

# Economic Development Strategy

TOWN OF FOSTER, RI



MARCH 2023

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Foster initiated an economic development strategy designed to move the needle on diversifying the tax base while maintaining the current quality of life and rural aesthetic. As of the most recent assessment, the breakdown of residential property versus combined commercial, industrial, and mixed-use properties are 77% and 23%, respectively.

Residential property owners are bearing the brunt of the rising costs of community services, making living in Foster unsustainable for

some individuals who may not have the financial means to continually pay more in taxes.

The Economic Development Strategy is intended to guide future economic development activity in Foster and provide a framework for growth that is aligned with the values and vision of the community. Finding a balance between economic growth and community preservation is challenging but not impossible with targeted and strategic action.

## GOAL AREAS

From the outset of the economic development strategic planning process, the Town of Foster identified three priority goals to support diversified growth and enhanced business opportunities in the town. These three goals prioritize a balanced approach to maintaining the rural character of the community while still pursuing economic development opportunities and a diversified tax base.

- 1 Improve the sense of place along commercial corridors** by enhancing the overall appearance and aesthetic of the main entrances to the community. This goal is intended to help focus on opportunities along Route 6 and Route 101 to create a cohesive look for those visiting and traveling through Foster, with additional benefits for Foster residents.
- 2 Diversify the economy** to build resilience in the community and reduce the property tax burden on residential property owners by directing non-residential growth to specific corridors and nodes within the town and supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs.
- 3 Align capacity for growth with community values** to ensure that the residents' vision for the future of Foster is realized. Pursuing investments and directing resources towards opportunities that will balance economic diversification with rural lifestyle will be critical to achieving and retaining community support.

## IMMEDIATE PRIORITY TACTICS



### Establish an Economic Development Commission

to take the lead on implementation of this plan. Start with a strategic effort to raise awareness that Foster has been working on this plan and is working to improve the overall business environment.



### Install large Welcome to Foster signs

along Route 6 and Route 101 to improve sense of place and regional recognition.



### Conduct full review and update of current code enforcement requirements

and processes and implement consistent enforcement.



### Initiate an ongoing community conversation

to build general consensus and agreement around the future of Foster, including along key commercial corridors and village center nodes. Work to mediate major differences, share accurate information, assuage concerns, and come together for the future of the community.



### Review current zoning and develop design guidelines

for Route 6 to direct development activity to existing underutilized parcels in an effort to improve appearance and diversify the tax base.

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# INTRODUCTION

The Town of Foster is at a crossroads. Located along the border of Connecticut, in western Providence County, Foster's strength is in its ability to maintain its rural character while still providing residents with proximity to goods, services, and employment opportunities.

As of the most recent assessment, the breakdown of residential property versus combined commercial, industrial, and mixed-use properties in Foster are 77% and 23%, respectively. Additionally, 16% of properties have frozen assessments. While there are many positive aspects of living in Foster, the limited amount of non-residential development has created a situation where residential property owners are bearing the brunt of the rising costs of community services, making living in Foster unsustainable for some individuals who may not have the financial means to continually pay more in taxes.

Recognizing that the challenges will continue to grow without action, the Town of Foster initiated an economic development strategy designed to move the needle on diversifying the tax base while maintaining the current quality of life and rural aesthetic. Finding a balance between economic growth and community preservation is challenging but not impossible.

At the outset of this project, it was established by the project team that protecting the rural character of the town is not necessarily at odds with wanting to see economic diversification. These two goals are not mutually exclusive and, in fact, many communities throughout the United States have found ways to marry these goals to protect the lifestyle they desire, while simultaneously diversifying their tax base through targeted growth that aligns with the community's vision.

Foster is not immune to the economic and demographic challenges facing the rest of the country — aging population and infrastructure, lagging population growth, and a high reliance on residential property taxes. The Town has a decision to make with regard to whether they would like to continue down the same path to get the same results or whether it is time to go in a different direction in an effort to move towards change and opportunity. Changes will likely be neither swift nor easy and will involve creating partnerships with businesses and the state, as well as bringing together a highly divided community. In order to do this, it will be important for both residents and elected officials to bring a solution-oriented approach to economic development that involves transparency and communication in planning and implementation.

# WORK COMPLETED

Development of Foster’s Economic Development Strategic Plan included a combination of data analysis, interviews, best practice research, and public input. The following tasks were completed and are summarized throughout this report:



**Review of existing information:** The team reviewed existing documents, plans, and survey results to understand recent priorities, approaches, and messages. The results of the community survey the Town recently conducted to inform its Comprehensive Plan update were also reviewed to identify key areas of importance for community members.



**Economic Conditions Analysis:** A thorough analysis of the town’s current socioeconomic composition was conducted, with a focus on understanding the overall sense of place, as well as gathering and analyzing information to guide opportunities and strategies. This included an understanding of the demographics, economic trends, local retail market, and development capacity of the community to implement on priority recommendations.



**Stakeholder interviews and public input:** Interviews were conducted with key individuals throughout the town to understand the current obstacles and opportunities to economic diversification. Individuals interviewed included property owners, business owners, local officials, residents, and others who provided insights on strategic next steps for Foster. A public meeting was also held to receive input on the overall framework and direction of the plan.



**Strategy development:** Pulling together intelligence from every aspect of the research, combined with experience working with other rural communities around the United States, an economic development strategic plan was established to build on Foster’s strengths and address its challenges.

The results of this research are summarized in this plan with additional detail and supporting materials included as attachments.

# KEY FINDINGS

## DATA FINDINGS

A demographic and economic conditions analysis was completed to understand the current economic conditions in the Town of Foster. Findings from this task inform the strategy and identify potential opportunities for business attraction and a greater understanding of the types of goods and services residents may need. The following section highlights takeaways from the economic conditions analysis.



### POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

- Foster has seen a slight population decline over the last 10 years while the state has grown by almost 5% during the same period.
- The town's median age (48) is notably older than the surrounding region<sup>1</sup> (45) or Rhode Island (41).
- Commuter data demonstrates that an extremely small portion of the town residents also work in Foster. The town is a net exporter of workers, meaning more people leave Foster each day than come in to work. Of those residents leaving Foster for work, 65% are traveling 10-24 miles.
- For those working in Foster, 46% are traveling less than 10 miles with the largest proportion coming from Warwick.
- The K-12 school enrollment in Foster-Glocester increased from 2016-2022 — a reversal of the declines experienced from 2011-2015.

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<sup>1</sup> The 42 rural zip codes surrounding Foster include the towns of Douglas, Uxbridge, Chepachet, Clayville, Coventry, West Greenwich, Exeter, Forestdale, Foster, Glendale, Greene, Harrisville, Hope, Mapleville, North Scituate, Oakland, Pascoag, Slatersville, North Smithfield, Brooklyn, Danielson, Dayville, Eastford, East Killingly, Hampton, North Grosvendale, Pomfret Center, Putnam, Quinebaug, Rogers, Thompson, Woodstock, Woodstock Valley, Canterbury, Central Village, Jewett City, Moosup, Oneco, Plainfield, Sterling, Voluntown, and Wauregan.



## INCOME & INDUSTRY

- Median household income in Foster is significantly higher (\$103,406) than the region (\$85,646) or the state (\$76,687). 53% of Town of Foster households earn over \$100,000 annually while only 44% of the region's households and 37% of households in Rhode Island earn the same amount.
- The region's agricultural legacy is reflected in industry data. Both the Town of Foster and the region have a higher concentration of jobs in the Agriculture, Forest, Fishing, and Hunting industry as compared to the United States.
- The Town of Foster experienced a decrease in jobs from 2002-2011. The decrease in jobs in both the town and region was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which hit the US in 2019 and slowed the increase in jobs that had been occurring over the previous eight years.



## LOCATION

- Foster is about 20 miles, or 30 minutes, west of downtown Providence along Route 6.
- Sitting along the Connecticut border, Foster is about 10 minutes from Dayville, CT, and access to I-395. Dayville has many big box stores that Foster residents frequent, including Target, Stop and Shop, Lowes, and others.
- Route 6 just outside of Foster gets 9,000 vehicle trips per day (east and westbound total).



## RETAIL/ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

- There are few retail and entertainment establishments in Foster.
- Retail market leakage data shows there is minimal demand for any one particular type of new retail store. However, the leakage analysis demonstrates that people currently leave Foster to visit limited-service restaurants suggesting this type of establishment with a strategic market reach and solid business foundation could be successful in Foster.
- In addition to growing local support, attracting visitors and spending from beyond the immediate trade area will be necessary to encourage additional business activity in Foster.



## Foster's Business Attraction Strengths

- Proximity to Connecticut, Providence, and I-395
- Undeveloped land along a major thoroughfare to Providence
- Higher median income

## STAKEHOLDER THEMES

Through interviews with stakeholders, a series of key themes were developed that have informed the understanding of the current economic development environment and potential strategies.

**Economic and Demographic Conditions:** Foster is a small town that is experiencing an aging and declining population base. The limited resident population makes it difficult for any business to remain viable with only the support of residents as customers. Bringing more people to Foster, either temporarily for shopping, dining, and events, as they are passing through, or as new residents, will make it possible to support a wider variety of business types to help diversify the tax base. There are very few businesses in town, which limits the town's ability to diversify the tax base in a way that will have meaningful benefit to residential property owners.

**Location:** With proximity to Connecticut, interstate highways, and location on a main thoroughfare to Providence (Route 6), Foster's location is its main asset and competitive advantage. Building off this advantage by creating opportunities for people to stop, slow down, and get to know Foster will help expand awareness and economic activity throughout the town. The Route 6 corridor has the potential to attract warehousing, logistics, and distribution-related services as well as retail and food establishments serving residents, travelers, and visitors.

**Rural Character:** With rolling hills, pastoral landscapes, and beautiful natural resources, the Town of Foster's rural





character is striking to all that visit and live there. It is what has attracted so many to the area, especially in recent years, with the COVID-19 pandemic inspiring many people to get out of their more crowded communities.

Maintaining this character is important to most people in Foster — 86% of respondents to a recent community survey said that Town leaders should maintain its rural character, and 46% of respondents responded that rural character is why they live in Foster. Finding ways to support economic development that allows for the rural character to remain, while still building and diversifying the economy will be critical.

This could mean supporting opportunities for farmers who are looking to expand into value added food production, artisans who are making goods throughout the town, agritourism businesses, and expansion of outdoor recreation that preserves and protects natural resources. Identifying areas within the community that are a good fit for development, considering both business and resident perspectives, will help diversify Foster’s economy while still maintaining its rural character.

**Sense of Community:** It is common for communities in a similar situation as Foster to experience a tension between residents with different perspectives and visions for their community. Coming to consensus around what the community wants to look like in the next 10 years can be a difficult and emotional process. However, establishing general ideas about what type of community Foster wants to be will make it possible to direct development in a way that will align with that vision. Coming together as one Foster with a clear sense of community and vision will make it simpler to prioritize projects and efforts.

**Perception:** Foster has a negative public perception as a place that is unwelcoming to business and newcomers. This also relates to what people driving through the community see (or don’t see). Without identification signs, wayfinding signs, or beautification efforts, the Town of Foster can be missed and, for those who know it is there, it feels as though there is no real sense of place or community pride. This negative attitude, real or perceived, has constrained the ability of the town to attract businesses that may be aligned with its community values. Reversing these perceptions will make it possible for Foster to have greater control over the type of economic activity that it attracts and retains.

**Capacity and Resources:** The small Town staff and the lack of people willing to participate on town boards or committees have made it difficult to build up the organizational capacity necessary to make progress on various improvement efforts and initiatives identified in the past. Expanding participation on these boards, including by new voices and participants, and working to improve the retention of Town staff will be critical to the implementation of this plan.

In addition, there is room to improve the available information related to the Town’s development processes, timelines, expectations, and resources available. Updating Foster’s website to include more information for potential developers, creating funding programs

to incentivize desired development, and establishing basic protocols to ensure a streamlined process that is mutually beneficial will be important moving forward.

**Investment Opportunities:** Throughout the community conversations, a series of potential development/redevelopment opportunities were described as being a good fit for Foster that also align with findings from the economic conditions analysis, including:

- Transportation and logistics companies that would benefit from access to the town's transportation infrastructure.
- Mixed use developments that would create a village feel appropriate for a rural setting, providing retail/services on the first floor and apartments above.
- A garden nursery, outdoor supply store, or similar uses that would complement the rural nature of the region for residents and non-residents.
- Destinations that build on the town's country character, such as a brewery, distillery, farm-to-table restaurant, general store, cannabis dispensary, or other similar business that can serve both locals and visitors.
- Senior housing that would allow residents to be able to stay in the community but downsize and transition to more care as needed.

## CRITERIA TO CONSIDER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

It will be beneficial to establish a series of priorities or goals for new non-residential development that attract the types of uses that are most aligned with town residents' vision for the future, it. Considering the answers to the following types of questions collectively will help determine the overall impact a business will have on the community:

- Will it generate more in property tax revenue than it will require in community services?
- Will the developer take steps to minimize impact on the environment and rural character of the town?
- Will the development serve both residents and nonresidents?
- Why did the developer choose Foster? Was it because of the unique features of the community, its location, or rural environment?

## Impact of Commercial Development on a Typical Homeowner

A hypothetical scenario can help people understand how commercial development can help slow the growth of tax rates for other property owners. Currently, the Town collects \$13,049,218 in property tax revenue based on assessed value to pay for town services. If the town's assessed value increases, the tax revenue needed for services would be spread out over more properties, slowing the rate of growth of the property tax rate.

The table below details how the addition of a 100,000-square-foot commercial building in Foster would increase the townwide assessed value. Assuming that a portion of the new assessed value from the commercial building will generate revenue above and beyond the additional costs it creates in community services, the typical household would bear a slightly lower tax burden annually.

**It is important to note this assumes no other changes in the community and, in reality, additional commercial development would simply slow the rate of increase in the property tax levy and may not reduce the overall tax burden.**

### Hypothetical Industrial Development Scenario

	Current	Future <sup>1</sup>
A Townwide Assessed Value	\$ 694,439,933	\$ 697,239,933
B Total Town Revenue from Property Taxes	\$ 13,049,218	\$ 13,049,218
C Revenue Generated Per Dollar of AV (B/A)	\$ 0.01879	\$ 0.01872
D Typical AV of Residential	\$ 210,000	\$ 210,000
E Revenue Generated Per Typical Residential Property (D*C)	\$ 3,946	\$ 3,930
F Savings Per Household (Current E - Future E)		\$ 15.85

Source: Town Assessor, Camoin Associates

<sup>1</sup>: Assumes a 100,000 square foot commercial building with a final assessed value of \$4,000,000. Of the \$4 million, 70% is new net revenue, the rest pays for any additional expenses.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

## IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of a plan like this will require the community come together in a way that has been difficult in the past. The issues that have been discussed throughout the planning process around maintaining the rural character versus allowing development have made it clear that the difference of opinion that exist between residents on this issues will be hard to address without first building trust, increasing transparency in town decision making, and taking small steps that create momentum towards the community's goals.

