

Northeastern University
Dukakis Center *for* Urban & Regional Policy

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL (EDSAT)

**EDSAT REPORT FOR THE CITY OF
TAUNTON, MASSACHUSETTS
FEBRUARY 2017**



THE PARTNERS

About the Kitty and Michael Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy

The Kitty and Michael Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University conducts interdisciplinary research, in collaboration with civic leaders and scholars both within and beyond Northeastern University, to identify and implement real solutions to the critical challenges facing urban areas throughout Greater Boston, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the nation. Founded in 1999 as a “think and do” tank, the Dukakis Center’s collaborative research and problem-solving model applies powerful data analysis, a bevy of multidisciplinary research and evaluation techniques, and a policy-driven perspective to address a wide range of issues facing cities and towns. These issues include affordable housing, local economic development, workforce development, transportation, public finance, and environmental sustainability. The staff of the Dukakis Center works to catalyze broad-based efforts to solve urban problems, acting as both a convener and a trusted and committed partner to local, state, and national agencies and organizations. The Dukakis Center is housed within Northeastern University’s School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs.

About the National League of Cities

The National League of Cities is the nation’s oldest and largest organization devoted to strengthening and promoting cities as centers of opportunity, leadership, and governance. NLC is a resource and advocate for more than 1,600 member cities and the 49 state municipal leagues, representing 19,000 cities and towns and more than 218 million Americans. Through its Center for Research and Innovation, NLC provides research and analysis on key topics and trends important to cities, creative solutions to improve the quality of life in communities, inspiration and ideas for local officials to use in tackling tough issues and opportunities for city leaders to connect with peers, share experiences, and learn about innovative approaches to urban governance.

For additional information about the Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT), please visit <http://www.northeastern.edu/dukakiscenter/econdev/edsat> or contact:

Catherine Tumber, Ph.D.

Northeastern University
Dukakis Center for Urban & Regional Policy
310 Renaissance Park
360 Huntington Avenue
Boston, MA 02115
617-373-7868 (v)
617-373-7905 (f)
c.tumber@neu.edu

Christiana McFarland

Center for Research and Innovation
National League of Cities
1301 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Suite 550
Washington, DC 20004
202-626-3036 (v)
mcfarland@nlc.org

Report authors: James Huessy and Catherine Tumber

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
Project Overview	1
Methodology	1
SUMMARY OF RELATIVE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES	4
Taunton’s Strengths and Potential “Deal-Makers”	4
Taunton’s Weaknesses and Potential “Deal-Breakers”	5
DETAILED ANALYSIS AND QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS.....	6
Section 1: Access to Customers/Markets	8
Section 2: Concentration of Businesses (Agglomeration)	12
Section 3: Cost of Land (Implicit/Explicit)	16
Section 4: Labor	20
Section 5: Municipal Process	22
Section 6: Quality of Life (Community)	27
Section 7: Quality of Life (Site)	29
Section 8: Business Incentives	30
Section 9: Tax Rates	33
Section 10: Access to Information.....	35
NEXT STEPS	38

Page intentionally left blank.

INTRODUCTION

A robust, sustainable, and adaptable local economy depends heavily on public officials who can lead in forming and implementing an economic development strategy. A thorough strategy is developed with an understanding of local business interests and regional resource availability, and a careful assessment of the community's ability to attract new business investment and jobs. Participating in the Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT) is an important step public officials can take to assess their jurisdictions'¹ strengths and weaknesses for the purpose of planning for viable, long-term economic growth. Through EDSAT, public officials and business leaders collaborate as a team, assessing each of their roles in creating a business-friendly climate.

By participating in this self-assessment, Taunton will not simply better understand its economic development assets and challenges, but learn to build upon strengths and overcome weaknesses. This report contains a thorough analysis of the responses provided by Taunton to the EDSAT questionnaire.

The Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy will keep all individual-municipality results in this report strictly confidential.

Project Overview

Since 2005, Northeastern University's Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (Dukakis Center) has sought to identify the "deal-breakers" that impede private investment in local municipalities. Based upon research on the resurgence of older industrial cities, the Dukakis Center has identified two crucial elements in economic development. First is a municipality's ability to respond opportunely to ever-changing market forces. Second is local government's skill in working collaboratively with regional agencies, business leaders, and academic institutions to lessen municipal weaknesses and market the city or town's strengths. These conclusions led to the development of EDSAT, an analytical framework for providing practical, actionable feedback to public officials. In its current form, EDSAT resulted from a partnership between the Dukakis Center and the National League of Cities (NLC).

Methodology

The foundation for the 200-plus questions that make up the EDSAT questionnaire was established when the Dukakis Center surveyed more than 240 members of the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties, now known as NAIOP and CoreNet Global. These leading professional associations represent site and location experts, whose members research new sites for businesses and other institutions. Members were asked to identify those factors that are most important to businesses and developers when evaluating locations. This process generated a set of 38 broad factors relevant to economic growth and development. Examples include highway access, available workforce, and the timeliness of permit reviews. Based on rankings by these location experts, EDSAT factors are identified as *Very Important*, *Important*, or *Less Important* to businesses and developers. We denote these rankings as follows: A filled circle (●) indicates *Very Important*, a half-filled circle (◐) indicates *Important*, and an unfilled circle (○) indicates *Less Important*.

¹ Jurisdictions are usually categorized as individual towns and/or cities. A "jurisdiction" can also consist of several small municipalities, a geographic region, or a county—as long as each plans and strategizes its economic development efforts as a single entity.

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF EDSAT LOCATION FACTORS

Very Important ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highway Access • Parking • Traffic • Infrastructure • Rents • Workforce Composition • Timeliness of Approvals • Website/Access to Information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of Available Space • Land • Labor Cost • Industry Sensitivity • Sites Available • Predictable Permits • Fast Track Permits • Citizen Participation in the Review Process • Cultural and Recreational Amenities • Crime • Housing • Local Schools • Amenities • State Business Incentives • Local Business Incentives • Local Tax Rates • Tax Delinquency 	Less Important ○ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airports • Rail • Water Transportation • Proximity to Universities and Research • Unions • Workforce Training • Permitting Ombudsman
Important ◐ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Transit • Physical Attractiveness • Complementary / Supplemental Business Services • Critical Mass Firms • Cross Marketing • Marketing Follow-Up 		


Each question in EDSAT addresses a particular location factor and provides three ways to interpret that factor relative to the response in your own community:

1. The level of importance businesses and developers place on that location factor
2. How other jurisdictions participating in EDSAT have typically responded to that question
3. How your jurisdiction's response compares to the typical response and the importance of the location factor

The EDSAT analysis compares your jurisdiction's responses with those of Comparison Group Municipalities (CGM)—that is, all of the jurisdictions that have completed the EDSAT questionnaire. With regard to the Permitting Process, for example, your jurisdiction may offer significantly shorter review times than the CGM. In this case, the EDSAT analysis suggests that on this measure your jurisdiction may possess a relative advantage in what is a *Very Important* location factor. However, if permit reviews take significantly longer, then your jurisdiction may be at a disadvantage, because businesses are interested in “time-to-market”—the time it takes to get up and running in an ever-increasingly competitive environment.

EDSAT assigns a color code to highlight the results of your jurisdiction compared to the median response among the CGM. Colors—green, yellow, and red—indicate a municipality's relative strength on each specific location factor. Green indicates that your jurisdiction is quantitatively or qualitatively stronger than the CGM response; yellow indicates that your jurisdiction is average or typical; and red indicates a relative deficiency.

