

Mt. Auburn Associates

**A Strategy for
Fairhaven's
Economic Future**

Final Report

Prepared for:

**Fairhaven Local
Partnership Committee
Town of Fairhaven**

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Moving From A Proud Past To A Vibrant Future

If there is one word that captures the heart of Fairhaven, it is history. History is the glue that has bound Fairhaven into a community. It shapes industry today and affects Fairhaven residents' attitudes regarding economic and social change.

The nautical history of Fairhaven pervades many aspects of the culture and tradition in the Town. The whaling vessels that sailed from the New Bedford/Fairhaven harbor brought prosperity to the region and, later, so did the fishing industry. That maritime tradition continues today in such businesses as D.N. Kelley and Sons, which has made the Fairhaven waterfront its home for 135 years, and the Fairhaven Shipyard and Marina, which has been in operation for over 70 years.

Fairhaven's history was also shaped by the industrial revolution. The rise of New Bedford as a manufacturing hub, especially for textiles and apparel, benefited Fairhaven residents. The magnificent structures commissioned by Henry Huddleston Rogers at the turn of the century are shrines to one resident's success in the early years of the industrial revolution.

For many, remembering and preserving Fairhaven's history is the driving force behind their civic involvement. For instance, the energy and drive of local residents have enabled such celebrations of the Town's past as the Museum of Fairhaven History, the walking tours that tell the history of Henry Huddleston Rogers and John Manjiro, and the recent events in honor of the Captain Joshua Slocum Centennial.

The challenge facing Fairhaven is how to embrace its proud past, but not be limited by it. It is essential for the long-term prosperity of the Town's residents that the community does not stagnate. As proud a past as the Town has, it is the obligation of its citizens to work toward an even brighter future.

The zeal for what "can be" rather than "what was" is more important now than ever. The region suffered a dramatic decline in manufacturing jobs, losing more than a third of all industrial jobs between 1984 and 1990. Generally, employment throughout the region dropped as a result of one of the worst recessions ever to hit New England. Just as the region was able to begin to adjust to those problems, the fishing industry collapsed, further stripping the region of well-paying jobs. While these trends are certainly not unique to Fairhaven, the impacts were borne heavily by Fairhaven residents, many of whom have faced unemployment in recent years. New jobs sprung up in Fairhaven, however, most were in retail. Those jobs are mostly part-time and do not offer wages that can lift low- and moderate-income residents out of their current circumstances.

Local Economic Development Partnership

Recognizing the need to merge the strengths of Fairhaven's past with the hopes for a brighter economic future, a dedicated group of local citizens began an important planning study to look at the current economic situation in the Town and develop a strategy to move forward. The Local Economic Development Partnership, with funding from the Executive Office of Communities and Development, was formed many months ago to shepherd an economic development planning process that:

- *supports the improvement of overall economic welfare of the Town's residents, particularly those most in need;*
- *fosters a sense of community pride and vitality; and*
- *incorporates safeguards to protect and enhance the quality of life of the Town's natural resources.*

The process set out by the Partnership included a number of tasks to gather and analyze relevant information about the local and regional economies. An overview of the planning tasks follows:

- *Visioning and goal setting* -- community focus groups, a sample survey of households, and meetings with local organizations allowed for maximum input from residents.
- *Analysis of the existing economy* -- a myriad of data sources was used to analyze the structure and performance of the Fairhaven economy and how low- and moderate-income residents fare in this environment. Information was augmented with numerous regional studies. Further information was gathered in a survey of the Town's export-oriented businesses and largest employers. Personal interviews with a number of key business leaders also provided insight into the economy.
- *Analysis of key sectors* -- Harbor-related activity, marine technology, aquaculture, and tourism all received special attention. Extensive local interviews combined with research on national and state industry trends yielded an in-depth look at industries targeted for growth.
- *A study of economic resources to support industry* -- The labor force, education and training establishments, finance availability, physical infrastructure, land use, higher education, and economic development capacity were all carefully analyzed.

The outcome of this analysis is an economic development strategy for the Town that when dovetailed with the Fairhaven Master Plan, presents citizens with a road map that will prepare Fairhaven for the new millennium.

Building On The Local Strengths

The Town of Fairhaven has a strong base upon which to build. While facing a more complex economic environment, the Town has the following assets:

1. A strong location for industrial development. New Bedford has many vacant buildings but scarce land for new development. Dartmouth has been quick to capitalize on the development needs unmet within the New Bedford city limits. The potential exists, however, for Fairhaven to play a regional role as a location for some short- and long-term industrial development. Transportation access as well as sewer and water capacity make Fairhaven an attractive sight. However, Fairhaven sites face some obstacles before they can be easily marketed including zoning issues, multiple ownership, and infrastructure service.

2. A vital waterfront that continues to define much of the local economy as well as culture. Boating, clamming, commercial fishing, aquaculture, and ship repair are all examples of the ways in which Fairhaven residents and businesses utilize the Fairhaven waterfront. The greatest concentration of non-retail business activity in Fairhaven is based on its waterfront. Despite the problems plaguing New Bedford's fishing fleet, many of Fairhaven's waterfront businesses are successfully transitioning to new markets.

3. Quality of life. Small town life is appreciated by Fairhaven residents. Fairhaven residents are devoted to their town and its historic structures, waterfront areas, and the charm of the village center. They take advantage of New Bedford for job opportunities but prefer the suburban advantages of their home town.

4. A hard-working and dedicated labor force. In the new global economy, the skills and productivity of the workforce are increasingly important assets. Fairhaven is fortunate in having a labor force considered to be highly productive and motivated. Judging from anecdotal evidence, local workers appear willing to acquire the skills needed to perform new, more challenging jobs.

5. Technology resources related to marine technology and sustainable development. Although the Town is not home to a large university or research facility, the greater New Bedford region is rich with such technology resources as the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, and Marine Biological Lab to name just a few. The soon to be built UMass Center for Marine Science and Technology in New Bedford will help position the region for further activities related to marine and environmental technology.

The Challenges For Fairhaven

Building upon these strengths and ensuring that Fairhaven's low- and moderate-income residents benefit will not be easy. Changes in the international and national political environments, questions about the sustainability of the region's marine resources, the increasingly global economy, and rapid technological changes have resulted in economic and social transformations that have affected the day-to-day life for many. Low- and moderate-income

residents in particular have suffered from dislocation from the fishing industry and manufacturing. There is a growing perception of economic insecurity and a need to reaffirm the importance of a sense of community in uncertain times.

In developing an economic development strategy, Fairhaven faces a number of economic challenges -- some posed by economic, social, and political forces unique to the region, others by larger trends affecting the international economy. To be successful in the future, and to maintain the high quality of life that is cherished by the residents will require cooperative actions to address these local, regional, and global challenges.

Local and Regional Challenges

1. Fairhaven is part of a highly interdependent regional economy. The economy of Fairhaven is closely linked to the economy of New Bedford. A large number of residents work in the greater New Bedford region. And the marine-related businesses located in Fairhaven are dependent on the harbor, which is a regional resource. The Town of Fairhaven cannot develop a strategic plan for its economy without integrating it in some fashion with what is occurring in the larger region.

2. The region suffers from fragmentation and a lack of political leadership on economic development issues. The New Bedford region is composed of a number of cities and towns, each containing diverse ways of life and economic activities. While many communities in Massachusetts, and in fact throughout New England, have historically been very independent, and find any activity that is "regional" in nature problematic, regional relationships in the New Bedford area are weaker than most. No organization or political leader has been able to mobilize the towns and their residents around a strategic approach to economic development. This severely limits the potential of any individual economic development project.

3. Until this study, there has been little effort to link economic development projects, locally or regionally, to the needs of Fairhaven's low- and moderate-income residents. While there is growing interest regionally in economic development projects such as the airport, aquarium, and casino, little attention has been paid to creating mechanisms that will ensure that the populations most in need -- low- and moderate-income residents -- will derive immediate benefits from these projects. Given that 35 percent of Fairhaven's population is considered low- or moderate-income, this is a serious concern.

4. A new generation of leaders has not been effectively mobilized. The Town's citizens active in local organizations, boards, and committees have been working hard for a long number of years and many do not have much energy left to expend on civic activities. In addition, in recent years, few members of the business community have been willing to dedicate their time to working jointly with the Town on community issues.

5. The region as a whole, as well as Fairhaven, has not maximized the economic potential related to its considerable assets -- its waterfront, technological capacity, and human capital. Local assets have not been adequately nurtured in order to fully benefit the Town and region. Many of Fairhaven's waterfront businesses are in serious disrepair. Linkages with the region's technology resources such as UMass Dartmouth, Woods Hole, and the Marine

Biological Lab have not been fully cultivated. The labor force struggles with inadequate skills to meet the changing demands of regional employers.

6. While there is evidence of improvement, the education available to youth and adults needs continued public vigilance and support. Education is an area of much concern in the community. The public support offered to renovate and expand the high school shows the Town's commitment to improving local education. However, much remains to be done. Education must continue to be a priority for all of the Town's residents regardless of their age. Action is needed to ensure that Fairhaven residents can fully utilize new information technology.

7. The Town lacks planning and economic development capacity. Fairhaven's capacity to carry out economic development is limited at best. There is no staff to support the Executive Secretary's efforts, and no existing organization in Town to market the Town to businesses. While there are considerable state and regional resources available for economic development (for example, in the areas of finance, technical assistance, and labor force training), many Fairhaven residents and businesses are unaware of these resources and are, thus, unable to access them.

8. The region's natural resource base is being threatened. The lengthy industrial history in the area left a legacy of polluted waters and land. In some cases, cleanup efforts have proven more destructive than the initial polluting. However, further environmental remediation may hold the promise of new jobs in the future. Any new economic development will need to be carefully crafted so as not to imperil any of Fairhaven's natural resources -- the remaining farm land, fragile marine ecosystems, and popular beach areas.

Global Challenges

Fairhaven must meet the hurdles discussed above in the context of the challenges and opportunities posed by global trends. In the past 20 years, significant changes have radically altered the competitive environment for U.S. businesses. In few places have these changes been as wrenching to the local economy as in the New Bedford region. These may be divided into trends regarding markets, products, manufacturing technology, and business structure. Specifically, we have seen:

1. The growing segmentation, globalization, and volatility of markets. The revolution in information processing, transportation, and telecommunication technologies, propelled by divergent consumer tastes, has produced an increasingly niche-oriented marketplace. This segmentation of market has been accompanied by an internationalization of the market.

2. The change in existing products from standardized to tailor-made. Facilitated by the introduction of flexible manufacturing technology, product lines have shifted from being mass produced, one size fits all, to being customized to the needs of individual buyers. The flip side of the changes in markets is changes in products. Standard products have given way rapidly to customized products.

3. The development and diffusion of new, more productive, and more flexible manufacturing technologies. Advances in manufacturing technology have allowed the

development of flexible, reprogrammable production machinery. The advantage in manufacturing has changed over the past several years from one type of basic skill, being good at the routine, to two skills, being flexible and being able to change quickly.

4. The rise of agile enterprises. Businesses must react quickly to rapid demand shifts in volatile niche markets. They must respond promptly to innovation in technology and to the demand for more specialized, higher-quality, and shorter-lived products. The need for speed and accuracy in that response is driving a general decentralization of organization. As a result, many firms are shrinking in size, shedding overhead, and stripping away embedded layers of management hierarchy.

5. An information revolution. Rapid changes in telecommunication and information technologies are transforming the way people live and work. And we are only at the initial stages of this revolution. For example, the Internet -- until recently, known primarily to academic scientists -- is now a household word, with millions of Americans going on-line in a very short time period. For many service and "information" related industries, physical proximity to markets is no longer important.

These larger trends pose real challenges to the residents and businesses of the New Bedford region. In such an environment, there is no quick fix. There are limits to what actions those on the local level can take to counter larger economic trends or to compensate for federal and state policies that may provide barriers to economic opportunity for residents. Replacing jobs lost in the fishing industry and in manufacturing will not occur overnight. Local companies must also recognize that, to be competitive, they need to "be smart" in a number of dimensions of business operations, no matter what their industry or stage of product development. Learning is the fundamental skill in creating and maintaining the competitive, high performance enterprise.

The future of the Fairhaven economy depends upon the ability of its leaders, businesses, and residents to respond effectively to these internal and external challenges and to position the community so that it is able to take advantage of opportunities and to build upon its competitive advantages.

Local Visions For Economic Development

Residents of Fairhaven share a vision of the future -- this vision focuses on preserving the unique quality of life in the community. Through this economic development planning process, Fairhaven residents have begun to voice their vision of the future. Here are some of the priorities expressed by residents:

- *a Town in which residents have the skills to find and maintain good jobs in Fairhaven and throughout the region;*
- *a Town with a more vibrant small business base;*
- *a Town with strong community institutions that collaborate effectively;*
- *a Town that is committed to education and learning for all ages;*

- *a Town where residents, particularly the poorest and least educated, receive the assistance that will enable them to prosper;*
- *a Town where residents are no longer victims of technological advances but can instead capitalize on the information revolution;*
- *a Town where marine-related activities continue to provide a backbone for the local economy;*
- *a Town where youth have the option of remaining after completing their education;*
- *a Town enjoyed not only by its residents but by visitors as well; and*
- *a Town that never sacrifices its natural assets for short-term gains.*

Strategies To Realize The Vision

There is no magic bullet that will magically produce the vision for the future described by residents. There is no quick fix for the problems faced by the many low- and moderate-income Fairhaven residents. And, simply increasing the tax base through further expansion of retail activity in the Town will do little to affect the lives of most of the Town's residents. What is needed is a long-term approach that recognizes that the "social capital" in a community -- its people and institutions -- affects the ability of a town to respond to economic changes and to prepare for the future. The stronger this "social capital," the better the opportunities for all Fairhaven residents to improve their quality of life. However, with the energy and determination of a broad coalition of citizens, change can occur. Specifically, the Town should pursue the following broad strategies:

- *focus attention on community infrastructure issues;*
- *develop a strategic approach to business development;*
- *promote the development of tourism-related activities appropriate to the Town;*
- *strengthen the marine-related economy; and*
- *ensure that Fairhaven residents are prepared for the current workplace.*

CHAPTER TWO:

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND RESOURCES

The performance of an economy is a function of the strengths and weaknesses of two major components of the economy. The first is the *traded sector*, which is comprised of those businesses that provide goods and services to customers residing outside of the region. Because traded sector businesses bring income into a region, they are the primary engine of the economy. The second key component is the region's economic *resource base*: its labor force, education and training institutions, financial institutions, physical infrastructure, development institutions, and the environment. It is the strength of the economic resource base that ultimately determines the economic health of the region's traded sector. This section summarizes the major findings related to the local economy and its resource base. More complete analysis as well as related data can be found in the Appendices to this report.

Economic Overview

The development of a strategic economic development plan requires an understanding of current economic conditions affecting the Town of Fairhaven. How has the demographic composition of the community changed and what are the implications of these changes? Are certain groups of residents in the Town facing particular economic hardships? How have changes in the economic base of the Greater New Bedford region affected the residents of Fairhaven? How are businesses within the town faring? Finally, are there certain industries that are vulnerable to further declines or that pose an opportunity for the region?

A review of available data on the Fairhaven and New Bedford economies, as well as surveys and interviews with the local business community, yielded the following findings:

Economic Performance

Fairhaven residents did not reap their share of the economic benefits during the time of the "Massachusetts Miracle"; were hit particularly hard during the recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s; and have not experienced the level of recovery that others in the state have during the past four years. The result is a growing sense of economic insecurity in the community.

- *The demographic composition of Fairhaven has changed.* With stagnant population growth and limited in-migration of new families, there has been significant "graying" of the Town's population. Fairhaven residents over 65 represent 19 percent of the population, and the number of residents in this category grew by 25 percent between 1980 and 1990.

