

Dalton Master Plan Update

Transportation Section – Questions & Goals Meeting

Economic Development Section – Discussion Meeting

October 5, 2022



Topics to Cover:

At the October 5, 2022 Planning Board meeting we will plan to discuss:

- Transportation, pick-up where we left off on 9/7/22, we will discuss key questions around transportation and goals.
- Economic Development, time permitting, we will review economic development data, local knowledge, needs & opportunities

Transportation

Follow-Up Items from last meeting

Local Roads

NCC staff spoke with the Dalton Road agent on Monday October 3, 2022 in order to better understand the Town's transportation network needs and opportunities from this key stakeholder's point of view. The following items were discussed:

- Width of Roads & Right-of-way.
 - Condition. The width of roads (as physically constructed) and the right-of-way (available land area under and around the road) were the main topic of concern. Several roads within the Town have an unknown, or undefined, right-of-way (ROW). Additionally, known ROWs and road widths are narrow, typically described as between 10 and 20 feet wide.
 - Result. Due to narrow ROW and road widths, the space available to address grading and drainage needs of the roadways are limited. Stormwater runoff must be handled in order to reduce road base issues related to poor drainage and standing water. Additionally, the narrow ROWs present a clear barrier on increased development in the town. Finally, narrow ROWs can limited line of sight and crowding issues for vehicles and other road users, which lead to increased safety concerns.
- Road Base Condition Areas.
 - Condition. Two (2) areas along Faraway Road were identified as ongoing trouble areas. Both sites were described as "swamp" areas which the road passes through. In these areas potholes are an ongoing concerns requiring much attention without any permanent resolution. No known ledge areas or issues were identified by the Road Agent.
 - Result. The wetness of the land under and surrounding the road creates poor drainage conditions which undermine the infrastructure and an area of continued attention without permanent resolution.
- Culverts.

- Condition. Culverts along Town roads are in fair condition. The Road Agent noted that many are in need of replacement due to end of life. Galvanized ones are being replaced with plastic ones, but the sizing of culverts has been adequate.
- Result. As part of ongoing maintenance of the system the Town replaces a number of culverts each year.
- Equipment & Financial Resources.
 - Condition. The Road Agent noted that the equipment needed to maintain the road is provided and is in fairly new condition, as such there are no immediate un-accounted for equipment needs. Additionally, the Road Agent noted that the budget available is tight but enough to meet the systems greatest needs. However, in current economic conditions, the amounts budgeted to complete work are falling short, this presents challenges with the accuracy of budget as material and labor price are fluctuating.
 - Result. The Road Agent advocates for equipment as needed, and develops a budget to meet forecasted needs and planned projects. Budgeting and planning for large equipment expenditures in the future may help reduce the impact of fluctuations, additionally, including healthy contingencies for cost overruns in the transportation budget may be important to maintain the network.

Strava Mapping

NCC' GIS staff explored the available data to see if we could improve the condition of the map generated through Strava (as a reminder Strava is a mobile app used by many recreational bikers, runners, etc. to track their rides). At this point there are two options. We can use the map in its current condition, we can have GIS staff produce a new map utilized the information provided in Strava's (for improved clarity, but not better information), or we can eliminate the map from the Master Plan itself and instead just discuss the most popular and least popular routes as tracked by Strava.

Rails until Trails

Following the presentation to the Planning Board regarding re-use of existing rail transportation lines through Dalton for multi-modal recreational transportation, NCC planners recommend incorporating Rail Lines into the draft road network map shared at the last meeting. NCC seeks guidance from the Planning Board as to including goals and actions relative to the cross NH trail in the Recreation or Transportation section.

2021 Outreach Comments Regarding Transportation

When asked to share opinions on Dalton's greatest transportation challenge or need response trends centered around:

- Road maintenance needs, particularly those of dirt roads were identified as well as areas for improvement along route 135 & 142
- A need for increased public transportation, and transportation services to meet the needs of aging seniors
- Some minor trends around increased bicycle and pedestrian conditions, improved enforcement of traffic laws, and impacts of truck traffic (both current and potentially increased in the future)

Key Questions Around Needs & Opportunities

The key questions identified below are designed to launch a discussion with the Dalton Planning Board regarding the communities needs and opportunities for improving and maintaining the road network.

1. What areas would be best served by additional bicycle and pedestrian facilities?
2. In what areas are there known safety concerns for different roadway users?
3. What improvements could be made to reduce the vulnerability of our transportation network to flooding, and other natural hazards?
4. What local and state road infrastructure investments should be made to better support or enhance the local economy?
5. What types of alternative transportation infrastructure is most appropriate in Dalton?

