The Central Connecticut Economic Development Alliance

# Central Connecticut Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

A plan for sustainable economic growth

## Acknowledgements

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## The Central Connecticut Economic Development Alliance

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| Bristol | Art Ward – Mayor | Organized Labor | Bruce Lydem |
| | Jonathan Rosenthal (Chair) – Economic Development | Finance | Byron Treado |
| | Mike Nicastro – Chamber of Commerce | Tourism; women | Janet Serra – Western Connecticut Convention & Visitors Bureau |
| Burlington | Rich Stocker – Economic Development | Utilities | John O'Toole – Northeast Utilities |
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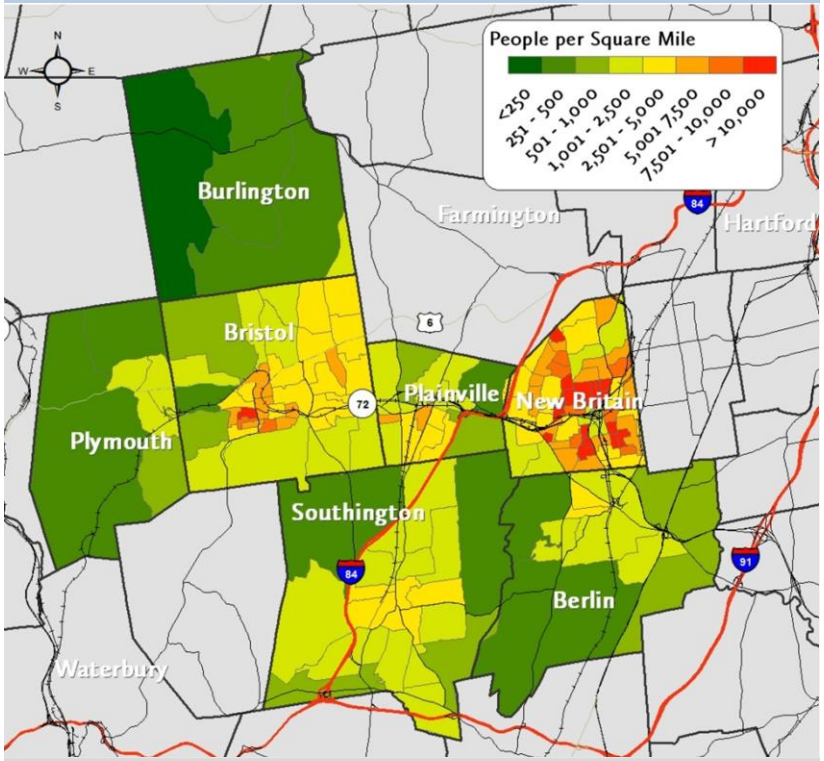
# Introduction

In 2004 the *Central Connecticut Corridor*, an alliance of four municipalities from the Central Connecticut Region, developed and approved its first Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). This document updates that plan by taking a renewed look at demographic and economic conditions in central Connecticut, and expands it to encompass the entire 235,000-person strong Central Connecticut Region. It also makes the region eligible for funding from the Economic Development Administration and allows the region to pursue designation as an Economic Development District.

The region, country, and, indeed, world as a whole have experienced significant economic developments since passage of the last CEDS. These include a real estate and financial bubble, followed by the deepest financial crisis since the Great Depression. Since 2007, the economy has suffered, with unemployment and costs rising, housing prices falling, and stagnation setting in. While these developments may grab headlines, they also conceal longer-term structural challenges in the economy that must be addressed if prosperity and well-being are to be sustained.

While this plan focuses on these longer-term challenges, it will be implemented in the context of the current economic crisis. While government spending can dampen economic downturns, the length and severity of the ongoing recession has strained

Figure 1. Central Connecticut Population Distribution




Source: Map by CCRPA using U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 data.

public finances to capacity. As a consequence, fewer resources are available to implement the economic development strategies and projects that are needed to stimulate and sustain growth. These constraints make smart, well thought-out, and realistic planning all the more vital. Given limited resources, if the problems of economic development are to be successfully addressed, every cent must not just count; it must count many times over.

This plan takes a critical and strategic approach to these issues in central Connecticut. It is based on a thorough analysis of economic, demographic, and other pertinent data. Numerous industry, government, and research reports inform the analysis and eventual project and strategy selection. At the same time, participants in this process were cognizant of the limited ability this plan will have to address some of the more pressing issues. Therefore, emphasis has been placed on issues that this plan can most directly impact, while acknowledging those that it can only affect indirectly. Projects and strategies have been designed in a similar manner.

## The Region and its Context

The Central Connecticut Region comprises the cities of New Britain and Bristol and the towns of Berlin, Burlington, Plainville, Plymouth, and Southington. As its name suggests, the region sits at the center of Connecticut and is equidistant to the New York City, Boston, and Albany (NY) metropolitan areas. The region borders or lies within a relatively short distance of several major urban areas in Connecticut. These include Hartford and New Haven, as well as Waterbury, Middletown, and Torrington. A mature (if uneven) transportation network connects the region to these areas; primary interregional routes comprise the limited access expressways Interstates 84 and 691 and State Routes 8 and 9.

According to the most recent counts available, the region houses 235,878 residents. This constitutes 6.6 % of the state population of 3,574,097. The region presents a broad range of population densities and development patterns. These range from dense urban centers and suburbs to rural lands (see *Figure 1* on page 1). New Britain represents the largest population, with 73,206 residents in a high-density, historic city environment; Burlington, in contrast, is home to 9,301 residents who enjoy its agricultural landscapes and small-town feel.

### Physical and Natural Features

The Central Connecticut Region covers 166.3 square miles. The south of the region consists of plains with fertile soil sandwiched between dramatic, steep traprock ridges (the Metacomet Ridge and South Mountain). While most of the plains agriculture in the region has been lost to suburban sprawl, challenging terrain has spared the ridges the depredations of major development.

The foothills of the Appalachian Mountains begin in the middle of the region and rise to the north and west. These areas have witnessed an explosion in exurban development in recent years but, for the time being, by and large are ecologically unimpaired, with tracts of unfragmented forest the dominant landscape.

Ragged Mountain, which rests atop the Metacomet Ridge in the towns of Southington and Berlin, is the region's highest point, at 761 feet. Due north along the ridge in Plainville is Pinnacle Rock, another popular spot for enjoying scenic vistas. These and many other peaks, ridges, valleys, and kettle holes can be accessed through an extensive, semi-connected network of hiking trails. These include the New England Trail, the newest of the eleven federally-designated National Scenic Trails.

The region is rich in water features, albeit of varying quality. The Farmington, Pequabuck, and Quinnipiac Rivers flow through the region. The Farmington, which is immensely popular with kayakers and anglers, as well as with walkers, joggers, cyclists, and roller-skaters (on its riverfront trail) is under consideration for addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The Quinnipiac, while supportive of motorless boating, in contrast is chronically polluted. Lakes and ponds can be found in every part of the region. These include several pristine reservoirs as well as several private community lakes. (There are no public swimming holes in the region.)

New Britain and Bristol offer generous, well-maintained, historic urban parks, with opportunities for passive and active recreation. However, in recent years municipal open space protection in the region has lagged. The State of Connecticut has preserved large volumes of land, its properties are not evenly distributed: while some towns enjoy thousands of acres of State open space, others have fewer than twenty.

## History

While each community in the Central Connecticut Region has its own history, the region as a whole was settled relatively late. Initially, agriculture dominated the region's economy. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, that soon changed. Thanks to its favorable location, plentiful resources (including rivers and streams for power), and some old-fashioned of Yankee ingenuity, the region quickly burgeoned into a manufacturing powerhouse of national renown.

Bristol and New Britain in particular boast long and storied traditions of manufacturing. This history is still evident today in the countless remnants of mills and factories, many of which are

**Figure 2. Scenic view from Ragged Mountain**

Source: Photo by Paul W. Gagnon

still in use. Bristol, known as the "Clock City," pioneered clock making. In the mid-19th century, its manufacturing industry diversified beyond timepieces to span fabrics, springs, bearings, and brass.[i] New Britain, known as "Hardware City", had similar beginnings. The city continues to be home to several notable manufacturers, including Stanley Black & Decker.

The establishment of the Farmington Canal in 1828 and the arrival of the railroad shortly thereafter also put many communities on the map, including Plainville, aptly named for the large, flat stretch of land that the town was established on.[ii] Together with Berlin, Plymouth, and Southington, Plainville transitioned from agriculture to manufacturing with the Industrial Revolution. Manufacturers produced a diverse variety of goods, from cutlery and hardware to clocks and plows. At the same time, milling operations, including gristmills and sawmills, sprang up along the region's rivers and streams.[iii]

While agriculture has declined in much of the region, it is still a large part of Burlington's community identity. Early in the town's establishment, the common farmer also made his living through additional trades and was often found to be a blacksmith, tinsmith, miller, wood maker or minister.[iv] Today, farmers are less likely make their own tools; however, as the most rural town in the region, Burlington and its landscape continue to be defined, at least in part, by its agricultural heritage.

Following the nation's economic trajectory, the region began another series of transitions in the mid twentieth century. Deindustrialization led to a loss of both manufacturing employment and capacity. Formerly bustling factories now lay abandoned throughout the region, many of them leaking harmful chemicals into the soil. The accompanying loss of tax revenue has left the cities that house these derelict factories less able to deal with resultant social problems. Cities like New Britain, and to a lesser extent Bristol, now face high unemployment rates and growing poverty.

At the same time, new development patterns emerged. The rise of the automobile permitted development of heretofore undeveloped areas of the region. Sprawling suburban development exploded throughout the region, eating up formerly productive agricultural land, leveling forests, and draining population from traditional population centers. While such developments have permitted allowed formerly sparsely developed areas of Berlin, Burlington, and Southington to prosper, other parts of the region have suffered.

The region is now at a cross-road. It is in the midst of an economic transition from its formerly manufacturing based economy to one that relies more heavily on services. At the same time, development patterns have shifted the region's distribution of resources. Quality of life in the region is threatened by persistent poverty, failing schools (in some parts), loss of environmental resources, and stagnant employment growth.

## Overview of the 2004 CEDS

In 2002 the four municipalities of the Central Connecticut Corridor (Bristol, New Britain, Plainville, and Plymouth) created the region's first CEDS, which was adopted in 2004. This document offered an analysis of available data regarding demographics, employment trends, the housing stock, education, the economy, and land availability. The picture that emerged from this analysis was that of a region experiencing lagging growth with changing demographics that would present new concerns for economic sustainability. The top regional issues identified were:

1. Need to retain existing businesses and attract new ones
2. Need to revitalize downtowns
3. Need for, and cost of, improving infrastructure
4. Difficulty funding necessary improvements
5. A weak regional structure

To address these issues the 2004 CEDS identified the following goals:

1. To build a more effective regional approach to economic development.
2. To build the physical, financial and human capital capacity in the region necessary to support economic development.
3. To achieve an effective transition of the region's economic base through business retention, expansion, attraction, creation and transition.
4. To improve the economic prosperity of the region's residents and increase the profitability of its businesses.

### Significant Developments

Since adoption of the 2004 CEDS, the region has been hard at work implementing it. The region was able to leverage EDA grants for three major regional development projects and has continued to build upon projects funded by past EDA grants:

- In Bristol, $1.2 million in EDA funding was used to develop the initial phase of the Southeast Bristol Business Park. This was followed up with a recently-completed second phase. Both phases have attracted numerous tenants.
- In New Britain, the EDA provided an $875,000 grant for the Phase 1 SMART Park project. The project was completed in 2008 and is now home to Celebration Foods, employing 300 workers.
- In Plymouth, $1.1 million in EDA funds enabled construction of Phase III of the Plymouth Industrial Park. The project was quite successful, and State funds have now been used to start Phase IV of the park.

The region has also successfully leveraged other funding sources to implement the CEDS.

- Plainville completed two phases of its downtown revitalization project (using State funds) and completed an addition to its Strawberry Fields Industrial Park.
- New Britain drew on EPA brownfield clean-up funds for its SMART Park.

- New Britain has also used a number of grant sources to begin work on its Pinnacle Heights redevelopment project *and* its new downtown police station.

Other recent economic development trends are discussed throughout *Appendix 2: Economic Analysis*.

## The Planning Process

Regional economic development planning in Central Connecticut is undertaken by the Central Connecticut Economic Development Alliance (referred to as the Alliance throughout this plan). This organization represents all seven towns that make up the Central Connecticut Region and includes representatives from each of them. Representatives are also included from various special interest groups, such as higher education and the unemployed (see page *i* at the beginning of this document for a complete list). The Alliance normally meets on a quarterly basis.

In 2009 the work to update Central Connecticut's CEDS began. After discussions with regional leaders and representatives from the State, the decision was made to regionalize the CEDS process so that this plan would incorporate all seven municipalities in the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency (CCRPA). Unexpected funding cuts and position eliminations brought on by the recession temporarily slowed work on the CEDS; however, beginning with November 2010, the project resumed at full bore.

The first planning meeting after this point was held in December 2010. CCRPA staff presented a work plan and gave updates on progress already achieved. On February 15th the results of an analysis of demographic data was presented, leading to a discussion of regional issues and trends. On March 21st the Alliance discussed the results of the first of a series of public meetings, an initial analysis of industry trends, and data on transportation issues. At the April 25th special meeting, the results of the second public meeting were discussed; those in attendance discussed goals and objectives for the next five years. The May 23rd meeting focused on reviewing project proposals and ranking them. In June, a draft was presented and project rankings were finalized.

Following the February 15th meeting, a coordinating committee was formed to guide CCRPA staff in completion of the project. This committee was composed of economic development officials from each town. They met three times during the process. One of their primary tasks was to create a project solicitation survey and identify opportunities to publicize the CEDS process and solicit feedback from stakeholders. The project survey was distributed to municipal representatives in March 2011. In addition, numerous presentations were given to municipal economic development agencies and other organizations regarding the CEDS as a result of suggestions by the committee.

Meeting minutes, agendas, and other materials can be found in *Appendix 3: Meeting Schedules & Materials*.

### Public Participation

Broad public participation has been integral to the success of this effort. Input from members of the general public, issue ori-

ented non-profits, representatives from area businesses, business organizations, and public sector employees all helped direct this process. These stakeholders were involved with every aspect of the planning process, from collecting and analyzing data to formulating goals and objectives. Many insightful comments and observations came out of the public participation process and helped shape the final content of this document.

Early in the process it was determined that a targeted outreach effort should be undertaken to supplement the already diverse membership of the Alliance. A list of over one hundred organizations and individuals whose work was identified as being particularly relevant to the CEDS was compiled. These organizations and individuals were contacted in January and February of 2011 and invited to a public meeting on March 8th.

In addition to the targeted list of stakeholders that was compiled, a broader outreach effort was also undertaken. The region's chambers of commerce sent notices to their members, informing them of the ongoing process and inviting them to public meetings. Presentations were also given at numerous public meetings held by other organizations, including the Plymouth Economic Development Commission, the Plainville Economic Development Agency, and Bristol Rising (over 40 people attended), a group formed in support of Bristol's downtown revitalization process. Newspaper articles have also been written about the CEDS, which has helped to get the word out, copies of which can be found at the end of this document.

On March 8th an evening public meeting was held in the offices of CCRPA. Normally the Alliance meets during the day, so an evening time was chosen to provide an opportunity to those who cannot attend daytime meetings. A total of 18 people attended, representing a broad array of the public. Members of arts organizations, business owners, state representatives, workforce representatives, and many others attended. At the meeting, CCRPA staff introduced the CEDS process to attendees, presented some initial data findings, and led the group in an initial SWOT analysis. Two breakout groups were formed and each developed lists of the region's strengths and weaknesses, which can be found in *Appendix 3: Meeting Schedules & Materials*.

The meeting was so successful that a handful of attendees requested that its running time be extended so that they could continue to discuss the future of Central Connecticut. CCRPA staff were happy to oblige and the meeting went on for another hour of thoughtful and productive discussion. In addition to the ideas regarding the CEDS that were generated, numerous attendees met each other for the first time and discovered that they had common interests.