- ***While the Town has a relatively low incidence of poverty, it has a large number of residents who are struggling to get by, many of whom have been hit hard by the decline in manufacturing and fishing jobs.*** Moreover, per capita income and median household income are low and have lost ground relative to Bristol County and the state between 1980 and 1990.
- ***Fairhaven residents were hit hard in the most recent recession, with unemployment rates tripling, going from 4.2 percent in 1988 to 12.3 percent in 1991 --well above both the state and national averages during this period.*** Since 1991, while the unemployment rate in the Town has declined, it remains over two percentage points above the state and national rates.

Economic Structure

For many years, the residents of Fairhaven have depended on the vitality of the key sectors in the Greater New Bedford economy. When the fishing industry was healthy, and manufacturing was competitive, the residents of Fairhaven reaped the economic benefits. However, the region's core industries have undergone significant restructuring over the past decade and no longer provide Fairhaven residents with many opportunities for employment. The jobs that have taken their place -- primarily in the retail and service sectors -- do not provide the same level of wages and benefits as those that have been lost. Fairhaven residents now face a very changed regional economic environment, one in which quality job opportunities are relatively limited. It is this change in the regional economic structure that presents the residents of Fairhaven with their most notable challenge.

- ***Fairhaven is increasingly a bedroom community whose economic fate is closely tied to economic conditions in the Greater New Bedford economy.*** Seventy-three percent of Fairhaven's working residents go outside of the Town to work -- most in New Bedford.
- ***Employment opportunities within the Town are limited, and those that do exist are primarily in lower wage industries such as retail trade.*** In 1993, retail trade, in which the average annual wage is \$12,505 (includes full- and part-time), accounted for 1,896 jobs within Fairhaven, or close to 40 percent of its entire employment base.
- ***The regional manufacturing sector has been decimated over the past decade.*** The New Bedford region lost 9,000 manufacturing jobs between 1983 and 1993, or 37 percent of its manufacturing base. Fairhaven, which had a small manufacturing base to begin with, has lost 267 of the 434 manufacturing jobs it had in 1983, or 61 percent of its base. Over one-third of the job losses has been in the apparel industry -- historically the most important sector in the regional economy.
- ***Other than retail trade, the only other area of job growth has been in the service sector and this is dominated by the growth in the health care industry.*** Further growth in this industry is unlikely as the industry consolidates and responds to cost containment efforts.

- ***Marine-related economic activities remain an important component of both the New Bedford and Fairhaven industrial bases.*** While it is difficult to precisely define the number of jobs in this "cluster" since it includes such diverse activities as fishing, boat repair, and fish processing, wholesaling and retailing, together with marine industries, account for a relatively large number of jobs. The future of these jobs has been threatened by the depletion of groundfish stocks and related federal regulatory actions, yet opportunities remain in such segments as aquaculture, marine technology, and fish processing.
- ***Marine technology and environmental technology represent potential areas of opportunity and growth in the regional economy.*** However, trends in these industries are not as promising as was previously expected.
- ***While tourism presently comprises a relatively small share of employment in the region, the potential development of the casino in New Bedford, along with other local tourism promotion efforts, may lead to a growth in jobs in this industry.***

Economic Resource Base

Central to the viability of any regional economy are the human, fiscal, and physical resources that can be drawn upon to strengthen a region's principal traded-sector companies. If properly organized and utilized, the resources can make a significant contribution to the long-term viability of an economy and they can enhance the competitiveness of individual businesses and companies. This section provides key findings related to the resource base of the Fairhaven and the New Bedford regional economies. More detailed analysis is found in the Appendix.

Labor Force

Southeastern Massachusetts, like many mature industrial regions, is an economy in transition. The shifting economy forces one to evaluate the region's labor force through a different lens than in the past. The region's workers were well-suited to the jobs historically prevalent in the region; stories of dedicated, hard-working, industrious employees who frequently labored in physically demanding jobs are commonplace. Today, however, the region is hampered in its effort to develop new growth industries by a workforce that lacks the skills now in demand. Hard work cannot be successfully substituted for a strong base of knowledge and critical thinking skills.

While residents of Fairhaven would like to believe that the problems described above stop at the Fairhaven bridge, the issues of workforce development are regional in nature and must be looked at as a regional concern. In an economy in which 70 percent of Fairhaven residents work out of town and 60 percent of the jobs in town are held by non-residents, it is impossible to separate the skills and educational attainment of Fairhaven residents from those of their neighbors

in surrounding communities.

The analysis of the labor force in Fairhaven and in the region found:

- ***The regional labor force is generally viewed favorably by employers within traditional industries.*** Locally, the businesses surveyed for this project were generally positive about the workforce. Almost half believed labor force skills were a positive factor of doing business in the region while only 17 percent saw skills as a negative.
- ***Much of the regional labor force lacks basic skills.*** According to New Directions' 1995 Job Training Plan Modification Report, one in five people served by the SDA read at or below the seventh grade level.
- ***While Fairhaven enjoys higher rates of educational attainment than New Bedford, the Town trails not only the state, but other towns within the labor market area.*** The percentage of people having completed high school in Fairhaven was lower than state and national figures in both 1980 and 1990. The discrepancy between Fairhaven, the state, and the nation is of far greater concern in terms of college education. Fairhaven lagged far behind both the state and nation, with only 13.5 percent college graduates.
- ***The occupational skills of employed Fairhaven residents reflect the composition of the regional job base:*** skills tend to be more clustered in blue collar trades and service occupations than is seen across the state or nation.
- ***The New Bedford labor market area has a large available workforce with experience in fishing and manufacturing.*** The region lacks a large pool of available professional, technical, or clerical workers.
- ***As dedicated and hard working a workforce as the region has, people are ill-equipped for new styles of management and work organization.*** Many of the changes in technology, markets, and workplace organization have changed the demands placed on workers. The region's labor force will be challenged to not only know their respective jobs but to develop a broader set of skills so they can quickly adapt to modifications and innovation.
- ***A number of Fairhaven residents feel they are at a disadvantage in the job market based on their current computer skills.*** A number of residents responding to the public opinion survey expressed that they believed they could obtain better employment if they could develop better computer skills.
- ***Linkages between job seekers and employment opportunities are not maximized.*** The region appears to have developed extensive informal job networks in which local manufacturers hire friends or family of current workers.

Education and Training

While economic development initiatives at the municipal level frequently focus on more real estate driven projects, the need to make education and training a priority in Fairhaven becomes obvious when one considers some of the survey results of the survey sent to residents: ***A significant portion of Fairhaven residents face uncertain futures in their existing careers and Fairhaven residents see the need to gain new skills to attain more desirable jobs.*** An analysis of the education and training resources in the region found:

Public Schools

- ***The Fairhaven Public School system is moving forward on many of the changes recommended in the accreditation report, but tension still remains in the community between the historic value and educational value of the school buildings.***
- ***The delays in securing state funding for the addition at the high school leave some teachers and community members frustrated.***
- ***Some improvements and upgrading of the system's computer technology have been made, but the system lacks a fully integrated and coordinated plan for computer use and instruction.***
- ***Partnerships with outside businesses and research institutions have occurred in individual schools and individual classrooms, but the partnerships have not been adopted institutionally within the system.***
- ***Parent and community involvement in the Fairhaven Public School system has grown and should continue.***

Vocational Education

- ***Unlike many other communities, vocational education is highly valued and a popular option chosen by many students.*** Moreover, the vocational school is involved with the business community and receives a high degree of respect.
- ***New Bedford Regional Vocational High School has not placed an emphasis on occupations that service emerging technology companies.*** However, given the employment base in New Bedford, the more traditional focus of training is likely warranted.
- ***Bristol Community College's Center for Business and Industry is a critical link between the education infrastructure and the skills needs of industry.*** While the Center enjoys a high level of visibility in the business community it appears to be an underutilized resource.
- ***Efforts to provide basic skills (i.e., English as a Second Language) in the workplace have been constrained by lack of employer interest and lack of adequate funding.***

- ***The major source of funding for education and training assistance in the region is the provider of federal JTPA training -- New Directions, which is perceived by some in the business community as not paying adequate attention to job placement.*** These criticisms appear to be tied to the legacy of past training initiatives.
- ***Fairhaven is a minor blip on the screen for service deliverers focusing on New Bedford.*** Both in terms of residents and businesses, Fairhaven is overshadowed by the needs of its larger neighbor.

Higher Education

- ***While there is no institution of higher education located in Fairhaven, residents and businesses of Fairhaven have access to a rich source of educational resources through Bristol Community College, Bridgewater State College, and the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth.***

Financing

The availability of appropriate sources of business financing is critical to sustaining the economy of Fairhaven and the greater New Bedford region. Capital is an essential ingredient in every phase of the development of a business enterprise, from startup, to expansion, to maturity. While many other ingredients must be present for a firm to succeed, a promising business may stagnate, fail, or never even start if it does not have access to the right types of capital in the right amounts. Thus, Fairhaven must be concerned about the ability of its businesses to access the financing that they need. Findings related to the financial resource base in the region include:

- ***The New Bedford regional banking market is a moderately competitive banking market.*** Many banks operate in the area and there is a mix of regional and local banks. However, a number of the banks that are active in the area are savings banks that have not traditionally been active commercial lenders.
- ***Small businesses in Fairhaven have access to a relatively diverse set of banks including the National Bank of Fairhaven, which remains headquartered in the Town and is focused on the small business market.***
- ***The regional banking market has experienced substantial institutional restructuring.*** Such structural changes can be disruptive to credit relations.
- ***There is evidence that the banking environment has improved over the past three years.*** The major regional banks have resolved their troubled portfolios and have returned to profitability. Some of these banks are now lending more aggressively to smaller firms.
- ***Private sources of business financing are supplemented by public and quasi-public sources of "development finance" at the federal, state, and regional levels that fill many of the existing private market "gaps."***

- *Based upon the responses to the survey of Fairhaven businesses, the availability of financing does not appear to be of serious concern to the general business community.*
- *As in most communities, risk capital is available to firms meeting the criteria of the venture capital industry, but is in short supply to firms needing small amounts of risk capital.*

Social Capital and Development Capacity

Nationally, there is increasing attention to the issue of "social capital" -- the network of civic, political, and economic institutions within a community. There is growing evidence that effective institutional networks within a community are a major factor in its long-term economic vitality. An effective system is one in which there is civic involvement, a shared vision, a sense of reciprocal interest, and long-term relationships of trust.

The issue of social capital and institutional capacity in the Town of Fairhaven, as well as in the Greater New Bedford area, is of fundamental importance to efforts to promote the Town's, as well as the region's economic development. Without an effective system of institutions that work together cooperatively, any strategic plan will remain sitting on a shelf, rather than being effectively implemented. Without adequate planning on the part of a city or town, residents often find out too late the potential negative impacts of unregulated growth. Moreover, communities around the U.S. have built up effective development organizations whose mission is to assist in the economic development process and manage the community development process. Many of these organizations recognize that in an increasingly global economy it is essential that individual municipalities work cooperatively around economic issues. To prepare for its future, Fairhaven must now assess its own capacity, as well as that of the region, to address economic development challenges and opportunities.

- *Fairhaven has had very limited planning and economic development capacity.* Essentially, the Executive Secretary has been responsible for these tasks along with many others. In addition, unlike many other towns, there is no formal, volunteer Economic Development Committee or Commission.
- *Fairhaven is perceived as a town that is open to industrial development.* While it is not actively marketing an industrial park or any specific industrial sites, Fairhaven does have a reputation as a town that would like to see more industrial development.
- *While Fairhaven has a strong history of civic involvement, the level and commitment of residents and businesses to joint, cooperative action to benefit the Town has waned in recent years.*
- *While there are a large array of resources in the region related to economic development, most businesses in Fairhaven are not familiar with the state and regional resources designed to assist business.*

- ***The New Bedford region has a history of fragmentation in regards to economic development and has not come together around a strategic vision for the region's future.*** Many of the existing organizations have been led by the same individuals for a number of years. While there has been some new leadership, the institutions within the region lack a shared vision, or a sense of reciprocal interest -- both critical to building the community's "social capital."
- ***Fairhaven has an Executive Secretary to the Board of Selectmen who is well-respected by everyone in the region.***

Infrastructure and Land Use

The availability of either buildings or sites for commercial and industrial development is clearly of critical importance in efforts to promote new economic activity in a community. However, the availability of sites is not sufficient. Investments in physical infrastructure -- transportation and utilities -- has long been recognized as a critical factor in economic development. Consequently, government at all levels have long been heavily involved in ensuring that the infrastructure needs of their communities are met. While local governments alone cannot address the range of infrastructure needs their communities face, they can make strategic local investments, work cooperatively with other communities to development regional infrastructure, and seek to influence state and federal regulatory policies and budgetary decisions.

A review of land use and infrastructure conditions in Fairhaven finds the community relatively well poised for future development:

- ***Fairhaven's regional industrial activity is largely driven by manufacturing in New Bedford and Fall River, with expanding or relocating New Bedford-based firms the major users of new industrial space in the New Bedford-Dartmouth-Fairhaven market.***
- ***Fairhaven has a good infrastructure platform to support industrial development, especially in terms of water service, sewer service, and transportation access.*** No serious deficiencies exist.
- ***Fairhaven's, as well as the whole region's, main disadvantages are the high cost of electricity and the lack of freight rail service that precludes Fairhaven from serving some firms and sectors.*** The expected deregulation of the electric utility industry provides an important opportunity for Fairhaven and the region to lower its cost structure.
- ***The future of two major regional infrastructure assets -- the New Bedford Airport and the Seaport -- will have a significant impact on the region and influence industrial development opportunities.***
- ***Fairhaven has two areas with the strongest development potential for industrial and distribution uses.*** Based on a review of all potential industrial development sites

in Fairhaven, the Alden Road area (10 acres on Pequod Road, 17 acres on Alden Road, and 17 acres on Bridge Street) can address immediate user needs for industrial land and should be the focus of short- to medium-term industrial development efforts. The 31-acre Mill Road site (11 Mill Road -- north of the AT&T building, west of Mill Road, and south of the I-195/Route 240 interchange) has good potential for future industrial development and Fairhaven should consider expansion of its industrial land resource to include this area. The large undeveloped site west of Mill Road and south of the I-195/Route 240 interchange provides an additional opportunity for long-term expansion of Fairhaven's industrial land resource, but will require rezoning and a change in the Nasketucket River Basin boundary.

- *The vacant AT&T building offers development potential to serve users seeking an existing building.*
- *Regional industrial real estate activity has increased in the last two years accounting for the acquisition and construction of over 400,000 square feet of industrial building space.*
- *While the region is experiencing a modest rebound in the demand for industrial space, there still exists a considerable inventory of industrial land. Over 400 acres exist in five industrial parks serving the region with the bulk of it, approximately 250 acres, located in the New Bedford Industrial Park on the Dartmouth side.*
- *Fairhaven's zoning appears to provide a cost advantage to firms developing new facilities in Fairhaven through higher floor to area ratios that lower land costs.*

CHAPTER THREE:

STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Economic well-being and a decent quality of life are not achieved through hopes and wishes. Rather, as efforts in communities around the country have shown, they are most effectively achieved through thoughtful, goal-oriented, and active behavior on the part of community leaders. The fundamental challenge for the region is to recognize and respect the diversity of interests, and to combine resources to work collectively to make the shared vision a reality. The strategies that were developed for this plan are designed to move Fairhaven in the direction of this "vision."

The design of the strategic plan was also guided by a set of overarching principles:

Positive adjustment to the economic challenges facing the region requires that old ways of thinking about economic development be refined. Most importantly, elected officials and local boards in the New Bedford region must recognize that they are not competing with each other. The location or expansion of any jobs within the region benefit the residents of all of the towns. With commuting patterns extending further and further out, Fairhaven residents should be concerned with the economic health of communities far beyond their own borders.

The second principle is that economic development should seek to strengthen existing businesses in the region and to promote the establishment of new enterprises, not focus solely on new development and attracting new business. There is a critical need to balance recruitment efforts with an active strategy aimed at halting the job loss in the region, strengthening existing companies, and creating a new generation of entrepreneurs.

