

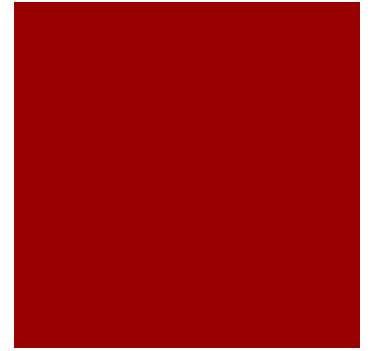


# Canton Economic Development Agency

Three-Year Plan  
11/06/2014

# Membership - EDA

- Robert Bessel, Chair
- Amy Parchen, Vice Chair
- Theresa Sullivan Barger, Member
- Diana Boorjian, Member
- Tom Bradley, Member



# Mission Statement



- The Canton Economic Development Agency (EDA) fosters and supports the growth and development of Canton's business sector by:
  - Recruitment of new businesses
  - Providing services and support to help existing local businesses grow
  - Creating a friendly environment for entrepreneurs and start-ups
  - Educating Canton citizens about the value of responsible economic development
  - Forming partnerships and enhancing communications between organizations involved in Canton economic development.
  - Identifying opportunities for and obstacles to economic development.

# Business Recruitment



- Goal
  - Recruit and attract businesses that will add to the town's tax base, create employment opportunities, and improve Canton's quality-of-life.

# Business Recruitment



- Strategies
  - Develop a targeted marketing campaign to promote Canton as an attractive location for business
  - Demonstrate consistently that Canton is “business friendly” in all marketing activities
  - Conduct research as necessary to define Canton’s advantages as a business location
  - Work cooperatively with property owners, area brokers, site selection consultants, state and non-governmental economic development organizations to enhance our efforts and broaden our reach
  - Build partnerships with the Chamber of Commerce, Canton Main Street, and other local organizations to focus and amplify our message.

# Business Recruitment



- Tactics
  - Identify target business segments most likely to find Canton attractive
    - Define best media and communications vehicles for reaching priority segments
  - Message definition/"brand"
    - Conduct informal, qualitative discussions with a sample of the kind of individuals we would target: e.g., large retail developers, business owners, location consultants
    - Craft a "brand statement" that articulates our brand and key messages

# Business Recruitment



- Tactics
  - Marketing Communications: Launch a communications campaign to prospects in our target markets; support via social media
  - Create a printed sales package for promotion of Canton as a business location by area brokers and town representatives; develop web-based version
  - Develop a business welcome package in conjunction with Chamber of Commerce

# Business Recruitment



- Tactics
  - Site Inventory: Create and maintain an easily accessible, complete inventory of available sites and buildings
    - Inventory should include expanded descriptions/key information about major sites, including Collins Company site, Harts Corner, etc.
    - Investigate possibility of ARC/GIS based platform
  - Business Liaison: Create a stable of “ambassadors” who can help businesses find appropriate locations and navigate Canton’s regulatory process.



# Local Business Support



- Goal
  - Create opportunities for cooperative efforts that help local businesses market their goods and services, gain access to technical and educational resources, and interact more effectively with local government agencies.

# Local Business Support



- Strategies
  - Build a closer relationship with the existing business community through partnerships with the Chamber, e.g., cooperative marketing programs, cluster marketing, events
  - Communicate regularly with business owners with information about government and private resources that may be helpful to them
  - Conduct events that offer educational opportunities, e.g., marketing and/or business finance seminars

# Local Business Support



## ■ Tactics

- Cooperative Advertising: Investigate potential for cooperative advertising vehicles that will gain exposure for local businesses at a lower cost
- Chamber/Main Street Liaisons: Maintain a consistent presence at Chamber and Main Street meetings; work to reduce redundancy and integrate economic development-focused activities; participate in cooperative events
- Communications: Contribute to Chamber/Canton Main Street communications vehicles to keep membership informed of EDA activities, contributions

# Local Business Support



- Tactics
  - Events: Conduct at least one event annually for local business owners and operators, both to provide support and to foster a stronger sense of community and cooperation. (Event could be a cooperative venture of all Canton economic development organizations.)
  - Business Visits: Organize a consistent timetable for EDA members to visit local businesses

# Promoting Entrepreneurship



- Goal
  - Develop a mindset and environment in Canton that values and supports the launch of start-up and new business ventures, and the growth of existing small businesses.

# Promoting Entrepreneurship



- Strategies
  - Develop a stronger internal understanding of potential entrepreneurship/innovation development initiatives
  - Identify potential incubator space
  - Investigate potential for partnerships with area universities/colleges, e.g., providing space for student entrepreneurs
  - Work with DECD and local banks to develop a start-up financing initiative

# Promoting Entrepreneurship



- Tactics
  - Identify an individual/individuals with a passion for fostering entrepreneurship to spearhead these efforts
  - Other tactics TBD until we “get smarter”

# Educating Canton



- Goal
  - Educate Canton citizens about the value of economic development in ensuring the town's health and future, and enlist their active engagement in and support for town economic development initiatives.



# Educating Canton



- Strategies
  - Communicate directly and consistently to local citizens through online vehicles
  - Work with local news media to keep people informed and up-to-date
  - Hold and participate in public events offering opportunities to educate people about economic development
  - Measure citizens' understanding of economic development issues on an annual basis

# Educating Canton



- Tactics
  - Benchmark Survey: Conduct an annual email survey of Canton to measure understanding/support
  - Blog: Provide regular updates on EDA activities, occasional “primers” on economic development-related topics
  - Media Relations: Maintain relationships with the Courant, Compass, and other area media; place news and stories about economic development news, EDA initiatives
  - Events: Develop a town-wide event (separate, or as part of a larger town gathering) focused on discussion of Canton’s economic development needs and initiatives. Hold “coffees” 2-3 times per year for specific groups to discuss relevant issues, perhaps in conjunction with the Chamber and Canton Main Street.

# Improve Development Process/Advocacy



- Goal
  - Help create a more attractive, less onerous process for submitting development and business expansion proposals.

# Improve Development Process



- Strategies
  - Participate in continued efforts to streamline Canton's regulatory process
  - Evaluate proposed projects for economic impact
  - Endorse and advocate for proposed projects that will have a positive impact.

# Improve Development Process



- Tactics
  - Develop a quantitative system for evaluating the economic impact of major development proposals
  - Work with Planning & Zoning, the Town Planner, the Boards of Selectmen and Finance, and other agencies and commissions to streamline and enhance review and regulation of economic development proposals.

# EDA – Focus Champions



- Business Recruitment/Communications – T. Bradley, R. Bessel
- Business Recruitment/Site Inventory - TBD
- Local Business Service & Support – T. Sullivan Barger, D. Boorjian
- Entrepreneur Support – TBD
- Community Education – T. Bradley
- Partnerships/Integration – A. Parchen, T. Sullivan Barger
- Process Improvement/Development Advocacy – R. Bessel