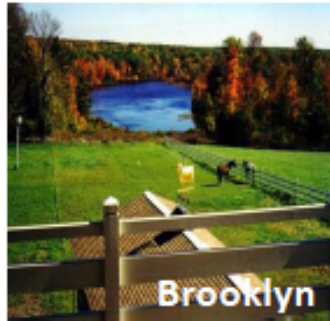
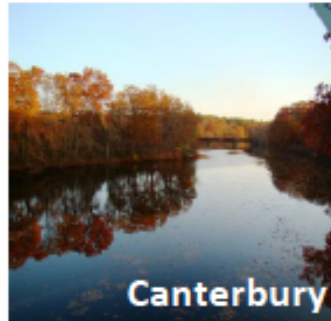




Ashford



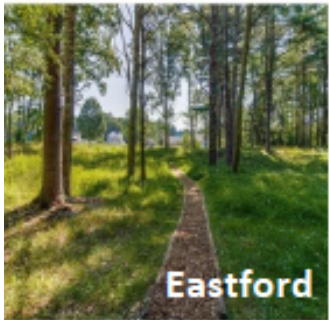
Brooklyn



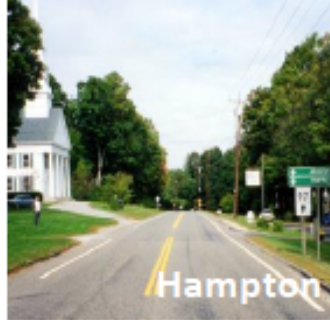
Canterbury



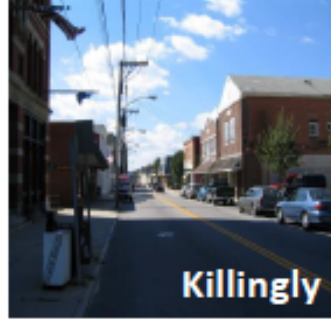
Chaplin



Eastford



Hampton



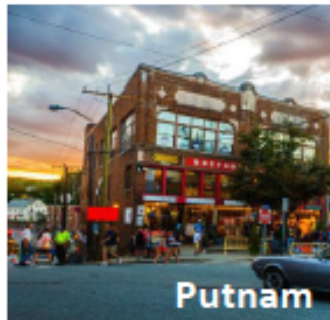
Killingly



Plainfield



Pomfret



Putnam



Scotland



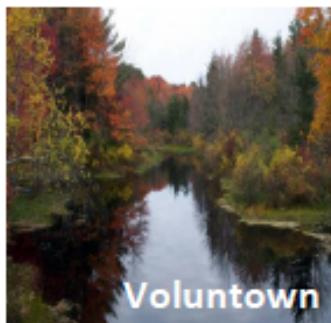
Sterling



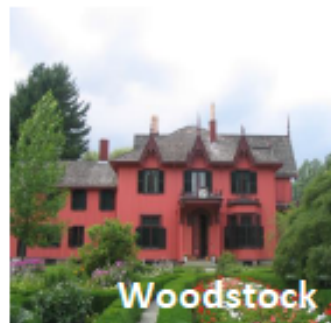
Thompson



Union



Voluntown



Woodstock

**Northeastern
Connecticut
Comprehensive
Economic
Development
Strategy
2018-2023**



Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

Funding for this document provided in part by member jurisdictions, grants from the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, Federal Highway Administration and Connecticut Department of Transportation. NECCOG fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. NECCOG does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, English proficiency, income, religious creed, ancestry, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, military service, or gender identity or expression. Any person who believes himself/herself or any specific class of persons have been subjected to discrimination prohibited by Title VI or related statutes or regulations may, himself/herself or via a representative, file a complaint with the NECCOG.

The contents of this plan do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the funding agencies.

Principal Author, Researcher, Coordinator - Hoween Flexer, Director of Regional Services

Additional copies of this document may be obtained by contacting:

Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments
125 Putnam Pike (PO Box 759)
Dayville, CT 06241

or at

neccog.org



necog

March 5, 2019

Linda Cruz-Carnall,
Regional Director
EDA – Philadelphia Regional Office
Robert N.C. Nix Federal Building
900 Market Street, Room 602
Philadelphia, PA 19107

RE: Comprehensive Development Strategy Submittal

Dear Director Cruz-Carnall:

Please find the Approved 2018- 2023: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments received approval from the organization's board of directors on March 23, 2017, from the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management on July 13, 2018 and from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development of September 13, 2018.

The Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments is comprised of sixteen towns; Ashford, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Eastford, Hampton, Killingly, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Scotland, Sterling, Thompson, Union, Voluntown and Woodstock, that run along the Massachusetts and Rhode Island border and consist of the following towns. Part of the Region is in the Worcester Urbanized Area, which runs along the Interstate 395 corridor. It is also home to the Route 169 National Scenic By-Way, one of only two in the state of Connecticut.

The Region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy analyzes the assets of the Region as well as its long-standing challenges. Taking an in-depth examination of both the strengths and weakness assisted greatly in developing a strong SWOT Analysis. This plan contains stringent goals and performance measures to truly address the overall economic well-being of both our member town and its citizens through robust action plans, standard for development and quality of life standards.

If EDA and its regional office needs additional information or has any follow-up, please don't hesitate to contact the Council's Director of Regional Services, Hoween Flexer at 860-774-1253 or hoween.flexer@necog. Thank you for time and consideration in reviewing this document.

Sincerely,

John Filchak
Executive Director
Northeastern Connecticut Council of Government

Page Left Blank Intentionally

REVIEW & ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Planning Organization Information

Name:	Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments
Address:	125 Putnam Pike, P.O. Box 725, Dayville, CT 06241
POC Name, Title:	John Filchak, Executive Director
POC Telephone, Email:	(860) 774-1253, john.flichak@necog.org

Organizational Review & Approval Process *(to be completed by Organization)*

Strategy committee roster included/attached: Yes No

Copy of CEDS provided to affected Regional Commission: Yes No NA

Dates of public review & comment period (at least 30 days):

Date CEDS adopted by organization’s governing body:

Attached documentation of public comment and adoption:

- Governing body adoption of CEDS (minutes or resolution): Yes No
- Verification of 30-day public comment on the CEDS: Yes No
- Copy of all public comments received on the CEDS: Yes No
- Explanation from the Planning Organization stating how comments were incorporated into the final CEDS: Yes No

CEDS self-assessment checklist completed & attached (optional): Yes No

REVIEW & ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

EDA Review & Approval Process *(to be completed by EDA)*

Reviewer Name, Title, RO:

Reviewer Phone, Email:

Date CEDS Received by EDA:

Date CEDS Review Completed:

CEDS Review Determination: Approved Deficient

Date CEDS Review Letter & Checklist Sent to Organization:

CEDS, Review Letter, & Assessment Checklist Filed at RO: Yes No

CEDS Receipt, Review Notification, & Status Entered in OPCS: Yes No

Overview

“A CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development. A CEDS is the result of a regionally owned planning process designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of an area or region.” This definition comes from the “Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Content Guidelines: Recommendations for Creating an Impactful CEDS,” published by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) in 2015. It frames the nature and purpose of a CEDS. The checklist below is an optional assessment tool intended to help area/regional development organizations prepare viable strategies that meet EDA’s guidelines. Likewise, it is a tool for EDA staff to use in reviewing and approving a CEDS. Although it is not a required form, it is a useful tool.

Structure

The checklist follows the structure of EDA’s CEDS guidelines. The assessment elements relate to the stated requirements and recommendations contained in the guidelines. **Requirements, which are noted as such, are few. Most of the elements are recommendations.**

Instructions

The following instructions will optimize the use of this checklist for CEDS reviews and self-assessments:

REVIEW & ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

- Check the appropriate box to indicate whether or not the element is present and has been satisfactorily addressed. For certain elements not applicable to the area/region, indicate "NA."
- Where requested, note the location of the element in the CEDS by showing the section or page number(s) where the topic is addressed.
- Include comments to clarify the review, as needed, or to indicate deficiencies to be addressed, or to acknowledge exemplary treatment of the element.

Self-Assessment

It will be helpful for a CEDS-preparing organization to conduct a self-assessment of its strategy using this CEDS checklist. In so doing, the organization should be able to identify and address deficiencies prior to submitting the document for EDA review and approval. It will also be helpful for the organization to submit a copy of its self-assessment with its CEDS.

References

"Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Content Guidelines: Recommendations for Creating an Impactful CEDS," <http://www.eda.gov/ceds/>

EDA Regulations: 13 C.F.R. § 303.7; http://www.eda.gov/pdf/edas_regs-13_cfr_chapter_iii.pdf

REVIEW & ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

CEDS REVIEW & ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

1. OVERVIEW

In accordance with EDA’s regulations and guidelines, the following sections must be included in the CEDS document:

Summary Background	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Location:	Page 68
SWOT Analysis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Location:	Page 71
Strategic Direction/Action Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Location:	Page 79
Evaluation Framework	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Location:	Page 95

Comments: The overview of the region is extensive and evaluates the long-standing challenges, assessing the positives and negatives in the SWOT, and develops a comprehensive plan to address the needs as well as putting in safe guards to ensure economic growth is smart for not on the communities in the region, but also its workforce.

REVIEW & ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

The CEDS must incorporate the concept of economic resilience (i.e. the ability to avoid, withstand, and recover from economic shifts, natural disasters, the impacts of climate change, etc.)

The CEDS meets this requirement.

Yes No Location:

Pages 9 and 19

Comments: This plan provides a comprehensive review of the natural weather threats and generational issues of educational attainment, poverty and low wage jobs and provides strategies to fully engage with all stakeholders to address these issues.

2. CONTENT

The CEDS meets the following general criteria:

It was developed with broad-based community participation.

Yes No Location:

Chapter 4, Appendix C, Appendix D, and Appendix E

It is readily accessible to regional stakeholders.

Yes No Location:

On website, distributed to all member towns, stakeholders, and elected officials.

It is usable to stakeholders as a guide to the regional economy and for action to improve it.

Yes No Location:

Seen through the lens of economic resiliency, the four required elements (see 'Overview' above) logically build upon each other to result in a coherent, targeted document.

Yes No Location:

REVIEW & ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Comments: Over 70 stakeholders reviewed and provided input on the CEDS, including local, state and federal officials, state agencies, economic development professionals, economic development commissions members, local non-profits, human services agencies, and educational institutions. The layout of overview of the document was informative and easy to understand across all knowledge bases and the goals, objectives and performance measures were comprehensive.

2-A. SUMMARY BACKGROUND

The “Summary Background” section meets the following criteria:

Answers the question, “Where have we been?” and presents a clear understanding of the local economic situation, supported by current, relevant data. Yes No

The information is presented in a clear and concise manner, and can be easily understood by the general public. Yes No

Data presentation allows for clear, relevant connections to the SWOT analysis and strategic direction. Yes No

Comments: This document takes an in-depth review of not only the last four decades of economic indicators, but also of the last 4 decades of regional economic plans to assess whether to goals of those plans were actualized. Data is presented clearly illustrates the long-term challenges facing the region. Plans to address these issues are defined concisely in the SWOT and in the performance measure and project evaluation framework.

REVIEW & ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

The “Summary Background” section provides information in the following areas that affect the regional economy, as applicable:

Demographic & socioeconomic data Yes No Location: NA

Environmental, geographic, climatic, and cultural information Yes No Location: NA

Infrastructure assets that relate to economic development Yes No Location: NA

Emerging or declining clusters or industry sectors Yes No Location: NA

Relationship of the area’s economy to the larger region or state Yes No Location: NA

Factors that directly affect economic performance in the area (e.g. workforce, innovation assets, industry supply chains, etc.) Yes No Location: NA

Other factors that relate to economic performance (e.g. housing, health services, etc.) Yes No Location: NA

Chapter 2: Regional Overview

Chapter 2: Regional Overview

Chapter 2: Regional Overview

Chapter 2: Regional Overview

Chapter 2: Regional Overview

Chapter 2: Regional Overview

Chapter 2: Regional Overview

REVIEW & ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Comments: All factors that impact the regional economy, including state and neighboring states, are clearly evaluated and the decades long issues are defined. A review of the changes in employment opportunities, as well as employment type are also outlined.

The CEDS includes content that meets the following related criteria:

It is a vehicle that promotes the integration of economic development with other regional plans (e.g. sustainability, transportation, land use, housing, environmental protection, etc.) Yes No Location:

Chapter 2: Regional Overview

It identifies opportunities for the integrated use of local, state, private, and federal funds. Yes No Location:

Chapter 4: Strategic Plan

The research for the CEDS includes a review of the long-term trends of the area. Yes No Location:

Chapter 2: Overview, Chapter 3: SWOT Analysis, Chapter 4: Strategic Plan and Chapter 5: Performance Measures

Comments: The plan includes the historical review of the region, its successes and challenges. It strives to incorporate all the elements that impact economic development including housing, transportation, land use, sustainability and environmental impacts. Funds are identified to address the goals and objectives in this plan and what stakeholders and group will work to achieve the goals.

REVIEW & ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

2-B. SWOT ANALYSIS

The “SWOT Analysis” (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Strengths) section meets the following criteria:

Answers the question, “Where are we now?” and identifies the critical internal and external factors that speak to the region’s unique assets and competitive positioning. Yes No

Considers economic resiliency, specifically, factors that can ensure the long-term success, viability, and durability of the regional economy. Yes No
Location:

Chapter 4: Strategic Plan and Chapter 5: Performance Measures

Comments: The SWOT analysis carefully reviewed all elements that contribute to economic development and clearly defined the actions to take, both broad and specific to address the weaknesses and threat and build upon the strengths and opportunities that exist.

The “SWOT Analysis” assesses a wide-variety of regional attributes and dynamics, including the following specific areas and tools:

State of the regional economy Yes No Location:

Chapter 4: Strategic Plan and Chapter 5: Performance Measures

Regional clusters Yes No Location:

Chapter 4: Strategic Plan and Chapter 5: Performance Measures

External trends and forces Yes No Location:

Chapter 3: SWOT, Chapter 4: Strategic Plan and Chapter 5: Performance Measures

REVIEW & ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Workforce considerations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Location:	Chapter 4: Strategic Plan and Chapter 5: Performance Measures
Spatial efficiencies/sustainability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Location:	Chapter 3: SWOT, Chapter 4: Strategic Plan and Chapter 5: Performance Measures
Broadband needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Location:	Chapter 4: Strategic Plan
Energy needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Location:	Chapter 4: Strategic Plan
Natural hazards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Location:	Chapter 4: Strategic Plan
Equitable development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Location:	Chapter 4: Strategic Plan and Chapter 5: Performance Measures
Partners for economic development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Location:	Chapter 4, Appendix C, Appendix D, and Appendix E
Resources for economic development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Location:	Pages 89 -90

Comments: The SWOT analysis defines what issues are most pressing, the targeted locations, its impact on the region and state and who and how the region will address each challenge delineated in the SWOT. It identifies partners, time frames and resources to address the items prioritized in the SWOT.

REVIEW & ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

2-C. STRATEGIC DIRECTION/ACTION PLAN

The “Strategic Direction/Action Plan” section meets the following criteria:

Answers the questions, “Where do we want to go?” and “How are we going to get there?” by applying the SWOT analysis. Yes No

Includes a vision statement, goals, and objectives. Yes No Location:

Includes an action plan for the implementation of the stated vision, goals, and objectives. Yes No Location:

Chapter 4 and Chapter 5

Comments: None

The Vision Statement, Goals, and Objectives meet the following criteria:

They respond to the analysis of the area’s development potential and problems (i.e. SWOT analysis). Yes No Location:

The process used to create the vision statement involved broad community participation. Yes No Location:

Chapter 3: SWOT
Appendix C, Appendix D, and Appendix E

REVIEW & ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

<p>The draft vision statement was widely circulated for review and comment to ensure maximum stakeholder engagement.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>Location:</p>	<p>Appendix D, E, F and G</p>
<p>The goals are statements of broad outcomes and general intentions that build upon the vision statement.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>Location:</p>	<p>Chapter 4, 5 and 6</p>
<p>The goals reflect the desires of most regional stakeholders, are realistic, and are limited to a manageable number.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>Location:</p>	<p>Chapter 4, 5 and 6</p>
<p>The objectives are specific, measurable, concrete, and support the attainment of the stated goals.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>Location:</p>	<p>Chapter 5 and 6</p>
<p>The goals and objectives are prioritized, with consideration for the factors outlined in the CEDS guidelines.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>Location:</p>	<p>Chapter 4, 5 and 6</p>

Comments: Guidelines and performance measures were introduced to address the challenge of implementing the goals set forth. The measures are clearly defined and are assertive in order to address some of the long-standing needs in the region. They are measurable, realistic, attainable and hold the stakeholders accountable for the initiatives pursued through this process.

REVIEW & ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

The Action/Implementation Plan meets the following criteria:

It must be clearly linked to the prioritized goals and objectives stated in the framework for strategic direction. Yes No

It identifies and describes a limited number of key projects with the highest priority and potential for regional impact. Yes No Location:

Chapter 4 ,5 and 6

Comments: The actions and implementation of the plan are directly linked to the goals and objectives, as defined, but also work to address the issues that have long not been addressed and implemented in previous plans.

The Action/Implementation Plan describes explicitly how the region will work together to achieve its goals and measurable objectives by including the following elements:

An outline of the steps required to take each selected high-priority activity from inception to successful completion. Yes No Location:

Chapter 4

A roster of the key individuals and institutions that will be responsible for implementing and supporting these steps. Yes No Location:

Chapter 4

A reasonable estimate of the costs associated with implementing the activity. Yes No Location:

Chapter 4

REVIEW & ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

A list of the integrated funding sources (public, private, non-profit) to support the costs.

Yes No Location:

Chapter 4

A realistic time frame for execution (i.e. implementation schedule), with relevant benchmarks and performance measures that address overall impact.

Yes No Location:

Chapter 4

The identification of prioritized activities includes broad-based participation from regional stakeholders, including those affected by the proposed activities and those that can ensure their success.

Yes No Location:

Chapter 4

Comments: The COG had a comprehensive public participation process with focus groups per regional industry focus. The CEDS Advisory Committee also created an evaluation criteria and prioritization process for identifying strategic regional projects.

2-D. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The “Evaluation Framework” section meets the following criteria:

It answers the questions, “How are we doing?” and “What can we do better?” by applying the SWOT analysis.