A third principle is that wherever possible, the role of the public sector would be that of a catalyst -- making things happen in the private sector and in the nonprofit sector. The public sector needs to be involved in managing economic development activity in the region, but cannot be the "driver" of this activity.

A fourth principle is that an economic development strategy must be comprehensive in nature. Economic growth implies simply actions that will lead to new economic activity within a community. In contrast, the goal of economic development is to create shared and sustainable improvements in the economic well-being of a community's residents. This requires attention to job quality, who gets the jobs being created, who benefits from economic growth, and improvements in a community's economic resource base through investments in people, physical infrastructure, institutions, and quality of life. Thus, most aspects of the region -- its education and training system, its public works, and its basic services -- are all related to its economic development efforts.

Role Of The Town

It is important to note that the research and analysis revealed a number of economic opportunities as well as economic barriers that are not addressed in the Strategic Plan. For the most part, our focus was on recommendations that were appropriate for a municipality as opposed to a regional organization or the state. Moreover, it took into account the institutional capacity of a community the size of Fairhaven with very limited capacity. In particular, issues that would require thoughtful regional action include working on market issues with troubled companies in the marine industry, the development of services (such as an incubator) to meet the needs of startup companies, issues related to regional infrastructure (such as the airport and seaport), and financing programs.

Given the "vision" and the principles, we recommend the following strategies:

- 1. Focus attention on community infrastructure issues.*
- 2. Develop a strategic approach to business development.*
- 3. Promote the development of tourism-related activities that are appropriate to Fairhaven.*
- 4. Strengthen the marine-related economy.*
- 5. Ensure that residents are prepared to meet workplace challenges.*

Relevance of Strategy to Low- and Moderate- Income Residents

Note: Following each of the strategies, a brief explanation of the benefits to low- and moderate- income residents is included.

Strategy #1: Focus Attention On Community Infrastructure Issues

- ***Create a planning/community development position to assist in the implementation of the economic development plan.***

It is unlikely that Fairhaven will be able to reap many benefits from this economic development strategy without the dedication of adequate staff time to oversee its implementation. Despite continuous praise for the work of the Town Secretary, one individual can only take on so much. The Town demonstrated its commitment to economic development by pursuing the EOCD funding of this study. It must now demonstrate its continuing commitment by funding a new position in the Town to fill the void in two key areas: planning and community economic development.

With the completion of both the Master Plan and this economic development study, Fairhaven is faced with the arduous task of taking the recommendations of both studies and translating them into action. Lacking staff capacity in either area raises serious concern about the ability of the Town to take the necessary steps toward implementation. The time has come for the Town to expand its internal capacity. Community and economic development will only happen with a full-time professional staff. It is getting harder to find funding or compete for development with other communities, most of which have full-time staff.

While the exact balance of economic development and planning tasks would need to be mutually agreed upon by the interested parties, the concept of combining the two responsibilities appears to be a compatible and efficient means of filling both staffing needs. Previous discussions of such a position were constrained by a debate over supervision responsibilities. However, the recent recommendation of the Planning Board suggests that a solution is within reach. We recommend that the individual report directly to Jeffrey Osuch who will, in turn, report progress to the respective boards on a semi-annual basis.

The Economic Development Partnership will play a critical role advising the community development/planner on economic development issues and priorities for implementation of the Town's strategic plan. The Partnership should act as the bridge between Town Hall and the business community both for Jeffrey Osuch and for the individual hired to fill the newly created position.

- ***Formalize the Partnership as an ongoing economic development committee in the Town. At the same time, membership should be broadened and additional business participation encouraged.***

The Economic Development Partnership forms a strong foundation for longer-term economic development capacity in Fairhaven. We would propose that the Partnership be formally recognized as an ongoing committee charged with overseeing the implementation of the Town's economic development strategy. To be effective in implementation, the Town requires one organization to serve as the focal point for economic development. This lead entity should carry

out a number of functions:

- *provide a forum for building Town-wide consensus on the issues facing the Town and the means for addressing them;*
- *develop marketing and promotional materials and carry out other implementation activities that stimulate business attraction, local entrepreneurship, and job retention and expansion by local businesses;*
- *assist industrial prospects seeking to locate in Fairhaven;*
- *strengthen Fairhaven's visibility and involvement in regional marketing, development, and infrastructure projects;*
- *represent the Town before state government; and*
- *periodically update the strategic plan.*

In order to accomplish these tasks, the Partnership should establish the following specialized committees. While each committee should be chaired by Partnership members, they can include other representatives in the community:

- ***Marketing Committee*** -- Responsible for all efforts to market the community to commercial, industrial, and educational entities.
- ***Business Outreach Committee*** -- Responsible for working with existing employers on energy, labor force, and regulatory issues.
- ***Education and Training Committee*** -- Responsible for working with local school system and regional training providers on all issues related to workforce development

While these specialized committees will be a vital element to implementing the strategy, it may take six months to build the membership of the Partnership and improve the Partnership's linkages with the business community before adequate participation on the committees could be assured.

- ***The Partnership should work closely with the proposed community development/planning staff person and act as the advisory board to the individual on issues pertaining to the implementation of the economic development plan.***

The first order of business of the Partnership should be to oversee the implementation of the strategic plan. The recommendations should be reviewed carefully: some may need to be embellished, and others may need to be put on hold for the immediate future. Ultimately, a list of priority projects should be identified by the Partnership and the list should be the basis for its workplan. One role of the Partnership is to oversee the periodic updating of the plan.

Tackling implementation of the economic development strategy is no small task. For the Partnership to assume these responsibilities, the membership will need to be willing to make a significant commitment of time to the task. The Partnership should consider expanding its

membership in preparation of the implementation task ahead. Fairhaven has considerable interest, expertise, and creativity among its local residents and businesses that provide a strong volunteer and leadership base for this organization. The committee should conduct its own outreach to expand the committee's membership soliciting new members from the business community and members from other constituencies in Town. We would suggest that the expanded Partnership include:

- ***Business people willing to attend regular meetings.*** In recruiting members, the Partnership should take into account the desire for business diversity and seek a mix of industry varied in industry-type as well as size (see next recommendation).
- ***A representative from the public schools.***
- ***Fairhaven residents that do not necessarily work in Town but bring a regional perspective on economic development to the Partnership.*** Fairhaven is home to some regional economic development leaders. These people should be encouraged to take a more active role in their home town.

➤ ***Business leaders in the Town should play a more active role in economic development.***

There have been a few very key leaders from the business community who have maintained a presence in economic development. Their participation has been critically important. However, there should be a broader base of people from the business community involved and these individuals need to make a long-term commitment. The focal point of economic development activity has been the Town -- more private sector involvement needs to occur.

Aggressive outreach to individuals in Town not currently involved in Fairhaven specific economic development should be carried out by the Partnership. The Partnership should be expanded to include a representative of Titleist, a representative of another local manufacturer such as New Bedford Thread, a representative of a marine-related business, a local commercial-industrial real estate broker, and a local commercial banker.

➤ ***Develop strategies to make the Village Center more of a focal point of Town life.***

The Village Center is the closest area to a town center that Fairhaven has. It is next to the key historic and community buildings as well as to the harbor. Yet, the area is underdeveloped -- with vacant commercial buildings and no real focus. With the large retailers in the Town, i.e., Super Shaws and Wal-Mart, the Village Center will probably not meet the general shopping needs of the Town. However, its visibility could be enhanced and the area made more attractive, in the hopes of attracting other retailers to the area.

Residents need to develop a clearer sense of why they should travel downtown as opposed to conducting all of their shopping in the large plazas on Route 6. For residents who do not work on the waterfront, there is little need to venture downtown other than to attend church or conduct business at Town Hall. While a number of Village Center buildings are well-utilized, they are

used for occasional events or organization meetings and do not create a sense of downtown as a destination for recreational or commercial activities.

Since small businesses -- restaurants, retail, and recreational activities -- are unlikely to compete with national chains for price or selection, Village Center businesses will have to be more creative. The Partnership and Tourism Committee working together can help generate a more innovative image of the center that will support business development. An image for the village center could be cultivated around the arts for instance

Examples of the types of activities the Partnership or the Tourism Committee could pursue include:

- ***Develop a sense of visual unity for downtown through the use of banners on lightposts.*** Banners could help to define the Village Center for residents. They can also be used to market an image or slogan that the Town would like associated with the center.
- ***Use the auditorium (when renovations are complete) at Town Hall as a new center for cultural activity.*** The auditorium at Town Hall offers tremendous potential to attract cultural activity to the Village Center. The impressive restoration of the room will make it all the more inviting when complete. The Partnership or the Tourism Committee should take charge to market the space when complete to ensure that use of the newly restored space is maximized. For instance:
 - *encourage local dance schools to use the auditorium for recitals;*
 - *encourage school theater productions to use the Town Hall stage;*
 - *solicit community theater groups to use the stage for performances;*
and
 - *consider the costs and benefits of a Town-sponsored weekly movie.* The Town could either directly sponsor or seek an entrepreneur to run second-run movies at the auditorium on weekend nights. Since second-run movies are available at reduced costs, attendees would be attracted by lower ticket costs and reduced travel time to the movies.
- ***Encourage the location of a full-service restaurant in the Village Center/waterfront area that would attract visitors through the dinner hour.*** Currently, there are few destinations in the Village Center after store hours end. Additional restaurants in the downtown would benefit not only current restaurants but would boost tourism in downtown as well.
- ***Encourage the development of specialty shopping.*** While stores that compete directly with the discount chains on Route 6 are unlikely to survive in Town, Fairhaven Village Center is far more likely to support specialty and gift shopping.
- ***Promote downtown as a location for the arts.*** One way Fairhaven could help

to revitalize the downtown is by cultivating an image as a locus for artists and artisans. This is not in response to a particular cluster of existing activity in Fairhaven but more in response to the apparent potential in the region to create such a focus. One method Fairhaven could use to build this image is with the creative reuse of buildings in or near downtown for studio/gallery space. Either instead or in addition to the artist studio space, Fairhaven should seek out a site for a potential regional "charter" school for the arts. The Atlas Tack site is one place such a project could be pursued. However, the magnitude of the environmental clean up as well as the duration of that clean up process may make the site unusable.

➤ ***Develop a new spirit of community through involvement of residents in a range of activities.***

- ***Sponsor intergenerational programs that involve the Town's elderly residents in a range of activities.*** This can include an "intergenerational life-history project" in which students from the high school work with retired and elderly residents on life-histories that focus on Fairhaven's past. The objective would be to develop strong insights into the concept of "citizenship" and to develop "mentor" relationships. This project can be integrated with a "visioning" project in which teams made up of students and their elderly "mentors" focus on community planning. For example, the teams can explore the waterfront, review historic photographs, visit historic sites and develop ideas about future development.
- ***A mentoring program can be established that links retired business owners and professionals with Fairhaven small business owners and entrepreneurs.***

➤ ***Support and participate in efforts to strengthen regional institutions.***

- ***Fairhaven should act as the catalyst community to spur the creation of a region-wide Council on Workforce Development.*** The council should be the voice for industry commitment to upgrading the skills of the area-wide labor force. It could offer a mechanism for increased business participation in the region-wide school-to-work initiative and aggressively promote government-supported, customized job training and workplace literacy programs.
- ***Promote and strengthen the New Bedford Community Foundation.*** The Community Foundation could be a potential administrator of some of the Harbor Trustee Council funds. Community foundations have been made the administrators of restitution funds in a number of communities. For example, in Connecticut, six community foundations are administering funds related to restitution funds resulting from a scandal involving a financial institution. In Pennsylvania, the Pittsburgh Foundation was made an administrator of the \$1.5

million in funds resulting from utility rate overcharges.

- *Call for a regional summit that includes all of the existing economic development-oriented organizations in the greater New Bedford region with the objective of clarifying roles and strategies.*
- *Create a strong Fairhaven presence on the World Wide Web -- opening up the Internet to Fairhaven residents and using the resource to build the community.*

The Internet has become an increasingly important mode of information exchange and dissemination. Communities around the U.S. are providing their residents and businesses with access to this resource through readily accessible sites. Moreover, cities and towns are using the Internet to provide information about community services; to receive information and feedback from residents; and to publicize community activities. Finally, through a Web site, communities are able to promote themselves to businesses throughout the world. In this new environment it is critical that Fairhaven provide its residents with the ability to access this new media.

Fairhaven should develop sites -- at the library and at the high school -- where residents can access the World Wide Web through computers. Special training sessions could be designed to increase the "literacy" of residents around this new medium.

Relevance of Strategy to Low- and Moderate-Income Residents

Many of the suggestions for strengthening the community infrastructure outlined in Strategy #1 will not directly improve the economic well-being of low- and moderate-income residents. However, without enhancing the community's economic development capacity and social capital, it is unlikely that Fairhaven would be able to successfully implement any of the other recommendations that will more directly benefit low- and moderate-income residents. Many towns make the mistake of jumping into projects without creating the needed capacity to carry out their ideas. By strengthening the Partnership, creating stronger linkages between the Town and regional development efforts, and building a stronger sense of community spirit, Fairhaven is far more likely to have the manpower, resources, and public will to pursue later recommendations aimed more specifically at job creation. Creating that infrastructure over the long run is far more likely to have a lasting impact on community economic development in the Town than any single project.

Even within this community building strategy, there are items that can provide more immediate benefits to low- and moderate-income residents. The recommendation to create intergenerational activities could provide segments of the Fairhaven population with mentors to spur them on in their education or business ventures. Fairhaven's substantial retiree base could be tapped to assist teenagers unclear about their future or to advise new small business owners struggling to get up to speed in a variety of business practices. Also, low- and moderate-income residents could benefit from the expansion of local Internet access. While this population is less likely to pay for on-line services at home, public access would enable unemployed or under-employed residents to search the Internet for local or national job listings, as well as simply learn how to use this increasingly important technological tool.

Strategy #2: Develop A Strategic Approach To Business Development

➤ ***More aggressively develop and market potential sites for industrial development in Fairhaven.***

The greatest constraint to further industrial development in Fairhaven is the lack of clearly identified industrial sites that are ready for development. The Town cannot begin to market itself to potential users, without knowing what to market.

- ***Ensure that Fairhaven's best industrial sites are listed in the Mass. Alliance for Economic Development site inventory and known among brokers and regional economic development staff.***
- ***Focus efforts on the sites with the strongest potential through coordinated marketing of the currently zoned undeveloped sites in the Alden Road area and rezoning and development of the Mill Road site.***
- ***Work with the Alden Road industrial land owners to increase market visibility and desirability of this priority industrial area.*** This effort should focus on the existing 44 acres of zoned industrial land on Pequod Road, Alden Road, and Bridge Street. Joint initiatives to market and develop this land could include a common marketing brochure for the area, developing common use and design standards, ensuring full listing of all vacant property, and employing a common targeted marketing effort. A commitment of land owners to be flexible in combining and subdividing sites would help these infill sites address the varied needs of industrial firms. As a first step in this effort, a meeting should be held with all existing land owners to determine their interests and willingness to work together.
- ***Analyze the feasibility of rezoning and developing the Mill Road site for industrial use.*** The 31-acre site needs to be rezoned for industrial use. Before initiating this zoning change, Fairhaven should study the feasibility of this site for industrial development. This study should address the costs of required infrastructure extensions, wetlands limitations on land available for development, and the potential absorption and revenue. Fairhaven should apply for pre-development assistance funds from the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency (formerly the Massachusetts Government Land Bank) to undertake this study.
- ***Explore the feasibility of altering the Nasketucket River Basin district boundary to open up additional land for long-term industrial development, particularly the land northeast of the intersection of Mill Road and Bridge Street.*** Key issues to consider are the Town's willingness to change the district boundaries, the process and cost for these changes, and the

economic feasibility of developing this land.