The strategy has been designed to reflect the desires of the community to remain rural in nature but allow for targeted and focused development that will have minimal impact on the day-to-day life of residents.

The plan includes a series of strategies and tactics that can be implemented over time as resources and capacity allow and do not need to be followed in any specific order or completed by any particular deadline. The Town of Foster cannot complete the work included in the plan alone and should work with regional and state partners to build the resources needed to move the necessary steps forward.

## FRAMEWORK

From the outset of the economic development strategic planning process, the Town of Foster identified three priority goals to support diversified growth and enhanced business opportunities. These three goals prioritize a balanced approach to maintaining the rural character of the community while still pursuing economic development opportunities and a diversified tax base.

- **Goal 1: Improve the sense of place along commercial corridors** by enhancing the overall appearance and aesthetic of the main entrances to the community. This goal is intended to help focus on opportunities along Route 6 and Route 101 to create a cohesive look for those visiting and traveling through Foster, with additional benefits for Foster residents.
- **Goal 2: Diversify the economy** to build resilience in the community and reduce the property tax burden on residential property owners by directing non-residential growth to specific corridors and nodes within the town and supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs.
- **Goal 3: Align capacity for growth with community values** to ensure that the residents' vision for the future of Foster is realized. Pursuing investments and directing resources towards opportunities that will balance economic diversification with Foster's rural lifestyle will be critical to achieving and retaining community support.

## STRATEGY

The following strategies are organized according to the Town's major economic development objectives. These strategies are intended to guide future economic development activity in Foster and provide a framework for growth that is aligned with the values and vision of the community.

### GOAL 1: IMPROVE THE SENSE OF PLACE ALONG COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

**1.1 Improve the Appearance of Route 6:** As the main arterial in Foster and one of the main routes from Hartford, CT, to Providence, Route 6 is both the primary way that travelers access and interact with Foster and the corridor with the greatest opportunity for development.

To create more economic diversity within the town, Foster will need to use a small portion of land on Route 6 to **create** commercial activity and encourage some development of designated parcels. Commercial business districts are vital components of a healthy economy and while the right business mix is one component of a vibrant, enjoyable business district, other elements like housing options, appropriate streetscaping and design, and signage, among other factors, all further contribute to economic potential.

- a) Install large welcome signs for travelers along Route 6 (going in both directions) to welcome them to Foster and Rhode Island. Consider a location that is closer to the intersection of Foster Center Road and some of the town's main attractions. Create a unique and memorable sign that creates interest and highlights local attractions.
- b) Conduct a full review of current code requirements and begin widespread and consistent enforcement throughout the town. Inspectors must respond to complaints by tenants, emergency responders, neighbors, and elected officials to ensure all health, safety, and blight-related violations are handled swiftly and reasonably. Recognize the impact that property appearance has on travelers in terms of their perception of Foster.
- c) Begin the first stages of any necessary documentation and/or remediation of brownfield-related issues along Route 6 so Town staff can be confident when communicating with developers about potential constraints or needed mitigation. Create clarity and transparency around any concerns to limit unpredictability for developers and demonstrate the Town's support for development along the corridor.
- d) Establish and promote a funding or incentive program to assist property owners with making needed upgrades and/or to address code violations. A revolving loan fund, grant program, and/or tax credit program that allows the Town to direct and monitor how the funds are used will help improve appearances along Route 6. This may involve looking for local investors to provide seed money or may be a longer term strategy to pursue.

**1.2 Consider Opportunities for Route 101:** Route 101 is slightly more remote but does present some opportunities for development, although secondary to Route 6.

- a) Establish an inventory of underdeveloped parcels along Route 101.
- b) Install large Welcome to Foster signs for travelers in both directions.
- c) Reach out to owners of key parcels to find out if they have any interest in seeing their property redeveloped.
- d) Create collateral materials detailing key parcels and promote them through the Town's website, coordination with real estate agents, and awareness among regional economic development professionals.

**1.3 Market Foster's Place-Based Assets:** Foster's sense of place is not just an amenity for those who live in Foster, but can also be an asset for attracting visitors who live elsewhere (particularly in more urban environments) and want to spend time and money in a more rural setting. To that end, marketing and expanding existing place-based assets will be beneficial, including but not limited to:

- a) Further promote the existing events and festivals that occur in Foster, including Old Home Days. Look for opportunities to expand the event, bring in more people, and create a greater awareness of the event within the region. Create signage along Route 6 that highlights and promotes the event.
- b) Use wayfinding signs to make travelers aware of the various assets within the community, including Jerimoth Hill, the many Land Trust trails, cultural/historic assets, farm-based businesses, and other destinations they might not be aware of just by driving through.
- c) Use Foster's rural environment with proximity to Providence and goods/services to brand the town to visitors as well as potential new residents.

### Case Study: Town of Burrillville

The Town of Burrillville has been intentional about directing growth to key areas within the community in order to protect the rural character of the community while still encouraging a more diversified tax base. Some of the key steps that Burrillville has taken to do this include:

- Creating a Redevelopment Agency to help remove blight and fix up buildings.
- Establishing a façade improvement program using federal Community Development Block Grant funding.
- Identifying redevelopment districts with proper zoning and created an industrial park.
- Directing new downtown “main street” businesses to village districts and commerce/industrial to industrial parks.
- Supporting mixed-use housing developments with businesses on the first floor and residents above through partnerships with private companies as well as organizations like NeighborWorks.
- Limiting curb cuts and signage on the main road and requiring a primary driveway with a cul-de-sac road to limit the impact of industrial parks on the main road.
- Working closely with developers to find a way to get to a solution, rather than just immediately saying no.

The Town of Burrillville has also spent a lot of time over the years refining its zoning to align with the goals of the community. Town officials note that having the right plans and regulations in place, but still finding room for flexibility, has been their key to success.



Example of a welcome sign.  
Source: Burrillville website

## GOAL 2: DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY

**2.1 Improve the Town's Reputation:** Interviews revealed that Foster does not have a welcoming reputation when it comes to its business environment or welcoming new people/outside. The fact that Foster is investing time, energy, and resources into strategic planning efforts reveals that the Town is working toward a more proactive approach to economic development, which shows that the Town is invested in supporting business attraction and retention. There are a number of steps Foster can take to help improve its reputation through branding and outreach efforts, including:

- a) Promote this plan to a wide audience, including realtors, public officials, regional organizations, and economic development professionals. Educate local officials and members of boards about their role in implementing the strategy. Highlight and celebrate when progress is made on different initiatives to keep the momentum going and promote the hard work of the Town on diversifying the tax base.
- b) Complete an update of the Town's website that considers the needs of a variety of users, including current businesses, potential businesses, current residents, potential residents, and visitors. Include information that answers questions quickly and comes across as friendly and welcoming. Specific recommendations for the website include:
  - o Outlining the development process, providing links to resources and contact information, and information about success stories or recent projects.
  - o Highlighting the quality of life in Foster using photos, links to trail maps and resources for moving to the area, and testimonials from residents.
  - o Providing easy access to new business resources, including links and contact information for the Small Business Development Center, local service providers, and regional experts.

### A Redevelopment Authority

A more proactive approach to development would involve the Town of Foster establishing a Redevelopment Authority, setting aside funds to purchase key parcels, and purchasing key parcels. Once parcels are assembled, issue a developer Request for Proposals that reflects the town's development vision and procure bids from developers for potential purchase and development of the land.

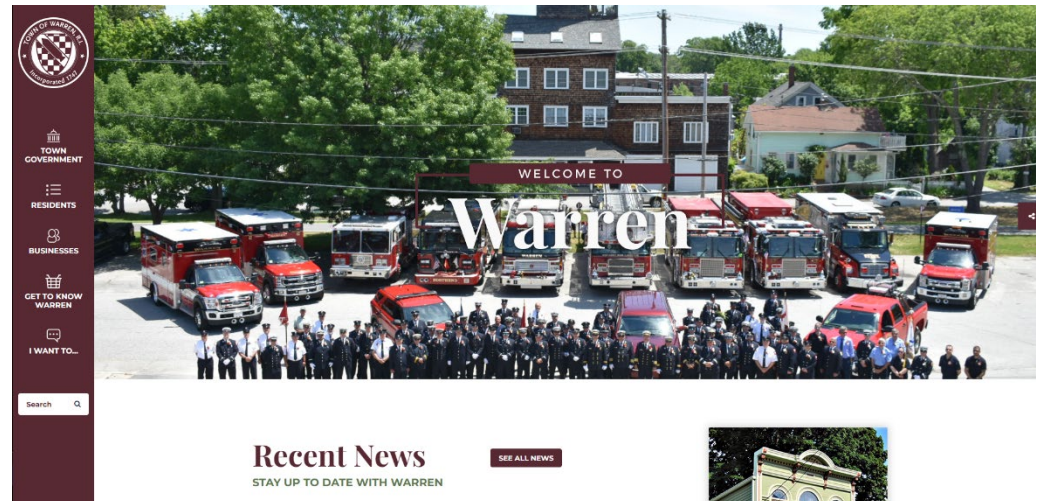
**Note:** This is likely a longer-term strategy that may not be easily implementable right away.



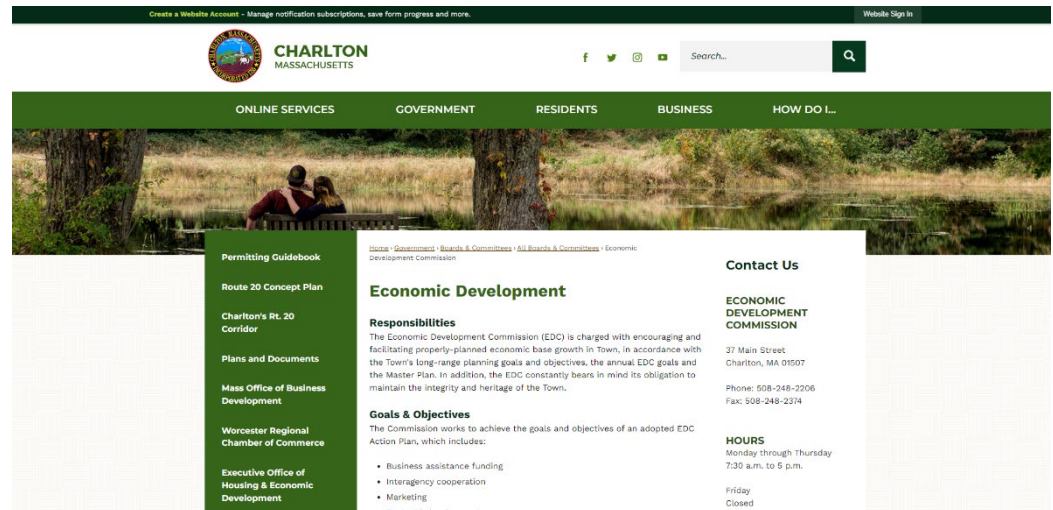
c) Invite real estate agents, state officials, and regional economic development professionals to become more familiar with the Town of Foster. Highlight the work being done on this plan, regional assets, competitive advantages, and available sites for development so that if a project or developer comes to the area, Foster will be considered. Participate with the state on any marketing and/or business attraction efforts to show that Foster is open for business and to take ownership in the direction and type of development that occurs. Prepare materials and create regular points of communication to nurture key relationships.

d) Take the initiative to promote Foster through various channels, including social media, news media, and earned media. Recognize the importance of having a strong and positive reputation when pursuing business attraction and work to highlight the advantages of starting a business in Foster, as well as the many recreational opportunities for visitors. Improve the online discourse of Facebook pages. Provide training to public officials about how to engage in this type of conversation and what is productive versus hurtful to the public narrative.

**2.2 Encourage Appropriate Businesses Development and Redevelopment Opportunities:** Foster has opportunities to leverage the assets of its different



The Town of Warren, RI, has a comprehensive and welcoming website that includes pages for each of its boards, including the [Warren Economic Development Board](#), which shares work plans, reports, and the major goals of the group.



The Town of Charlton, MA has a page dedicated to economic development that includes key contact information and resources. They also have a dedicated sub-site for the [Charlton Economic Development Commission](#), which includes information about how they are dealing with site planning and blight removal along Route 20.

commercial corridors, nodes, and districts. Identifying appropriate development/redevelopment opportunities throughout the town will allow for diversification and preservation of Foster's rural character.

- a) **Route 6 Development:** Given the amount of traffic on the road, there are opportunities to attract businesses that like the location, proximity to major transportation infrastructure, and level of commuter traffic. The intention should be first to redevelop any underutilized parcels, removing blighted buildings and improving the overall appearance and vibrancy of Route 6.

Specifically, the types of uses most likely to be attracted to this corridor include limited service/grab-and-go food service, transportation/logistics/distribution/warehousing (including self storage), brewery or other destination food production, and gardening nursery or landscaping services. Define design guidelines to ensure that development aligns with the desired aesthetic of the community.

Examples of Design Guidelines in Nearby Rhode Island Communities.



The Route 6 corridor is a prime location for industrial/commercial development and would be able to offer the potential to diversify the tax base while maintaining the rural character and limiting the impact on the rest of the town. To pursue this type of development, the Town of Foster can:

- Establish an inventory of the existing properties along Route 6 that are vacant or underutilized and potential opportunities for redevelopment.
- Work with property owners, review zoning, and evaluate the permitting process to streamline and incentivize the type of development desired.
- Conduct outreach to regional entities to make them aware of the opportunities.
- Complete permitting and/or infrastructure projects for properties identified for development to be primed for investment.
- Assess any related brownfield issues and document what is needed for development.
- Pursue eligibility through the RIReady program.
- Establish and promote available tax credits or financial incentives for businesses looking to locate or make improvements to properties in designated areas. For example, the town's Tax Stabilization Incentive for Industrial, Commercial, and Manufacturing facilities. In addition, look to programs available from the State of Rhode Island Commerce Corporation to fund blight removal and redevelopment.

b) **Small mixed-use retail center:** This type of development would work well at the intersection of Route 6 and Foster Center Road. With the new police station already slated for development at this intersection, it would be appropriate to create a node of development around that Route 6 and Foster Center Road that could provide first-floor retail space along with upper floor residential apartments or senior housing. By outlining clear design guidelines for the number of stories, curb cuts, landscaping, and other aesthetic requirements, the development could provide a significant tax base, provide a community center space for the town and meet the needs of both residents and visitors. To pursue this type of development, the Town of Foster can:

- Work with existing property owners in the area to identify opportunities and interest in redevelopment.
- Establish appropriate zoning to allow for more dense development within the node.
- Identify regional developers doing similar types of projects and make them aware of the opportunity.

c) **Outside Route 6 corridor:** Outside of the main commercial corridors and village center nodes, there exist opportunities to diversify the tax base while maintaining Foster's rural character through farm-based businesses, such as local food production,

agritourism, wineries, breweries, cideries, outdoor recreation uses, and more. Creating destinations throughout the town will support local farmers in their efforts, protect the agricultural landscape, and bring additional people to town. Additionally, more dense housing options, such as those geared towards seniors that want to live in a rural setting with access to natural resources would also be appropriate and beneficial to the town's property tax rates.

