

Central Connecticut Corridor
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
ANNUAL UPDATE
Covering the Period ending June 30, 2006
Prepared by the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency
for submittal to the
United States Economic Development Administration

The following information recaps those major accomplishments which were achieved in the Corridor regarding the implementation of the Central Connecticut Corridor's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy which was first approved on May 17, 2004.

Economic Progress in the Corridor Since Last Year

Since our FY2005-2006 Update various Corridor economic development efforts have progressed. In the City of Bristol, Phases I and II of the Southeast Bristol Business (industrial) Park were awarded permits from the Inland Wetlands Commission and also given permission to subdivide by the Bristol Planning Commission pending completion of engineering design modifications by the Public Works Department. The CT State Traffic Commission also reviewed the project and directed that Route 229 be widened for left turn lanes at the new traffic signal.

Also in Bristol, the first portion of the North Main Streetscape in downtown has been substantially completed, and the City is considering whether other areas in downtown are appropriate for similar improvement projects. The City has also been taking steps to move forward with execution of work on the former Bristol Mall Site. As of May 1, 2006, only two tenants remained in the former mall site; one of which is scheduled to move on or about July 1, 2006.

The City of New Britain reports that during the FY2005-2006 the City saw the departure of eleven companies, but sixteen new companies either started up or moved to New Britain from another location. The result has been the creation of 91 new jobs and retention of another 154.

For SMART Park I, Myrtle Street, there has been some preliminary discussion with a potential business relocating from an inadequate undersized facility and building on an approximately four acre portion of the site. Exact details as to the location, etc., are yet to be worked out.

For SMART Park II, off of South Street, the new road - Commerce Circle - was completed last November, and development is underway on one of the three parcels, a 50,000 square foot office and warehouse facility for Siracusa Moving and Storage. Plans for development on the other two parcels are being finalized, with the potential for the second piece- the DATTCO parcel - to possibly begin construction before the end of the calendar year.

Early last year, the Town of Plymouth joined the Naugatuck Valley Brownfields Pilot program in order to be eligible for federal and state support for brownfields remediation projects. The Town also adopted a Village District zone along a portion of Route 6 to foster smart growth development in that area. In addition, the Town acquired several parcels of land adjoining Terryville's historic waterwheel and appointed a Waterwheel Committee, acting under the aegis of the Economic Development Commission, to implement the Waterwheel Park Plan at the western

end of the Village District zone. The Town continues to aggressively promote available business properties throughout town, and has aided in having several vacant buildings in Plymouth Business Park occupied. The Town also provided partial funding and support for Plymouth's first annual Manufacturing Expo held in February, and applied to the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development for funding to build a water booster pump station at Plymouth Business Park.

The Town of Plainville continues to enjoy a diverse economic base, which includes small, mid-size, and large manufacturers consisting of General Electric, Carlingswitch (an electrical component maker), and Mott Corporation, an industrial air filter manufacturer. Plainville is also home to a number of medium and large sized construction firms, among them Walker Crane, Atlantic Pipe Corporation, National Eastern, Aiudi & Sons, LLC, and Tilcon CT, Inc. that continue to operate quarries and ancillary facilities in Plainville.

During the past fiscal year the Town of Plainville approved or had substantial construction start or finish on a number of new commercial, industrial, and residential projects. The final grand list of October 1, 2005 saw the net taxable grand list increase by 1.0% to \$957,924,310. DDR MDT Connecticut Commons LLC, the largest taxpayer in the community, had an assessment of \$42,556,770. The retail facility most recently added Dick's Sporting Goods, Petsmart and DSW Shoe Warehouse into the complex. The Wheeler Regional YMCA has just completed a major addition and renovation to the facility that doubled its size to 57,000 square feet. It is used by residents of all ages in Plainville and surrounding communities. A new facility has also been completed that houses Crowley Ford. The facility, which is next to Crowley Volkswagen, occupies approximately 32,000 square feet. New construction in progress includes a Taco Bell, Long John Silver, Tim Horton and a \$1.5 million self-storage facility. A new industrial park, Limestone Business Park, is under way, with 10 units, comprising 14,100 square feet under construction and another 10 units approved. Residential activity has continued to be on the upswing, which includes new residential units estimated to sell for \$350,000 to \$400,000. These include 36 age-restricted units and 116 freestanding condominiums. Also being considered are 300 upscale apartments.