- ***Pursue a partnership with the New Bedford Industrial Foundation to market and develop Fairhaven's industrial land.*** Given the limited staff capacity in Fairhaven, the actual development of an industrial park or individual industrial sites would be very difficult. However, the region does have a resource through the New Bedford Industrial Foundation that has both the resources and the ability to develop industrial land outside of New Bedford. Given the limitation on sites in the city, the Foundation might be interested in developing cooperative relationships outside of the city. The Partnership should meet with the Foundation as soon as possible to assess its potential interest in working in Fairhaven on industrial development.

➤ ***Formally designate sites as Economic Opportunity Areas.***

The Economic Opportunity Area program offers a 5 percent investment tax credit (otherwise 3 percent) to all categories of investment in a designated area, a 10 percent tax deduction for the development of abandoned buildings, and a negotiated schedule of property tax payments with the towns. There are three steps in the process. Fairhaven has only completed the first of three steps. First, the area has to be part of an Economic Target Area. Fairhaven is already part of the Greater New Bedford Economic Target Area. The second step is to have a Town Meeting to designate areas, neighborhoods, industrial areas, commercial areas, and the harborfront as Economic Opportunity Areas. For planning purposes, the Town has outlined proposed areas, although it has not been formally designated by Town Meeting.

The Town then needs to establish goals for the program related to jobs and improvements. The Town needs to carefully think through what community benefits would warrant the property tax break. For instance, the currently proposed Opportunity Area includes the Route 6 commercial strip. The Town may want to consider whether reserving the Opportunity Areas as a tool for industrial development is more in keeping with the types of jobs the Town would like to foster. The last step in the process is for the Town to approve each project as a Certified Project before a business would become eligible for the benefits.

➤ ***Develop criteria for the types of industry that the Town would like to see.***

The Town should be proactive and identify its development priorities. With limited sites available for industrial development, the Town of Fairhaven should develop a set of criteria for its development before it is forced to react to proposals. Potential criteria for screening industrial and commercial development projects include:

- *revenue generation per-square-foot of land;*
- *total number of jobs for low- and moderate-income Fairhaven residents;*
- *quality of jobs in terms of wages and benefits;*
- *conformity to the economic development "vision";*

- *compatibility with residential uses and quality of life; and*
- *potential environmental hazards.*

➤ ***Identify both short - and longer-term industrial prospects.***

It is important that the Town differentiate between potential "short-term" prospects related to the community's current competitive advantages and potential "long-term" prospects that can develop as a result of the further development of the port and the expansion of the airport. It is too early to start to market the Town to the type of prospects that might be attracted to the region if there is a significant investment in its transportation infrastructure. For example, while warehousing and distribution might be a prime target in the future, it is not currently that competitive to firms in this industry.

Given our overview of the economy, we believe that short-term prospects include:

- *food processing -- most notably fish;*
- *marine technology (see appendix for more complete discussion);*
- *environment technology (see appendix for more complete discussion);*
- *boat building;*
- *information processing and back office space; and*
- *telecommunications equipment.*

In the longer term, if proposed infrastructure improvements are made, we would add to this list:

- *international companies (including Canadian companies);*
- *warehouse and distribution centers; and*
- *light assembly operations of national or international firms.*

➤ ***Develop a working relationship with both AT&T and the state with regard to the potential reuse of the AT&T building.***

The AT&T building represents the most significant potential economic development site in the community. Due to its unique characteristics, the reuse of this building poses enormous challenges. However, whether or not it is reused, and how it will be reused, will be of critical importance to the residents of Fairhaven.

Currently, AT&T is working on marketing the site. The State Office of Business Development has also played some role in efforts to market the site. It is now time for the Town to become more involved in these efforts. We propose that the Town:

- ***Meet with officials of AT&T and the State Office of Business Development.***
A first step in the process would be for two members of the Partnership to meet

with officials at AT&T and with the real estate company involved in the site. It should also set up a separate meeting with the OBD. The purpose of these meetings would be to get a better idea about the progress on the site, building and site characteristics, price, etc. At this meeting, the Partnership could propose a more productive working relationship with AT&T, its real estate consultants, and the state. The Town could discuss what it could do to help market the site (i.e., EOA designation, other incentives, permitting, etc.).

- ***Explore the feasibility for a mixed use, multi-tenant reuse of the AT&T building with UMass/Dartmouth and AT&T.*** In the past, UMass has proposed that the AT&T building become a multi-tenant building. The Partnership should meet with the Chancellor of UMass Dartmouth to explore any interest UMass might have in the building. If it is still interested, it would be helpful to undertake a market and feasibility study to better understand the economics of such a project, including a realistic assessment of potential users, their space needs, rehabilitation costs, and operating costs. This study would be valuable in convincing AT&T of the project's viability and securing necessary funding sources. This study might also provide useful information to understanding the requirements and opportunities for other multi-tenant uses of the building. If Fairhaven and UMass can interest AT&T in this option, it may want to utilize pre-development assistance funding from the Massachusetts Government Land Bank to complete a feasibility study.

➤ ***Streamline the permitting process.***

If Fairhaven wants to compete for economic development it must make its permitting process more "user friendly." The entire process needs to be made very clear to companies. The following steps can be taken that ease the development process without sacrificing rigorous reviews around environmental and other issues of concern to the Town's residents. These include:

- ***Develop a guide to the Town that introduces the boards, departments, and Town services relevant to the business community.*** The detailed information should include a description each Town entity, its regulatory jurisdiction or type of service provided, and a contact name and phone number. In addition, the brochure should provide clear information on the permitting process.
- ***The Town should develop a checklist to be given to all developers, businesses, and others who enter the process so that there is a record of just what they need to do, whom they need to see, and in what order.*** This should include all local, state, and federal reviews.
- ***The Town should appoint a single individual, an ombudsman, with responsibility for coordination of reviews on a specific project.*** This one person would be the contact person for the business on all dealings with Fairhaven.

- ***Rather than reviewing projects on a first come first served basis, a "fast track" for small projects should be developed.*** In many communities, all projects are reviewed on a first come first served basis. If a very small simple project is submitted after a number of large projects, the small project will not be reviewed until the complex and time consuming task of reviewing the large project has been completed.

- ***Develop marketing materials for Fairhaven that are flexible in design, so that they can be revised to account for changing conditions.***

Once Fairhaven has clarified what it is trying to market and to whom through the above tasks, it will be ready to develop marketing materials. These materials need not be expensive but they should advertise Fairhaven's strengths and advantages as an industrial and business location, indicate overall availability of sites and buildings, and promote Fairhaven's quality of life. A key consideration should be to differentiate Fairhaven from surrounding communities in terms of key benefits to firms. The design should be flexible enough so that information can be regularly changed. For example, data and information on local assets should be designed as inserts that can be revised.

The Town should pursue both in-kind and direct contributions from local businesses for this brochure. For example, local graphic artists and printers may be willing to donate their time on the design of the brochure and local banks may be willing to subsidize the printing costs.

- ***Develop a marketing approach that involves local businesses and civic leaders.***

Fairhaven will gain little from a marketing strategy that involves a mass mailing to a wide range of industrial prospects. This is the marketing approach used by most communities. Moreover, broad-based industrial marketing is best done through a regional approach that focuses on the strengths of the Greater New Bedford region. However, local businesses and leaders can play a role in targeted marketing efforts. The marketing subcommittee of the Partnership should develop a more proactive approach that includes attending conferences of industries of interest. For example, members of the group could attend meetings in New England related to the marine technology or environmental technology industries.

- ***Work more closely with existing businesses in Fairhaven.***

The Partnership needs to pay at least as much attention to existing businesses in Fairhaven as it does to trying to attract new businesses to the Town. The Business Outreach Committee of the Partnership should develop a business visitation program that would involve regular meetings with key businesses in the Town. This Committee could undertake the following:

- ***Develop a fact sheet for local businesses that alerts them to the availability of public and private resources in finance, training, and technical assistance.***

The majority of Fairhaven businesses are unaware of the host of business support services that they could potentially tap. Only a small fraction were

aware of any of the publicly-sponsored finance programs, government-sponsored training programs, or technical assistance programs. Only 6 percent of those responding to the business survey rated state and local economic development services positively, but that appears to stem from the fact that businesses have not used the available services.

The Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District recently published a comprehensive resource directory of business services available in the region. This 50-page guide is a useful compilation and could be used as the basis of a shorter summary fact sheet that the Partnership could provide to local businesses. While not every business could benefit from every service, until Fairhaven firms know what tools are available to them, they cannot take advantage of those that would most help their businesses. For instance, the 23 percent of businesses that expressed concern about the availability of financing should be informed about alternatives to traditional bank loans.

- ***Sponsor semi-annual forums for local businesses.***

Since there is no Chamber of Commerce in the Town, there are relatively few opportunities for businesses to meet to discuss issues of concern with the Town. A regular forum on business would send a clear signal to businesses in Fairhaven that the Town is interested in their future. A first forum could be sponsored around this Strategic Plan, providing local businesses with the opportunity to become involved in various implementation activities.

- ***Work to establish a regional strategy to capitalize on deregulation to improve the region's electric costs.***

Given the region's high electric costs, the expected deregulation of the electric utility industry provides an important opportunity for Fairhaven and the region to lower its cost structure. Municipalities and economic development organizations should explore options to gain the maximum impact from this market change. The greater the amount of electric usage that can be purchased in a single block, the larger the negotiating leverage and capacity to achieve the lowest possible rates. Thus, a mechanism is needed to assemble electric users into a large purchasing block. Options include establishing a purchasing cooperative among businesses and a municipal or regional electric wholesale distribution company. The largest electric users in the region will have a strong incentive to join such an effort and should be enlisted early in any initiative.

- ***Fairhaven should encourage the creation of a Buzzards Bay Sustainable Development Project.***

Buzzards Bay would be a prime focal point to bring together environmental and economic interests around a range of issues. The Bay is already in good environmental shape and there are already major environmental protections in-place. There is also an unusual concentration of research institutions and individual expertise located in the region. Fairhaven should sponsor a half-day workshop that brings together all of the key actors to initiate discussions about what a

sustainable development initiative could look like, who should be involved, potential activities, and potential sources of funding.

- ***As part of a long-term effort to support regional growth of the distribution industry, Fairhaven should work with the City Planner of New Bedford to develop a Foreign Trade Zone subzone in Fairhaven. In the short-term, however, the Foreign Trade Zone is unlikely to result in any new business activity for the Town.***

The New Bedford Airport is a federally designated Foreign Trade Zone, which provides tariff relief to companies who manufacture or assemble goods with a mix of foreign and U.S. components; alternatively, the Zone can provide tariff relief for companies that import products and hold them for later sale. Tariffs are only paid when goods are actually sold and cross out of the zone. New Bedford's Foreign Trade Zone has been in existence since 1977 and has yet to be used. The City recently stepped up the pace in marketing the benefits of the Zone. With the help of a national firm, the City is seeking to measure the financial benefits of the Zone as well as to study the import/export market in Fairhaven.

If New Bedford is successful in expanding port activities, there may be advantages to Fairhaven establishing a subzone to successfully attract warehousing or distribution operations. To that end, Fairhaven should work with Marc Rousseau, the City Planner in New Bedford, to develop a subzone in Fairhaven. It should be associated with the use of the industrial area and potentially the waterfront as well. ***However, this strategy will likely yield long-term results since it first depends on expanded port activity in New Bedford. While this action is worth pursuing, it does not necessitate immediate attention from the Partnership.*** A company must first be identified in order to take full advantage of the program.

Relevance of Strategy to Low- and Moderate-Income Residents

1. Job Creation Through Industrial Development.

The clear consensus expressed by those surveyed and interviewed regarding the needs of low- and moderate-income residents was that there is an *overwhelming demand for quality jobs*. The explosion of retail jobs is no substitute for the well-paid manufacturing occupations that have been lost over two decades. While it is unlikely that the region will regain the same level of industrial strength it once enjoyed, there does appear to be a modest industrial expansion underway. ***Fairhaven will best serve its low- and moderate-income residents by supporting this industrial expansion, developing quality jobs within easy traveling distance of targeted populations.*** Without further preparation, and marketing of Fairhaven's industrial sites, it is unlikely that Fairhaven will reap the benefits of this expansion.

2. Job Creation Through Assistance to Existing Businesses.

In addition to promoting job creation through new industrial development, Fairhaven can encourage job creation by better ensuring that existing local businesses have access to the tools that could assist them in expansion efforts. Fairhaven businesses have a poor understanding of what resources are available to them so a publication by the Town to inform them would alleviate this problem.

Strategy #3: Promote The Development Of Tourism-Related Activities That Are Appropriate To Fairhaven

- *Use revenues from the hotel room tax to hire part-time staff to coordinate tourism activities in the Town.*

With the addition of the Hampton Inn, the Town may soon begin to develop enough revenues from the hotel room tax to hire a part-time staff person. Part-time staff would be better equipped to oversee some of the recommendations in this report that involve tourism. And, the staff would help lay the foundation for increased cooperation with the region's tourism industry in the future. The Town's volunteer Tourism Committee has done an exceptional job to date, but as tourism activities increase, it becomes an unfair burden to expect volunteers to take on more responsibility without staff support.

- *Formalize the current Tourism Committee and create a more institutional presence in the Town.*

The Committee has functioned quite effectively as a volunteer support system for the Town. It should now be formalized and given a higher profile in the Town to enhance its visibility and importance to the community.

- *The Tourism Committee should continue to cooperate closely with the Office of Tourism in New Bedford.*

The Office of Tourism in New Bedford is clearly a key leader in the region's tourism industry. It has vision, credibility, and the capacity to provide leadership. As tourism grows in the region, the New Bedford Office will also grow in importance and stature. Fairhaven should maintain its good working relationship with the Office.

- *The Town should support efforts to improve the Seaport Inn so that it could be more of a centerpiece of the Town's tourism activity.*

The Inn is in an ideal spot, overlooking the harbor and centrally located on the Town's waterfront. It has the potential for being a key element within the Town's tourism infrastructure. Improvements have been made to the facility, but added investment could enhance the physical appearance and its appeal to tourists. It could also become a hub of water-related activities in the harbor and build on the waterfront as an attraction.

- *Promote the development of Bed & Breakfasts (B&Bs) in the Town.*

The appeal of B&Bs has grown in the last five to seven years as an alternative to motel and hotel chains. Although they have historically been seen as part of the rural tourism landscape, B&Bs are now becoming more popular in cities and major metropolitan areas. To capitalize on this opportunity, Fairhaven should encourage more of its local residents to create B&B

establishments. The Town is blessed with a formidable number of older, Victorian homes that have the kind of charm and elegance with which B&Bs are associated. Incentives, technical support systems, and business assistance could be offered to people in the Town who are interested in opening a B&B. If residents could count on this type of help, more of them might be willing to start a B&B.

➤ ***Explore the feasibility of attracting a harbor cruise company on the Fairhaven waterfront.***

As the cleanup of the harbor continues and as new development occurs along the waterfronts of both New Bedford and Fairhaven, the appeal of the harbor will increase. A cruise would add another dimension to the water-related activity occurring in the harbor and eventually help position the region as a destination. (A local business had previously developed a harbor cruise, but it failed -- local business leaders feel the failure had less to do with a weak market and more to do with a need for better promotion and marketing.) The time may be right to further explore this opportunity.

➤ ***Develop a more attractive and vibrant Village Center that links the waterfront, existing restaurants, the Town Hall and Library, and potentially new high quality retailers.***

The heart of Fairhaven is clearly found in its marine life and historic charm. Marine-related businesses have always been important to the economic life of several generations of Fairhaven families. And, if the recreational and tourism-related developments outlined in this report actually occur, the waterfront will become even more of a central part of the Town's economy. This historical and architectural tradition reflected in many of the Town's older homes also adds a key dimension to Fairhaven's character. If an investment was made to further develop a few small quality retail shops near the center of Town, a critical mass of activity and attractions would be formed. (See previous recommendation.)