6. Are there equipment needs which would assist Dalton in better maintaining roadways?
7. Does Dalton participate in processes like the Regional Transportation Plan and Ten Year Transportation Improvement Program to advocate for local roadway improvements?
8. Are there areas of town, where different development may be encouraged (near the Town Center for example) that should be considered for improvements to support more pedestrian activities?
9. Are there areas where people currently meet to carpool? Are there any town-controlled locations where you might consider allowing carpoolers to park?

Goals to Consider

The suggested goals below are illustrative examples, not an exhaustive list of goals for the Planning Board and community to consider.

1. Possible Goal: Dalton will have a clearly marked, safe, and well connected network of on- and off-road bicycle network that allows residents, and visitors, to explore the varied terrain, views, and landscapes in town.
 - a. Possible Action Item: Install “share the road,” “bike route,” and other appropriate signage, along common (and planned) bicycling routes in order to improve driver awareness, visibility of cyclists, and promote bicycling as a safe, healthy, and enjoyable use of roadways in Dalton.
 - b. Possible Action Item: Advocate for improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities along major corridors (typically state aid roadways) including designated bike lanes, routes, sharrows (Shared use arrows), through NHDOT transportation funding processes such as the Ten Year Plan and Transportation Alternative Programs.
 - c. Possible Action Item: Encourage the use of unused rail corridors for multi-modal transportation for a variety of purposes, in order to preserve these rights-of-way for the future, and improve off-road networks for residents and visitors alike.
 - d. Possible Action Item: Explore and identify preferred public parking locations for walkers, bicyclists, and other users along common routes and points of interest.
2. Possible Goal: Dalton is a community that values ride-sharing as a tool to aid neighbors and reduce environmental impact. Residents commuting to neighboring employment hubs, as well as seniors and those with mobility restrictions benefit from increased participation and infrastructure for ride-sharing.
 - a. Possible Action Item: Scout locations, and seek funding for “park and ride” facilities in Dalton. This may include formal facilities constructed with support from NHDOT or informal facilities like existing public parking at town-owned buildings.
 - b. Possible Action Item: Increase awareness and promote ridesharing by publishing (and distributing) ride share parking locations, or posting a ride-share board at the Town offices or online.
 - c. Possible Action Item: Encourage residents to become volunteer drivers through Tri-County CAPs volunteer driver programs as a way to give back, and help seniors and people with mobility challenges by providing information about the programs on the town website.
3. Possible Goal: Dalton will continue to improve and strengthen its network of local roads by better understanding and planning for the costs of roadway maintenance and betterment projects.
 - a. Possible Action Item. Dalton will encourage a healthy contingency be budgeted into the costs for all road work items included in the town budget in order to ensure completion of projects during uncertain times.
 - b. Possible Action Item. Dalton will collect data on the legal ownership and right-of-way of municipally-owned roadways in order to better understand the land area available to address safety and condition concerns.
4. Possible Goal: Plan for the strengthening and improvement of Dalton’s transportation network through local, regional, and statewide engagement.
 - a. Possible Action Item: Designate a representative to participate on the North Country Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) which is the regions formal interface with NHDOT in order to better make

use of NHDOT funding in Dalton's transportation networks, and to remain current on best practices and strategies to improve road networks.

- b. Possible Action Item: Integrate transportation network improvements, as well as equipment needs, into Dalton's Capital Improvement Planning process. Ensure key stakeholder's such as the Road Agent and NHDOT District Engineer participate.
5. Possible Goal: Visually improve the "gateways" into Dalton located along major routes of ingress and egress.
- a. Explore opportunities to create signage, or improvements along the Connecticut River Scenic Byway (Route 135) a designated Scenic Byway.
 - b. Engage with the North Country Scenic Byways Committee to understand how to market a byway as an attraction for visitors, and a cultural asset for local residents.
 - c. Identify areas for increase signage, lighting, and pull-off improvements in order to create a welcoming entrance to Dalton when entering or traveling through.

Economic Development

Data

NCC staff has gathered and explored the following data regarding Dalton's economic development conditions including business activities, infrastructure resources, assets, needs and opportunities.