The Town of Plainville approved an Enterprise Zone in February 1999 that consists of 200 acres. The Enterprise Zone allows for special tax incentives for businesses within its boundaries. There are currently 90 acres of available land that are targeted for future improvements that will bring in new business, employment opportunities and growth to the Town's grand list. Most recently, Northeast Produce completed construction of a 21,000 square foot facility with 40 employees. Also completed is NewForge (an 18,000 square foot forging manufacturer) and Heritage Lawn Service (a 12,000 square foot turf business). The 5,000 square foot Topflight Machine Tool has just been completed, with Multi Prints (15,000 square feet), Connecticut Support Services (estimated 7,500 square feet), and Barker Plainville, LLC (10,750 square feet) in the design phase.

Past Year's Economic Development Activities Related to Identified Needs and Objectives of the Act

The following table describes activities undertaken during FY2005-2006 related to the Corridor's identified needs. The "Action Items" and "Proposed Actions" noted below are taken from the text of the CEDS, the "Actual Accomplishments" are the things that were done about each Action Item during the past year:

ACTION ITEMS	PROPOSED ACTIONS	ACTUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS
<p>Host a Corridor forum on historic preservation, to promote the value of historic sites and to encourage adaptive reuse of property instead of demolition.</p> <p>Host a Corridor forum on CT Main Street, possibly combined with historic preservation.</p>	<p>CCRPA staff will contact Councilmember Ellen Zoppo to facilitate the accomplishment of this objective.</p> <p>CCRPA staff will host a breakfast meeting to discuss the Downtown Resource Center with its Director John Simone.</p>	<p>This combined Main Street/Historic Preservation program was held on Friday, March 31, at 8 AM at the Whiting House in Plainville with approximately 25 participants..</p>
<p>Organize a bus trip to successful downtown programs for Corridor downtown merchants, bankers, and Realtors [e.g. West Hartford, New London, Watertown, Niantic, Manchester, New Haven Town Green] .</p>	<p>The Alliance will be asked to sponsor this event during FY2005-2006.</p>	<p>The CEDS Committee voted to organize this activity to occur in FY2006-2007.</p>
<p>Identify capabilities/programs of key allies and resources, such as SCORE, etc., and establish improved working relationships between the various economic development groups.</p> <p>Meet with Connecticut Innovations, and explore the need for additional incubators in the Corridor.</p>	<p>CCRPA will be responsible for this work during FY2005-2006.</p> <p>Connecticut Innovations staff will be invited to discuss this subject with the Alliance.</p>	<p>SCORE representatives presented their staffing situation and programs to the Central Connecticut Economic Development Alliance (which includes the members of the Corridor) and discussed future potential collaborations at a meeting on December 12,2005. Information materials are on file at the CCRPA offices. Instead of Connecticut Innovations, the Executive Director of the CCSU ITBD was invited to discuss incubators from the perspective of an incubator operator to the Alliance at their March 13, 2006 meeting.</p>
<p>Study and identify other industry clusters most appropriate for the Corridor to diversify its economy.</p> <p>Develop and implement a marketing plan, utilizing the existing data developed in the State's cluster research, to attract those types of businesses identified as the Corridor's competitive advantage.</p>	<p>CCRPA will be responsible for this work during FY2005-2006.</p>	<p>The Technical Committee has recommended, and the CEDS Committee has concurred in modifying this Item to indicate that instead of making efforts to identify other industry clusters, we would make efforts to assure that our currently recognized clusters are recognized by state and other agencies and given appropriate inclusion in their work.</p>
<p>Identify key Corridor sites for development.</p>	<p>CCRPA will prepare a 3-fold brochure highlighting the corridor's most prime available commercial/industrial sites.</p>	<p>In preparation to be ready for publication in early FY2006-2007.</p>

