

### 13.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*Scituate will strive to achieve an equitable framework of local policies and regulations that promote sustainable economic development and balance the tax base with the Town's unique natural environment and community character.*

Early in Scituate's history, economic activity was tied to the land. Early development was based on subsistence farming, eventually evolving to an export market due to its proximity to Providence. With the establishment of a transportation network to move goods to the capital city, ancillary economic activities were established to support those moving goods east from Scituate. Taverns, small stores, and service providers established themselves along the route to provide supplies and support to those moving goods.

This land use based economic engine of the Town shifted gears in the nineteenth century with the industrial revolution. This era signified a shift from a primarily agricultural economy to one of a manufacturing economy, which was mainly located in more developed urban areas. With this shift came a need for skilled workers. Some farm operations were abandoned as settlers moved out of Scituate to places where economic opportunities were more widely available. During this time Scituate became the focus of several industrial villages, centered around water-operated mills.

The focus for future economic development in Scituate should strike a balance between maintaining its position as one of the stewards of the State's most vital water supply and diversification of the tax base to manage the financial burden on residential properties in Town. This must be done in a way that respects the rural character of the Town, as well as recognizes the importance of being home to an incredibly valuable drinking water resource for the state. Fostering small scale economic opportunities in Town will provide an opportunity for Scituate residents to create live/workspaces as well as utilize local services and products from within their own community. There is a delicate balance to be struck in doing so, as Scituate is home to a wealth of highly important natural resources for the Town and the State as a whole.

This element focuses on maintaining and enhancing economic opportunities in Scituate while maintaining the Town's rural character and the Scituate Reservoir's water quality that so many in the state rely upon.

This element is divided into the follow topics:

- An overview of existing economic conditions in Town ([Section 13.1](#))
- The role water production plays in the Town's economic profile ([Section 13.2](#))
- A discussion of the role agriculture and home occupations play in Scituate's economy ([Section 13.3](#))
- An overview of the Scituate Business Association and the role they play ([Section 13.4](#))
- A summary of economic development survey related results ([Section 13.5](#))

The following considerations are of a high priority to the Town when contemplating how to balance the Town's economic health while maintaining the rural quality of the Town:

- Encourage and support economic development to diversify the tax base, that is in keeping with the Town's character ([Policy #1, #2, #3, #4, Action #1, #2, #3, #4](#))
- Foster a collaborative business environment that is sensitive the Town's history and culture ([Policy #1, #3, #4, #5, Action #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #7](#))
- Provide a predictable and reliable regulatory framework that streamlines the review and application process for new and expanding businesses ([Policy, #1, #2, Action #1, #2, #3, #5, #6](#))

### 13.1 Existing Conditions

Chapter 6 *Land Use* contains the Town’s current land use map (Map LU-1). This map provides a general representation of the types and locations of economic activity in the Town. Just .7% of the Town’s land area is dedicated to commercial and industrial uses. The majority of the Town is limited to residential development, at relatively low densities.

#### 13.1.1 Labor Force

The total population for the Town of Scituate was 10,329 at the time of the 2010 Census and was estimated to be approximately 10,634 in 2019 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). The 2022 ACS estimates Scituate’s population at 10,404. The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (RIDLT) estimated an annual average labor force population of approximately 6,467 individuals in 2023 (RIDLT, 2024). Table 13-1 illustrates a slight decline in Scituate’s total labor force since 2010, with a rebound in 2023. This is representative of a national trend where the labor force has been decreasing, being further impacted by COVID-19. Table 13-1 shows a rise and fall in the unemployment rate in Scituate. Unemployment in 2010 was unusually high due to a national drop in the creation of new jobs. This trend began to turn around in 2014 – 2015, which is represented in below. The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the unemployment rate in 2020. Employment statistics for 2023 are included as the most recent full year of statistics currently available.

