

# MEMORANDUM

**To:** Town Council and Town Manager

**From:** Theo Holtwijk, Director of Long-Range Planning

**Date:** July 2, 2009

**Re: Proposed Web-based Economic Development Resource Package & Available Commercial Property Database**

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On February 9, 2009, the Council discussed various economic development options for the Town and decided to:

- not form a local economic development committee at this time,
- continue to pursue regional initiatives, such as the one by the Metro Coalition, as well as
- develop resource information for existing and prospective businesses in Falmouth.

Regarding the last point, staff researched what area communities, such as Portland, South Portland, Freeport, and Scarborough, are providing and prepared a draft outline for a proposed economic development website and a draft available commercial property database for Falmouth.

The proposed **economic development resource package** - draft editorial text and resource links of which are provided below – is envisioned as an informational service to be housed at the Town's website. Each separate page starts with one or more typical questions that someone may have, followed by an explanation and resource website links. We envision that some illustrations will be incorporated to help present each page. A key question for the Council is whether or not to list any private websites (for examples of potential private websites, please see below).

The draft **available commercial property database** is attached separately. This information was developed by field review and real estate broker/commercial property database website review. Town staff then reached to all owners/brokers for the identified properties to verify the property data and request answers to several feedback questions. The Town's outreach effort and responses received have been provided in two additional memos. Data was obtained for forty-four properties. The data is divided into an East Falmouth (31 properties) and West Falmouth section (13 properties). It is then organized by for lease, for sale, and for sale/lease, and within that by street name and number.

### **Proposed Next Steps:**

After Council feedback is incorporated, staff plans to present this information to the Falmouth-Cumberland Chamber of Commerce and the Falmouth Economic Development Commission (FEDC) for additional feedback.

Staff is happy to answer any questions the Council may have. Thank you.

## **Proposed Web-based Falmouth Economic Development Resource Package**

A possible catchy head line could be developed and could lead this website.

**Front page: Welcome to Falmouth!** *This page provides a welcome and basic overview of what this website offers.*

“Whether your business is already located in Falmouth or you are contemplating locating it here, the Town of Falmouth wants you to feel welcome and wants your business to thrive. The Town prides itself on its quality of life and exemplary schools and recognizes the importance of economic development and a diversified tax base.

This website provides information on some typical questions that you may have in the following areas:

- Site Location Assistance
- Permit and License Assistance
- Financial Assistance
- Falmouth “Facts & Figures”
- Current Development Initiatives

Please contact Nathan Poore, Town Manager, at \_\_\_\_\_, if you have *any* questions that the Town of Falmouth may be able to help you with. “*Your* business is *our* business!”

Thank you for your interest in our community.”

**Page 1: Site Location Assistance.** *This page gets you to the “available Falmouth commercial properties” database. This database is a PDF of a simple Excel-based spreadsheet. The spreadsheet is proposed to cover:*

- *property type*
- *tax map and lot number*
- *location/address*
- *zoning district*
- *land area and/or building square feet available*
- *basic terms (for sale/lease)*
- *realtor/owner contact info*

“Where in Falmouth am I able to locate my business? Which commercial properties are currently available for sale or lease?”

To help you answer those questions, the Town has compiled a basic overview of available retail, office, and industrial properties for your use. If you are interested to learn more about any particular property, please use the contact information provided in the spreadsheet. (Note: While the Town has made every effort to keep this listing accurate, complete, and up-to-date, no assurances are being made in that regard.)

Using the address or tax map and lot data noted in the spreadsheet, you may be able to consult the Town’s Geographic Information System (GIS) website to check out availability of sewer or water service, 5-ft contour information, and aerial photography.

Please click [here](#) to access the available commercial property listing. **<Note: This listing is attached separately.>**

Please click [here](#) to access the Town’s GIS website.

You may also wish to check the following commercial property database websites:

[Catylist.com](#)

[LoopNet.com](#)

[Maine Commercial Property Exchange](#)

Please contact Theo Holtwijk, Director of Long-Range Planning at \_\_\_\_\_, if you have *any* questions about this database.”

**Page 2: Permit and License Assistance.** *This page provides information on:*

- *how to schedule a project scoping meeting*
- *building permits*
- *site plan permits*
- *zoning information*
- *master planning inquiries and*
- *business license requirements.*

“What permits do I need for my building or site? What will the Town require of me? How much is permitting going to cost? How long will it take? Does my business need any licenses from the Town?

We are here to help you through the Town’s regulatory process in an efficient and expeditious manner. We know that your time is important. We are happy to sit down with you to scope out the requirements for your particular project. We can bring in other Town departments and coordinate a multi-party meeting, as required or desired. The extent of permits required depends on the size and type of development you are considering.