Yes No

It cascades from the strategic direction and action plan.

Yes No

REVIEW & ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Performance measures are identified to evaluate the progress of activities in achieving the vision, goals and objectives. Yes No
Location:

Chapter 6, Appendix A and B

Performance measures go beyond job creation to address linkages to other important factors, such as conditions the region needs to reverse or create, and what regional assets can be leveraged. Yes No
Location:

Chapter 6, Appendix A and B

Comments: The evaluation framework not only provides for comprehensive measurement of the goals, but also defines comprehensive review and evaluation for economic development projects looking the receive funding. It concisely defines the priority areas for the region and are measured by the goals of the plan.

2-E. ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

The “Economic Resilience” section addresses the following two approaches in harmony with the principles outlined in EDA’s CEDS Content Guidelines:

“Steady State” Initiatives: Planning for and implementing resilience through specific goals or actions to bolster the long-term economic durability of the region.

Yes No Location:

Chapter 4

REVIEW & ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

“Responsive” Initiatives: Establishing information networks among the various stakeholders in the region to encourage active and regular communications between the public, private, education, and non-profit sectors. The “Economic Resilience” section demonstrates how the region serves as a source of information to deal with an economic challenge and a convener of regional stakeholders to gather data and encourage collaboration in the post-disruption stage.

Yes No Location:

Chapter 4

Comments: The plan creates avenues for long term growth and success at all level of economic development and has clearly defined measures of success in all areas. Stakeholders will be involved in the evaluating of projects, the funding of projects and the assessment of project success. The performance measures and evaluation measures will assist greatly in this process.

3. FORMAT

The structure and presentation of the information in the CEDS takes the following factors into consideration:

Keeps the audience in mind with respect to the length of the document, the presence of an executive summary, the placement of supporting data, etc.

Yes No

Communicates creatively by having a professional and appealing look and feel, by including attractive and informative graphics and photos, and by using both hard-copy and electronic formats.

Yes No

Thinks beyond the document by finding ways to use it to engage stakeholders in meaningful conversations, and to leverage its relevance and use through social media.

Yes No

REVIEW & ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Comments: The formatting, length and layout of the document was strategic in engaging both those familiar with economic development and those who are not. The over 70 stakeholders who reviewed the plan found it informative, concise, easy to understand and found the graphics gave a clear overview of the region’s successes and challenges.

4. PREPARATION

The preparation of the CEDS included the following key steps and elements:

A strategy committee, which broadly represents the main economic interests of the region, was formed to facilitate the planning process, and to develop and update the CEDS.

Yes No Location:

Appendix C, D, E, F and G

The CEDS documents how the planning organization collaborated with its diverse set of stakeholders in the formation of its strategy committee and the development of the CEDS.

Yes No Location:

Appendix C, D, E, F and G

The planning organization has or will collaborate with EDA and other entities funded by EDA (e.g. University Centers, Economic Development Districts, Tribes) on the development and implementation of the CEDS.

Yes No Location:

Appendix C, D, E, F and G

Vision Statement

Northeastern Connecticut is a special place, having tremendous natural resources and a location that makes it accessible to some of the finest cultural and recreation destinations in New England. The region, economically, is home to many successes. The region also has many economic challenges, most of which have been longstanding and unresolved. Unemployment, underemployment, inadequate wages, unacceptable drop-out rates, poverty, and lack of affordable housing continue to challenge the region, as they have for more than forty years. To overcome these challenges, it is imperative that the Region address, in a sustained manner, the issues that have held the Region back from realizing its full potential

To attract and retain employees, it is necessary to examine the make-up and quality of housing stock, most of which was built pre-1970. Focusing on walkable communities, more diversified housing options, and neighborhoods, will attract younger residents and allow residents to age in place, or at least remain in their current communities. Examining housing and zoning codes, to ensure not only enforcement, but also find out whether restrictive zoning is excluding population groups we are trying to attract and retain. Expanding the opportunities of individuals to access loan funding, such as small cities and community development block grants, will allow homeowners and landlords to make much needed cosmetic and safety repairs to their property. Model programs being run in municipalities such as Coventry, Manchester and South Windsor serve as a guide for how to address more properties and, in turn, help more residents live in quality and safe housing.

To promote smart and diverse economic development in the region, it is imperative that we address some of the long-standing challenges and obstacles that have brought us here. It is important to address the educational attainment and skill level gap affecting a high percentage of our potential workforce. Better collaboration is needed between our primary schools, technical schools, local colleges, and the department of labor. We need a more detailed assessment of the needs of the workforce and then to coordinate with our education and job programs to provide the resources that can help people acquire the skills and tools needed to enter the workforce and obtain meaningful, stable, and better job.

This plan strives to use the needs of the regions citizens and employers to establish strategies to address some of its long-standing issues. This plan purposefully does not include projects as the goal is to make sure the projects approved by the CEDS Strategic Partners will focus on creating and attracting companies that hire, train and support people from the region and those companies provide living wages and full-time benefitted employment. All projects seeking available funding through this CEDS, must meet the minimum requirements in the Evaluation Framework and Measures Priority System for Ranking Projects located in Appendix A of this document.

page left blank intentionally

Contents

Section	Page
Submission Letter	
EDA Checklist	i - xvii
One Introduction	5
Two Regional Overview	13
Three SWOT Analysis	63
Four Action Plan - Moving the Region Forward	71
Five Performance Measures	83
Appendix A Evaluation Framework and Measures Priority System for Ranking Projects	87
Appendix B Projects and Initiatives	95
Appendix C Outreach	97
Appendix D Review	105
Appendix E Strategic Partners	107
Appendix F Public Notices and Public Hearings	115
Appendix G Stakeholder Comments and Incorporation	117
Appendix H Municipal Adoption and Resolution	139
Appendix I CT Office of Policy and Management Approval Letter	141
Appendix J CT Dept. of Economic and Community Development Approval	143

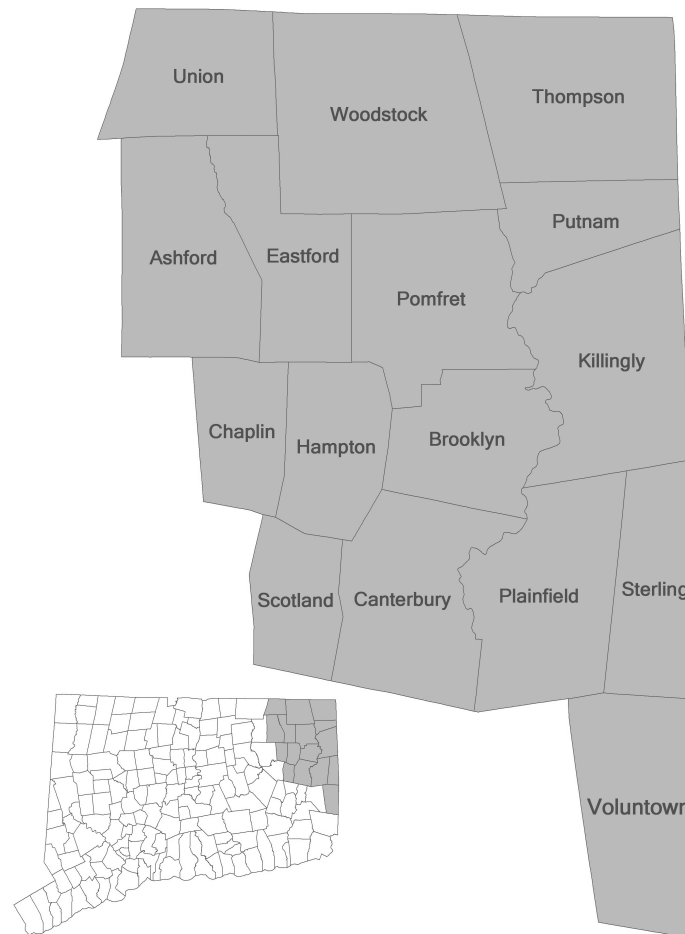
Page Left Blank Intentionally

One

Introduction

The Northeastern Connecticut Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) represents the region's economic strategy - a blueprint for making economic investment and strategic policy decisions. A CEDS is the federally designated process employed across the nation to provide a common approach to addressing the economic health of a region. As a region, we need to closely examine the issues that challenge our economic health and design a strategy around those challenges to address, in a sustainable and meaningful way, the entrenched and generational needs. The CEDS provides a process for collectively addressing the economic challenges facing the region and its member towns. It is intended to present a fiscally realistic evaluation of projects and strategies to promote the Region's economic wellbeing. The Economic Development Administration explains the purpose of a CEDS in the following way:

Simply put, a CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development. A CEDS is the result of a regionally-owned planning process designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of an area or region. It is a key component in establishing and maintaining a robust economic ecosystem by helping to build regional capacity (through hard and soft infrastructure) that contributes to individual, firm, and community success. The CEDS provides a vehicle for individuals, organizations, local governments, institutes of learning, and private industry to engage in a meaningful conversation and debate about what capacity building efforts would best serve economic development in the region. The CEDS should take into account and, where appropriate, integrate or leverage other regional planning efforts, ... private sector resources, and state support which can advance a



Northeastern Connecticut Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

region's CEDS goals and objectives. Regions must update their CEDS at least every five years to qualify for EDA assistance under its Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance programs. In addition, a CEDS is a prerequisite for designation by EDA as an Economic Development District (EDD).¹

The Region is made up of the towns of Ashford, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Eastford, Hampton, Killingly, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Scotland, Sterling, Thompson, Union, Voluntown and Woodstock. Collectively, the sixteen towns make up the Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (NECCOG). NECCOG, in its many iterations, first as a regional planning agency formed in 1958 and covering ten towns to sixteen today, has been developing economic plans for over 40 years. The Region, through NECCOG, developed its first Overall Economic Development Plan in 1974. In 1999, NECCOG formed a partnership with the Windham Region Planning Agency to develop its first CEDS. The Economic Development Administration (EDA) approved the Region's (then known as the Northeast Economic Partnership covering 22 towns) CEDS in 2002. In 2007, the Partnership conducted its first five-year update of the CEDS and in 2010 the state of Connecticut granted the Partnership State Economic Development District status. Shortly after that designation the State moved to consolidate planning regions in Connecticut and make each a regional council of governments. The Windham region was broken into three parts, with NECCOG acquiring three of their towns (Scotland, Hampton and Chaplin) and adding one town from another region to the South, Voluntown. The resulting region of NECCOG was quite different from its predecessor and necessitated the redrafting of the CEDS. This document represents the new CEDS for the NECCOG region.

How Will the Plan Be Used?

The CEDS serves as a blueprint for making economic investment and policy decisions. The plan is intended to be dynamic - subject to change over time as the needs of the Region change. (The Plan provides a process for collectively addressing the economic challenges facing the region and its member towns that

¹ Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) - Content Guidelines: Recommendations for Creating an Impactful CEDS



Northeastern Connecticut Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

is intended to present a fiscally realistic evaluation of projects and strategies that promote the economic well-being of the Region). The CEDS will be used by the 16 member towns of NECCOG individually regarding the identification of local priorities and at the regional level for projects/strategies that are regionally beneficial.

Who is Responsible for the Plan?

NECCOG is responsible for the facilitation and maintenance of the CEDS. The CEDS process, in conformance with EDA guidelines, is written into NECCOG's bylaws. Public Act 10-168, An Act Concerning Regional Economic Development, further enhances NECCOG's role. This act enables regional councils of governments and regional economic development organizations to propose Regional Economic Development Districts (REDDs) status. A REDD is a federally, and in Connecticut's case, a state designated economic development district. The act specifies criteria for drawing district boundaries and procedures for preparing, reviewing, and approving strategies. The procedures require proposed districts and strategies to be approved by the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) commissioner and Office of Policy and Management (OPM) secretary. Once the submitted plan is approved, the region and its municipalities may apply for and receive approval for federal funds from the U. S. Department of Commerce.

Critical Factors in the Planning Process

The planning process investigated how the NECCOG region might develop by evaluating projected population, employment growth, transportation, housing, financial capacity, and the business environment. NECCOG used input from public workshops, member towns, business community and nonprofit stakeholders to fully develop the CEDS. Taking a regional view, the CEDS attempts to address:



Our Objective

Build on our established strengths, invest in growth and emerging sectors; differentiate based on our key assets:

- **Grow the Business Clusters that Drive Connecticut's Economy and Encourage Entrepreneurial Development**
 1. Retain and grow our existing job base
 2. Facilitate ecosystems for industries to strengthen, connect, and collaborate
 3. Support entrepreneurial activities
 4. Build exports and encourage foreign direct investment
 5. Promote Connecticut's brand effectively nationally and internationally
- **Ensure a Workforce that Meets the Needs of the Future**
 1. Understand the future needs of employers
 2. With education partners, grow and enrich our talent pool and develop both short and long range initiatives to invest in our institutions around the key STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) skills
- **Create Livable, Vibrant Communities**
 1. Create vibrant neighborhoods through innovation, art, culture, and historic preservation
 2. Ensure quality housing at a broad range of prices
- **Invest in Infrastructure and Support Systems that will Foster Business Growth**
 1. Continue to strategically invest in transportation infrastructure
 2. Work to reduce or offset the cost of energy while reducing greenhouse gas emissions
 3. Continue efforts to create a more responsive government that reforms the regulatory environment and makes it easier to do business in the state
 4. Encourage environmentally-friendly, modern, and resilient development

- ▶ How land use affects economic development and sustainability
- ▶ Maintenance of the existing economic structure
- ▶ Economic and employment opportunities
- ▶ How investments in transportation, housing, education influence growth
- ▶ How economic projects are selected
- ▶ How economic projects serve regional needs
- ▶ How economic development impacts the Region's rural character
- ▶ Enhancing the connectivity of the Region's economy within the state, nation, and the world

Stakeholder and Public Involvement Process

NECCOG has a strong commitment to informing and seeking the advice of the region's residents as well as public and private stakeholders in the development and maintenance of the CEDS. NECCOG's public participation plan is designed to ensure opportunities for the public to express its views and to become active participants in the decision-making process. NECCOG believes that public input into its process is valuable and makes its services and programs better. CEDS planning is intended to provide a two-way process of information and idea-sharing with the public and directly affected communities and the region at large. The NECCOG Participation Plan is designed with the following goals:

- ▶ Open access, effective communication - leading to knowledgeable, informed stakeholders
- ▶ Regional stakeholders including municipal leaders, engaged early and continuously in a collaborative, inclusive, accessible transportation planning process
- ▶ Seeking out under-involved populations within the region, including minority, low income, senior citizen, and immobile populations.

Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

- ▶ Holding public meetings at sites convenient to potentially affected citizens and promoting meetings in a manner appropriate to the population groups from which feedback is desired.
- ▶ Maintain contact with “interested parties” and key stakeholders throughout the CEDS planning process.
- ▶ NECCOG will keep the public informed of on-going CEDS related activities on a continuous basis, using a variety of written and graphic means.
- ▶ Employ visual techniques to depict transportation conditions and plans, including charts, graphs, photo interpretation, maps, GIS, and/or computer simulation.

NECCOG’s website will be in compliance with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act for disabled users.

Measurement and Accountability

Effective plans require not only action, but follow-up review and evaluation. Each of the previous plans address the need for targeted economic development, better coordination and cooperation within the region, expanding educational and job training resources and addressing some of the fundamental challenges facing our low-income community members - transportation access, education and job training and housing issues.

The expectation is that this plan will generate measurable signs of improvement toward developing and enhancing the region’s economy in a sustainable manner. Toward that end, NECCOG will annually report on the following performance measures:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ▶ Number of Jobs Created | ▶ Number of Jobs Retained |
| ▶ Full Time Positions | ▶ Amount of Private Investment |
| ▶ Part-Time Positions | |

EDA Invest Priorities

Collaborative Regional Innovation: Projects that increase the development and growth of innovation clusters which, based on objective economic data, are existing regional competitive strengths. Public/Private Partnerships Projects that use both public and private sector assets and complementary investments by other government/public entities and/or nonprofits.

National Strategic Priorities that: encourage job growth and business expansion in manufacturing, including advanced manufacturing, sustainable manufacturing, and manufacturing’s supply chains; assist communities severely impacted by the declining use of coal; Increase economic resiliency, including resilience to the effects of natural disasters and climate change; assist with natural disaster mitigation and recovery; aimed at restoring/improving urban waters and the surrounding communities

assist and/or support: information technology infrastructure (for example, broadband or smart grid); communities severely impacted by industry restructuring; job-driven skills development; access to capital for small- and medium-sized and ethnically diverse enterprises; innovations in science and health care; and advancement of science and research parks other technology transfer, or technology commercialization efforts.

Global Competitiveness: Projects that support high-growth businesses and innovation-based entrepreneurs to expand and compete in global markets, especially investments that expand U.S. exports, encourage foreign direct investment, promote the repatriation of jobs back to the U.S, and position U.S. firms to become leaders in global industries.

Environmentally-Sustainable Development: Projects that promote job creation and economic prosperity through enhancing environmental quality and developing and implementing green products, processes, places, and buildings as part of the green economy. This includes projects that encourage job growth, business expansion, and innovations in energy-efficient technologies and clean energy, including alternative fuel technologies

Underserved Communities: Investments that strengthen diverse communities that have suffered disproportionate economic distress and job losses and/or are rebuilding to become more competitive in the global economy, including economic development initiatives that help unemployed and underemployed young adults obtain the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed.

Source: <https://www.eda.gov/about/investment-priorities.htm>

CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT
 POLICIES: THE PLAN FOR
 CONNECTICUT



2013-2018

Prepared by the Office of Policy and Management
 In accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Section 14-200

Connecticut's Growth Management Principles

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

- Amount of Public Sector Investment
- Number of Investments
- Types of Investments
- Changes in Educational Attainment
- Changes in Job Training Programs
- Average Wages

The primary goal of the CEDS is to address some of the longstanding issues in the region, as it pertains to job quality, living wages, increased access to education and training, quality and affordable housing, and empowering the region's citizens to achieve a better quality of life.

Consistency with Connecticut Plans

In developing this plan effort was made to be consistent with both the state's Economic Development Plan and the Conservation and Development Policies: The Plan for Connecticut - in particular that plan's six growth management principles.

EDA's investment priorities are designed to provide an overarching framework to guide the agency's investment portfolio to ensure its investments contribute the strongest positive impact on sustainable regional economic growth and diversification. Competitive applications will be responsive to the evaluation criteria listed under each individual funding announcement, including at least one of the following investment priorities.