To follow up on this successful event, a survey was sent to participants of the meeting, as well as to others who had expressed interest but were unable to attend. The survey asked people to rank the strengths and weaknesses that the group had come up with at the meeting. Another survey, replicating the questions that were asked at the public meeting, was sent out to the entire

list of stakeholders and to the distribution lists of the chambers of commerce.

A second evening public meeting was held on April 14th in the Town of Plainville Public Library. This meeting drew a smaller but very enthusiastic crowd. Ten people attended the meeting, mostly representing the towns of Burlington and Plainville. Additionally, a reporter from a local paper was in attendance. Following a presentation by CCRPA staff, a discussion of the region's strengths and weaknesses ensued. Participants provided a wealth of feedback and new ideas.

### Final Approval

A draft of the CEDS was completed in June 2011 and sent to the Alliance for review. CCRPA staff incorporated suggestions and scheduled a public meeting on June 30th to approve the draft plan and present it to the public. Following this meeting, the plan will be made available to the public for review for 30 days. Following this review period, the CEDS will be sent to the EDA for final approval.

## Relation to Other Planning Processes

While this plan is comprehensive in nature, it exists within a wider planning context. Plans at the local, regional, and state levels all affect its implementation. The following is a brief description of how this plan was shaped by other plans. A more complete description of the plans and studies that were consulted for this document can be found in *Appendix 4: Plans & Studies Consulted*.

Local (municipal) plans were primarily consulted to gain insight into what has been occurring within the region. Projects from Plans of Conservation and Development (POCD) were examined for relevance to the CEDS, as were goals and objectives. Issues that were identified by these plans helped inform the data collection and analysis phase of this planning process as well.

Regional plans were consulted to ensure coordination and cross-sectoral integration of planning efforts. For example, land use patterns were a major issue brought up by participants in the CEDS process. Rather than go into depth on land use, this document refers to the region's Plan of Conservation and Development, which is the authoritative plan for land use in the region and is scheduled for revision after the completion of the CEDS. It is intended that lessons from the CEDS be incorporated into the region's new POCD. Similarly, transportation was repeatedly cited as a major concern by CEDS participants. The region's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) addresses and governs future investments in the region's transportation system. So that economic and transportation plans dovetail, the region's LRTP was revised concurrently with the CEDS; rather than duplicate the LRTP here, this document accordingly refers to it directly.

### State Economic Development Strategy and Plan of Conservation and Development

In 2009 the Department of Economic and Community Development completed its Economic Strategic Plan (ESP) for the state. This plan lays out a 20-year strategy in three areas of policy: talent and technology; cultivating competitiveness; and responsible growth. To ensure that the strategies put forth in Central Connecticut's strategic plan will support and benefit from state led initiatives, the analysis and policy proposals in the ESP were reviewed carefully. The state's emphasis on environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable growth is echoed in this CEDS, as is its concern for training a highly productive workforce and lowering the cost of doing business.

Connecticut's 2005 to 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development was also reviewed in preparation of this CEDS. The state POCD contains two parts. The first is the plan text, which lays out policies to help guide state agencies. The second is the locational guide map which visually shows which parts of Connecticut should fulfill which parts of the plan. In the plan text there are six growth management principles that were consulted throughout the development of this CEDS. They are:

- *Redevelop and Revitalize Regional Centers and Areas with Existing or Currently Planned Physical Infrastructure*
- *Expand Housing Opportunities and Design Choices to Accommodate a Variety of Household Types and Needs*
- *Concentrate Development Around Transportation Nodes and Along Major Transportation Corridors to Support the Viability of Transportation Options*
- *Conserve and Restore the Natural Environment, Cultural and Historical Resources, and Traditional Rural Lands*
- *Protect and Ensure the Integrity of Environmental Assets Critical to Public Health and Safety*
- *Promote Integrated Planning Across all Levels of Government to Address Issues on a Statewide, Regional and Local Basis*

Each of these principles is reflected in the goals and objectives of this CEDS.

### Responsible Growth

In 2006 Governor Rell signed Executive Order 15 establishing a Responsible Growth Taskforce. In 2008 that taskforce released a report outlining principles of responsible growth. The Department of Economic and Community Development then released a list of eight responsible growth criteria. These eight criteria were used to guide the process of creating this CEDS. They influenced every aspect of the process, from data collection and analysis to the creation of criteria that were used to evaluate proposed projects.

DECD's Responsible Growth Criteria are listed below:

1. *Project activities should be in conformance with the Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut.*
2. *Locate Projects within existing developed areas and promote infill development.*

3. *Locate projects within existing public utilities service areas (water, sewer, etc.).*
4. *Projects outside of public utility services areas should be scaled to use on-site systems, where practicable, to manage unplanned development of adjacent land.*
5. *Promote transit-oriented development.*
6. *Promote energy/water conservation, energy efficiency and "green" building design.*
7. *Avoid impacts to natural and cultural resources and open space.*
8. *Promote mixed-use development and compatible land uses (pedestrian-friendly with access to multiple destinations within close proximity of each other).*

# Vision, goals, & Objectives

Central Connecticut, while endowed with many assets and competitive advantages, also faces a number of challenges. Demographic shifts, structural changes to the economy, environmental constraints, infrastructure deficiencies, and pockets of disadvantaged populations all limit Central Connecticut's ability to build upon its strengths. The goals and objectives that are enumerated in this section are designed to overcome the region's challenges by leveraging its assets. They are based on a thorough analysis of the trends within and outside of the region. They also represent a realistic and achievable plan of action.

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

Based on a synthesis of available information, an analysis of regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats was performed. This analysis used data from the demographic and economic analysis, stakeholder input, and a review of relevant plans, studies, and recent developments. Information from each of these sources is included throughout this plan, but a summary of major findings is compiled here for easy reference.

### Strengths

- **Strong manufacturing sector**: Manufacturing still makes up a large portion of regional employment. While it has lost employment over the previous five years, it was a slower than average rate.
- **Good public schools**: In most of the region's towns the schools perform better than the state average.
- **Presence of nationally known large employers**: The region is home to the headquarters or branches of many large employers. ESPN, General Electric, the Barnes Group, and other high profile companies have a presence in the region. This brings stability and notoriety to the region.
- **Affordability**: While Connecticut and the Northeast are high cost areas, the region manages to remain relatively affordable. With a few exceptions, housing is more affordable than average and a smaller percentage of residents experiences housing cost burdens.
- **Higher education institutions**: The region is home to a large state university (CCSU) as well as smaller colleges and a branch of a community college. Additionally, the University of Connecticut's medical school and Tunxis Community College are in adjacent Farmington. Other institutions, such as

the University of Connecticut's other campuses, Yale University, and Hartford University, are less than an hour away.

- **Strong health care sector**: The health care sector is the largest sector of the economy, employing tens of thousands of people. In recent years, despite the downturn in the economy, this sector has grown. The large number of institutions also provides the region's residents with easy access to quality health care.
- **Highway and rail access**: The highway and rail system was noted as both a strength and a weakness as it varies throughout the region. Places like New Britain and Southington enjoy very good highway access while Bristol, Plymouth, and Burlington have fewer access points. The region also has a freight rail line that connects to a class 1 rail line and Berlin has an Amtrak station providing passenger rail service.
- **Partnering institutions**: For example, Northeast Utilities (parent company of Yankee Gas and Connecticut Light & Power), which has a major facility in Berlin, has been a major partner in economic development projects and helps market Connecticut to businesses. Other examples include the Institute of Technology and Business Development (which provides business incubation, development, and training services), CW Resources (providing job placement and business incubation services), and dozens of others.

### Weaknesses

- **Loss of manufacturing employment**: While still strong, the manufacturing sector continues to lose employment.
- **Demographic shifts**: The region is losing younger residents. Age groups between 25 and 44 have been declining in population over the past nine years while older age groups have been growing. This will mean a smaller labor pool in the future and increased burden on social services.
- **Lack of vibrant town/city centers**: Many of the region's centers have suffered from years of neglect. Participants in public meetings cited low levels of activity, few retail options, and a lack of attractive affordable downtown housing.
- **Educational attainment**: Residents of the region, on average, have lower educational attainment than the rest of Connecticut. A much larger proportion of the population (compared to the state and the nation) has a high school diploma or less.
- **Declining pool of skilled workers**: While the region has a large pool of skilled workers, it is not meeting employer demands. Fewer students are choosing skilled trades as a career path, choosing instead to attend college. Those who do not attend college are not meeting the needs of employers.
- **Few existing strong clusters**: As one participant put it: "the region has lots of small pieces of industries". Companies in the region engage in a wide variety of industries, but few strong clusters exist. It has pieces of aerospace, bioscience, and broadcasting, but lacks a critical mass.
- **Lack of transportation options**: Few people in the region use modes of transportation other than driving alone. The public transportation system is not very extensive and is cited as being difficult to navigate. The result is a reduction of

employment opportunities for those without cars, high costs for commuters, and reduced quality of life.

- **Loss of open space and agricultural land**: Sprawling development patterns have claimed open space and agricultural land more quickly than the population has grown. Unchecked, these patterns will lower the region's quality of life and threaten the livelihoods of farmers.
- **Pockets of poverty**: Economic conditions are uneven throughout the region. Burlington, for example, has good schools, high incomes, and high property values. New Britain, on the other hand, has high unemployment, poorly performing schools, and a high rate of poverty. Uneven levels of prosperity lead to a significant loss of investment in human and physical capital.

### Opportunities

- **Investments in bioscience**: Connecticut is investing heavily in bioscience research. Fortunately for Central Connecticut, much of that investment is being funneled to the nearby UConn Health Center. This opens up an opportunity for the region to attract companies in this growing field.
- **Growth of exports**: Businesses in the U.S. are exporting more, and both state and national leaders are supporting them. In Connecticut, manufacturers have successfully tapped into external markets, helping them to grow.
- **Growing need for "middle skill" workers**: The Federal Reserve of Boston forecasts a growing need for workers with associate's degrees or some college education. While regional higher education attainment lags comparison regions, the pool of "middle-skill" workers compares favorably with the national average.
- **Return to cities**: For a few years now, people have been returning to cities. This trend presents an opportunity to attract new life into the region's downtowns.
- **Resurgence of manufacturing**: Early trends coming out of the recession point to a resurgence of manufacturing. Output is up and profitability is increasing. This in part due to the weak U.S. dollar, leading to the above cited growth in exports. Central Connecticut's highly skilled and productive manufacturing sector stands to benefit from this trend.
- **Transportation investments**: The state recently approved construction of the Hartford-New Britain busway, providing rapid bus service to the region. The state is also investing heavily in rail service along the Springfield-Hartford-New Haven line, which will connect Central Connecticut to the broader region. These investments will expand the labor pool and provide new employment opportunities to the region's residents.

### Threats

- **Energy costs**: Connecticut is one of the most expensive energy markets in the country. While this fact affects the entire state (and most of the Northeast), it also makes Central Connecticut a more difficult place to do business.
- **Reductions in defense spending**: Two of Connecticut's largest manufacturing industries are aerospace and defense. Cuts in defense spending threaten this important piece of

the state economy. This also threatens the region's aerospace and defense companies.

- **Global shifts**: China's ascendance as a manufacturing powerhouse threatens the state and regional economies. While off-shoring has been occurring for decades, products involving significant investments in intellectual property and high quality control standards have remained in domestic facilities. Higher quality manufacturing overseas and the growth of products both designed and manufactured overseas are serious threats.
- **High cost of doing business**: Connecticut is repeatedly cited as a high cost location for businesses, ranking between 3rd and 5th highest in the nation.

## Vision

The vision established for the 2004 CEDS was reviewed by the Alliance following the identification of regional strengths and weaknesses. It was determined that, with a few exceptions, that statement was still expressive of the region's vision. The new vision is as follows:

> *In the year 2030 the Central Connecticut Region will be a vibrant industrial, commercial and technological region that supports a thriving educational community, successfully embraces diversity, and recognizes the value of its rich spectrum of popular, cultural and natural environments. It will be the home of an energized technological cluster of industries, and will have a fully employed, multi-skilled, effectively educated work force upon which the region's strong public institutions and its participatory democracy will be built. The region will be addressing its challenges on a regional basis with strong inter-community cooperation and with institutions capable of dealing satisfactorily with the needs of its disadvantaged citizens. The region's success will be founded upon an integrated fabric of well-designed, constructed, and maintained community infrastructure facilities. It will host a series of community events and programs that will demonstrate the effectiveness of its cooperative spirit, and will capitalize on the region's valued historic heritage. It will be a place that is perceived as successful and desirable, as well as one which its residents and businesspeople will speak of with great pride.*

## Organization

The goals and objectives of the Central Connecticut Economic Development Alliance (CCEDA) are based on a thorough review of relevant data, studies, and planning documents. To reflect this fact they are accompanied by the most relevant findings from the demographic and economic data analysis, input from stakeholders, and information from other studies and plans. Other findings from the analysis can be found in the appendices. This section begins with an overview of the goals and objectives, including an implementation time frame and a list of key partners. A more detailed description of each goal, objective, and strategy is provided in the next section.

The schedule on the following pages includes time frames for implementation. Some strategies may be immediately implementable, but have a continuous or recurring component; multiple timeframes are listed for these strategies. Definitions of the time frames are as follows:

- Short term (S): 1 to 2 years
- Medium term (M): 3 to 4 years
- Long term (L): 5 years+

## Implementation Schedule

| **Goal 1. Regional Planning and Cooperation**<br>*Build a stronger regional economic development program that achieves closer coordination among municipalities and between Central Connecticut, the state, and other surrounding regions.* | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Objective/Strategies** | **Implementation Partners** | **Time Frame** |
| 1-1: Increase intra-regional cooperation and continue to plan on a regional level for the development of Central Connecticut's economy. | CCRPA, Municipalities | |
| 1-1.a: Complete and continue to update CEDS. | | S-L |
| 1-1.b: Become a designated Economic Development District. | | S |
| 1-1.c: Continue to involve the public in economic development planning and project implementation. | | M |
| 1-1.d: Encourage municipal officials to take advantage of economic development training opportunities from outside organizations. | | M |
| 1-1.e: Pending EDD designation, encourage municipalities to form tax-base sharing agreements under Public Act 09-231. | | M |
| 1-2: Achieve better coordination between Central Connecticut and inter-regional planning efforts. | CCRPA, HSEP, CWP, CT Farm Bureau, Regional Tourism Councils, CRCOG, PVPC | |
| 1-2.a: Develop a regional sustainability plan with CRCOG, PVPC, and HSEP. | | L |
| 1-2.b: Coordinate strategies with partners identified in other goals, such as Capital Workforce Partners, regional tourism councils, and the Connecticut Farm Bureau. | | S |
| 1-3: Continue to ensure that the needs and priorities of existing and growing clusters are included in regional planning efforts. | State cluster organizations (CURE, METAL, etc…) | |
| 1-3.a: Consider amending Alliance bylaws to include representation from each targeted cluster. | | S |
| 1-3.b: Periodically meet with statewide cluster organizations. | | M |
| 1-4: Continue to utilize existing economic development and marketing tools. | Municipalities, CERC, NU | |

