community development partnership

Creating opportunities for people to live, work, and thrive on the Lower and Outer Cape

CDP Economic Development Committee

"There is a tension between addressing the immediate crisis of having enough workers and housing them, and developing a broader economic development plan that works for three, five, ten, and more years."

– ***Andrew Stern, CDP Vice Chair and Chair of the Economic Development Committee***

Earlier this year, the CDP launched an Economic Development Committee to help strengthen the CDP's business and credit programs designed to increase economic opportunity across the Lower and Outer Cape. The Committee's mandate is to identify up to three initiatives that generate year-round jobs that pay a living wage and recommend how the CDP can support local businesses to accomplish that goal. The group's work grows from the CDP's strategic plan and supports the organization's mission to build a community where people can live, work, and thrive.

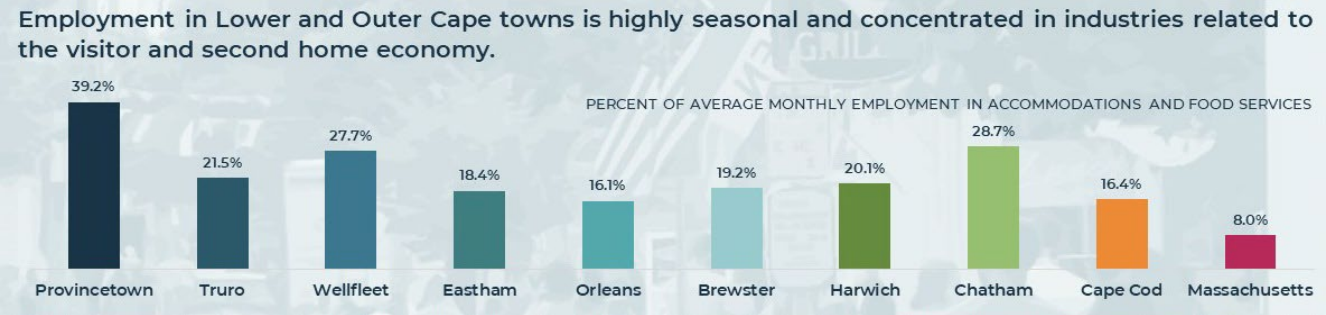
"We have assembled a group of highly talented and well-respected residents and business owners from across the Lower Cape to better inform this process," said CDP President & CEO Jay Coburn. "Their insights have been invaluable, and I'm confident they will develop a great set of recommendations to grow the CDP's small business development work and impact."

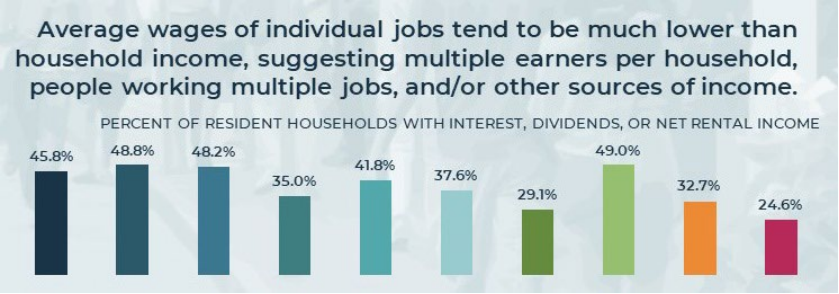
Committee members include CDP Board and Advisory Council members, local business owners, and representatives.

- Andrew Stern, CEO, The Global Development Incubator
- Nicholas Athanassiou, Emeritus Professor, D'Amore-McKim School of Business, Northeastern University
- Shayna Ferrulo, Owner, Snowy Owl Coffee Roasters
- Brian Junkins, Owner, Friends Marketplace
- Mary Kay Leonard, Consultant and Interim CEO
- Bill Madden, Vice President and Commercial Loan Officer, Cape Cod 5
- Aaron Polhemus, Owner & CEO, Polhemus Savery DaSilva

Andrew Stern, Chair of the Economic Development Committee and CDP Vice Chair, shared his thoughts on the Committee's task. "As the Lower and Outer Cape continues to face significant housing challenges, it's important to support economic development aimed at more than just surviving here," says Stern. He points to the reality that few local high school graduates and young people can stay here due to the lack of year-round living wage jobs providing growth opportunities.

The Lower and Outer Cape economies differ somewhat from the Upper Cape's. The Lower Cape's economy is still dominated by the tourism industry, seasonal employment, and low-paying jobs, compelling many people to work multiple jobs during the summer and use unemployment benefits during the winter. A seasonal unemployment model is not ideal for many reasons. The fluctuations and uncertainties make attracting and retaining workers time-consuming and costly. Workers facing seasonal unemployment may feel uncertain about their job security and become disengaged, which can decrease morale and overall productivity. All kinds of businesses struggle because they don't have enough staff to support their operations, affecting service and quality of life. These pressures raise downstream concerns, such as, as older employees and business owners retire, who will fill their shoes?







**Sources: Massachusetts Labor Market Information, 2022 ES – 202 Data, US Census Bureau Economy Surveys, 2021 County Business Patterns, Table CB2100CBP; 2021 American Community Survey 2021 – Year Estimates, Table B19054.*

Unfortunately, the economic situation is exacerbated by the lack of affordable housing. The challenge for the economy, the CDP, and the Committee is to think expansively within this constraint and consider the longer term. Stern says, "There is a tension between addressing the immediate crisis of having enough workers and housing them, and developing a broader economic development plan that works for three, five, ten, and more years."

"We have 1,000 units of housing coming online on the Lower and Outer Cape. Hopefully, at some point, we are going to get ahead of the housing crisis, and we are going to need an economy to support the people living here," says Stern.

As the CEO of The Global Development Incubator, Stern has focused his career on economic development in areas far from the Cape -- places like Haiti, Guatemala, Ethiopia, and Liberia. He says that, strangely, the issues there are not dis-similar. These economies are also dependent on tourism, fishing, and small businesses. The question is, where are the opportunities? There are always entrepreneurs who have figured out something new. This brings up another important part of the Committee's and the CDP's approach: not to pick ideas but to support entrepreneurs who are finding success, learn from them, and help them grow and be sustainable.

The CDP's years of experience, relationships, and eight-town focus position it well for building partnerships, finding collective solutions, and acting strategically. "Larger businesses might be able to address this on their own, but mid-sized and smaller businesses, they don't have access to resources to advance this long-term," says Stern. "We need all groups to work together; despite their different missions and agendas." The hope and plan are that the CDP can help facilitate this work and continue to support local businesses innovatively and strategically.

References and More Information

*Graphics and data from Cape Cod Commission's Report: *Economic & Demographic Trends on the Lower & Outer Cape*, February 2024; Chloe Schaefer, Chief Planner, Cape Cod Commission.

To explore economic, demographic, and housing trends across the region, visit www.datacapecod.org. Data Cape Cod was first created by the Cape Cod Commission to provide local and regional datasets to support planning efforts, economic development, and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Now an ongoing effort, the initiative increases transparency around economic progress in the region and enhances information access to support data-driven decision-making on Cape Cod.