exeter have been concentrated along the major roadways of Route 3 (Nooseneck Hill Road) and Route 2 (South County Trail). Starting at the Route 3/102 intersection, there are a number of retail/service type establishments that exist between Route 102 and Route 165. Those businesses include service stations and convenience stores, restaurants, garages and other retail ventures.

Further south on Route 3, between Route 165 and Industrial Drive, are a number of automotive/salvage uses that are located adjacent to Route 3. Industrial Drive, located close to the Richmond border, between Route 3 and I-95 also has a collection of automotive/salvage type uses.

In general, Route 165 provides the dividing point between the retail/service establishments to the north and the heavy commercial type of activities to the south along this 2.5-mile stretch of Route 2 (102 to Richmond Border).

While the Industrial Drive area is fairly well defined, the remainder of this area has developed in a somewhat haphazard fashion being spread throughout the area. Buildings are in varying states of repair or disrepair and there is no consistency to the development that has occurred, which is typical of rural commercial development.

The southeastern section of Exeter is another location of economic activity. It takes place in two areas, along Route 2 and in the area of Yawgoo Valley and Mill Pond Roads. Again, as with Route 3, these businesses ranging from pubs and restaurants, service facilities and major industry, are fairly well spread out along Route 2 between the town line and Yawgoo Valley Road.

On the eastern end of Yawgoo Valley Road is the Yawgoo Valley Ski area and the accompanying business located on that property. In the same general area located off of Mill Pond Road (State) is the Dorset Mill, which also includes a number of businesses in close proximity to the South Kingstown town line and the Amtrak Rail line, which cuts across Exeter's southeastern corner.

Along Route 102, there are different businesses properties along with the Bald Hill Nurseries and the Exeter Country Club (18 hole public golf course).

Agricultural type uses are spread throughout the Town. Moving across town from east to west, Albert Farms is located north of Exeter Road at the North Kingstown town line. Bald Hill Nurseries is on Route 102 just west of North Kingstown. Schartner's Farm (land only) is located to the west of Route 2 in the area where Route 2 enters Exeter. Robert Whitford harvests hay just west of Widow Sweets Road on Ten Rod Road. Our Kids Farm is located off of Gardner Road just east and north of the Town of Richmond. George Whitford's Farm is located near the intersection of New London Turnpike and Hillside Road. In addition to these agricultural uses there are a number of Christmas tree farms in Town as well.

5.1.8 Implementation

5.1.8a Findings

1. Exeter's present commercial/service industries are limited and are mostly scattered along two major roadways, Routes 2 and 3. There is no commercial center in Town.
2. The zoning ordinance and map allows strip commercial development particularly on Routes 2 and 3.
3. In 1986 the Agricultural, Forestry and Fishing industrial group represented the largest annual payroll of any employment group in Exeter. The Service sector provided the most jobs. It is apparent that the agricultural industry is important to the local economy.
4. Commercial properties contributed 5.56% to the tax base in 1988. Industry contributed less than 1%. Residents pay 87-89% of all property taxes collected by the Town.
5. South County is the new growth area in Rhode Island. For Exeter the improvement of Rt. 4 to the east and the accessibility of Exeter from I-95 to the west makes it a possible location for economic growth in the future.
6. Small one-to-four person home-based businesses are Exeter's primary economy.
7. Exeter is a bedroom community with most residents seeking employment outside the Town.

5.1.8b Issues

1. The Town should take an active role in the decision-making process pertaining to the future of the Ladd Center in order to promote a positive investment.
2. The Town should promote areas for economic growth to diversify the tax base, and decide to what degree should such promotion go (tax incentives, expanded zoning initiatives, etc.).
3. Strip development detracts from the rural character of the Town.
4. If the Town is to encourage tax base diversification, it must be sensitive to the natural limitations of the land
5. Marketing the Town's recreational and sporting amenities and its agricultural products can play an expanded role in the future economic development of the Town if handled in an economically sensitive manner
6. The Town should investigate rural village centers that include a mixture of retail, professional office, office residential, and government in order to concentrate development in specific areas within the town.

5.1.8c Implementation –Economic Development Program

The focus of this program should be used to foster positive economic growth for the town in the future that is consistent with its rural character, is purposeful, while complementing the positive elements of the community. There are four major elements to this program. They are:

- Economic diversification
- Expanded services to town residents
- Supporting development that is consistent with the historic and rural nature of the community
- Support for the agricultural and home industries that exist in the community

It is no secret to town residents that the continued reliance upon residential development as the mainstay of the economy will result in increased tax burdens upon all town residents. It is also apparent that new and long time residents alike are finding it increasingly difficult to keep pace with the town's rising tax rate, a situation that has been complicated by the recent downturn in the economy.

While residents are concerned with development and its impacts, they also are asking that increased services be made available to them. The challenge of providing those

services in a way that enhances the character of the community, rather than detracts from it, will be addressed further on in this document.