- Establish appropriate zoning to allow for desired development within non-commercial corridors.
- Create an incentive program for farm-based businesses and desired development types.

### 2.3 Enhance Small Business and Entrepreneurial

**Environment:** In addition to business attraction, Foster should seek to develop small businesses by supporting entrepreneurs and home businesses. These businesses are more likely to stay and grow in Foster and can help accelerate economic development. Steps Foster can take to support small businesses and entrepreneurs include:

- a) Continue to update the inventory of businesses in Foster on the [Town's online yellow pages website](#) and celebrate micro-businesses and entrepreneurs in Foster. This can be done via networks and word of mouth, as well as community events, yard sales, craft fairs, and other similar environments.
- b) Use this list to communicate with business owners to identify what help they may need, how they may be able to partner with the Town, what resources would help them be more successful, and how the Town can support them. Support efforts by business owners to collaborate and expand their marketing reach, knowledge base, and resources.
- c) Add information about entrepreneurial support resources like those at [Social Enterprise Greenhouse](#) and [Rhode Island Commerce](#) to Foster's business website, and meet with state officials to network, learn, and collaborate around supporting small business development.
- d) Look into the feasibility of establishing a way to expand marketing and sales opportunities for small businesses, including expanded offerings at Old Home Days, creating a cooperative retail establishment (like in the old barn near Town Hall), or an online sales platform.



Example of a shop that sells locally made products in New York called The Olde Mercantile. They have a physical presence and an online store.

**2.4 Take Steps to Support Farm-Based Businesses:** Foster's many farms are a community strength, and finding ways to support and celebrate these local businesses will strengthen Foster's economy while also helping retain the overall sense of place within the community. Actions the Town can take to develop and grow farm-related businesses in Foster include:

- a) Establish an Agricultural Commission to serve on behalf of the farming community. Agriculture commissions are established to protect agricultural lands, preserve the rural character, provide a voice for farmers, and support agriculture-based businesses.
- b) Bring farmers together to discuss ways to collaborate, improve, and monetize small business activities among those who wish to grow their businesses.
- c) Pursue a feasibility analysis to create an indoor, year-round farmers market in the unused barn by Town Hall. Use this space to showcase local products, provide expanded market opportunities, and increase visibility to new customers. In the interim, review regulations regarding ability to sell products from a farm stand on the road.
- d) Encourage the creation of new craft food and beverage enterprises in Foster through review of zoning regulations to make sure they are allowed, providing access to training programs to support new business owners, and establishing a funding pool to help with startup costs. Work with Relish Rhody (statewide effort to support sustainable food system in Rhode Island) to identify potential resources to support new and expanding food related enterprises.
- e) Work with existing organizations in town to develop a cultural assets/agritourism trail that bring visitors to Foster's various farms, craft foods and beverages, historic village center, recreational assets, and natural areas. Map out the resources for users to visit by bike (road or mountain) or by car and promote it throughout the region. Look for opportunities to partner with neighboring communities to expand the trail and destinations.
- f) Connect local operators to regional workforce development programs and business support services to help them modernize and diversify their operations.



Example of an Agritourism-based event in Vermont.

**2.5 Encourage Expansion of Outdoor Recreation Uses:** Foster’s natural beauty and environmental assets are one of its biggest strengths. The town can leverage these assets by promoting and supporting outdoor recreation as a way to bring people into the community and support local businesses while still protecting its natural resources and rural character. Efforts that can support outdoor recreation include:

- a) Promote existing assets, including the highest point in the state and the many trails maintained by the Land Trust. Update trail maps and make sure they are readily accessible in multiple formats and in locations around the town.
- b) Expand the local trail and outdoor recreation network. Look into opportunity to expand connections for horseback riding, mountain biking, fatbiking, snowshoeing (see Kingdom Trails information below), disc golf, and other activities. Work with local landowners who may be interested in offering more intensive uses, like zip lining or ropes courses.
- c) Investigate the potential to host a trail race series in Foster and expand the use of the existing systems regionally. Talk to the South Foster Fire Station about their annual road race and potential for expansion.
- d) Conduct a feasibility analysis to determine the potential for expanded public access to amenities, including through property acquisition by the Town, public-private partnerships, and easements.

### **Foster Land Trust**

The Foster Land Trust is uniquely situated in the town’s economic development landscape. It can acquire, hold, and manage property and determine the level of development on its properties in order to help preserve the town’s natural resources.

The Foster Land Trust currently owns 900 acres of land and provides public access to eight trails.

### **Kingdom Trails**

The Kingdom Trails in northeastern Vermont offer 100+ miles of high-quality, non-motorized, multi-use, year-round trails. First founded in 1994, the Kingdom Trails generate an estimated \$10 million in annual economic impact for the region by attracting visitors from all over the world.

The trail network is possible thanks to 100+ private landowners who allow the public to cross their property along the trails. The Kingdom Trail Association offers daily, monthly, and annual memberships to cover the costs associated with trail maintenance. An adult day membership costs \$20 and residents can purchase an annual membership for \$75.

## What is an Agricultural Commission?

Source: [New Hampshire Municipal Association website](#)

Establishing an agricultural commission is an option for communities that value their local farms and rural character, keeping land in open space, and healthy, locally produced foods. An agricultural commission has no regulatory or enforcement authority and focuses primarily on agriculture. It will typically work cooperatively with other town or city governments and land use boards and commissions to make sure the concerns and interests of farmers are better understood and considered in their decision-making processes. An agricultural commission may:

- Advise and work with other boards and commissions on issues facing farming in the town
- Conduct inventories of agricultural resources, historic farms, and farm buildings
- Educate the public on matters relating to farming and agriculture
- Serve as a local voice advocating for farmers, farm businesses, and farm interests
- Provide visibility for farming
- Give farmers a place to go to for help
- Help resolve farm-related problems or conflicts
- Help protect farmland and other natural resources

Agricultural commissions serve as an information bridge between farm businesses and the non-farm public. Agricultural commissions provide a positive way for the governing bodies of the town to consider the effects on agriculture before taking action. Other potential activities of an agricultural commission may include:

- Publicizing farm retail outlets in the town
- Fundraising for farmland protection and economic development
- Providing mediation and conflict resolution on farm-related disputes
- Collaborating with other town boards to review development proposals
- Holding educational workshops on intergenerational transfer of property
- Conducting an inventory of farms and barns
- Discussing state and federal grant and land protection programs
- Starting local farmers' markets
- Adopting local Right-to-Farm bylaws
- Hosting farm festivals and events

## GOAL 3: ALIGN CAPACITY FOR GROWTH WITH COMMUNITY VALUES

### 3.1 Review and Update Zoning to Protect Rural Character and Direct Growth to Commercial Corridors and Nodes:

While 98% of the land in Foster is zoned as agricultural/residential, the Town can move forward with zoning updates to incentivize desired kinds (and locations) of businesses that are in line with community values and achieve the desired diversified tax base. Steps that can be taken include:

- a) Initiate an ongoing community conversation effort about the future of Foster and what that can look like. Include renderings, image examples, community conversations, and financial modeling that demonstrate how different levels of development will have different effects on the tax base. Build off the community survey to help engage residents and collect feedback.
- b) Reach out to property owners along key corridors to understand where there is potential to assemble property for the type of development desired.
- c) Use information gathered from the community visioning and property owner discussions to update the current zoning. Focus rezoning efforts along key commercial corridors and within commercial nodes to allow for increased development that aligns with the community's desire to diversify the tax base while maintaining its rural character.
  - Create a basic economic and fiscal impact model that considers the implications of different types of land use types on public resources (both positive and negative). Use this model to inform zoning decisions.
  - Focus development on areas with infrastructure, underutilized existing development, access to community services, and ease of transportation options for the workforce.
  - Incorporate environmental zoning overlays to protect water and natural resources.
  - Work with the Town Planner to develop zoning along commercial corridors that allow for commercial and/or residential development to allow property owners to sell for the highest return on their investment.

### Design Guidelines

One way to continue to develop Foster without losing the essence of its rural character is to implement design guidelines that maintain environment, history, and visual landscape of Foster. Design considerations can include:

- **Building Placement**
  - Limit visibility from the road through setbacks
  - Cluster nonresidential development
- **Landscaping**
  - Naturalistic requirements
  - Use existing natural features
  - Landscape buffers
- **Signage**
  - Dictate size, style, and location
  - RIDOT guidelines
- **Building Design and Architecture**
  - Appropriateness of height and size so as not to be obtrusive to local landscape
  - Building materials
- **Road Design Requirements**
  - Lane/roadway width limits
  - Limit curb cuts
- **Lighting**
  - Comply with dark sky ordinance



- Create a one page informational guide that includes details about what the rezoning would and would not allow to be used with the general public and property owners to ensure accurate information is being distributed.
- d) Develop design guidelines that reflect the rural nature of the community.
- e) Establish a range of rural-based businesses that would be allowed along Route 6 and provide finance assistance to those developing in line with the community vision.

### **3.2 Investigate the Potential for Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to Guide Growth:**

- a) Pursue funding to conduct an initial feasibility analysis of whether Tax Increment Financing would be a useful tool to incentivize economic development.
- b) Coordinate with the State of Rhode Island about use of TIF and potential infrastructure investments that are needed.
- c) If determined to be feasible, implement the TIF.

## **Tax Increment Financing in Rhode Island**

### **What is Tax Increment Financing (TIF)?**

TIF is a process by which a municipality allows some or all future property tax revenues from development to support and finance public and private development costs, including those for infrastructure, projects, and programs related to economic development.

In Rhode Island, qualified development projects can include infrastructure, new facilities that will increase the number of jobs in the state, or subsidies toward a project that will contribute to a community's economic development. TIF is **not** a new tax or special assessment on top of existing property taxes.

### **Key Considerations**

- A TIF requires a clear economic development purpose and should include a land use plan, local approval/community engagement, and a plan for implementation, monitoring, tracking, and reporting.
- Municipal officials, assessment/finance staff, developers, and the public should be involved in the TIF district creation.
- Develop a clear purpose and guidelines. Incentives provided to one project typically serve as a benchmark for future requests.
- There is a tradeoff between TIF and General funds — funding for a TIF cannot be used for General Fund purposes. The portion of incremental revenues not dedicated for TIF goes toward the Town's general fund and property tax revenues function normally once the TIF expires.
- The Town assessor should be involved early and often, as understanding current and potential future values is critical. Revenue potential should be estimated conservatively.
- Use of TIFs should be part of an overall long-term economic development strategy.

For more information on [Tax Increment Financing in Rhode Island](#), visit [Rhode Island Commerce](#).

**3.3 Enhance Capacity Within the Town:** As a small town, Foster has historically had limited resources to fund planning and economic development. This limited capacity has been a significant barrier to accomplishing goals related to economic development. Increasing capacity, including through professionalizing staff positions and establishing key commissions, could help address the organizational challenges that are hindering development efforts.

- a) Professionalize the planning and code enforcement work by making them full time, hired positions insulated as much as possible from political pressures. This will aid in recruitment/retention, develop more capacity and institutional knowledge, and help maintain independence and credibility in development efforts. Revisit planning and code enforcement job descriptions and related performance measures. Update as needed to provide clarity around expectations, responsibilities, and roles with a focus on implementation of the Town’s economic development goals. Conduct exit interviews to help understand and address high turn over rate.
- b) Explore funding sources that would support additional staff to aid in grant writing and administration, economic development plan implementation, and specific business development projects.
- c) Establish (reestablish) the Economic Development Commission and charge it with implementation of the Economic Development Strategic Plan. Members of other Town boards and committees with relevant skills and knowledge for economic development should be included on this commission. Use this team as advocates or ambassadors for right-sized economic development in Foster, to communicate the work being done, and help ease tensions surrounding the issue in the town. Require regular reporting to the Town Council and participation in planning-related efforts throughout the town. See side bar on this

### **Diversity of Representation on the Economic Development Commission**

Example from the Town of Warren’s Economic Development Board bylaws:

Total membership of the board shall be seven (7) voting members, all of whom will be appointed by the Town Council. Initial appointees shall be for the following terms: Three shall be appointed for three-year terms, two shall be appointed for two-year terms, and two shall be appointed for one year terms. Thereafter, as terms expire, appointments other than interim appointments shall be made in January and shall be for terms of three years. Members shall serve without compensation. The Town Council will solicit, but not be limited to, applications for membership from the following groups:

- (a) Local Chamber of Commerce.
- (b) Service, food and retail sector.
- (c) Tourism and hospitality sector.
- (d) Manufacturing sector.
- (e) Arts and Culture sector.
- (f) General Public.

Note: The Town of Foster may also want to include representation from the agriculture community sector.

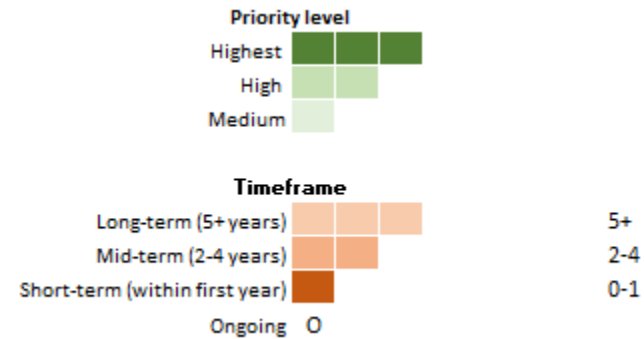
page for guidance on ensuring diversity in representation on the Economic Development Commission.

**3.4 Expand Capacity for Boards:** Foster can augment its community-oriented projects and initiatives by making it easier for more people to participate, helping those already involved deepen their knowledge, and by targeting residents who are less likely to be part of town planning processes. These actions include:

- a) Use the onboarding process for new board members as a time to share information about the connections between economic development, community development, quality of life, and the specific board they are joining. This could include reviewing this plan, the Comprehensive Plan, community survey results, and other materials to reinforce the role of boards in furthering the goals of the community.
- b) Establish a clear code of conduct and ethics for town officials and board members. Require regular training/retraining for all that engage with the public to begin to improve the reputation of Foster and improve the overall experience of meeting attendees. Identify a training program that includes content related to ethical behavior, how to address the public/fellow board members, need for professionalism during meetings, and how to receive feedback.
- c) Direct boards to be more inclusive of different voices who may not typically engage with community planning efforts, including outlining requirements for expectations of representation. Ways to enhance outreach to key individuals representing diverse backgrounds include advertising board membership opportunities widely in the community, offering flexibility in meeting times, providing wrap around services (childcare, transportation, meals, etc.), and other best practices to allow for greater participation.
- d) Improve access to public meetings by installing better equipment in the Ben Eddy Building to allow for virtual as well as in-person participation. Consider installing signage outside the Ben Eddy building to build awareness of meetings and advertise opportunities for resident involvement.