<p>Host a Corridor forum with human resource providers, to both educate them on how they relate to economic development, and to ascertain from them how they may better relate to the economic development community.</p> <p>Host a Corridor forum with representatives of the Corridor's institutions of higher learning/training to forge relationships and to promote collaboration between skill training entities and economic development groups.</p> <p>Invite the educational and training institutions in the Corridor to develop seminars and/or workshops for students to learn and understand the importance of desirable work habits, attitudes, communications, and reasoning skills; develop programs thru appropriate industry associations, and/or workforce trainers, to foster pride in work and to understand how each person's role in society contributes to the overall betterment of the community.</p>	<p>Capital Workforce Partners will be invited to discuss the efforts they have made to accomplish these objectives with the CEDS Committee.</p>	<p>Capital Workforce Partners representatives presented their staffing situation and programs to the Central Connecticut Economic Development Alliance (which includes the members of the Corridor) and discussed future potential collaborations at a meeting on December 12,2005.</p>
<p>Develop an educational program about the benefits of tourism to the Corridor; increase the capacity and visibility of the Central Region Tourism District and the Northwest Tourism District; an industrial heritage tourism attraction, building upon the Corridor's manufacturing heritage; and, create a major cultural attraction.</p>	<p>CCRPA staff will contact the two Tourism Districts to see if they can jointly bring about the accomplishment of this objective.</p>	<p>The two Tourism Districts impacting the Corridor will participate in the June 12 meeting of the Central Connecticut Economic Development Alliance to assure compliance with this objective.</p>

Adjustments to the CEDS to Take Advantage of Unforeseen Opportunities/Address Unexpected Problems

1. Bristol
 - a. Current Projects
 - i. Southeast Bristol Business Park - infrastructure construction should begin this summer when those costs will be invoiced against its US EDA grant.
 - b. New Projects - no new projects submitted for this Update.

2. New Britain
 - a. Current Projects
 - i. Smart Park I, Myrtle Street - received approximately \$1.5 million from the State, \$1.2 million from EPA, and some US EDA funds which assisted in the demolition work that was required. Well monitoring continues in the area east of Booth Street. There is quite a bit of interest in the site; and there

- is another EPA funded project for the Booth Street area of the site which involves completing a grading plan.
 - ii. Smart Park II off of South Street - is completed and the first tax abatement award of \$50,000 was recently granted in relation to it for a development.
 - iii. Pinnacle Heights Redevelopment - this project is moving forward and all the tenants have relocated; the City is seeking funds from OPM for the demolition and anticipating the property being transferred from the State to the City in June 2006.
 - iv. Assisted Living Care Facility - because the Jerome Home is going to build an assisted care facility which should meet the need for this type of housing for the time being, this project can be dropped from the CEDS.
 - v. Broad Street is starting reconstruction this year.
 - vi. St. Claire and Lester Street project will also be under construction this year.
- b. New Projects
- i. Downtown Transit Supportive Development
- This project entails early phase planning for transit supportive development in the downtown area, north of the Main Street bridge over Route 72. This project derives from the New Britain Busway Station Area Planning Study, in which two alternative concept plans were presented for the NewBrite Plaza area, a short distance north of the Busway terminus in downtown.

One concept envisions construction of a 6,000 to 10,000 seat arena for use by CCSU athletics programs and for various entertainment and other special events. The proposed arena construction would entail redevelopment of an aging shopping plaza and would be designed in a manner so as to better integrate the site into the urban framework. The arena concept would also incorporate commercial retail space at the street frontages and would be likely to include a parking garage, reconfiguration the Clark and Winter Streets with a through street to East Main, and the possibility of moderate- density infill residential construction.

The second alternative, if the arena project does not go forward, would entail a mixed-use housing and commercial development. This is envisioned as a mix of multi-story commercial and residential buildings on the Main and East Main Street frontages with townhouses and more moderate density development on the secondary streets of Lafayette Street and Winter Street.