SAMPLE RESULT, DRAWN FROM SECTION 1: ACCESS TO MARKETS/CUSTOMERS

<input type="radio"/> E. Airports			
Report of [REDACTED] as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			Comparison Group
27: Do you have a local (municipal/ general aviation) airport?	yes		no

The interaction between the importance of a location factor and your jurisdiction’s relative strength yields powerful information. With respect to businesses and developers, a comparison yielding “red” for a *Very Important* factor represents the potential for a “deal-breaker,” while a comparison resulting in “green” for a *Very Important* factor represents the likelihood of a “deal-maker.” There are several important considerations to keep in mind when reviewing a jurisdiction’s EDSAT results:

1. If your jurisdiction is at a disadvantage in certain *Very Important* location factors, such as possessing a slow permitting process, a workforce that lacks necessary skills, and infrastructure that lacks the capacity to support growth, it is considered to have three distinct “deal-breakers,” regardless of its geographic location.
2. Your jurisdiction should look at its EDSAT results as an overview, and not focus on a particular location factor. One “deal-breaker” does not mean that your jurisdiction should abandon its economic development efforts. At the same time, your jurisdiction cannot rely solely on one or two “deal-makers.” Economic development is a dynamic process and should be managed in such a way that a community continually responds to the changing needs of local and prospective businesses.
3. The interpretation of comparisons and color assignments depends on your jurisdiction’s context in answering the question and its objectives for economic development. For example, if there are significantly more square feet of vacant commercial space than the CGM median, EDSAT assigns “red” because large amounts of space may indicate outdated facilities in a stagnant local economy. However, the empty space may actually be an asset if your jurisdiction is focusing on attracting businesses that would benefit from large spaces, such as a creative mixed-use complex. Thus, your jurisdiction’s context is important in understanding EDSAT results.

For some questions, the red and green color assignments serve to highlight the response for further consideration within the context of your jurisdiction’s objectives and circumstances. Several questions have no comparison at all. They tend to be lists of potential incentives, resources, or regulations associated with the municipality and will be discussed in corresponding sections of the report.

SUMMARY OF RELATIVE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

This section summarizes Taunton's primary strengths and weaknesses in the realm of economic development. EDSAT does not provide an overall grade for a jurisdiction, but rather assesses a jurisdiction's unique set of strengths, weaknesses, and economic development objectives.

The Dukakis Center staff create a list of significant or notable responses for each of the *Very Important*, *Important*, and *Less Important* location factors, emphasizing strengths and "deal-makers," which are not organized in any particular order of importance. Dukakis Center staff suggests that your municipality review these lists and use them to highlight, enhance, and market your city's strengths.

Tasks on the weakness and "deal-breaker" lists, however, are prioritized to emphasize the importance of their mitigation. The Dukakis Center staff arranges the tasks according to feasibility, with consideration of the latitude and abilities of local, county, or regional levels of government. For example, in a jurisdiction with limited highway access, building a new highway interchange or connector would likely be cost-prohibitive, time-consuming, and an inefficient use of local resources. However, other tasks are more feasible with modest investments in time and resources. For example, streamlining the permitting process and making related development information readily accessible to both location experts and businesses could be accomplished without significant capital investments. Although location experts rank both highway access and the timeliness of permitting as *Very Important* location factors, in the prioritized list of potential "deal-breakers," the permitting process is given a higher priority due to its feasibility in implementation.

Taunton's Strengths and Potential "Deal-Makers"

The following three lists of Taunton's strengths are its powerful economic development assets. The city should build upon these assets and promote them to prospective businesses and developers. Taunton should first consider those in the *Very Important* group, then the *Important*, and finally the *Less Important* group. Please note that strengths are **not listed in any particular order** within each list.

Strengths among *Very Important* Location Factors

PARKING: Taunton is on par with the CGM in providing on-site parking on available development sites, and it excels in offering municipally owned parking near such sites and taking advantage of state and federal funding programs for parking infrastructure. That the CGM charges nothing for central business district parking reflects the fact that most of these communities are suburban, not that Taunton's rates are uncompetitive for a city of its size and complexity.

INFRASTRUCTURE: Aside from your wastewater treatment system, which is at capacity, Taunton has well-developed infrastructure with capacity for further buildout, and (unless the figures provided are inaccurate), comparatively low electricity costs.

WEBSITE: With its information updated weekly, Taunton's website provides a wealth of information and resources useful to businesses considering locating in the city. The website could better serve as an economic development marketing tool by making its helpful links for possible business developers and locations scouts more clear and obvious.

TIMELINESS OF APPROVALS: Though Taunton's wait times for most approvals are similar to those of the CGM, it approves special permits and reviews site plans at a faster clip.

Strengths among *Important* Location Factors

STATE TAX INCENTIVES: Taunton takes advantage of more state incentives that benefit its businesses than the comparison group. These include investment tax credits, R&D tax credits, job training tax credits, low interest loans and loan guarantees, and workforce training grants. The city also has a brownfield revolving loan fund, which is especially important given the large proportion of brownfields in your municipality.

LOCAL TAX INCENTIVES: Taunton offers property tax abatements to existing businesses, which is not common among the comparison group. Taunton grants TIFs for retail development, and actively tries to secure financing for its business community, and to attract municipal, state, and federal facilities that improve the business climate.

FAST-TRACK PERMITS: Taunton is ahead of the comparison group on fast-track permitting through the use of pre-permitting and overlay districts, and by directly marketing fast-track permits to possible developers.

PUBLIC TRANSIT: Taunton is fortunate to have relatively good access to public transportation, with regular GATRA bus service and the Middleborough/Lakeville commuter rail stop within five miles of the city’s borders. More than 75% of available sites are located within a quarter mile of public transit. Furthermore, Taunton is using transit-oriented development strategies in new development.

COMPLEMENTARY/SUPPLEMENTAL BUSINESS SERVICES: Your city provides a similar level of complementary and supplementary business services as the comparison group, with a moderately involved chamber and an active economic development committee, both of which are commendable. Taunton excels, however, in having the acumen to assist emerging technical and scientific firms and in hosting an incubator. Though the incubator is not large, it provides the framework for possible innovation and business growth in the future.

CROSS-MARKETING: Similar to the comparison group, you work with local and regional business organizations to market Taunton. Unlike your peers, however, you enlist the services of firms already in your city to help attract new firms, which can help lead to faster and stronger growth.

LABOR COST: Taunton’s labor costs are on par with the comparison group but where your city differs is the average salary of public school teachers. Business developers look at this metric to determine quality of education in local schools as well as the city’s commitment to bringing quality education to their residents’ children.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE REVIEW PROCESS: Elected officials in Taunton make efforts to facilitate dialogue with community groups and have intervened in the past to rescue development deals that were in danger of being lost due to abutters’ concerns.

CRITICAL MASS FIRMS: Although you do not yet have an up-to-date economic development strategy or formal plan (which participation in EDSAT is intended to help remedy), Taunton has an aggressive industrial attraction policy and development specialists available on local, regional, and state levels.

LOCAL SCHOOLS: Taunton’s public schools handle a relatively large proportion of economically challenged students who qualify for subsidized lunches and do not go on to a four-year college upon graduation. Nonetheless, your schools perform well, with a strong graduation rate, no underperforming schools, and students scoring comparatively well on proficiency tests.

Strengths among *Less Important* Location Factors

PERMITTING OMBUDSMAN: Though Taunton does not assist businesses that require state or federal licensing, it does require many local licenses for specific businesses and industries, ensuring a sanitary, well-maintained small-business environment. Another advantage that Taunton has over the comparison group is that the mayor plays a significant role in ensuring the efficiency of the local permitting process.

PROXIMITY TO UNIVERSITIES & RESEARCH: Taunton does comparatively well in this field thanks to your proximity to Bridgewater State University, Bay State University, and Wheaton College. In addition, Taunton is home to Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical School and benefits from its proximity to Bristol Community College—both of which can work with potential employers on workforce skills development and employee placement.