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| 1-4.a: Increase and maintain regional listings in CERC's SiteFinder database. | | S |
| 1-4.b: Encourage municipalities to use Northeast Utility's E-Pulse software to manage economic development activities. | | S |
| 1-4.c: Further develop and update a regional economic development website. | | S |
| **Goal 2. Responsible Growth**<br>*Promote responsible development patterns that improve the region's quality of life, provide recreational amenities, use resources wisely, and contribute to economic development.* | | |
| **Objective/Strategies** | **Partners** | **Time Frame** |
| 2-1: Encourage the revitalization of village, town, and city centers. | CCRPA, CT Main Street, Municipalities | |
| 2-1.a: Pursue municipal led village, town, and city center revitalization projects. | | L |
| 2-1.b: Prioritize projects that support village, town, and city center redevelopment. | | S |
| 2-2: Encourage policies that minimize the amount of newly developed land, especially in environmentally sensitive areas or near critical environmental resources. | CCRPA, Municipalities, OPM, DEP | |
| 2-2.a: Prioritize projects that reuse previously developed sites, have compact footprints, and preserve critical environmental resources. | | S |
| 2-2.b: Support the adoption of land conservation policies in the region's POCD. | | M |
| 2-2.c: Support locally appropriate policies to conserve land and avoid development in environmentally sensitive areas. | | L |
| 2-3: Minimize the amount of new infrastructure that must be developed for economic development projects. | CCRPA, Municipalities | |
| 2-3.a: Coordinate with municipal and regional conservation and development planning processes to identify growth and infill areas. | | L |
| 2-3.b: Continue to prioritize economic development projects at the regional level that make use of existing infrastructure. | | S |
| 2-4: Increase the effectiveness of, and regional support for, historic preservation policies and incentives. | Municipalities, CT Trust for Historic Preservation | |

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| 2-4.a: Encourage towns to create/update historic resource inventories. | | M |
| 2-4.b: Advocate for local policies that encourage adaptive reuse instead of demolition. | | |
| 2-4.c: Investigate the possibility of developing an analysis of impediments to historic preservation and building rehabilitation. | | S |
| 2-5: Provide greater support to the region's agricultural cluster. | CT Farm Bureau Association, CCRPA | |
| 2-5.a: Investigate opportunities to create an updated regional agriculture plan. | | S |
| 2-5.b: Consider establishing a standing region-wide agricultural advisory committee. | | M |
| 2-5.c: Help coordinate regional tourism and agricultural plans to better tap into the growing "agritourism" market. | | L |
| **Goal 3. Workforce Development**<br>*Attract, retain, and develop a skilled and diverse workforce that meets the needs of existing employers and is attractive to new firms providing high quality, high paying jobs.* | | |
| **Objective/Strategies** | **Partners** | **Time Frame** |
| 3-1: Improve the availability, and responsiveness to the needs of industry, of workforce training and education programs. | CWP, Chambers of Commerce, CCSU, Tunxis | |
| 3-1.a: Reach out to area businesses to assess how well their training needs are being met. | | M |
| 3-1.b: Meet with industry cluster representatives on a regular basis to assess how well their workforce needs are being met. | | S |
| 3-1.c: Where appropriate, work with educational institutions to develop new programs that respond to industry needs. | | L |
| 3-2: Prepare high school students to become the next generation of skilled workers in the region. | CWP, Chambers of Commerce, School districts, Community Colleges, CBIA. | |
| 3-2.a: Work through existing partnerships and programs to promote education and training in skilled professions to the region's high school students. | | S |
| 3-2.b: Encourage the region's manufacturers to partner with high schools to increase awareness among students of the benefits of employment in skilled trades. | | M |
| 3-2.c: Work with key partners to provide career readiness services to high school students in the region | | M |
| 3-3: Encourage the adoption of policies which would support an increase | CWP, HSEP, Chambers of Commerce, | |

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| in the number of young professionals working and living in the region. | Nearby Colleges | |
| 3-3.a: Work with area companies to list internship opportunities on the Hartford-Springfield Economic Partnership's Interhere.com website. | | L |
| 3-3.b: Study the dynamics of college student migration and employment in the region. | | M |
| 3-4: Provide a full range of high quality, attractive housing options, from single-family homes to studio apartments. | Municipalities; Partnership for Strong Communities | |
| 3-4.a: Support town-led Incentive Housing Zone programs that encourage the construction of affordable workforce housing. | | M |
| (See also Objective 2-4) | | M |
| **Goal 4. Business Attraction and Retention**<br>*Foster an environment that is conducive to the creation of new firms and industry clusters, while helping to strengthen existing firms and clusters.* | | |
| **Objective/Strategies** | **Partners** | **Time Frame** |
| 4-1: Develop a regional marketing strategy focused on key industry clusters. | Cluster Organizations, NU, DECD | |
| 4-1.a: Research and create industry cluster marketing strategies to highlight regional assets. | | S |
| 4-1.b: Coordinate with region/state led marketing efforts. | | M |
| 4-1.c: Periodically hold regional meetings with commercial and industrial real estate brokers and site selectors. | | L |
| 4-2: Provide and enhance resources that support entrepreneurs and startups in the region. | ITBD, Connecticut Enterprise Center, Municipalities | |
| 4-2.a: Study the need for additional incubators in the region, especially in larger towns such as Bristol and Southington. | | M |
| 4-2.b: Study the demand for incubator space focused on specific clusters and industries. | | M |
| 4-2.c: Work with staff at existing incubators to study the needs of "graduating" incubator firms. | | L |
| 4-2.d: Improve access to, and awareness of, business start-up counseling and mentoring services. | | |
| 4-3: Increase the amount of financial assistance available to the region's | Chambers of Commerce, CT Innova- | |

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| entrepreneurs. | tions, Central Connecticut Revolving Loan Fund | |
| 4-3.a: Advocate for the expansion of the CT Innovations pre-seed capital fund. | | L |
| 4-4: Study the feasibility of forming a regional cluster around Central Connecticut's growing *Information* sector. | CCRPA, Bristol Chamber of Commerce | |
| 4-4.a: Study supplier relationships and employment dynamics among existing information companies. | | L |
| 4-4.b: Analyze existing ties between firms and identify gaps in the cluster. | | L |
| 4-5: Help existing businesses stay competitive by lowering costs and increasing profitability. | Chambers of Commerce, ITBD, METAL, SBA | |
| 4-5.a: Assist and encourage businesses to take advantage of process improvement consultation services (such as "lean" manufacturing). | | M |
| 4-5.b: Assist firms with accessing export assistance programs. | | M |
| 4-5.c: Connect businesses with resources to help them reduce energy usage and associated costs. | | M |
| **Goal 5. Physical Infrastructure**<br>*Maintain, improve, and develop the region's infrastructure so that it meets the needs of existing and growing industries and clusters.* | | |
| **Objective/Strategies** | **Partners** | **Time Frame** |
| 5-1: Ensure that an adequate supply of sites and buildings is available for (re)development. | Municipalities | |
| 5-1.a: Continue to identify key sites in the region for development, focusing on infill sites, sites near transit and transportation nodes, and sites that avoid negative impacts to environmental resources. | | L |
| 5-1.b: Advocate for a more coordinated and streamlined approach to land use/development regulations. | | L |
| 5-2: Ensure that the site and building needs of targeted clusters are being met within the region. | Municipalities, CCRPA, Statewide cluster organizations | |
| 5-2.a: Continue to study the site and building needs of targeted clusters. | | M |
| 5-2.b: Develop cluster specific strategies for increasing site availability. | | L |

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| 5-3: Return underutilized brownfield sites to productive use. | Municipalities, EDA, CT Brownfields Redevelopment Authority, Regional Brownfields Partnership of West Central CT | |
| 5-3.a: Create and maintain a prioritized inventory of brownfield sites. | | M |
| 5-3.b: Continue to prioritize projects that will remediate and reuse brownfield sites. | | L |
| 5-4: Improve and maintain the region's transportation infrastructure to enable the safe and efficient movement of goods and people. | ConnDOT, CCRPA, Amtrak, Municipalities, CT Transit, PanAm Railways | |
| 5-4.a: Prioritize projects near transportation nodes, especially public transit stops. | | L |
| *5-4.b:* Coordinate site development projects with transportation improvement plans contained in the region's *Long-Range Transportation Plan.* | | L |

## Goal 1: Planning and Cooperation

***Build a stronger regional economic development program that achieves closer coordination among municipalities and between Central Connecticut, the state, and other surrounding regions.***

### Objective 1-1: Increase intra-regional cooperation and continue to plan on a regional level for the development of Central Connecticut's economy.

Successfully developing the economy of Central Connecticut will require a cooperative planning effort. As a recent report from the Connecticut Office of Policy Management stated: "There is broad consensus that Connecticut's 169 cities and towns cannot individually compete effectively against other more highly-coordinated metropolitan areas in other states."[v] Stakeholders at public meetings echoed this concern, identifying regional cooperation as a frequently missing ingredient in economic development plans.

Rapidly changing economic conditions require that economic development planning also be a continuous activity. The activities undertaken as a result of this plan must be measured against updated data and adjusted where necessary. The Alliance must also work to secure continued support from the citizenry and elected officials of the region's municipalities. Considerable interest in regional economic development planning was generated through this process and continued outreach will help to preserve that interest.

**Strategy 1-1a** *Complete and continue to update CEDS.*

On an annual basis the Alliance will evaluate its progress in implementing the CEDS. Newly available data will be analyzed, completed projects will be examined, and new projects will be evaluated.

**Strategy 1-1b** *Become a designated Economic Development District.*

The region will pursue designation as an Economic Development District to continue Central Connecticut's history of cooperating on economic development planning. Even before the 2004 CEDS was completed, other initiatives, such as the Capital District Revolving Loan fund, were undertaken by regional economic leaders. Designation as an EDD will help to formalize the cooperative relationship between the region's towns.

EDD designation may also open up new streams of funding. The Economic Development Administration currently provides annual funding to designated EDDs. Various bills have also been proposed in Connecticut that would dedicate funding streams to designated EDDs. Having access to these funds would allow the Alliance to more effectively implement this plan. It will also allow member municipalities to pursue *Strategy 1-1e*.

**Strategy 1-1c** *Continue to communicate with the public and solicit feedback on economic development related activities.*

Public participation was an important part of the preparation of this plan and should continue throughout the implementation

phase. The Alliance will continue to report on its activities and seek feedback and participation from a diverse group of stakeholders.

**Strategy 1-1d** *Encourage municipal officials to take advantage of economic development training opportunities.*

Ultimately, decision making power regarding many economic development projects rests with municipal officials. Ensuring that they have the tools and knowledge to make informed decisions should be a priority. Northeast Utility's *Community Builders Institute* offers a number of workshops and classes on economic development topics. To increase involvement and understanding from municipal leaders, the Alliance and its members should encourage them to take advantage of these resources.

**Strategy 1-1e** *Pending EDD designation, encourage municipalities to form tax-base sharing agreements under Public Act 09-231.*

Recognizing that development projects rarely affect just one municipality, the Connecticut General Assembly enacted Public Act 09-231. This act permits municipalities that are located within a single designated EDD, to enter into tax sharing agreements. These agreements allow municipalities to share revenues generated by economic development projects. Municipalities entering into such agreements must agree not to compete for economic development and must also include a number of terms related to infrastructure development and other cooperative programs.

The Alliance will encourage and support the formation of such agreements. Already, Plainville and New Britain have begun discussing such an agreement (see the Hospital of Central Connecticut Cancer Center project in the *Regional Projects* section). A necessary prerequisite, however, is that the region obtain EDD status.

**Strategy 1-1f** *Continue to create and update a comprehensive "asset map" for the region.*

Central Connecticut boasts a plethora of community groups, business associations, institutions, individual businesses, and private citizens who are dedicated to the improvement of the region. This was evidenced by the enthusiastic response that this planning process received and the work that was done to identify potential stakeholders.

The data analysis and outreach that went into this plan provides a base of information for a comprehensive asset map. The region should continue, in conjunction with the region's new plan of conservation and development, to expand upon this work by identifying more a complete list of stakeholders, interviewing key partners, analyzing data, and identifying linkages.

### Objective 1-2: Achieve better coordination between Central Connecticut and inter-regional planning efforts.

As shown in *The Transportation System* section on page 79, residents of Central Connecticut find employment in a variety of locations, including Hartford, New Haven, and New York City. While the region cannot control what happens outside of its borders, it can better coordinate and cooperate with other regional and local planning agencies.

**Strategy 1-2a** *Develop a regional sustainability plan with CRCOG, PVPC, and HSEP.*

The larger Hartford-Springfield region was recently awarded a Sustainable Communities Initiative Grant from HUD. CCRPA is included in this regional effort and will be collaborating with the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), the Hartford-Springfield Economic Partnership (HSEP), and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) to create and implement the sustainability plan. While this grant only combines funds from DOT, EPA, and HUD, economic development is an essential part of sustainability. The Alliance of the CCRPA will work with PVPC, CRCOG, HSEP, , and the MetroHartford Alliance to ensure that economic development priorities are coordinated across regions.

**Strategy 1-2b** *Coordinate strategies with partners identified in other goals, such as Capital Workforce Partners and regional tourism councils.*

As partnerships are formed with organizations throughout the region and state, the Alliance should update the goals, objectives, and strategies of this plan so that they are better coordinated with partner organizations. This will not always be possible, but to the extent that it is, effort should be made to ensure that strategies advanced through this plan support those of partner organizations, and vice versa.

The region is already cooperating with outside organizations on a number of projects. Central Connecticut is a member of the Hartford-Springfield Economic Partnership, a cross-state partnership between governmental, non-profit, and business groups in the "knowledge corridor". The Central Connecticut Region is also part of the same workforce investment board as the Hartford region. That board, Capital Workforce Partners, administers programs targeted at youth, adult workers, and employers in targeted industries.

### Objective 1-3: Continue to ensure that the needs and priorities of existing and growing clusters are included in regional planning efforts.

An analysis of recent economic data was performed to identify potential target industry clusters (see page 95 for more information). This analysis identified bioscience, health services, and printing & publishing as the targets for future job growth. Metal manufacturing, aerospace & defense, and agriculture were identified as important regional clusters that should be supported.

To effectively support and encourage these clusters, the region must ensure that their voices are part of the ongoing planning process. Outreach to cluster organizations and representatives from companies operating in cluster related industries has already begun as part of the process of creating this plan. These activities should continue and the Alliance should explore other ways to ensure that the needs of industry clusters are being addressed.

**Strategy 1-3a** *Periodically meet with statewide cluster organizations.*

On a regular basis, representatives from the Alliance should meet with representatives of the state's industry cluster organizations, such as METAL, Aerospace Components Manufacturers, and CURE, as well as statewide agricultural organizations such as the Connecticut Farm Bureau. Meetings with representatives from local health services providers should also be held. These meetings will keep the Alliance informed of industry trends and allow it to get important feedback on plans and activities.

**Strategy 1-3b** *Consider amending Alliance bylaws to include representation from each targeted cluster.*

The membership structure of the Central Connecticut Economic Development Alliance is currently organized around sectors. These include workforce, education, agriculture, and others. While it is essential that these voices contribute to future planning processes, it is also important to ensure that representatives from targeted clusters are included. The Alliance will be better equipped to respond to the changing needs of dynamic and growing clusters, if they are regular contributors to our planning and implementation processes.

### Objective 1-4: Continue to utilize existing economic development and marketing tools.

The 2004 CEDS for Central Connecticut called for the creation of a number of online economic development resources. During subsequent years, other organizations largely addressed these needs. To avoid expending unnecessary resources by reinventing the wheel, the region should use these existing resources. Where tools are not provided by other organizations, however, the region should endeavor to create them.

**Strategy 1-4a** *Increase and maintain regional listings in CERC's SiteFinder database.*

The Connecticut Economic Resource Center hosts a database of available sites and buildings throughout Connecticut, alleviating the need for the region to create one. Not only does this service remove the burden of creating and maintaining a Central Connecticut specific site, but it also allows the region to reach a broader audience. An analysis of currently available sites and buildings is included in the *Developable Sites and Buildings* section on page 88.

**Strategy 1-4b** *Encourage municipalities to use Northeast Utilities' E-Pulse software to support local business retention programs.*

Northeast Utilities also maintains a service called *E-Pulse*, which helps municipal economic development professionals track site visits and referrals. This service can be an integral part of a municipality's business retention program.

**Strategy 1-4c** *Further develop and update a regional economic development website.*

A centralized online repository of information about the region would help market it to new firms. This repository could also contain information that is useful to existing regional firms, such as grant opportunities and links to important statewide and

regional advocacy groups. Such a site could also contain information that is useful to expanding or relocating companies and site selectors, such as demographic and economic information.