# ACTION PLAN MATRIX

The following Action Plan Matrix provides a summary of the more detailed strategy outlined above. It also provides priority level, timeframe, and partner information.



GOAL 1: IMPROVE THE SENSE OF PLACE ALONG COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS						
Strategy	Tactics	Priority	Timeframe	Resources	Town Partners	
<b>1.1 Improve the Appearance of Route 6</b>	a) Install large Welcome to Foster signs.	High	Short-term	Cost: Medium Staff: High	Property owners, Department of Transportation, Department of Environmental Management	
	b) Conduct full review and update of current code requirements and begin consistent enforcement.	High	Short-term			
	c) Begin first stages of documentation and/or remediation of brownfield-related issues.	High	Mid-term			
	d) Establish funding stream to assist property owners with making needed upgrades.	High	Mid-term			
<b>1.2 Consider Opportunities for Route 101</b>	a) Install large Welcome to Foster signs.	High	Short-term	Cost: Low Staff: Low	Property owners, Department of Transportation, Department of Environmental Management	
	b) Establish an inventory of underdeveloped parcels along Route 101.	High	Short-term			
	c) Reach out to owners of key parcels to see if they have interest in redevelopment.	High	Mid-term			
	d) Create collateral materials promoting key parcels and distribute to raise awareness.	High	Mid-term			
<b>1.3 Market Foster's Place-Based Assets</b>	a) Further promote events and festivals in Foster.	High	Mid-term	Cost: Medium Staff: High	Festival and event producers, asset owners/managers	
	b) Expand wayfinding to make travelers aware of various assets to visit.	High	Mid-term			
	c) Promote Foster's natural environment and proximity to Providence to brand the town.	High	Mid-term			

GOAL 2: DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY						
Strategy	Tactics	Priority	Timeframe	Resources	Town Partners	
2.1 Improve the Town's Reputation	a) Promote this plan to a wide audience and educate local official and members of boards about their role in implementing. b) Complete a professional update of the Town's website. c) Build relationships with real estate agents, state officials, and regional economic development professionals. d) Promote Foster through various channels, including social media. Train officials on how to handle engaging in online discourse.			Cost: Medium Staff: High	Realtors, regional economic development professionals, third party expert to assist with website design	
2.2 Encourage Appropriate Businesses Development and Redevelopment Opportunities	a) Direct development to Route 6 through inventory of existing uses, assessing infrastructure and brownfield issues, pursuing RIReady eligibility, establishing tax credits and other incentives. b) Small mixed-use retail center for the intersection of Route 6 and Foster Center Road to include first floor retail and upper story residential apartments (including possible senior housing). c) Outside of the main commercial corridor and village center nodes, focus on encouraging businesses that want a more natural setting such as local food and beverage production, agritourism, outdoor recreation, and senior housing.			Cost: Medium Staff: High	Property owners, Rhode Island Commerce Corporation	
2.3 Enhance Small Business and Entrepreneurial Environment	a) Create a list of existing micro-businesses and entrepreneurs in Foster. b) Communicate with business owners to identify where their needs are. c) Add entrepreneurial support resources to Town's website. d) Look into the feasibility of establishing a way to expand marketing and sales opportunities, such as expanded offerings at Old Home Days, creating a cooperative retail establishment, or online sales platform.			Cost: Low Staff: Low	Business owners, entrepreneurship programs	
2.4 Take Steps to Support Farm-Based Businesses	a) Establish an Agricultural Commission. b) Bring farmers together to discuss opportunities to collaborate, improve, and monetize small business activities. c) Pursue feasibility analysis to create an indoor, year-round farmers market to showcase local products. d) Encourage the creation of new craft food and beverage enterprises by reviewing zoning and start up assistance opportunities. e) Create a cultural assets/agritourism trail throughout Foster. f) Connect local operators with regional workforce development and business support resources.			Cost: Low Staff: Low	Entrepreneurship programs, higher education, third party expert to assist with feasibility analysis	
2.5 Encourage Expansion of Outdoor Recreation Uses	a) Promote existing assets and update trail maps. b) Expand local trail and outdoor recreation network to include new activities. c) Look to host events or trail race series in Foster to expand use. d) Conduct a feasibility analysis to determine potential for expanded public access to amenities.			Cost: Medium Staff: Low	Property owners, Land Trust, Audubon Society	

GOAL 3: ALIGN CAPACITY FOR GROWTH WITH COMMUNITY VALUES					
Strategy	Tactics	Priority	Timeframe	Resources	Town Partners
<b>3.1 Review and Update Zoning to Protect Rural Character and Direct Growth to Commercial Corridors and Nodes</b>	a) Initiate a community visioning/consensus engagement effort about the future of Foster.	■	■	■	
	b) Reach out to property owners along key corridors to understand where there is potential to assemble property for the type of development desired.	■	■	■	
	c) Use information gathered from the community visioning and property owner discussions to update the current zoning	■	■	■	
	d) Develop design guidelines that reflect the rural nature of the community	■	■	■	■
	e) Establish a range of rural-based businesses that would be allowed along Route 6 and provide tax incentives	■	■	■	■
<b>3.2 Investigate the Potential for Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to Guide Growth</b>	a) Pursue funding to conduct an initial feasibility analysis of whether Tax Increment Financing would be a useful tool to incentivize economic development	■	■	■	■
	b) Coordinate with the State of Rhode Island about use of TIF and potential infrastructure investments	■	■	■	■
	c) Pursue TIF if determined to be feasible.	■	■	■	■
<b>3.3 Enhance Capacity Within the Town</b>	a) Professionalize the planning and code enforcement work by making them full time, hired positions.	■	■	■	■
	b) Explore funding sources that would support additional staff.	■	■	■	■
	c) Establish (reestablish) the Economic Development Commission and charge it with implementation of the Economic Development Strategic Plan.	■	■	○	
<b>3.4 Expand Capacity for Boards</b>	a) Use the onboarding process for new board members as a time to share information about this Economic Development Plan and the role they play in implementation.	■	■	○	
	b) Establish a clear code of conduct and ethics for town officials and board members	■	■	○	
	c) Encourage boards to be more inclusive of different voices who may not typically engage with community planning efforts	■	■	■	■

# APPENDIX A - DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE

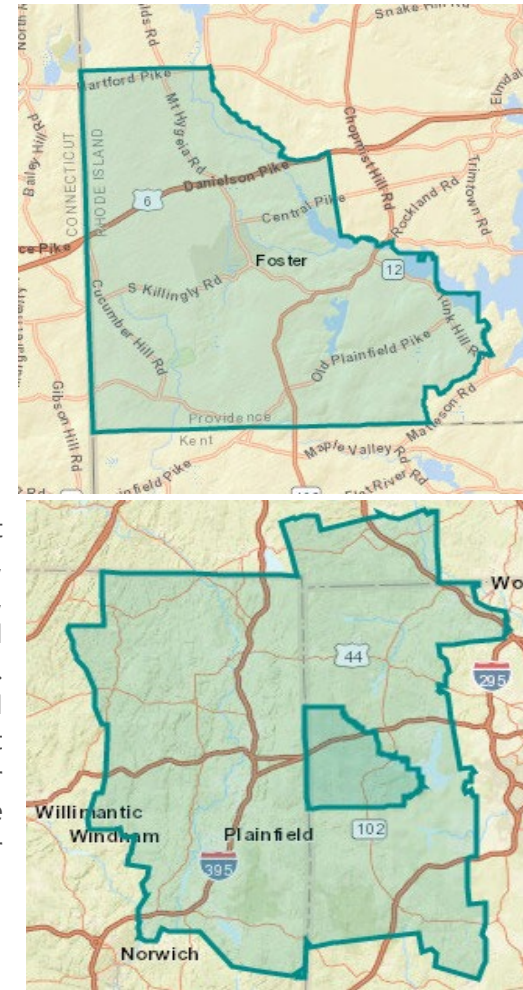
# DATA ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

## STUDY REGIONS

Study of the Town of Foster<sup>2</sup> will establish a baseline of macroeconomic indicators that will help guide discussions around the potential redevelopment in the Town. As an initial step, two regions for analysis were identified - the Town of Foster and a Forty-Two Zip Code<sup>3</sup> Surrounding Region. Demographic and economic conditions within both the Town and region are determined by a variety of factors that interrelate with conditions in the wider area, including state and national level trends. Throughout this analysis the Town of Foster, Forty-Two Zip Code Region, and State of Rhode Island are the areas used for analysis.

## DATA SOURCES

Much of the data in this report was acquired from Esri Business Analyst Online (Esri) and Lightcast, formerly Economic Modeling Specialists International (Emsi). Esri uses the 2000, 2010, and 2020 Census along with the 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) as its base data. It also employs proprietary statistical modeling and additional data from the US Census Bureau and other sources to project current statistics and future trends. Lightcast data are often used for economic development, marketing, site selection, and strategic decision making. Emsi uses data compiled from several sources, including the US Census Bureau and the US Health and Labor Departments. Using specialized proprietary processes and models, it provides estimates on current statistics and predicts future trends. The data used are from Lightcast's Complete Employment data set, which includes both jobs covered and uncovered by unemployment insurance. In other words, it includes both traditional employment and non-traditional employment such as the self-employed. As traditional jobs have been replaced or augmented by freelance work, consulting, and self-employment, these non-covered jobs have become much more important to the economy, and Lightcast provides researchers with a way to track their trends over time.



<sup>2</sup> Data for the Town of Foster is available at the zip code level (02825)

<sup>3</sup> Towns within 20 miles of Foster with less than 500 people/square mile. Includes: Douglas, Uxbridge, Chapachet, Clayville, Coventry, West Greenwich, Exeter, Forestdale, Foster, Glendale, Greene, Harrisville, Hope, Mapleville, North Scituate, Oakland, Pascoag, Slatersville, North Smithfield, Brooklyn, Danielson, Dayville, Eastford, East Killingly, Hampton, North Grosvendale, Pomfret Center, Putnam, Quinebaug, Rogers, Thompson, Woodstock, Woodstock Valley, Canterbury, Central Village, Jewett City, Moosup, Oneco, Plainfield, Sterling, Voluntown, Wauregen.



## DEMOGRAPHICS SUMMARY

- ◆ With a 0.05% decrease since 2010, the Town of Foster has seen a slight population decline over the past decade. The broader region has seen modest growth (+0.94%), but growth has been slower than that of the state's population overall (4.64%).
- ◆ The number of households have grown in the town and region but remained stable at the state level.
- ◆ The median age of the population is slightly older in Foster (48 years) than in the region (45 years) and the state (41 years).
- ◆ The median income for the residents of the Town of Foster (\$103,406) is higher than the median income for the residents of the region (\$85,646). The median income in Foster is 135% of the median income for the Rhode Island (\$76,687).
- ◆ Foster's population is 97% White, 1% Asian, 1.1% Two or More Races, and <1% all other groups.

### Demographic Profile

Population	2010	2022	% Change
Town of Foster	5,461	5,406	-1.01%
Region	226,946	229,081	0.94%
Rhode Island	1,052,567	1,101,372	4.64%
<b>Town of Foster Percentage of Region</b>	<b>2.41%</b>	<b>2.36%</b>	<b>-0.05%</b>
Households	2010	2022	% Change
Town of Foster	2,001	2,059	2.90%
Region	86,274	90,908	5.37%
Rhode Island	413,600	413,600	0.00%
<b>Town of Foster Percentage of Region</b>	<b>2.32%</b>	<b>2.26%</b>	<b>-0.05%</b>
Median Age	2010	2022	% Change
Town of Foster	44	48	8.43%
Region	42	45	7.62%
Rhode Island	39	41	4.83%

Source: ESRI

### 2022 Household Income

	Town of Foster	Region	Rhode Island
Median Household Income	\$103,406	\$85,646	\$76,687
Percent of State Household Income	135%	112%	100%

Source: ESRI

## AGE DISTRIBUTION

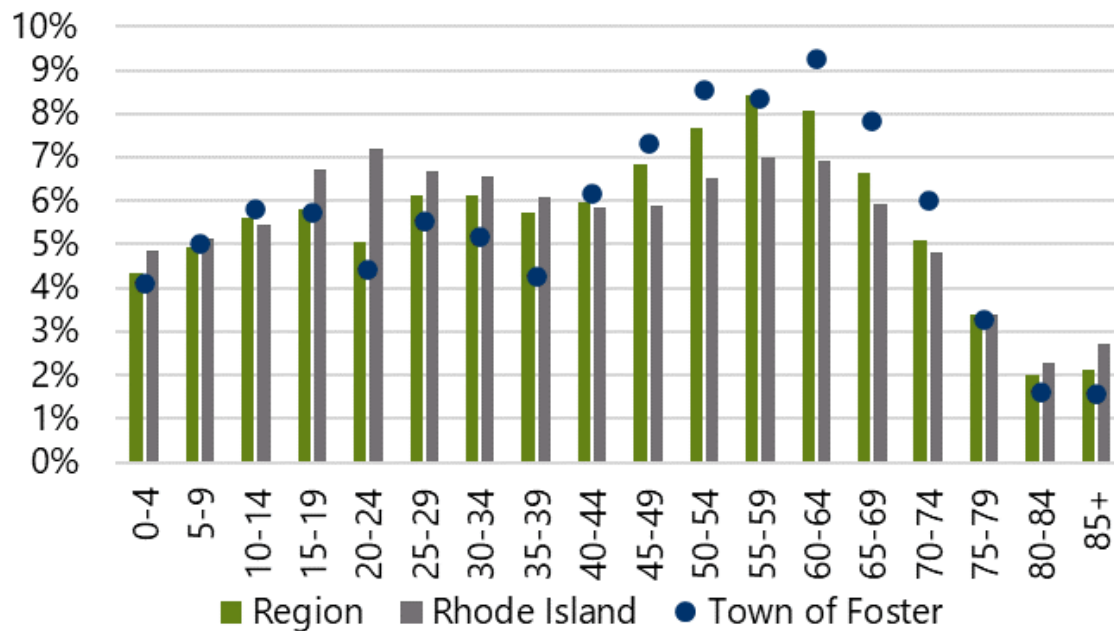
- ◆ Both the Town of Foster and the region have a higher concentration of their population between 40 to 69 years old and between 10 and 19 years old, and a smaller percentage of residents between 20 and 39 years old, than Rhode Island as a whole.
- ◆ Compared to the surrounding region and Rhode Island overall, Foster has a higher percentage of their population between the ages of 40 to 69 years old.