Taunton’s Weaknesses and Potential “Deal-Breakers”

Despite many advantages, Taunton has a number of apparent weaknesses that could pose challenges to successful development. The factors in the *Very Important* group are the ones that the city should consider addressing first because they are the most critical potential “deal-breakers.” Again, the city should next consider those in the *Important* group, and finally those the *Less Important* group.

Unlike the above itemization of Taunton’s strengths, this three-part list of weaknesses is **arranged in order of priority**. We suggest that, while reviewing this prioritized list of challenges, participants keep in mind Taunton’s economic development objectives and the feasibility (economic and otherwise) of upgrading “deal-breakers” and other weaknesses.

Weaknesses among *Very Important* Location Factors

RENTS: Taunton’s commercial rents are high relative to the comparison group. Though your city has cheaper per square foot rents on retail space, rents for class A, B, and C office space both in highway access districts and the central business district are higher.

AVAILABLE LABOR: The proportion of city’s population with a high school diploma or bachelor’s degree is below that of the comparison group in both categories, which could be an obstacle for employers looking for a pool of educated workers.

HIGHWAY ACCESS: Though over 75% of your available manufacturing sites are within 2 miles of a limited access highway, only 50-74% of your available retail and general office space is within 2 miles of a limited access highway.

Weaknesses among *Important* Location Factors

QUALITY OF AVAILABLE SPACE: Taunton has experience dealing with redevelopment of brownfield sites but it also has a larger percentage of brownfield/contaminated sites than the comparison group, as well as a lower percentage of open greenfield sites.

SITE AMENITIES: Though Taunton’s available sites have nearby fast food restaurants and retail shops, they are remote from fine dining and adequate day care services, in contrast with the comparison group.

CRIME: Taunton has higher crime rates among robbery, auto theft, and homicides than the CGM. Your city’s robbery rate is particularly noteworthy, for it is more than double the average rate of the comparison group.

Weaknesses among *Less Important* Location Factors

None.

DETAILED ANALYSIS AND QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The following is a ten-part section-by-section analysis of the EDSAT results comparing Taunton’s self-reported responses with the median response among the CGM. Each location factor is ranked with three possible symbols: The shaded circle (●) denotes a *Very Important* factor, the half-shaded circle (◐) denotes an *Important* factor, and the unshaded circle (○) denotes a *Less Important* factor.

This ten-part portion of the report—its heart, really—is presented in the same order as the questions listed on the EDSAT questionnaire, with the tabular printout of Taunton’s results appearing first, and our narrative summary and interpretation of the results appearing second. The tabular results are displayed in four primary groupings of information:

Group 1 identifies a location factor (such as Highway Access), a circle indicating the relative importance of the location factor, and questions related to the factor that your city has already answered.

Group 2 shows Taunton's responses to the EDSAT questions.

Group 3 is the median (or majority, for yes/no questions) response among the "comparison group municipalities" (or CGM) that have completed the EDSAT questionnaire.

Group 4 is a series of green, yellow, or red blocks indicating how Taunton compares to the CGM. A built-in function in EDSAT allows a municipality to compare itself against a subset of the CGM by other criteria such as population, median income, or size of operating budget. For purposes of this analysis, however, Taunton is compared with all the CGM.

Section 1: Access to Customers/Markets

A. Highway Access

Report of Ludlow as compared to all jurisdictions

Question			Comparison Group
1: What percentage of available sites for retail trade, including your central business district, are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	75%+	Yellow	75%+
2: What percentage of available sites for manufacturing are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	75%+	Yellow	75%+
3: What percentage of available sites for general office space are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	75%+	Yellow	75%+
4: Does your jurisdiction impose weight restrictions on streets or access roads?	yes	Yellow	yes

Importance To Market

☒ Very Important ☐ Important ☐ Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers

☒ Strong ☐ Average ☐ Weak

Group 1 points to the "A. Highway Access" section.






Group 2 points to the "Report of Ludlow as compared to all jurisdictions" section.









Group 3 points to the "Comparison Group" column.








Group 4 points to the "Your Performance Relative To Peers" column.

Section 1: Access to Customers/Markets
















In order to minimize transportation costs and time-to-market, businesses want adequate access to uncongested transportation corridors for their shipping needs, customers, and employees. Highway access, congestion, and parking are *Very Important* factors in location decisions. Public transportation is *Important*, while proximity to airports, rail, and water transport are *Less Important*. The overall physical attractiveness of public spaces, enforcement of codes, and condition of housing and commercial real estate are *Important*, as they are indications of general economic health and quality of life in a community.

<div>  A. Highway Access </div>			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
1: What percentage of available sites for retail trade, including your central business district, are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	50-74%		75% or greater
2: What percentage of available sites for manufacturing are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	75% or greater		75% or greater
3: What percentage of available sites for general office space are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	50-74%		75% or greater
4: Does your jurisdiction impose weight restrictions on streets or access roads?	no		no





<div>  B. Public Transit </div>			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
5: What percentage of available sites for retail trade are within 1/4 mile of public bus or rail rapid transit?	75% or greater		50-74%
6: What percentage of available sites for manufacturing are within 1/4 mile of public bus or rail rapid transit?	75% or greater		26-49%
7: What percentage of available sites for general office space are within 1/4 mile of public bus or rail rapid transit?	75% or greater		50-74%
8: Is there a transit-oriented development strategy in your plans for attracting new firms?	yes		no
9: Is there a commuter rail or bus stop within 5 miles of your jurisdiction's boundaries?	yes		yes
10: Do you offer any shuttle services to other public commuting stations?	no		no
11: Is public transit service available on nights and weekends?	yes		yes

Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
--	---


<div>  C. Parking </div>			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
12: What percentage of available sites for retail trade have on-site parking?	75% or greater		75% or greater
13: What percentage of available sites for manufacturing have on-site parking?	75% or greater		75% or greater
14: What percentage of available sites for general office space have on-site parking?	75% or greater		75% or greater
15: Does your jurisdiction offer parking facilities near development sites?	yes		no
16: Have you used state or federal infrastructure grants to improve parking in your jurisdiction?	yes		no
17: How much is typically charged for parking in your central business district? \$/Hourly	0.75		\$0
18: How much is typically charged for parking in your central business district? \$/Daily	4.00		0
19: How much is typically charged for parking in your central business district? \$/Monthly	30.00		0


<div>  D. Traffic </div>			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
20: Do you have regular access to a traffic engineer or transportation planner, such as one who is on staff or with a regional organization of which your jurisdiction is a member?	yes		yes
21: Do you routinely use the services of a transportation consultant?	yes		yes
22: Do you have access to traffic count data for the major roadways in your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
23: Do you require firms or developers to provide traffic mitigation beyond the streets adjacent to the site? (e.g. installing traffic signals, metering flow)	yes		yes
24: How would you rate traffic into and out of your jurisdiction during a typical weekday rush hour?	Moderately congested		Moderately congested
25: What is the average speed of automobile commuter traffic during a typical weekday rush hour?	11 - 25 mph		11 - 25 mph
26: Do you require a traffic impact analysis for large-scale development or redevelopment projects?	yes		yes
<div> <div> Importance To Market <div>  Very Important  Important  Less Important </div> </div> <div> Your Performance Relative To Peers <div>  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison </div> </div> </div>			


<input type="radio"/> E. Airports			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
27: Do you have a local (municipal/ general aviation) airport?	yes		no
28: The closest regional airport is how many miles away?	11-20 miles		11-20 miles
29: The closest major/international airport is how many miles away?	31 miles or more		31 miles or more
30: Is the major/international airport accessible by public transportation?	yes		yes
31: How long does it take to drive to the major/international airport from your town center?	61 minutes to 90 minutes		21 minutes to 60 minutes