Relevance of Strategy to Low- and Moderate-Income Residents

Tourism, if properly cultivated, has the potential to generate jobs in Fairhaven. Certainly if the casino plans in New Bedford come to fruition, there will be a host of job opportunities and specialized training programs to meet those needs. New Directions, Inc. is eager to train black jack dealers and any other occupations demanded by the Wampanoags.

However, tourism's greatest contribution for low- and moderate-income residents in Fairhaven is business development opportunities created through an expanded tourism trade. Many tourism businesses are not particularly capital intensive. Success is less likely to depend on being well-financed than on finding the correct market niche. However, to ensure that benefits are properly targeted to low- and moderate-income residents, the Town will need to be responsive to requests for assistance. For instance, residents interested in starting a tourism business should be able to seek the expertise of the Community Development Director, Tourism Coordinator, and the regional Small Business Development Center to create a business plan.

Of the specific entrepreneurial activities mentioned above, some offer more potential for low- and moderate-income residents than others.

- Harbor tours are a perfect transition for a dislocated Fairhaven fisherman who would otherwise face a serious loss of income. The new business still allows the individual to work on the water and work independently.
- Retail expansion in the Village Center also offers some potential for low- and moderate-income residents. Tourism-related retail is one of the few retail opportunities that would allow local businesses to compete without being undercut by retail giants like K-Mart or Wal-Mart. Retail businesses do not even need to be assumed by one entrepreneur. Low-income residents could enjoy the benefits of entrepreneurship through a shared storefront space to sell hand-made crafts.
- While B&Bs do not take much money to start up, success will be partially determined by the quality of housing offered. This will be a problem for many within the targeted population.

Strategy #4: Strengthen The Marine-Related Economy

➤ ***The Town should create a special Task Force on marine-related activities.***

The marine-related segment of the Town's economic life should be a major priority. There are two dimensions to it: the physical infrastructure of the waterfront, and the businesses that engage in different types of marine economic activity (machine shops, fish processing, boat repair, recreation, and other services). Protecting and enhancing these two marine-related resources should be the principal charge of a new Marine Task Force.

The following recommendations are meant to guide the Partnership as it develops the Task Force. Changes in the structure of the Task Force or its programmatic function should, of necessity, be made as the organizing process is undertaken.

Task Force Formation

Once the new economic development staff person has been hired, the Partnership should create the Task Force. The staff person should be the organizer of the Task Force, ensuring that the right stakeholders and constituencies are represented. The staff person should also provide logistical and administrative support for the Task Force. Initially, the Task Force should have 10 to 12 members so that operations and decision-making do not become too unwieldy -- over time, the Task Force can determine if the membership should be expanded.

Included on the Task Force should be: two members of the Partnership (one of whom should be a co-chair along with someone from the business community); four to five representatives from marine businesses on the waterfront; a member of the Town's Tourism Committee; a marina owner; a banker; and a commercial fisherman. Linkages should also be made with the New Bedford Harbor Trustee Council, the New Bedford Harbor Development Commission, and the Seaport Bond Advisory Council. Because of the potential of membership overlap, whether these organizations have formal or ex-officio membership should be decided once an initial organizing meeting of the Task Force is held.

The Task Force should be seen more as a "working group" at the outset and then a decision can be made as to the kind of formal status it should pursue. Mt. Auburn recommends this approach in order to get the Task Force up and running and working. Once its priorities and direction are more clearly defined, and it has had a chance to work on a few projects, the Task Force can determine what affiliation it should have with the Town and other harbor and marine-related organizations in the region.

The Task Force should begin its work with a half-day session in which key needs and opportunities related to the waterfront and the marine economy are outlined. At this session, it would be important to develop a "sense of priorities" for the first six months of the Task Force's operation. Also, the Task Force should meet on a monthly basis during the first six to 12 months.

Projects and Programs

The Task Force should devote its energies to the following programs and projects.

- ***Physical improvements for the waterfront.*** The physical and aesthetic appearance of the Town's waterfront is very poor. If the Town wants to be in a position to capitalize on new investments and initiatives that are occurring in the region, it has to enhance the waterfront by removing abandoned buildings and junk material, by fixing or replacing damaged docks and pilings, and by renovating existing buildings and infrastructure. The Task Force should explore various sources of capital for this effort including the Harbor Trustee Council, EOCD, and federal EDA public works funding.
- ***Business assistance.*** Some of the businesses on the waterfront and in the marine economy are doing well because they have the resources or they have made strategic decisions to expand markets. Other businesses are struggling. Within the region, there are a number of business and economic development organizations (see text of report) that could lend valuable assistance to these businesses. The Task Force should identify which of these organizations have resources for marine-related businesses and then serve as a broker between the businesses and the organizations.
- ***Attracting new businesses.*** Once some improvements have been made to the waterfront, the Task Force could begin an effort to attract new businesses. Particular attention should be given to businesses that are in the tourism industry, those that provide services to fishermen and recreational boaters, or those that add value to the fishing industry.
- ***Integrating tourism and the waterfront.*** In the near-term and over the longer-term, the waterfront has significant potential for enhancing the Town's tourism appeal. Several different areas can be pursued. Making the waterfront more visitor-friendly with signage, removal of abandoned structures, and perhaps a guide to some of the businesses that currently operate there would be an appropriate first step. Secondly, as noted elsewhere in this report, a harbor cruise business that operates out of the waterfront would bring more visitors to the Town. And, thirdly, the Fairhaven/New Bedford Harbor presents a real example of a working marine economy that, if "packaged" properly, could add to the Town's and region's attractions infrastructure.
- ***Aquaculture.*** Aquaculture presents additional marine and economic opportunities. Should the Town and the Task Force pursue development activities in this area, a separate aquaculture subcommittee should be formed under the Task Force that would include the Harbormaster, the Shellfish Department, the SRPEDD aquaculture specialist, a representative from the Northeast Regional Aquaculture Center, and the owner of the Town's existing aquaculture venture. For a targeted program on aquaculture, see the following recommendation.

- ***If the Marine Task Force and the Town decide to further promote aquaculture, a number of steps could be taken to build the industry.***

Fairhaven is well suited for further development of the aquaculture industry. Expansion of local aquaculture activity could bring a number of benefits to the Town. New jobs is the most obvious impact of a larger aquaculture industry. New jobs can occur not only among direct hires but also among ancillary businesses dependent on the struggling fishing industry. Producers of fishing net and lobster traps, for instance, will find their products easily modified for use by aquaculturists. Coastal shellfish aquaculture has a second benefit to the Town in that it should help reseed shellfish beds outside of the lease area thanks to tidal flows.

It is unclear, however, whether there are areas of the coastline that could be farmed without interfering with other water uses. Even if areas can be found, the community needs to decide whether it is willing to throw its support behind the emerging industry. While a small survey of residents completed for this strategic plan noted overwhelming approval for aquaculture, local boards have encountered more concern and resistance among residents. If it decides to try to develop the local industry, the Town and the aquaculture subcommittee should:

- ***Orchestrate a public awareness campaign to dispel misperceptions around aquaculture.*** One of the largest barriers facing the growth of aquaculture in Massachusetts is widely held myths about the industry. The Town needs to work both directly with residents and civic organizations to give people a more realistic vision of aquaculture both in terms of the potential benefits and problems. Discussions should be held at Town boards, the Rotary, the high school, neighborhood improvement meetings, and at Town Meeting.
- ***The Town and the aquaculture subcommittee should develop a closer relationship with SRPEDD's aquaculture specialist.*** The aquaculture specialist on staff at SRPEDD is a strong regional resource. However, the industry would be best served by having access to the specialist and his resources at even closer proximity than Taunton. Fairhaven would be an excellent locale for the specialist to make himself available to the aquaculture community. Similar to the way in which the Town offered office space to the head of the Seaport Council, Fairhaven could be host on a part-time basis to the aquaculture specialist. In addition, Fairhaven could offer to house the wealth of industry materials currently within SRPEDD to place them closer to those that would most benefit from the resource.
- ***Efforts should be made to map out Fairhaven waters to determine what areas could be used as aquaculture sites.*** Given the traditional hurdles and delays associated with local permitting for aquaculture ventures, Fairhaven would send a key message to entrepreneurs about its interest and willingness to promote aquaculture by considering in advance what areas are considered desirable sites for aquaculture. While there is some perception that there is little space available for the expansion of aquaculture, this fact has not been verified through any mapping process. The aquaculture subcommittee should map out

Fairhaven waters with an eye toward potential aquaculture sites. Competing uses, access issues, and physical characteristics (i.e., temperature, current velocity, wave height) are all priority issues to consider. This approach is advocated by the SRPEDD aquaculture specialist who could be a useful resource in carrying out the mapping.

- ***Develop a brochure summarizing the Town's stance on aquaculture and listing the areas in which aquaculture would not conflict with other uses.*** If the Town truly supports aquaculture, it should put it in writing. Clarity of the community's intent will also encourage local aquaculture ventures. The brochure need not be elaborate, but simply state the Town's support of aquaculture, describe what areas are available for further aquaculture development, suggest the type of aquaculture that is suited for those areas, and outline the process by which one obtains a permit to operate a fish farm. The granting of aquaculture licenses is the municipality's responsibility and Fairhaven needs to make the process as clear and efficient as possible. The brochure provides an opportunity to spell out the process.
- ***Review existing municipal regulations on industrial waste water discharge.*** One barrier faced by indoor recirculating aquaculture is the fact that although the waste water produced by the venture is organic, it is treated as industrial waste and must meet the same standards met by manufacturers of metal and dye products. Companies have two options for handling their discharge. First, they can tap into the municipal sewer system. Fairhaven, with its ample sewer capacity, may be able to accommodate such discharge. Fairhaven can help companies considering locating in the Town by providing information about sewer and water rates and the municipal policy on digging a well on industrial property. Businesses wishing to direct discharge organic waste need to apply for a NPDES, a federal permit. The Town can choose to assist the business in the permitting process.
- ***The Task Force and the Fairhaven school administration should work with New Bedford Regional Vocational High School to develop an introduction to aquaculture course open to the community.*** Regardless of Fairhaven's willingness or capacity to expand aquaculture's presence in the Town, there is clearly a regional movement to explore its usefulness as a substitute or complement to traditional fishing. Fairhaven residents would be better able to capitalize on any regional growth, whether in terms of business development or employment, if they have an understanding of the practice. While some workshops aimed at displaced fishermen have focused on the potential for aquaculture, a course introducing the sector that is open to any interested party would be useful. The tilapia tank at New Bedford Regional Vocational High School would provide an excellent living laboratory for students to experience firsthand how the process works.
- ***Involve school administrators and staff in a discussion about development of school curriculum around aquaculture.*** Local educators should be

encouraged to develop an interdisciplinary approach to teaching students about aquaculture. Aquaculture should be presented within the evolution of the proud regional fishing heritage, the economics of fishing and aquaculture, and the science of aquaculture that involves biology, oceanography, and chemistry.

- ***The Town should remain an active player in all harbor-related issues in the New Bedford region and should work with New Bedford to develop an overall strategic plan for the harbor.***

Although many of the environmental, economic, and tourist-related initiatives will take varying amounts of time to bring to fruition, Fairhaven should continue to stay actively involved in these activities -- virtually all of them will have a direct impact on the future of the Town and the future of the Fairhaven waterfront. Participation from the Town should come from both the public and private sectors so that no one individual or individuals are overburdened by attending the series of ongoing meetings that take place for each initiative.

Also, a comprehensive economic development plan should be developed for the harbor. Currently, there are numerous environmental plans, and a faculty and student group from MIT are laying the foundation for a Master Plan. A thorough economic analysis of the harbor's commercial assets and activities, as well as a plan to fully capitalize on its potential should be undertaken.

- ***Fairhaven should work with New Bedford on a more aggressive marketing plan to enhance the visibility of the harbor.***

The harbor still has to undergo the next round of environmental cleanup and maintenance; dredging so that it can better exploit its potential as an economic engine in the region. Nonetheless, there is considerable commercial activity and capacity in the harbor at the moment and it could be further enhanced with a more high profile and aggressive marketing campaign.

Relevance of Strategy to Low- and Moderate-Income Residents

Water-related companies comprise a strong cluster of business activity in Fairhaven. It is critical for the continued economic well-being of many Town residents that economic activity is sustained on the waterfront. Strategies for promotion and coordination of harbor-related activities should help in this respect. The newly created task force will give particular attention to job opportunities for low- and moderate-income residents, although, based on the results of the survey, it is unlikely in the near term that many new jobs will be created.

Aquaculture can offer low- and moderate-income residents entrepreneurial opportunities since many forms of fish farming do not require large initial investments. In fact, aquaculture can be useful as a means of supplementing an income earned in another part- or full-time job. Courses at New Bedford Vocational High School combined with curriculum in Fairhaven's primary and secondary schools will help to educate residents about the potential of the emerging industry. Entrepreneurial activity is likely to expand as people better understand how the industry operates.

Strategy #5: Ensure That Fairhaven's Residents Are Prepared For The Current Workplace

Education and training is the link between business development and the improved well-being of Fairhaven residents. When properly targeted, education and training acts as the bridge to the world of work. Too often, however, the transition from education to employment is not a smooth one, leaving the local labor force without the skills demanded by area employers.

The Partnership's ability to affect change is limited since adult education and training is primarily regional in nature. However, given the needs expressed by residents to upgrade skills and the shortage of organizations providing federally-sponsored job training in the region, the Partnership may be able to spur the provision of adult education at the local level.

The Partnership could help local residents, youth and adults alike, by building local mechanisms that can improve communication between the educators, businesses, and economic development professionals. The outcome of these actions should be a workforce of Fairhaven youth and adults with the necessary preparation to find a good job upon completion of their studies, whether those studies end in high school, college, or a vocational training program.

➤ ***Strengthen the role of the public schools in the community.***

- ***Develop an institutional relationship with area research institutions and major employers.*** A partnership could include: mentoring programs involving business managers, teachers, and students; exchange programs in which teachers work in certain key businesses and sectors to enhance their awareness of the workplace environment; close interaction between guidance counselors and area businesses about the nature of certain occupations; programs that pair, for example, artists and writers with teachers and students; and the adoption-of-a-school program by individual companies.
- ***Initiate an aggressive effort to develop an innovative and comprehensive computer program in the school system open to both students and the community at large.*** Such a program could involve: a technology enhancement committee that includes teachers, administrators, academics, business people, and consultants from the region to develop a comprehensive plan; development of a system to network all schools within the FPS; creation of a technology coordinator for the system; a planning and support program for the purchase of new equipment; computer linkages with area higher educational institutions; and a teacher training program for maximizing the use of computers in the classroom.
- ***Create a working group of teachers and administrators from the school system, parents from the community, and members of the Economic Development Partnership to help the FPS stay abreast of changes in the Town's and region's economy, and to build mechanisms for responding to***

those changes.

- ***Consider using New Bedford/Fairhaven Harbor as a learning/teaching laboratory.*** The harbor provides an extraordinary learning environment for students in the FPS: as a marine eco-system; as a water-related economic unit that includes fishing, cargo handling, and boat repair; as a laboratory for a multi-disciplinary approach to history, social science, and math; and as an example of an intermodal transportation system. The harbor has been and will continue to be a major influence in shaping the lives of people who live and work in the area.

➤ ***Promote continuous learning among community residents of all ages through the development of a local adult education program.***

In order to benefit fully from local as well as regional economic development efforts, Fairhaven residents must be willing to continually upgrade their skills and expand their knowledge base. The lack of any local institution to promote such efforts not only hampers residents' efforts to improve their education but communicates that learning is not a priority past high school graduation.

An adult education program could be an effective local mechanism to promote further education. A broad range of courses including professional skills development, basic education, and personal enrichment should entice a critical mass of participants. Computer courses should be an early offering of the program given the interest expressed in the resident survey. Once established, the adult education program could ally with New Directions to receive some government funding for adult basic education and GED classes.