### 2022 Age Distribution

	Town of Foster	Region	Rhode Island
0-4	4%	4%	5%
5-9	5%	5%	5%
10-14	6%	6%	5%
15-19	6%	6%	7%
20-24	4%	5%	7%
25-29	6%	6%	7%
30-34	5%	6%	7%
35-39	4%	6%	6%
40-44	6%	6%	6%
45-49	7%	7%	6%
50-54	9%	8%	7%
55-59	8%	8%	7%
60-64	9%	8%	7%
65-69	8%	7%	6%
70-74	6%	5%	5%
75-79	3%	3%	3%
80-84	2%	2%	2%
85+	2%	2%	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>41</b>

Source: ESRI

### Age Distribution, 2022

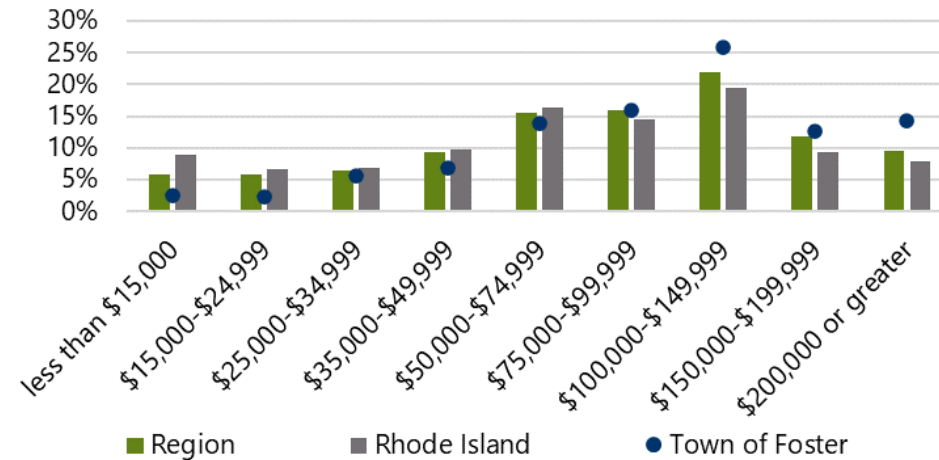


Source: ESRI

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

- ◆ Annual median income for households in Rhode Island was \$76,687 in 2021.
- ◆ Median household income within the Town of Foster is \$103,406, approximately 135% of the state's median household income. Regional household median income is 112% that of the state (\$85,646).
- ◆ 4% of households in the Town of Foster earn less than \$25,000 compared to 12% of the region's households and 16% of Rhode Island households.
- ◆ At the other end of the income distribution, 53% of Town of Foster households earn over \$100,000 annually while 44% region's households and 37% of households in the state of Rhode Island earn the same amount.

**Income Distribution, 2022**



Source: ESRI

**2022 Income Distribution**

	Town of Foster	Region	Rhode Island
less than \$15,000	2%	6%	9%
\$15,000-\$24,999	2%	6%	7%
\$25,000-\$34,999	6%	7%	7%
\$35,000-\$49,999	7%	9%	10%
\$50,000-\$74,999	14%	15%	16%
\$75,000-\$99,999	16%	16%	15%
\$100,000-\$149,999	26%	22%	20%
\$150,000-\$199,999	13%	12%	9%
\$200,000 or greater	14%	10%	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>2,058</b>	<b>88,825</b>	<b>443,641</b>
<b>Median Household Income</b>	<b>\$103,406</b>	<b>\$85,646</b>	<b>\$76,687</b>

Source: ESRI

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

- ◆ The Town of Foster has a similar concentration of residents with Some College or an associate degree (31%) as the surrounding region (30%) and, more than Rhode Island overall (25%).
- ◆ The Town of Foster has a lower concentration of residents with less than high school (3%) compared to the region (7%) or the state (10%).
- ◆ The town has higher overall levels of educational attainment compared to both the region and the state.
- ◆ The town and the state have the same percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree (22%) and advanced degree (14%).

**Educational Attainment, 25+, 2022**



Source: ESRI

**Educational Attainment 25+ , 2022**

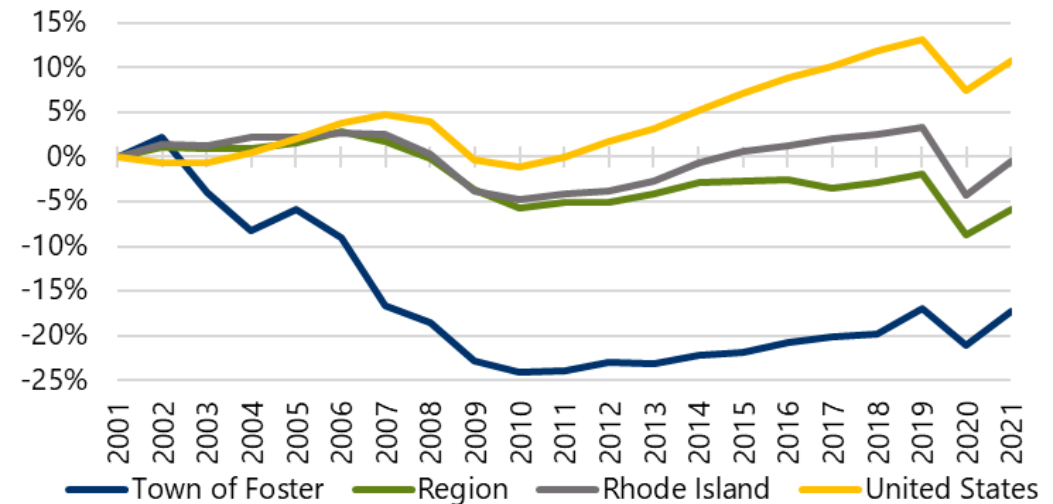
	Town of Foster	Region	Rhode Island
Less Than High School	3%	7%	10%
High School	30%	31%	28%
Some College or Associates	31%	30%	25%
Bachelor's Degree	22%	20%	22%
Advanced Degree	14%	11%	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: ESRI

## JOB COUNT OVER TIME

- ◆ The Town of Foster experienced a decrease in jobs compared to 2001, from 2002 through 2011.
- ◆ From 2011 on, jobs began to slightly rebound from their historic lows, but not yet climb to 2001 level.
- ◆ The job decrease in both the town and region was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic which hit the US in 2019 and slowed the increase in jobs that had been occurring over the last eight years.
- ◆ Renewed economic activity over the first half of 2021 brought a rebound in jobs at the state and country level.
- ◆ The Town of Foster and the region were able to add new jobs following the pandemic but still not return to their 2001 totals.

**Job Change, 2001-2021**



Source: Lightcast

## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED)

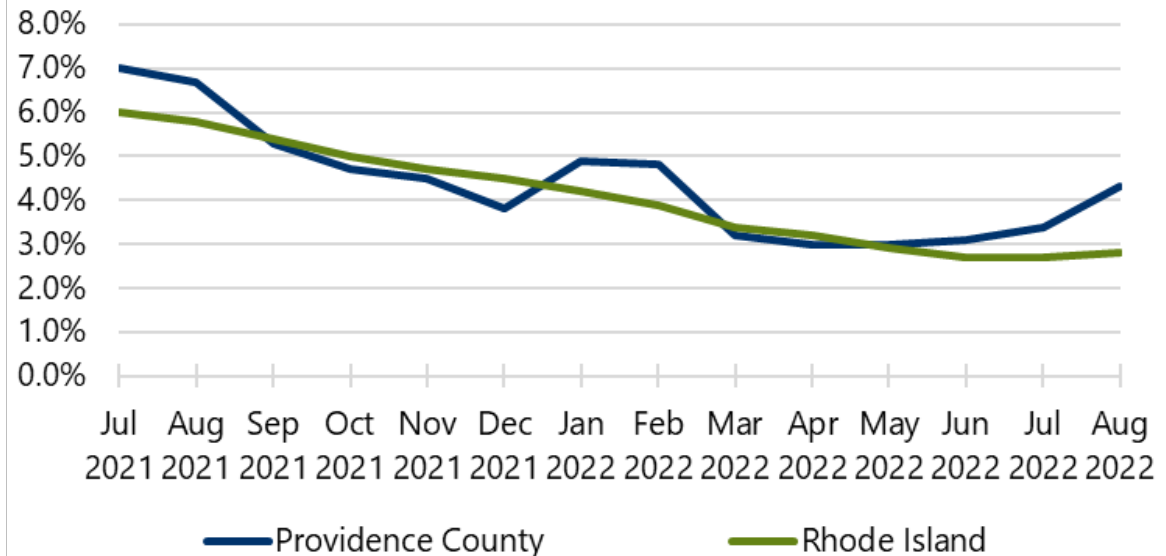
- ◆ The unemployment rate in Providence County has been higher than that of the Rhode Island since May 2022.
- ◆ Unemployment peaked in both the state (6% unemployment rate) and the county (7% unemployment rate) in July 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ◆ The unemployment rate in Providence County has been trending downward since its peak in July 2021, with an increase from December 2021 to March 2022 as well as June to August 2022.

### Unemployment Rate 2021-2022

	Providence County	Rhode Island
Jul 2021	7.0%	6.0%
Aug 2021	6.7%	5.8%
Sep 2021	5.3%	5.4%
Oct 2021	4.7%	5.0%
Nov 2021	4.5%	4.7%
Dec 2021	3.8%	4.5%
Jan 2022	4.9%	4.2%
Feb 2022	4.8%	3.9%
Mar 2022	3.2%	3.4%
Apr 2022	3.0%	3.2%
May 2022	3.0%	2.9%
Jun 2022	3.1%	2.7%
Jul 2022	3.4%	2.7%
Aug 2022	4.3%	2.8%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Statistics

### Unemployment Rate, 2021-2022



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Statistics

## INDUSTRY TRENDS

### 2022 Location Quotients and Average Earnings

NAICS	Description	Town of Foster			Region		
		Jobs	Location Quotient	Avg. Earnings Per Job	Jobs	Location Quotient	Avg. Earnings Per Job
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	66	4.38	\$33,897	1,528	1.74	\$59,044
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	-	0.00	\$0	135	0.60	\$82,999
22	Utilities	39	9.68	\$189,944	709	2.99	\$188,610
23	Construction	164	2.34	\$68,806	5,607	1.37	\$72,974
31	Manufacturing	54	0.58	\$62,962	7,338	1.35	\$81,072
42	Wholesale Trade	48	1.13	\$67,217	1,870	0.75	\$88,520
44	Retail Trade	119	1.01	\$34,230	8,701	1.26	\$42,877
48	Transportation and Warehousing	28	0.55	\$60,877	3,190	1.05	\$60,447
51	Information	30	1.33	\$62,889	320	0.24	\$95,855
52	Finance and Insurance	-	0.00	\$0	1,715	0.58	\$112,505
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	-	0.00	\$0	451	0.37	\$70,203
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	-	0.00	\$0	2,792	0.56	\$94,324
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	-	0.00	\$0	200	0.20	\$58,834
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	< 10	0.12	\$64,081	2,288	0.53	\$50,725
61	Educational Services	28	0.87	\$57,200	1,948	1.04	\$50,583
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	38	0.24	\$52,387	9,720	1.06	\$58,275
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	-	0.00	\$0	827	0.76	\$29,754
72	Accommodation and Food Services	62	0.67	\$29,834	4,585	0.85	\$30,064
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	65	1.06	\$20,984	3,272	0.92	\$34,095
90	Government	457	2.61	\$95,469	13,344	1.31	\$89,122
99	Unclassified Industry	-	0.00	\$0	< 10	0.00	Insf. Data
<b>Average</b>				<b>\$43,344</b>			<b>\$73,255</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,132</b>			<b>69,012</b>		

Source: Lightcast

- ◆ The region's agricultural legacy is reflected in industry data. Both the Town of Foster and the region have a higher concentration of jobs in the Agriculture, Forest, Fishing and Hunting industry as compared to the United States.
- ◆ Utilities jobs are highly concentrated in the Town of Foster and the Region as well as having higher average earnings than the average earnings and median household income for both the town and region.
- ◆ There is a relatively high concentration of Construction industry jobs the Town of Foster, 2.34x the national average.
- ◆ Foster has relatively fewer Accommodation and Food Service establishments than the US average, and less than the surrounding region.

*\*Note that the Town of Foster industry data is represented by ZIP Code*

## TOP INDUSTRIES, FOSTER ZIP CODE

### 2022 Top Industries by Percent Growth, Foster Zip Code

NAICS	Description	2022 Jobs	2012 - 2022 Change	2012 - 2022 % Change
238190	Other Foundation, Structure, and Building Exterior Contractors	39	27	227%
424910	Farm Supplies Merchant Wholesalers	33	19	132%
452311	Warehouse Clubs and Supercenters	61	28	86%
111000	Crop Production	66	30	83%
238990	All Other Specialty Trade Contractors	17	5	43%
611110	Elementary and Secondary Schools	27	7	36%
238220	Plumbing, Heating, and Air-Conditioning Contractors	25	5	22%
902999	State Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	202	29	17%
238340	Tile and Terrazzo Contractors	25	3	14%
238910	Site Preparation Contractors	21	2	8%
722511	Full-Service Restaurants	32	0	1%
901149	US Postal Service	128	1	1%

Source: Lightcast

### 2022 Top Industries by Job Count, Foster Zip Code

NAICS	Description	2022 Jobs	2012 - 2022 Change	2012 - 2022 % Change
902999	State Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	202	29	17%
901149	US Postal Service	128	1	1%
903611	Elementary and Secondary Schools (Local Government)	72	0	0%
111000	Crop Production	66	30	83%
452311	Warehouse Clubs and Supercenters	61	28	86%
903999	Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	55	-2	-3%
316998	All Other Leather Good and Allied Product Manufacturing	43	-5	-10%
452319	All Other General Merchandise Stores	39	-11	-22%
238190	Other Foundation, Structure, and Building Exterior Contractors	39	27	227%
424910	Farm Supplies Merchant Wholesalers	33	19	132%
722511	Full-Service Restaurants	32	0	1%
624410	Child Day Care Services	30	0	-1%

Source: Lightcast

- ◆ Other Foundation, Structure and Building Exterior Contractors grew by 227% or 27 jobs over the last decade.
- ◆ A majority of subsectors that that grew from 2012 to 2022 are within the Construction, Agriculture, and Government industries.
- ◆ General Merchandise Store jobs have decreased by 22% over the past 10 years.
- ◆ By number of jobs, the largest industry is State Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals, which has seen a 17% increase of jobs from 2012 to 2022.



## TOP INDUSTRIES, 42-ZIP CODE REGION AROUND FOSTER

- ◆ The region’s top three industries by percent growth from 2012 to 2022 are Water, Sewage, and Other Systems (11,975%), Freight and Transportation Arrangement (495%) and Investigation and Security Services (295%).
  
- ◆ The top three growing industries in the region by number of jobs in 2022 are Education and Hospitals (Local Government) (4,482 jobs), Restaurants and Other Eating Places (3,454 jobs), and Local Government Excluding Education and Hospitals (3,695 jobs).