Exeter has many positive elements that make it an attractive place to live and work. It is blessed with an overabundance of natural resources in addition to high quality recreational facilities. It is time to use these natural features to the advantage of the town and market them as a reason to visit the community, recreate here and purchase locally produced goods and services. Home industries are prevalent in the community and should be promoted in a controlled and environmentally sensitive manner.

To accomplish these and other goals, it is recommended that the town take full advantage of its positive environment and history by embracing an economic plan that complements rather than competes with it. The town should support commercial and industrial growth of the type, location and scale that is consistent with the town. It should take advantage of the Town's access to I-95, as well as pursue the development of village areas and commercial centers that are of a scale and design consistent with its rural character.

This community must recognize economic growth as positive and seek ways to enhance it through cooperation with other South County communities and the State of Rhode Island. It has to understand the local economy and build upon its strengths for the benefit of all existing and future town residents.

The Exeter Economic Development Commission has drafted many of the recommendations presented here. The Commission presented a report to the Town Council on January 23, 1992. The report contained many ideas for future consideration. Many of these ideas are consistent with those developed by the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee.

The economic development program presented here is divided into two components. They relate to the zoning initiatives the town should pursue to control and mold future development and secondly, other economic development initiatives that can be undertaken to foster economic opportunity in the town. The first area of discussion relates to zoning initiatives. In presenting this section, the intent is to provide a regulatory structure for the future that presents control mechanisms and opportunities to support development that is consistent with the character of a rural environment.

In addition, present zoning that is inconsistent with this approach is also identified. The main focus of this section relates to the recommendation that Planned Development be encouraged to develop village centers containing a mix of residential and commercial uses. This concept was discussed in previous elements of the plan and will be reintroduced here. Also, industrial-zoning initiatives will be discussed that promote

industrial growth that is marketable and sensitive to the environmental constraints that exist in the community.

The second component of the plan relates to other initiatives available to the town outside of the regulatory environment. These relate to future planning initiatives that seek to prepare the town for its economic future, while taking advantage of its numerous assets to its own advantage.

The following are the specific zoning initiatives recommended for the town.

5.1.8c.1 Planned Development

Two types of Planned Districts are recommended. The first type, a Village Center or Village District, which would encourage pedestrian efficiency and clustering of town facilities in a traditional New England style setting, should be considered if deemed appropriate at some future date. The second type of planned development, Planned Industrial and Commercial Zoning Districts would relate directly to industrial and commercial growth in areas deemed suitable for such development.

Two types of Planned Industrial and Commercial Zoning Districts are recommended. One would allow the development of light commercial or industrial uses in a mixed commercial environment, while the second district would be designated as “Special Use Districts” for the Ladd Center and the Dorrset Mill concentrating on heavier industrial and commercial use.

***Administrative Responsibility:** Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Exeter Economic Development Commission, and Town Council*

5.1.8c.2 General Commercial and Industrial Growth

Industrial - The area zoned for industrial use and should remain as such with concentration along the I-95 corridor.

Commercial - Controls over site development, signage, parking location and screening, signage and buffers should be instituted through a review process. The purpose of the review would be to insure commercial development be less intensive and more residential in appearance, blending and not competing with, the historic and rural nature of the community.

Areas where commercial uses currently exist are recommended to be integrated with light business/residential uses to buffer these existing uses with those more characteristic of a rural community.

***Administrative Responsibility:** Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Exeter Economic Development Commission, and Town Council*

5.1.8c.3 Development Plan Review

This process would be utilized to enforce the expanded controls to be contained in the future zoning ordinance with respect to the development of commercial and industrial properties. Specific performance and design standards need to be implemented to control development in the future in such a way as to make such growth complement the rural character of the community. Standards with respect to building design, site layout, signage, parking, etc., should be an integral part of such an ordinance.

Administrative Responsibility: Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Exeter Economic Development Commission, and Town Council

5.1.8c.4 Other Economic Initiatives

The purpose of this section is to provide mechanisms that enhance and build on the local economy of Exeter. At the same time they serve to preserve important elements that are critical to maintaining the character of the town. In addition, long-term economic initiatives are presented to position the town to not only understand its local economy, but to be positioned to react to change and market conditions.

5.1.8c.5 Home Occupations-Cottage Industries

There are a number of Exeter residents who are self-employed, operating small businesses from their homes. Many of these businesses relate to the raising of livestock, pets and crops, in addition to the arts and crafts industries, landscaping services, day cares, and other businesses such as small printing shops, wood sales etc. These activities should be encouraged as a vital part of a rural economy. There is the need however for control over such industries to prevent them from infringing upon the property rights of others or from potentially having an adverse impact upon the environment. Control mechanisms and alternatives for such businesses need to be provided when they outgrow their existing locations or threaten the surrounding environment, natural or otherwise. The zoning ordinance must be updated to provide controls relative to the uses allowed, their size, hours of operation, number of employees, etc.