	2010	2015	2020	2023
Total Employment	5,516	5,809	5,547	6,299
Total Unemployment	731	357	540	168
Unemployment Rate	11.7%	5.8%	8.9%	2.6%
<b>Total Labor Force</b>	<b>6,247</b>	<b>6,166</b>	<b>6,087</b>	<b>6,467</b>

Source: Scituate Labor Force Statistics, Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, 1990 - Present

Educational attainment in Scituate is a community strength, with close to 65% of the population attaining at least some level of college education by 2022. Scituate residents obtaining either a bachelor’s degree or a graduate or professional degree has increased approximately 21% and 33% respectively since 2010. The Town overall, is becoming more educated which is a trend that mirrors that of the country and the region. Table 13-2 provides more information on educational attainment in Scituate.

	2010	2013	2016	2019	2022
Educational Attainment	% of Population 25 Years and Older				
Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	3.4%	2.6%	1.6%	0.9%	4.7%
9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade, no H.S Diploma	5.9%	5.1%	4.3%	3.2%	5.7%
H.S. Diploma or GED Equivalency	28.2%	30.1%	29.8%	26.2%	26.1%
Completed Some College	21.6%	17.3%	16.1%	25.0%	19.1%
Associate’s degree	12.6%	12.4%	11.5%	8.1%	8.8%
Bachelor’s Degree	17.8%	20.4%	22.1%	24.3%	21.6%
Graduate/Professional Degree	10.5%	12.0%	14.7%	12.4%	14.0%

Source: U.S. Census 2010, 2013-2022 ACS

accompany the high educational attainment many Scituate residents have achieved, the Town also ranks

amongst the top of Rhode Island municipalities in a commonly referenced economic indicator statistics, median household income (Table 13-3). The Town consistently has the median income significantly higher than the state median income. Unemployment rates in Scituate track closely with the state’s rate, coming in slightly lower than the State over the last several years. Statistically speaking, Scituate’s workforce is a successful group that is thriving despite somewhat stagnant commercial and industrial economic growth within the Town.

	Year	Scituate	State of RI	Difference
Median Household Income	2010	\$74,000	\$54,902	\$19,098
	2013	\$78,980	\$55,902	\$23,078
	2016	\$81,975	\$58,387	\$23,588
	2019	\$96,179	\$71,169	\$25,010
	2022	\$110,429	\$81,854	\$28,575
Unemployment Rate <sup>a</sup>	2010	11.7%	11.6%	0.1%
	2013	9.3%	9.5%	0.2%
	2016	4.9%	5.2%	0.3%
	2019	3.1%	3.6%	0.5%
	2022	2.9%	3.2%	0.3%

Source: U.S. Census 2010, 2013-2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2022 ACS.

Note:

a. R.I. Dept. of Labor and Training <https://dlt.ri.gov/lmi/datacenter/laus.php>

Scituate is a desirable community to live in for those looking for rural small-town character, and the housing market reflects this position. According to the HousingWorks RI 2023 Housing Fact Book, the median price of a single-family home in Scituate ranks as the 19<sup>th</sup> highest in Rhode Island’s 39 municipalities, requiring an annual household income of \$135,152 to meet the 30% income affordability cost burden. This housing cost burden is a major deterrent to entry level employees and first-time homebuyers looking to purchase a home in Scituate and is evidenced by the Town’s low number of residents in the 20 – 34-year-old demographic (Table 13-4).

Age	Population	% of Population
Under 9 years	891	8.6%
10 to 19 years	890	8.6%
20 to 29 years	1,236	11.9%
30 to 39 years	1,321	12.7%
40 to 49 years	1,125	10.8%
50 to 59 years	1,525	14.7%
60 to 69 years	1,902	18.3%
70 to 79 years	1,173	11.3%
80 years & older	341	3.3%

13.1.2 Local  
According to  
2022 Rhode  
Employment

Employment  
the RIDLT  
& Island  
Wage

Report, there are 326 private business establishments in Scituate. Private businesses accounted for an average of 1,152 employees with total wages amounting to \$51,508,128<sup>1</sup>. Local employment in Scituate