**2022 Top Industries by Job Count, Region Zip Code**

NAICS	Description	2022 Jobs	2012 - 2022 Change	2012 - 2022 % Change
9036	Education and Hospitals (Local Government)	4,482	-379	-8%
7225	Restaurants and Other Eating Places	3,695	111	3%
9039	Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	3,454	-1,110	-24%
9029	State Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	2,512	55	2%
6241	Individual and Family Services	1,745	673	63%
5617	Services to Buildings and Dwellings	1,618	291	22%
4931	Warehousing and Storage	1,458	-37	-2%
2382	Building Equipment Contractors	1,419	270	23%
6231	Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	1,412	-364	-21%
9011	Federal Government, Civilian	1,353	39	3%
4451	Grocery Stores	1,349	-186	-12%
4522	Department Stores	1,318	-72	-5%
6111	Elementary and Secondary Schools	1,237	206	20%
4523	General Merchandise Stores, including Warehouse Clubs and Supercenters	1,154	199	21%
6221	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	1,128	-237	-17%
9012	Federal Government, Military	1,109	-91	-8%
2389	Other Specialty Trade Contractors	1,081	82	8%
4441	Building Material and Supplies Dealers	998	138	16%
3261	Plastics Product Manufacturing	970	136	16%
2381	Foundation, Structure, and Building Exterior Contractors	954	188	25%

Source: Lightcast

**2022 Top Industries by Percent Growth, Region Zip Code**

NAICS	Description	2022 Jobs	2012 - 2022 Change	2012 - 2022 % Change
2213	Water, Sewage and Other Systems	18	18	11,975%
4885	Freight Transportation Arrangement	154	128	495%
5616	Investigation and Security Services	128	96	295%
6117	Educational Support Services	42	29	229%
3131	Fiber, Yarn, and Thread Mills	30	19	175%
4539	Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	263	163	162%
6222	Psychiatric and Substance Abuse Hospitals	105	62	147%
2379	Other Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	61	35	138%
5619	Other Support Services	215	123	134%
4922	Local Messengers and Local Delivery	24	13	120%
5611	Office Administrative Services	34	18	110%
4243	Apparel, Piece Goods, and Notions Merchant Wholesalers	140	71	103%
3121	Beverage Manufacturing	138	68	98%
3241	Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing	27	13	95%
4234	Merchant Wholesalers	86	41	91%
6215	Medical and Diagnostic Laboratories	149	69	87%
4246	Chemical and Allied Products Merchant Wholesalers	32	14	83%
6219	Other Ambulatory Health Care Services	106	48	82%
3371	Manufacturing	88	39	81%
4533	Used Merchandise Stores	76	33	77%

Source: Lightcast

## TOP OCCUPATIONS, TOWN OF FOSTER

- ◆ The most prevalent occupation in the Town of Foster, Postal Service Mail Carriers, earns an average of \$55,331 annually.
- ◆ Other prevalent occupations in Foster support the retail, manufacturing, and agriculture industries.

### Top Occupations by Job Count, Town of Foster

SOC	Description	2022 Jobs	Avg. Annual Earnings
43-5052	Postal Service Mail Carriers	59	\$55,331
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	34	\$34,484
	Postal Service Mail Sorters, Processors, and Processing		
43-5053	Machine Operators	31	\$52,179
47-2031	Carpenters	30	\$59,273
41-2011	Cashiers	26	\$27,883
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	25	\$34,739
11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	25	\$45,289
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	24	\$42,993
39-9011	Childcare Workers	23	\$30,767
47-2061	Construction Laborers	21	\$52,663
33-3012	Correctional Officers and Jailers	20	\$67,987
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	20	\$41,731
	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and		
25-2031	Career/Technical Education	19	\$72,252
45-2092	Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	16	\$26,988
	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except		
41-4012	Technical and Scientific Products	15	\$71,247
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	14	\$72,279
25-9045	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	14	\$34,591
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	13	\$66,691
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	13	\$132,991
	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal,		
43-6014	Medical, and Executive	13	\$45,435

Source: Lightcast

### Top Occupations by Job Count, Region

SOC	Description	2022 Jobs	Avg. Annual Earnings
31-1128	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	2069	\$30,061
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	1991	\$33,212
41-2011	Cashiers	1938	\$27,478
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	1555	\$34,036
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	1147	\$128,593
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	1037	\$40,618
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	1035	\$40,965
	Landscaping and Groundskeeping		
37-3011	Workers	978	\$42,524
	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material		
53-7062	Movers, Hand	968	\$35,541
	Secondary School Teachers, Except		
25-2031	Special and Career/Technical Education	953	\$72,517
	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and		
37-2011	Housekeeping Cleaners	949	\$35,025
29-1141	Registered Nurses	934	\$82,283
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	918	\$27,433
47-2061	Construction Laborers	901	\$51,288
	Elementary School Teachers, Except		
25-2021	Special Education	893	\$73,719
	Teaching Assistants, Except		
25-9045	Postsecondary	885	\$34,278
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	838	\$34,406
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	832	\$29,442
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	823	\$51,884
	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants,		
43-6014	Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	800	\$44,939

Source: Lightcast

## REGIONAL FARM PRODUCTS

- ◆ In 2017, there were a total of 1,043 farms, producing \$12,432,000 worth of agricultural products in Providence County.
- ◆ 45% of all farmland in Providence County is used as pastureland, which produced 27% or \$3,400,000 of all agricultural products sold in the county.
- ◆ Pastureland is used for livestock, poultry, and products which in turn account for \$3,400,000 and 27% of all agricultural products sold in the county.

### Providence County Agricultural Overview, 2017

Number of Farms		Land in Farms (Acres)	Average Size of Farms	Market Value of Products	
2017	% Change Since 2012			2017	% Change Since 2012
1,043	145%	16,328	55	\$12,432,000	-12%

Source: USDA 2017 National Agricultural Census

### Providence County Land in Farms by Use, 2017

	Percent of Farm Land
Cropland	31%
Pastureland	45%
Woodland	14%
Other	10%
Land in Farms (Acres)	100%

Source: USDA 2017 National Agricultural Census

### Providence County Agricultural Products Sold

	Sales	Percent of County Products Sold
Crops	\$9,033,000	73%
Livestock, Poultry, and Products	\$3,400,000	27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,433,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: USDA 2017 National Agricultural Census

## AGRICULTURE PROFILE

- ◆ The top crops in Providence County in 2017 were horticultural products, vegetables, melons, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and fruits, tree nuts, and berries.
- ◆ Total Sales from crops in Providence County were \$9,033,000 and total sales from livestock, poultry, and products were \$3,400,000.
- ◆ 73% of total sales were in crops and 27% were in livestock, poultry, and products.
- ◆ Providence County’s highest sales related to Livestock, Poultry, and Products were in cattle and calves (\$213,000).

### Providence County Crops, 2017

	Sales
Fruits, tree nuts, berries	\$1,079,000
Grains and Corn	\$4,000
Field Crops	\$489,000
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, sweet potatoes	\$1,991,000
Horticulture	\$5,201,000
Cultivated Christmas trees	\$269,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$9,033,000</b>

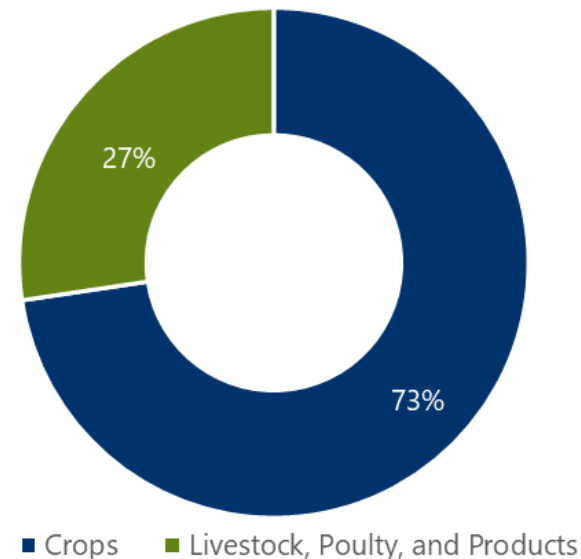
Source: USDA 2017 National Agricultural Census

### Providence County Livestock, Poultry, and Products, 2017

	Sales
Milk from Cows	Withheld
Cattle and Calves	\$213,000
Sheep, goats, wool, mohair, milk	Withheld
Horses, ponies, mules, burros, donkeys	\$202,000
Hogs and pigs	Withheld
Poultry and eggs	Withheld
Speciality animals	\$48,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,400,000</b>

Source: USDA 2017 National Agricultural Census

### Providence County Agricultural Products Sold, 2017



Source: USDA 2017 National Agricultural Census

## REGIONAL FARM CHARACTERISTICS

- ◆ Of those working on farms in Providence County in 2017, 59% were male and 41% were female.
- ◆ The majority of producers were between 35 and 64 years old.
- ◆ Producers were overwhelmingly white (94%).
- ◆ Almost one-third of producers in Providence County have a military background or are New and Beginning Farmers (32%).
- ◆ Of all 377 farms in Providence County 27.6% hire farm labor while 87.0% are family farms.

### Providence County Producer Demographics, 2017

Sex of Producers	Number	Percent
Male	1109	59.37%
Female	759	40.63%
Age of Producers	Number	Percent
younger than 35	167	9.23%
35 to 64	1081	59.72%
64 and older	562	31.05%
Race of Producers	Number	Percent
Hispanic	15	0.80%
Asian	9	0.48%
Black or African American	13	0.70%
White	1764	94.43%
More than one Race	8	0.43%
<b>Total Producers</b>	<b>1,868</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: USDA 2017 National Agriculture Census

### Providence County Producer Demographics, 2017

Other Characteristics	Number	Percent
With Military Service	209	11.19%
New and Beginning Farmers	380	20.34%

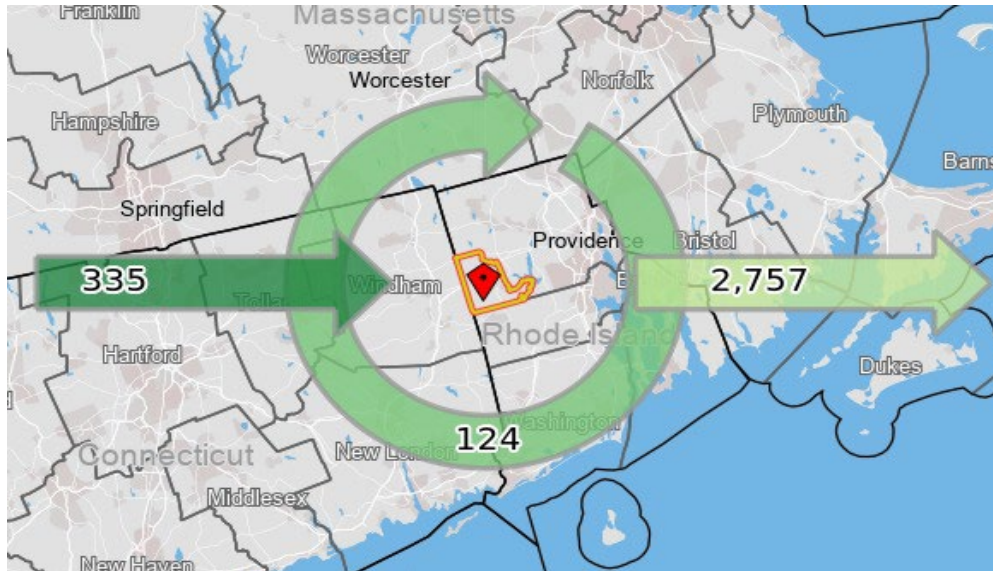
Source: USDA 2017 National Agriculture Census

### Providence County Farm Characteristics, 2017

	Number	Percent
Have Internet Access	311	82.49%
Farm Organically	5	1.33%
Hire Farm Labor	104	27.59%
Are Family Farms	328	87.00%
<b>Total Number of Farms</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: USDA 2017 National Agriculture Census

## COMMUTING PATTERNS, TOWN OF FOSTER



Source: US Census OnTheMap

Note: Arrows Represent commuter inflow and outflows – not commuter direction

### Inflow/Outflow Job Counts, 2019

Employed in Town of Foster	Percent
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	27%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	73%
<b>Total Employed in the Selection Area</b>	<b>459</b>
Living in Town of Foster	Percent
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	4%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	96%
<b>Total Living in the Selection Area</b>	<b>2,881</b>

Source: On the Map

- ◆ The Town of Foster overall is a net importer of jobs, with about 73% of the workforce commuting in for work. The inbound commuting ratio could indicate that there is limited opportunity for the workforce to both live and work in Foster.
- ◆ Of those living in the Town of Foster, 96% work elsewhere.
- ◆ By producing new opportunities for the workforce, both through jobs and through additional housing, the Town of Foster can increase the percentage of the workforce that is able to both live and work in the town.
- ◆ Data presented reflects commute patterns in 2019, the most recent data available. In the wake of the pandemic, some of these proportions have likely changed.

*Note: Due to the small geographical area of study, exact counts may vary.*

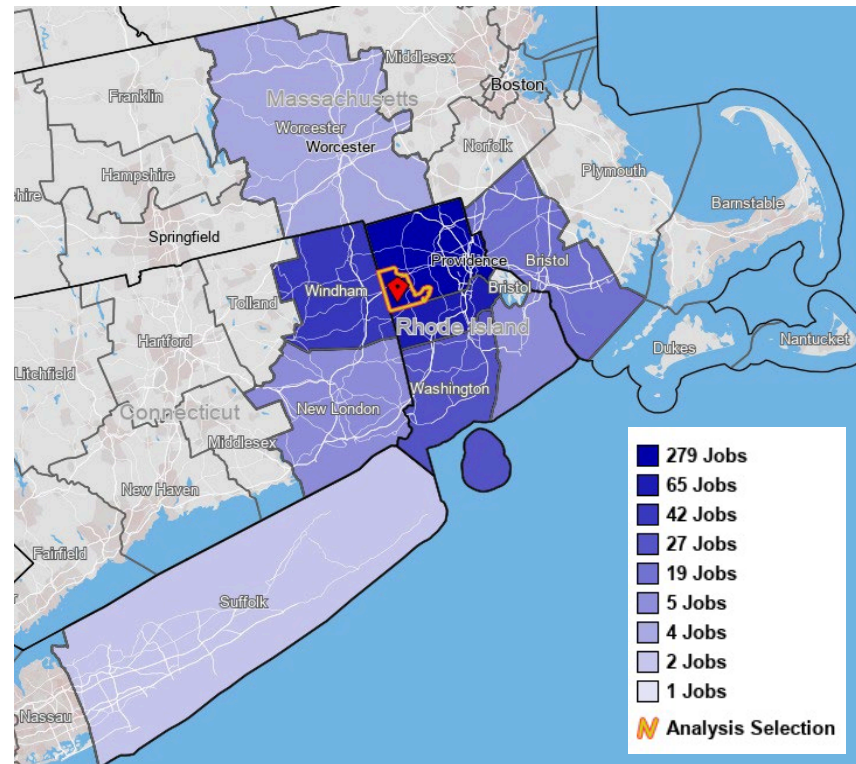
## WHERE WORKFORCE LIVES

- ◆ The largest single place of residence for the Town of Foster is Warwick City, RI, with 23 total workers or 5.0% of those working in Foster.
- ◆ Of the remaining 436 people working in the Town of Foster, 350 or 76.3% of the overall workforce is commuting all other locations.
- ◆ Most of those commuting into Foster for work are traveling less than 10 miles (46%) or between 10 and 24 miles (43%).
- ◆ Data presented reflects commute patterns in 2019, the most recent data available. In the wake of the pandemic, some of these proportions have likely changed.