The new developments would replace a substantial amount of vacant and significantly underutilized retail and office space, and create new, modern more desirable space. Redevelopment of this area would provide an increased economic base and serve to generate retail activity near the downtown. Both projects would incorporate design elements that would serve to connect and integrate this general vicinity into the downtown center. The developments would involve public-private partnerships, leveraging private money for some portion of the development. Investment in this type of transit supportive development would help significantly ensuring the success of the New Britain – Hartford Busway and optimize the return on investment for state and federal monies put into the busway project .

Conclusion: Goals 2 and 3 would be met.

ii. Downtown Police Headquarters/Commercial Development

The City's current Police Headquarters building is aging and deficient in a number of regards, including problems with asbestos, aged and inadequate ventilation system, and space and structural deficiencies. Numerous studies over the years have led to the conclusion that it would not be cost-effective to repair or reconstruct the existing structure. To that end a new, state of the art facility is seen as the best, most cost effective means of meeting the department's current and future needs. After a long search and study of available locations a decision was made to plan for construction of the facility in the heart of downtown on the corner of Main and Chestnut Streets.

Aside from meeting the Police Departments needs for a modern, up-to date facility, this project gives the City several key benefits. First it removes two unattractive, underutilized commercial buildings and replaces them with a new, high-quality, multi-story building that would enhance the appearance of the downtown. Secondly, the lower floor would be designed to accommodate quality commercial floor space, at ground floor level. This would be valuable generating added downtown retail activity and pedestrian shopper traffic. The location is adjacent to an underutilized City parking garage, which gives the potential for a sky walk bridging from the garage through the building to Main Street, increasing the value and usefulness of the garage for the entire downtown business community. Additionally, it is expected that having the Police presence directly on Main Street will have a benefit in battling the problem of perceived crime that is sometimes cited in regards to the City's downtown business climate. The multi-story facility would make efficient use of the land and open up the former headquarters site for private sector redevelopment, for other office, and/or commercial uses, that would enhance and complement the downtown core, and add to the City's tax base.

By creating new retail floor area, and by excessing the former Police headquarters for private development, this project serves to leverage private investment in the downtown, which is a designated Enterprise Zone. Also this select location helps to optimize the return on the previous public investments in the City's parking garage and in streetscape improvements on Main Street and the general downtown area.

Conclusion: Goal 2 would be met.

3. Plainville

a. Current Projects

i. Strawberry Fields - this project is no longer active because the owners of the property were not willing to work with the City which had obtained a \$500,000 grant to assist in its redevelopment. The City is asking the State Bond Council to allow this money to be applied to the Town's downtown enhancement project.

b. New Projects

- i. Downtown redevelopment - subject of a CERC report which outlines nearly three-quarters of a million dollars of improvements to downtown infrastructure.

Conclusion: Goals 2, 3 and 4 would be met.

- ii. Water Pollution - the town's wastewater treatment plant requires upgrading and, until that work is completed, treatment plant capacity will limit the town's growth and economic development.

Conclusion: Goals 2, 3 and 4 would be met.

- iii. White Oak Property - This property comprises 12.6 acres within the central commercial area of Plainville with frontage on West Main Street (CT Route 372). Until recently the property has been used as a construction business and yard, with heavy equipment used in bridge-building and other large construction projects operating from the property. The property borders the Pequabuck River, a tributary to the Farmington River. The property is presently for sale.

Situated close to the heart of Plainville's central commercial district, the property offers significant opportunities for redevelopment as a mixed use center featuring retail and other consumer-oriented businesses, higher density housing, and recreation. With Plainville struggling to "reinvent" and revitalize its commercial core, this property offers the potential to serve as a catalyst for such revitalization. Its frontage on both West Main Street and the Pequabuck River presents a unique opportunity to connect these underutilized and untapped resources and shape this area into a modern "lifestyle center" in Plainville's historic downtown.

Conclusion: Goals 2, 3 and 4 would be met.

- iv. New Britain Avenue "Chun" property - Owned by the Chung Family Realty Partnership LLC, this 9.55 acre parcel contains several vacant commercial buildings in deteriorating condition. Several of the buildings were used until recently for automotive services such as transmission repair, body work, etc. The property is known to have soil contamination, and Phase I and II assessments have been completed.