<sup>1</sup>[https://dlt.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur571/files/2023-05/2022summary\\_0.pdf](https://dlt.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur571/files/2023-05/2022summary_0.pdf)

is relatively low when compared to some other communities in the State due to the lack of significant commercial or industrial development within the Town. A majority of the Town's employment comes in the form of small businesses. Most of the Town's workforce is employed outside the community (73%) with only 1,644 people working jobs within the community (RIDLT, 2020c). Due to the environmentally sensitive nature of much of the land area in Scituate, larger commercial and industrial land uses are not appropriate, both because of environmental constraints and due to context. The Town is currently comprised of small-scale business, along with a predominantly residential land use pattern that is dotted with several small historic villages. Large scale commercial or industrial development could pose a threat to both the watershed and the current rural character that the Town desires to protect.

The Town made approximately \$200,000 available for matching grants for small businesses and organizations to apply for. This money was made available through the use of COVID-19 funds that were received by the Town. A variety of different types of businesses and organizations applied for the funding for a variety of different types of uses to help support them as a result of injury suffered to their business and/or organization as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Town will continue to look for ways to support the small businesses that operate.

### 13.1.3 Tax Base

The major source of tax revenue in Scituate is derived from assessments on residential real estate, representing approximately 67% of the Town's tax base. Scituate derives only about three percent of their tax revenue from commercial real estate taxes. The second major source of tax revenue for the Town is from tax payments from the PWSB. These tax payments to the Town include both real estate as well as tangible taxes. This highlights the importance of the continued cooperative relationship with PWSB to the Town's tax base. In fiscal year 2019-2020, watershed properties generated tax revenue of \$6,646,164.18 for the Town, representing approximately 22% of the Town's total operating budget. This number generally rises year to year based on the assessed value of their land holdings and any new property they purchase. Table 13-5 provides a summary of tax revenue from PWSB from 2015 to 2020.

Fiscal Year	Total Real Estate Tax Payments	Total Tangible Tax Payments	Total Tax Payments	Tax Roll Year
2014-2015	\$5,781,286	\$129,785	\$5,911,071	2014
2015-2016	\$5,834,474	\$130,979	\$5,965,453	2015
2016-2017	\$5,967,500	\$133,965	\$6,101,465	2016
2017-2018	\$6,206,200	\$139,324	\$6,345,524	2017
2018-2019	\$6,392,386	\$142,503	\$6,535,890	2018
2019-2020	\$6,646,164	\$149,201	\$6,795,365	2019
2020-2021	\$6,822,620	\$153,162	\$6,975,782	2020
2021-2022	\$7,092,113	\$159,212	\$7,251,325	2021
2022-2023	\$7,375,798	\$165,580	\$7,541,378	2022

Source: Scituate Treasurer's Office, Retrieved April 2024

Scituate's tax rate is not much different than those of surrounding communities. The Town falls just about in the middle when compared with adjacent municipal tax rates. Table 13-6 provides a comparison of tax rates in Scituate and nearby municipalities for fiscal year 2024. (Scituate is highlighted in aqua in the table.)

Table 13-6 FY 2024 Municipal Tax Rates			
Municipality	Real Estate	Commercial	Personal Property
Scituate	16.67	24.57	35.69
Glocester	14.25	17.08	28.50
Foster	22.67	22.67	31.12
Smithfield	13.72	19.20	59.74
Johnston	15.30	27.43	64.65
Cranston	18.90	28.35	28.35

### 13.2 Water Production

The production of water is a vitally important activity in Scituate that supplies the Town with approximately 23.3% of its operating budget in fiscal year 2022-2023. In support of its major industry, Scituate endorses the implementation of *State Guide Plan Element 721: Rhode Island Water 2030* (Water 2030), in which the Scituate Reservoir is a major focus area. Scituate has played a relatively passive role in Reservoir activities or policies. The primary discussion point between the Town and the PWSB has revolved around tax revenues paid to the Town for the large amount of land owned by PWSB. The ownership of 15,044 acres of land by PWSB has placed limitations on the Town’s ability to develop an economic tax base to the extent that would otherwise be feasible. The implementation of Water 2030 limits Scituate’s development opportunities and restricts its land use policies as an effective tool to preserve water quality for the 600,000 Rhode Island residents served by the water supply. Due to this circumstance, a relationship with PWSB is necessary to continue to assure that the Town can balance its tax base appropriately.

