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Town of Salisbury

Item Type	article;article
Download date	2026-04-15 12:55:08
Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/4700

SALISBURY

The Town of Salisbury has the history and the skeleton of a typical New England village, but has lost much of the identifiable character to post 1950 regulated development. (Town of Salisbury Local Partnership Committee Economic Development Plan, 1996) Today Salisbury has two identifiable centers. The historic town center, known as Salisbury Square, and Salisbury Beach. Salisbury Square, though it retains some aspects of a village center, is now dominated by small service facilities. Salisbury beach, though not the tourist destination of the early 1990's, has the potential to return with a new direction. The miles of sandy beach, marshlands and tidal mud flats are special resources that give Salisbury a strong base on which to build a vital economy. New leadership in Salisbury's municipal government is poising the community to take advantage of the strengthening economy. Recent actions include changing zoning regulations, applying for state and federal grants, implementing water pollution control practices and exploring tourism and commercial shellfish opportunities. A continuation of these efforts will result in a vibrant oceanfront community and an unparalleled regional amenity.

Community Assets

1. Salisbury State Beach Reservation is the most prominent element in town. (Resnick)
2. Interstate access provides the town with excellent ground transportation links. (Resnick)
3. Salisbury is reversing its downward economic trend with proactive planning. (Brown)
4. Coastal waterways and ecosystems add a valuable dimension to the Town. (Brown)
5. Working with neighboring Amesbury has resulted in the creation of a new Office Park zoning district. (Resnick)
6. There is an attractive prospect for eco-tourism in Salisbury. (Brown)
7. The fishing industry has returned to Salisbury, spawning additional retail and service industries. (Resnick)
8. Rowley residents recently passed an Open Space/Cluster Zoning bylaw that will help retain the Town's rural character. (Matthews)

General

Established:	1638
Type of Community:	Growth Community (DOR), Rural Community (MVPC)
Total Land Area:	15.43 Square Miles (DHCD)
Location:	42 miles north of Boston, 20 miles south of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and 260 miles from New York City (DHCD)
Population per Square Mile:	451 (1996DOR)
Population:	1980 – 3,867 persons (1980 US Census) 1990 – 6,882 persons (1990 US Census) 1996 – 7,093 persons (DOR)
Population Projections:	2000 – 7,727 persons (M.I.S.E.R.) 2010 – 8,443 persons (M.I.S.E.R.)
Form of Government:	Selectmen Town Manager Open Town Meeting

Economic Data

Salisbury is taking steps to return to its original attraction, the beauty of its ocean and beach (The Business Advantage, May 1999). So while the commonwealth is trying to reinvigorate Salisbury Beach State Reservation, reestablish the natural dune areas and plans to make the Oceanside more accessible, Salisbury's Office of Economic and Community Development is working to put together a town framework that will entice commercial, light industrial and recreational enterprises into the community. Already, Salisbury can boast of one of the lowest tax rates in the Merrimack Valley.

Planning Strategies

In 1996 the Town of Salisbury, under the direction of its first town planner and with grant money from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Communities and Development funded the Local Partnership Committee Economic Development Action Plan. The project goals were 1) to increase employment and tax base within the Town in a manner which respects the natural environment, heritage and unique assets of the Town; and 2) to assist the Town in setting a vision for the future and to provide guidance on specific projects and activities to move in that direction. It's recommendations are direct and comprehensive making it a valuable tool for guiding future growth in Salisbury.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts plays a role in the towns growth and development due to the extremely sensitive ecosystems within the town's boundaries. Present State effort include a study by the Department of Marine Fisheries to explore the possibility of commercial aquaculture in Salisbury and abutting towns. The state also is involved in the purchase of 6 buildings that extend over the beach on pillars. They are scheduled to be removed, creating better beach access and an unimpeded view of the beach's length. In addition the State is doing flow studies

to determine the effectiveness of stormwater treatment facilities recently installed on the beach. The partnership between the town of Salisbury and the Commonwealth is vital to the community's success.