The property is situated on the north side of New Britain Avenue (CT Route 372) from the Connecticut Commons shopping center. It is zoned general commercial. It offers the potential for retail and consumer-oriented redevelopment that creates a synergistic relationship with Connecticut Commons and other retail businesses on New Britain Avenue.

Conclusion: Goals 2, 3 and 4 would be met.

4. Plymouth

a. Current Projects

- i. Plymouth Business Park Phase IV – some developer interest has been expressed. The town has submitted grant applications (2) which include \$750,000 for a water booster pump station.
- ii. Terryville Business District – on March 9, 2006, the Planning & Zoning Commission amended the zoning regulations to incorporate a new

commercial zone called the Village District. At its westerly end the District is anchored by the waterwheel project, where a key parcel was acquired by the town in late 2005.

- iii. 33 South Main Street – still privately held, there has been virtually no activity at this site during the past year. The town’s interests in facilitating re-use remain unchanged.
 - iv. 4 William Street – another site of interest to the town. However, it too is privately held with no activity despite some developer inquiries.
 - v. 100 South Riverside Avenue – owned by a large out-of-state corporation. Recently, some generators were removed from the buildings, perhaps signaling upcoming real estate activity.
- b. New Projects – Plymouth does not have any new projects to submit at this time for the FY 06-07 update.

Evaluation of Effectiveness of Meeting Goals

The CEDS includes the following annual “qualitative and quantitative benchmarks, for each of the goals, with their associated objectives, [which] can be used to determine how well outcomes are achieved to indicate how successfully the Corridor is achieving its economic goals, and to provide guidance for making adjustments, if necessary:

- I. Create and submit a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy to EDA - meet the required date of 6/30, each year, for submission of a CEDS Update to EDA.” - we are meeting that goal with an “excellent” rating thus far into the program which it is understood will require the submission of a completely new CEDS after the five years of our current CEDS has run its course in June of 2009.
- II. “Attendance and participation at CEDS meetings is an important part of the CEDS process so the measurable indicator is Average Attendance.” Average attendance of our various represented interest groups is “satisfactory” in that it is above 75%.
- III. “Submission of Data & Information from CEDS members is an important part of the process. ... indicators are [for an] ‘excellent’ [rating] submission within 1 week of request.” We are meeting that goal at an “excellent” level.
- IV. “Individual community support is important. [The] measurable indicator [for] excellent [is that] all 4 communities adopt the CEDS.” We will be submitting the FY2006-2007 Update to the four communities for approval during the summer of 2006 and expect all four towns to adopt the document.
- V. “A majority of the Chambers of Commerce are considering adopting the CEDS as a part of their economic development plans/program” is a requirement for an “excellent rating on this factor and has been achieved in the past. The FY2006-2007 Update will also be submitted to the Chambers for their adoption during the summer of 2007.

Achievable Goals for the Coming Year

The following table includes those goals which were a part of the original CEDS and which remain to be competed.

Organize a bus trip to successful downtown programs for Corridor downtown merchants, bankers, and Realtors [e.g. West Hartford, New London, Watertown, Niantic, Manchester, New Haven Town Green] .	The Alliance will be asked to sponsor this event during FY2005-2006.	The CEDS Committee voted to organize this activity to occur in FY2006-2007.
Work to assure that the Route 72 Extension and the New Britain-Hartford busway will be constructed.	This on-going effort continues with the coordination of the CCRPA.	
Enhance economic development opportunities along the New Britain-Hartford busway and encourage redevelopment and adaptive reuse of brownfields and grayfields sites.	The CCRPA recently completed the Busway West project to enhance Busway accessibility; and the station area plans being completed by CRCOG also implement this objective. The Region has also joined the Valley Brownfields Pilot in order to have access to their brownfields/grayfields assessment and cleanup skills.	
Encourage an increase in the number of units of senior housing in the Corridor.	Each town will conduct an assessment of the sites available for senior housing in their jurisdiction and seek to develop appropriate infrastructure for the development of additional senior housing units in areas accessible to public transportation and health care facilities.	