**16 of 39 communities receive potable water from the Scituate Reservoir:**

- Bristol
- Barrington
- Cranston
- Coventry
- East Greenwich
- East Providence
- Johnston
- Lincoln
- North Providence
- Providence
- Part of Scituate
- Smithfield
- Warren
- Warwick
- Part of West Greenwich
- West Warwick

Sixteen of the state’s 39 municipalities depend on the Scituate Reservoir for potable water in one way or another, representing the second largest water supply reservoir system in New England (Water 2030, 2012). The PWSB provides water in one of two ways: either directly through their retail service area or through a wholesale service to various water suppliers that in turn supply water to various communities. Nine of the state’s major suppliers of water rely, at least in part, on the Scituate Reservoir for the water they distribute. See Chapter 7 *Natural Resources* for more information on the Scituate Reservoir and the important role it plays in the state’s water supply network.

**Nine of the State’s 28 major suppliers depend upon the Scituate Reservoir:**

- Warwick Water Department (3,200 MGY)
- Kent County Water Authority (2,800 MGY)
- East Providence Water Utility Division (1,700 MGY)
- Bristol County Water Authority (987 MGY)
- Lincoln Water Commission (895 MGY)
- Greenville Water District (408 MGY)
- Smithfield Water Supply Board (346 MGY)
- Johnston Water Department (278 MGY)
- East Smithfield Water District (250 MGY)

MGY = Million Gallons per Year

### 13.3 Agriculture and Forestry

Scituate is home to a large number of working farms and agriculturally related businesses. Farmers in Scituate raise food crops (including meat, vegetables, fruits, and dairy), grow flowers, and grow and harvest wood. These products are either sold on premises, in local farmers markets, or shipped to markets throughout the region. According to the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training an estimated 35 people were employed in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting in Scituate in 2023 providing approximately \$1,063,409 in annual total wages<sup>2</sup>. Table 13-7 provides a list of farms in Scituate, their location, and their primary agricultural products.

Farm	Products	Location	Distribution
<i>Blanchard Farm</i>	Fruits, Vegetables, Meat, Fish	255 Greenville Road	Farm Stand
<i>Cedar Knoll Farm</i>	Meat	7 Old Harmony Road, North Scituate	Meat
<i>Barden Orchard</i>	Fruits, Vegetables, Apple Cider, Baked Goods	56 Elmdale Road, North Scituate	Farm Stand, You Pick
<i>Golden Rods Farm</i>	Meat	627 Central Pike	
<i>Hopkins Southdowns</i>	Meat, Grains and Feed, Fiber, Breeding Stock	1125 Danielson Pike, North Scituate	Market Mobile, Farmers Markets, Farm Stand, Wholesale
<i>Knowlton Farm</i>	Meat, Grains and Feeds	377 Central Pike, North Scituate	Wholesale
<i>Martinelli's Farm and Charcuterie, LLC</i>	Fruit, Vegetables, Herbs, Dairy and Eggs, Meat, Nursery and Flowers, Spreads, Specialty, Breeding Stock	56 Peeproad Road	Market Mobile, Delivery, Pickup, Whole Foods, Dave's Markets, Farmers Markets, Farm Stand, Wholesale
<i>Red Dog's Roost</i>	Fruit, Vegetables, Herbs, Dairy and Eggs, Meat, Wood, Nursery and Flowers, Spreads, Baked Goods, Fiber, Breeding Stock	Hartford's Pike, North Scituate	Pickup, Farm Stand, Restaurants
<i>Sunset Orchard</i>	Apples, Apple Cider, Peaches	244 Gleaner Chapel Road, North Scituate	Farm Stand, You Pick
<i>Tall Pine Farm</i>	Meat, Grains and Feeds	49 George Washington Highway	Wholesale
<i>Timberdoodle Farm</i>	Vegetables, Herbs, Dairy and Eggs, Meat, Nursery and Flowers, Specialty, Breeding Stock, Family Fun	337 Central Pike	Pickup, Farmers Markets, Farm Stand, PYO, Restaurants, Wholesale

Source: Farm Fresh RI, <http://www.farmfreshri.org/>, 2023.