➤ ***Encourage collaboration between Fairhaven's expanding businesses and the federal job training agency, New Directions.***

While few Fairhaven companies responding to the survey anticipate adding employees in the next three years, there are a couple of exceptions. The Seaport Inn, Fairhaven Shipyard and Marina, and the Community Nurse Association all anticipate adding ten jobs each. The Town should work to see that low- and moderate-income residents have an opportunity to get these new jobs. The Town should encourage meetings between the employers and New Directions to discuss what preparation New Directions could provide to its clients to prepare for these job openings.

Relevance of Strategy to Low- and Moderate-Income Residents

There is no doubt in people's minds that education is closely linked to economic prosperity. Many of the recommendations within this strategy point to concrete and manageable improvements the Town can make in the quality and availability of education and training. The suggested education improvements will have an immediate impact on low- and moderate-income residents. For the children of Fairhaven, closer relationships with research institutions and employers in combination with the implementation of state-of-the-art technology will greatly improve the educational curriculum as well as better prepare students for the future workplace.

In addition to the enhanced support for primary and secondary education, the creation of an adult education center in Fairhaven can provide residents with readily available classes to upgrade their skills. If provided by the local adult education center, GED, basic education, and computer skills will all substantially improve the employment marketability of Fairhaven's low- and moderate-income residents. Implementation of the above strategies will not only improve the general education levels of residents, but by building partnerships between New Directions and growing local employers, the Town could help 30 low-income residents get jobs at local firms.

CHAPTER FOUR:

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REPORT

The implementation of any plan poses formidable challenges, but more so for a community like Fairhaven that has had limited resources to devote to economic development and limited experience. As a result, the keys to successful implementation will be the leadership strengths of the Partnership, the Partnership's commitment to the plan over the long-term, staff capacity to work on projects, and starting with small, manageable projects.

Following are guidelines and a process for implementing Fairhaven's strategic economic development plan.

Public Education And Awareness

The Partnership should hold a large group meeting or a series of small-scale meetings throughout the Town to review the plan and to educate the community about the Town's economic development future. At the meetings, the Partnership should, first, briefly review the process that was undertaken to secure funding from EOCD, to hire the consultant team, and then to work together with the consultant team to develop the plan.

Secondly, the Partnership should review the key findings and conclusions of the report, highlighting the Town's strengths and challenges, as well as articulating the economic opportunities for Fairhaven. Of particular importance will be the regional activities and initiatives underway in the greater New Bedford/Fairhaven region that have significant economic benefits for the Town.

Thirdly, the Partnership should outline the major strategy areas of the plan and outline a few of the key recommendations contained in each strategy. The Partnership should be sure to note that the recommendations, while broad and far reaching, are intended to help build a stronger foundation internally (i.e., within the Town) and to help position the Town externally (i.e., within the region) to exploit future economic development opportunities. The recommendations can also be a springboard for other opportunities that might emerge as the plan is being implemented.

Finally, the Partnership should encourage a general discussion about the plan and the recommendations, giving Townspeople the chance to freely express their views. This gives residents an opportunity to make suggestions and to offer their recommendations about implementation. Differences of opinion will surely emerge during the discussion about various dimensions of the plan. Nonetheless, the discussion and open exchange will make it easier for the Partnership to move ahead on key segments of the plan for which there is general consensus.

Endorsing The Plan

After the public meetings, the Partnership should formally endorse the plan. The endorsement does not mean that the Partnership agrees with every item in the report, nor should it mean that the Partnership is bound to implement every recommendation. Rather, the endorsement affirms the thrust and direction of the plan and signals that the Town will be moving forward to implement it.

The endorsement should occur at a formal meeting of the Partnership and key comments and recommendations from the public meeting should be included as attachments to the plan. Again, it should be understood that the plan is a "living document" that can and should be changed over time to reflect changes in the region's economy or a shift in priorities. This perspective should make it easier for an endorsement of the plan to occur.

The plan should then receive the broader support of the community. The Partnership should present the report to and seek the approval of the Board of Selectmen. Like the endorsement of the Partnership, the Board of Selectman need only express their support for the direction of the plan. Town meeting should also be made aware of the strategy and asked to endorse the vision and principles outlined in the report's introduction.

Selecting And Setting Priorities

Setting priorities within the four strategy areas will present a challenge. Establishing priorities can be time-consuming and contentious, particularly when so many interests are at stake. To avoid this frustration and prevent delays in implementing the plan, the priorities should only be loosely defined at a working session of the Partnership; that is, a "sense of the group" should determine which area should be given priority attention.

During the priority-setting session, the Partnership should keep the following principles in mind as it chooses its priorities:

- ***Choose activities for which there are adequate organizational capacity, available staff assistance, and sufficient resources (financial and technical) to carry them out.*** Avoid areas that are simply beyond the influence or immediate capacity of the Town -- it could create considerable frustration and derail the implementation before it even has a chance to begin.
- ***Initially, focus on activities that can be undertaken successfully in the immediate term (three to six months).*** This will give the Partnership a sense of momentum. Visible, tangible results will provide the kind of excitement and accomplishment that is necessary for keeping an implementation effort viable.
- ***Next, identify and begin initial work on activities that will take considerable effort and resources, but can be accomplished with six months to one year.*** Activities in this category are also important because they

demonstrate the Town's ability to succeed on a slightly higher level.

- ***Outline and develop a longer-term work plan for activities that will take one to three years to accomplish.*** These activities will need considerable attention and persistence to bring about success. They do not require immediate attention, but are vitally important for the long-term success of the study.

Suggested Organizational Priorities

While it is essentially the Partnership that selects its own priorities, we recommend the following steps be taken:

Short-term (first 6 months)

- ***Formalize the Partnership as an economic development committee in the Town.*** The Partnership has done an excellent job of spearheading this economic development plan. It has been very professional and has provided effective leadership. In order to carry the plan through the implementation phase, the Partnership should formalize itself and be recognized by the Town as the economic development oversight committee.
- ***The Town should initiate the process for securing staff capacity.*** Hiring staff to carry out the strategic plan is essential -- without that capacity, the programs and projects will not bear fruit. The Town should be in a good position to hire a strong candidate for the job because a plan is already in place and because the Partnership has demonstrated the ability to get things accomplished. In order for the new staff person to be effective, it is important to note that s/he should be relatively free of political interference and not be micro-managed. The staff person will need considerable freedom to work on projects and must have flexibility as s/he proceeds. Also, implementing a strategic plan is an extraordinary undertaking and will require substantial support and backing from the Partnership.
- ***The Partnership should identify and designate new members, most notably three to four business leaders in the Town to serve on the Partnership.*** The Partnership is aware that it needs more involvement from the business community. That involvement will be important to the implementation process over time to give it legitimacy. Also, business community participation will allow business people to offer their input into projects and programs that are intended for their benefit. Because it has been difficult to secure business involvement in the past, we recommend that the Town hold off on recruiting business people until the new staff person has been hired. The staff capacity will make a critical difference to business people and it will give the Partnership more credibility.

- ***The Town should formalize a Tourism Committee.*** In effect, the process of formally establishing a Tourism Committee or Department is underway. The recommendation offered in the report was meant to affirm that initiative and to highlight the importance of giving tourism a bona fide role in the Town's economy.
- ***The Partnership should designate members to three committees.*** It is difficult for the Partnership to take actions when it operates solely as one large group. To mobilize the attention of members around specific issues, committees should be developed and chairpeople designated.
- ***Convene relevant actors around a "sustainable development" initiative.*** The Executive Secretary should identify local actors involved in a range of issues around the environment and development, and convene a meeting to see if there is interest in developing a more formal regional initiative around sustainable development.

Next Steps (6-12 months)

- ***Once the Tourism Committee/Department is established, it should develop linkages with New Bedford's Office of Tourism.*** The New Bedford Office will perhaps emerge as the key tourism organization in the region. The current director has extensive experience in the industry and his leadership abilities will help position the region as a destination. Fairhaven should work closely with him.
- ***Tourism activities and projects could be enhanced by hiring part-time staff through revenues from the hotel room tax.*** This would give the Town's tourism program a higher profile and greater capacity.
- ***The Partnership should sponsor a regional summit on economic development.*** The thrust of this recommendation is to encourage the development of a few key regional organizations and to build a stronger role for one other organization. If Fairhaven takes the lead here, the Town will benefit as will the region overall. Joining with New Bedford will be essential in this task.
- ***Create a waterfront task force.*** Once a staff person has been hired and a few projects have been successfully carried through, a waterfront task force should be created. The waterfront is such a crucial element within the marine economy that it deserves serious attention. Starting slow, keeping expectations low, and bringing in business leaders are all important guidelines to follow.

Suggested Programmatic Priorities

To help the Partnership move forward on the implementation and to build a sense of momentum, we recommend the following program priorities:

Short-term (first 6 months)

- ***The Partnership should more aggressively identify, strengthen, and market industrial sites in the community.*** There are several recommendations in this section that are designed to help the Town take better advantage of industrial development. The activities are not very complicated or time consuming, but could give an early boost to implementation efforts. Particularly useful would be listing Fairhaven with the Mass. Alliance for Economic Development, meeting with AT&T and the state, meeting with Alden Road landowners, approaching the New Bedford Industrial Foundation to market and develop Fairhaven's industrial land, and formally designating sites under the EOA.
- ***The Partnership should develop a guide to the permitting process and a fact sheet for local businesses.*** These two projects are relatively easy to accomplish, and they send a strong message to the business community about the Town's commitment to economic development. Publishing the materials will also give the Partnership a tangible accomplishment early in the implementation process.
- ***The Town should designate an "ombudsman" to help businesses through the permitting process.***
- ***The Partnership should develop a new spirit of community through involvement of residents and promote continuous learning among community residents.*** Each of these recommendations focuses on the civic infrastructure of Fairhaven and building more social cohesion within the Town. And, although the thrust of these recommendations is more long-term, several programs noted under the recommendations could be initiated.
- ***The Partnership should develop criteria for industrial development and propose them to the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen.***
- ***The Tourism Committee/Department should promote the development of B&Bs and explore the feasibility of harbor cruises.*** Each of these tourism-related initiatives are appropriate next steps for building a stronger tourism infrastructure in the Town. Each would require considerable time and an investment of resources by the Tourism Committee, but is well worth the investment.
- The new Town staff person should pursue funding for a design and market study

for the Village Center. Fairhaven should pursue EOCD funding for a more formal study of the Village Center that should include both design and market issues.

Next Steps (6-12 months)

- ***Invest in and improve the waterfront and pursue marine-related activities.*** The waterfront and marine recommendations are intended to help the Town capitalize on its water-related resources. As noted elsewhere in the report, the harbor could become an even more important economic resource than it currently is. However, in order for Fairhaven to take advantage of the expected changes, it should start slowly and focus on improving the physical and visual attractiveness of the waterfront. Marine-related activities that could be undertaken in the six to 12 month period include: working with New Bedford to better market the harbor; laying the foundation to do a strategic plan for the harbor, and working with other groups and organizations to initiate a Buzzards Bay Sustainable Development Project.
- ***Working with the Superintendent and the school system's teachers, the Partnership should strengthen the role of the public schools.*** The suggested activities under this recommendation would help make the schools an important element within the Town's economic development life. The activities will take time to implement, but focusing on them within the first year and expecting some modest success is quite appropriate.
- ***The Partnership should create a Fairhaven presence on the World Wide Web.*** As the text for this recommendation indicates, the Internet has become a powerful learning tool as well as a mechanism for communities to market and promote themselves. Getting access for Fairhaven residents and the Town should be a priority of the Partnership during the second six months of the implementation.
- ***The Partnership should meet with representatives of organizations working with the Town's elderly to develop potential intergenerational projects.***
- ***The Partnership should meet with UMass to discuss interest in the AT&T site.***
- ***The Partnership should begin work on marketing materials.*** A first step in the process would be to solicit in-kind contributions from local graphic artists and marketing professionals.

APPENDIX A: ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

The purpose of this overview is to provide an understanding of the dynamics of the local economy. The analysis is divided into three parts -- economic well-being of residents, performance, and structure of the business base. The profile of the economic health of residents is included first as a reminder of the intended beneficiary of any thriving economy -- people. It is important to consider the effect of changes in the business base on the residents to determine how better to link business vitality with an improved quality of life for the residents of Fairhaven.

The structure and performance of the business base are examined to understand which industries, if any, dominate the local economy and how these industries have contributed to job growth over time. To give the local economy some context in which to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses, it is discussed relative to other areas: Bristol County, Massachusetts, and the nation.

Economic Well-Being Of Residents

Data collected on Fairhaven's demographic trends comes essentially from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. The most recent data is, therefore, for 1990, and it is thus important to keep in mind the potential changes that might have occurred in the course of the past five years.

- ***Fairhaven's population grew slowly in the past decade. The slow growth follows a period of out-migration in the 1970s that led to a reduction in the Town's population from 1970 to 1980.***

Fairhaven's population of 16,132 residents increased modestly between 1980 and 1990, lagging behind the growth experienced in other parts of Bristol County, Massachusetts and the United States. While the population in the United States increased by nearly 10 percent in this period, that of Fairhaven increased by only 2.4 percent. In Bristol County, population increased by nearly 7 percent, a rate approaching that of national population growth, and surpassing that of Massachusetts (4.9 percent). The addition of 370 new residents to the Town follows a decade of population decline. Fairhaven lost more than 570 people between 1970 and 1980.

- ***Fairhaven has a rapidly aging population.***

The percentage of the working age population (18 to 65 age bracket) in Fairhaven falls slightly short of county, national, and state figures, with 59 percent as opposed to 61 percent, 63.9, percent and 61.5 percent, respectively.

Most significant is the "graying" of the Town's population. Fairhaven residents over the age of 65 represent 19 percent of the population, as compared to 14.5 percent in Bristol County, 13.6 percent in the state, and 12.5 percent in the nation. Moreover, this segment of the population is the fastest growing. Between 1980 and 1990, the number of senior citizens in the

Town increased by almost 25 percent. That rate was almost double the growth seen statewide.

- ***Fairhaven, similar to Bristol County overall, tends to mirror national income levels more closely than the wealthy regions of Massachusetts.***

Income figures for Bristol County resemble national ones, but residents of this county are not well-off relative to the average in Massachusetts. Fairhaven has the lowest level of per capita income of any of the comparison areas, with \$13,114 as the average, closely followed by Bristol County with \$13,853. The state's per capita income is \$17,224. Figures representing the median household income follow the same pattern, with one difference. Fairhaven and Bristol County have very similar median household incomes, approximating \$31,000. Again, this figure falls behind the state figure of \$36,952, but just manages to surpass the national median, whereas the state's per capita income slightly surpasses figures for Fairhaven and Bristol County.

While still above national figures, however, household incomes in Fairhaven lag behind those of Bristol County, which itself is not as well-off as the state averages. Twenty-one percent and 26 percent of households in Fairhaven and Bristol County earn more than \$50,000, as compared to 34 percent in Massachusetts and 21 percent in the U.S. as a whole. In other income brackets as well, figures for Fairhaven and Bristol County fall between state and national averages.

Fairhaven residents did not reap their share of economic benefits during the time of the "Massachusetts Miracle." Fairhaven's per capita and household income lost ground relative to Bristol County and to Massachusetts between 1979 and 1989. However, relative to national figures, they increased, especially median household income.

- ***Fairhaven has a significant portion of residents "struggling to get by," but there is a relatively low incidence of poverty.***

More than a third of Fairhaven residents are considered low- or moderate-income, although a relatively small portion of that population lives in absolute poverty. Fairhaven's rate of poverty in 1989 was 6.5 percent, well below Bristol County and the state's 9 percent, and the nation's 13 percent. The situation ten years earlier, in 1979, was very similar, with the rate of poverty in Fairhaven at 6.7 percent and the rates in the county, state, and nation only one percent lower than in 1989.

Despite the relatively low rate of poverty, there are clearly pockets of severe need in Fairhaven. In seven local neighborhoods, more than half of all people live on a low- or moderate-income.