WHAT IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

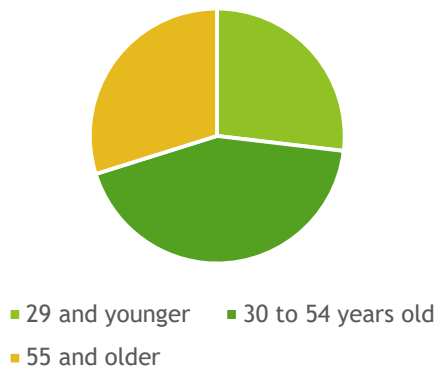
Economic development is the sustained, concerted action of policy makers and communities to create the conditions for economic growth and improved quality of life. It involves expanding the capacity of individuals, firms, and communities to maximize the use of their talent and skills to support innovation, lower transaction costs, and responsibly produce and trade goods and services. It can involve expanding businesses to create greater opportunity for residents and ensure these opportunities are accessible. Economic development often encourages communities to build on their assets and strengths that make them unique, and complement regional economic activities, rather than compete.

EXISTING BUSINESS ACTIVITY

Currently, there are 28 businesses registered with the NH Secretary of State in Dalton. Of those businesses the following industries are represented:

Type of Business	Number of Businesses	Current Employers	Size of Employers (# of employees)
Government (local government & federal contractors)	4	Dalton Town Clerk, Dalton Selectmen's Office, Dalton Tax Collector, Ridgeline Defense, LLC	1 to 4 employees at each business
Cemeteries & Churches	4	Ladd Cemetery, Johns River Cemetery, Cushman Cemetery, Harbinger Bible Conference	1 to 4 employees at each business
Automobile (Parts & truck wholesale)	2	White Mountain Auto Broker, White Mountain Used Parts	5 to 9 employees at each business
Driving Instruction	1	Team O'Neil Rally School	20 to 49 employees
Motorcycle Repair & Service	1	JR's Cycle Repair	1 to 4 employees
Contractors (Building trades)	4	Merola Drywall, Henry's Electrical, Thermal Mass, Inc, White's Septic	1 to 4 employees at each business
Recreation/trails	1	Dalton Ridge Runners	Unknown
Accounting & Bookkeeping	1	Basic Bookkeeping	1 to 4 employees
Retail	1	Dalton Country Store LLC	1 to 4 employees
Radio Equipment & Systems	1	TAC-2 Communications	1 to 4 employees
Library	1	Dalton Public Library	5 to 9 employees
Police	1	Dalton Police Department	1 to 4 employees
Real Estate	1	Pelletier Property Management LLC	1 to 4 employees
Restaurants	1	Nomad's LLC	5 to 9 employees
State Park	1	Forest Lake State Park	1 to 4 employees
Training Consultant	1	Raven Firearms Training	1 to 4 employees
Trucking	2	North Woods Transport, BNB Inc.	1 to 4 employees

Worker Ages

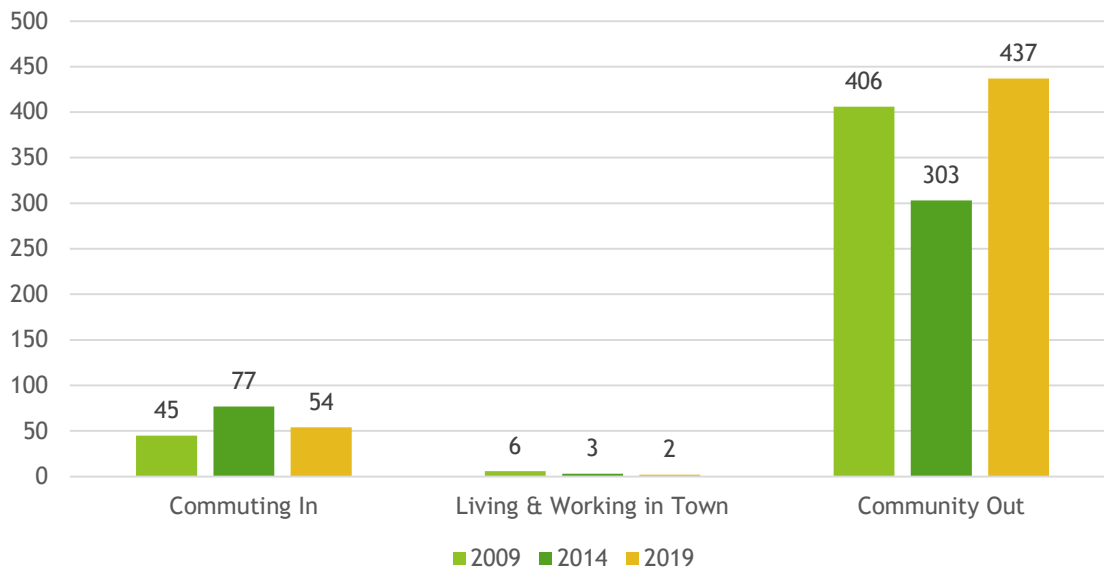


There are a total of 439 jobs held by residents of Dalton based on 2019 Census data. Of those jobs 26.9% are held by people 29 years old or younger, whereas 43.3% are held by people between 30 and 54 years old, and 29.8% are held by people 55 or over.