Source: Farm Fresh RI <https://guide.farmfreshri.org/> (Retrieved May 2023)

<sup>2</sup> Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages City and Town Report – Annual 2023

The Town has approximately 362 farms, 11,688 acres of forest, and 1,479 acres of open space enrolled in the Farm, Forest, and Open Space (FFOS) program administered by RIDEM (see Chapter 7 *Natural Resources* for more information). This program helps conserve land that is considered farmland, forestland, wetlands, and open space through tax abatement. This program is an important component of maintain local farms in Scituate and should be supported and promoted by the Town as a mechanism to help retain productive agricultural and forest land.

### 13.3.1 *Agricultural Tourism*

Agricultural tourism, or agritourism, is defined as a commercial enterprise on a working farm conducted for the enjoyment, education, and/or active involvement of the visitor.<sup>3</sup> The farm experience is often enhanced by on-site and nearby historical, cultural, or natural attractions. Farm products and locally sourced good, available for purchase by visitors can enhance the overall farm income, assisting in keeping the farm viable and in operation. Scituate is well positioned to encourage and promote agricultural tourism. The Town is easily accessible from most areas of the state and has operating farms that currently offer a variety of pick your own amenities, as well as locally made and sourced products.

The Town's regulations are accommodating towards maintaining the viability of agricultural as a viable business in Scituate by permitting a variety of agricultural activities in residentially zoned property. The raising of crops, forest products, the sale of produce raised on the premises, commercial nurseries, and the keeping of animals are permitted by right or by special use permit in all the Town's residential zoning districts, which comprises a vast majority of the Town. The Town could work with the Scituate Business Association and other locally based business and agriculturally related organizations to develop marketing tools and other resources to promote and increase opportunities for agricultural tourism within the Town.

### 13.3.2 *Forestry*

According to RIDEM, forests cover just over 50% of Rhode Island's land area, with about 74% of that area being held in private ownership. About 31% of these private forest landowners have had commercial harvesting activity on their land (RIDEM, 2015). The harvesting operations produce a range of products from veneer logs to wood chips being burned for fuel. Although forestry does not represent a significant economy in Scituate, Table 13-7 above includes several farms in Scituate that identify wood as one of the agricultural products that they produce. Forestry in Scituate also takes the form of selective cutting on PWSB land in order to properly maintain their buffers and forested land. With over 15,000 acres of land under ownership of PWSB, a significant forested area in Scituate is managed.

## 13.4 **Home Occupations**

Home occupations play an important role in a small-town economy such as Scituate's. These businesses provide an opportunity to grow the business base in the Town, permitting residents to use space within their homes to operate. Home occupation opportunities have expanded in recent years, and the COVID-19 pandemic has increased people's desire the transfer their typical office spaces to spaces within their own homes. Home occupations provide an opportunity for a community like Scituate to expand upon their economic tax base without creating a significant impact to traffic and the environment. Due to the existence of the Scituate Reservoir, a significant portion of the Town is limited in the type and intensity of development that can be established due to the sensitive nature of watershed lands. This important role as land steward to the watershed presents a unique opportunity for the Town to incentivize small home-based occupations as a mechanism to increase economic development while maintaining environmental sensitivity.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://projects.sare.org/project-reports/lne04-208/>