The Merrimack River Watershed Council is a non-profit group devoted to protecting and improving the human and natural communities throughout the watershed. It is working with Salisbury as part of the Salisbury Ecotourism Initiative to protect Salisbury's environment while helping its economy. (Natural & Historic Treasures of Salisbury brochure)

Manufacturing and Industry

Although Salisbury is thought of first as a beach community, the town's planners realize the need to increase employment and diversify the tax base. Their strategy for this rests on building a framework that welcomes industry and professional services as well as commercial and recreational businesses. To this end the Town has recently worked with the neighboring town of Amesbury to create a new Office Park zoning district that takes advantage of that town's existing facilities and infrastructure. This joint venture has provided two additional suitable parcels of land within the "Golden Triangle, so called due to its envelopment with three major roadways, I 495, I 95 and route 110.

The Town of Salisbury is also looking to rezone an additional 175 acres for professional office and general commercial use by widening the Route 110 corridor commercial zone. Although it will not result in any additional frontage for commercial development it will enlarge the parcels making them suitable for larger businesses and allowing development to take place off the main corridor.

Salisbury has a single private industrial park that is approximately 50% occupied. The lack of sewer facilities to this site limits the area's suitability. However, the town planner is currently writing an Environmental Impact Report to justify extending the sewer into the park. State funds are simultaneously being sought for construction.

The Town of Salisbury Local Partnership Program Economic Development Plan using 1995 Assessor's data identified vacant industrial and commercial parcels in Salisbury. The 15 vacant industrially zoned sites range in size from 1.16 acres to 7.9 acres. The sites can accommodate small industrial operations seeking raw land. 34 vacant commercial parcels offer a good resource for new local commercial growth.

Tourism and Service Industries

Based on several economic development trends Salisbury has reason to be optimistic about improving its economic vitality through tourism and its related industries. The Local Partnership Program Economic Development Plan noted that the tourist season is getting longer, adding two additional months to this window of opportunity. Relative to Beachside businesses, restaurants, tee shirt and beach accessory stores and arcades with the latest electronic games are doing well. Also biking and walking are rapidly growing recreational activities. Route 1A in Salisbury is a

popular route for bicyclists. By addressing these trends and implementing a local economic development strategy, Salisbury has the opportunity to position itself for real growth.

The fast growth of heritage and eco-tourism fits well with Salisbury's natural and cultural resources and its vision. The mouth of the Merrimack River is one of the top ten bird-watching sites in North America. As such it provides Salisbury with a unique resource to capitalize upon to expand its local economic base.

Striper, bass and blue fishing have returned to be a strong recreational industry in Salisbury. The fishing industry has spawned retail establishments in boats, tackle and bait, as well as waterfront facilities for docking, service and tours.

Labor Force

1990 Average Time to Work: 22 minutes (1990 US Census)
 1998 Labor Force: 3,865 Employment (1999 DET)
 1998 Unemployment Rate: 4.4%, State Average 3.3% (1999 DET)
 1997 Wages: Total annual payroll \$67,009,290 (DET)

<u># of Persons</u>	<u>Type of Establishment</u>	<u>Percentage of Total</u>
38	Agriculture	1.5%
246	Government	10.0%
164	Construction	6.7%
485	Manufacturing	19.7%
103	TCTU (Transportation, Communication, Public Utilities)	4.2%
921	Trade	37.4 %
32	FIRE (Finance, Insurance, Real Estate)	1.3%
472	Services	19.2%
	Total:	100.0%

1990 Income (US Census)

Per Capita Income: \$14,455 State Rank 270
 Median Household Income: \$35,679, State Rank 237

FY 99 Tax Levy and Assessed Value (1999 DOR)

<u>Tax Classification</u>	<u>Tax Rate</u>	<u>Tax Levy</u>	<u>Assessed Value</u>	<u>Percentage of Total</u>
Residential	\$15.14	\$6,102,957	\$403,101,500	74.6%
Open Space	\$15.14	\$	\$	0.0%
Commercial	\$15.14	\$,582,764	\$ 104,541,000	19.3%

Industrial	\$15.14	\$ 172,823	\$ 11,415,000	2.1%
Personal Property	\$15.14	\$ 324,475	\$ 21,431,644	4.0%
Total:		\$8,183,091	\$540,490,044	100.0%

Education (DOE)