## Goal 2: Responsible Growth

***Promote responsible development patterns that improve the region's quality of life, provide recreational amenities, use resources wisely, and contribute to economic development.***

### Objective 2-1: Encourage the revitalization of village, town, and city centers.

Throughout the planning process a persistent message was that our city and town centers lack the level of activity and vitality that is being sought by an increasingly large portion of the population. Participants cited the lack of cafes, restaurants, retail shops, and other activities. They also noted that most of the region's town and city centers lack a night life.

Following national trends, retail development in the region has tended to cluster along highways outside of city and town centers. In Bristol, considerable commercial space has been developed along Route 6; in Southington development first shifted to Queen Street and is now clustered around freeway on-ramps. While development along these corridors contributes to the municipality's tax base and provides needed services to residents, the style of development is not conducive to non-automobile modes of transportation. It has also contributed to the decline of retail, and thus the vibrancy, of city and town centers.

**Strategy 2-1a** *Pursue municipal led village, town, and city center revitalization projects*

Existing town and city center redevelopment projects should be continued at the municipal level, and supported whenever possible. Bristol has chosen a master developer for Depot Square, the site of a former mall in downtown. Bristol also recently finished work on streetscape improvements along North Main St. Work is underway on a new downtown police headquarters in New Britain that will open up new sites for commercial development. Berlin has identified portions of Farmington Avenue (between Massirio Drive and Porters Pass) as a likely location for a "high intensity, mixed-use" town center. Plainville has already completed some work on its downtown redevelopment plans. Plymouth recently received a STEAP grant to complete streetscaping work in the Terryville section of town. Southington has completed numerous projects to revitalize its downtown and has recently begun exploring ways to revitalize the Plantsville section of town. Finally, Burlington's recently adopted plan of conservation and development identified the development of a town center as the "greatest opportunity for development".

**Strategy 2-1b** *Prioritize projects that support village, town, and city center redevelopment.*

One simple and quickly implementable strategy to encourage town and city center revitalization is to consider proximity to town and city centers when evaluating projects. While not every project will be suited to locations in village, town, and city cen-

ters, by considering proximity and transportation linkages, they can support revitalization efforts.

**Objective 2-2: Encourage policies that minimize the amount of newly developed land, especially in environmentally sensitive areas or near critical environmental resources.**

A major concern of stakeholders throughout this process was the sprawling development patterns occurring in some parts of the region. This concern is supported by data from the University of Connecticut's Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR). According to CLEAR, in 1990 there was one acre of developed land for every 7.58 residents. Between 1990 and 2006, however, land was developed at a rate of one acre for every 1.77 new residents. The total population density (people per developed acre) decreased from 7.58 people per acre to 7.15 people per acre.

Data from the American Community survey also confirms that most new housing development is occurring outside of the traditional population centers. Over 31% of housing built in the region since 1990 is located in Southington while just 17% of the region's total housing is there. Almost 9% of post-1990 housing is in Burlington while just 3.1% of total housing is. Conversely, New Britain contains over 32% of the region's housing units but just 8.1% of its post-1990 units.

If this continues new pressures will be placed on the region's water supply, road infrastructure, recreational amenities, and agricultural land. The total effect will be to make the region a less desirable place to live and thus make it harder for companies to attract and retain high quality employees. Greater levels of sprawl will also make it more difficult to pursue improvements to the region's public transit system.

**Strategy 2-2a** *Prioritize projects that reuse previously developed sites, have compact foot-prints, and preserve critical environmental resources.*

The Alliance will continue to consider environmental impacts when proposing projects for the CEDS. Considerations include the reuse of existing structures or sites, the compactness of the development, and its proximity to critical environmental resources.

**Strategy 2-2b** *Support the adoption of land conservation policies in the region's POCD.*

CCRPA will soon begin the process of updating the regional plan of conservation and development (POCD). This document will identify areas that are appropriate for new development, and those that should be preserved to protect important environmental resources, such as wetlands and habitats. It is also required to consider locations that are appropriate for compact and transit-oriented development.

The Alliance should advocate for the inclusion of policies in the region's POCD that will conserve land and protect environmental resources. To facilitate this, members of the Alliance should be encouraged to participate in the process by providing data, feedback, and acting as advocates within their organizations and municipalities.

**Strategy 2-2c** *Support locally appropriate policies to conserve land and avoid development in environmentally sensitive areas.*

Even though development patterns were repeatedly cited as major indirect economic development factors, they are mostly beyond the Alliance's control. As an organization that includes many stakeholders, and as a stakeholder itself, the Alliance should participate in municipal land use planning processes.

The Alliance should support the adoption of policies in municipal plans that protect environmental resources and support more compact development. Members of the Alliance should provide support and advocacy for such policies.

### Objective 2-3: Minimize the amount of new infrastructure that must be developed for economic development projects.

As with residential development, industrial and commercial development that is located away from existing services places a strain on resources. Development located away from existing development requires new sewer and water infrastructure, new power lines, and new roads. Not only do these infrastructure extensions cost money to install, but they can also reduce the efficiency of the entire system.

**Strategy 2-3a** *Coordinate with municipal and regional conservation and development planning processes to identify growth and infill areas.*

As municipal and regional POCDs are updated, the Alliance should work to ensure that projects detailed in this plan are taken into consideration. If conflicts between regional or municipal land-use policies arise, effort should be made to resolve them before plans are adopted or projects started.

**Strategy 2-3b** *Continue to prioritize economic development projects at the regional level that make use of existing infrastructure.*

Projects that are proposed for inclusion in the CEDS are asked whether the development will be located near existing infrastructure. While a hard distance limit is not included, it is, and should remain, a consideration that it is taken seriously when prioritizing projects.

### Objective 2-4: Increase the effectiveness of, and regional support for, historic preservation policies and incentives.

One of Central Connecticut's most valuable assets is its rich history. The region is dotted with historic homes, factories, and other buildings. Many of these structures are in states of disrepair or are in danger of being demolished. Historic homes, sites, and downtown districts have become popular destinations throughout the country. Not only do they draw tourists from outside the region, but they contribute to the character of an area, making it a more desirable place to live and do business.

**Strategy 2-4a** *Encourage towns to create/update historic resource inventories and encourage the creation of a regional historic resource inventory.*

As towns and the region update their POCDs, historic resource inventories should be created or updated. Such an inventory can help a town prioritize preservation efforts and develop more effect land use policies. They may also help increase support for historic preservation by demonstrating to the public just how much there is to lose.

At least one inventory has already been created. In 2007, following a recommendation in their POCD, the Town of Plymouth conducted such an inventory.

**Strategy 2-4b** *Advocate for local policies that encourage adaptive reuse instead of demolition.*

With a comprehensive inventory of historic sites in place, effective policies can be drafted to encourage adaptive reuse or rehabilitation. Such policies can include tax credits, low cost loans, or preservation ordinances. It is essential, however, that such policies not be overly burdensome or restrictive. Without support from property and land owners, historic preservation efforts will falter.

Towns should also consider becoming Certified Local Governments. This program provides grant funds and technical assistance to communities that take an active role in preserving historic properties and sites. Plymouth is currently the only town in the region to have received this designation.

**Strategy 2-4c** *Investigate the possibility of developing an analysis of impediments to historic preservation and building rehabilitation.*

While participants at public meetings were supportive of rehabilitating existing structures and preserving historic properties, some expressed concerns regarding local, state, and federal regulations. Complying with energy efficiency, safety, and accessibility requirements can be difficult for historic properties. The Alliance should investigate these impediments and consider holding a regional, or statewide, forum on these issues, depending on the level of interest expressed by stakeholders.

### Objective 2-5: Provide greater support to the region's agricultural cluster.

According to the UConn's CLEAR project, agricultural land is being lost at an alarming rate. From 1990 to 2006, the amount of agricultural land in the region declined by 17.4%. That represented a total loss of 977 acres. During that same period, the amount of agricultural land lost to development statewide was just 9.5%. Not only does agricultural land provide food and economic benefits ($866 million annually in Hartford County), but it also performs important ecological functions, such as permitting rainwater to recharge aquifers and providing habitat for animals. Multiple attendees at public forums held for this plan cited the loss of agricultural land as a major cause for concern.

Despite these losses, agriculture is still strong in Central Connecticut. According to the 2007 USDA Agricultural Census, the region is home to 154 farms. There are also nearly 1,300 people

employed in agricultural related industries. Farm operations range from small farms focusing on vegetable farming to larger operations that draw tourists from around the state (such as Roger's Orchards). Central Connecticut is home to the state's largest maple syrup producer (Lamothe's Sugar House in Burlington) and New England's largest urban organic farm (Urban Oaks in New Britain).

**Strategy 2-5a** *Investigate opportunities to create an updated regional agriculture plan.*

Although individual municipalities have elements that focus on agriculture in their Plans of Conservation and Development, there is no up to date regional agriculture plan. In 2007 the region produced a study titled *Agriculture Preservation and Enhancement Strategies for the Central Connecticut Region*, which compiled a list of issues facing the region's farms and offered a series of recommendations for addressing them. The plan recommended that towns reform their zoning codes, adopt transfer of development rights policies, and establish agricultural committees. CCRPA plans to update the region's plan of conservation and development in 2011/2012. An updated agriculture plan should be included with this effort.

**Strategy 2-5b** *Consider establishing a standing region-wide agricultural advisory committee.*

The region's 2007 *Agriculture Preservation and Enhancement Strategies for the Central Connecticut Region* plan recommended establishing town based agriculture commissions. None of the towns have acted on this yet. An initial step toward greater representation would be to establish a regional advisory committee. This body would have no decision making authority, but could serve to advise other regional and municipal bodies on agricultural matters. They could also serve as a point of contact for coordinating with other regional and statewide organizations.

**Strategy 2-5c** *Coordinate regional tourism and agricultural plans to better tap into the growing "agritourism" market.*

The Alliance should work with organizations such as King's Mark, the Connecticut Farm Bureau, and regional tourism boards, to promote "agri-tourism" activities. Nationwide, there is growing interest in locally sourced and organic food. People are becoming more concerned with where and how their food is produced. Increasingly, people are also taking trips to see where food is produced. This trend represents an opportunity to promote agricultural operations as tourism destinations.

A regional example is the King's Mark Resource Conservation and Development Area's *Tour des Farms* program. This is an organized bicycle tour of regional farms where riders get to experience the beautiful scenery of Western Connecticut, learn about farm operations, and purchase farm produced goods. Not only do farmers gain sales, but visitors also gain a greater awareness of the benefits that agriculture provides to the state. Current funding challenges threaten this event's future. New funding streams should be sought to continue and expand this event to serve both agricultural and tourism goals.

## Goal 3: Workforce Development

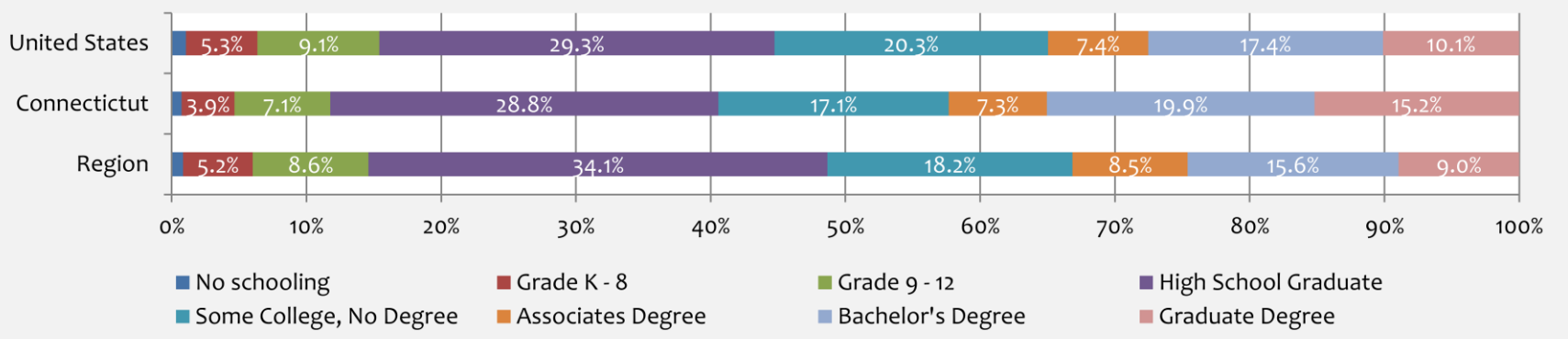
***Attract, retain, and develop a skilled and diverse workforce that meets the needs of existing employers and is attractive to new firms providing high quality, high paying jobs.***

### Objective 3-1: Improve the availability, and responsiveness to the needs of industry, of workforce training and education programs.

Central Connecticut has been less successful than other areas at retaining and attracting the kind of highly skilled, highly educated, diverse workforce that is increasingly in demand by employers. As shown in *Figure 3*, a much smaller proportion of the population has advanced degrees than either the nation or the state, and a significantly larger proportion only has a high school diploma or less. The region does have a relatively healthy cohort of "middle skill" workers, who have some college education or an associate's degree, but the overabundance of residents with low educational attainment, and the relative dearth of residents with high educational attainment, make the region less competitive.

This gap in educational attainment was cited by participants at public meetings, and by representatives of government and business. Participants in this process noted that businesses which demand employees with high levels of education are unable to find them locally and must recruit from outside the region. Others noted that industries with lower educational requirements, but high *skill* requirements, find it equally difficult to find qualified employees. A high school education is no longer sufficient to prepare a worker for the increasingly high-tech jobs in manufacturing and other trades.

**Figure 3. Educational attainment in the region, the state, and the nation (2009)**




Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010

**Strategy 3-1a** *Reach out to area businesses to assess how well their training needs are being met.*

Where possible the Alliance will work through the existing efforts of partner organizations to study the training needs of the region's companies. The primary point of contact on workforce training issues is Capital Workforce Partners. Through their many job training and placement programs, they are in constant contact with businesses throughout the greater Hartford region.

Other organizations in the region are also involved in workforce training issues. The Greater Bristol Chamber of Commerce, for example, recently held a forum with manufacturers in the region where a number of workforce training issues were identified. Tunxis Community College also regularly communicates with companies in the region to discuss their workforce training needs.

**Strategy 3-1b** *Meet with industry cluster representatives to assess how well their workforce needs are being met.*

In addition to the general workforce training needs of the region, the specific needs of targeted clusters should also be considered. As the Alliance continues to reach out to industry cluster representatives, effort should be made to specifically address workforce training.

**Strategy 3-1c** *Where appropriate, work with educational institutions to develop or expand training programs that respond to industry needs.*

Numerous organizations throughout the state and region are already providing workforce training programs. Where gaps are found, the Alliance will work with educational institutions, industry representatives, and key partners such as CWP, to develop programs that respond to industry needs.

## Objective 3-2: Prepare high school students to become the next generation of skilled workers in the region.

An issue that generated considerable discussion during the public outreach process was that students are avoiding skilled professions such as manufacturing. Without a steady supply of new skilled workers, the region's manufacturers cannot hope to remain competitive. The result would be an exodus of manufacturers and manufacturing jobs.

Connecticut maintains a system of technical high schools that provide education and training in a variety of fields. A more detailed description of these institutions is provided on page 68. These schools provide students with the opportunity to learn a skilled trade, but fewer students are taking advantage of that opportunity. From the 2001-2002 school year to the 2009-2010 school year, enrollment declined by over 4%. At the same time, statewide public school enrollment only decreased by 1%.

**Strategy 3-2a** *Work through existing partnerships and programs to promote education and training in skilled professions to the region's high school students.*

The region is not alone in decrying the trend of students avoiding skilled trades such as manufacturing. The Connecticut Business & Industry Association partners with Achieve Hartford, Capital Workforce Partners, the Connecticut Technical High School system, Next Generation Manufacturing, and others to promote vocational education to high school students. Some of the programs include instructional materials for educators, the *Manufacture Your Future* expo, and informational materials for manufacturers looking to forge partnerships with schools.