<input type="radio"/> F. Rail			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
32: Do you have rail freight service available?	yes		yes
33: Do you have intercity passenger rail service? Check all that apply.			
- Commuter	no		no
- Intercity/Interstate(Amtrak)	no		no
- None	yes		no


Importance To Market


 Very Important


 Important


 Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers

 Strong

 Average

 Weak

 No Comparison



G. Physical Attractiveness

Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
34: To what extent do you enforce codes and regulations on abandoned properties, abandoned vehicles, trash disposal within your jurisdiction?	Moderately		Moderately
35: To what extent does your jurisdiction maintain streets, sidewalks, parks, etc., near available development sites?	Moderately		Moderately
36: Is there a hotline available for reporting code violations and maintenance needs within your jurisdiction?	yes		no
37: Is there a system for monitoring the timeliness and quality of responses to reported violations within your jurisdiction?	no		no
38: Do you involve the arts community in the design of open space (street furniture, murals, etc.)?	N/A		no
39: What percentage of the acreage within your jurisdiction is reserved for parks?	11-15%		6-10%
40: What percentage of your housing stock is considered dilapidated?	6-10%		0-5%
41: What percentage of your commercial buildings are boarded up or closed down and would need renovations to reopen?	0-5%		0-5%
42: What percentage of commercial space is presently vacant (not currently occupied)?	6-10%		6-10%
43: What percentage of your industrial buildings are boarded up or closed down and would need renovations to reopen?	0-5%		0-5%
44: What percentage of industrial space is presently vacant (not currently occupied)?	6-10%		6-10%



H. Water Transportation

Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
45: Do you have water based transportation facilities within your jurisdiction? Check all that apply.	None		None

Importance To Market



Very Important



Important



Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers

Strong









Weak




Average





No Comparison

Section 2: Concentration of Businesses (Agglomeration)

Agglomeration refers to the number of complementary and supplemental services and related firms—including academic institutions—that are available within a jurisdiction to support new or existing companies. A concentration of similar or supporting companies creates a critical mass of businesses within an industry, making it easier for that industry to thrive in the local community, regionally, or on the state level. The scale of agglomeration within a jurisdiction can be enhanced by the intensity of its efforts to attract companies, its coordination of marketing plans with regional or state efforts, cross marketing among stakeholder organizations, and follow-up with existing and potential businesses.

 A. Complementary/Supplemental Business Services			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
1: Is your local chamber of commerce or business association actively involved in the economic development activities of your jurisdiction?	Moderately		Moderately
2: Does your jurisdiction have an active volunteer economic development committee or nonprofit center for economic development?	yes		yes
3: Is there an incubator or other form of cooperative space for start-up businesses in your jurisdiction?	yes		no
4: Are there CPA, business advisory or financial services firms in your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
5: Are there law firms in your jurisdiction specializing in commercial law, intellectual property rights, or patents?	yes		yes
6: Are there branches of major commercial banks in your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
7: To what extent are the business services (e.g. venture capital, business planning, specialized recruiting, etc.) in your jurisdiction capable of working with emerging technical and scientific firms?	Highly capable		Moderately capable

Importance To Market
 Very Important
  Important
  Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers
 Strong
  Average
 Weak
  No Comparison



B. Critical Mass Firms

Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
8: Does your jurisdiction have an up-to-date development strategy, an overall economic development plan (OEDP), or an economic development plan within your community master plan?	no		yes
9: Is your jurisdiction part of a county or regional OEDP or Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)?	yes		yes
10: Does your state have a development strategy or economic development plan?	yes		yes
11: If yes, are there firms within specific industry types or sectors that are targeted in your jurisdiction's, your county's or your state's development strategy?	yes		yes
12: If yes, what specific industry types or sectors are targeted by your municipality's development strategy? Other, please specify (Your Municipality)	Alternative Energy; Travel and Tourism; Information Technology; Financial Services; Traditional Manufacturing; Other Life Sciences, including Biotech; Healthcare		
13: If yes, what specific industry types or sectors are targeted by your region/county's development strategy? Other, please specify (Regional/County)	Alternative Energy; Travel and Tourism; Information Technology; Financial Services; Traditional Manufacturing; Other Life Sciences, including Biotech; Healthcare		

Importance To Market



Very Important



Important



Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers

Strong

Weak

Average

No Comparison

14: If yes, what specific industry types or sectors are targeted by your state's development strategy? (State)	Alternative Energy; Travel and Tourism; Information Technology; Financial Services; Traditional Manufacturing; Other Life Sciences, including Biotech; Healthcare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15: Which of the following jurisdictions have development specialists to assist in interpreting the needs of these clusters? (Choose all that apply)			
- Your Municipality	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
- Regional/County	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- State	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
16: How aggressive is your industrial attraction policy?	Vigorous	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate

 C. Cross Marketing						
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions						
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group			
17: Do you actively enlist the services of firms already resident in your jurisdiction to assist in attracting new firms?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	no			
18: Do you engage local and regional business organizations to participate in marketing your jurisdiction?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes			
19: Do you engage regional planning and development organizations to participate in marketing your jurisdiction?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes			
20: Do you engage state agencies and organizations to participate in marketing your jurisdiction?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes			
<table border="1"> <tr> <td> Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important </td> <td> Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Weak </td> <td>  Average  No Comparison </td> </tr> </table>				Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Weak	 Average  No Comparison
Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Weak	 Average  No Comparison				

<input checked="" type="radio"/> D. Marketing Follow-Up			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
21: Is there a formal de-briefing process with firms that chose to locate in your jurisdiction about what made the difference?	no		no
22: Is there a formal de-briefing process with firms that chose not to locate in your jurisdiction about what made the difference?	no		no
23: Do you have a formal procedure for contacting existing local firms about their satisfaction with your jurisdiction?	no		no
24: Do you have a formal procedure for intervening when early news surfaces about firm dissatisfaction with your jurisdiction?	no		no

<input type="radio"/> E. Proximity to Universities & Research			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
25: How many public or private four-year college or universities are located within your jurisdiction?	1		0
26: How many public or private four-year college or universities are located within 10 miles of your jurisdiction?	3		2
27: How many community colleges are located within your jurisdiction?	1		0
28: How many vocational/technical schools are located within your jurisdiction?	1		1

Importance To Market

☒ Very Important

☐ Important

☐ Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers

Strong









Average




No Comparison





Weak






Section 3: Cost of Land (Implicit/Explicit)

The cost of land to a firm includes two *Very Important* factors: Infrastructure and Rent. Updating civil, utility, and telecommunications infrastructure is costly, and firms do not like to incur these expenses. Therefore, if a municipality does not already have adequate capacity in place, a potential firm could decide to locate somewhere else with stronger capacity. Likewise, Rents are *Very Important* as they contribute heavily to operating expenses. Location experts consider the quality of available space and amount of available land for development *Important* factors.