NECCOG Commitment

Section 8b of the NECCOG Bylaws outlines NECCOG's commitment to the CEDS process and the inclusionary approach to economic development:

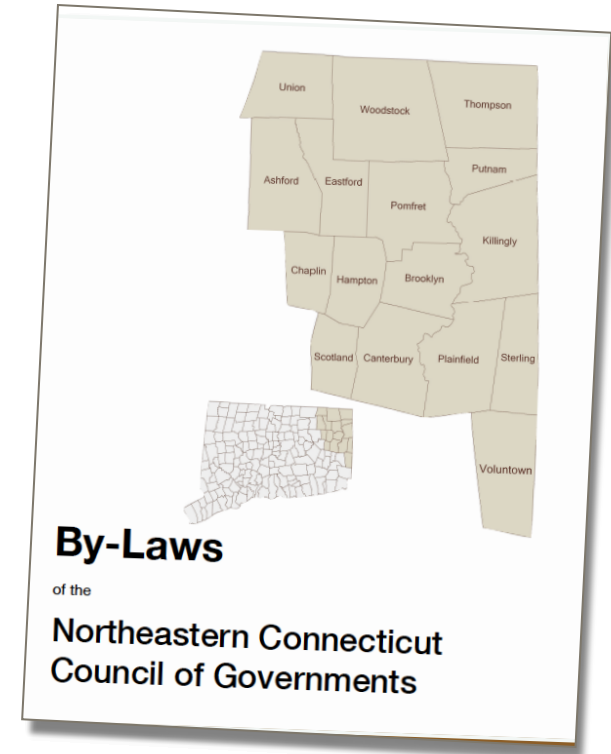
Regional Economic Development Committee

- a. *NECCOG shall appoint a Regional Economic Development Committee to develop and maintain the Region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The purpose of the Regional Economic Development Committee is to:*

1. *To promote economic development and opportunity in the NECCOG region;*

Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

2. To increase employment opportunities for unemployed and underemployed persons and maximizes effective development and use of the workforce;
 3. Promotes the use of technology in economic development, including access to high-speed telecommunications;
 4. To assist and coordinate economic development planning efforts of local governments and local economic development organizations in the region;
 5. To coordinate economic development planning with transportation planning, smart growth, environmental protection, education, and other programs and activities that might stimulate the region's economic betterment;
 6. To implement an economic development technical assistance program that includes workshops, assistance in implementing economic development programs, and assistance to local organizations in applying for grants for economic development purposes;
- b. The Regional Economic Development Committee shall represent the main economic interests of the region, and shall, in accordance with EDA regulations, include Private Sector Representatives as a majority of its membership. At a minimum the Regional Economic Development Committee shall include:
- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public officials;• Community leaders;• Representative of the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board;• Representative of the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System;• Representative of Quinebaug Valley Community College; | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minority and Labor groups; and• Private individuals;• Eastern, Northeast and Windham Chambers of Commerce;• Connecticut Farm Bureau• Additional membership shall be determined at the discretion of the executive director of NECCOG. |
|--|---|
- c. The Regional Economic Development Committee Council shall meet not less than quarterly to(1) ensure that the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is maintained and updated as needed, and (2)



ensure the regular interaction of the public, private and non-profit sectors in the Region's economic development.

- d. Regional Economic Development Committee shall develop bylaws and shall submit such and any modification to such bylaws as may be proposed for approval by the NECCOG Council.*

Two

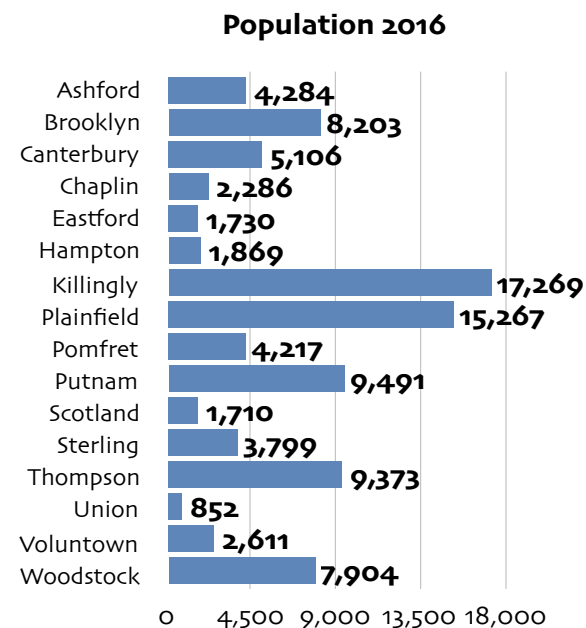
Regional Overview

The region, which forms the northeastern corner of Connecticut, covers 16 of the state’s 169 towns: Ashford, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Eastford, Hampton, Killingly, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Scotland, Sterling, Thompson, Union, Voluntown and Woodstock. Geographically, the Region is large (just over ten percent of Connecticut’s total area) - covering 562.8 square miles. The region is often referred to as the “Quiet Corner” and more recently as the “Last Green Valley” because of its inclusion in the Federal Designated National Heritage Corridor program in 1994.

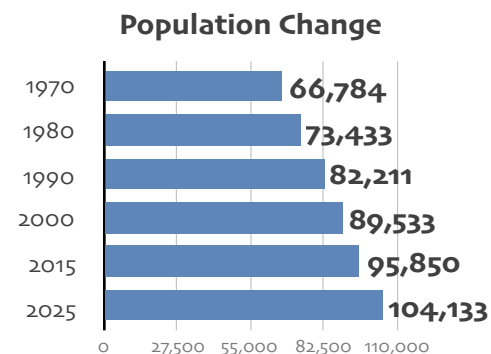
The region is home to a range of natural and historic New England landscapes, making it visually quintessential New England. The landscape is characterized by rolling hills, forests, classic New England villages, former mill towns and farms. The region, for more than forty years and especially during the past 20 years, has grown in population, housing and businesses. The reasons for this growth are tied to the strategic location of the region; relative low costs for land and housing; and affordable labor.

Historically, the region’s economic development was heavily tied to water power. The Quinebaug River and its tributaries, such as the Moosup, Five Mile, and French Rivers, have largely defined the existence of the region in northeastern Connecticut. Most of the Region lies in the Quinebaug River’s watershed, but many of the region’s western portion belongs to the Shetucket River watershed. Both rivers meet to the south and combine with the Yantic River to form the Thames River. These waterways in the region played a pivotal role in 1st American Industrial Revolution and allowed spinning and weaving machines of local mills to be operated by water power. In the 1920’s steam eventually replaced waterpower and by the 1970s the textile mills of the region had either moved south or off-shore to cheaper labor and lower production costs.²

² <http://americanhistory.about.com/od/industrialrev/a/indrevoverview.htm>

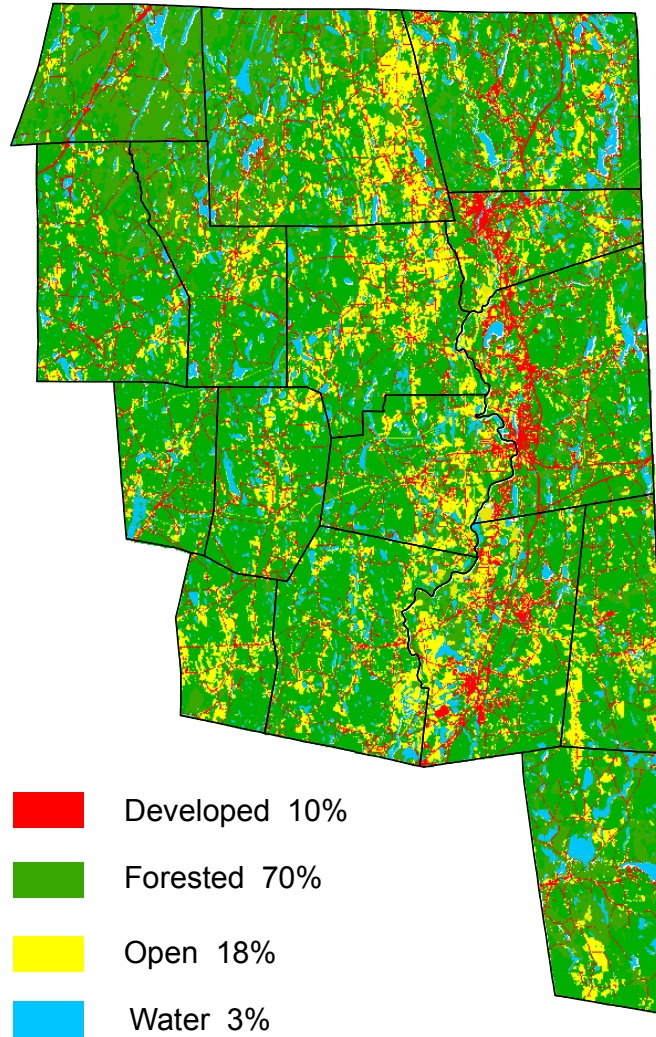


Source: Connecticut Department of Public Health



Source: <http://web2.uconn.edu/ctscdc/projections.html>

2010 Land Use/ Land Cover



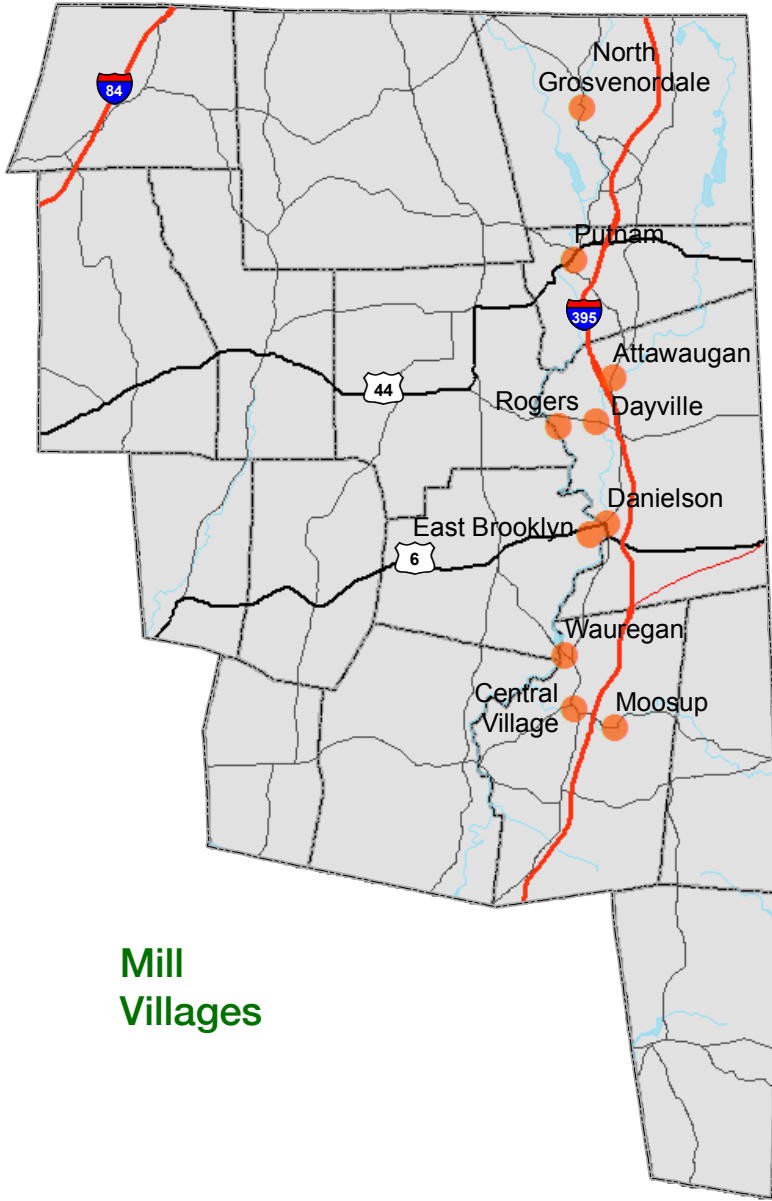
Source: UCONN Center for Land Use Education and Research

With the exception of the eleven mill villages located along the Route 12 corridor, where most of the region's economic activity takes place, the landscape is rural and characterized by rolling hills, forests, farms, and single-family homes. The population concentrations that resulted from the Industrial Revolution and the region's mill villages were developed in the 19th and 20th centuries in association with water-powered manufacturing and are still reflected today in population distribution.

The Region is located close to New England's largest metropolitan areas: Providence, Rhode Island, and Worcester and Boston, Massachusetts - which collectively have a workforce of more than 3 million persons. The region is also close to the Hartford metro area as well as the New London metro area (which includes the Groton/New London Submarine Base and two of the largest Native American gaming casinos in the world). While the Hartford metro area has in recent years been in economic decline, the New London Area, because of new defense contracts, is seeing a surge in employment. They also form a ready made audience for the many destinations located in the region. The 2010 Census designated much of the Interstate-395 corridor, including the areas of Woodstock, Thompson, Putnam, Pomfret, Killingly, Brooklyn and Plainfield, as part of the Worcester Urbanized Area. Regional growth in population, housing, and business are tied to the strategic location; relative low costs for land and housing; and affordable labor. Many newer residents to the Region have located here because of its access to these metro areas while having a rural lifestyle and a choice of more affordable housing options.

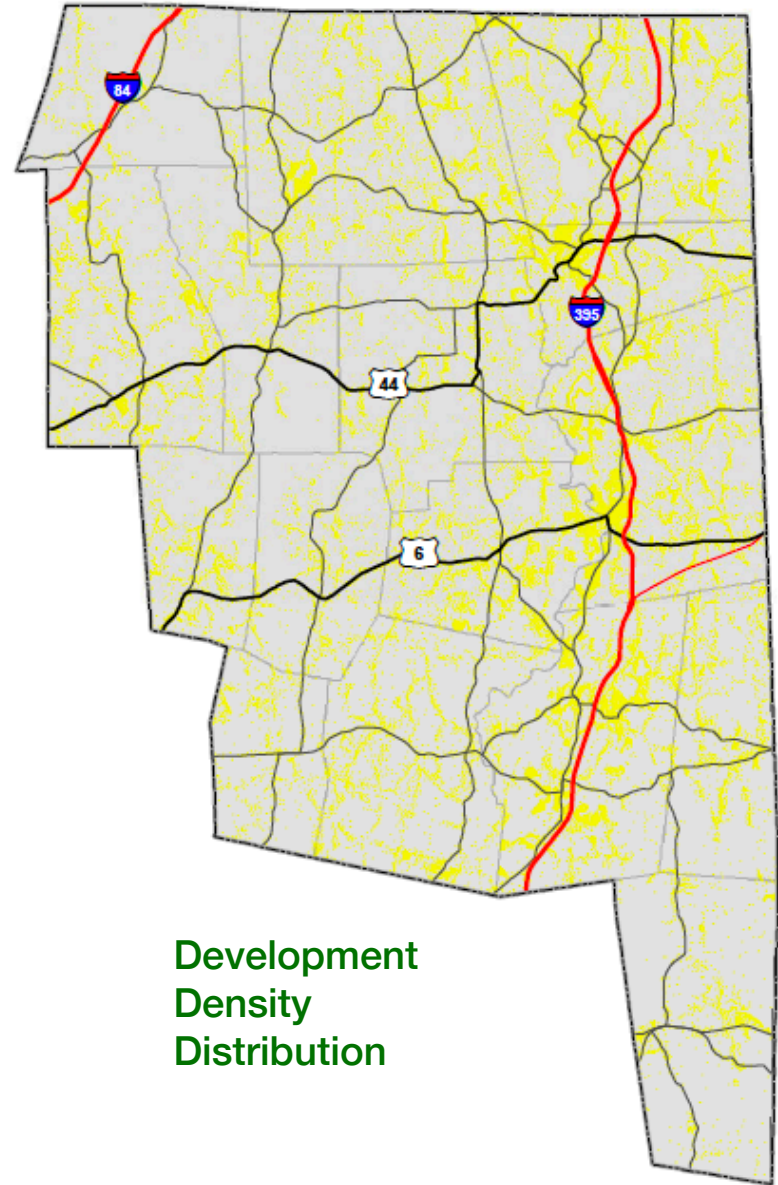
In 2015, the Region had a population of 95,880 (186.9 persons per square mile - compared to 647.6 persons per square mile for the State) making it one of the least populated regions in Connecticut. The Region contains just 2.7 percent of the state's population and the average size of the Region's towns was 5,992 persons in 2015. The largest population is found in Killingly (17,250) and the smallest in Union (also the State's smallest population with 913 persons). From 1975 to 2015 the region gained more than 31,345 persons - about one-third of the present population. Most of this growth occurred in previously undeveloped locations through the construction of single family homes. Population projections indicate

Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023



Mill Villages

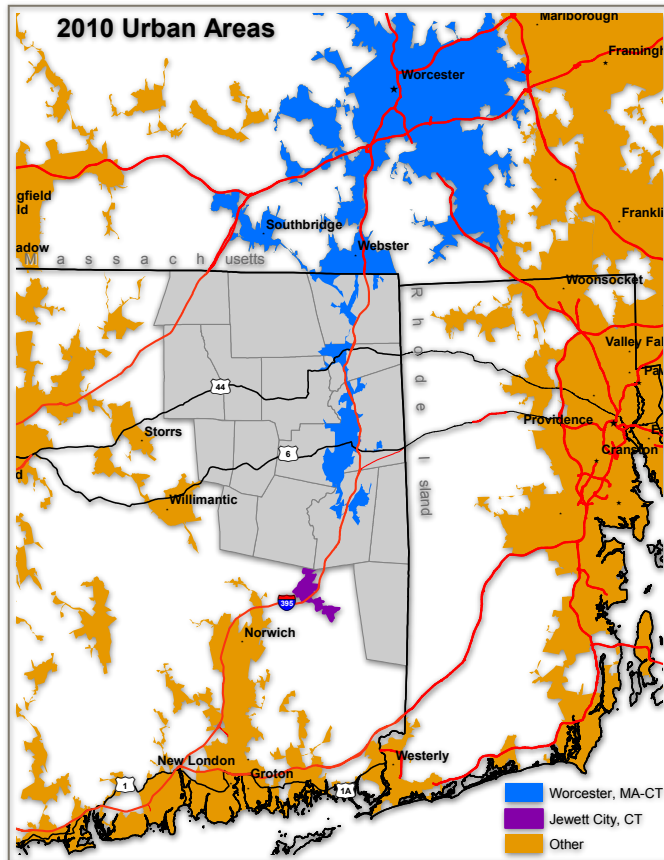
Source: NECCOG GIS



Development Density Distribution

Source: NECCOG GIS

Northeastern Connecticut Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023



Source: <https://factfinder.census.gov>

that the region will grow to more than 104,000 persons by 2025. Despite those projections, during the past five years each of the Region's towns has realized a very modest population decline. According to the Connecticut State Data Center, the Region is projected to experience roughly 7.8% population growth, to 104,128 persons, from 2010 to 2025. The towns of Sterling (23.8%), Union (16.5%), Brooklyn (15.4%), Pomfret (14.8%), and Woodstock (11.3%) were projected to experience the sharpest increase in population³. The state projected population increase for the same time period is estimated to increase by 9.5%.⁴

The towns of northeastern Connecticut are relatively homogenous, racially, and ethnically- and not in balance when compared to Connecticut. The 2015 Census reveals that approximately 95.6% of the Region's population were "White", compared with 77.6% in the State, only 1.25% were "Black/African American", compared with 10.1% in the State. The Asian populations represents less than 1.1% of the Region's population, compared with 3.8% in the State. "American Indian or Alaskan Native" made up less than 1% of the Region's population, less than the State's average and similarly, the Region's Hispanic population was also less than 1%, much less than the 13.4% for Connecticut.⁵

The Region's landscape and geology, shaped by ancient glacial activity, lends itself to prime agricultural land on hill tops and in river valleys. Although agriculture as a way of life has waned significantly in southern New England since the early twentieth century, significant portions of towns such as Woodstock, Pomfret, and Scotland remain farmland. Each town in the region actively promotes the preservation and protection of farm, forest and open space lands and many have been aggressive in purchasing development rights from land owners.