### Where Town of Foster Workers Live

	Count	Share
Warwick city, RI	23	5.0%
Providence city, RI	22	4.8%
Cranston city, RI	15	3.3%
Pawtucket city, RI	14	3.1%
Foster Center CDP, RI	11	2.4%
Clayville CDP, RI	7	1.5%
East Providence city, RI	5	1.1%
Fall River city, MA	4	0.9%
Greene CDP, RI	4	0.9%
Newport city, RI	4	0.9%
All Other Locations	350	76.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: On The Map



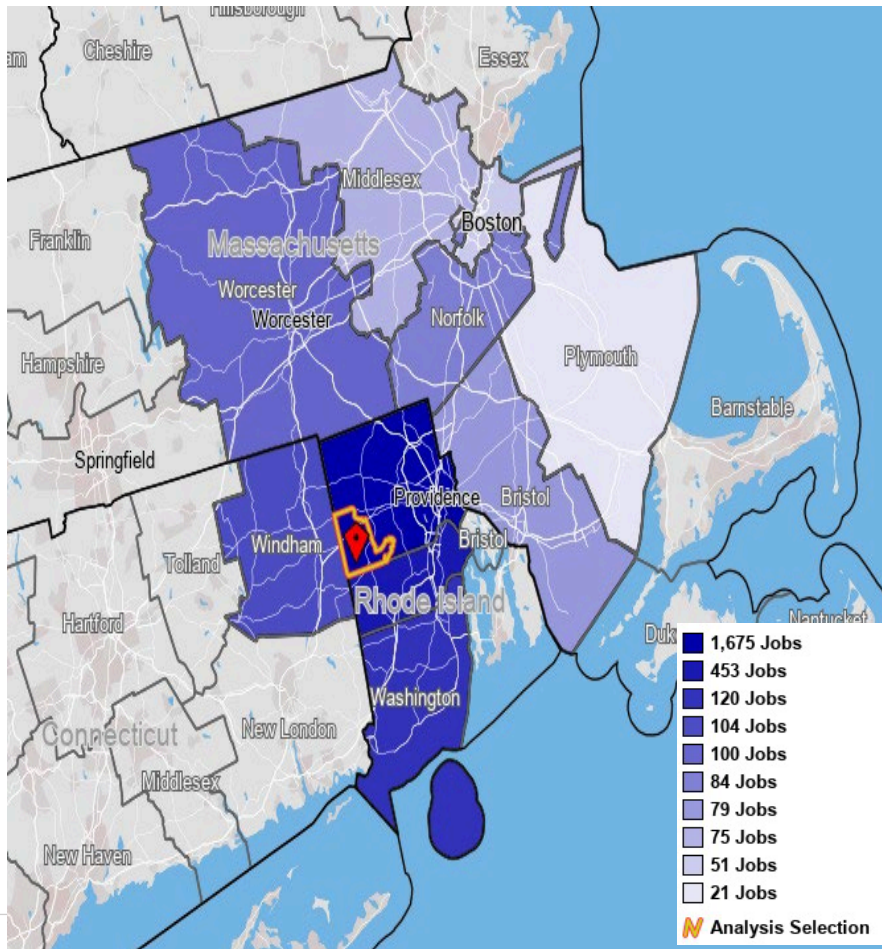
### Distance Travelled by Those Commuting into the Town of Foster

	Count	Share
Less than 10 miles	210	46%
10 to 24 miles	198	43%
25 to 50 miles	41	9%
Greater than 50 miles	10	2%
<b>Total All Jobs</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: On The Map

## WHERE RESIDENTS WORK

- ◆ Of those living in the Town of Foster, 2,757 workers of the 2,881 captured in the data are employed elsewhere.
- ◆ The largest concentration of workers is working within in Providence County (58.1%).
- ◆ Other top destinations for the workforce include Kent County, RI (15.7%), Washington County, RI (4.2%), Windham County, CT (3.6%), and Worcester County, MA (3.5%).
- ◆ Data presented reflects commute patterns in 2019, the most recent data available. In the wake of the pandemic, some of these proportions have likely changed.



### Distance Travelled for Those Commuting out of the Town of Foster

	Count	Share
Less than 10 miles	520	18%
10 to 24 miles	1,870	65%
25 to 50 miles	339	12%
Greater than 50 miles	152	5%
<b>Total All Jobs</b>	<b>2,881</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: On The Map

### Where Town of Foster Residents are Employed

	Count	Share
Providence County, RI	1,675	58.1%
Kent County, RI	453	15.7%
Washington County, RI	120	4.2%
Windham County, CT	104	3.6%
Worcester County, MA	100	3.5%
Norfolk County, MA	84	2.9%
Bristol County, MA	79	2.7%
Middlesex County, MA	75	2.6%
Suffolk County, MA	51	1.8%
Plymouth County, MA	21	0.7%
All Other Locations	119	4.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,881</b>	<b>100%</b>

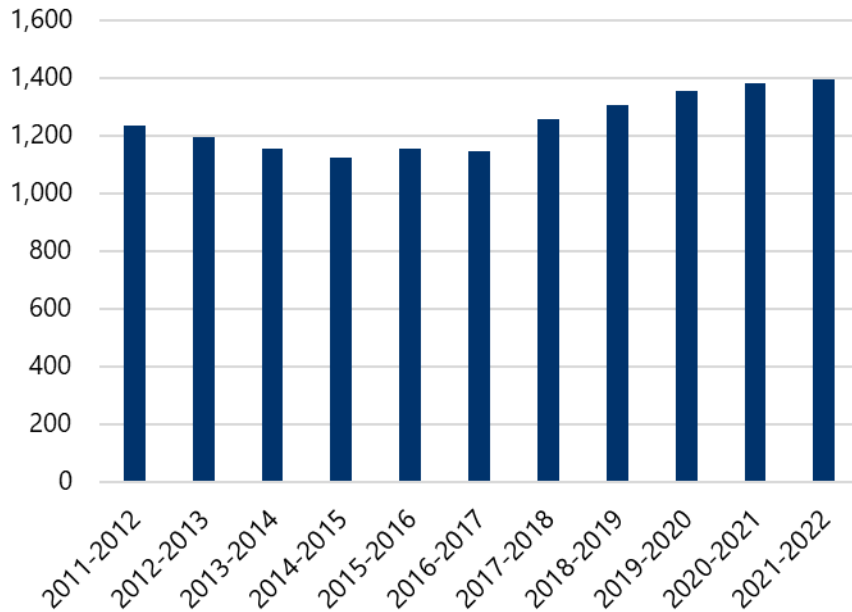
Source: On The Map



## LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS

- ◆ The K-12 school enrollment in Foster-Glocester increased from 2016 through 2022 a reversal of the declines experienced from 2011-2015.
- ◆ Foster-Glocester has one of the top ranked school districts in the region, given a B+ by Niche.
- ◆ Foster-Glocester school districts have a 12:1 student-teacher ratio.
- ◆ The Foster-Glocester district has 31% of students deemed “at least proficient in math” and 55% “at least proficient in reading”.
- ◆ The Foster-Glocester district received an “A” in clubs and activities, an “A-” in teachers, a “B+” in academics, a “B” in college prep, and a “C-” in diversity.

**K-12 Public School Students, Foster- Glocester 2011-2022**



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education

**K-12 Public School Students, Foster-Glocester**

Year	Students
2011-2012	1,234
2012-2013	1,193
2013-2014	1,153
2014-2015	1,121
2015-2016	1,155
2016-2017	1,147
2017-2018	1,257
2018-2019	1,306
2019-2020	1,355
2020-2021	1,383
2021-2022	1,396

Source: Rhode Island Department of Education

**School District Grade 2022**

District	Grade
Barrington	A+
East Greenwich	A+
North Kingstown	A
Narragansett	A
Portsmouth	A-
Exeter-West	
Greenwich	A-
Lincoln	A-
Cumberland	A-
North Smithfield	A-
Smithfield	A-
Foster-Glocester	B+

Source: Niche

## TRAFFIC PATTERNS\*

- ◆ Route 6 generates 9,000 vehicles per day (east and westbound total) just outside of Foster.
- ◆ Route 94 generates 1,100 vehicles per day (north and southbound total) directly through Foster.
- ◆ Route 101 generates 5,000 vehicles per day (east and westbound total) just outside of Foster.
- ◆ There is an opportunity to capture traveler spending potential of thousands of vehicles per day.

\*RIDOT Average Annual Daily Traffic estimate, 2016



# RETAIL MARKET ANALYSIS

## INVENTORY OF RETAIL BUSINESSES

Alarry Farm	7 Rickard Road
API Alan Pittman Investigations	117 Central Pike
Aunt B's Eclectic Finds	114 Daneilson Pike
Chelsea's Trading Post & Garden Supply	151 Danielson Pike
Coastal Atlantic LLC d/b/a Foster Auto Parts	40 Mill Rd
Cooke Brother's Imports	184A Danielson Pike
Danny's Auc Barn LLC dba Partners Auto Auction RI	1 Snagwood Rd.
Diablo Custom Workz	52 Danielson Pike
Drake Petroleum Company Inc\Foster Xtra Mart	188 Danielson Pike
Dyer Woods	114 Johnson Road
GCC Auto Sales LLC	175 Danielson Pike
Ginny-B Campground	7 Harrington Road
Healey's Liquors Inc. D/B/A Healey's Liquors	143 Danielson Pike
Helen's Place Inc., d/b/a Helen's Place	172 Danielson Pike
J P's General Store	189A Hartford Pike
Little Rhody Vasa Park Inc. d/b/a Little Rhody Vas	10 Boswell Trail
Lucky's Pizza	143 Danielson Pike
MCC Inc., d/b/a Mike's Auto Repair	45 Anthony Road
Old Man Mercantile & Antiques	52A Danielson Pike
Rhody Outdoors, LLC	2 Gold Mine Road
Rte 6 Outpost	52 Danielson Pike
Shady Acres Fry Shack LLC d/b/a Shady Acres Diner	164 Danielson Pike
The Country Mutt LLC, D/B/A The Country Mutt	110 South Killingly Rd.
The Watering Hole LLC d/b/a The Watering Hole	185 Hartford Pike
Tykamac Ent. LLC d/b/a Foster Golf & Country Club	67 Johnson Road
Woodland Meeting House LLC d/b/a Woodland Meetin	115 East Killingly Rd

- ◆ Farm and supply stores, including sawmills, sand and gravel, bait, and farm, are used to address demand for hardware supplies for those both within and outside of Town of Foster and represent the largest business sector.

## RETAIL LEAKAGE

- ◆ The table below identifies the top 10 industries for potential market growth in the Town of Foster.
- ◆ Two of the top five potential industries are food focused including, limited-service restaurants and full-service restaurants.
- ◆ The top industries are supported by the surrounding trade area and those visiting the town.

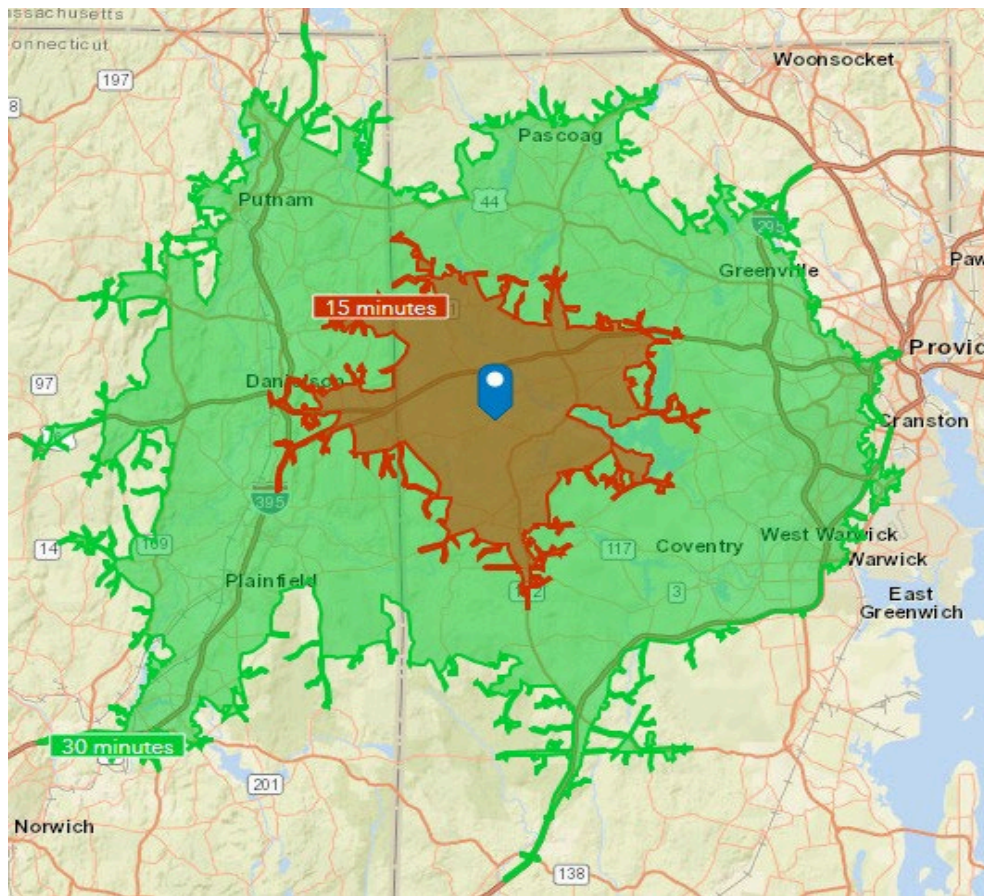
### Top Ten Potential Industries, Town of Foster

NAICS	Description	Retail Gap	Leakage Recapture	Average Sales Per Business	Potential Business
722513	Limited-Service Restaurants	\$6,451,650	\$1,612,912	\$1,313,684	1.23
454110	Electronic Shopping and Mail-Order Houses	\$3,619,166	\$904,791	\$1,867,861	0.48
812112	Beauty Salons	\$832,117	\$208,029	\$450,730	0.46
722511	Full-Service Restaurants	\$2,416,902	\$604,226	\$1,521,940	0.40
447110	Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores	\$2,100,020	\$525,005	\$1,426,991	0.37
713940	Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers	\$471,159	\$117,790	\$463,118	0.25
441120	Used Car Dealers	\$543,453	\$135,863	\$585,525	0.23
443142	Electronics Stores	\$952,875	\$238,219	\$1,215,389	0.20
445120	Convenience Stores	\$220,122	\$55,031	\$287,373	0.19
445110	Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores	\$3,596,643	\$899,161	\$4,885,318	0.18

Source: Lightcast

## DEFINING THE TRADE AREA CONSUMER PROFILE

- ◆ The retail trade area around the Town of Foster includes those locations within a 30-minute drive of the town.
- ◆ Those towns within a 30-minute drive of Foster provide goods and services that the town does not, meeting the town population’s unmet demand.