Educational Attainment:	75.8% High School Graduate or Higher (1990 US Census) 10.4% Bachelor's Degree or Higher (1990 US Census)		
Triton Regional School District:	Towns of Newbury, Salisbury and Rowley		
Elementary	Plains K Memorial 1-6		
Jr/Sr High School	Triton Region School 7-12		
Other (Public) High Schools:	Whittier Regional Vocational High School, grades 9-12 Essex Agricultural and Technical Institute, grades 9-14		
Statistic for Grades 9-12:	<u>District Average</u>	<u>State Average</u>	
Number Students per Teacher (1996-7)	17.3	18.0	
Percent Planning 4-year College (1996-7)	56.8%	53.4%	
SAT Scores - Verbal (1998)	533	502	
- Math (1998)	521	502	
- Participation Rate (1998)	66%	86%	
Drop-Out Rate (1996-7)	2.2%	3.4%	
Colleges:	None		

Metropolitan Statistical Area: Boston

Housing

Salisbury is a rural community with two distinct type of neighborhoods. The beachfront neighborhoods are compact and attract mostly seasonal residents. The trend in these types of communities is the conversion of seasonal cottages into year-round units, although these structures are most often still occupied seasonally. Very few new multi-family housing units are being built within beach communities. Vacancies within Salisbury's beachfront neighborhoods indicate there is substantial opportunity for purchases and for conversions.

Outlying neighborhoods are more typical of the general region. Most old homes and new construction consists of single family units.

There is an interest in preserving the few farms that are left in Salisbury. Several historical farms operate as commercial businesses in addition to farming, adding another dimension to the town's character.

Number of Housing Units:	4,040 +/- (1990 US Census)
Owner versus Rental-Occupied:	73.3% Vs 26.7% (1990 US Census)
Subsidized Housing Inventory:	110 units or 4.14% of all units in Town (1993 DHCD).
Public Housing Units:	80 Conventional State (1993 Community)
Rental Assistance:	4 State (MRVP), 56 Federal (Section 8)
1999 Tax Rate:	\$15.14 (DOR) – 1998 State average \$16.96 (DOR)
1999 Avrg. Single-Family Tax Bill:	\$1,952 (1999 DOR)
1998 Median Sales Price:	(1999 Banker & Tradesman)
- Single-Family	\$125,000
- Condominium	\$142,500
Jan-Feb 1999 Median Sales Price:	(1999 Banker & Tradesman)
- Single-Family	\$153,000
- Condominium	n/a
Zoning:	10,890 square feet (DHCD, 1993)

Transportation

Miles of Roadway:	54.43 (1999 MVPC)
Principle Highways:	Interstate 495 and 95 cross in Salisbury. Routes 110, 1 and 1A.
Rail Service:	MBTA Commuter rail service to Boston is accessible in neighboring Newburyport
Bus Service:	Trolley service goes between the towns of Newburyport and Salisbury.
Air Service:	The Lawrence Municipal Airport located in North Andover is the closest facility. Logan Airport is approximately 40 miles to the south and Manchester, NH Airport is approx. 35miles to the north.

Natural Resources

Salisbury's landscape consists of sandy beaches, marshlands, plains, woodlands, islands, and rivers all contributing to a wide range of recreational as well as economic opportunities. The 521-acre Salisbury Beach State Reservation has a beautiful barrier beach suitable for walking, swimming, fishing, birding and cross country skiing. Camping is available, and a boat ramp gives access to the marsh and river. Several established trails for bicycling, hiking and birding

are located along the beach, marsh and river. Two island sanctuaries account for 130 acres and are used for birding hiking, and nature study while others are enjoyable to investigate by canoe.

Agricultural land is another valuable natural resource in Salisbury. Three that are of cultural significance as well are the Pettingill Farm and Bartlett's Farm, Mudnock Farm:

Pettingill Farm in Salisbury has endured for over 200 years and now offers visitors the opportunity to enjoy the plantings and farm animals as well as attend gardening classes

Bartlett's Farm produces fresh seasonal produce and flowers that are a 325-year tradition in the beautiful Salisbury Plains.

Mudnock Farm allows visitors the opportunity to pick their own organic heirloom varieties of blueberries, raspberries, gooseberries and currants on their 100 + year old farm overlooking the marsh.