Dalton’s workforce is evenly split between male and female workers.

The chart below explores the commuting patterns of Dalton’s labor force as they have changed in recent years. Commute patterns are divided into three (3) categories: “Commuting into Dalton,” “Living & Working in Dalton,” and “Community out from Dalton.”

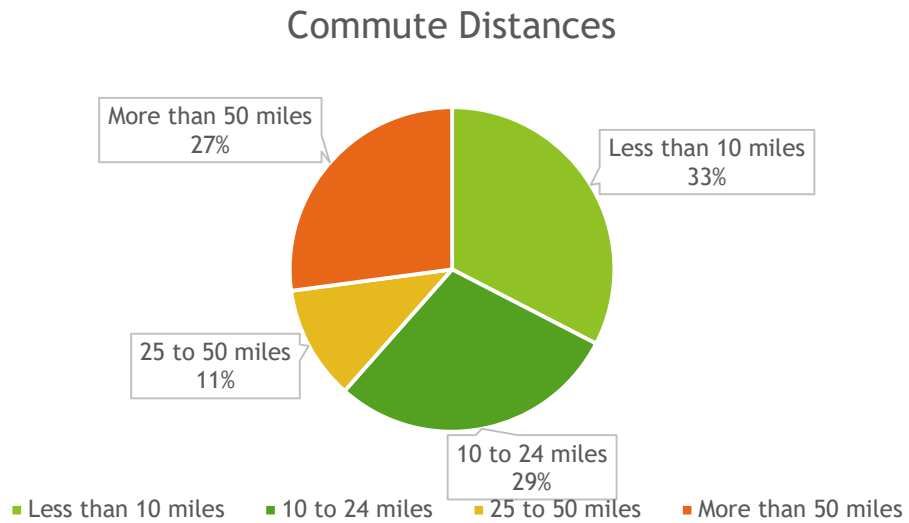
Commute Patterns & Volumes



Of those Dalton residents commuting outside of town to work, in 2019, the 10 most typical work destinations were:

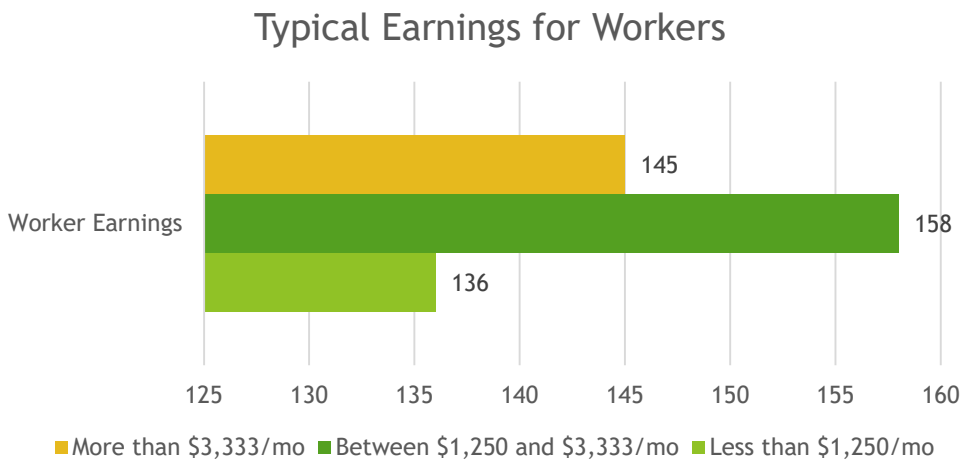
1. Whitefield (6.3% of jobs)
2. Littleton (6% of jobs)
3. Lancaster (2.9% of jobs)
4. Concord (2% of jobs)
5. Conway (1.9% of jobs)
6. Lisbon (1.4% of jobs)
7. Tilton/Northfield (1.4%)
8. St. Johnsbury, VT (1.4%)
9. Berlin (1%)
10. Claremont (1%)

The image to the right depicts the typical distances traveled to work by Dalton residents.