<div>  A. Infrastructure </div>			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
1: Are there significant limitations to any of your existing infrastructure systems? - Water Supply	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
2: Public Sewer	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
3: Wastewater Treatment	Capacity for current needs only		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
4: Natural Gas	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
5: Electric Power	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
6: Data/Telecommunications - Land Lines	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
7: Data/Telecommunications - Cellular	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service




Importance To Market
 Very Important
  Important
  Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers
 Strong
 Weak
  Average
 No Comparison


7: Data/Telecommunications - Cellular	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
8: Data/Telecommunications - Fiber optic / Cable / DSL	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
9: What is the average retail cost in cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for residential, commercial, and industrial end users in your municipality? Residential	0.11842 first 600 kWh/0.14998 in excess of 600 kWh		16.23
10: What is the average retail cost in cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for residential, commercial, and industrial end users in your municipality? Commercial	0.16000 kWh		15.20
11: What is the average retail cost in cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for residential, commercial, and industrial end users in your municipality? Industrial	0.08575 kWh (under 300 hours)/0.07099 kWh (over 300 hours)		13.03

 B. Rents							
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions							
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group				
12: What is the current average square foot cost for existing retail space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)?	9		12				
13: What is the current average square foot cost for existing retail space in your highway business district (Triple Net/Lease)?	13.50		13				
14: What is the current average square foot cost for existing manufacturing space (Triple Net/Lease)?	Class A: 7 -9 PSF NNN Class B: 5 - 9 PSF NNN Class C: 2 - 4 PSF NNN		6				
15: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)? CLASS A	18		16				
16: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)? CLASS B	15		12				
17: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)? CLASS C	10		9				
18: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your highway business district (Triple Net/Lease)? CLASS A	21		15.50				
<table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2"> Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important </td><td colspan="2"> Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison </td></tr> </table>				Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important		Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison	
Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important		Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison					

19: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your highway business district (Triple Net/Lease)?: CLASS B	16		12.00
20: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your highway business district (Triple Net/Lease)?: CLASS C	10		between 8 and 9
21: Of all the available office space in your jurisdiction, what percentage is: CLASS A	10%		between 10 and 12
22: Of all the available office space in your jurisdiction, what percentage is: CLASS B	65%		44
23: Of all the available office space in your jurisdiction, what percentage is: CLASS C	25%		40

Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
--	---

 C. Quality of Available Space			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
24: Approximately what percentage of available sites in your jurisdiction would be considered contaminated or brownfield sites?	11-20%		0-10%
25: What experience does your jurisdiction have with the redevelopment of contaminated or brownfield sites?	Considerable		Limited
26: Approximately what percentage of available sites in your jurisdiction would be considered vacant or severely underutilized shopping centers?	11-20%		11-20%
27: Approximately what percentage of available sites in your jurisdiction would be considered unused open land or greenfield sites?	11-20%		21-35%

Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
--	---



D. Land (space)

Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
28: Approximately how much vacant developable land in your jurisdiction is currently zoned for commercial/industrial uses?	1-150 acres		1-150 acres
29: Approximately how much vacant useable industrial or warehouse space exists in commercial/industrial buildings in your jurisdiction?	1,000,001 sq. feet or more		1-250,000 sq. feet
30: Approximately how much vacant useable office space exists in commercial/industrial buildings in your jurisdiction?	1-250,000 sq. feet		1-250,000 sq. feet
31: What proportion of the parcels available for industrial development or large scale commercial development are of 5 acres or more?	51% or greater		11-20%

Importance To Market



Very Important



Important



Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers

Strong






Weak















Average

No Comparison

Section 4: Labor

The effect of labor factors on location decisions runs somewhat contrary to popular belief. An available labor force that is adequately trained (Workforce Composition) is a Very Important factor, while the cost of labor is Important and the presence of strong unions is Less Important. Conventional wisdom often holds that higher labor costs and strong unions negatively affect a firm's location decision. However, if the workforce is adequately skilled, these factors are not as detrimental as the conventional rule of thumb suggests. Workforce training resources is Less Important relative to other location factors. However, having a technically trained workforce whose skills align with the industries a municipality wants to attract is a valuable selling point.

 A. Labor Cost			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
1: What is the prevailing average hourly wage rate for semi-skilled, blue-collar manufacturing workers?	\$12.26-\$17.25		\$12.26-\$17.25
2: What is the prevailing average hourly wage rate for mid-level clerical workers?	\$12.26-\$17.25		\$12.26-\$17.25
3: What is the prevailing average annual salary for public high school teachers?	\$70,001 or more		\$60,001-\$70,000
4: Is there a local minimum or living wage statute?	no		no

 B. Workforce Composition			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
5: What percentage of your workforce is Unskilled?	26-49%		1-25%
6: What percentage of your workforce is Semi-skilled	26-49%		26-49%
7: What percentage of your workforce is Technically skilled	26-49%		26-49%
8: What percentage of your workforce is Managerial	26-49%		1-25%
9: What percentage of your workforce is Professional	26-49%		1-25%
10: What percentage of your workforce are current English language learners?	11-20%		0-10%
<div> <div> Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important </div> <div> Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Weak  Average  No Comparison </div> </div>			

<input type="radio"/> C. Unions			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
11: Have any employers in your jurisdiction had a major strike or work stoppage within the last three years?	no		no
12: Has there been a major union organizing drive among public or private workers in the last three years?	no		no
13: Do labor unions have a significant presence in the labor market of your jurisdiction?	Somewhat		Somewhat

<input checked="" type="radio"/> D. Labor (available)			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
14: What percentage of residents age 25 or older have earned at least a high school diploma?	66-84%		85% or greater
15: What percentage of residents age 25 or older have earned at least a bachelor's degree?	11-20%		21-35%

<input type="radio"/> E. Workforce Training			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
16: Which of the following workforce training resources do you interact with to respond to skill development needs of firms?			
- Regional employment board or state employment services department	yes		
- Area High schools	yes		
- Voc-tech schools or community colleges	yes		
- Human service or nonprofit career training centers	yes		
17: Do you support public-private partnerships to provide specific workforce training?	yes		yes
18: Is there an adult education program readily available to residents of your jurisdiction?	yes		yes

Importance To Market <input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important <input type="radio"/> Important <input type="radio"/> Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/> No Comparison
---	--

Section 5: Municipal Process











The municipal process section covers several themes relating to marketing and permitting. Public officials who aggressively market their jurisdictions strengths and collaborate with firms already located in their city or city may have significant advantages in attracting new investment. Local firms can speak firsthand about their own experiences and market conditions to interested companies and investors. Likewise, they can advise municipal leaders about industries with which they are intimately familiar. Additionally, municipalities that have established transparent and efficient permitting processes, minimizing startup time and costs, are also ahead of the game. Among the factors examined in this section, the timeliness of approvals is *Very Important* to location experts and all but one of the remaining factors (Permitting Ombudsman) are ranked *Important*.

 A. Industry Sensitivity			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
1: Does your jurisdiction have a marketing program based on the needs identified by industrial or office location specialists?	no		no
2: Does your jurisdiction have a marketing program based on existing core strengths, identified opportunities, or industry concentrations?	no		no
3: Do you have a quick response team available when negative data, stories, or incidents about your jurisdiction make the news?	no		no
4: Do you actively engage local business spokespersons to speak on behalf of your jurisdiction?	no		no
5: Do you have a strategy for engaging your jurisdiction's racial or ethnic populations in unique businesses, festivals, etc., as a way to attract regional niche shopping?	no		no

 B. Sites Available			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
6: Does your jurisdiction own sites that it is currently marketing for development?	no		no
7: Is there a readily accessible, up-to-date, complete list of sites that are available for development in your jurisdiction?	no		no
8: Do you maintain an active relationship with commercial real estate brokers, developers, or agents with sites in your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
9: Do your land use regulations protect land currently zoned industrial from encroachment by residential or other incompatible uses?	yes		yes
10: Do you have an active strategy for reclaiming or land banking tax delinquent and tax title properties?	yes		no
11: Do you have an active strategy for reclaiming vacant or underutilized shopping plazas?	no		no

