

The Value of Engaging and Retaining Local Businesses

25th Annual Spring Planning & Zoning Conference

June 1, 2019

Community and Economic Development Goals

- Communities have the knowledge and tools to strengthen their business and economic base
- People have the skills to be effective leaders, engage others in local decisions, and solve community problems
- Communities and organizations collaborate to leverage resources and meet the needs of vulnerable audiences

 **Extension**

Community & Economic Development



Growing Economy

Our economic development work focuses on promoting solutions for New Hampshire's communities. The end goals are to strengthen local businesses, build local leadership and improve quality of life, all of which support a sustainable and resilient future for our state and citizens like you.



Vibrant Communities

Downtowns are the heart of New Hampshire's communities. Our innovative programs build local leadership to look at assets, create a vision and focus on strengthening place. Most important, we give local residents and business owners the skills to make their community a vibrant place to live, work and visit.



Nature Economy

We aim to help communities connect the environment and natural resources with community goals to create vibrant economies and high quality of life for all. This can be in the form of assisting communities in identifying and utilizing their natural capital, such as connecting their downtowns with trails and leveraging green infrastructure to reduce or maintain costs of community services.



Community Leaders

Leaders and volunteers in your community need special skills to help manage diverse perspectives. Our work teaches leaders all over the state how to help citizen groups stay focused, work together and take action that benefits their communities.

Business Attraction v. Retention



Business Engagement & Retention Program

- Identify the needs of business and organizations related to location, business and municipal services.
- Build network between businesses and community leaders for strong social and business connections.
- Build capacity of community leaders and volunteers to address needs of business and organizations.
- Create connections between community and business/economic development resources in NH.



What UNH Cooperative Extension has learned

404 Businesses/organizations surveyed or interviewed

About the Businesses/Organizations

- **85%** locally owned
- Primarily small
- Started in their town
- On main street and beyond
- Many interested in expansion in their town or county

Communities

1 large city: Portsmouth

4 large towns: Exeter, Hooksett, Amherst, Milford

6 small towns: Northfield, Bethlehem, North Hampton, Hillsborough, Wilton, Wolfeboro

Engagement by Volunteers

Over **200** community volunteers trained and conducted surveys and interviews

Key Findings

1 Workforce

- Growing demand means need for more employees
- Hard to recruit and compete for employees
- Skilled and unskilled training needs
- Aging population and loss of young people

2 Housing

- A need for quality housing that is affordable
- Has a relationship to transportation and commuting

3 Quality of Life

- Value working and living in New Hampshire
- Natural resources and recreation are important to owners, employees and visitors

Challenges to Consider

- Businesses lacking a succession plan
- Land, water and sewer capacity and expansion issues
- Poor broadband quality
- Keeping businesses engaged with other businesses, civic leaders, their municipality and the community
- Complicated municipal review process to navigate