The ability to do this is predicated on appropriate standards established in the zoning ordinance to protect the integrity of residential areas from undesirable business-related impacts such as traffic, noise, and pollution. Scituate's regulations regarding home occupations are relatively minimal, requiring only that the applicant uses no more than 600 square feet of the area of one floor or the home, provided that the activity related to the business is not visible from the edge of the lot of the property and there is no exterior advertising. With these provisions, home occupations are allowed by right in almost all zoning districts in Town, with an allowance by special use permit in the RS-120 and RSW-60/80 districts. The Town should consider updating their current home occupation regulations to increase the flexibility of the type and configuration of businesses that are allowed. Additionally, in order to effectively promote the establishment of home occupations, the Town should consider how these businesses will impact the residential neighborhoods in which they are located and establish practical standards and requirements to provide clear guidance to any applicant, while providing some protection for neighbors and the neighborhood. Additionally, the Town should consider implementing a business license requirement for businesses operating in Scituate. This can help ensure that regulatory requirements are being met by the businesses and allow the Town to keep track of those operating a business in the Town.

### 13.5 Scituate Business Association

The Scituate Business Association (SBA) is a privately organized non-profit membership group of local businesses in Scituate. The SBA was created with the goal of having a membership-based organization that could support Scituate businesses and organizations that enhance the spirit of the community. The SBA is governed by a Board of Directors with seven members and one Town Council designated liaison.



The purpose of the organization is to promote and encourage the creation and expansion of businesses in Scituate, assist the Town in establishing a favorable business climate, provide resources to new and expanding businesses to help them succeed, and to provide information to the residents of Scituate and surrounding areas on what local businesses have to offer. The SBA accomplishes these goals in many ways. They hold several events each year to promote local businesses, they work with the schools to educate students on how to run a small business, they provide promotional materials to assist in marketing businesses in the area, and they partner with the Town and other local organizations to provide support for Scituate's small business economy.

According to the SBA, they have 90 current members in their organization, including a number of home occupation business, as well as farm stands, realtors, investors, contractors, insurance agents, animal groomers, photographers, and other small business operations. The Association identified three issues or actions the Town should address in order to improve the business climate in Scituate, those are:

- Draft and adopt an economic development plan
- Address the parking shortage in North Scituate Village
- Develop a mentoring program to teach youth about business startup and ownership

The SBA and the Town will work together to review and discuss local economic and regulatory related issues to improve the economic climate in the Town, as well as the issues identified above.

### 13.6 Issues and Opportunities

Scituate is environmentally constrained due to the existence of the Scituate Reservoir. This constraint is not a negative characteristic. The presence of the Scituate Reservoir allows the Town to enjoy a variety of desirable attributes: a reasonable tax rate for its residents, a relatively low density of development, natural and scenic qualities not found elsewhere in the state, and the prestige of being home to one of

the most valuable natural resources in Rhode Island. Although this environmental limitation does hinder the Town's ability to develop, the current development pattern and rural charact of the Town make Scituate unique and a desirable place to live. The Scituate Reservoir provides the impetus to restrict development in ways that protect the resource for the entire state.

As discussed in Section 6.6 of the *Land Use* Chapter, the Town of Scituate Zoning Ordinance is in need of a full update to reflect new and upcoming land uses, changes to state enabling legislations, and improve upon requirements for development. The zoning ordinance use tables have many uses that are no longer relevant and are lacking uses that have evolved and come to be over the last several decades since it was originally drafted. The Town should review the zoning ordinance in its entirety and assess where changes and updates are needed that will improve development processes as well as those designed for the protection of natural, cultural, and historic resources.

The Scituate *Land Use and Subdivision Regulations* are also in need of review and update. Similar to the zoning ordinance, the type of development has changed since they were first drafted. This has caused the subdivision regulations to be antiquated as well as inconsistent with state law in some respects, as changes were made to the enabling legislation over time. The Town currently employs a review process referred to a Commercial Site Plan Review, codified in Article IV, Section 13 of the zoning ordinance. This section requires that all commercial development over 500 square feet, requires written site plan approval by the Plan Commission. Although this section of the zoning ordinance provides guidance on an application procedure and process, it is not well defined, and it is contained solely within the zoning ordinance, and this results in little to no flexibility for the Plan Commission to review applications and make decisions. The Town should look into ways to build in flexibility and clarify the process and application requirements in order to streamline the process for applicants and the Town.