According to 2010 Data from the University of Connecticut, Center for Land Use Education and Research landcover in northeastern Connecticut consisted of nearly 10% "Agricultural Field", Over 71% forested land, and 9.3% "Developed". From town to town, land cover values vary significantly. For example, in 2010, 18.3% of

³ <http://factfinder.census.gov>

⁴ <http://web2.uconn.edu/ctscd/projections.html>

⁵ <http://factfinder.census.gov>

An urban area will comprise a densely settled core of census tracts and/or census blocks that meet minimum population density requirements, along with adjacent territory containing non-residential urban land uses as well as territory with low population density included to link outlying densely settled territory with the densely settled core. To qualify as an urban area, the territory identified according to criteria must encompass at least 2,500 people, at least 1,500 of which reside outside institutional group quarters. The Census Bureau identifies two types of urban areas:

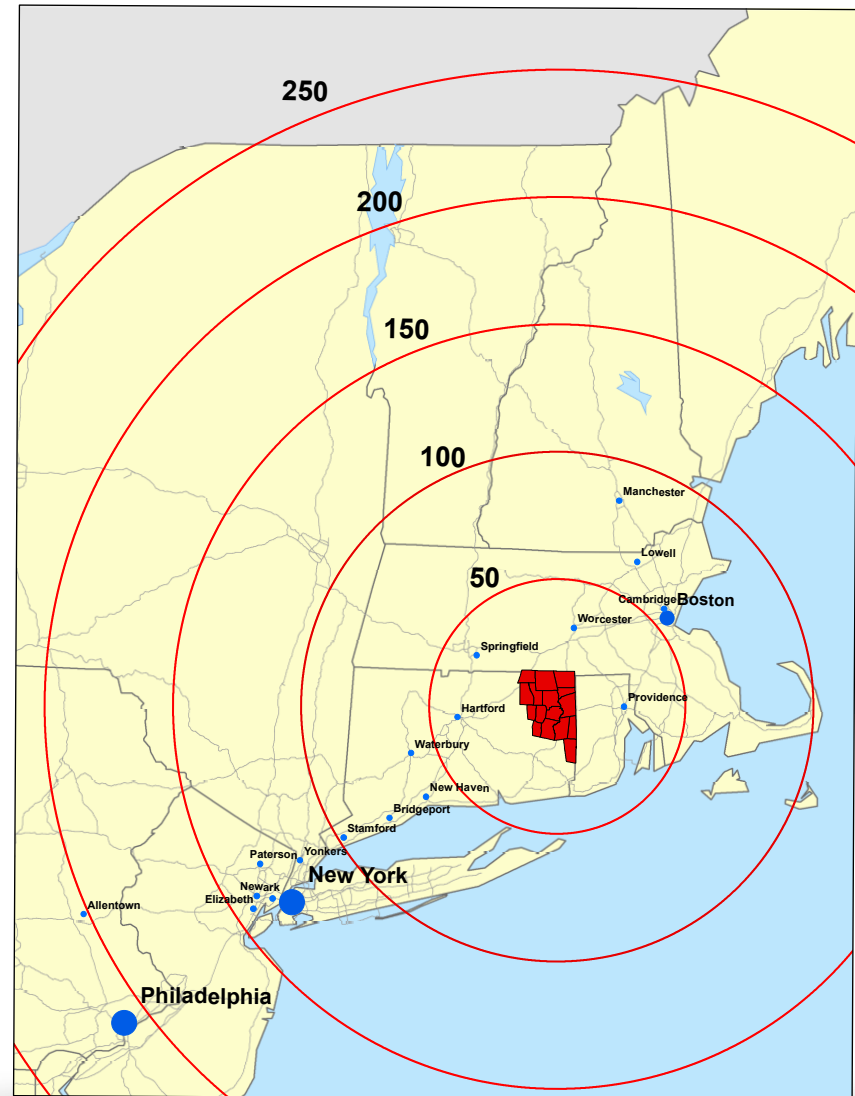
- Urbanized Areas (UA's) of 50,000 or more people;
- Urban Clusters (UC's) of at least 2,500 and less than 50,000 people.

Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

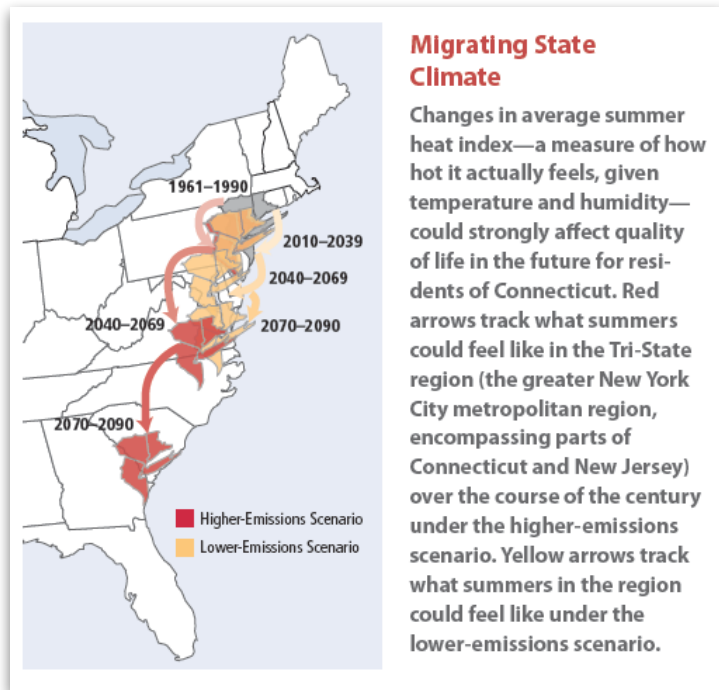
Putnam’s land cover was classified as “Developed”, while Voluntown and Scotland had values of 5.8% and 5.9%, respectively. Putnam was also the Region’s least forested town. 59.1% of Putnam’s land cover was classified as forested, while 84.2% of Union’s land cover was classified as forested, most of it being “Coniferous Forest”. Union, however, had the least amount of land classified as “Agricultural Field”, only 2.6%. Pomfret and Scotland, on the other hand, were 17.1% and 16.9% “Agricultural Field”, respectively. Northeastern Connecticut has diverse land use, with its rich industrial history, abundance of agricultural land, and proximity to Interstate 395, other major highways, and railroads.

Fifteen of the 16 towns have some form of zoning as enabled by Connecticut law. Eastford is the one town without zoning - one of two in the state. Each of the towns has subdivision regulations in place and several towns (Putnam, Killingly, Brooklyn and Plainfield) either have or will have aquifer protection regulations due to the location of high yield aquifers and public drinking water wells. The regulations by the Region’s towns prohibit most development in floodplains to minimize the danger and financial losses of flooding. Uses that may be allowed would not be excessively impacted by flooding, such as parks, golf courses, playgrounds, etc. Each town has in place an ordinance to damages caused by flooding and to regulate in the floodplain. In addition, these ordinances prohibit development in the floodplain without a permit. No development in the flood hazard area is permitted to increase the base flood elevation or impact other properties. Each of the municipalities has in place, as by law, a plan of conservation and development (POCD). The POCD (the Region and the State also have POCDs) is the communities blueprint for future development and investment - covering a range of issues from land use, transportation, natural resources, agriculture, economic development, public safety and education.

At the local level, each town has their own land use regulations which in most cases differ greatly from the neighboring town. With all the varying regulations there is



Source: NECCOG GIS



little coordination or discussion between towns. This can cause the region as a whole to miss opportunities because we frequently operate in isolation. Developers spend much time visiting and learning about other towns, yet the regulations stop at the town line while the problems regarding regulations do not.

The interdependence of local economies has contributed to growth that somewhat preserves the development patterns of the early twentieth century. State-owned forest and parks, land trusts, and municipal regulations seek to preserve the rural character of the Quinebaug Valley's upland areas. Towns in northeastern Connecticut, except for Eastford, have adopted zoning regulations. Towns regulate land use through subdivision, wetlands and watercourses regulations and local ordinances. Land use regulations allow towns to properly manage development, and the local tax base, in consistency with the local guidelines.

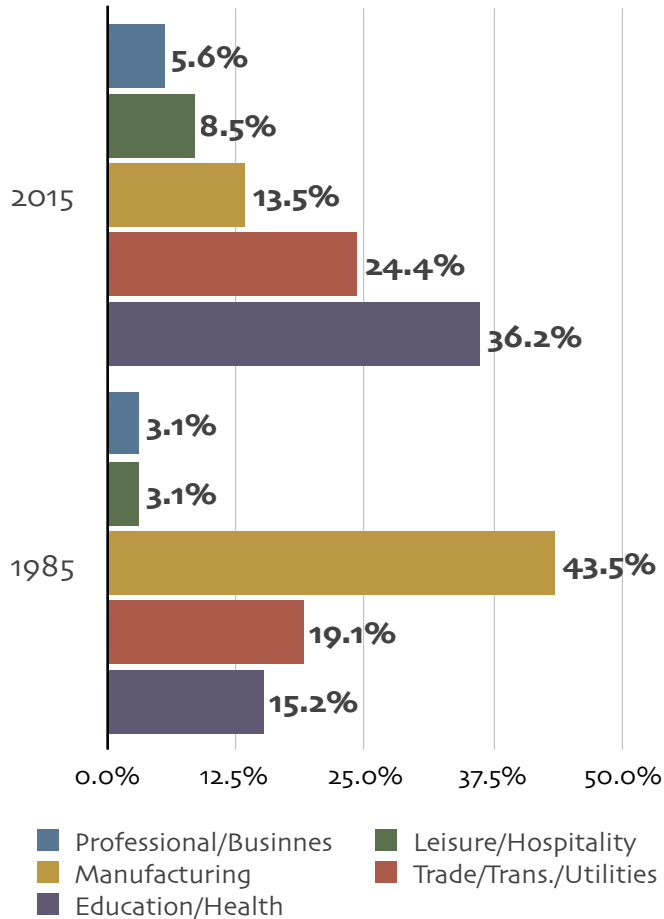
The Region's climate is categorized as a "humid continental climate" with four full seasons. Each season brings different weather conditions with regular precipitation and humidity that is relatively high year-round – there is no distinct "wet season" or "dry season". The Region's climate, however, appears to be changing, creating challenges in the near term as well as the long term. As referenced by the independent Union of Concerned Scientists' 2007 publication, *Confronting Climate Change in the U.S. Northeast*, "Since 1970 the Northeast [United States] has been warming at a rate of nearly 0.5°F per decade. Winter temperatures have risen even faster, at a rate of 1.3°F per decade from 1970 to 2000...climate projections found that over the next several decades, temperatures across the Northeast will rise 2.5°F to 4° F in winter and 1.5 F to 3.5F in summer regardless of the emissions choices we make now.....rainfall is expected to become more intense and periods of heavy rainfall are expected to become more frequent."⁶ Adapting to climate change will be challenging to the region, with economic implications.

⁶ *Confronting Climate Change in the U.S. Northeast*, July 2007 - A report of the Northeast Climate Impacts Assessment, pg. ix

For Consideration:

- ▶ *What are the impacts (positive and negative) of individual town land use regulations?*
- ▶ *What is the significance to the region as it relates to climate change?*
- ▶ *CT is currently seeing a high number of people leaving the state. If we need to evaluate why residents are leaving and what demographic groups are most contributing to this. An action plan must be developed to address this or the problem will continue.*
- ▶ *We need more comprehensive discussion, involving multiple groups and stake holder - taking a more wholistic approach and develop more ways to work together and acknowledge the problem is as large as it appears to be create greater buy in to address the individual problems, where many are interrelated. The problems while overwhelming must have concurrent efforts that address the problem in a coordinated way.*

Employment Composition



Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census

Economic Profile

The Region's business profile is diverse. It includes plastics, photonics, food processing, electronics, and distribution centers, antiques dealers, retailers, agriculture, and more. During the last half of the 1990's, the I-395/Route 12 Corridor realized significant commercial and industrial growth from existing and new businesses. Like much of New England, northeastern Connecticut's industrial and commercial past was firmly anchored in manufacturing and its river mills in particular. Today, the original mill businesses are gone. Some of the mills house new businesses and at least one (Central Village) has been converted to housing. Others are in various states of decline. However, manufacturing of both durable and non-durable goods still constitutes a significant share of the local employment profile. Income levels, on average, (per capita, household, or family) are below those for the rest of the state. This is especially true for the village areas of the region.

The economy of the Region has historically lagged that of the nation, state, and New England for at least 30 years, in terms of critical economic indicators; median household income, percentage of income spent on housing, poverty rates and families utilizing assistance programs. Killingly, Brooklyn, Plainfield, Putnam, Sterling, and Thompson each aggressively seek economic development. They have a long history of industrial and commercial use and have designated areas for growth in each of their towns. Interstate 395, the Providence and Worcester Railroad and an extensive network of water, sewer, gas, and other utilities make these towns desirable for this kind of development.

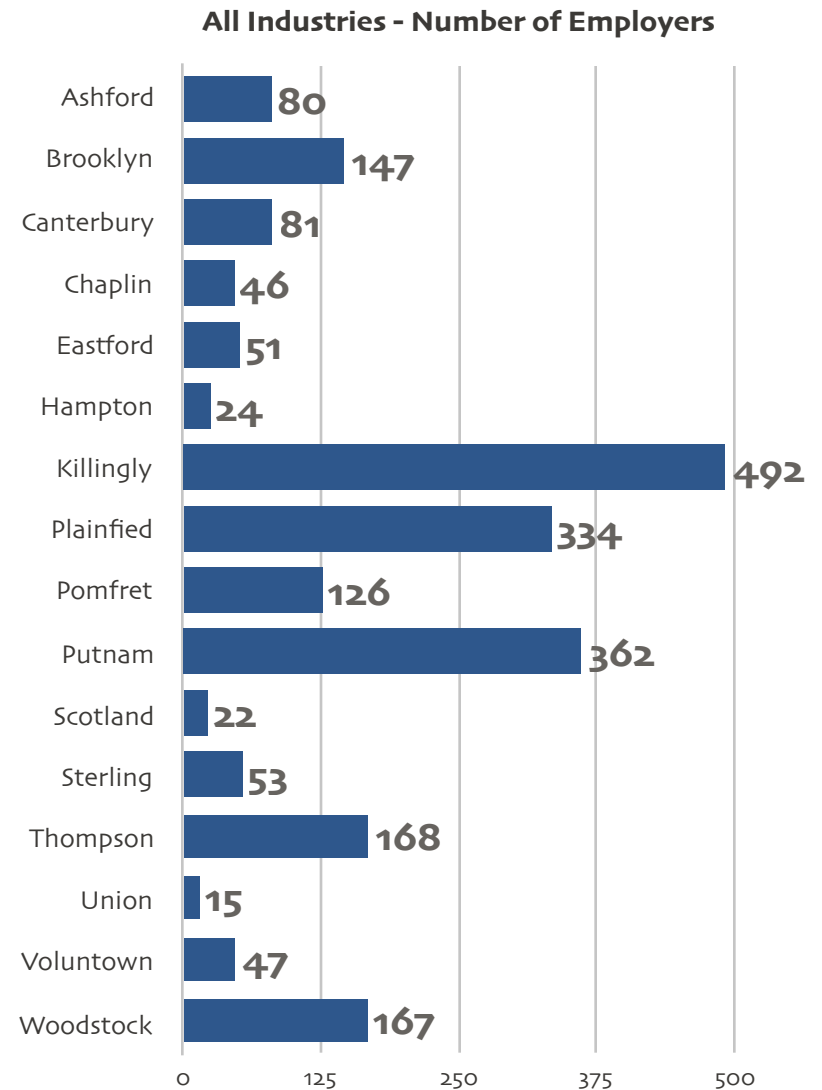
Interestingly and frustratingly, the fundamental issues, goal and objectives identified in various economic plans prepared by the Region have remained largely unchanged since 1974. These longstanding issues challenge the Region and act to stifle positive development. Issues of low educational attainment, high unemployment rates, high poverty level, an inadequate supply of affordable housing, access to affordable health care, limited public transportation (both inter and intra-regional), limited workforce and educational training continue to harm the Region.

**Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023**

The economic elements of the Region have drastically changed over the last 30 years. There has been a significant decrease in the manufacturing sector, which experienced a 30% decrease between 1985 and 2015. Manufacturing made up 43.5% of the occupations in the region in 1985 versus only 13.5% in 2015⁷. In contrast to the major reduction in manufacturing positions, the education, health, leisure, and hospitality industries saw a considerable boom and almost doubled over the same 30-year period.