- ***The economic shifts of recent years have taken a particularly hard toll on Fairhaven's low- and moderate-income residents.***

Manufacturing jobs and fishing jobs offered economic security, usually with good wages that could support a middle class family in Southeastern Massachusetts. These jobs were particularly important because they traditionally did not require extensive education. Those residents most likely to be marginalized in a different labor market were able to earn a decent

wage in the New Bedford area.

The disappearance of these jobs has made it much more difficult for families to maintain their middle-income status. In conversation, people spoke of former fishermen that now patch together odd jobs to put food on the table. Laid-off manufacturing employees face similar difficulties without retraining. Anecdotal evidence is confirmed by Department of Employment and Training surveys of the unemployed that point to the fact that the jobs lost in the local economy were disproportionately the better paying positions (over \$300 a week).

Moreover, economic dislocation in New Bedford has had a tremendous impact on low-income residents who never even worked in manufacturing or fishing. Job trainers and job placement experts acknowledge that employers prefer to hire dislocated workers who have a proven work history and demonstrated work ethic rather than AFDC recipients who have no track record and who carry the stigma of being a welfare mother. People openly joked that those charged with placing Title II (low-income) training recipients in jobs "were saints" due to the difficulty of their task.

Economic Performance

- *Fairhaven, dragged down by the economic turmoil in New Bedford, enjoyed little of the labor force expansion seen in Massachusetts or across the country throughout the 1980s.*

Fairhaven and New Bedford's labor force declined sharply in the mid 1980s and has never fully recovered. Fairhaven's labor force has increased steadily since 1987, unlike that of New Bedford, but the current labor force of 8,256 people does not equal the levels seen in the early 1980s. While the labor forces of the U.S and Massachusetts were larger in 1993 than in 1984, the reverse was true in Fairhaven and Bristol County.

- *Fairhaven's unemployment rate has been following the national pattern, but is much higher.*

Unemployment rates have followed roughly the same pattern in Fairhaven, Bristol County, Massachusetts, and the U.S. since 1984. From that year until 1988, these rates steadily declined, with Fairhaven's higher than that of Massachusetts, but lower than the two others. From 1988 until the peak of the most recent recession in 1991, these rates rose rapidly, with Fairhaven's rate tripling from 4.2 percent to 12.3 percent. At that time, Bristol's unemployment rate was even higher, while the state's was 9 percent and the nation's was 6.5 percent. Since then, rates have been decreasing steadily. The general improvement in economic conditions has not only lowered the unemployment rate but drawn people back into the workforce, demonstrated by an expansion of the labor force.

- ***Despite the recession, the actual number of residents employed continued to gradually increase.***

Total employment in Fairhaven increased gradually from 1984 to 1989, then dropped until 1991, and has since been on the rise again. In the New Bedford labor market area (LMA), a similar pattern emerged, with the difference that total employment now is lower than in 1984, whereas in Fairhaven it is higher despite the drop in 1990-1991. The New Bedford LMA suffered more from the recession in terms of the number of people employed, as did Massachusetts, where employment numbers started to decline as early as 1988.

Economic Structure

- ***Commuting patterns data shows the interdependence of the Fairhaven and New Bedford labor markets.***

The vast majority of residents commute out of Fairhaven for work. As the employment data showed, most of Fairhaven's residents (73 percent) do not work in their hometown. Of these, a large majority work in the surrounding towns, primarily in New Bedford, where nearly half of the Town's residents work. About 10 percent of Fairhaven's residents work in Plymouth County, and a handful travel to other counties or neighboring Rhode Island for work.

While most residents seek work outside of Town, the majority of jobs in Town are not filled by local residents either. Only 40 percent of local jobs are filled by Fairhaven residents. Almost half of the Fairhaven workers live in other parts of Bristol County, especially in New Bedford. Another 9 percent live in Plymouth County, and the remaining few come from other counties and Rhode Island.

- ***Retail trade is the largest component of the Town's economic base. The concentration far exceeds the norm seen nationally.***

In 1993, retail trade supplied 1,896 jobs, nearly 40 percent of all jobs in Fairhaven. This was followed by the services sector with close to 30 percent. While the figure for the services sector resembles the U.S. figure for the same year, Fairhaven's economy is far more dominated by retail trade than that of the U.S, where this sector represents only about 18 percent of the workers. For over a decade, Fairhaven's leading industry has been retail trade, with an expansion of its relative importance in the local economy.

It appears likely that retail establishments attract workers from outside of Fairhaven to fill open slots. While 40 percent of the Town's jobs are retail, only 23 percent of the Town's residents are employed in this sector.

➤ *Retailing has been a major source of economic growth over the past decade.*

Fairhaven-based retail trade employment has grown more rapidly than in the New Bedford LMA, Massachusetts, and the United States. Between 1984 and 1990, Fairhaven's retail trade sector showed an employment growth rate of 17.7 percent which, while slightly below the national rate of 18.7 percent, easily outpaced that of New Bedford LMA and Massachusetts. During the recent recession, the Town's retail trade employment showed growth of 6 percent even as employment in the LMA and Massachusetts declined and nationwide retail employment crept up a mere 0.6 percent.

Retail trade appears to supply an increasing percentage of the jobs for Fairhaven residents. In 1980, 18 percent of Fairhaven's employed residents worked in retail trade; in 1990, the figure had risen to 23 percent.

➤ *While the Town's retail sector is enormous, it appears that very little of the related wholesale activity occurs within the Town boundaries.*

In 1993, wholesalers accounted for only 2.6 percent of total Fairhaven-based employment. The equivalent figures are higher for New Bedford MSA (4 percent), the state of Massachusetts (5.5 percent), and the United States (5.4 percent). The growth of wholesale employment in the region has been somewhat erratic, with LMA and state levels jumping above U.S. levels during the late 1980s (the New Bedford LMA saw a jump of 28.2 percent between 1984 and 1990) and declining in the early 1990s. Growth of the sector within Fairhaven itself has been much more modest but equally erratic. From 1984 to 1990, Fairhaven wholesale employment grew a mere 1.9 percent and declined 19.3 percent from 1990 to 1993.

The wholesaling sector, however, has become slightly more important as an employer of Fairhaven residents; this is probably due to the job growth the sector has enjoyed in the New Bedford LMA at large, where a majority of Fairhaven residents work. In 1980, 3.6 percent of the Town's residents worked in wholesale trade; in 1990, 5 percent did so.

➤ *The area's manufacturing sector suffered sharp declines in the 1980s.*

Nationwide, the manufacturing sector, particularly within the more mature manufacturing industries, was hard hit by competition from abroad. The traditionally high-wage Northeast lost factories both to foreign countries and to other, lower-wage regions of the United States.

Few areas bore the brunt of these trends more severely than did the New Bedford labor market. Its notable strengths in the very traditional industries of textile and apparel made it most vulnerable to competition from areas with lower cost structures. From 1984 to 1990, Massachusetts manufacturing employment declined 22.6 percent, New Bedford LMA's 34.1 percent, and Fairhaven's 55.1 percent. This decline continued, albeit at more gradual rate, from 1990 to 1993.

The decline of manufacturing in Fairhaven has been more precipitous than in the larger areas. In 1984, Fairhaven boasted 434 manufacturing jobs; in 1993, that number had fallen to 167. Not surprisingly, manufacturing has declined in importance as an employer of Fairhaven

residents. The percentage of employed residents working in manufacturing fell from 27.6 percent in 1980 to 19.7 percent in 1990. Clearly, many of the residents working within this sector find employment outside of the Town limits, most likely in New Bedford.

➤ ***Employment in apparel manufacturing and assembly, a traditionally important component of the area's economic base, has declined in the region.***

Apparel manufacturing has experienced a steady decline in employment since 1984. Apparel manufacturing is much more economically significant in southeastern Massachusetts than in Massachusetts and the United States. In 1984, 12 percent of the New Bedford MSA's total employment was in the apparel industry; the comparable figure for both Massachusetts and the United States was 1.3 percent. Because of this, declines in apparel manufacturing have hit the area hard even though Massachusetts as a whole has experienced slightly sharper drops in employment levels. From 1984 to 1993, the New Bedford MSA lost 3,153 apparel industry jobs. Apparel employment now accounts for a significantly smaller share of total employment -- 7.9 percent in 1993 -- than it did in 1984.

Employment in electronics has also declined as a percentage of the region's total employment. This branch of manufacturing is roughly as important to the New Bedford MSA as to Massachusetts as a whole, but it accounts for a larger proportion of total employment than does the nationwide industry.

➤ ***Fairhaven's construction sector has shown growth, but not without volatility.***

Since the construction industry is very sensitive to changes in the economic climate, trends over the past decade have not been smooth. The industry enjoyed rapid growth in the early- and mid-1980s, but dropped sharply in 1989-1990 as the recession hit. From 1984 to 1990, growth of construction employment in Massachusetts and New Bedford was less than the 17 percent nationwide rate, but Fairhaven-based employment jumped a remarkable 51.2 percent. From 1990 to 1993, Fairhaven, reflecting trends in MSA, Massachusetts, and the U.S., lost 19.4 percent of its construction employment, but the industry is beginning to respond to more favorable economic conditions: construction firms in Fairhaven hired 64 more workers in 1993 than they did in the previous year.

Proportionally, more Fairhaven residents were employed in contract construction in 1990 than in 1980, but given the inherent volatility of the construction industry, this figure is not particularly meaningful.

➤ ***Finance, insurance, and real estate showed gradual growth in the mid-1980s but declined in the 1990s; in Fairhaven, growth was particularly erratic.***

In the New Bedford LMA, Massachusetts, the finance, insurance, and real estate sector grew in the mid-1980s and declined gradually after 1990; the nationwide sector showed similar growth, but was able to avoid contracting during the recession.

In Fairhaven, the sector is relatively small with only 181 jobs. Because the base of jobs in this sector is low, changes in the employment levels tend to make the sector look more volatile.

Employment in finance, insurance, and real estate jumped 40.3 percent (as opposed to 11.9 percent, 18.4 percent, and 18 percent for New Bedford LMA, Massachusetts, and the United States, respectively) from 1984 to 1990, and declined by 32.5 percent from 1990 to 1993.

In 1990, finance, insurance, and real estate accounted for a slightly smaller proportion of employment among Fairhaven residents than in 1980. Again, the volatility of the sector makes the importance of this figure difficult to gauge.

➤ ***Transportation, communication, and utilities employment has been fairly steady in New Bedford LMA, Massachusetts, and the United States, but it has declined in Fairhaven.***

Since 1984, employment in transportation, communications, and utilities has been rather steady for New Bedford LMA, Massachusetts, and the United States. In Fairhaven, however, trends have been considerably less predictable. From 1984 to 1990, Fairhaven-based employment in this sector grew by 49 percent, outdistancing the second fastest growth rate, that of the state of Massachusetts, by 33.4 percent. From 1990 to 1993, Fairhaven's employment declined a steep 60.5 percent while the New Bedford LMA, Massachusetts and the United States saw declines of 13.8 percent, 4.6 percent, and 0.1 percent, respectively. In 1993, Fairhaven employed only 143 people in this sector, down from a high of 616 in 1986.

➤ ***Natural resource-based industries have declined in the region.***

Given the notoriety of the fishing industry's demise, the decline in employment in agriculture and fishing throughout southeastern Massachusetts does not come as a surprise. Employment in agriculture, forestries, and fishing has declined in the New Bedford area since 1984, although trends have been somewhat more positive for the state of Massachusetts as a whole. Fishing, hunting, and trapping employment was somewhat uneven in the 1980s, but has been in a state of decline since 1989. Since 1989, New Bedford has lost 840 jobs in the fishing industry. The rate of decline for both industries accelerated after 1990. Between 1992 and 1993 alone, Fairhaven lost 120 jobs. Because this source of government data excludes sole proprietors, these figures no doubt underestimate the loss of jobs within the industry.

➤ ***Fairhaven's government employment rose in the mid- and late-1980s, but fell after 1990.***

Government employment climbed in the mid- to late-1980s and began to decline in 1990. This is true for Fairhaven, New Bedford LMA, and Massachusetts; for the United States as a whole, employment has grown steadily since 1984. Fairhaven, however, experienced a sharper rise and a harder fall. From 1984 to 1990, government-related employment in Fairhaven rose 12.1; from 1990 to 1993, it declined by 11.2 percent (in contrast to rates of 1 percent, 3.2 percent, and 2.8 percent in the New Bedford LMA, Massachusetts, and the United States, respectively). In 1993, Fairhaven actually employed two fewer people than it had in 1984. Despite having reached peaks of public sector employment in 1987 and 1988, Fairhaven has made no net employment gains in this area since 1984.

- ***The service sector in the area is growing, both as a part of the region's economic base and as a source of employment for Fairhaven residents.***

In keeping with statewide and national trends, the service sector in southeastern Massachusetts is growing steadily. Growth of Fairhaven-based service employment is particularly notable. In 1984, Fairhaven service firms employed 654 people; in 1990 that number reached 1,543, and settled at 1,432 in 1993 in the wake of the recession. In 1993, the service sector accounted for 28.5 percent of Fairhaven-based employment, a highly significant increase from its 1984 level of 15.1 percent. As a part of the Town's economic base, it is second in importance only to retail trade.

The growth of service sector jobs is reflected in the employment patterns of the Town's residents. In 1980, the various branches of the service industry employed 25.2 percent of Fairhaven residents; in 1990, service jobs employed 28.7 percent of working residents, up from 25 percent in 1980.

APPENDIX B: ECONOMIC RESOURCE BASE

Central to the viability of any regional economy are the human, fiscal, and physical resources that can be drawn upon to strengthen a region's principal traded-sector companies. If properly organized and utilized, the resources can make a significant contribution to the long-term viability of an economy and they can enhance the competitiveness of individual businesses and companies. This chapter will describe and assess the resource base of the Fairhaven and New Bedford regional economy:

- availability and quality of the labor force;
- regional and educational job training resources;
- financial resources;
- economic development capacity; and
- physical infrastructure.

Labor Force

Southeastern Massachusetts, like many mature industrial regions, is an economy in transition. The engines that fueled economic growth in previous decades, traditional manufacturing and fishing, can no longer be relied upon to provide large numbers of jobs in future years. The shifting economy forces one to evaluate the region's labor force through a different lens than in the past. The region's workers were well-suited to the jobs historically prevalent in the region; stories of dedicated, hard-working, industrious employees who frequently labored in physically demanding jobs are commonplace. Today, however, the region is hampered in its effort to develop new growth industries by a workforce that lacks the skills now in demand. Hard work cannot be successfully substituted for a strong base of knowledge and critical thinking skills. The problem is well documented and clearly a topic of discussion in the area. Most recently, it was discussed in the United Way's regional needs assessment:

"At present it is apparent that the overall education levels in the New Bedford area, and especially in New Bedford city, are low and constitute a serious impediment to economic development."

While residents of Fairhaven would like to believe that the problems described above stop at the Fairhaven bridge, the issues of workforce development are regional in nature and must be

looked at as a regional concern. In an economy in which 70 percent of Fairhaven residents work out of town and 60 percent of the jobs in Town are held by non-residents, it is impossible to separate the skills and educational attainment of Fairhaven residents from those of their neighbors in surrounding communities.

To develop a picture of the labor force in Fairhaven and the surrounding area, a number of sources were used. First, the 1990 Census data is the best source of information specific to Fairhaven. The available workforce (the unemployed) was characterized using data collected by the Department of Employment and Training. These sources were augmented with interviews of regional education and training professionals, community leaders, and local residents. A public opinion/employment survey provided further information from a sampling of residents. Reports from southeastern Massachusetts Partnership, Greater New Bedford United Way, and the New Bedford Regional Employment Board also added to the composite sketch of labor force strengths and weaknesses.

Findings

- *The regional labor force is generally viewed favorably by employers within traditional industries.*

In contrast to many other areas in which we have worked, there is a general perception among employers that the region's labor force is dedicated and hard working. Employers frequently cite the workforce for low absenteeism, low rates of employee turnover, and high rates of productivity. Traditionally labor intensive industries such as apparel manufacturing have been attracted to the local labor force because of the workers' penchant for hard work, their willingness to work for relatively low wages, and a level of manual dexterity that bred good "stitchers."