Specific performance standards must be established to allow such industries to flourish in a responsible fashion. In addition, the investigation of available support services for such industries and potential outlets for the goods and services produced needs to be identified. Consideration for a farmer's outlet where such items could be displayed in a central setting on a regular basis has merit. Such a site could be the location of the Exeter Days celebration. What is important is that the talents, goods and services produced by town residents be marketed in a positive manner. This can occur in a central setting or be part of an expanded effort on the part of the town to attract visitors to the community.

The next recommendation, relative to the investigation of the potential to support an Economic Incubator site, relates directly to dealing with the potential for growth in the Cottage Industry area.

Administrative Responsibility: Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Exeter Economic Development Commission, and Town Council

5.1.8c.6 Incubator Space

As home occupations prosper and outgrow their environment, one of two things happen, they either move to a new location or continue to operate in a constrained environment that may begin to have a negative impact upon their immediate neighbors. For those who cannot afford to move their families and businesses to another location, the availability of incubator space is an attractive alternative. Incubator space is typically located in industrial complexes and designated for new or growth industries that cannot afford to purchase a site or pay high rental or lease costs. Services are shared among incubator tenants such as work processing, secretarial, cleaning and other common needs. Subsidies are typically involved from the government (federal or state) to support such businesses. Sources could include the federal Community Development Block Grant Program, the Farmers Home Administration or the Economic Development Administration.

For a town such as Exeter, there appears to be a need for two types of incubator space: First, associated with the more traditional, factory-type location and a second, geared toward agricultural interests. On the manufacturing side, the *Dorset Mill* would appear to be an ideal site for such an activity. At present there are a variety of tenants in the facility and it lends itself nicely to such an activity. On the agricultural side, space may be more difficult to come by. Investigation in the potential lease of underutilized farmland or the outright purchase of land should be undertaken. Like the manufacturing incubator, the agricultural incubator would also provide the opportunity for shared services and cost for items such as feed, medical care, fertilizers, etc.

Administrative Responsibility: Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Economic Development Commission, and related civic organizations

5.1.8c.7 Tourism

Without question, Exeter is and will continue to be an extremely attractive place for people wishing to enjoy its rural atmosphere, visit any one of its numerous recreational or sporting locations, or just to enjoy a bicycle ride or walk through its peaceful surroundings. Tourism is a big business in Rhode Island, generating millions of dollars in revenue a year. These revenues are not those solely associated with money spent at recreational activities alone, but the spin-off effect these attractions generate to surrounding businesses that are located near these facilities. Exeter must recognize its

potential as a recreational and rural attraction and market itself to both in state and out of state visitors who may be attracted to the numerous activities that exist in the town. At the same time the town must enhance its position as an attractive tourism location by taking steps on its own to improve its position.

Several ideas are included in this plan relative to the establishment of a bicycle trail system, hiking trails, village centers, historic preservation activities, farmland preservation, the marketing of its cottage industries etc. These activities and attractions must be packaged and marketed effectively to promote tourism and an industry in the town. Coordination with the State Department of Economic Development and the activities of the South County Tourism Council should take place to ensure that Exeter's attractions are highlighted among those listed in the materials produced by these agencies. Also, the town should seek to attract recreational developments that are consistent with existing town activities.

The establishment of a Visitors Center at the Hall School, Town Clerk's Office or at the new town hall is recommended to provide tourists with information concerning the town and its attractions. Maps, a town history, local goods and products listings, and other items of interest could be made available at the center.

Administrative Responsibility: *Exeter Economic Development Commission, Town Council, and Planning Board*

5.1.8c.8 Farmland Preservation

The maintenance of existing farmland in agricultural use or as open space is critical to the preservation of the town's rural character. To do so will require the availability of incentives to local farmers that are finding it harder and harder every year to support their families from the revenues generated from farming. The town should investigate methods to preserve farmland such as providing reduced assessments through the Farm, Forest and Open Space Act, that provides reduced assessments to farmers who guarantee that their land will be dedicated to agricultural uses for an extended period of time. Other approaches could include the purchase of development rights from farm owners to maintain these lands as open space. Local contributions to such funds are typically required through general revenue collections or bonds.

Administrative Responsibility: *Conservation Commission, Tax Assessors, Town Council, and Planning Board*

5.1.8c.9 General Economic Development Planning

While the development of this Comprehensive Plan involved substantial research into the local economic condition of the town, its aim was general in nature and did not investigate any one element in detail. As an example, the analysis of the potential for future economic development was not accomplished, nor was a review of detailed 1990

Census information. The town should make economic development planning and strategy formulation a priority by developing a detailed profile of the community which includes an inventory of available sites for future development or re-development. In addition, the town should clearly understand the local and regional market to take advantage of the opportunities it presents in the future.

What will it take to make Exeter an attractive place for industry in the future? How can the town benefit from its many attractions and generate a wholesome tourism industry? These are but two of many questions that would be answered through the development of an Economic Development Strategy Plan that deals with these questions and others relative to the steps necessary to promote Exeter within the region and the state. The Planning Board and Town Council should take an active part in this process.

Administrative Responsibility: Town Council and Planning Board