You may also wish to check the following resources, available on our website:

[Land Use Ordinances](#)

[Building Code References](#)

[Planning Application Forms, Checklists, and Fee Calculations](#)

[Building Application Forms](#)

[Building Permit Fee Schedule](#)

[Frequent Permit Process Questions](#)

[Frequent Planning Questions](#)

[License and Permit Information from Town Clerk](#)

[Personal Property/Business Equipment Information from Assessor](#)

[Property Sales Data from Real Estate Transfer Tax forms \(RETTs\)](#)

[Planning Office – General Information](#)

[Code Administration & Building Regulation – General Information](#)

[Assessor – General Information](#)

For questions about land use permitting or to set up a scoping meeting, please contact Amanda Stearns, Community Development Director, at \_\_\_\_\_.

For building permit questions, please contact Albert Farris, Chief Codes Enforcement Officer, at \_\_\_\_\_.

For business license questions, please contact Ellen Planer, Town Clerk, at \_\_\_\_\_.”

**Page 3: Financial Assistance** *This page provides links to available business incentive programs and a description of current TIF districts where the Town invest in its infrastructure.*

“What types of financial assistance are available for my business?”

The State of Maine offers several financing and tax reimbursement programs.

Click [here](#) for an overview of State financing programs, such as Employment Tax Increment Financing (ETIF), Maine Technology Institute (MTI), Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Finance Authority of Maine (FAME), and the Small Enterprise Growth Fund.

Click [here](#) for an overview of State tax reimbursement programs, including as Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement (BETR) and Technology Tax Credits.

You may also wish to consult the following web sites:

[Maine Office of Business Development](#)

[Maine Department of Economic and Community Development](#)

[Finance Authority of Maine](#)

[Maine Small Business Development Centers](#)

The Town of Falmouth has created two TIF districts. One, created in 1998, is in West Falmouth near Turnpike exit 53. The other, created in 2000, is located along Route One North and South. Click [here](#) for maps to these two districts. **<Note: These maps are not attached with this memo.>**

The TIF districts have been used to encourage major new commercial construction in Falmouth and to assure continued infrastructure investment by the Town in these two business areas. The Town investments are guided by a multi-year investment plan that is part of the Town’s budget and is approved by the Town Council.

For financial assistance or TIF-related questions, please contact Nathan Poore, Town Manager, at \_\_\_\_\_.”

**Page 4: Falmouth “Facts and Figures”** *This page provides links to summary, statistical data, a brief description as to what Falmouth has to offer, and a link to the City of Portland’s promotional description.*

“What can you tell me about Falmouth and the Portland area?”

Falmouth, located on scenic Casco Bay, was incorporated in 1718 and, at that time, encompassed Portland and other neighboring communities. Its current 30-square mile land area was finalized in 1871. Throughout the 1800s the Town had many mills and several shipyards, primarily along the Presumpscot River. By 1900, Falmouth began to take shape as a suburban community with conversion of summer homes into year-round residences, trolley service from Portland, and later automobile traffic.

In the past 50 years, Falmouth has grown from a quiet, small town of just over 4000 people to a bustling suburb of over 10,000. It is part of the Greater Portland area, which has some 350,000 inhabitants. Portland is the finance, commerce and cultural capital of northern New England as well as Maine’s largest city.

In the mid-1950s, the primary land use in Falmouth was agriculture, with the vast majority of the town’s populace living in the eastern portion of the community. The transformation of Falmouth started with the construction of the interstate system (I-295 and the Maine Turnpike), which divided the community with major physical barriers and provided ready access for future commuters to the Portland job market.

The highways and a new sewer treatment plant stimulated commercial development on Routes 1 and 100, with more than a million square feet of non-residential space. The availability of sewer collection and treatment also made it possible for a 1970s boom in multi-family housing on the eastern part of town, including several large condominium projects. In recent decades, single-family homes have spread in the western sections of town.

Today, Falmouth boasts three private golf courses, the Portland Yacht Club, the largest anchorage in Maine (with over 1200 moorings), and many preserved open spaces and recreation areas located throughout the community, including:

- Mackworth Island, a State-reserved land of about 100 acres, which was donated by Governor Baxter and affords views of Casco Bay and Portland, and
- Gilsland Farm, headquarters of the Maine Audubon Society, which includes 2-1/2 miles of trails through a 60-acre sanctuary of fields, woods, and marsh bordering the Presumpscot River.

