

SWOT ANALYSIS

Land Use

S

Strengths

- Village scale
- Rural character
- Hills/Mountain
- Current zoning
- Town plan
- Water
- Timber
- Prime agricultural land
- Public parks

W

Weaknesses

- High cost of land & farmland
- Route 7 bisects East Dorset
- Lack of funds for Conservation Commission

O

Opportunities

- Mixed use C.H.O.
- Land conservation fund
- Renewable energy Resources
- Encourage continuation of agricultural and forestry uses

T

Threats

- High cost of land and farmland
- Sprawl
- Tax structure threatens farming
- Lack of protection for town water C.H.O.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Economy

Strengths

- Proximity to Manchester
- Good real estate
- Dorset bedroom community to Manchester and other larger towns
- Town is open to public input

Weaknesses

- Lack of transportation alternatives
- Perceived difference between Dorset Village and East Dorset
- Lack of affordable housing
- Difficult working from home because of poor internet infrastructure
- Regulations may limit home businesses
- Few street lights (Dorset West Road)
- Lack of services (trash, police, etc.)
- Town water system

Opportunities

- Enhanced transportation alternatives (rail, air, other)
- Perceived East Dorset lower rents and real estate costs
- More flexible regulations

Threats

- Decreasing disposable incomes
- Declining middle class
- Can't keep our kids here
- High degree of dependence on Manchester
- Aging population.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Economy

Strengths

- Small businesses (JK Adams, Williams, DUS)
- Businesses reflect the character of Dorset (Visible to the street)
- Good anchor businesses exist
- Good schools
- Natural resources
- Dorset is marketable
- Good zoning in place

Opportunities

- More mixed use
- More non-tourist businesses
- Improved internet connectivity
- Very attractive place to live creates new jobs

Weaknesses

- Not all businesses are within the commercial district (retail)
- Not taking opportunity for mixed uses
- Expensive commercial rents
- Dorset is significantly a 2nd home market
- Limited housing for year round residents
- Limited internet connectivity
- Commutation required because of limited employment opportunities
- Few people know zoning and Town plan strengths
- Act 60 – Taxes
- Hard for young people to make a living here

Threats

- Too highly concentrated in 2nd homes
- Perception it is difficult to do business here
- Perception of limited opportunities because of poor internet
- Fear of change limiting growth
- Lack of participation from younger residents

SWOT ANALYSIS

Services

Strengths

- **Efficient Town government**
- **Rescue services**
- **Cell Service**
- **Library**
- **Schools – Choice and excellent quality**
- **Dorset Nursing Association**
- **Fire Service**
- **Meals on Wheels**
- **Adequate services in Dorset perceived to attract young people**

Opportunities

- **Closer relationship with Manchester**
- **Central communications center**
- **Consolidation of schools (for better or worse)**
- **Public/Private transport services to Manchester/Bennington/Rutland**
- **Improved Village sidewalks and lighting**
- **Develop pedestrian walkway from Route 30 cemetery/Cheney Road, etc.)**

Weaknesses

- **Police protection**
- **Insufficient cell service**
- **Lack of volunteers to staff Fire and Rescue**
- **Limited public transportation**
- **No gas station in town**
- **No drug store in town**
- **No bust transportation to BBA**

Threats

- **Not enough money to pay for services**
- **Taxes**
- **Aging population**

SWOT ANALYSIS

Recreation

Strengths

- Open Space
- Existing trails
- Natural Beauty
- Roads for motorcycling
- Emerald lake
- Wildlife variety - birds

Weaknesses

- Lack of info on trails
- Limited parking
- Trail Maintenance
- Lack of access to natural areas
- No trail markers
- Limited funding
- Lack of Police – safety for children and recreation

Opportunities

- More Improved Town website with links
- Widen road shoulders for bikes
- Maps and brochures
- X-Country skiing
- Mixed use trails – motorized
- Volunteers to organize and implement
- Work with State and bike clubs, hiking groups to promote Dorset

Threats

- Motorized vehicle use on trails
- Landowner concerns about litter, noise and liability
- Lack of respect (for landowners?)
- Lack of landowner education on issues

SWOT ANALYSIS

Arts

Strengths

- Dorset Theater Festival
- Large population of local artists and craftsmen
- “Bickford Property” on the green though only temporary
- Reputation as center for the arts and art friendly
- Availability of local artists to participate across schools, art shows, theater, etc.

Opportunities

- **Internet offers ability to promote and share arts in ways not contemplated through bricks and mortar facilities**
- **Lower cost of theater**
- **Re-create writers colony**
- **More Arts on the Green – Discover Dorset**
- **Build on DTF to promote theater for youths**
- **More Arts for kids after school – Promote youth art shows**
- **Integrate with Vermont Council for the Arts**
- **Summer Arts program for youth through the Rec Department**

Weaknesses

- **Theater is expensive**
- **Lack of community center**
- **Limited public parks (seems like a rec issue)**
- **Limited identification and marketing of the arts locally**
- **Poor internet limits the “creative economy”**
- **Limited transportation to gets kids to arts focused activities after school**

Threats

- **Internet is a disrupter that has created venues for the arts that by-pass local venues**
- **Limited financial resources to pay for everything**
- **Rise of Saratoga and other communities as centers for the arts may leave the Shires behind**
- **Cost of hosting arts related events is already high and getting even more expensive**
- **Economic issues limits funding**