In 1990, the top employers in the region were Day Kimball Hospital, Frito-Lay, Anchor Glass, the National Patent Development Corporation, Danielson Curtain, and Delta Rubber. Today, only Day Kimball, Frito-Lay and Delta Rubber remain with 1,000, 700 and 250 employees, respectively. Commercial enterprise can contribute greatly to the economic vitality of town, but it also helps to alleviate the burden of property taxes. The top five industries in 2016, According the state Department of Labor were Retail, Construction, Government, Health/Social Services, and Manufacturing, which is much different than the business composition of 20 years prior.

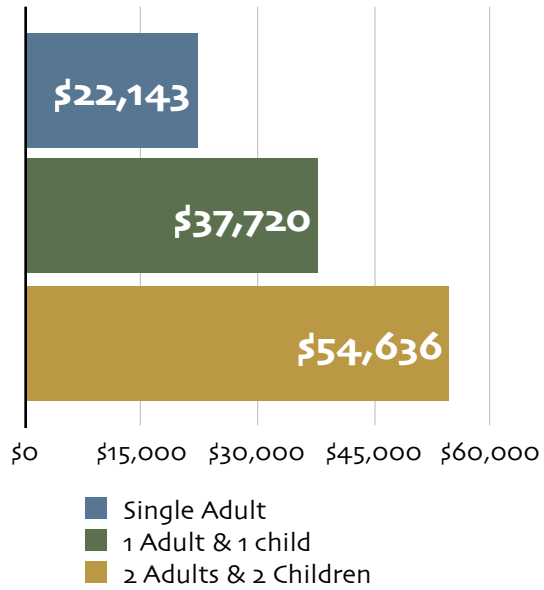
The highest property tax assessments in the region for 1996 and 2016 are listed below. It is important to know that the majority of recent companies have predominately part time or a limited number of employees, where most employees do not carry benefits.



Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census

⁷ ctdol.state.ct.us

ALICE Survival Budget



Source: <http://www.ctdatahaven.org/reports>

1996

- Kaman Aerospace
- National Patent/White Cross
- Anchor Glass
- Algonquin Gas Transmission Co.
- International Paper
- CCF Plainfield Dist.
- American Standard
- CT Yankee Racing

2015

- Lake Road Generating
- Plainfield Renewable Energy LLC
- Lowe's Home Centers
- Connecticut Light and Power
- Dayville Property Developments
- EAN Holdings LLC
- UNFI (United Natural Foods)
- Rite Aid
- Putnam Acquisition
- Walmart

The lasting impacts of the change in employment composition and the recession of 2008, include high unemployment numbers, particularly with the long-term unemployed population. Some of this is attributed to a large disconnect between workers' skills and employer needs and has created a quandary for both groups. It has caused many employers to lose confidence in our workforce triggering them to look outside the region for suitable employees. This issue has permeated much of the region, especially in towns along the I-395 corridor and remains a persistent issue. Industrial mills, which provided the economic engine for much of the region's modern history, are no longer in operation. The largest of these complexes in the region, American Standard in Plainfield, Anchor Glass, and Kaman Aerospace Corporation in Plainfield, have closed their operations. Over the past few decades, non-farm employment opportunities in the Region have been increasing in the health care, service industries (retail) and warehousing.

An example of the change from a manufacturing based economy to a more service based economy is Anchor Glass. Anchor Glass was located in the Dayville section

of Killingly from 1960 until its close in 1997. The Town of Killingly, in 1960 recruited and in part provided financial incentives for Anchor Glass to locate their facility in Dayville. Anchor Glass became the leader in glass manufacturing and employed

ALICE: Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed - ALICE describes working households that above the federal poverty line, but are unable to cover basic living expenses. (UNITED WAY)

Per the 5-year US Census, the healthcare industry (which is grouped with education and other social services) holds a 25.3% share of the Region's workforce.

similar plants world-wide), but also the costliest. Additionally, approximately 34 percent of the workforce did not have a high-school degree and their average age was in the early 50s. This added to the economic woes of the area. The region and its towns had no strategy to address the effects of the shutdown.

The subsequent sale of the property in 2005 resulted in the construction of Killingly Commons, a major retail destination with a large retail store (Target), large building supply store (Lowe's) and a large food store (Stop and Shop) coupled with restaurants and smaller retail operations. While the re-use of the property is a major plus and property tax generator (although not as much as the former use) for the Town, the resulting jobs are predominately retail with hourly wages and mostly part-time employees with no benefits.

Retail is centered mostly along the north-south corridor of the region, that follows the Quinebaug River, State Route 12, and Interstate 395. Smaller pockets of commercial zones, typically in village centers exist, away from the river valley. However, trade in this sector is densest in areas like Danielson, Dayville, Putnam, and Plainfield. Per the US Census 5-year survey retail trade employment in the region was 13.4%, compared to 10.9% in the State. "Box stores," such as a Lowe's, Wal-Mart, and Target, have moved to the Region in newer, highway-adjacent clusters. Smaller retail businesses still have a strong presence in the Region, both along the Quinebaug River corridor, and in upland village centers. Antique businesses are a significant share of downtown Putnam's economy and attracts buyers to the Region and their village center, has a densely developed, historic area adjacent to the towns mill buildings and the Quinebaug River. It has enjoyed a recent revival of small businesses and restaurants. Unique events in the region also draw in visitors, summer concerts, First Fridays, River Fire to name a few. The

over 3,000 persons at its peak. Closing the plant in 1997 resulted in 350 hourly and salaried employees, making an average of \$26.50 an hour, to lose their jobs. At the time the plant closed, it was the most productive plant in the organization (there were 15 other

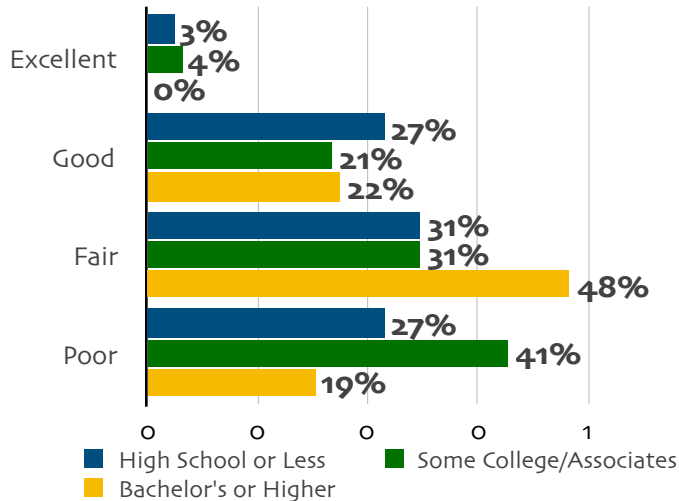


A study conducted in 1995 concluded that Anchor Glass was Killingly's second largest employer with 375 employees, adding \$110.2 million annually to the local economy.

Source: <http://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us>

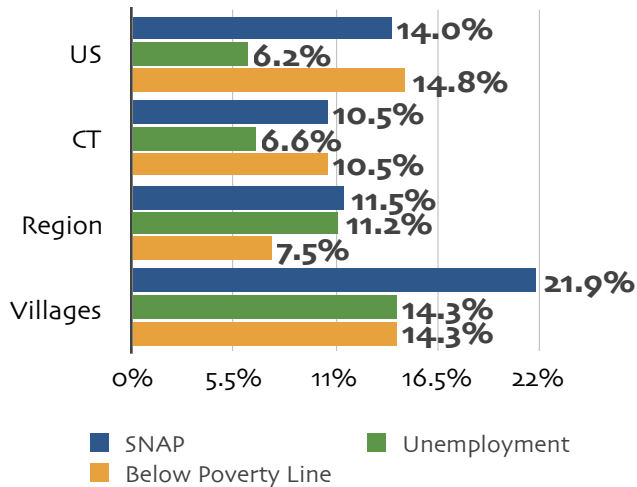


Ability to Obtain Suitable Employment 2015



Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census

SNAP, Unemployment and Poverty Percentages



Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census

villages of South Woodstock, home to the Woodstock Fairgrounds, Roseland Cottage, and Pomfret Center, are examples of a smaller, upland centers that have retained many niche, local retailers, and restaurateurs. Others include Martha's Herbarry, Woodstock's Thimble Cottage, and The Vanilla Bean Cafe. Ashford is home to the Midway, Wooden Spoon, Ashford Dairy Bar and Iron Mine Valley Preserve. The region is also home to the Route 169 National Scenic By-Way, which runs through Canterbury, Brooklyn, Pomfret and Woodstock. Community events draw in visitors both inside and outside the region and continuing to promote and advertise them will continue to support our local businesses and economy. All of these unique traits and events help foster community identity and a sense of place.

The region is also home to many historical sites, The Prudence Crandall House is in Canterbury and sits on the Route 169 National Scenic By-Way, Sterling has the famous Ekonk Hill Turkey Farm, Chaplin is home to James L. Goodwin State Forest and historic landmark William Ross Public Library, Hampton with its historic downtown and the Burnham-Hibbard House, Jillson House, Theodore Dwight Weld House and Scotland hosts the annual Highland Games and the Samuel Huntington House.

Killingly, Voluntown, and Woodstock lead the Region in total agricultural employment. Dairy farming, which has shown dramatic reductions in Connecticut during the past 25 years, remains a key agricultural element in northeastern Connecticut, primarily in the town of Woodstock. Agriculture in the Region is diverse and includes maple syrup, corn, vegetables, fruits, orchards, wine, hay, and meat products. Some attractions include Eastford's Yale Forest along Voluntown, and Union state forest land offer limited employment in agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining.

There are four business development parks in the Region located in Killingly, Putnam, Plainfield, and

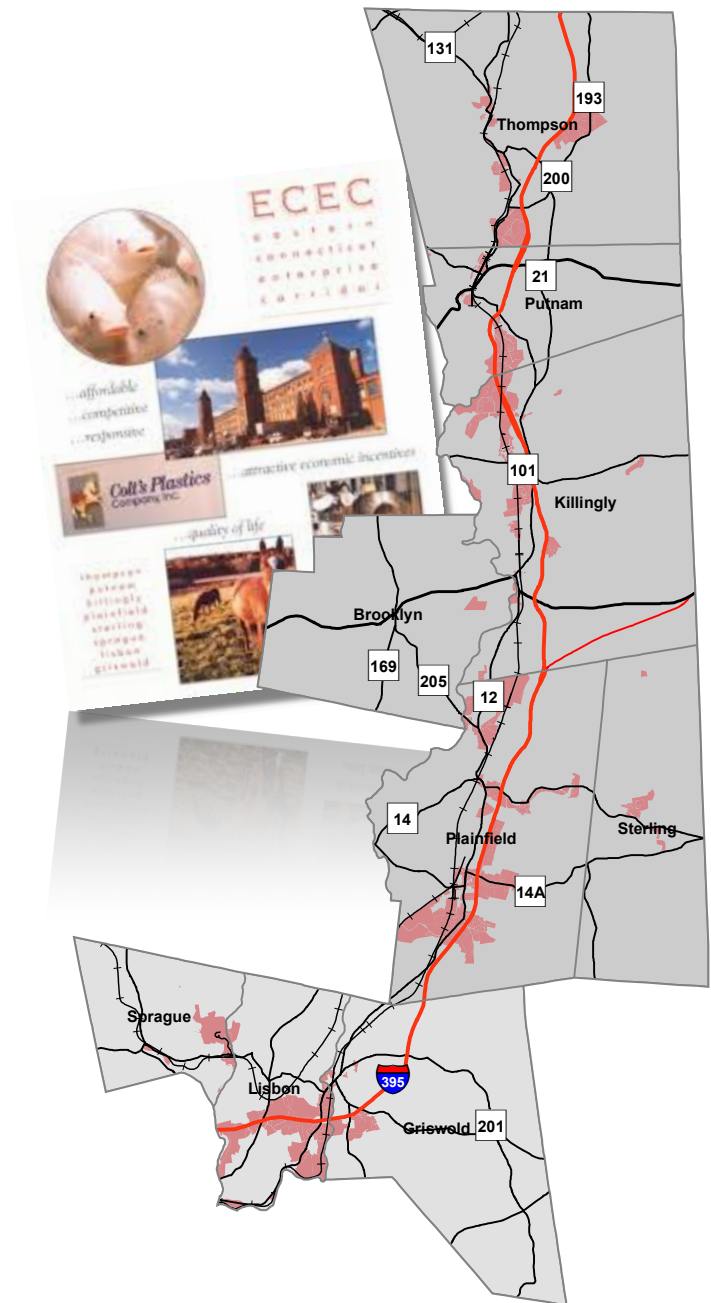
Living Wage in CT
Single Adult: \$19.08 **Single Adult with a School Aged Child: \$28.81**
Single Adult with a Toddler and School Aged Child: \$40.48 **Two Adults (one working) with a toddler and school aged child: \$35.18**

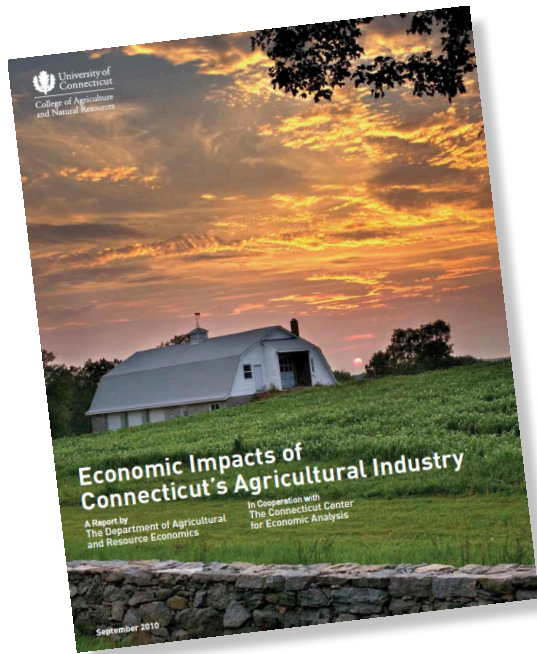
Sterling, which are all municipally owned and received state funding to establish them. Each of these parks offer business incentives for eligible companies through the Eastern Connecticut Enterprise Corridor designation

Per the US Census 5-year survey retail trade employment in the region was 13.4%, compared to 10.9% in the State.

and some offer local incentives as well. Unfortunately many of the existing industrial parks are partially filled and mostly empty, Plainfield's is 1/3 full and Sterling's currently has a single occupant. The industrial history of the Quinebaug River Valley lends itself to a supply of vacant or underutilized, contaminated properties. These are referred to as "brownfields," which are environmentally contaminated properties, often previously used for commercial or industrial purposes, and are typically a burden to towns. As a result there are also many vacant or underutilized mill structures with potential for new economic use. These types of properties have been avoided by developers because of costs and bureaucracy associated with reclaiming and cleaning the land. The Connecticut Brownfields Redevelopment Authority (CBRA) lists six brownfields sites in its online Brownfields Inventory located in the region, two in Killingly, two in Plainfield, one in Putnam, and one in Sterling.

There are five business development parks in the Region that are municipally owned and which received state funding. Each of these parks offer business incentives for eligible companies through the Eastern Connecticut Enterprise Corridor designation and some offer local incentives as well. The industrial history of the Quinebaug River Valley lends itself a supply of vacant or underutilized, contaminated properties. These "brownfields", contaminated real property, often previously used for commercial or industrial purposes, are typically a burden to local government and have historically been avoided by developers because of costs and bureaucracy associated with reclaiming and cleaning the land. The Connecticut Brownfields Redevelopment Authority (CBRA) lists six brownfield sites in its online Brownfields Inventory, two in Killingly, two in Plainfield, one in Putnam, and one in Sterling.





2015 Agricultural Impacts Are Estimated At:

- **\$3.20 billion to statewide dollar sales • 17.64% increase since 2007**
- **Approximately \$880 per resident**
- **20,037 statewide jobs • 9% increase since 2007**
- **\$765 million to statewide wages (labor income)**
- **38% increase since 2007**

Source: <https://today.uconn.edu/2010/09/connecticut-agriculture-a-3-5-billion-industry/> Or the most updated data: http://www.zwickcenter.uconn.edu/presentations_8_368686563.pdf

Killingly, Brooklyn, Plainfield, Putnam, Sterling, and Thompson each aggressively seek economic development. Each has a long history of industrial and commercial use and has designated areas for growth in each of these towns. Interstate 395, the Providence and Worcester Railroad and an extensive network of water, sewer, gas, and other needed utilities make these towns desirable for such development. Reuse of mill structures is also an area of activity for these towns.

Six communities (Brooklyn, Thompson, Putnam, Killingly, Plainfield and Sterling) are members of the Eastern Connecticut Enterprise Corridor (ECEC). The ECEC, like an urban enterprise zone, is an economic development tool established by the General Assembly in 1994 for rural areas to retain, develop, and improve business. The ECEC has been useful in actively promoting economic development and in attracting business to the region. The ECEC towns have an agreement to work cooperatively (non-compete agreement) in attracting and sustaining businesses. The establishment of the ECEC has resulted in the development or creation of more than one million square feet of business space. This represents significant development for the region and for the success of the ECEC as a development tool.⁸

Per the 5-year US Census, the healthcare industry (which is grouped with education and other social services) holds a 25.3% share of the Region's workforce. Day Kimball Healthcare is the Region's largest employer according the Connecticut Department of Labor, and is the only employer in the Region with more than 1,000 employees, and over 60% of their workforce reside in the region. Several other hospitals, including Windham Hospital in Willimantic, Backus Hospital in Norwich (which also has a critical care facility in Plainfield), Natchaug Hospital in Mansfield, Hartford Hospital and St. Francis Hospital in Hartford, Manchester Memorial Hospital in Manchester, Rockville General Hospital in Vernon, St. Vincent Hospital and UMass Memorial Medical Center in Worcester, and Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island in Pawtucket are within an hour of the Region. Natchaug Hospital, a partner of Hartford HealthCare, and Backus Hospital, also operate local, outpatient care centers in the Region.