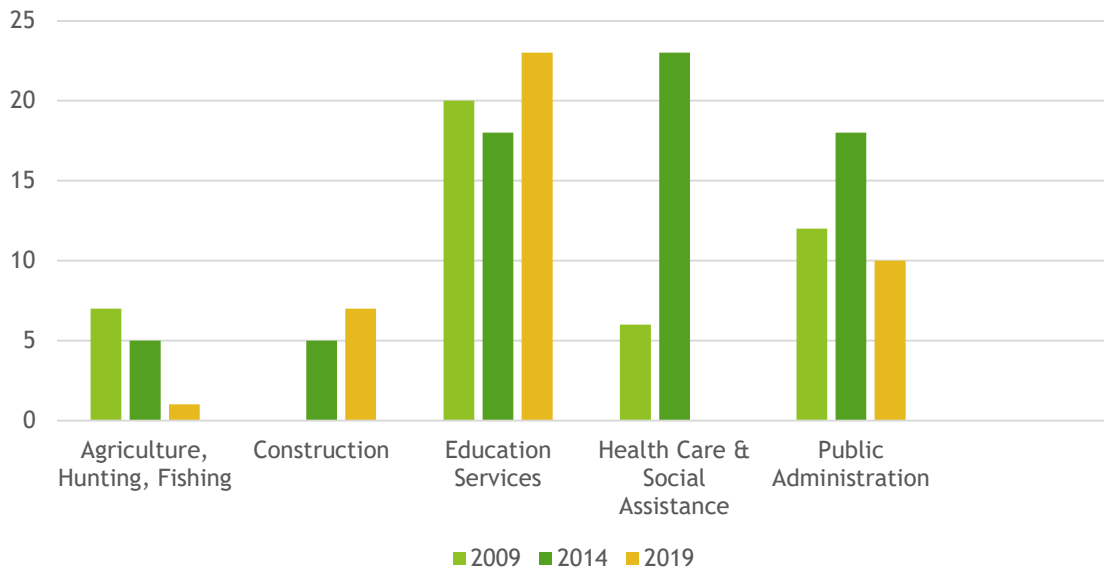
EARNINGS & EDUCATION

Over 30% of Dalton’s workforce earns less than \$1,250 per month in wages.

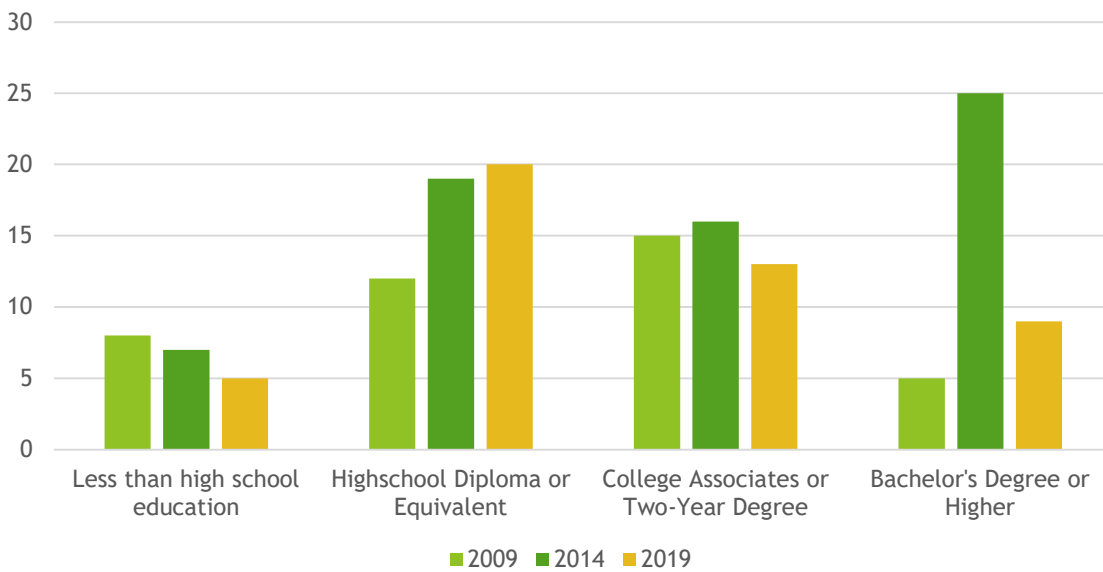


Dalton’s residents, as with any community, bring their knowledge, capabilities and experiences to the areas economic activity. The charts below explore Specialized Skills and Education Levels for the community.