C. Timeliness of Approvals

Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
12: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for new projects?: Site plan review	5-8 weeks		5-8 weeks
13: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for new projects?: Zoning variance	5-8 weeks		5-8 weeks
14: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for new projects?: Special permit	5-8 weeks		9-12 weeks
15: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for new projects?: Building permit	0-4 weeks		0-4 weeks
16: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for new projects?: Appeals process	5-8 weeks		5-8 weeks
17: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for existing structures?: Site plan review	0-4 weeks		5-8 weeks
18: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for existing structures?: Zoning variance	5-8 weeks		5-8 weeks
19: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for existing structures?: Special permit	5-8 weeks		5-8 weeks
20: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for existing structures?: Building permit	0-4 weeks		0-4 weeks
21: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for existing structures?: Appeals process	5-8 weeks		5-8 weeks

D. Predicable Permits

Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
22: Do you provide a checklist of permitting requirements to prospective developers?	yes		yes
23: Do you provide a flowchart of the permitting process to prospective developers?	no		no
24: Do you provide a development handbook to prospective developers?	no		no
25: Do you allow for a single presentation of a development proposal to all review boards and commissions with relevant permit authority?	no		no






Importance To Market
















 Very Important
  Important
  Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers

 Strong
  Average
  No Comparison

 Weak









 E. Fast Track Permits			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
26: Do you pre-permit development in certain districts?	yes		no
27: Are there any publicly or cooperatively owned industrial parks in your jurisdiction that have their own expedited permitting authority?	yes		no
28: Do you have an "overlay" district that allows expedited permitting of certain uses?	yes		no
29: Do you market "fast track" permitting to potential developers or firms?	yes		no

 F. Citizen Participation in the Review Process			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
30: To what extent do abutters slow the permitting process in your jurisdiction?	Somewhat		Somewhat
31: To what extent do organized neighborhood groups slow the permitting?	Somewhat		Somewhat
32: To what extent do elected officials in your jurisdiction expedite development by facilitating dialogue with community groups?	Somewhat		Very little
33: Do you establish a specific time frame and procedure for abutter or neighborhood response in the initial stage of the process?	yes		yes
34: Do interested parties get multiple opportunities for review and comment during the various development review processes?	yes		yes
35: Has a development proposal in your jurisdiction been stopped by abutter or neighborhood opposition in the past 5 years?	yes		yes
36: Have officials from your jurisdiction intervened to rescue a development proposal that was endangered by abutter or neighborhood opposition in the last 5 years?	yes		no
<div> <div> Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important </div> <div> Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Weak  Average  No Comparison </div> </div>			






<div> <input type="radio"/> G. Permitting Ombudsman </div>			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
37: Does the chief executive officer of your jurisdiction play a significant role in ensuring the efficiency of your local permitting process?	yes		no
38: Are there other local officials empowered to ensure the efficiency of your local permitting process?	yes		yes
39: Is there a "development cabinet" or "development team" that is convened to review major developments?	yes		yes
40: Do you have an established training program for development staff that regularly identifies critical adjustments in policy or regulation to accommodate changing needs of firms?	no		no
41: Do you have an established training program for boards, commissions, authorities, districts, and elected officials that regularly identifies critical adjustments in policy or regulation to accommodate changing needs of firms?	no		no
42: Is your jurisdiction involved in the process for businesses that require state or federal permitting or licensing?	no		yes
43: Do you provide technical assistance for businesses in the state or federal permit or license application process?	no		no
44: Does your jurisdiction require any local licenses for specific businesses or industries?			
- General license for all businesses	no		no
- Auto dealership	yes		no
- Barber shop	yes		no
- Bar/Tavern	yes		no
- Beauty salon	yes		no
- Child care services	no		no
- Construction contractor	yes		no
- Home health care	no		no
- Massage therapist	yes		no
- Real estate agent/broker	no		no
- Restaurant	yes		no
- Skilled Trades (electrician, plumber, etc)	no		no
- Other, please specify	yes		no
45: Approximately how long (in weeks) is your local licensing process for businesses?	0-4 weeks		0-4 weeks




Section 6: Quality of Life (Community)





The quality of life within the community is an *Important* location factor because companies want to be able to offer employees a safe community with affordable housing, good schools, and a rich selection of cultural and recreational opportunities.








 A. Cultural and Recreational Amenities			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
1: Is there a professional sports team resident within your jurisdiction?	no		no
2: Is there a major art, science or historical museum?	yes		no
3: Is there a professional repertory theater company?	no		no
4: Is there a civic center, arena or major concert hall?	no		no
5: Is there a golf course within your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
6: Is there a symphony orchestra, opera, or ballet company?	no		no
7: Are there public beaches or boating activities within 5 miles of your jurisdiction?	yes		yes

PLEASE NOTE: THE GREEN POLARITY ON #8 BELOW SHOULD BE DISREGARDED BECAUSE THE QUESTION WAS NOT ANSWERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROPER FORMAT.










 B. Crime			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
8: What was the residential burglary rate per 100,000 residents last year in your jurisdiction?	26.85 (residential and business burglary rate)		between 256 and 265
9: What was the auto theft rate per 100,000 residents last year?	84		between 80 and 82
10: What was the robbery rate per 100,000 residents last year?	63		29
11: What was the homicide rate per 100,000 residents last year?	2		1

Importance To Market
 Very Important
  Important
  Less Important












Your Performance Relative To Peers
 Strong
 Weak
  Average
 No Comparison

 C. Housing			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
12: What was the median sale price of a single-family home in your jurisdiction last year?	\$151,000-\$250,000		\$251,000-\$350,000
13: What was the median rent for a two-bedroom apartment in your jurisdiction last year?	\$1001-\$1250		\$1001-\$1250
14: What is the homeownership rate?	51-65%		66-75%
15: What is the vacancy rate for rental housing?	3-5%		3-5%
16: What percent of homes are for sale?	Less than 3%		Less than 3%
17: Approximately what proportion of the major officers of firms located in your jurisdiction live in the community?	Some		Some


PLEASE NOTE THAT THE POLARITY COLOR FOR #20 (BELOW) SHOULD BE GREEN.


 D. Local Schools			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
18: What is the average K-12 per pupil expenditure in your jurisdiction last year?	\$12,001 - \$14,000		\$12,001 - \$14,000
19: Does your state mandate an assessment or proficiency test as a prerequisite for high school graduation?	yes		yes
20: If yes, what percent of students in your jurisdiction tested at least "proficient" in English?	81% or greater		between 66-80% and 81% or greater
21: If yes, what percent of students in your jurisdiction tested at least "proficient" in Mathematics?	66-80%		66-80%
22: If yes, are the tests used as a measure of performance within your local school district for teacher assessments or teacher evaluations?	yes		no
23: What percentage of your jurisdiction's K-12 students are eligible for free or reduced-cost lunch last year?	50-74%		1-25%
24: What was the average combined (reading, math, and writing) SAT score last year?	1126 or higher		
25: What was the average composite score (English, math, reading, and science) for the ACT last year?			


Importance To Market			Your Performance Relative To Peers		
	Very Important		Important		Less Important
	Strong		Average		No Comparison
	Weak				

26: What percentage of high school freshmen normally graduate within 5 years?	81%-94%		81%-94%
27: What is the high school dropout rate last year?	1-25%		1-25%
28: Are there any schools in your jurisdiction that are currently deemed "underperforming?"	no		no
29: What percentage of high school graduates from last year's class went on to a four-year college?	1-25%		50-74%
30: Are there any charter schools in your jurisdiction?	yes		no
31: What types of private schools are there in your jurisdiction?			
- Parochial	yes		
- Non-sectarian	no		
- Boarding	no		


Importance To Market



Very Important



Important



Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers


Strong


Average


Weak


No Comparison

Section 7: Quality of Life (Site)

This section reviews the amenities and services available within one mile of existing development sites. Having a variety of amenities, restaurants, stores, and services near employment centers enhances the location, adds convenience, and allows employees more social opportunities.