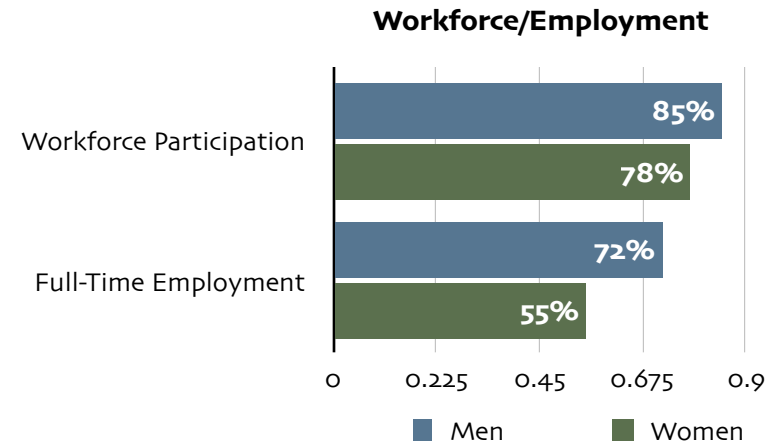
⁸ <http://www.ct.gov/ecd/cwp/view.asp?A=1099&Q=249774>

The purchase of three hospitals in the region is likely to impact accessibility to care. Both Backus and Windham Hospital were purchased by Hartford Hospital and patients are starting to feel the effects of those mergers. Day Kimball Healthcare (DKH) remains an independent, non-profit community hospital and health system, though it became an official “Community Partner” of Yale New Haven Health (YNHH) in April of 2017. The partnership does open avenues for DKH to partner with YNHH as it chooses on business and clinical endeavors that will serve to enhance business operations and provide enhanced services within DKH’s own service area. Windham hospital has significantly decreased the number of minor and major procedures conducted at Windham Hospital, patients are now required to have surgery at Hartford hospital. This creates a large challenge for many families in that area that have limited funds and access to transportation. There is no public transportation from Windham to Hartford. People currently only have access to Commercial Bus Service, which is typically more costly than public transportation.

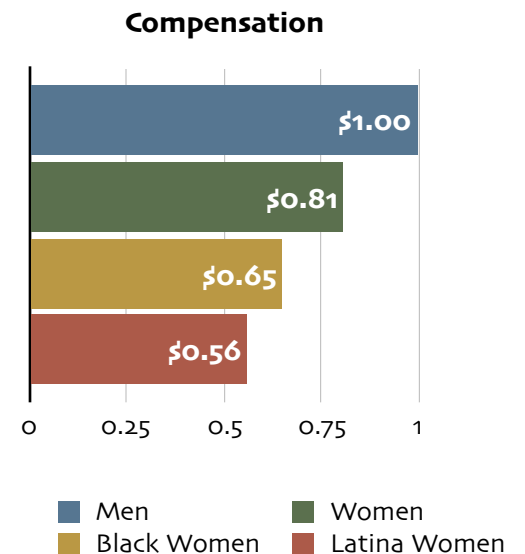
A CT Fast Track Route is currently underway from Storrs to Hartford, but that would require a resident of Windham to take the WRTD /Storrs Shuttle and then transfer to CT Fast Track. It is important to note that this construction will not be completed within the next few years, while residents and patients will still be required to have procedures done in Hartford. This will also be a challenge for people who use Backus, also a Hartford Health Care subsidiary. For the Plainfield site in particular, they have no access to public transportation and there is no indication that a recent application for service will be approved.

The US Census 5-year estimates for median household income reached as low as \$22,647 in portions of Putnam, and as high as \$108,125 - a \$86,000 spread.

Wholesale trade accounts for a small share of the Region’s employment - 2.8% according to the 2014 U.S. Census. Pepsi-Cola of Central New England, a division of PepsiCo Inc., which operates a beverage distribution center and Frito-Lay Inc. are both located in Dayville. There are two Staples distribution centers one located in Killingly and the other in Putnam, The region also has a Lowe’s distribution center in Plainfield. Other large distribution centers

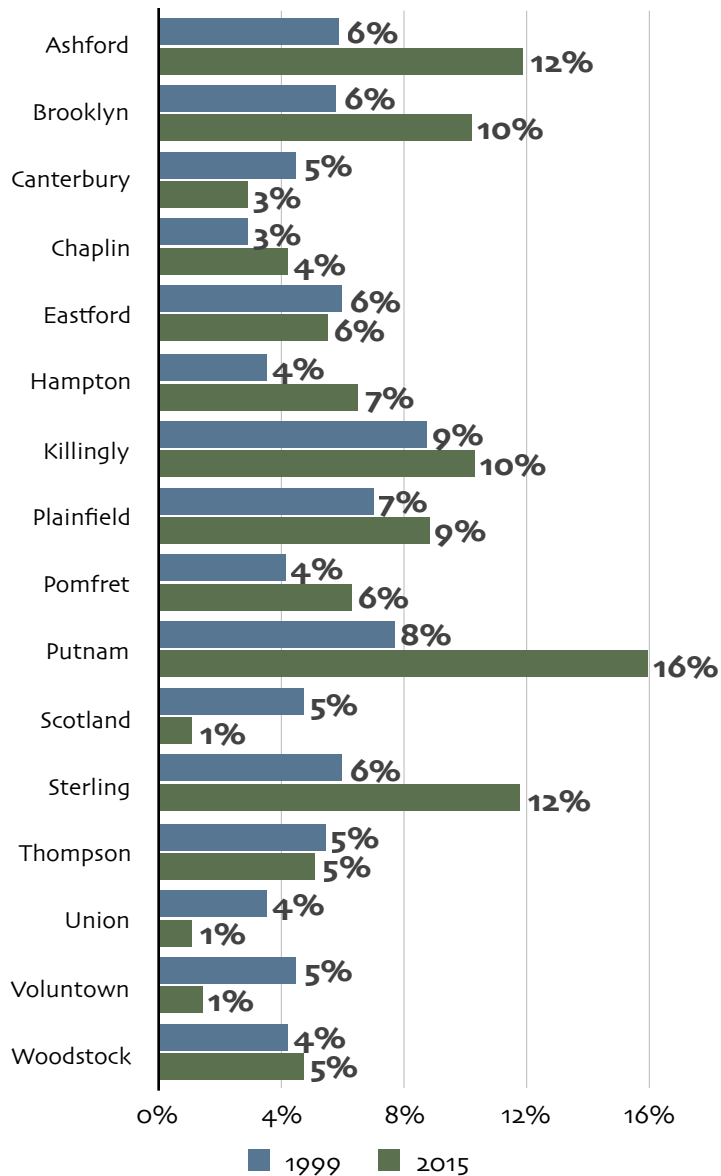


Source : <http://www.ctdatahaven.org/reports>



Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census

Poverty Rates 1999 and 2015



Source: <https://factfinder.census.gov>

include United Natural Foods Inc. and Symbol Mattress Company's New England warehouse. Similar to manufacturing, wholesale trade would benefit greatly from enhanced connection to the Providence and Worcester Railroad. Currently on-road freight has concentrated wholesale trade along Interstate 395, which the Providence and Worcester Railroad roughly follows.

Agriculture is an important part of the region's economic profile. Northeastern Connecticut's agricultural past dates back to the earliest settlers of its lands. Preservation and protection of prime farmland for active agriculture is particularly important to the region's economy, to its rural character, and to its sense of place. There has been a steady increase in the diversity and value of agricultural production.

Connecticut leads New England in agricultural sales, contributing more than 2.1 billion dollars to the state's economy. Agriculture takes many forms and has a diverse array of agricultural operations. However, it cannot be assumed that agriculture will remain a viable economic driver in the region unless steps are taken to expand and promote our agricultural assets. With more green energy uses, solar and biofuels, the region can encourage farmers to reduce costs and expand production. Increasing access and affordability of local produce could be realized through alternative energy sources and increased locations and access. As residential growth continues to squeeze operations that depend on the land (such as dairy, forage crops, field crops, meat production, and equestrian), many farms are also finding it difficult to operate in a state with a fading understanding of the realities of agricultural production; there are issues of noise, odors, and hours of operation for example.

One in ten households (10%) in the region are under the poverty Line and 18% of women ages 18-34

Farm to table and local sourced products are very popular. More and more customers have a desire to know where their food is coming from. Heirloom Food Company, 85 Main and the Vanilla Bean have been very successful with this venture. Providing more supports and emphasis on small businesses is critical for economic development in the

**Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023**

region. Focusing on and encouraging the use of renewable energy alternatives could also prove to have a significant benefit to small businesses by reducing overhead costs for heating and electricity.

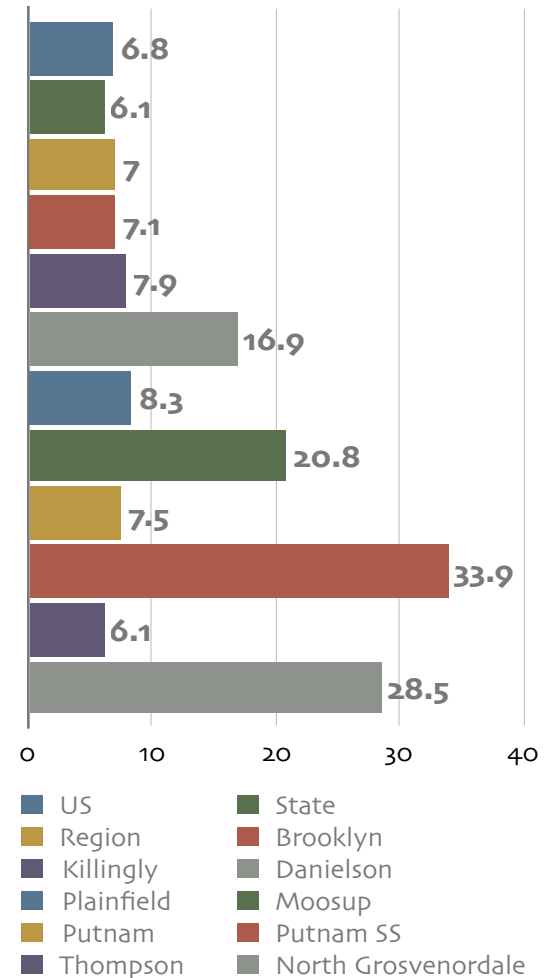
The region has towns that are defined as “distressed” either under state criteria or federal (EDA) criteria. Five towns (Windham, Plainfield, Killingly, Brooklyn, and Putnam) are designated distressed by Connecticut. The federal definition requires that a municipality have either a lower per capita income than the national average or an unemployment rate lower than the national average for the past 24 months. The towns of Killingly, Plainfield and Windham meet the federal definition of “distressed” based on unemployment data. Killingly and Plainfield were also defined as Labor Surplus Areas (LSAs), for the years of 2014-2015, by the United States Department of Labor. Labor Surplus Areas are areas whose average unemployment rates were at least 20 percent above the average rate for all states (including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico) during the previous two calendar years. Employers located in designated labor surplus areas are eligible for preference in bidding on federal procurement contracts. The purpose of providing such preference is to direct federal funds toward businesses and jobless individuals in areas with the most severe economic need.

At a municipal level, income and employment may only appear to be a minor issue in the Region. None of the Region’s towns qualify, federally, as a “distressed community”, by the United States Economic Development Administration, and only three towns, Killingly, Plainfield, and Putnam, meet Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development criteria as distressed communities. Killingly and Plainfield were also defined as Labor Surplus Areas (LSAs), for the years of 2014-2015, by the United States Department of Labor. However, when looking below the municipal level, at villages and boroughs within each town, labor, poverty, and income statistics become more divided and spatial clusters are apparent.

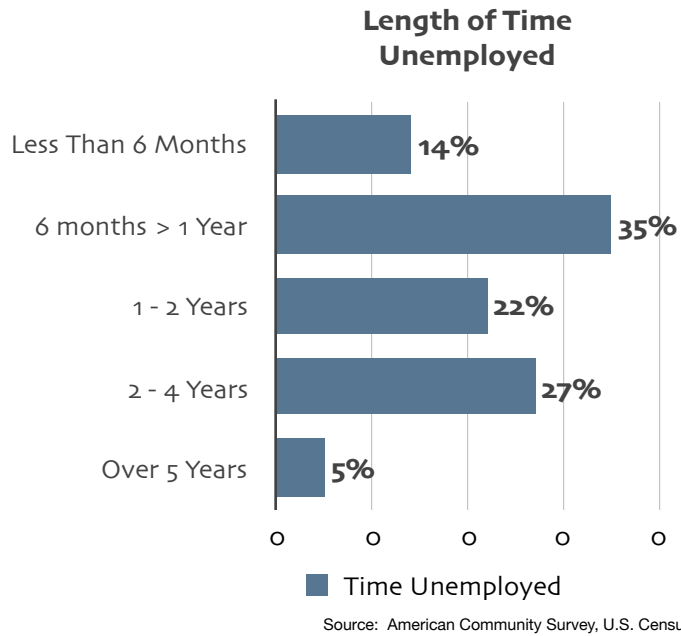
For Consideration:

- ▶ *Capitalize on niche agriculture could greatly benefit the region*

Unemployment Rates 2015



Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census



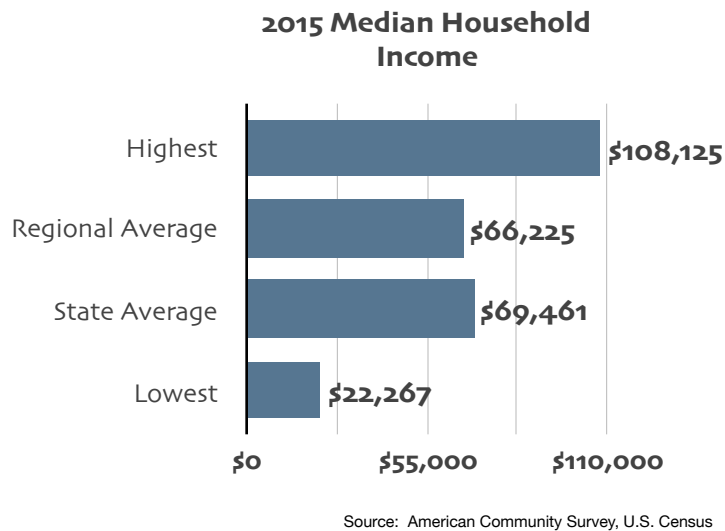
- ▶ *Small businesses employ local residents at a higher rate than larger corporations and have a greater commitment to the region, are more likely to have a higher fiscal impact on the region in the form property tax revenue and monies spent locally*

- ▶ *Focus on and encourage the use of renewable energy alternatives could also prove to have a significant benefit to small businesses by reducing overhead costs for heating and electricity*

Income and Employment

In general, for more than thirty years, the economy of the Region has lagged behind that of state, New England, and the United States. Income levels, have consistently been among the lowest in the state for more than thirty years, and unemployment rates, especially in the Region’s former mill villages, are significantly higher than the rest of the Region and the State. Three towns, Killingly, Plainfield, and Putnam, meet Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development criteria as distressed municipalities. Additionally, four towns, Brooklyn, Killingly, Plainfield, and Sterling may qualify as economically distressed communities, meeting the unemployment criteria of the United States Economic Development Administration. Killingly and Plainfield were also defined as Labor Surplus Areas⁹ (LSAs), for the years of 2014-2015, by the United States Department of Labor.

While there are numerous employment opportunities in the region, there are some significant issues that the region has yet to address. The large amount of part-time and non-benefitted employment opportunities present a unique challenge to many individuals looking for work or re-entry into the work force. Most employment is part-time and does not help employees meet their monetary obligations (paying bills, rent, gas money) or the ability to save. This issue is further exacerbated by the fact that the part time jobs usually do not offer or carry health insurance. With the



⁹Labor Surplus Areas (LSAs) are areas with average unemployment rates at least 20% above the average rate for all states, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, during the previous two calendar years.

rising cost of health care having the funds to pay for preventative or illness related care is practically impossible.

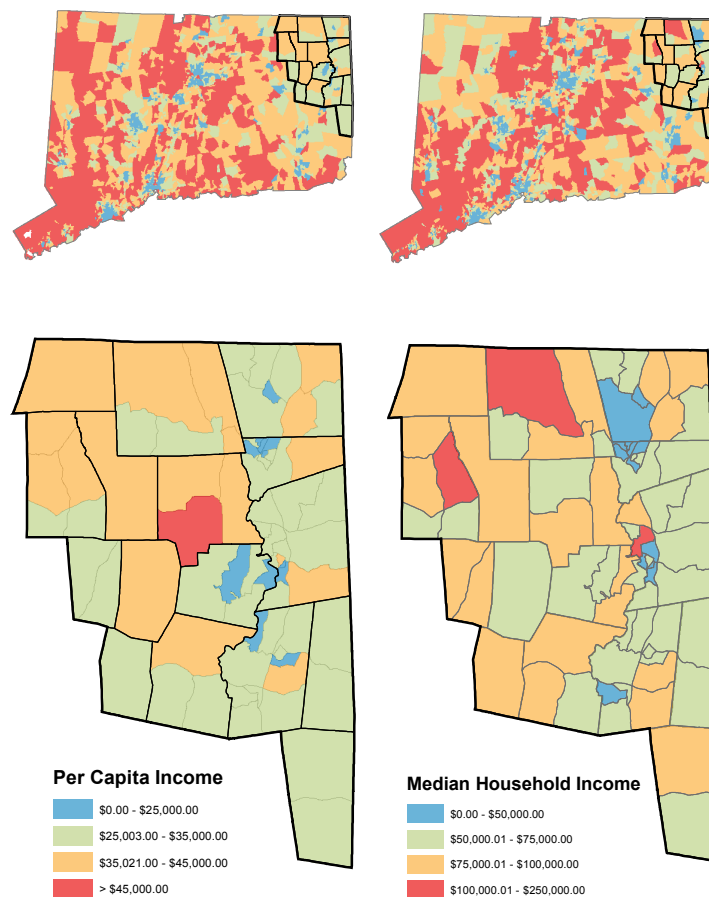
At the municipal level, income and employment may only appear to be a minor issue in the Region, but when examined at a smaller level, by village area or block group the deficiencies become more apparent. The most recent census data (2014) shows that the Region had a lower median household income (\$66,225) than the State average of \$69,461. The income for the villages areas of the Region was even lower at \$49,303. Median incomes for the Region range from \$22,267, in Putnam to \$108,125 in Pomfret - an \$86,000 gap. In many cases, income earned in the region is significantly below that that would be considered a living wage. " A living wage is one that allows families to meet their basic needs, without public assistance, and that provides them some ability to deal with emergencies and plan ahead. It is not a poverty or survival wage. In this report, living wages are calculated on the basis of family budgets for several household types. Family budgets include basic necessities, such as food, housing, utilities, transportation, health care, child care, clothing and other personal items, savings, state and federal taxes - this assumes full-time work on a year-round basis¹⁰.