The Alliance will work with CBIA, CWP, and local chambers of commerce to ensure that educators have access to these materials. The Alliance will ensure that local firms are aware of these programs and encourage them to participate.

**Strategy 3-2b** *Encourage the region's manufacturers to partner with high schools to increase awareness among students of the benefits of employment in skilled trades.*

Students should be provided with opportunities to experience careers in manufacturing and the skilled trades first hand. Representatives from local manufacturers could partner with schools to make these careers more visible through in-class presentations and fieldtrips. This would help encourage students to pursue these careers by counteracting the negative image that such careers have.

**Strategy 3-2c** *Work with key partners to provide career readiness services to high school students in the region.*

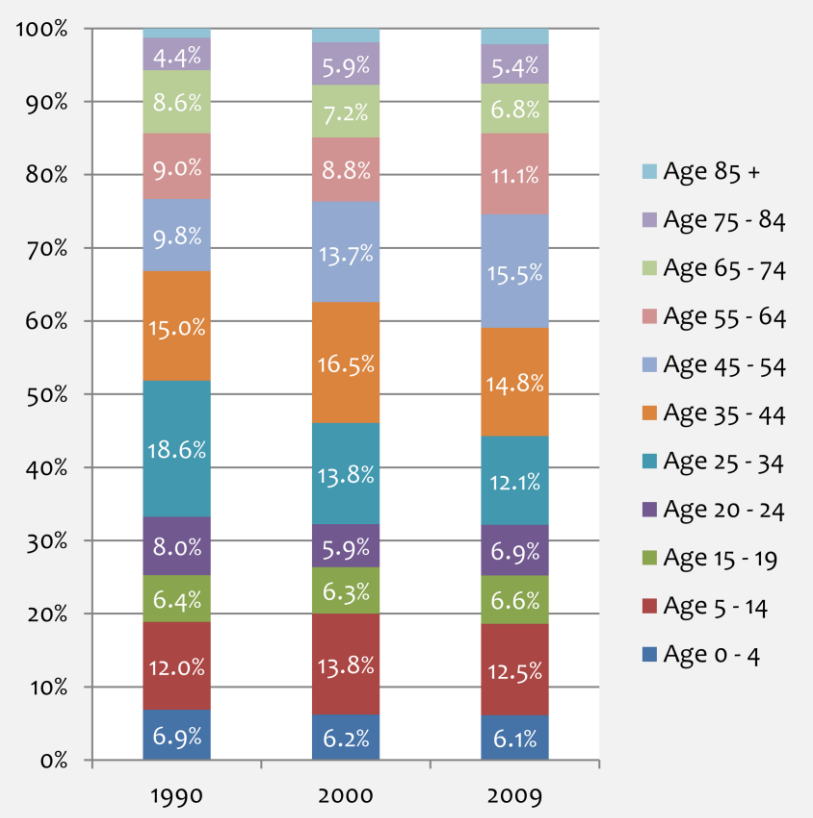
Capital Workforce Partners provides a number of youth oriented services under its Future Workforce Services program. They provide participants with exposure to various careers, job shadowing, internships, job readiness workshops, and employment mentoring services. These programs were started with major funding from the City of Hartford and currently target students in Hartford schools. The Alliance should work with CWP to investigate ways of expanding these programs to the region.

### Objective 3-3: Encourage the adoption of policies which would support an increase in the number of young professionals working and living in the region.

A demographic shift is underway in Central Connecticut. The data show that over the past few decades, the age distribution of Central Connecticut has skewed dramatically toward older age groups (see *Figure 4*). People between the ages of 25 and 34 made up 18.6% of the population in 1990, but only make up 12% of it now. Conversely, just 9.8% was between 45 and 54 in 1990, but as of 2009 that group represented nearly 16% of the population. Just since 2000 the region lost over 3,000 25-34 year olds and nearly 6,000 35-44 year olds.

While definitive data is not available regarding the dynamics of the demographic shift being experienced, circumstantial evidence suggests that college students are not remaining in the region after they graduate. As noted, the population of people

Figure 4. Change in Regional Age Distribution (1990-2009)




Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; CERC, 2010

under 25 increased while the population between 25 and 34 decreased dramatically. This indicates that students leave the region soon after graduation (some of these are likely students who maintain the region as their home address even though they attend school outside of the region).

This dynamic leaves the region with a gap in its workforce. As workers retire there will be fewer skilled and educated young people to take their places. A shrinking labor pool will make the region and its companies less competitive.

**Strategy 3-3a** *Work with area companies to list internship opportunities on the Hartford-Springfield Economic Partnership's Internhere.com website.*

A recent search on internhere.com resulted in just nine available internships in the region. Just three companies were responsible for these internships. It is of course possible that other firms use it throughout the year, or have used in the past. Regardless, it would seem that there is room for enhancement. The Alliance should partner with chambers of commerce and schools to increase awareness of this valuable resource.

**Strategy 3-3b** *Conduct a comprehensive study of available higher educational resources, employer/higher education dynamics, and student outcomes.*

While a general inventory of higher educational institutions available to the region's residents and businesses is included in this document, a comprehensive study would be valuable. This would include an assessment of available programs, employer needs, student success rates, and student migration trends. It would give regional leaders a solid understanding of how well existing educational resources are meeting the needs of businesses and the future workforce. It would also allow regional leaders to assess how well the region is meeting the needs and desires of students.

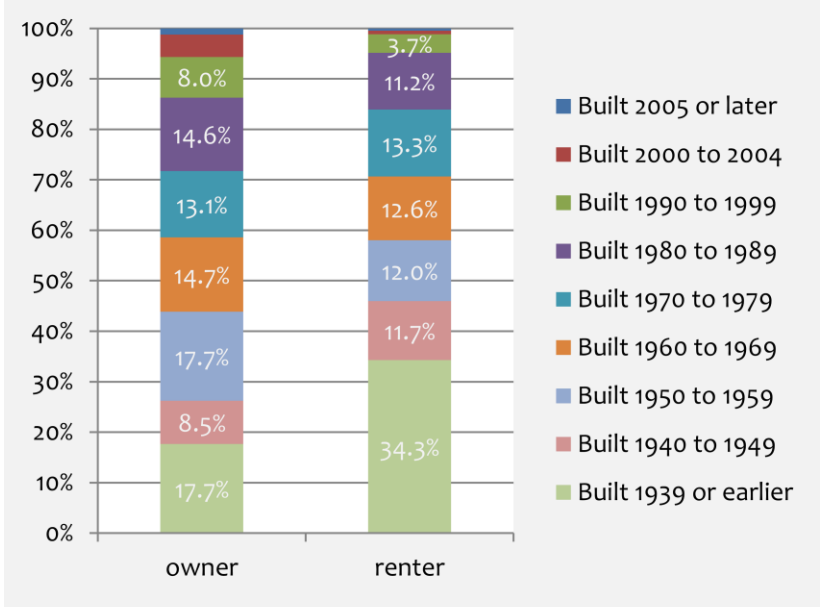
Conducting such a study could also give area businesses a chance to connect with schools and students throughout the state. Opportunities to increase community-university interaction could be explored and eventually implemented. Opportunities to establish work study and internship programs with area businesses could also be explored.

### Objective 3-4: Provide a full range of high quality, attractive housing, from single-family homes to studio apartments.

A likely contributor to shifting age and workforce demographics, according to studies reviewed for this plan and comments from participants, is the region's housing stock. According to a survey by CBIA, 56% of businesses say that the state's lack of affordable housing is a key problem[vi]. While Connecticut in general is an expensive housing market, data presented in the Housing section on page 73 indicate that Central Connecticut is actually relatively affordable.

A key observation made during the public outreach process was that, while the region has enough housing, and enough housing that is affordable, it does not necessarily meet the needs and desires of young professionals. Stakeholders noted that while there are apartments in Bristol and New Britain, many are old, outdated, or in poor repair. Indeed, much of the housing that has been built in recent years has been single-family homes in suburban neighborhoods. For example, from 2005 to 2009, 82% of all housing units constructed in the region were single family homes. Also, as shown in Figure 5, rental housing units in the region tend to be much older than owner occupied units.

Figure 5. Regional occupied housing units by year built




Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010

The above housing concerns were echoed by the *Connecticut Housing Program for Economic Growth* report from 2007. This report noted that housing construction in Connecticut ranked 48th out of 50 states. It also noted that Connecticut had lost more 25-34 years olds than any other state. In that report's view, the exodus of young people was directly linked to the state's failure to provide an adequate supply of affordable worker housing. Data from the American Community Survey confirm that Connecticut's housing growth rate between 2000 and 2009 lagged the nation considerably: 3.7% versus 10.2%. Central Connecticut's rate was 3.6%.

**Strategy 3-4a** *Support town-led Incentive Housing Zone programs that encourage the construction of affordable workforce housing.*

The solution provided by the above cited report was to use Incentive Housing Zones (IHZ). The IHZ program provides incentives to towns to adopt ordinances that encourage affordable housing development in appropriate designated areas. Three municipalities in the region have already undertaken studies in support of IHZ: New Britain, Plainville, and Plymouth. Bristol is currently in the process and Berlin has just begun it.

(See also *Objective 2-4:* above).

## Goal 4: Business Creation, Attraction, & Retention

***Foster an environment that is conducive to the creation and attraction of new firms and industry clusters, while helping to strengthen existing firms and clusters.***

### Objective 4-1: Develop a regional marketing strategy focused on key industry clusters.

A common issue identified by participants in the planning process was Central Connecticut's lack of name recognition. Some also pointed out that Connecticut in general has either no image, or a negative one. Overcoming this deficit will require a concerted effort on the part of the towns, the region, and the state.

**Strategy 4-1a** *Research and create industry cluster marketing strategies to highlight regional assets.*

Strengthening key clusters in the region will require a targeted cooperative marketing effort. In addition to the statewide and larger marketing efforts listed above, targeted regional approaches should also be pursued. For each target cluster, a multi-town marketing strategy should be developed.

During the process of creating this plan, one such effort got off the ground. The cities of New Britain and Bristol are partnering with the town of Farmington to create marketing materials targeted at bioscience companies.

**Strategy 4-1b** *Coordinate with region/state led marketing efforts.*

While individual towns have marketing and attraction strategies, marketing to industry clusters is more effectively done through an inter-regional approach that can build on resources located in disparate municipalities. The bioscience cluster, for example, relies on resources located outside of the region, such as UConn's Health Center in Farmington, and CURE in New Haven (an organization that promotes bioscience in Connecticut). For the region's marketing and attraction efforts to be successful, we must stay informed of larger cluster trends and marketing activities.

Other statewide organizations are also already wooing the same clusters that the region has identified as targets. Northeast Utilities sends a delegation of representatives to medical device trade shows throughout the world. The cost for the region to be present at these shows on its own would be prohibitive. By working through Northeast Utilities, the region can gain access at a much lower cost. Talks with representatives of NU have already occurred and numerous low-cost options were presented to regional representatives, such as paying for a spot in the larger New England delegation, or renting space in a booth at trade shows. This effort should be continued and expanded to include other targeted clusters.

**Strategy 4-1c** *Periodically hold regional meetings with commercial and industrial real estate brokers and site selectors.*

Equally important to having a presence at trade shows is getting realtors and site selectors familiar with the region. Firms looking to expand or relocate often use site selection services to help them find the best location. Developing relationships with, and becoming noticed by, these site selection professionals is essential in this increasingly competitive environment.

The region's chambers of commerce and municipalities already hold such events. The possibility of combining efforts, or periodically holding combined events should be investigated.

### Objective 4-2: Provide and enhance resources that support entrepreneurs and startups in the region.

Statewide studies, and local data, indicate that the region lags others in entrepreneurial activity and dynamism. Connecticut has been cited in numerous studies as lacking the sort of dynamism found in nearby regions such as Boston and NYC. Within Central Connecticut specifically, most indicators show that the business climate has cooled since the 2004 CEDS was completed. Vacancies have increased, retail sales have decreased, and volume of trade filings has slowed considerably (by 9% since 2003). The number of firms in the region did grow (from 2004 to 2009 by 2.9%), but at a slower pace than the national average (7.1%).

**Strategy 4-2a** *Study the need for additional incubators in the region, especially in larger towns such as Bristol and Southington.*

Business incubators have been shown to be effective ways of nurturing entrepreneurs. A recent EDA funded study showed that business incubators create more jobs than any other type of construction project funded by the EDA. That study found that incubator projects created between 46 and 69 jobs per $10,000 of EDA funding. Industrial parks, on the other hand, created only 4 to 8 jobs per $10,000. That study also noted that 84% of graduates from incubators stay within 20 miles of the incubator facility.[vii] Other studies have found that total public subsidies per job created are relatively low, ranging from $3,000 to $12,000.[viii]

The region is currently home to two incubators, both located in New Britain. One is operated out of CCSU's Institute of Technology and Business Development; the other is operated by CW Resources. Both of these facilities have shown considerable success. As they are both located in New Britain, there may be demand for incubator facilities in other parts of the region. For example, Southington's Plan of Conservation and Development, adopted in 2006, contains a recommendation to study the possibility of developing an incubator.

**Strategy 4-2b** *Study the demand for incubator space focused on specific clusters and industries.*

The Alliance should study existing incubator space and assess how well it is meeting the needs of targeted clusters and industries. For example, cities throughout the country have developed

bioscience and technology incubator spaces (San Jose, Denver, and others). UConn's Farmington Health Center has a Technology Incubation program that provides wet lab space for bioscience startups. This facility has been very successful and there may be sufficient demand to justify a similar facility in the region. Potential locations would include Bristol, New Britain, and Plainville (pending legislation would expand the bioscience zone into portions of Plainville).

**Strategy 4-2c** *Work with staff at existing incubators to study the needs of "graduating" incubator firms.*

While business incubators have been shown to be effective at helping businesses get started, eventually the business must make it on its own. Firms graduating from incubators may face problems finding affordable space outside of the incubator and accessing the services that had been available to them. It is also essential that regional leaders reach out to these firms to ensure that when they leave the incubator they stay in the region.

The Alliance should work with staff at the region's existing incubators to explore ways that the region can provide greater support to graduating companies. Potential projects might include: connecting firms to real estate professionals; providing inexpensive "virtual incubator" services to newly graduating firms; and helping graduating firms connect with financial resources to fund their relocation.

**Strategy 4-2d** *Improve access to, and awareness of, business start-up counseling and mentoring services.*

A wide array of business start-up services is available to entrepreneurs in the region. Brief descriptions of these service providers are included in the *Business Resources* section on page 84. The Alliance will work with local SCORE affiliates, ITBD, and CERC to improve access to counseling and mentoring services. The Alliance will also work with local chambers of commerce to improve awareness of these services.

## Objective 4-3: Increase the amount of financial assistance available to the region's businesses.

A key issue for entrepreneurs is accessing capital to either start or expand a business. The great recession severely curtailed capital availability, making it difficult for companies to thrive. This is especially true of entrepreneurs with new, untested products that are typically avoided by traditional banking institutions. While a great deal of venture capital is managed in Connecticut, a relatively small proportion of that money goes to Connecticut companies.[ix]

**Strategy 4-3a** *Advocate for annual funding for CT Innovations.*

Connecticut Innovations provides early stage startup capital for high-tech, bioscience, and clean energy firms in Connecticut. Since an initial round of funding in 1989, CT Innovations has been self-funded (relying on interest from repaid loans). Providing a continuous stream of new funding would allow this important resource to expand its reach and help more companies

launch in Connecticut. The Alliance should advocate for an annual funding stream.

**Objective 4-4: Investigate the possibility of building a strong regional cluster around Central Connecticut's information and broadcasting sector.**

Central Connecticut's economic base has changed dramatically in the past few decades. Manufacturing employment continues to decline and is no longer the largest sector of the economy. In its place, other sectors such as health services have grown, but have not offered the same level of wages that manufacturing once did.