<div>  A. Amenities </div>			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
1: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Fast food restaurant	Most		Most
2: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Fine dining	Few		Some
3: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Day care	Some		Most
4: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Retail shops	Most		Most
<div> <div> Importance To Market <div>  Very Important  Important  Less Important </div> </div> <div> Your Performance Relative To Peers <div>  Strong  Average  No Comparison  Weak </div> </div> </div>			

Section 8: Business Incentives

When companies are evaluating various jurisdictions for site location, business incentives (mainly subsidies and tax credits) are *Important* considerations. However, contrary to conventional wisdom, these incentives are not the first factors on which an investor makes a location decision—nor are they decisive. Factors such as infrastructure, workforce composition, and timeliness of permitting are of the utmost importance and can all too easily become “deal-breakers.” A municipality must be at least adequate in these areas before a company will advance negotiations. While investors value a broad portfolio of business incentives as possible “deal-closers,” they might not initially attract them.



















 A. State			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
1: Are businesses in your jurisdiction eligible for any of the following special state tax incentives? Check all that apply.			
- Investment tax credits	yes		no
- Job training tax credits	yes		no
- Research and development (R&D) tax credits	yes		no
- Low (subsidized) interest loans	yes		no
- Loan guarantees	yes		no
- Equity financing	no		no
- Workforce training grants	yes		no
- Other, please specify	no		no
2: To what extent does your jurisdiction actively take advantage of any special state business incentives?	Very much		Somewhat
3: Does your state allow for priority funding for distressed economic areas?	yes		yes

Importance To Market
 Very Important
  Important
  Less Important


Your Performance Relative To Peers


 Strong
 Weak


 Average
 No Comparison

			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
4: Does your jurisdiction offer existing businesses property tax abatement?	yes		no
5: If yes, what proportion of existing businesses are offered abatements?	1-25%		1-25%
6: Does your jurisdiction offer new businesses property tax abatement?	no		no
7: If yes, what proportion of new businesses are offered abatements?	1-25%		1-25%
8: Who negotiates the tax abatement?	Other, please specify		Legislative
9: Does your jurisdiction offer any of the following incentives for businesses to locate in your jurisdiction? (Check all that apply)			
- Revolving loan fund	no		no
- Loan guarantees	no		no
- Revenue bonds	no		no
- Equity participation	no		no
- Business district group loans	no		no
- None	no		no
- Investment tax credits	no		no
- Job training tax credits	no		no
- Research and development (R&D) tax credits	no		no
- Low (subsidized) interest loans	no		no
- Workforce training grants	no		no
- Other, please specify	no		no


Importance To Market


 Very Important


 Important


 Less Important








Your Performance Relative To Peers

 Strong


 Average

 Weak


 No Comparison

10: Does your jurisdiction actively pursue federal and/or state programs designed to assist in attracting and retaining businesses?	yes		yes
11: Does your jurisdiction use Tax Increment Financing (TIF) or other programs to provide tax breaks to businesses?	yes		yes
12: Does your jurisdiction grant TIFs or similar programs for retail development?	yes		no
13: Does your jurisdiction assist in securing financing for businesses with commercial lenders or state industrial finance mechanisms?	yes		no
14: Do you actively try to attract local, state, and federal facilities to your jurisdiction?	yes		no
15: Is any part of your jurisdiction in a designated Enterprise Zone?	no		no
16: Do you participate in a regional brownfield revolving loan fund or offer your own?	City		No brownfields funds utilized


Importance To Market



Very Important




Important




Less Important


Your Performance Relative To Peers




Strong



Average





















Weak




No Comparison


Section 9: Tax Rates


Municipalities often think that if tax rates are too high, they will have a hard time attracting businesses—that high taxes are a “deal-breaker.” Like financial incentives, however, the tax rate is not one of the *Very Important* location factors. If the *Very Important* factors are satisfied, then a business will likely request a more favorable tax rate during later-stage negotiations. Yet negotiations are unlikely to get to that point if the *More Important* location factors have not been satisfied.

 A. Local			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
1: What types of taxes are collected by your jurisdiction to pay for local services?			
- Property tax	yes		yes
- Local sales tax	yes		no
- Local income tax	no		no
- Hotel room tax	yes		no
- Meals tax	yes		no
2: Of the potential commercial and industrial property tax revenue your jurisdiction could collect, what percent is currently abated?	0%		1%-10%
3: Does your jurisdiction tax property in industrial or commercial uses at a different rate than residential properties?	yes		yes
4: If yes, what is the tax rate on industrial/commercial property? \$ /\$1,000	34.70		between 19.68 and 19.89
5: If yes, what is the tax rate on residential property? \$ /\$1,000	15.71		between 11.29 and 11.37
6: If no, what is the tax rate on all property?	-		13.91
7: What % of your tax revenue is derived from: Industrial %	7%		
8: What % of your tax revenue is derived from: Commercial %	25%		
9: What % of your tax revenue is derived from: Residential %	62%		
10: Does your jurisdiction impose impact fees on new commercial or industrial development?	no		no


Importance To Market


 Very Important


 Important


 Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers

 Strong

 Average

 Weak

 No Comparison



B. Tax Delinquency

Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
11: What proportion of residential property in your jurisdiction is more than one year delinquent in taxes?	0%-3%		0%-3%
12: What proportion of commercial property in your jurisdiction is more than one year delinquent in taxes?	0%-3%		0%-3%
13: What proportion of industrial property in your jurisdiction is more than one year delinquent in taxes?	0%-3%		0%-3%
14: How many properties are tax defaulted or subject to the power of sale?	300 or more		0-50
15: When do you choose to auction tax title properties?	After 1 year		1-5 years
16: Do you have an organized and defined process for conducting such auctions and ensuring that they are successful?	yes		yes
17: Do you auction the "right to foreclose" on tax delinquent properties?	no		no
18: Do you seek tax abatement on tax title properties to allow the liens to clear for new owners?	no		no
19: If a tax delinquent or tax title property serves as an impediment to development, does the property receive special attention?	no		no

Importance To Market



Very Important



Important



Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers

Strong












Weak




Average





No Comparison

Section 10: Access to Information

A city's website could offer a business location expert his or her first impression of what the area has to offer. In today's digital age, a location expert could use a municipality's website to gather initial information, and if it is not available, easy to find, and easy to understand, the researcher may reject the city as a potential location without further consideration. While a city's website may rank *Less Important* as a factor in decision making, it can be this initial source of information that entices a location expert to probe deeper and to contact a municipality to seek additional information. At that point, the municipality's economic development leader or permitting ombudsman has an opportunity to step in and develop one-on-one rapport with the developer or company representative.