Five towns in the region have unemployment percentages above both the state and national average; Brooklyn, Killingly, Plainfield, Putnam, and Sterling with 7.1%, 7.9%, 8.3%, 7.5% and 8.5%, respectively. When looking below the municipal level - at villages and boroughs within each town - labor, poverty, and income statistics appear more divided, where income and employment gaps are clearly apparent. According to the US Census, several block groups¹¹ in northeastern Connecticut were estimated to have unemployment rates as high as 33.9% compared with 9.8% for the State of Connecticut. Of the seven census block groups estimated to be above 20% unemployment, five were in or inclusive of former mill villages: North Grosvenordale and Grosvenordale (28.5%), Putnam (33.9%, 23.2%, 21.1%), and Moosup (20.8%). The villages of

¹⁰ www.alianceforajustsociety.org

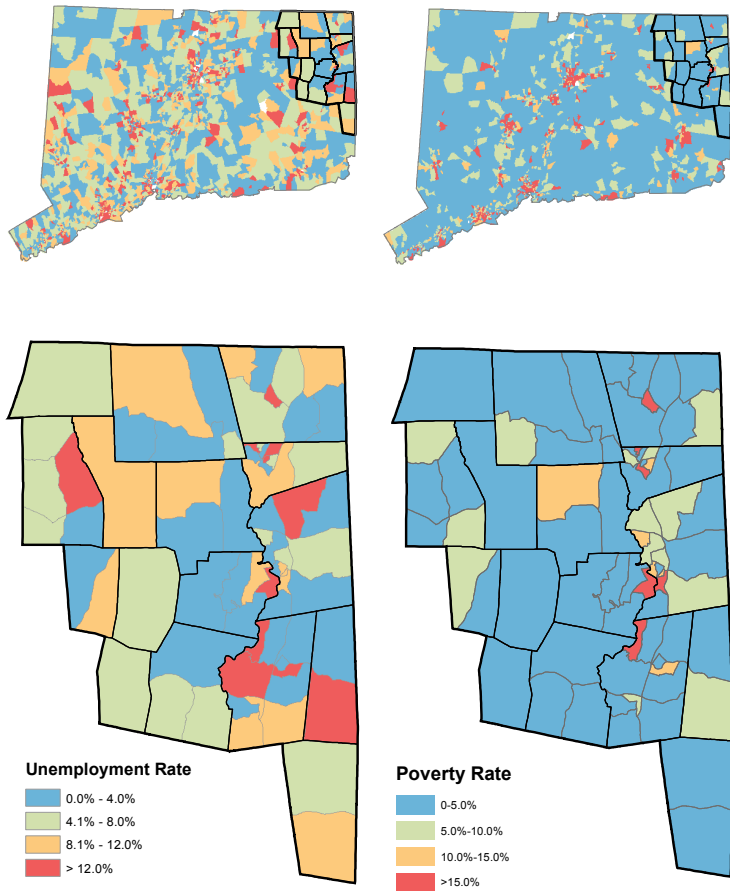
¹¹ A block group is a statistical division used by the United States Census Bureau to aggregate demographic data. In the Region, there are 73 block groups.

Unemployment and Poverty Rates



Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census

Per Capita and Median Income



Source: <https://factfinder.census.gov>

Ballouville, Attawaugan, Wauregan, Wilsonville, Central Village, Plainfield, Danielson, and East Brooklyn were also completely, or partially, projected to have unemployment rates of 15% or greater. The large disparities can be attributed to many factors, which include educational opportunities, educational attainment, development of transferrable job skills and access to suitable employment ¹².

The income gap disparity between our region and the rest of state has been longstanding. In 1977, the average annual earnings for a resident in the northeast corner was \$9,304 versus \$11,715 for the state, a \$2,411 gap. The gap grew even wider in the decades to follow growing to a \$4,000 gap in 1988 and now sits at \$3,200 less than the state average. The Connecticut Department of Labor market statistics have historically ranked our LMA (Labor Market Area) at or near the bottom since the 1970's. Many recommendations have been presented, reviewed, and adopted over the last four decades, but have yet to actualize a closing of the income earnings gap.

One statistic that is not reported is the number of persons who are no longer eligible for unemployment benefits. Data Haven surveyed 500 people in 2014 to assess the needs of individuals in the region seeking full-time employment. The survey results revealed that many residents have already exhausted their benefits. Many have been unemployed longer than the 26 weeks of benefits that were available during this period.

Poverty rates in northeastern Connecticut follow a similar trend. US Census estimates for the years 2009-2013, projected poverty rates reached as high as 27.7% in a census block group in Putnam, 26.4% in East Brooklyn, and 24.6% in a census block group that

Five census block groups had projected median household incomes below \$30,000 - four in Putnam and one in Thompson, covering Grosvenordale and North Grosvenordale.

¹² <http://factfinder.census.gov>

includes the villages of Grosvenordale and North Grosvenordale in Thompson. The villages of Danielson, Plainfield Village, Wauregan, and Moosup also had block groups with projected poverty rates above 20%. 13 census block groups had projected poverty rates above the national average of 15.4%, all of which included former mill villages along the Quinebaug River or one of its tributaries. For this time, the State of Connecticut was projected to have an overall poverty rate of 10.2%. In the Region, the poverty rates far exceed those of our towns and the state.

The US Census 5-year estimates for median household income reached as low as \$22,647 in portions of Putnam, and as high as \$108,125 and \$105,424 in northwestern Pomfret and northwestern Woodstock, respectively. Five census block groups had projected median household incomes below \$30,000 - four in Putnam and one in Thompson, covering Grosvenordale and North Grosvenordale. 38 census block groups were projected to have median household income levels below that of the entire state, \$69,461. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, in the fourth quarter of 2013, show that Windham County's average weekly wage was \$797 per person, which is more than \$400 below the Connecticut average of \$1,238, and the lowest average wage earning county in the State¹³. Large income disparities exist within single towns, Woodstock, for example, has the largest gap within a single town, at a staggering \$70,013 between the median annual earnings of town census block groups. Other towns with significant disparities are Plainfield with a \$48,617 difference in annual earnings, Killingly with a \$58,792 gap, Thompson has a \$59,884 differential and Putnam's \$61,051 variance of incomes between census block groups.

For Consideration:

- ▶ *Support living wage jobs, with benefits*
- ▶ *Create Job and Education training programs that meet the job requirements of local employers*

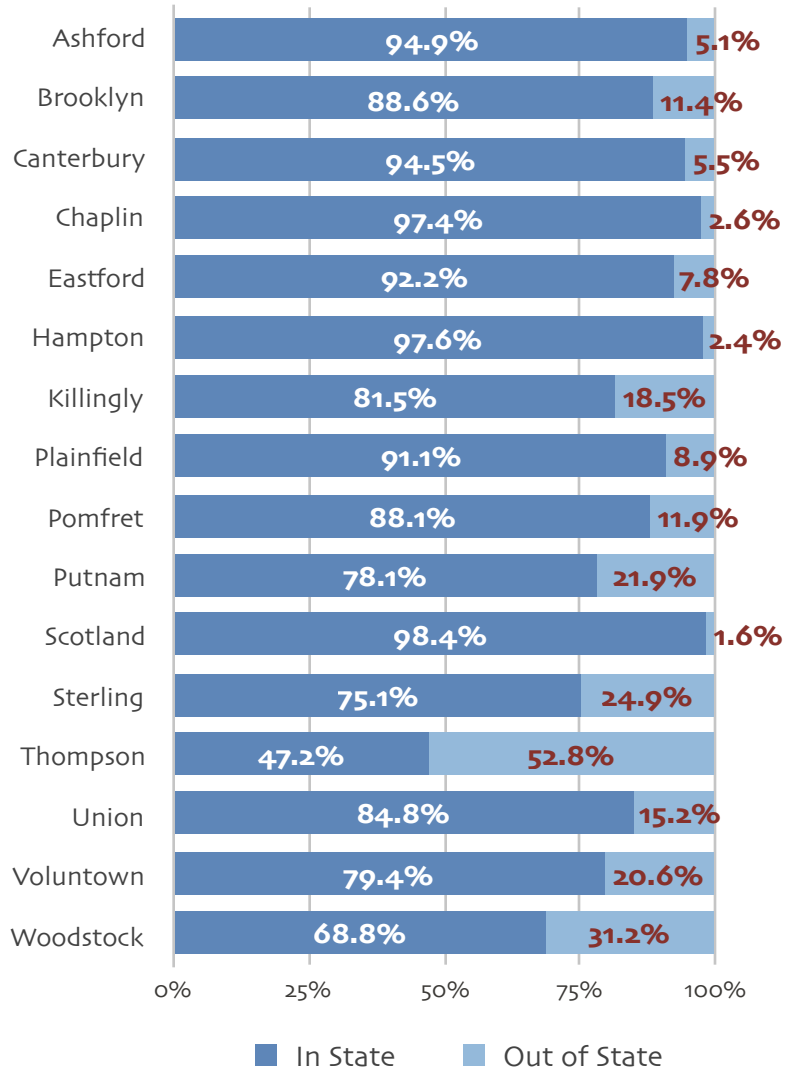
¹³http://www.bls.gov/regions/new-england/news-release/countyemploymentandwages_connecticut.htm#tab2

In 1977, the average annual earnings for a resident in the northeast corner was \$9,304 versus \$11,715 for the state, a \$2,411 gap. The gap grew even wider in the decades to follow growing to a \$4,000 gap in 1988 and now sits at \$3,200 less than the state average.

Source: Northeast CT Regional Plan of Development, 1977 and 1988

Low Income Households have one dollar of debt for every \$15.64 in income - More affluent Households have one dollar of debt for every \$32.42 in income

Where People Work



Source: <https://factfinder.census.gov>

- ▶ Increased access and utilization of DOL apprenticeship funding to train individuals in high demand fields
- ▶ Focus on K-12 education - establishing classrooms that meet the educational needs of tomorrow
- ▶ Increase availability of GED/High School Diploma programs and accountability for administrators of these program
- ▶ Evaluate the capacity of programs vs. the individual need for services
- ▶ Assess how programs and services are promoted

17% of women in the region were under employed in 2015

Tourism

Tourism in northeastern Connecticut is currently limited but has opportunities to grow and strengthen the Region’s marketability as a destination location. As a rural region, agriculture and outdoor recreation play important roles in the Region’s tourism economy. Two large agricultural fairs, the Brooklyn Fair—the longest running agricultural fair in the country—and the Woodstock Fair, occur annually, each lasting four days attracting large crowds from Connecticut, New England, and beyond. Several of the Region’s farms, vineyards, and orchards have also exhibited how agriculture may drive future tourism to northeastern Connecticut. “Agri-tourism” is a burgeoning sector of the tourism economy which offers visitors an opportunity to interact with, sample, and learn about, farm production and a region’s agricultural history. Programs such as the CT Grown Program and the Connecticut Wine Trail promote many northeastern Connecticut establishments. Agri-tourism also includes bed and breakfasts and scenic drives. Most of the region is part of the Last Green Valley (Quinebaug & Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor) and, also features Route 169, a state highway, and federally designated National Scenic Byway - one of only two in Connecticut and 150 in the United States. A recently completed management plan for Route 169

Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

seeks to capitalize on the Byway as an economic driver for the Region and promote an improved tourism experience and marketing opportunities along its corridor.

Outdoor recreation includes several clusters and is focused, mainly, around the region's state parks and forests. Hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, biking, horseback riding, and camping, in and around the region's forests and parks, attract large numbers of people every year, both from inside and outside of the State. Thompson Speedway is a popular destination, holding over 240 events annually. CT Nation is also a venue visited in large numbers. The Natchaug State Forest, for instance, is a popular hunting location in autumn, and the Natchaug River is well known for fly fishing. The Region's rivers, swamps, lakes, and ponds (many with public or private campgrounds) are also popular for boaters and fishermen.

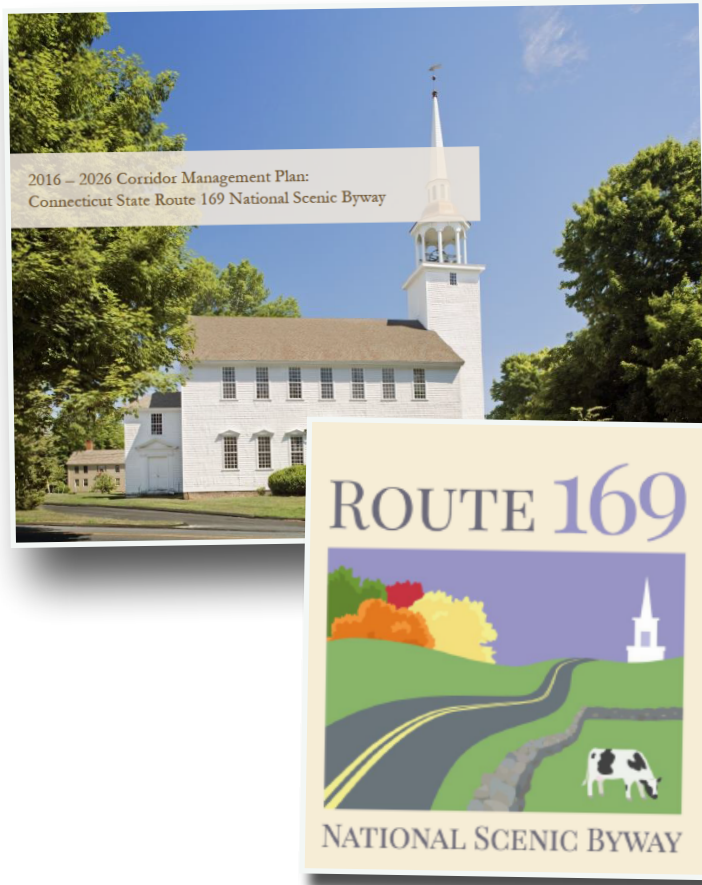
The region is currently working closely with the CT Dept. of Tourism and our municipalities to increase our presence on the CTVisit website, which promotes tourism opportunities across the state. NECCOG has been working with a number of towns to assist them in creating a "brand" for their community. "...in today's brand-driven world, fueled by social media and search engine optimization, there is absolutely nothing more important to the long term vitality and viability of a community than having a recognized and well-understood brand. People have choices where to live, work and recreate and it's imperative for every community to make sure its brand is considered. ¹⁴"

For Consideration:

- ▶ *It is vital to tourism in the region that state website be increasingly utilized more to promote business, events, activities and attractions in Northeastern Connecticut*
- ▶ *Implement to Route 169 National scenic by-way, include the expansion recommendation to include both the Taftville and Southbridge Mills*



¹⁴ A Community That Works The Branding Journey of the Village of Los Lunas, New Mexico



Housing

The 2015 Decennial Census noted, northeastern Connecticut was home to 37,240 housing units. 74.9% of the Region's housing units were owner-occupied (27,892) and 25.1% were renter-occupied (9,348), compared with the state at 67.5% and 32.5%, respectively. Like recent growth, much of projected housing development will most likely occur on previously undeveloped lands. Of the total number of housing units, 29,653 (46%) were built 1969 or earlier and 9,791 (23%) units were built prior to 1940. Most of the older housing units are associated with the former mill villages and manufacturing activities, where they have been largely allowed to deteriorate, not receiving much needed health and safety renovations.

The 2015 Decennial Census noted, northeastern Connecticut was home to 37,240 housing units. 74.9% of the Region's housing units were owner-occupied (27,892) and 25.1% were renter-occupied (9,348), compared with the state at 67.5% and 32.5%, respectively.

A small number of individuals or rental firms control many units. Many of the residents are low to moderate income and are not using a Voucher or Section 8 Program. A vast number of renters do not have knowledge or comprehension of renters rights, nor do they know how to handle an issue in their apartment as to who to call, or where to file a complaint. And when individuals do come forward, they are typically greeted with resistance, less than helpful assistance or no service at all. A call to the town will usually incur no follow-up or worse, a response from the landlord, which can result in harassment or eviction. There is a need for more information and referrals to social and legal services to be more frequently provided.

To attract and retain employees, the region needs an adequate supply of housing accommodating a range of income levels. The principal issue with the region's housing is affordability. Median sale prices for houses has increased dramatically across the region over the past decade. The Region has seen the median sale

prices of homes more than double between 1994 and 2009. However, with the current economic climate, housing prices have fallen significantly and foreclosures have risen dramatically. It is noteworthy that approximately 17% of the Region's residents rent, making housing quality an additional issue with affordability. With such high housing costs -transportation becomes a more cumbersome issue as people cannot afford to purchase, insure, register or maintain a car. Many rental costs have increased significantly in that in 7 of the 16 towns, renters are now paying more than 30% of their income on rent, as compared to statewide income percentages of 24% for homeowners and 16% statewide, having an average hourly wage of \$24.29. This equates to the average working person earning at least \$18.69/hour to be able to afford a 2-bedroom apartment in the Region. Rentals in the region are problematic, as the income of renters continues to not keep pace with housing costs. Increasingly more persons are relying on housing assistance programs because they are spending too high a percentage of their income on housing.

The issue of increasing housing options for low and moderate-income families has been discussed for over 40 years. We have primarily focused on housing for the elderly and those with disabilities, as that is the less contentious issue. Every plan since 1974 had a goal to address more affordable units, yet very few new units have been built. Also, large corporations have purchased many of the existing units formally under the management of town housing authorities. Others have fallen into disrepair, many after being touted as models in the affordable housing models of the 1970's and 1980's.

In 1977, the Region as it existed with 10 towns, had the following: 194 elderly housing units and 70 planned for future construction; 124 low income units and 57 planned; but only 40 moderate income units with no plans to build more. However, even with more units available, this is still not enough to meet the need. There are currently only 350 Section 8 Program Vouchers (VASH) in the region, with only 135 units of low income public housing (LIPH) under the oversight of two Public Housing Authorities. In contrast, there are also 175 Project Based Section 8 (PBS8) multi-family homes, which are all privately and publicly subsidized. In 1977, it was estimated that 1,900 families could benefit from this type of housing and the deficit between need and availability was 1,744 units. Approximately only 125 families

In 1977, the Region as it existed with 10 towns, had the following: 194 elderly housing units and 70 planned for future construction; 124 low income units and 57 planned; but only 40 moderate income units with no plans to build more.