One very bright spot for the region has been the information sector. As explained in more detail in the Regional Employment section on page 97, regional employment in the information sector was 1.3 times as concentrated in 2004 as would be predicted by national trends. By 2009 that had changed to being nearly twice as concentrated. Overall, the sector accounted for nearly 5% of the region's employment. Growth from 2004 to 2005 was an astounding 42%, adding 1,155 jobs. Wages in the Printing & Publishing cluster (which includes many information sector companies, such as ESPN) are also high, with an average wage among Hartford area businesses of over $70,000 a year (the average wage of all industries in the region is just $48,000).

**Strategy 4-4a** *Study supplier relationships and employment dynamics among existing information companies.*

The prominence of ESPN makes the region a draw for industry talent. Despite that prominence, however, ESPN is just one company. While a few related businesses are present in the region, the extent of interconnectedness between these companies is currently unknown. Without further study, the existence of a cluster cannot be determined.

The Alliance should investigate ways to better understand the relationships between companies involved in printing, publishing, and broadcasting.

**Strategy 4-4b** *Analyze existing ties between firms and identify gaps in the cluster.*

Connecticut does not currently recognize any industry clusters that include broadcasters such as ESPN. A broader Printing & Publishing cluster has been defined nationally, and 70 companies in the region participate in activities that are included in that cluster definition.

If it is determined that firms are clustering in the region, the Alliance should study the linkages that are being formed to determine where gaps still remain. With this knowledge in hand, strategies can be formulated to recruit firms supplying necessary materials or services.

## Objective 4-5: Help existing businesses stay competitive by lowering costs and increasing profitability.

Despite significant losses of employment, the manufacturing sector is still one of the largest sources of employment in the region. Nearly 15% of jobs in the region were in this sector in 2009 (down from 18% in 2004). The number of jobs had declined, by 2,300 between 2004 and 2009. While this loss was considerable (15% of manufacturing employment), the region performed better than the nation, which lost 17% of its manufacturing jobs. This indicates that the sector is still strong locally.

Discussions with stakeholders throughout the region revealed a number of challenges for manufacturers. In addition to workforce issues discussed in Goal 3, the cost of doing business was consistently cited by participants and in the literature. For example, in 2009, 72% of manufacturers in a statewide survey cited "cost of doing business" as their greatest concern.[x] Most cost of doing business issues are beyond the control of the region such as labor laws, electricity rates (excluding Alaska and Hawaii, Connecticut has the highest electricity rates in the nation), health care costs, and environmental regulations. While we cannot necessarily reduce those costs, we can work with the region's firms to support measures which would increase profitability and efficiency, mitigating the impact of those costs.

**Strategy 4-5a** *Assist and encourage businesses to take advantage of process improvement consultation services (such as "lean" manufacturing).*

Many of the region's manufacturers are also small businesses, or grew out of small businesses that may not have access to state of the art business process services. While these firms are staffed by highly skilled and productive workers, considerable money can be saved through process improvements such as lean manufacturing. A report from 2005 on the Metal Product Manufacturing cluster noted that innovation in products and production processes was a top challenge for firms to remain competitive.[xi] The challenge is educating firms about the benefits and helping them to afford the up-front costs.

The Alliance will work with ITBD, chambers of commerce, and other organizations, to help businesses access these services.

**Strategy 4-5b** *Assist firms with accessing export assistance programs.*

Emerging markets are fast becoming the greatest opportunities for growth. From 2003 to 2008, the value of Connecticut's exports nearly doubled from $8.1 billion to $15.3 billion. Even during the recession years of 2007 to 2008, exports increased by 11%.[xii] By exporting products overseas, companies can diversify their markets and increase the stability of demand.

While many Connecticut companies do export overseas, almost half do not. There are many reasons for this, including a general lack of knowledge about export regulations and foreign markets,

the belief that a company's products are not suited to exporting, and logistics problems. A report from CBIA noted that "training, consulting, and other assistance could go a long way toward boosting business intelligence and increasing Connecticut's reach and presence in the global marketplace."[xiii]

**Strategy 4-5c** *Connect businesses with resources to help them reduce energy usage and associated costs.*

While regional and municipal authorities have little control over energy costs, we can assist firms in the region with using less energy, thus lowering their costs. The Connecticut Clean Energy Fund has loan programs designed to help firms reduce their dependence on traditional energy sources and reduce their overall consumption of energy. Connecticut Light & Power offers a number of services to its business customers to help lower energy use in new and existing facilities. They also run the Connecticut Energy Efficiency fund, which offers rebates for energy efficient products. Yankee Gas customer can also access financial incentives through this fund.

## Goal 5: Physical Infrastructure

***Maintain, improve, and develop the region's infrastructure so that it meets the needs of existing and growing industries and clusters.***

### Objective 5-1: Ensure that an adequate supply of sites and buildings is available for (re)development.

As an older industrial region, Central Connecticut contains a large inventory of industrial sites, which do not necessarily meet the needs of modern industry. Modern manufacturers tend to prefer open layouts and single story buildings, as opposed to the traditional multi-story factories that dot the region. Modern firms also tend to prefer sites that are "shovel-ready" to speed up the development process.

A predicament for the region is that there is little developable land in its existing population centers. In New Britain, for example, nearly 85% of the land is either developed or covered in turf. Nearly 60% of Bristol's land falls into these categories. Most of the available space is located in places like Burlington, leading to concerns over losing forest and agricultural land.

**Strategy 5-1a** *Continue to identify key sites in the region for development, focusing on infill sites, sites near transit and transportation nodes, and sites that avoid negative impacts to environmental resources.*

In formulating the projects included in this CEDS, key development and redevelopment sites were identified. As projects are completed, and new ones are proposed, the Alliance should continue to consider the impact that chosen sites will have on the region. Considerations will include transit accessibility, environmental impacts, and reuse of existing infrastructure, buildings, and sites.

**Strategy 5-1b** *Advocate a more coordinated and streamlined approach to land use/development regulations.*

Developers must deal with multiple layers of regulation and with multiple levels of government for every project they pursue. Most of these regulations serve a public purpose, but methods of streamlining and coordinating review processes should be investigated.

At the local and regional level, plans of conservation and development should be carefully crafted to ensure a smooth permitting process. Targeted growth areas should be chosen carefully so that potential constraints to development are avoided. Local regulations should also be revisited to ensure that they support these targeted areas.

### Objective 5-2: Ensure that the site and building needs of targeted clusters are being met within the region.

As part of the region's overall cluster strategy, the spatial needs of targeted clusters must be considered. As noted under *Objective 5-1:1*, preferences for building and site characteristics have changed since much of the region's building stock was constructed. Some prefer large flexible spaces, while others only need smaller but well equipped lab space. Some also rely on ro-

bust high tech communications infrastructure, while others may need quick access to rail lines.

**Strategy 5-2a** *Continue to study the site and building needs of targeted clusters.*

Concurrently with strategies aimed at assessing the workforce training needs of targeted clusters (see *Strategy 3-1b*) site and building needs should be assessed as well. As noted above, the needs of firms engaging in bioscience research may differ from those that manufacture airplane parts.

**Strategy 5-2b** *Develop cluster specific strategies for increasing site availability.*

The region's focus on the bioscience cluster may necessitate a new approach to site and building development. Many of the small companies coming out of the UConn Health Center and other nearby R&D facilities have specific space needs. They require inexpensive wet-lab space to conduct research and refine products. These companies, being small, often do not have the resources to prepare their own lab space. If the region is to capture some of this entrepreneurial activity, it will need to have ready to use wet lab facilities offered at competitive rates. Currently the UConn Health Center charges $23/square foot.

### Objective 5-3: Return underutilized brownfield sites to productive use.

Like most of the Northeastern United States, Central Connecticut has numerous contaminated brownfield sites. A review of Department of Environmental Protection files showed more than 700 contaminated or potentially contaminated sites in the region and 28 registered brownfields. The largest concentrations of which were in Bristol and New Britain. Eighteen of them were listed as having been remediated and another 8 of them have had Environmental Land Use Restrictions enacted.

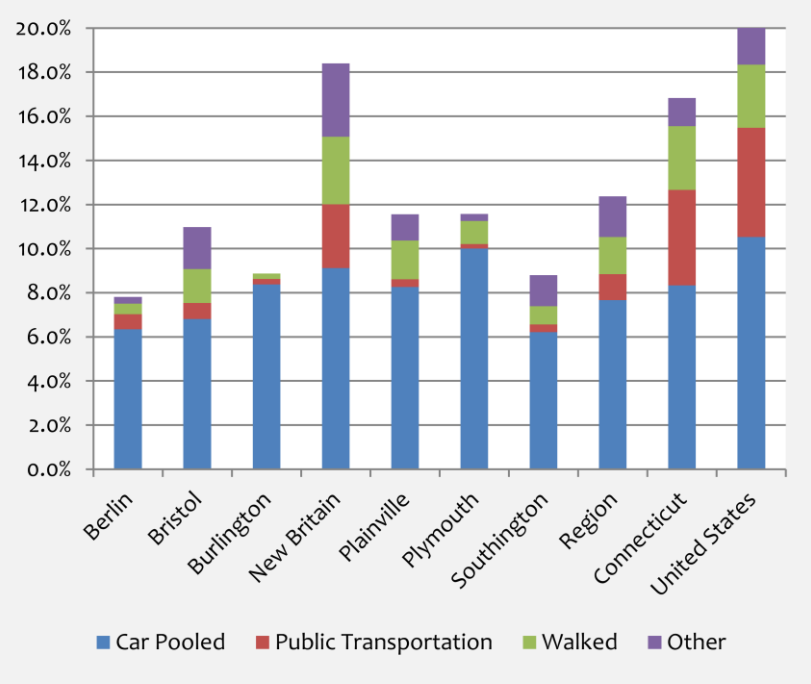
**Strategy 5-3a** *Create and maintain a prioritized inventory of brownfield sites.*

While brownfield sites carry with them a number of liabilities and challenges, they are also an opportunity. Grant, loan, and bond funding opportunities are available from state and federal sources to remediate brownfield sites. An inventory of these sites will help municipal and regional leaders quickly identify properties that are ready to be developed. This inventory can be consulted when formulating new development projects. In addition to remediation of the contaminated site, the project will have new sources of funding available to it.

Assessment grants up to $200,000 are available from the EPA. They can be used to: "inventory, characterize, assess, and conduct planning and community involvement related to brownfield sites." The city of New Britain received such a grant in 2003 and has completed a number of successful remediation projects. The city of Bristol also received an assessment grant in 2001 and performed assessments on four properties.

Grants are also available from state and regional sources. The Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development administers a number of grant and loan programs for assessments. The Re-

Figure 6. Popularity of Modes of Transportation (2009)




Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010

gional Brownfield Partnership of West Central CT, of which Central Connecticut is a member, also administers site assessment grant and assistance programs.

Work has already begun on preparing this site inventory. Data from the Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development and the Department of Environmental Protection has been collected. This data has also been geocoded and mapped to provide a visual representation (see *Figure 18* on page 90). The database will continue to be updated as new data becomes available.

**Strategy 5-3b** *Continue to prioritize projects that will remediate and reuse brownfield sites.*

As noted under Strategy *5-3.a:*, projects that involve brownfield remediation can access special sources of funding. Federal and state budgets will likely contract in the coming years, making it necessary that Central Connecticut use as many sources of funding as possible for its economic development projects.

Numerous funding sources are available for assessing and cleaning up brownfield sites. The EPA makes grants up to $200,000 available for both assessment and clean-up (sites must be assessed before clean-up funds can be sought). At the regional level, Valley COG administers the Regional Brownfield Partnership of West Central CT, which has a revolving loan program for site assessment and clean-up. At the state level, the Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development has a number of funding sources available, including grants, loans, and tax increment financing. A complete list is available at:

http://www.ctbrownfields.gov/ctbrownfields/cwp/view.asp?a=2620&q=319736

**Objective 5-4: Improve and maintain the region's transportation infrastructure to enable the safe and efficient movement of goods and people.**

Throughout this planning process the issue of transportation access, especially alternative modes of transportation, repeatedly came up. Much more so than either the state or the nation, Central Connecticut is dependent on automobiles (see *Figure 6*). In

Figure 7. Inflow/Outflow of jobs in 2009

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2009)

2009, 85.4% of the Region drove to work alone; this is compared to 79.4% of the state and 75.9% of the nation. While 7.7% of workers did car pool, they did so at a rate well below the national average of 10.5%. Public transportation's share of commuting was also below the national average: just 1.2% of people chose that mode, versus 5% of the nation.

Exacerbating congestion problems is the region's commuting dynamics. As of 2009, the majority of workers living in the region were employed outside of it (see *Figure 7*). Over 65% of workers living in the region worked outside of it (69,322), leaving just 35% of workers both living in and working in the region (37,129 people). This percentage has actually been decreasing, indicating a trend of decentralization. Since 2002, the percentage of workers living in the region who also work there has dropped from 39% to 34.9%. This represents more than 3,000 people who no longer live and work in the same region.

Data gathered for the region's *Long-Range Transportation Plan*, opinions solicited from business representatives, comments from the public, and discussions with government officials, all pointed to a transportation system that was not meeting the region's needs. By 2030 all state routes in the region but 69, 71, 72, 179, 364, and 571 will be near, at, or above capacity. This includes much of the region's expressway mileage. Given the current commuting dynamics of the region, this increased congestion will cost workers and business owners' time and money, making the region less competitive.

**Strategy 5-4a** *Prioritize projects near existing and proposed transportation nodes, especially public transit stops.*

It is not enough that transit infrastructure be provided in the region, people need to be able to use it. If jobs and housing are not located along transit lines, people will continue to be forced to rely on automobiles for transportation. Recently, the New Britain to Hartford busway was approved by the state. This project will provide bus rapid transit to and from the region, along with feeder bus service within the region. Projects located near busway stations, or along feeder routes, should be prioritized.

Concurrently, the state is funding a study of improvements to rail lines between the region and Waterbury, which would provide rail access to Southern Connecticut and New York. As more

becomes known about future rail plans, projects should be designed to take advantage of these infrastructure investments.

**Strategy 5-4b** *Extend bus service to Plymouth, expand service in existing service areas, and rationalize regional bus routes.*

While the major population centers of the region currently enjoy bus service, that service is often limited and difficult to navigate. The region's *Long-Range Transportation Plan* recommends rationalizing the routes to provide faster and more comprehensive access to jobs, homes, and shopping centers.

Service should also be expanded in key areas of the region. In Bristol, for example, service stops at 6:00pm, making certain commutes impossible. Service is also not provided on Sundays throughout the region. Funding should be sought to rectify this situation.

Bus service is completely unavailable in Plymouth. Service should be provided to the town's Terryville section at a minimum. This would provide much needed access to job centers in the region and beyond.

**Strategy 5-4c** *Connect the region to major job and population centers throughout the state (such as Hartford, Waterbury, Stamford, and Bridgeport) and beyond (New York City) via high speed rail.*

Providing fast, efficient, and frequent rail service to job and population centers throughout the state and beyond should be a top priority for the region. High speed rail service from the region (through Berlin's Kensington station) to New Haven and Springfield should be pursued. A connection from the region (possibly through Bristol and Plainville) to New York City should also be pursued. These are long range projects that will require coordination with numerous regional, state, and federal partners.

**Strategy 5-4d** *Coordinate site development projects with transportation improvement projects contained in the region's* Long-Range Transportation Plan.