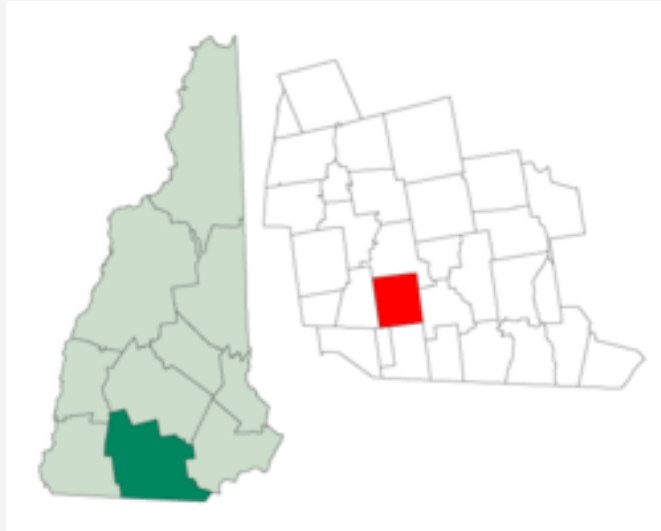


Best Practices and Recommendations

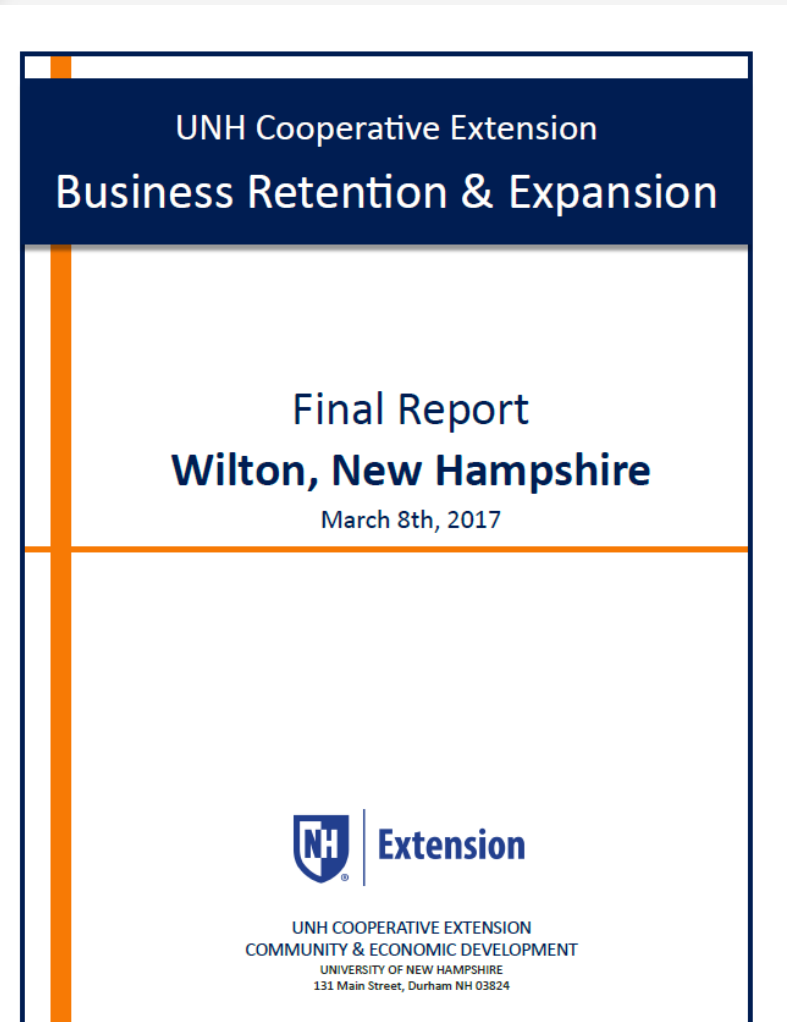
- Connect Career and Technical Education (CTE) centers with area employers
- Establish navigators through business permitting process
- Use state resources on workforce development, exporting
- Develop a town identity and marketing plan
- Market and promote assets using online search engines
- Enhance quality of life factors like recreation opportunities



Case Study: Wilton, NH



UNHCE Business Retention Study



- 44 businesses interviewed
- 8 community volunteers engaged
- 93% are local businesses that own their facility
- Challenges included prohibitive local regulations, inadequate labor skills, and lack of digital marketing

Marketing: Town Promotes Businesses

Town of Wilton, NH / News / What's New / Wilton Business Directory

Wilton Business Directory

New Wilton Business Directory

Posted on 04/16/2019



Our small, rural town is home to 139 businesses, many of which are leaders in their industry, and many who have been in operation for decades. We have created this **Business Directory** to showcase the wide array of businesses which call Wilton home.

It includes links to 30+ retail stores, a variety of arts, food, lodging and other services.

Detailed descriptions are also available for many of the online companies that are located in Wilton.

From manufacturing and engineering, hospitality, machining, software, pet services to swimwear!

So take a look, and start spreading the word about these great Wilton businesses!

Town of Wilton, NH / News / What's New / Wilton Business in the News!

Wilton Business in the News!

Wilton Business in the News!

Posted on 02/03/2019



Check out the January/February 2019 issue of Fiddlehead, a magazine designed to focus on all options for "living local" across New Hampshire. This issue includes an article on the "staycation" trend and features Pam and Pete Clemens and their wonderful new Wilton B&B and Tea Room, SereniTea.

Formally opened this past summer, Pete and Pam have lovingly restored the historic house in Wilton Center, outfitting three beautiful guests rooms with baths, and featuring regularly scheduled "High Teas" in their period décor rooms.

Check out the article for a wonderful interview with Pam, comments from very satisfied guests and some beautiful photos.

Be sure to spread the word to your friends about this new lodging option in our town, and congratulations to Pete and Pam on the great press!

Copies of the magazine can be found locally in Putnam's Store, Gary's Restaurant, Nelson's Candies, FrostThis bakery, Bee Fields Farm and Brookside Mini-Market, or read it online [HERE](#).

Policy: Revision of Downtown Commercial District

2. Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 1 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town of Wilton Zoning Ordinance as Follows:

ADOPT a new zoning chapter Section 7A Downtown Commercial District to distinguish the already existing Downtown Commercial District area established in Section 7.0.2 from the Commercial District.

1

This revision removes non-residential use from off street parking requirements; it eliminates site plan review requirements for many commercial uses; and establishes setback requirements to reinforce the existing neighborhood.

AMEND Section 7, Commercial District to make it consistent with the proposed Section 7A: Downtown Commercial District, including removing references to the Downtown Commercial Ordinance and standardizing permitted use terminology between the two sections.

AMEND Section 16, Signs, Section 16.3 by deleting the phrase, "except for the Downtown Wilton area as defined in Section 8.0.1 d and e" and Section 16.5 by deleting the phrase "Section 8.0.1 d and e" and replacing it with "Section 7A.1."

This amendment will update references to the existing Zoning Ordinance and provide consistency with the existing character of the district.

Yes 302* No 73

- Eliminated Parking Requirement
- Set thresholds for site plan review
- Prohibited ground floor residences
- Updated uses to include nanobreweries

Any Questions?

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