Rivers and Streams:	Merrimack River , Town Creek, Black Rock Creek,
Water Supply:	Ground Water, Purchased. At present the Town has adequate capacity to handle development in selected areas in terms of water supply.
Sewer:	Salisbury's sewer service has adequate capacity to handle development in selected areas.
Lakes, ponds & other Waterbodies:	The Atlantic Ocean is the principal water body in Salisbury.
Watersheds:	Merrimack River, North Coastal

Cultural Resources

Historic houses from the 1600 through the 1800's attest to Salisbury's early beginnings. In addition the Old Burying Ground, Ring's Island Museum and Salisbury's Historical Society Museum allow visitors to learn about early architecture, boatbuilding, fish drying and other historic activities.

Libraries:	Salisbury Public Library
Historic Commission:	Assists in designating historic buildings and sites.
Historic Sites:	Old Burying Ground has graves that date to 1639.
Historic Structures:	Pike School is a restored 1882 one-room schoolhouse.
Museums:	Ring's Island Museum offers a history of boat-building, fish drying and other historic activities.

Churches:

Salisbury Historical Museum is an 1852 house furnished with artifacts. It also sponsors lectures.
Three, 1 Methodist, 2 Catholic

Open Space and Recreation

Salisbury's recreational areas and open space depend on the area's natural resources. In addition to public areas Salisbury offers many other activities for outdoor activists including fishing and whale-watching charters. Some of the most significant public open space and recreation lands are below.

<u>Agency</u> <u>Acreage</u>	<u>Site/Facilities</u>	
Comonwealth	Salisbury State Beach Reservation proffers camping, boating, walking, swimming, fishing, bird-watching, biking and cross country skiing.	521
X	Carr Island Sanctuary I and Ram Island Sanctuary are used for nature observing.	130
X	Municipal Park has baseball and softball fields, basketball, tennis and general recreation areas.	12
Commonwealth Salisbury	Salisbury Beach offers over 4 miles of public sandy beaches. Rail Trail. This old railway suitable for birding, walking, Jogging and mountain bikes, takes you through beautiful and diverse natural areas.	
X	Barnes Island Trail. This beautiful wooded island in the marsh has a self-guided nature trail. It is accessible by canoe.	

Other Town-Supported Services

Council on Aging:	Salisbury's Council on aging supports a Senior Center as well as nutrition, transportation, health and other programs.
Fire:	Salisbury Fire Department offers 24 hour service
Police:	Salisbury Police Department offers 24 hour service
Ambulance:	Regional Contract
Solid Waste:	Curbside pick-up and recycling is a municipal service
Cemeteries:	5

Public Safety (Massachusetts State Police, Crime Reporting Unit)

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>
Total Crimes Reported	561	557
Violent Crimes	165	250
Property Crimes	396	307

Land Use (MVPC, 1991 MassGIS)

<u>Land Use Classification</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percentage of Total</u>
Cropland	488	4.82%
Pasture	157	1.55%
Forest	3,776	37.30%
Wetland	26	0.26%
Mining	98	0.97%
Open Land	170	1.68%
Recreation (Participation)	74	0.73%
Recreation (Spectator)	39	0.39%
Water based recreation	124	...1.23%
Residential Multi-Family	...11	...0.11%
Residential (<1/4 acre lots)	.190	...1.88%
Residential (1/4 to 1/2 acre lots)	536	5.30%
Residential (>1/2 acre lots)	742	7.33%
Salt Wetlands	2,676	26.44%
Commercial	232	...2.29%
Industrial	119	1.18%
Urban Open (Parks, Cemeteries)	58	0.57%
Transportation	158	1.56%
Waste Disposal (landfill & sewage)	...83	...0.82%
Water	321	3.17%
Woody Perennial	<u>44</u>	<u>0.43%</u>
Total:	10,122	100.00%

Contacts included:

Mark Resnick, Town Planner, Interview 6/6/7/99, (978) 463-2262

Wilma Mahoney-McDonald, Town Clerk, Telephone Interview, 6/24/99 (978) 462-7591

Document sources included:

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MVPC, MassGIS 1991 Land Use Classifications
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Town of Salisbury Local Partnership Committee Economic Development Action Plan,
1996