The Region's updated Long Range Transportation Plan was adopted on May 5, 2011. It contains a thorough analysis of transportation issues and proposes a program of improvements for the next 30 years. Since the CEDS and the LRTP were being developed concurrently, it makes the most sense to defer to the latter on transportation issues. The Alliance should continue to support transportation projects of regional importance. The LRTP includes the following regional goals, policies, and projects that will contribute to economic development by alleviating congestion, improving access, providing alternatives to automobile travel, and improving quality of life:

| GENERAL | Addressees |
|---|---|
| **Give priority to maintenance over expansion.** Do not construct new facilities at the expense of critical, existing infrastructure. Instead, seek to wring more efficiency from what is already built. | DOT, towns, CCRPA |
| **Review all projects for environmental impact.** Do not pursue projects that impair the environment. | DOT, towns, CCRPA |
| **Design roads and streets to enhance the built environment.** Use transportation to make safe, livable communities, in particular in areas with density or potential for redevelopment at density. | DOT, towns, CCRPA |
| **Improve data collection.** Collect region-wide traffic data. Work with police to routinely geocode accident reports and traffic violations and submit them electronically to a statewide database for system-wide analysis. | State police, towns, DOT |
| **Develop high-speed communication networks.** Connect workers and employers in the region to the information superhighway to give alternatives to physical travel (e.g., telecommuting). | Federal govt., State, towns, telecoms |
| PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS | |
| **Implement the State's 'complete streets' law.** All projects must provide for pedestrians and cyclists. | DOT, towns |
| **Adopt a network of on- and off-road pedestrian and cyclist routes.** Routes should connect to the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail and CRCOG's multi-use network. | CCRPA, towns |
| **Complete the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail.** Plug the gaps between Red Oak Hill Road in Farmington and Hart Street in Southington. | Towns, DOT, DEP |
| **Add connecting side trails to the New Britain-Hartford Busway trail.** Link the busway trail to CCSU and Westfarms Mall with spurs. | Towns, CCRPA, DOT, DEP |
| PUBLIC TRANSIT | |
| **Connect the region to the New York City, Stamford, Bridgeport, Waterbury, and Hartford areas.** Transit should be interregional. Extend the successful Bridgeport-Waterbury transit corridor through Bristol, Plainville, and New Britain to Hartford. Reconfigure local bus routes to fit service. | Metro-North, CTTRANSIT |
| **Run commuter rail along the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield corridor.** Reconfigure local bus routes to fit service. | Amtrak, DOT |
| **Rationalize local bus routes.** Eliminate detours and transfers where possible to improve system performance. | CTTRANSIT, NBT, DATTCO |
| **Use Internet trip planning to improve usability.** Submit all transit routes in the region for inclusion and update. | CTTRANSIT |
| **Add signage to heighten visibility.** Post maps and schedules at time points or bus stops. | CTTRANSIT |
| PRIVATE VEHICLES | |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Add electronic highway signs to indicate alternate routes to avoid congestion or incidents.** Supplement existing notification systems with signs that direct drivers onto alternate routes. | DOT |
| **Explore connecting local streets to serve as alternate routes for congested corridors.** Relieve traffic on arterials by knitting together and dispersing traffic onto the street grid. | CCRPA, towns |
| **Replace intersections with roundabouts where appropriate.** Eliminate unnecessary stops to improve safety and traffic flow. | Towns |
| **Implement access management and/or signal coordination where appropriate.** Better time traffic lights and consolidate driveways on congested roads, especially on busy through routes, to improve safety and traffic flow. | Towns, DOT |
| **Add red light and/or speed cameras at dangerous locations.** | DOT, towns |
| **Construct a charging network to support electric vehicles.** | Federal govt., State, towns |
| FREIGHT | |
| **Maintain and upgrade the region's rail system to handle freight traffic.** Shift as much freight as feasible from busy highways and roads to rail. | Pan Am, DOT |

# Regional Projects

In addition to the strategic action plan described above, specific economic development projects that invest in the region's infrastructure are also proposed. These projects are designed to leverage available federal, state, local, and private funds to improve and maintain the physical and human capital of the region. Projects range from cleaning up brownfield sites to assembling a critical mass of entrepreneurial and business assistance resources. They are each intended to address specific goals and objectives of this plan and have been proposed, evaluated, and prioritized in a cooperative manner.

## Process

In March, a project survey was distributed to members of the steering committee. In total, 22 project surveys were returned, representing five towns and one institution. Representatives of several of the region's towns indicated a desire to prepare a project for the next annual update. Returned surveys were compiled by CCRPA staff and distributed, along with a scoring matrix, for review by the committee.

## Criteria

To ensure that projects are implemented in an orderly and logical manner that is supportive of the goals of this plan, a series of ranking criteria were developed. The following is a list of the criteria used to evaluate the projects:

- Project is ready to go
    - Property is in conformance with applicable plans of conservation and development
    - Property is under control by the town, appropriate party or proposed developer
    - Preliminary engineering has been completed to confirm project feasibility
    - Proper zoning is in place
    - All approvals in place
- Strategic value to the Region
    - Benefits economically distressed area
    - Expands existing or potential regional cluster
    - Creates jobs consistent with the project vicinity
    - Improves the Region's quality of life
    - Supports the goals and objectives of the CEDS
- Jobs created or retained
    - Creates or retains permanent jobs in substantial number
    - Quality of jobs (wages, benefits, etc…)
    - Provides substantial benefits to disadvantaged population

- Provides workforce training in key sectors/industries
- Leverage
  - Ratio of private sector investment to public funds
  - Takes advantage of existing regional assets
- Sustainability
  - In conformance with the State's Principles of Responsible Growth
  - Supports the goals and objectives of the Connecticut Economic Strategic Plan
  - Utilizes existing infrastructure
  - Promotes redevelopment of brownfields and grayfields
  - Promotes transit oriented development

## Project Matrix

A listing of each submitted project is found below. It is broken up into two sections: vital projects, which are top priorities for the coming years based on the above listed criteria, and suggested projects, which may need to be developed further before being implemented. The matrix below provides the basic details and ranking of each project. A more detailed description of each project is found in the next section.

Table 1. Vital Projects (top priorities)

| Project Name | Responsibility | Est. Cost | Funding Sources | Jobs | Time Frame | Goals met |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hospital of Central Connecticut Cancer Center | City of New Britain , Hospital of Central Ct., North Mountain Rd. Land LLC | $1.5 million | State, Private party | Perm.: 150-200 | TBD | 1, 3, 4 |
| Central Connecticut University Center | CCSU/ITBD | $250,000 | EDA (potential) - $25,000 | TBD | TBD | 1, 3, 4 |
| Plymouth Business Park/Phase IV | Town of Plymouth | $1.4 million | EDA-potential, DECD, Town | 75-100 | 1-1-05 to 12-31-14 | 5 |
| Downtown Beautification - Streetscape Project - Phase III | Town of Plainville, Plainville Chamber of Commerce | $1.91 million | US EDA: $750,000; Town of Plainville: $60,000; State of CT: $1.1 million | Const.: 20-30 | 04/01/12 (construction) to 11-30-13 | 2, 3 |
| Pinnacle Business Park | City of New Britain | $1.5 million | TBD | Perm.: 450 to 500 | TBD | 2, 5 |

**Table 2. Proposed Regional Projects by Town**

| Project Name | Responsibility | Est. Cost | Funding Sources | Jobs | Time Frame | Goals met |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Bristol** | | | | | | |
| Brownfields Site Remediation 3 | City of Bristol | TBD | TBD | Const.: 5<br>Perm.: 0 | 7-1-15 to 6-30-15 | 2, 5 |
| Brownfield Site Remediation 2 | City of Bristol | TBD | TBD | Const.: 5<br>Perm.: 20 | 7-1-15 to 6-30-17 | 2, 5 |
| Brownfield Site Remediation 1 | City of Bristol | TBD | TBD | Const.: 5<br>Perm.: TBD | 7-1-15 to 6-30-17 | 2, 5 |
| Downtown Street Grid | City of Bristol | $3 million | TBD | Const.: 30<br>Perm.: 5 | 7-1-15 to 6-30-17 | 2, 3, 5 |
| Downtown Streetscapes | City of Bristol | $6 million | TBD | Const.: 5 | 7-1-15 to 6-30-17 | 2, 3, 5 |
| Downtown Structured Parking | City of Bristol | $6.05 million | TBD | Const.: 30<br>Perm.: 5 | 7-1-15 to 6-30-17 | 5 |
| West End Streetscape | City of Bristol | $2.25 million | TBD | Const.: 5 | 7-1-17 to 6-30-19 | 2, 3, 5 |
| Downtown Intermodal Transportation Center | City of Bristol | $2.4 million | TBD | Const.: 20<br>Perm.: 10 | 7-1-15 to 6-30-17 | 2, 3, 5 |
| **Berlin** | | | | | | |
| Berlin Train Station Redevelopment Project | Town of Berlin | $1.5 million | Town of Berlin, Other sources TBD, | TBD | 10-1-11 to 6-30-14 | 1, 2, 3, 5 |
| **Plainville** | | | | | | |
| New Britain Avenue Brownfield Remediation | Town of Plainville, 311 New Britain Avenue, | $800,000 | US EDA and State of Connecticut:$800,000; Private developer (con- | Const.: 35-45<br>Perm.: 45+ | 11-1-2011 to 12-1-13 | 2, 5 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | LLC | | struction costs) | | | |
| Strawberry Fields Industrial Park | Town of Plainville, D'Amico Construction Company | $500,000 | EDA, D'Amico Construction Company, | Const.: 15-20 Perm.: TBD | 9-1-13 to 6-1-14 | 2, 5 |
| West Main Street Mixed Use Development Project | Town of Plainville, White Oak Corporation or successor | $15 million | US EDA & State of CT (unknown), Town of Plainville (Tax Incentives), White Oak Corp or Successor (unknown) | TBD | 6-1-13 to 12-1-16 | 2, 3, 5 |
| **Plymouth** | | | | | | |
| Industrial Park- Infrastructure | Town of Plymouth | $2 million | EDA-Potential | TBD | 12-1-09 to 12-1-12 | 5 |
| Terryville Trust Site | Town of Plymouth | $600,000 | EDA-potential , DECD and Town , Private funds | 10 | 7-1-11 to 11-1-12 | 2, 5 |
| Waterwheel Park Redevelopment Project | Town of Plymouth | $2.5 million | EDA-Potential; CT Commission of Culture and Tourism, DECD, US EPA/ V-COG Regional Brownfields Agency | TBD | 1-1-00 to 12-31-15 | 2, 5 |
| Terryville Business District/Downtown Revitalization | Town of Plymouth | $3.5 million | EDA-potential , DECD, CT Tourism, Town, Private Investment | 35+ | 1-1-06 to 12-31-15 | 2, 5 |
| Route 6 Streetscape Project | Town of Plymouth | $2.6 million | DECD, Town of Plymouth-Anticipated Bond Proposal approval | TBD | 10-9-11 to 12-1-15 | 2, 3, 5 |

## Project Descriptions

### Bristol: Brownfields Site Remediation 3

A site adjoining a linear city park would be added to the city park. This former trucking site is located on Route 72 on the Pequabuck River. The property adjoins an important linear park, Veterans Memorial Drive and the historic Downes Street Cemetery. It is in an important gateway that can contribute to the revitalization of the downtown area by making this area more attractive to private investment. Based upon zoning, the property would be used for recreational purposes, possibly including handicapped accessibility to the river and would be added to the existing park.

### Bristol: Brownfield Site Remediation 2

This property is located on State Route 229 across from ESPN at the entrance to the 229 Technology Park. It is on an important gateway to the City. Based upon zoning, it could be used for light industry or even an office use. Some substantial contamination is assumed due to the nature of the work performed on the site with electrical transformers and car batteries and salvage but it has not been characterized. There is a possible re-user for the site. Other environmental concerns include wetlands and high voltage line rights-of-way.

### Bristol: Brownfield Site Remediation 1

This historic multistory "Mill" building is located on Route 72, Riverside Avenue. It is near the Pequabuck River and can be combined with the former Hubbard Florist/Hostess Outlet Site if the combination improves the usability/marketability of the site. It is located in an important gateway that can contribute to the revitalization of the downtown area by making the area more attractive to private investment. Based upon zoning, the property could support multiple uses including housing development as well as retail and office development. The building might be useful for a business incubator.

### Bristol: Downtown Street Grid

This project would provide 2,300 linear feet of road and associated infrastructure. Streets are needed to reestablish the street grid pattern for redevelopment of storefronts and a downtown neighborhood. It will also support housing development. The infrastructure will also consider including geothermal and steam interconnections (piping) for high energy efficiency and sustainability.

All of the downtown Bristol CEDS projects may be seen as interrelated. Bristol's downtown is located at the confluence of State Routes 6, 72 and 69 joining east and west and north and south through the Central Connecticut region. These projects are located in an enterprise zone and will thus impact a disadvantaged community. They will also leverage private investment by improving conditions surrounding an important 17 acre site being redeveloped by Renaissance Downtowns.

### Bristol: Downtown Streetscapes

Sidewalks will contribute to the revitalization of the downtown area by making it more pedestrian friendly and encouraging private investment. It will support housing development as well as retail and office development. Traffic calming measures will be implemented as well as pedestrian friendly design.

### Bristol: Downtown Structured Parking 1,541 cars- 3 sites

The project will construct structured parking facilities on three sites to allow for high density development of housing and transportation. It will also accommodate City Hall, retail, library and other users. Structured parking will contribute to the revitalization of the downtown area by making this area more pedestrian friendly and encouraging private investment. "Park and walk" behavior will be encouraged. Structured parking will be required for public transit, especially a transit center (train station). It will also support housing development as well as retail and office development.

### Bristol: West End Streetscape

This is a neighborhood revitalization project close to downtown and the confluence of State Routes 6, 72 and 69. Sidewalks and crosswalks will contribute to the revitalization of the area by making it more pedestrian friendly and encouraging private investment. Public investment will support redevelopment. The project will involve the installation of 2,250 linear feet of streetscape to include granite curbing, crosswalks, pedestrian lighting, planting, brick banding, new concrete, handicapped accessibility and street furniture. Traffic calming measures to be instituted as well as pedestrian friendly design.

### Bristol: Downtown Intermodal Transportation Center

Building to allow train and bus users to interchange and get out of weather waiting for service. Train and intercity and interstate buses will contribute to the revitalization of the downtown area by increasing access and encouraging private investment. Transit will support housing development as well as retail and office development.

This project will be part of larger transportation network that will likely include Plainville, Plymouth and have connections in Waterbury through to MetroNorth. It will likely have transit connections to Hartford, New Britain and Berlin as well.

### New Britain: Central Connecticut University Center

This project would coordinate existing resources at CCSU and CCSU's Institute of Technology and Business Development to provide support services to businesses and entrepreneurs throughout the region. It would focus resources to help the region grapple with changing economic and demographic conditions by supporting women and minority owned businesses, and targeting growing sectors of the economy such as health care, advanced manufacturing (including biomedical), banking and finance, and entertainment.

### New Britain: Hospital of Central Connecticut Cancer Center

This development would take place on a 28 acre, abandoned quarry site that is situated on the New Britain - Plainville town line. It would entail the development of a regional cancer treatment center under the auspices of the Hospital of Central Connecticut on the New Britain portion of the site with a three-story 65,000 square foot medical office building on the Plainville portion. The project is planned to involve an innovative tax revenue sharing arrangement between the two towns.

This project fulfills a growing regional need for accessible, modern, high-quality cancer treatment and medical office space. It makes use of an abandoned quarry that is centrally located within the state, with good access and visibility from I-84. New Britain is designated as a "regional center' in the State Plan of Conservation and Development and is an economically distressed municipality with chronically high unemployment. In addition to serving a growing medical service need for the region, the jobs created would be within one of our identified industry clusters and would be higher quality, higher wage jobs. The project is consistent with "smart growth" policies, since the site is previously developed, situated with good access to the both interstate highway system and to city bus routes, and has direct access to nearby utility systems.

### New Britain: Pinnacle Business Park

This development of a 63 acre business park on this excessed housing authority property has been a priority project for the City of New Britain for the past several years. The City of New Britain acquired the property from the state of Connecticut in 2006, formulated and adopted appropriate technology park zoning in 2007 and undertook demolition of the vacated buildings in 2008 and 2009. Project plans for the subdivision and development of infrastructure were developed and the subdivision plan approved in late 2010. Current planning for infrastructure is now underway. The City has begun discussions with at least one prospective buyer for purchase and development later in 2011, or in 2012.