### Towns within a 30 Minute Drive

- Brooklyn
- Canterbury
- Coventry
- Cranston
- Greenville
- Hope
- Jewett City
- Moosup
- Oneco
- Pascoag
- Plainfield
- Putnam
- Thompson
- Warick
- Waugan
- West Greenwich
- West Warwick

Source: ESRI

## TRADE AREA CONSUMER DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

- ◆ The median household income of the trade area was \$85,055 in 2021, expected to rise to \$98,288 by 2026.
- ◆ As the drivetimes expand further past the Town of Foster the median household incomes increase incrementally, giving the Town of Foster the opportunity to recapture the additional disposable income in the surrounding towns.
- ◆ The median age also increases incrementally as the area expands past the Town of Foster. The age demographics could indicate various needs for households in the surrounding area.

### Demographic Profile

<b>Median Household Income</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2027</b>
15 Minute Drive	\$94,926	\$111,055
30 Minute Drive	\$75,184	\$85,521
<b>Average</b>	<b>\$85,055</b>	<b>\$98,288</b>
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2027</b>
15 Minute Drive	47.6	48.6
30 Minute Drive	42.8	43.5
<b>Average</b>	<b>45.2</b>	<b>46.1</b>

Source: ESRI

## TRADE AREA CONSUMER SPENDING

- ◆ In 2021, within the Town of Foster trade area, the largest spending category was financial (\$19,809,968,928), followed by Home (\$2,605,469,827) and Entertainment and Food (\$1,234,799,220).
- ◆ The Entertainment and Recreation spending category include feed and admission, TV, audio and video, sporting equipment, reading, toys and games, photo equipment and supplies, catered affairs and spending on recreation vehicles and equipment.
- ◆ The Town of Foster has an opportunity to grow the Entertainment and Recreation spending by recapturing some of the trade area spending.

### Trade Area Spending, 2022

	15 Minutes	30 Minutes
Apparel and Services	\$10,894,853	\$284,783,711
Computer	\$1,017,808	\$26,586,147
Entertainment and Recreation	\$17,296,903	\$432,435,584
Food	\$47,269,178	\$1,234,799,220
Financial	\$870,728,062	\$19,809,968,928
Health	\$3,117,807	\$76,537,078
Home	\$110,660,077	\$2,605,469,827
Household Furnishings and Equipment	\$7,557,350	\$188,796,878
Household Operations	\$10,092,999	\$250,799,262
Insurance	\$43,658,268	\$1,093,395,582
Transportation	\$31,309,218	\$791,532,492
Travel	\$11,055,217	\$271,204,577
<b>Total Spending</b>	<b>\$1,164,657,740</b>	<b>\$27,066,309,286</b>

Source: ESRI



## ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATION INVENTORY

### Entertainment and Recreation In and Around Town of Foster

Venues	Activities	Accomodations
Amc Classic Lisbon 12	Alpine Country Club	Best Western West Greenwich
Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre	Bowdish Lake Camping Area	Comfort Inn
River Ridge Golf Course	Burn Boot Camp	Comfort Suites West Warwick
Wilbury Theatre Group	Connecticut National Golf Club	Crowne Plaza-Providence-Wrwick
Golf Game Solutions	Cranston Country Club	Extended Stay America
Tri State Golf Llc	Crystal Lake Golf Club	Extended Stay America
Levy Rink	Crystal Lake Golf Club	Fairfield Inn-Suites by
Teamworks	Formless Fitness Llc	Hampton Inn-Coventry/warwick
To the Pointe-Performing Arts	George Wa State Campground	Hampton Inn-Providence
Stateline Campresort & Cabins	Gloucester Country Club	Holiday Inn Exp Coventry S
Legion Bowl & Billiards	Gym Source	Holiday Inn Express
Smithfield Municipal Ice Rink	La Fitness	Holiday Inn Express
Royal Gallery	Melody Hill Country Club	Homewood Suites
Bald Hill Art Gallery	Neutaconkanut Recreation Ctr	La Quinta Inn-Suites by
Arctic Gallery Llc	Next Level Fitness Ctr	Nylo Providence Warwick Hotel
Artistic Contours	Quinnatisset Country Club	Residence Inn Providence
Bill Gallery Llc	Rally Point Racquet Club	Sonesta Es Suites Providence
Creative Space Art Lessons	River Bend Campground-Canoe	Springhill Suites by Marriott
	Smithfield Recreation Dept	Villa Dolce Villa
	Ultimate Fitness	Wyndham Providence Airport
	Unique Fitness Llc	
	Valley Country Club	
	West Warwick Country Club	
	Westwood Family Campground	

Source: ESRI

- ◆ There are 62 Entertainment and Recreation businesses within a 30-minute drive of Foster than had sales over \$500,000 (venues and activities) and over \$1,000,000 (accommodations).
- ◆ The businesses include venues (18), activity centers (24) and accommodations (20).
- ◆ The Entertainment and Recreation industry is one of the top 10 potential growth industries in the Town of Foster
- ◆ The Entertainment and Recreation industry is the 6<sup>th</sup> largest spending category in the trade area.

### Entertainment and Recreation in and around the Town of Foster

Venues	Activities	Accomodations
18	24	20

Source: ESRI

## ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATION CONSUMER SPENDING

- ◆ Entertainment/Recreation spending includes both “away from home” and “in-home” activities.
- ◆ Of the \$206,824,934 spent on Entertainment and Recreation within the Trade area \$103,496,417 (50%) is spent on membership or admissions fees, and tickets.
- ◆ By providing further entertainment opportunities for consumers the Town of Foster could capitalize on demand for such recreation and grow the economy within the town.

### Trade Area Spending, 2022

	15 Minutes	30 Minutes
Fees and Admissions	\$4,170,763	\$103,496,417
Membership Fees for Clubs (2)	\$1,399,144	\$34,785,537
Fees for Participant Sports, excl. Trips	\$648,423	\$15,912,833
Tickets to Theatre/Operas/Concerts	\$468,173	\$11,667,990
Tickets to Movies	\$277,906	\$7,407,790
Tickets to Parks or Museums	\$175,985	\$4,410,155
Admission to Sporting Events, excl. Trips	\$385,566	\$9,035,829
Fees for Recreational Lessons	\$810,374	\$20,108,383
<b>Total Spending</b>	<b>\$8,336,334</b>	<b>\$206,824,934</b>

Source: ESRI

## COSTAR DATA

- ◆ An analysis was also done using CoStar to determine any commercial real estate data that may be of use. The analysis focused on a historical tracking of five types of properties listed on CoStar these being: Retail, Office, Industrial Multifamily, and Flex.
- ◆ Due to Foster’s size, and to avoid pulling metrics from Providence, analysis was targeted on properties listed with Foster’s zip code.
- ◆ The data shows very few spaces for each use and is most likely a byproduct of both the small size of Foster and the availability of up-to-date data. The available properties have been the same since 2006.

### CoStar Properties in Foster

	Flex		Industrial		Office		Retail		MultiFamily	
	Buildings	Square Foot	Buildings	Square Foot	Buildings	Square Foot	Buildings	Square Foot	Buildings	Units
2006-2022	1	5,000	3	22,142	3	5,852	17	68,310	1	3

Source: CoStar Foster Rhode Island Zip Code

## COSTAR DATA

### CoStar Properties in Foster, 2022

Address	Property Type	Secondary Type
0 Danielson Pike	Land	Residential
10A Danielson Pike	Specialty	Contractor Storage Yard
44 Danielson Pike	Office	
64 Danielson Pike	Land	Commercial
82 Danielson Pike	Office	
88 Danielson Pike	Industrial	Manufacturing
110 Danielson Pike	Land	Commercial
114 Danielson Pike	Retail	Storefront Retail/Office
120 Danielson Pike	Retail	Storefront Retail/Office
142 Danielson Pike	Retail (Strip Center)	Storefront Retail/Office
142A Danielson Pike	Retail	Storefront Retail/Office
144 Danielson Pike	Retail	Freestanding
145 Danielson Pike	Retail	Storefront Retail/Office
164 Danielson Pike	Retail	Restaurant
175 Danielson Pike	Retail	Auto Repair
184 Danielson Pike	Retail	Auto Dealership
188 - A Danielson Pike	Retail	Freestanding
193 Danielson Pike	Retail	Freestanding
194 Danielson Pike	Land	Commercial
Foster Center Rd	Land	Commercial
Foster Center Rd	Land	Commercial
81 Foster Center Rd	Retail	Freestanding
7 Harrington Rd	Specialty	Trailer / Camper Park
208 Hartford	Land	Agricultural
Hartford Pike	Land	Commercial
180 Hartford Pike	Industrial	Manufacturing
189 Hartford Pike	Retail	Convenience Store
47 E Killingly Rd	Health Care	Skilled Nursing Facility
142 E Killingly Rd	Retail	
0 S Killingly Rd	Land	Residential
27 Mill Rd	Flex	Showroom
37 Mill Rd	Land	Commercial
37-A Mill Rd	Retail	Auto Repair
Old Plainfield Pike	Land	Commercial
0 Plainfield Pike	Land	Residential
40 Shippee Schoolhouse Rd	Land	Residential
1 Snagwood Rd	Industrial	Warehouse
1A Snagwood Rd	Land	Commercial
Danielson Pike	Land	Commercial
90-A Danielson Pike	Land	Commercial
146 Danielson Pike	Office	
173 Danielson Pike	Retail	
188 Danielson Pike	Retail	
67 Johnson Rd	Sports & Entertainment	Golf Course/Driving Range
10 S Killingly Rd	Land	Residential
Mount Hygeia Rd	Specialty	Police / Fire Station
Off-Mill Rd	Land	Commercial

Source: CoStar Foster Rhode Island Property Listings

# APPENDIX B: DATA SOURCES

## **ECONOMIC MODELING SPECIALISTS INTERNATIONAL (EMSI)**

To analyze the industrial makeup of a study area, industry data organized by the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) is assessed. Camoin 310 subscribes to Economic Modeling Specialists Intl. (Emsi), a proprietary data provider that aggregates economic data from approximately 90 sources. Emsi industry data, in our experience, is more complete than most or perhaps all local data sources (for more information on Emsi, please see [www.economicmodeling.com](http://www.economicmodeling.com)). This is because local data sources typically miss significant employment counts by industry because data on sole proprietorships and contractual employment (i.e. 1099 contractor positions) is not included and because certain employment counts are suppressed from BLS/BEA figures for confidentiality reasons when too few establishments exist within a single NAICS code.

## **ESRI BUSINESS ANALYST ONLINE (BAO)**

Esri is the leading provider of location-driven market insights. It combines demographic, lifestyle, and spending data with map-based analytics to provide market intelligence for strategic decision-making. Esri uses proprietary statistical models and data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Postal Service, and various other sources to present current conditions and project future trends. Esri data are used by developers to maximize their portfolio, retailers to understand growth opportunities, and by economic developers to attract business that fit their community. For more information, visit [www.esri.com](http://www.esri.com).

## **ONTHEMAP, U.S. CENSUS**

OnTheMap is a tool developed through the U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program that helps to visualize Local Employment Dynamics (LED) data about where workers are employed and where they live. There are also visual mapping capabilities for data on age, earnings, industry distributions, race, ethnicity, educational attainment, and sex. The OnTheMap tool can be found here, along with links to documentation: <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>.

## **SOCDS**

State of the Cities Data Systems (SOCDS) is a tool developed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that provides data on permits for residential construction issued by around 21,000 jurisdictions collected in the Census Bureau's Building Permits Survey. The data is available on a monthly and annual basis for states, counties, and jurisdictions from 2001 through 2022. For more information see:

<https://socds.huduser.gov/permits/summary.odb>

## **LOCAL AREA UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS (LAUS), U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS (BLS)**

The Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program estimates total employment and unemployment for approximately 7,500 geographic areas monthly, from the national level down to the city and town level. LAUS data is developed through U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) by combining data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), Current Employment Statistics (CES) survey, and state unemployment (UI) systems. More information on LAUS can be found here: <http://www.bls.gov/lau/lauov.htm>

**NYSED**

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) creates standards and curriculums, provides assessments, certifications and licensing, and tracks education data and reporting for the State of New York. School Report Cards, Comprehensive Information reports, Overview of Performance Reports, and other informative reports are available at the County, BOCES, District and School levels from 1998 through today, dependent on geography. For further information please visit: <https://data.nysed.gov/>

**NICHE**

NICHE is the market leader in connecting colleges and schools with students and families. NICHE has in-depth profiles on every school and college in America, over 140 million reviews and ratings, and powerful search and data tools. NICHE utilizes the most up-to-date available data from the Department of Education, U.S. Census and FBI as well as millions of reviews and survey responses to gain an understanding a school's true value. Data is available for K-12 Schools, College and Grad Schools across the U.S. For more information please visit: <https://www.niche.com/>

**REALTYRATES.COM**

RealtyRates.com is a comprehensive resource of real estate investment and development trends, analytics, and market research. RealtyRates.com™ surveys more than 300 lenders, investors, brokers, and property managers nationwide on a quarterly basis to track trends in cap rates, financing terms, rents, sales, and operating expenses. This data provides an up-to-date snapshot of the national real estate market. More information is available at <http://www.realtyrates.com/>

**RSMEANS**

RSMeans provides up-to-date construction cost per square foot information for a range of building types. Data from RSMeans can be used to develop construction cost estimates for use in market analysis and financial feasibility analysis. National cost averages can be adjusted for specific geographies using location factors down to the city level. Moreover, historical cost indexes can be used to adjust costs over time. For more information, visit <https://www.rsmeans.com/>

# ABOUT CAMOIN ASSOCIATES

As the nation's only full-service economic development and lead generation consulting firm, Camoin Associates empowers communities through human connection backed by robust analytics.

Since 1999, Camoin Associates has helped local and state governments, economic development organizations, nonprofit organizations, and private businesses across the country generate economic results marked by resiliency and prosperity.

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 Lead Generation and Relationships	 Business Attraction and Retention
 Entrepreneurship and Innovation	 Industry and Workforce Analytics
 Impact Analysis	

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