Falmouth’s single largest taxpayer in the community is OceanView at Falmouth, a retirement complex. Falmouth’s proximity to Portland allows its residents to take benefit of the urban amenities which that city offers.

[Summary data sheet](#) and [census data](#) for Falmouth can be found at the GPCOG website.



*Rendering of new elementary school in Falmouth*

You may also wish to consult the following websites:

[Falmouth Public Schools](#)

[Falmouth Memorial Library](#)

[Falmouth-Cumberland Community Chamber](#)

[Falmouth Land Trust](#)

[Falmouth Historical Society](#)

[Family Ice Center](#)

[Maine Audubon](#)

[OceanView at Falmouth](#)

[Convention & Visitors Bureau of Greater Portland](#)

[Greater Portland Council of Governments](#)

[Portland Regional Chamber](#)

[METRO Greater Portland Transit District](#)

[Portland Press Herald – Maine Sunday Telegram](#)

[The Forecaster](#)

[Wikipedia description of Falmouth](#)

**Page 5: Current Development Initiatives.** *This page briefly describes current development efforts and projects in construction.*

What else is going on in Falmouth? What can you tell me about current public or private development and planning initiatives?

**Tidewater Farm and Village**

In 2005 the Town Council approved a Master Development Planned Development District for Tidewater, a 52-acre saltwater farm and 20-acre adjacent area, close to Route One. The mixed-use plan includes 86 new homes, 65,000 sq.ft. of retail and commercial development, a 75-room inn and about 30 acres of open space. Many of the homes and some of the commercial space have since been completed. Mercy Hospital is one of the commercial tenants. A \$2-million, 8,600 sq.ft. regional learning center to be operated by the University of Maine Cooperative Extension in Cumberland County is also proposed for this location.



*Commercial building at Tidewater Village*



*Proposed Regional Learning Center*

You may wish to also consult the following web sites:

[Tidewater Farm](#)

[Tidewater Farm Regional Learning Center](#)

**West Falmouth Crossing**

West Falmouth Crossing is a \$23 million, master planned development district for commercial center which includes 60,000 sq.ft. of large and small-scale neighborhood retail businesses along with 143,000 sq.ft. of office space. A Hannaford grocery store and retail complex occupies the eastern half of the site, and a new office building for TD BankNorth anchors the site west of Gray Road. The site also includes vital neighborhood commercial services, including banks, convenience stores, medical offices, a daycare facility, and other storefronts.

The development includes forty acres of preserved forestland and riparian habitat on the site along the Presumpscot River, called River Point. It is located at the northern terminus of a METRO bus line.





*TD BankNorth building*



*Bowdoin Medical Group building*

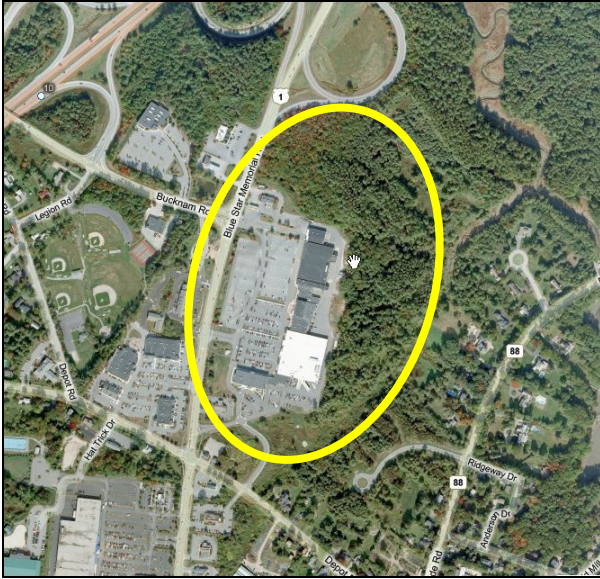
You may wish to also consult the following web site:

[West Falmouth Crossing](#)

### **Falmouth Shopping Center and Route One**

The 250,000 sq.ft. Falmouth Shopping Center on Route One, home to Shaw's Supermarkets and a variety of other businesses, was partially renovated in 2006. In 2008 the owners of the center expressed an interest to the Town to expand the shopping center onto the undeveloped northerly portion of the property. The Town Council, concerned with current vacancies in the complex, suggested a collaborative approach between the owners of the Center and the community to which the owners agreed.

A community event is currently being planned by the Town and property owners, where all stakeholders will be invited to participate, so public feedback on desired and non-desired elements for future development of the Falmouth Shopping Center and Route One can be gathered. This feedback will then be submitted to the Town Council and the owners. Based on Council review of the public feedback, the owners will be asked to prepare a master plan for Council consideration.