This project has numerous benefits for the city. It is a brownfield site that is currently underutilized. It is situated on a municipal arterial with good access to the both interstate highway system and to city bus routes, and has direct access to existing utility systems. The office, technology and ancillary jobs that are anticipated are higher quality, higher wage jobs than the current city median, and the opportunity to achieve an increase in tax base is important, given our lack of developable land and the percentage land currently state owned or otherwise tax-exempt.

### Berlin: Berlin Train Station Redevelopment Project

There are four major projects in process in the immediate vicinity of the Berlin Train Station. Funds are requested for the environmental clean-up of 889 Farmington Avenue to prepare it for redevelopment as a mixed use, pedestrian friendly transit oriented development. EPA has funded investigations of 889 Farmington Avenue, most recently a supplemental phase III and RAP through CRCOG's brownfields assessment grant, so the site is

ready to move forward to the remediation phase. The Town has two adjacent properties to the east (903 and 913 Farmington Avenue) under contract to purchase. The plan is to demo the existing buildings and construct a new Police Department headquarters. The Town also has a grant under the Enhancement Component of the Surface Transportation Program and matching STEAP grants to renovate the Berlin Train Station and parking lot. The project consultant Michael Baker Engineering is preparing plans and specifications to bid the project. The construction budget is approximately $1.8 million. The fourth major project underway is station and parking area improvements related to the New Haven Springfield intercity/commuter rail project. This project will include raised platforms, an up and over to accommodate new double tracking and expansion to the train station parking lot. DOT is in the EIE process for the commuter rail project. It is expected that their parking lot expansion will be done primarily to the east of the station and that it will connect to the Towns 889, 903 and 913 Farmington Avenue projects, and remove some existing incompatible or blighted properties.

### Plainville: New Britain Avenue Brownfield Remediation

Remediation of a brownfield site on New Britain Avenue in Plainville, CT. Eventual use of the site will be retail and will be developed by a private party. The property is approximately 9.5 acres and may be combined with adjacent vacant parcels to total as much as 22.98 acres. This will complement existing adjacent retail/commercial centers. Please note that for the purposes of this project, jobs created are for remediation only, and not actual site construction or eventual tenant fit out; permanent full time jobs created will be significantly higher. Owner is currently seeking State and/or Federal assistance to help with brownfield remediation.

The project involves the re-use of badly degraded land. Removal of contamination is only the first benefit realized. Quality site design will create a sense of place that has never existed on this site. In fact, the site has been an eyesore for several decades. Removal of contamination in such close proximity to both the headwaters of the Quinnipiac River (.4 miles) and the Level "A" ground water drinking wells (1.2miles) represents substantial benefits to the community. In an autocentric society, utilization of a brownfield site in such close proximity to existing goods and services serves to reduce vehicle trips and gas expenditure.

### Plainville: Downtown Beautification/Streetscape - Phase III

Plainville is a small community (< than 10 sq miles) with a well-defined downtown area. The central business district is a focal point that is an economic driver for the entire community. Recent improvements have added economic vitality to sections of the district, but more work needs to be done. The downtown is seen as key to the function and character of the community as a whole. The wellbeing of the community, both economic and social, is tied to its downtown. As other cities in the region enjoy the benefits of downtown improvement, so too should smaller, non-entitlement towns whose contribution to the overall economic health of the region cannot be discounted.

Phase III of Plainville's Downtown Beautification is estimated at $750,000.00 and will complete this project. Approximately $1,850,000.00 has been expended thus far. The project involves the completion of sidewalk treatments including pavers, planters and street furniture along portions of East Main Street and West Main Street. Wayfinding, signage and definition of public spaces are all elements of the plan. Plainville's demographic makeup does not allow for the utilization of CDBG funds for this project so State and Federal funds are fundamental to its success and completion.

### Plainville: Strawberry Fields Industrial Park

Extension of street within existing industrial park resulting in access to new industrial land within State of Connecticut designated Contiguous Municipality Zone (Enterprize Zone). Assistance is sought to provide needed infrastructure to open up small to medium size lots over a 35 acre site. Water and sewer are available and would be extended from an existing industrial cul-de-sac. The Town of Plainville will offer tax abatements to qualifying manufacturing firms through the State Contiguous Municipality Program, while non-manufacturing firms will be offered standard tax abatements based on economic benefit. The US EDA will be asked to provide 50% of costs associated with the provision of infrastructure including road, water and sewer extensions.

The development will take advantage of numerous regional assets. It is located in a contiguous municipality zone (enterprise zone). The development will be required to use low-impact development techniques to minimize environmental degradation. The Town will also ask the developer to segregate required open space in a manner that benefits an approved multi-use trail plan.

### Plainville: West Main Street Mixed Use Development

The West Main Street Mixed Use Development project is envisioned on a 15 acre parcel located directly within downtown Plainville. The property would be rezoned to allow for mixed use development including residential, retail, restaurant and office and parking. The site will support many combinations of uses, but for the purpose of planning, we have estimated 50 residential units, 30,000 square feet of office space and 20,000 square feet of retail space with as much as 10,000 square feet being devoted to restaurant. More density is possible.

### Plymouth: Industrial Park- Infrastructure

For the past several years, Phase 1 and 2 of the Industrial Park in the Town of Plymouth has experienced major problems with the existing utility wiring for cable, phone and electricity. Underground conduit problems have caused many service interruptions. The interruption of these services has caused severe difficulty for the business owners in the industrial park. In many cases, power has gone out in the middle of manufacturing processes. The wiring is in need of major upgrades. Many repairs have occurred but there needs to be a total upgrade of the entire system is needed to fix the problem.

### Plymouth: Terryville Trust Site

This significant property is within the Terryville downtown area and is the former location of the Terryville Trust Company. The building is one of the defining structures in the downtown area but currently sits vacant, unutilized and in a state of deterioration due to the lack of maintenance over the years. Its successful reuse as commercial and/or office space would represent a signal of economic resurgence in the downtown area. It would be one of the main contributors to the revitalization of the downtown area.

### Plymouth: Waterwheel Park Redevelopment

This redevelopment site is in the center of the Town of Plymouth's Main Street and Downtown area. The redevelopment of this site will transform an underutilized contaminated site into a historic and recreational Waterwheel Park, which will be a focal point of the Downtown area and the community. There has been a lot of community support and activism behind the redevelopment of the site. In recent years, the Town has made several strides toward achieving the goals of the Plan for the Waterwheel Park.

When complete, the Waterwheel Park will feature a historic museum with walking trails, picnic areas and the Eli Terry, Jr. Waterwheel as the centerpiece. Recognized on the National Register of Historic Properties, the Eli Terry, Jr. Waterwheel exemplifies the heritage of this community. Not only will this cultural park present a passive recreational opportunity for the residents of Plymouth, but it will also create a tourist destination where people from the region can come to visit the museum, see the waterwheel and enjoy the park-like settings and tranquil surroundings.

### Plymouth: Terryville Business District/Downtown Revitalization

Over the years, Downtown Terryville has lost much of its identity as the mercantile center of Plymouth, while still retaining many of its historical resources. Terryville has been the subject of land use studies, historic preservation studies, traffic studies and economic development studies. Unfortunately, the resources for implementation have not yet been marshaled and Terryville continues to decline. The problem has only exacerbated with the decline in the state and national economy. The goal is to reinvigorate the downtown area and encourage private investment dollars to come back to Terryville. This project is linked to the Route 6 Streetscape Project described at right.

### Plymouth: Plymouth Business Park/Phase IV

This project is for the final phase of the Plymouth Business Park. The parcel has the highest elevation within the industrial area. Its visibility calls for a high-end business/office park use. Project development would include road linkage with Phase III, utilities, engineering, permits and inspection services. This project would be a public/private partnership with the use of local, state and national funds and with private investment dollars from a developer.

This project would bring more business into the region. A high end business/office park would support other businesses in the region and provide jobs for the residents of neighboring towns. This would help to make the region more economically viable and competitive.

### Plymouth: Route 6 Streetscape

The streetscape area extends from Benedict Street (Near the Waterwheel), easterly to Allen Street. This project will serve to beautify the heavily traveled Main Street area. A new streetscape will create a more pedestrian-friendly environment that will help develop a sense of place for the main downtown area. Improvements will include new 5 foot wide sidewalks with 3 ft wide brick ribbons, granite curbing, pedestrian crossings, street trees, and pedestrian lighting and signage.

Grant funding has enabled the Town to reach several milestones with this project to date. Existing Conditions mapping was produced, which identifies project needs. A concept design plan has been created for the entire 3100 linear feet of project area. The Town had several public informational meetings to encourage involvement from the residents and business owners of the project area and the community at large, including a Mayor's Breakfast and Site Walk for the business owners and residents included in Phase 1 of the project area. Design Development Plan and construction documents for Phase 1 of the project area were created.

# Measurement and Evaluation

The Central Connecticut Economic Development Alliance recognizes that this plan is not static and that part of its implementation must be its continued revision. The Alliance also recognizes that establishing cause and effect is difficult for the kinds of programs put forth in this plan. With that in mind, this section lays out specific measures of program outcomes and general indicators of success. The latter category includes data points that demonstrate that the regional economy is moving in the desired direction, but that may not be directly attributable to specific actions taken.

## Direct Outcomes

| Goal 1: Regional Planning and Coordination | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Indicator** | **Data Source** | **Desired Result** |
| Participation at quarterly meetings | Attendance records | At least 50% |
| # of meetings with strategic partners | Staff records | At least 1 per quarter |
| # of meetings with cluster reps. | Staff records | At least 2 per year |
| Frequency of website updates | Staff records | At least once per quarter |
| **Goal 2: Responsible Growth** | | |
| **Indicator** | **Data Source** | **Desired Result** |
| % of projects in CEDS that are infill/reuse | Alliance records | At least 75% |
| % of towns with updated historic inventories | Town planning departments | 100% within 5 years |
| **Goal 3: Workforce Development** | | |
| **Indicator** | **Data Source** | **Desired Result** |
| # of internships offered by regional companies | Internhere.com search | Increase (from 3) |
| # of companies offering internships | Internhere.com search | At least 10 within 5 years |
| **Goal 4: Business Attraction and Retention** | | |
| **Indicator** | **Data Source** | **Desired Result** |
| Frequency of website updates | Staff records | At least once per quarter |
| # of firms using energy efficiency consulting | Survey | Increase year over year |
| # of firms using process improvement consulting | Survey | Increase year over year |
| **Goal 5: Physical Infrastructure** | | |

| Indicator | Data Source | Desired Result |
|---|---|---|
| # of brownfield sites remediated | Project records | At least one in 5 years |
| # of sites developed | Project records | Five in five years |
| Ratio of dollars of private investment leveraged by projects to public dollars invested | Project records/municipal economic development departments | At least 2 to 1 |

## Indirect Outcomes

| Indicator | Data Source | Desired Result |
|---|---|---|
| Rate of land development | UConn's CLEAR | Decrease from 2.4% (2002-2006 rate) |
| Rate of decrease in agricultural land | UConn's CLEAR | Decrease from 3.5% (2002-2006 rate) |
| # of employers | CT DOL | Increase |
| # of trade name filings | Town clerks | Increase |
| Employment in targeted clusters | ReferenceUSA.com | Increase |
| # and % change in total employment | CT DOL | Increase |
| % change in average regional wage | CT DOL | Increase |
| % of population in poverty | ACS/Census | Decrease |
| Change in the unemployment rate | CT DOL | Decrease |
| % of residents taking transit | ACS/Census | Increase |
| % of residents driving alone | ACS/Census | Decrease |
| % of the population with a high school diploma or less | Census (ACS) | Decrease |
| % of students proficient in math and reading | CT. Dept. of Education | Increase |
| % of the population in the 25-34 and 35-44 year old age groups | Census (ACS) | Increase |
| Enrollment in regional technical high schools | CT Dept. of Education | Increase |
| # of multi-family housing units built per year | Municipalities | Increase |

| Project Name | Responsibility | Est. Cost | Funding Sources | Time Frame | Score | Revised Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hospital of Central Connecticut Cancer Center | City of New Britain , Hospital of Central Ct., North Mountain Rd. Land LLC | $1.5 million | State, Private party | TBD | 72 | 72 |
| Central Connecticut University Center | CCSU/ITBD | $250,000 | EDA (potential) - $250,000 | TBD | 70 | 69 |
| Plymouth Business Park/Phase IV | Town of Plymouth | $1.4 million | EDA-potential: $500,000<br>DECD: $700,000<br>Town: $200,000 | 1-1-05 to 12-31-14 | 69 | 69 |
| Downtown Beautification - Streetscape Project - Phase III | Town of Plainville, Plainville Chamber of Commerce | $1.91 million | US EDA: $750,000<br>Town of Plainville: $60,000<br>State of CT: $1.1 million | 04/01/12 (construction) to 11-30-13 | 67 | 67 |
| Pinnacle Business Park | City of New Britain | $1.5 million | TBD | TBD | 63 | 63 |
| Berlin Train Station Redevelopment Project | Town of Berlin | $1.5 million | Town of Berlin, Other sources TBD, | 10-1-11 to 6-30-14 | 62 | 62 |
| New Britain Avenue Brownfield Remediation | Town of Plainville, 311 New Britain Avenue, LLC | $800,000 | US EDA and State of Connecticut:$800,000 | 11-1-2011 to 12-1-13 | 60 | 65 |
| Industrial Park- Infrastructure | Town of Plymouth | $2 million | EDA-Potential | 12-1-09 to 12-1-12 | 59 | 58 |
| Waterwheel Park Redevelopment Project | Town of Plymouth | $2.5 million | EDA-Potential, CT Commission of Culture and Tourism: $350,000<br>DECD: $150,000<br>US EPA/ V-COG Regional Brownfields Agency: $200,000 | 1-1-00 to 12-31-15 | 57 | 52 |
| Strawberry Fields Industrial Park | Town of Plainville, D'Amico Construction Company | $500,000 | EDA: $250,000<br>D'Amico Construction Company: $250,000 | 9-1-13 to 6-1-14 | 56 | 60 |
| Downtown Intermodal Transportation Center | City of Bristol | $2.4 million | TBD | 7-1-15 to 6-30-17 | 55 | 56 |
| Downtown Streetscapes | City of Bristol | $6 million | TBD | 7-1-15 to 6-30-17 | 53 | 54 |
| Brownfield Site Remediation 2 | City of Bristol | TBD | TBD | 7-1-15 to 6-30-17 | 53 | 53 |
| Route 6 Streetscape Project | Town of Plymouth | $2.6 million | DECD: $450,000<br>Town of Plymouth-Anticipated Bond Proposal approval: $200,000 | 10-9-11 to 12-1-15 | 53 | 48 |
| Terryville Business District/Downtown Revitalization | Town of Plymouth | $3.5 million | EDA-potential , DECD, CT Tourism, Town, Private Investment | 1-1-06 to 12-31-15 | 52 | 49 |
| Downtown Structured Parking | City of Bristol | $6.05 million | TBD | 7-1-15 to 6-30-17 | 52 | 52 |
| Terryville Trust Site | Town of Plymouth | $600,000 | EDA-potential: $250,000<br>DECD and Town: $200,000<br>Private funds: $150,000 | 7-1-11 to 11-1-12 | 52 | 48 |
| Downtown Street Grid | City of Bristol | $3 million | TBD | 7-1-15 to 6-30-17 | 51 | 51 |
| West Main Street Mixed Use Development Project | Town of Plainville, White Oak Corporation or successor | $15 million | US EDA & State of CT (unknown), Town of Plainville (Tax Incentives), White Oak Corp or Successor (unknown) | 6-1-13 to 12-1-16 | 51 | 51 |
| Brownfield Site Remediation 1 | City of Bristol | TBD | TBD | 7-1-15 to 6-30-17 | 50 | 51 |
| West End Streetscape | City of Bristol | $2.25 million | TBD | 7-1-17 to 6-30-19 | 50 | 50 |
| Brownfields Site Remediation 3 | City of Bristol | TBD | TBD | 7-1-15 to 6-30-15 | 50 | 49 |