Specialized Skills



Educational Attainment



ECONOMIC TREND – GROWTH OF RECREATION

Outdoor recreation continues to be a focus of economic activity across Coos County. Based upon data collected and provided by TravelStats, the following visitor volumes and expenditures have been observed in Coos County in 2021.

- Visitor Volume: 784,700 people visited Coos County.
- Tourism Dollars Spent: \$317.2 million dollars were spent via tourism, including \$104.3 million in Accommodations, \$89.4 million in Food & Services, \$38.7 million in local transit and gas, and \$37.8 million in Arts, Entertainment & Recreation.
- Tax Revenues: \$19.6 million was collected in Rooms & Meals tax

Looking backward, revenues generated by travel and tourism in Coos County have consistently increased since 2011, when all Tourism Dollars Spent totaled \$206.9 million. Resulting in a 48% percentage increase in this time period.

Within Dalton exist several assets, which may yield opportunities, to spur growth in this area. The Connecticut River Scenic Byway follows Route 135 through Dalton, and attractions such as the Mt. Orne Covered Bridge, Forest Lake State Park, and the Connecticut River are located within Dalton.

ECONOMIC TERMS – COTTAGE INDUSTRIES & BEDROOM COMMUNITIES

Two (2) terms stand out as important to understanding the economic landscape of Dalton today. These terms are defined here, and should be explored in their relation to Dalton's future hopes and aspirations for economic development.

- **Cottage Industry.** In the 2014 Master Plan, Dalton sought to encourage their home-based cottage industries. Noting them as part of local heritage. Within the plan, these businesses are described as "Businesses operated from individual homes where the home serves as both a place of residence as well as a business."
- **Bedroom Community.** A bedroom community can be described as, towns where the majority of residents commute elsewhere to work, typically in larger nearby communities, and then return home to sleep. These communities are typical in the U.S. following WWII development. They typically offer very limited shopping, entertainment, and other amenities.

ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The types of economic activity and employment centers in a community is impacted by the availability of physical infrastructure to support particular types, or scales of activity or development. For example, many manufacturing or industrial activities require three-phase power, public water supply, and public wastewater disposal systems to accommodate their energy, resources, and waste generation needs. Understanding the types of infrastructure available through out the community can aid in planning projects and local investment to encourage the types and sizes of businesses desired by the residents. In this section we will explore the presence of 1) trucking routes, 2) power transition lines, 3) public water, and 4) public wastewater systems.

- **Trucking Routes.** Route 135 and Route 142 are designated trucking routes capable of transporting goods to and from Dalton businesses. Many other routes in Town are subject to weight restrictions (seasonally due to mud season) and present limitations on business activity requiring large truck or consistent delivery of goods.
- **Power Transition Lines.** The proximity of the Moore dam hydro-electric facility provides some high-capacity power infrastructure in Dalton, even if just for transition to points beyond the community. These power lines have greater energy volumes than distribution lines (which connect to individual services) and can provide opportunities to high-energy businesses in need of three-phase power for operations.
- **Public water & Wastewater Infrastructure.** Many large businesses and specialized businesses such as restaurants, breweries, or manufacturers are challenged to adequately provide for their water and wastewater needs on site based systems, such as wells or septic systems. Such businesses seek locations with connection to existing public systems as a cost savings, and to properly handle water and wastewater needs. In locations without such systems, businesses in need of large, or complex systems, are less likely to be located.

When asked to share opinions on Dalton's greatest economic development (or business) challenge or need response trends centered around:

- A need to increase the tax base for the community in order to stabilize taxes and reduce residential tax burdens
- A need to increase opportunities for businesses Dalton. Primarily focused around small businesses with limited impacts to the area. Environmental, recreational, and tourism based businesses were highlighted, as well as business that provide employment for Dalton residents
- A few respondents called out the lack of high-speed internet as a challenge

Key Questions Around Needs & Opportunities

The key questions below are intended to launch a discussion regarding Dalton's needs and opportunities regarding economic development.

1. Are there natural resource-based industries (fishing, farming or forestry) which are important to the community? If so are they growing or declining?
2. Is tourism, including recreation-based, agritourism, or heritage tourism, an important part of the economy?
3. What types of change is the local economy experiencing?
4. What are the employment and commerce strengths of Dalton, what about the surrounding towns?
5. What role do cottage industries play in the community, how can they be better supported?
6. How do the existing services and infrastructure in town impact future business growth?
7. What share of the communities Tax Levy comes from commercial activities today? What allocation of Room & Meals tax does the community see?