Locally, the businesses surveyed for this project were generally positive about the workforce. Almost half believed labor force skills were a positive factor of doing business in the region while only 17 percent saw skills as a negative.

- *Much of the regional labor force lacks basic skills.*

According to New Directions' 1995 Job Training Plan Modification Report, one in five people served by the SDA read at or below the seventh grade level. Two in five people served by the SDA have a math level at or below the seventh grade level. Analysis of the 1990 Census completed by Northeastern University Center for Labor Market Studies for New Directions found that nearly half of the JTPA eligible population were high school dropouts.

- *While Fairhaven surely enjoys higher rates of educational attainment than New Bedford, the Town trails not only the state but other towns within the labor market area.*

The city of New Bedford clearly suffers from the most severe problems around basic skills. While just over half of new Bedford's residents have completed high school, in Fairhaven,

that figure approaches 70 percent. However, relative to the nation, state, and even other parts of southeastern Massachusetts, Fairhaven does not compare favorably. Dartmouth, Freetown, Marion, Mattapoisett, Rochester, and Wareham all boast higher rates of educational attainment than Fairhaven.

The percentage of people having completed high school in Fairhaven was lower than state and national figures in both 1980 and 1990. However, while the gap between Fairhaven's figures and the nation's remained the same from the beginning of the decade to the end, the relative number of people having completed high school in Fairhaven drew closer to that of the state average.

- ***The level of college education in Fairhaven is low, but has recently increased significantly.***

The discrepancy between Fairhaven, the state, and the nation is of far greater concern in terms of college education. Overall, Massachusetts ranked much higher than the U.S. in terms of the percentage of people having completed four or more years of college (1990 figures show Massachusetts at 27.2 percent as compared to 21.3 nationwide). Fairhaven lagged far behind both the state and nation, with only 13.5 percent college graduates. While this number is still relatively low, it represents a dramatic increase over 1980.

- ***The occupational skills of employed residents reflect the composition of the regional job base: skills tend to be more clustered in blue-collar trades and service occupations than is seen across the state or nation.***

Given the strong manufacturing tradition in the New Bedford Labor Market, it is not surprising that Fairhaven residents are more highly concentrated in industrial trades. Of the industrial skill areas, Fairhaven residents are most likely to be employed as machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors. While relative to other areas, the concentration of people with manufacturing-related skills is significant, the majority of working residents do not have these skills. Professional and technical skills are the most common, although vastly under-represented relative to Massachusetts. A large portion (in terms of actual and relative size) of residents work in service occupations such as teachers, policemen, firemen, nurses, and cooks.

- ***The New Bedford labor market area has a large available workforce with experience in fishing and manufacturing. The region lacks a large pool of available professional, technical, or clerical workers.***

Given the sources of employment losses in the region it is not a surprise that the largest segments of unemployed workers were previously employed in either the fishing industry or in the manufacturing sector. Analysis of the January and August data on the Characteristics of the Unemployed collected by the Department of Employment and Training reveals the following findings:

- ***Fishing.*** In the New Bedford labor market area, 17 percent of the unemployed previously worked in the agricultural sector, primarily fishing. Statewide, only 6 percent of the unemployed were let go from this sector.

- **Manufacturing.** In the New Bedford labor market area, about 28 percent of the unemployed last worked in the manufacturing sector compared to about 18 percent statewide.

The current market does not appear welcoming for those with manufacturing backgrounds. The number of people with manufacturing backgrounds collecting unemployment has risen dramatically in the last year. The New Bedford labor market area has seen a 42 percent increase since 1994 in the number of people unemployed from manufacturing jobs while statewide the number dropped 14 percent.

The extent to which these workers will be able to reuse their existing skills depends on the type of jobs the region attracts and the types of existing businesses that expand.

The data also indicates that the region does not have a readily available workforce for professional or technical positions. While statewide about a quarter of all unemployed have a professional or technical background, less than 10 percent of the unemployed in the New Bedford labor market area have such a background.

- ***As dedicated and hard working a workforce as the region has, people are ill-equipped for new styles of management and work organization.***

As is discussed in the economic overview of the region, the traditional manufacturing industries in the region have been in a prolonged period of decline. Many of those that have survived the global competitive pressures have done so by carving out niche markets, investing in new technology, and developing new ways of organizing the workplace in order to gain new productivity advances. It is expected that an increasing number of companies, particularly in manufacturing, will follow this path in coming years.

Historically, much of the labor force in the area has excelled at doing one job very well. However, many of the changes in technology, markets, and workplace organization have changed the demands placed on workers. The region's labor force will be challenged to not only know their respective jobs but to develop a broader set of skills so they can quickly adapt to modifications and innovation. Adapting to these changes means the labor force will need assistance in the following areas:

- understanding technical language;
 - how to self-schedule;
 - problem-solving skills, including algebra; and
 - computer skills, both shop floor or office use.
- ***A number of Fairhaven residents feel they are at a disadvantage in the job market based on their current computer skills.***

Residents understand that today's job market requires most workers to have a comfort level and familiarity with computers. A number of residents responding to the public opinion survey expressed the belief they could obtain better employment if they could develop better

computer skills. Residents specifically mentioned the need to learn or upgrade skills in computer graphics, word processing, and computer hardware.

➤ ***Linkages between job seekers and employment opportunities are not maximized.***

The region appears to have developed extensive informal job networks in which local manufacturers hire friends or family of current workers. Alternatively, temporary agencies provide employers with workers that they can "test out." As one educator put it, "Olstens Temp has become the major source of manufacturing employees in the region." These measures help some access quality manufacturing jobs, but a coherent regional policy that provides more formal links between workers and employment would improve the job opportunities for the existing labor force.

Education And Training

"We are living in a world where what you earn is a function of what you learn."

--President Clinton, 1994

"...if the region's leaders make a concentrated effort to improve the education and skill levels of the Southeastern Massachusetts workforce, it is possible to improve the region's ability to generate or attract the type of industries that can strengthen and diversify the region's economic base."

--Making the Transition, 1989

While economic development initiatives at the municipal level frequently focus on more real estate driven projects, the need to make education and training a priority in Fairhaven becomes obvious when one considers some of the results of the survey sent to residents:

- ***A significant portion of Fairhaven residents face uncertain futures in their existing careers.*** Eighteen percent of those responding to the survey indicated that they had been laid off in the past three years. Of those that had been laid off, only 13 percent returned to either the same or a similar position. In fact, 60 percent took jobs in either a new occupation or new industry.
- ***Fairhaven residents see the need to gain new skills to attain more desirable jobs.*** Seventeen percent identified specific skills or training needed in order to seek a better job opportunity.

The findings of this report outline what resources are currently available to meet area

education and training requirements. The resources are viewed in the context of economic development with specific attention to the following issues: 1) how are the resources used by the business community; 2) how do the resources prepare workers for existing and future jobs; and, 3) how responsive are the institutions to the changing economic needs of industry.

Fairhaven Public Schools

- ***The Fairhaven Public School system is moving forward on many of the changes recommended in the accreditation report.***

Most notable among the initiatives is the addition to the high school. Changes are also being made in the curriculum, and community and parental involvement are enhanced through the school councils. There are other areas where improvements are being made, yet there is a recognition that more needs to be done. Nonetheless, people in the community and the system feel there is momentum.

- ***Tension still remains in the community between the historic value and educational value of the school buildings.***

The tension comes from those who very much want to protect and preserve the historic character of the high school in particular, and those in the community who feel that the historic value needs to be seen in the framework of the education that is going on in the buildings.

- ***The delays in securing state funding for the addition at the high school leave some teachers and community members frustrated.***

There is a feeling that innovations and improvements have to be put on hold until the new addition is completed.

- ***Some improvements and upgrading of the system's computer technology have been made, but the system lacks a fully integrated and coordinated plan for computer use and instruction.***

A number of new IBM compatible computers have been purchased and installed in classrooms within the system and a few computers now have CD-ROM capability. Also, there is limited access to the Internet. What is lacking is a more strategic plan for networking within the system, for up-to-date computer hardware and software, for teacher training, and for staff coordination within the system.

- ***Partnerships with outside businesses and research institutions have occurred in individual schools and individual classrooms, but the partnerships have not been adopted institutionally within the system.***

UMD has initiated a number of science-based programs and projects with the schools, and businesses like Titleist have had managers and engineers involved. These efforts are well-received

within the system. A more formalized and institutional relationship has not yet taken place.

- ***Parent and community involvement in the Fairhaven Public School system has grown and should continue.***

The PTOs have played an important role in securing funds for a wide range of projects in the schools, and the relatively new School Councils, mandated by the state's educational reform initiative, have given parents a strong voice in school issues.

- ***The Fairhaven Public Schools need to be informed and represented in local and regional economic development planning and activities that are occurring in the greater New Bedford area.***

There are going to be major changes in the future of the greater New Bedford economy in the next five to ten years: the decline of the fishing industry, changes in the manufacturing economy, the dominance of computers in virtually all aspects of business and industry, and changes occurring in key industries like health care and tourism make it imperative that the schools are informed and made aware of these structural shifts in the economy. The changes have implications for both college-bound and work-bound students.

Vocational Education

- ***Unlike many other communities, vocational education is highly valued and a popular option chosen by many students.***

While communities across the state are struggling to attract students to their vocational programs, Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational High School actually has to turn away students each year. Approximately 270 Fairhaven students attend the vocational high school out of a total student body of 1,750. Although the waiting list is filled with primarily New Bedford residents, Fairhaven does fill its allotted number of slots each year. Not only is the school popular among students but clearly enjoys strong community support as well. The modern educational facility is testament the region's willingness to support vocational education. The school has developed a wide array of specialty areas in which students can focus. They include:

Architectural Drafting	Cosmetology and Aesthetics	Machine Technology
Appliance Repair	Culinary Arts	Medical Assistant
Auto Body	Data Processing	Maintenance Specialist
Automotive Technology	Electrical	Plumbing and Pipefitting
Carpentry	Electronics Technology	Nutrition Occupations
Child Care	Graphic Arts/Printing	Painting and Decorating
Clothing and Textiles	Health Services	Refrigeration and Air Conditioning
Commercial Art	Machine Drafting	Steam Engineering
		Welding/Sheet Metal

However, to ensure an even distribution of students throughout the vocational areas, the school places students in programs that do not necessarily reflect the interests of those students.

- ***The vocational school is involved with the business community and receives a high degree of respect.***

The vocational school is held in very high esteem in the community. It is considered highly relevant and a useful resource for the business community. The superintendent of the vocational school works to maintain strong relationships with local industry and is a highly visible educational leader. He is an active participant in economic development efforts and in the planning around school-to-work programs. Co-ops, advisory boards, and guest teachers from industry all help to strengthen the school's linkage with industry.

Recognizing the new demands of the marketplace as well as responding to the demands of state educational reform, the vocational school is currently in the midst of reforming its academic curriculum. Changes include the elimination of the general track and restructuring to increase the time devoted to these academic courses.

While the majority of graduates seek employment directly following graduation, the vocational school has aggressively sought cooperative agreements with area colleges to facilitate student transition to two- or four-year higher education. The school either has or is in the process of developing agreements with the following institutions: Bristol Community College, New England Institute of Technology, Johnson and Wales Culinary Program, Wentworth Institute of Technology, Franklin Institute, Cape Cod Community College, and Southern Maine Technical College.

- ***New Bedford Regional Vocational High School has not placed an emphasis on occupations that service emerging technology companies. However, given the employment base in New Bedford, the more traditional focus of training is likely warranted.***

The majority of the school's occupational preparatory programs prepare students for jobs in the "non-traded" sector, meaning jobs that meet local needs. The high school provides training for some of the manufacturing jobs that compose the bulk of the "traded" sector in the region, although due to cost and lack of job opportunities the school dropped its marine industries program.

New Bedford Voc is cautious about developing courses of study that prepare students for some of the emerging industries based on concerns that there is currently not a critical mass of jobs to warrant a program. In the meantime, New Bedford Voc is working with the aquaculture specialist from SRPEDD to introduce students to the concepts of fish farming. The high school houses a tank to grow tilapia and uses the experiment as a focus for multi-disciplinary curriculum. The school is looking at a three- to four-year timeframe to develop a program in environmental studies that will include aquaculture.

- ***Bristol Community College's Center for Business and Industry is a critical link between the education infrastructure and the skills needs of industry.***

The Center offers credit and non-credit courses in practical business, technical, and management areas. The Center performs a variety of functions all directly related to upgrading the professional capacity of the region's workforce. These services include:

- customized, company-sponsored workforce training on campus or on site (portable laptop computer lab available);
- technical, managerial, and professional development courses; and
- adult basic education.

Training in computer applications is the biggest area of interest. CBI has worked with a number of area employers on computer training, most recently with a number of textile-related manufacturers. Texas Instruments uses CBI's services heavily to fulfill its commitment to workforce education.

- ***While the Center enjoys a high level of visibility in the business community, it appears to be an underutilized resource.***

Although the survey of Fairhaven businesses indicated that the vast majority of businesses were familiar with CBI, few businesses in the area have availed themselves of the customized training. At the moment, the Center has no projects underway in the New Bedford area and has never worked extensively with the Fairhaven business community. CBI does offer some professional development training at the New Bedford downtown campus, but finds demand low and at times has had trouble reaching minimum enrollment requirements in order to run classes locally.

- ***While there is clearly a need to upgrade the skills of the existing workforce, current programs are only a small part of the solution. Workforce education is funded through a three-year grant for the state Education Department but is limited by employer interest and government financial support.***

A consortium of area institutions currently administer a state grant to provide workplace basic skill classes. Recent classes have included ESL, GED, Pre-GED, and Citizenship/Democracy classes. These classes are not only filled, but many have lengthy waiting lists. The classes are provided on-site if agreeable to the employer. However, interviews indicate that current funds are inadequate to meet the region's needs and it is difficult to convince employers of the merits of such programs.

- ***There are a number of education and training institutions available to Fairhaven residents to develop job skills.***

According to the Massachusetts Occupational Information Coordinating Committee, the

following training is available nearby for Fairhaven residents:

- **Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School** -- in addition to its day classes for high school age students, the school runs a large evening program for adults in virtually all of the disciplines listed above as areas of concentration for the high school students.
 - **New Bedford Public Schools** -- the high school offers adult programs in basic skills, computational skills, reading/literacy/communications, and high school equivalency certificates.
 - **UMass Labor Education Center** -- runs adult basic education classes in computational skills, reading/literacy/communications, high school equivalency certificates;
 - **Southern New England School of Law in New Bedford** -- confers law degrees.
 - **UMass at Dartmouth** -- the only four-year university in the region offering a large number of programs including computer and information sciences, civil engineering, computer engineering, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, textile science, a number of foreign languages, biology, mathematics, chemistry, social sciences, medical terminology, nursing, accounting, business administration, human resource management, business marketing, tourism promotion, and paralegal training.
 - **La Femmina** -- private school of fashion modeling.
 - **New Bedford Beauty Academy** -- private school offering courses in cosmetology.
 - **COGNOSCO** -- JTPA-funded training provider training nursing assistants/aides and home health aides.
 - **Fisher College in New Bedford** -- offers associate degrees in business administration, accounting, computer management, medical assistant, paralegal, criminal justice, early childhood education, medical records technology, criminal justice administration, and office administration.
 - **Bristol Community College** -- although outside of New Bedford Service Delivery area, BCC in Fall River is the closest community college. Although many of the courses needed for particular degrees are available exclusively on campus at BCC, the college does operate a center in downtown New Bedford to provide certain courses particularly for basic education and some vocational training.
- **The major source of funding for education and training assistance in the region is the provider of federal JTPA training -- New Directions.**

New Directions is the administrative entity of the New Bedford Service Delivery Area.