*Aerial view of Falmouth Shopping Center*

The Town is also in the process of finalizing a 2005 Plan for Route One South. The goals of the 2005 study were to make Route One a more mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly place and focused on three key aspects:

1. needed traffic improvements by the Town and private developers;
2. recommendations concerning the Town's existing design guidelines; and
3. changes to Route One land use standards (such as setbacks and building heights).

In taking on the Route One project, the Town Council wants to make sure that any recommendations it ultimately adopts for Route One will reflect the community's vision for this area as well as meet the needs of the businesses.

You may wish to also consult the following web site:

[Falmouth Shopping Center and Route One Project](#)

### **Community Facilities Planning Project**

In 2008 the Falmouth Town Council established a Community Facilities Planning Committee to review the current and possible future facilities needs of several town-owned buildings. The municipal buildings and facilities being reviewed are the Pleasant Hill Fire Station, the Falmouth Memorial Library, Town Hall and the Plummer-Motz and Lunt elementary schools which will become vacant in 2011 when a new elementary school is built at the Woodville Road campus.

The committee recognized the importance of community input into this critical task and held many outreach meetings with community groups, produced a 10-minute informational video, organized a Community Event and conducted an on-line survey to which almost 500 responses came. The committee is currently working to develop various scenarios, including costs and benefits, and will seek additional public input. These decisions will affect Falmouth for many decades, in terms of taxes and services and in terms of the community's sense of place.



You may wish to also consult the following web site:  
[Community Facilities Planning Project](#)

### **Transportation Planning**

Falmouth has the reputation of being a pro-active community. An example of this is its current transportation planning project. In 2009 the Town hired Gorrill-Palmer Inc. to conduct a Pavement Management and Transportation Management Plan for Falmouth. The purpose of this plan is to acquire current pavement condition information and outline priorities and recommendations for its 90 miles of roadways.

The plan will also include a recommended Transportation System Improvement Program, which will include:

- Roadway corridor improvements
- Intersection improvements
- Traffic operational improvements
- New roadways
- Access management recommendations
- Transit system improvements
- Bicycle, pedestrian, trail improvements

The Town of Falmouth will incorporate this information in its comprehensive Geographic Information Systems (GIS) program that has been in place for over 14 years. The Town is also implementing a Computerized Maintenance Management System, called VUEWorks, which will include the project's pavement and transportation data, to help manage its ongoing infrastructure needs.

You may wish to also consult the following web sites:  
[Falmouth Geographic Information System](#)  
[VUEWorks - corporate website](#)

### **Comprehensive Plan Update**

The Town's land use policies are articulated in its 2000 Comprehensive Plan. The Town is currently gearing up to prepare an update of this plan. The work for this will be overseen by the Long-Range Planning Advisory Committee Plus (LPAC+). The Council will have authority to adopt the new update.

You may wish to also consult the following web site:  
[2000 Comprehensive Plan](#)

**Page 6: Other Resource Links.** *This page provides other web links.*

“Where else can I go to get useful business information?”

You may find some of the following web sites also helpful for your business needs:

[Maine & Company](#)  
[Coastal Enterprises Inc.](#)  
[Doing Business in Maine](#)  
[Maine Bankers](#)  
[Maine Technology Institute](#)  
[Maine Idea Exchange](#)  
[Small Business Administration](#)  
[Maine Economy](#)  
[Maine International Trade Center](#)  
[Maine Office of Tourism](#)  
[Maine Patent Program](#)  
[Women’s Business Center](#)  
[Maine Liquor Licensing](#)  
[State of Maine Website](#)  
[Maine Eating and Lodging Licensing:](#)  
[Maine Corporate Names on the Secretary of State's Website](#)  
[BusGate-Maine](#)  
[Business Entity Information](#)  
[CareerCenter](#)  
[Doing Business in Maine](#)  
[Internal Revenue Service](#)  
[Maine Association of Non-Profits](#)  
[Maine Bureau of Corporations](#)  
[Maine Economy](#)  
[Maine International Trade Center](#)  
[Maine Office of Tourism](#)  
[Maine Patent Program](#)  
[Maine Tax Information](#)  
[Maine Trade Name Protection](#)  
[Maine Workers Compensation](#)  
[Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership](#)  
[SCORE Business Counseling and Training](#)  
[Maine Labor Information](#)  
[US Census](#)  
[US Patent & Trade Mark Office](#)  
[USM School of Business/Center for Entrepreneurship](#)  
[Women, Work and Community”](#)  
[Maine Real Estate and Development Association \(MEREDA\)](#)