 A. Website			
Report of Taunton as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Taunton		Comparison Group
1: Does your jurisdiction's website list all local development policies and procedures?	no		no
2: Does your website have contact information for key officials?	yes		yes
3: Does your website have general information about your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
4: How frequently is your website updated?	Weekly		Weekly
5: Does your website include an explicitly designed economic development tool aimed at businesses and developers?	no		no
6: Is there a development permit checklist or flow chart on the website?	no		no
7: Are permit applications available for downloading on the website?	yes		yes
8: Are applications and other forms date certified to ensure that they are the most recent versions (i.e. the same versions that you would get in person)?	yes		no
9: Is it possible to file permit applications electronically?	no		no
10: Is there a list of available land and building sites on the website?	no		no

Importance To Market
 Very Important
  Important
  Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers
 Strong
  Average
 Weak
  No Comparison

11: If yes, check the types of information available about each site. (Check all that apply)			
- :Owner	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Square footage of vacant land	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Square footage and quality of existing buildings and structures	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Abutters	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Zoning	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Assessed value	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Tax rate	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Current tax status (e.g. paid up, delinquent)	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Contamination	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Aerial photos	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- GIS links	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
12: Is there a posting of current hearings available on the website?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
13: Is there a posting of pending applications available on the website?	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
14: Is there a listing of current members of development review boards and staff contact information?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
15: Are there links to other local development resources? (Check all that apply)			
- State finance agencies	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- State permitting agencies	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Regional planning agencies	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Regional development organizations	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Workforce training organizations	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Local public or quasi-public financing resources	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Demographic information	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Economic development agencies	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Other, please specify	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no

16: Are there links to other locally-based private or non-profit organizations?			
- Colleges and universities	no		no
- Chambers of Commerce	yes		no
- Community development corporations	yes		no
- Arts and cultural organizations	yes		no
- Sports and recreation venues	yes		no
- Convention and tourist organization	yes		no
- Other, please specify	no		no
17: Is there a designated webmaster or staff person responsible for maintaining the website?	yes		yes

Importance To Market  Very Important  Important  Less Important	Your Performance Relative To Peers  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
--	---

NEXT STEPS

Taunton is a small city of approximately 56,000 people with an industrial history in iron, textiles, locomotive, and silver production. It is located in southeastern Massachusetts about 40 miles south of Boston and within 25 miles from the midsize cities of Providence, Fall River, and New Bedford. Like its midsize neighbor Brockton (once known for producing men's shoes), Taunton has fallen on hard times since the departure of its major industries in the early and mid 20th century. Nonetheless, the city has experienced nearly continuous population growth, increasing by 630% since 1840. Established in 1639 and incorporated as a city in 1864, Taunton is an ethnically diverse predominantly “blue-collar” community with a large established Portuguese community and a large number of locally owned businesses. The city is also home to two industrial parks, one among the largest in New England, with room for growth. Along with its historical and architectural assets, such as the Old Colony History Museum, Taunton Green, St. Mary's Church, the Bristol County Superior Courthouse, and the Pilgrim Congregational Church, and its access to Boston and other cities, Taunton has opportunity to develop a diverse economy based on both expanding new industries and commuter amenities. Also a plus is the city's attentiveness to “walkable urbanism,” which appeals to younger workers and emerging businesses both small and large, as reflected in Taunton's recent commissioning of a downtown traffic study by the Urban Land Institute.

The Dukakis Center's Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT) creates a snapshot of Taunton's economic development efforts at a time when the town seeks to attract new businesses and industries in order to bring in greater and more diverse tax revenue and create a more vibrant business community. The following is an overview of where your town is getting it right, and where improvements can be made. Outlined below are the top recommendations and their respective levels of priority for your economic development efforts.

CORE STRENGTHS

Taunton enjoys many valuable assets that can compel firms and developers to locate—or remain—in the city. Above all, the city has good **infrastructure** bones (with the exception of wastewater treatment, which is adequate only for current needs) and exceptionally low electricity rates, perhaps due to the municipal ownership agreement entered into many decades ago that still covers partial service to the region. The city's **timeliness of approvals** is better than in most comparison municipalities, and the availability of **fast track permits** makes the city that much more attractive to potential business developers. Local businesses benefit from a wide array of **state tax incentives** of which the City of Taunton makes great use, and offers tax abatements and TIF arrangements in its local tax incentives program. When handled properly, such programs allow small businesses to grow and larger businesses to expand. Taunton also benefits from access to **public transit** through the GATRA bus system, and is within five miles of the Middleborough/Lakeville commuter rail station. And although technically Taunton does not score well on EDSAT's “highway access” location factor, the one sector for which highway access most matters (manufacturing) is well situated near Route 24 and I-495. Retail and commercial developers, in recent years, no longer uniformly favor adjacent highway access. Although Taunton does not yet have an up-to-date economic development strategy or formal plan (which participation in EDSAT is intended to help remedy), the city is attentive to developing a **critical mass of firms**: Taunton has an aggressive industrial attraction policy and development specialists available on local, regional, and state levels. Emerging businesses in Taunton have strong **access to business services** as well as to an **incubator space** suited to innovative start-up work. Through the use of **cross-marketing**, the city works with local and regional business organizations to market Taunton's assets to potential business developers, and also elicits the help of existing businesses and firms to increase the effectiveness of this effort. Elected officials also stay on top of the **permitting review process**, working hard to ensure abutters' concerns are addressed long before they can delay a developer or business's “time to market.”

Taunton's **local public schools** perform relatively well, handling a large proportion of economically challenged students who qualify for subsidized lunches and do not go on to a four-year college upon graduation. Nonetheless, your schools have a strong graduation rate, with no underperforming schools and students scoring comparatively well on proficiency tests. Relatedly, Taunton's schools boast a relatively **high average salary for teachers**, which sends the message to developers that the city is dedicated to providing high quality primary education to its citizens—potentially the area workforce and their own children. Taunton's **proximity to universities and research** from local colleges and universities such as Bay State College, Bridgewater State University, and Wheaton College, in combination with its proximity to the global research powerhouse of metropolitan Boston also make Taunton an attractive location.

The City of Taunton **website** provides a wealth of useful resources and tools, including city maps, various online payment options on almost all city-related transactions, applications and official documents for over 15 city departments, and an online GIS portal. The

website stays up to date on a weekly basis and acts as a portal for citizens to report problems to city officials. The website's one big drawback is that it lacks an obvious one-stop portal for accessing content of interest to businesses and developers. We advise visually altering the website's homepage to make it crystalclear where current and potential businesses and developers should go for the information they need. Another outward-facing online platform that is likely to give location specialists their first impression of Taunton is the city's Wikipedia page—which would benefit from more information about the local economy, among other things.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

While Taunton is actively working to attract businesses, it also faces some obstacles and challenges. Above all, **commercial rents** in your central business and highway districts are much higher than those in the CGM. This can be a significant deal-breaker, especially if potential business developers can get a better array of amenities from a neighboring municipality with lower rents. The city should survey commercial landlords to learn the reasons for such high rents and negotiate measures to bring them down to more competitive levels. **Site amenities**, such as fine dining restaurants and more day care facilities are almost completely lacking within one mile of your available development sites. This could act as a deterrent to prospective businesses looking for areas where their employees can have access to these amenities without large amounts of travel. Encouraging such development, through zoning changes and/or tax incentives is advisable.

The education levels of Taunton's **available labor** pool leaves something to be desired, with lower levels of both high school diploma and college degree attainment than the CGM. This problem is not something that can be fixed overnight, and it will require careful coordination among the schools, employers, and such entities as the local Workforce Investment Board.

The **quality of available space** for development in Taunton is also a concern. Though the questionnaire results show that you have experience with redeveloping brownfield sites and your own municipal brownfields revolving loan fund, the amount of brownfield space in Taunton is still higher than the CGM. Conversely, Taunton has relatively small amount of open greenfield space, which would deter developers who want to start their projects from scratch.

Taunton's **crime rate**, which is arguably low compared to the immediate surrounding area is still higher than the CGM. Most important are the robbery rate, which is more than double the average range for the CGM, and the auto theft rate. As with education attainment, this problem doesn't have an "easy fix" but can be remedied over time with increased communication among law enforcement officials, city administrators, and residents.

Recommendations	Priority
Create a one-stop portal, prominently displayed on the town website homepage, for accessing content of interest to businesses and developers.	High
Develop strategies for bringing down central business district commercial rents to more competitive levels.	High
Redevelop available brownfield space to increase available development space.	High
Begin conversations with city officials to address the underlying systemic problems of education attainment and crime rates in the city.	Medium
Encourage development of site amenities through zoning changes and/or tax incentives.	Medium