The Town employs a Village Overlay District, which is located in two areas of Town, Hope and North Scituate Villages. This overlay district is enabled in Article IV Section 14 and establishes a Village Review Committee. In practice, the Town has created two review committees, one for each area of Town. These review committees review developments in the village overlay districts and have the ability to grant waivers, advise the Town Council, Plan Commission, and Zoning Board, and approve or deny applications within the districts. The Town should take a closer look at the application and review process presented in the zoning ordinance within these village districts to ensure that they are consistent with state law and that they embody the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan.

Scituate is perfectly situated to take advantage of a growing trend of individuals that are working from home and establishing home-based businesses. Due to the impact of COVID-19, more people are working from home or establishing businesses based out of their home. Scituate is a prime location in which to do that. The Town is relatively centrally located and has easy highway access. Additionally, the Town's zoning ordinance does allow for home-based occupations (see Section 13.4 for more information). Home based occupations in Scituate could allow the Town to expand their business base without creating negative environmental impacts that could affect the quality of the Scituate Reservoir.

In order to expand home occupations, the Town needs to consider how to properly regulate these. Currently the Town's regulations are minimal in this regard and although that makes it relatively easy to establish a home occupation, an increase could result in conflicts with neighboring properties causing issues related to noise, parking, traffic, and other potential nuisances. These can be easily mitigated through regulatory requirements. The Town will need to assess their current regulations to ensure that an expansion of home occupations will not have a negative impact on the immediate neighborhood or the community.

### 13.7 Opinion Survey of Scituate – Economic Development

In May of 2021, the Town posted an online survey for residents as part of the comprehensive planning process. The survey asked several questions related to economic development. A full summary of the survey can be found in Appendix A. In summary, the survey reported the following principal findings related to economic development:

- Survey respondents reported that shopping convenience was only either somewhat important (40.8%) or not important (32.5%) to their quality of life in Scituate.
- When respondents were asked about the importance of the Town taking measures to improve a variety of services and amenities only 8.8% of respondents felt that improvements to economic development were very important, with 34.5% responding that improvements were important to them. Improvements to economic development were somewhat important to 38.4% of respondents and not important to 18.2% of respondents.
- When asked what types of development respondents felt the Town needed more, less, or the same amount of survey respondents reported overwhelmingly that the Town needs the same amount of retail services (61.9%) with only 18.8% reporting the Town needs more. Respondents also indicated that more than half (53.8%) felt that the Town needed more agriculture, with 42.5% responding that the Town has a sufficient amount of agriculture.
- Respondents were asked to show their support (or lack of support) for example activities that the Town could engage in. Only 8.9% of survey respondents indicated that they would be very supportive of efforts to promote economic development, with 27.8% responding they would be supportive and 41.4% reporting they would be somewhat supportive. Conversely, 22.2% of respondents indicated that would not be supportive of promoting economic development.
- In the same question respondents indicated that they would be very supportive of promoting and supporting agricultural activities (54.2%) with 29.4% stating they would be supportive of such activities.
- Respondents were asked to rank their general feelings with statements related to a variety of topics. When asked about commercial development respondents reported that 21.9% strongly agree, and 42.5% agree that the Town has an adequate amount of commercial development. In a similar question 3.9% strongly agree, 27.9% agree, and 41.6% somewhat agree, that commercial development is appropriately located.

These survey results seem to indicate that there is a strong preference and level of support for agriculturally centric land use. This is most likely to come in the form of small pick your own farms, which contribute significantly to the rural character of the Town. Respondents are somewhat mixed when asked about the importance of promoting economic development in general within the Town. Responses clearly indicate that an overwhelming majority of respondents feel that the Town has an adequate amount of retail services available. These survey results should help the Town guide and direct their economic development efforts to those areas that were deemed appropriate and supportable by survey respondents.