15% of households in the Region spend more than 50% of their income on housing.

would have been serviced under the program as it existed then leaving many persons in need to reside in inadequate and very costly units. The deficits were present across the Region not only in low and moderate income, but also in elderly units. None of the regions towns had enough units to accommodate the need. Conversely, the 1988 Economic Plan mirrored the recommendations of the previous 1977 plan, and added a key element to build public support for affordable housing and offering educational opportunities for municipal and community leaders. Some of the recommendations to address the housing gaps in the 1977 plan included; continuing to provide additional housing units, developing regional housing improvement efforts, and securing state and federal funding to construct needed housing. Rehabilitation and new construction was encouraged using programs like HUD, Section 8 Rental Assistance, and the Farmers Home Administration.

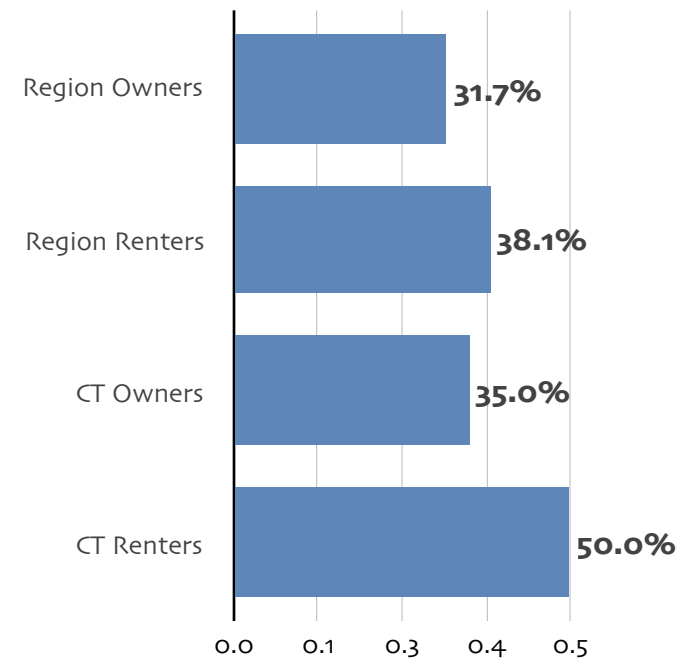
Unfortunately, in 2017, the housing needs (affordable, supportive, subsidized and market value) of the Region are still not realized. The state of Connecticut has 1,487,891 total housing units of which only 11.3% are assisted units which breaks down to over 90,000 Government Assisted units, over 41,000 are Rental Assisted Units, almost 30,000 are CHFA (Connecticut Housing Finance Authority)/USDA (U.S. Dept. of Agriculture) Mortgages and approximately 6,000 Deed Restricted. Only 2.9% of the housing rental units receive assistance. In the Region, less than one percent of residents receive rental assistance, or approximately 390 units. Only four towns have housing authorities to address state and federal housing assistance programs, Brooklyn, Killingly, Plainfield and Putnam despite 11 towns having at least one housing assistance program. The housing authorities in the region are merely rent collectors and do not provide any social services assistance.

Contrary to popular belief, increased low and moderate income housing units do not negatively impact property values for surrounding residences. An article published in the Wall Street Journal in November 2016, states that; **“Housing units earmarked for low-income residents have virtually no impact on surrounding property values in major U.S. metro areas, per an analysis of home price data that runs counter to the conventional view that such projects cause nearby**

property values to decline¹⁵. This article, along with a study conducted by Stanford University¹⁶ and many other institutions, dispels this myth. There is a responsibility to educate not only our community members, but also our municipal leaders and advocate for increased units throughout the region.

Currently, earnings are not keeping pace with housing costs, and with the increase of residents looking to age in place, it is imperative that we not only advocate for elderly housing, but also low to moderate income housing, and enforcement of state housing codes. Many quality housing units have been purchased by a small group of local landlords or major housing management companies. Many apartments have fallen into a serious state of disrepair and have been illegally subdivided. ¹⁷The aging housing stock, particularly in the high rental areas, adds another significant issue - the possibility of lead poisoning. Lead exposure is especially dangerous to babies and children. In the state of Connecticut there is currently no mandatory testing of school children for lead exposure and there is little information whether the three health districts (NDDH, Uncas and Eastern Highlands) serving the region are completing lead testing in our towns. The enforcement of the health, fire and safety codes, which are essential to providing quality living for people to raise a family without undo or unnecessary hazards, are also not consistently adhered to. While there are many regulations addressing landlord, tenant, municipal responsibilities; there is currently no statewide housing policy. Each municipality monitors, and enforces their own fire building and health codes, which can lead to confusion for both landlords and tenants, as well as inconsistency in enforcement of policies. The safety challenges for individuals renting are daunting and these challenges are potentially further exacerbated as most building and fire officials being employed part time and covering multiple towns. A broad review of practices and responsibilities with all stakeholders, including health departments would be beneficial to ensure dwellings in the region are safe for their residents.

Residents Spending More than 30% of Income on Housing



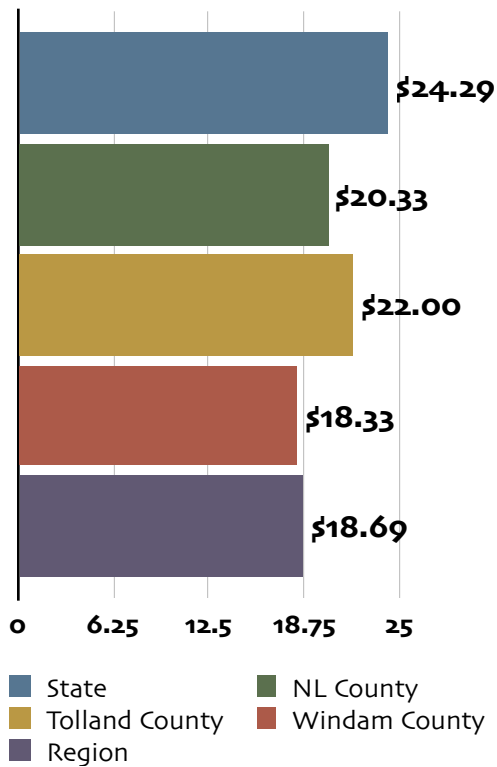
Source: <https://factfinder.census.gov>

¹⁵ <http://www.wsj.com/articles/low-income-housing-shown-to-not-weigh-on-nearby-property-values-1480361327>

¹⁶ http://web.stanford.edu/~diamondr/LIHTC_spillovers.pdf

¹⁷ https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_368o.htm

Hourly Wage Needed for a 2BR Apartment



Source: <http://www.pschousing.org>

Home ownership for low and moderate income individuals and families could benefit the region and address some of the challenges. Municipalities are eligible to utilize some of the state and federal housing programs to help persons become home owners. Collaborating with organization like the USDA and CHFA can assist individuals in purchasing single family or multi-family units. Home ownership has shown direct results to not only the home owner, but also for the other tenants and the neighborhood. The Partnership for Strong Communities (PSC), located in the Frog Hollow neighborhood in Hartford has been working to promote neighborhood pride through home ownership, neighborhood revitalization, using grant money to improve and preserve this historic neighborhood¹⁸. The work started by PSC is now being expanded to long vacant property on Capital Avenue, the site of the Hartford Office Supply company, which will soon house 112 mixed income units¹⁹.

The promotion of home ownership should also be included in addressing the low and moderate-income housing crisis in the region. Towns should be working with U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) and Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) to help individuals purchase single-family dwellings or multi-unit apartments. Having the multifamily house be owner occupied makes for a better quality of life for all residents. Many regions who have taken this approach have shown the direct benefits to the whole neighborhood.

Quality housing stock and home ownership promotion will benefit our towns. Improved housing stock will make communities more attractive, walkable, safer and improve the town's over all perception and will make the Region an attractive place to live, work, and open a business. Addressing the needs of current home owners will also prove advantageous. Through the CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) program towns can assist home owners with needed repairs. The region received just over 2 million dollars in Community Development Block Grants, most of this funding was used for Senior/Disabled Housing Complexes, as they are usually considered less controversial. Many towns have CDBG programs are open

¹⁸ <http://www.pschousing.org/our-neighborhood-frog-hollow>

¹⁹ <http://www.courant.com/real-estate/property-line/hc-hartford-office-supply-building-bond-commission-20150318-story.html>

Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

to all residents which income qualify so that residents can apply for funds to make necessary repairs to their home and participate in a low interest loan program making their homes safer and potentially more energy efficient. Municipalities offering what is called an open “spattering application” allow more households to be serviced than the commonly practiced targeted distribution of funds.

A major housing issue that has recently come to light is crumbling foundations which will potentially impact not only residential, but commercial and municipal properties. The testing and repair costs are high and will impact property assessment and reduce property tax revenues for many if not all of the region’s towns. Establishing and advocating for sources of relief for both home/businesses owners and municipalities is of the utmost urgency and importance.

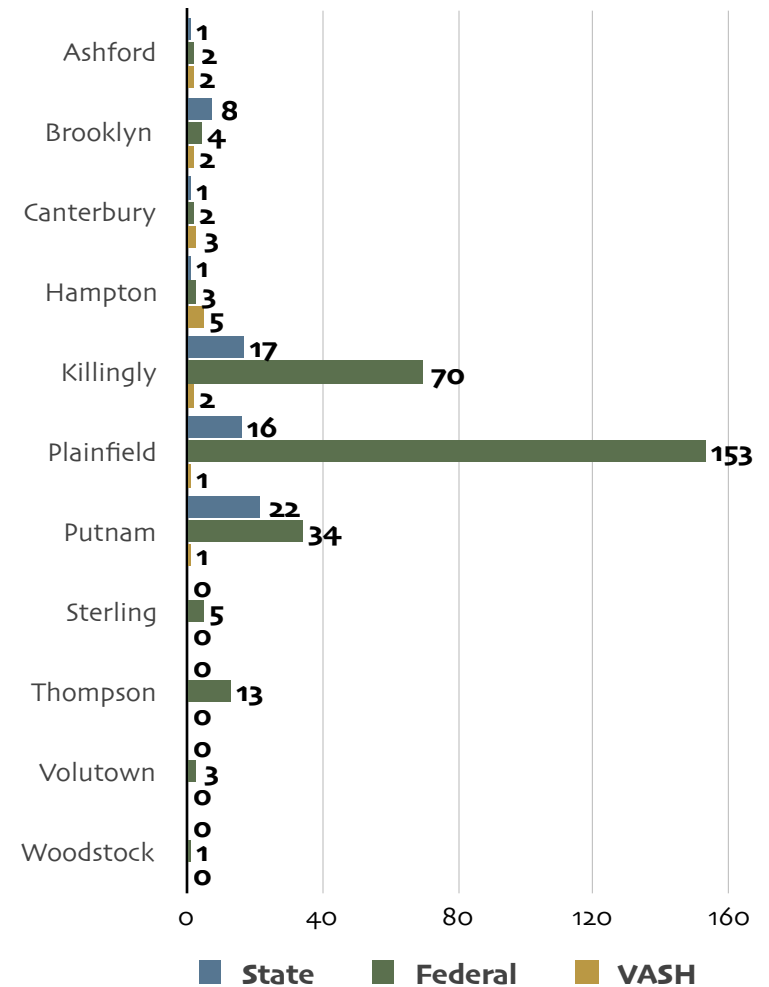
For Consideration:

- ▶ *Focus on walkable communities with more diversified housing options and neighborhoods will attract younger residents and allow residents to age in place, or at least remain in their current communities.*
- ▶ *Examine housing and zoning regulations and ordinances will be necessary to ensure not only enforcement, but also whether restrictive zoning is excluding population groups we are trying to attract and retain.*
- ▶ *Increase affordable housing options across the region providing housing choices for residents at all income levels*
- ▶ *Expand the opportunities of individuals to access loan funding, such as small cities and other community grants will allow homeowners and landlords to make much needed cosmetic and safety repairs to their property.*

Education and Training

Education is the largest financial obligation to the region’s communities; making up seventy-five percent or more of their town budgets. It is also an issue that provokes

Housing Voucher Utilization



Source: <http://www.pschoosing.org>

Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

Location	Risk	Poverty	Housing Age Risk
Ashford	2	7.42%	16.3
Brooklyn	5	12.757%	23.44
Canterbury	2	4.01%	17.34
Chaplin	5	4.64%	27.67
Eastford	4	2.99%	23.81
Hampton	5	5.91%	27.10
Killingly	4	6.98%	23.84
Dayville	5	9.43%	25.71
Danielson	7	13.11%	29.92
Plainfield (NW)	8	7.42%	16.13
Plainfield (NE)	7	9.63%	32.22
Plainfield (S-Rt. 14)	5	9.37%	24.28
Pomfret	4	3.11%	23.96
Putnam	4	7.49%	22.64
Putnam (SSD)	8	10.26%	41.33
Scotland	3	2.52%	22.92
Sterling	4	11.71%	19.84
Thompson (W-395)	6	6.69%	31.56
Thompson (E-395)	5	7.82%	24.13
Union	5	5.04%	26.66
Voluntown	3	2.81%	22.88
Woodstock	3	2.31%	21.39

significant debate and emotion. Ironically, northeastern Connecticut's expenditures for education are among the lowest in the State and the local property tax burden relating to the educational spending is in the bottom ten percent of all Connecticut towns. Along with the region's public schools, there are several private and parochial schools for grades pre-K through 12. Additionally, there are numerous day care facilities found throughout the region - some are affiliated with business, others with non-profits and the most are operated privately. More than thirty colleges and universities are within an hour's drive of the region (14 of which are located in Worcester). Ellis H. Technical School in Killingly, Norwich Tech in Norwich and Windham Tech, in Windham, offers first rate vocational/technical training for the region.

Quinebaug Valley Community Technical College (QVCC) has been and continues to be a key asset to the region. Quinebaug Valley Community College, with locations in Killingly and Willimantic, has evolved into a critical resource for residents and the business community. QVCC offers associate degrees and certificate programs. It also has a strong and growing program of continuing education and community service activities. QVCC has collaborated with many businesses within the Region, conducting training for employees from the line worker to senior management. QVCC is home to a program called Quinebaug Middle College, a program which allows students to complete their high school diploma in a non traditional setting and complete college course too. This a great alternative for students the region. QVCC has a Career Services Center to assist employers and individuals in finding qualified persons to meet their employment needs. The program is limited to current degree and certificate enrollees.

QVCC now (since 2012) is home to an Advanced Manufacturing Center and offers an Advanced Manufacturing Certificate Program. This has been a great asset for the region allowing individuals to gain new skills, and credentials in a high demand field of advanced manufacturing. This program has a 95% placement rate for those who complete the program. One major limitation is number of persons who can enroll in this program, approximately 30 students per year or 150 students since the program commenced. Expansion of enrollment in this program could be of significant benefit for people looking to gain high demand skills in an ever-growing high- tech manufacturing field in the region. Conversely the state of Massachusetts

Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

has programs at not only the community colleges but also at the vocational/ technical high schools and had 1352 persons complete their programs in 2015²⁰. Expansion of enrollment in this program could be of significant benefit for people looking to gain high demand skills in an ever-growing high- tech manufacturing field in the region.

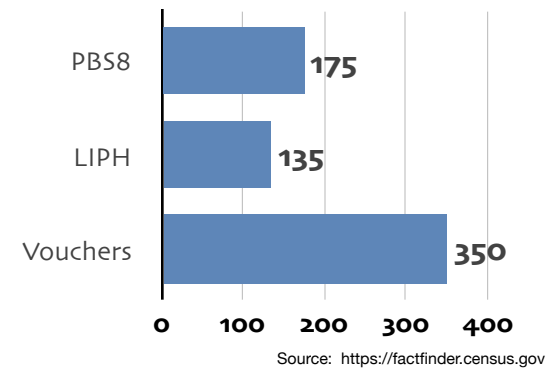
Throughout the region, the percentage of students going on to higher education is lower and the percentage going on to employment or the military is generally much higher than the state average. The region also has some of the highest dropout rates and the lowest educational attainment rates in the State; mostly concentrated along the 395 corridor and rivaling the rate of the state's major cities. Brooklyn, Killingly, and Plainfield top the list of towns in the region with highest percentages of residents without a high school diploma at 16.9, 14.6 and 12.5%, respectively²¹.

Education and job training programs offered to the region are not thoroughly addressing the needs of the region. Currently in the region, many programs offered are only offered to individuals that are already receiving other services such as addiction, probationary and/or mental health or behavioral services. The limited staffing at agencies providing individualized services (ie. Access Agency and the American Job Center) affects the level of individualized services provided. Consequently, people with limited computer skills and educational attainment may not receive the targeted attention and assistance they need. Additionally, services currently provided do not fully target or address the needs of our unemployed and underemployed individuals, especially those where this has been a long-term challenge. Many organizations offer mostly online based programs, which usually do not take a person's computer knowledge or skills into account. This can discourage those who have limited computer knowledge from receiving job or educational assistance. The lack of centralized information on the programs available to individuals in need of assistance is limiting the ability of persons to access needed assistance.

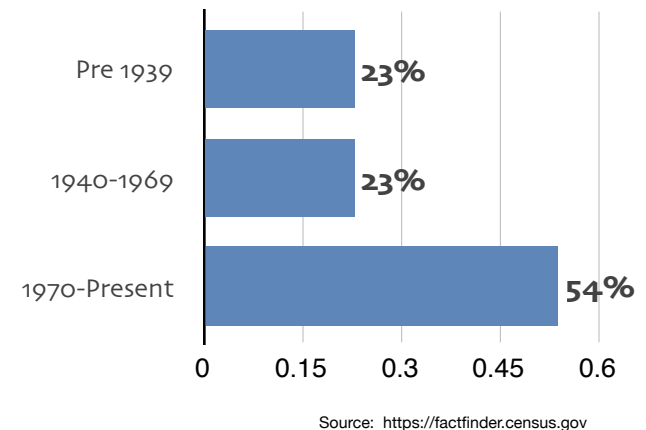
²⁰http://www.mass.edu/strategic/documents/16a_AttachmentAdvancedManufacturingWorkforcePlan_Spring2015.pdf

²¹<http://factfinder.census.gov>

Public Housing Units in the Region



Age of Housing Stock in the Region



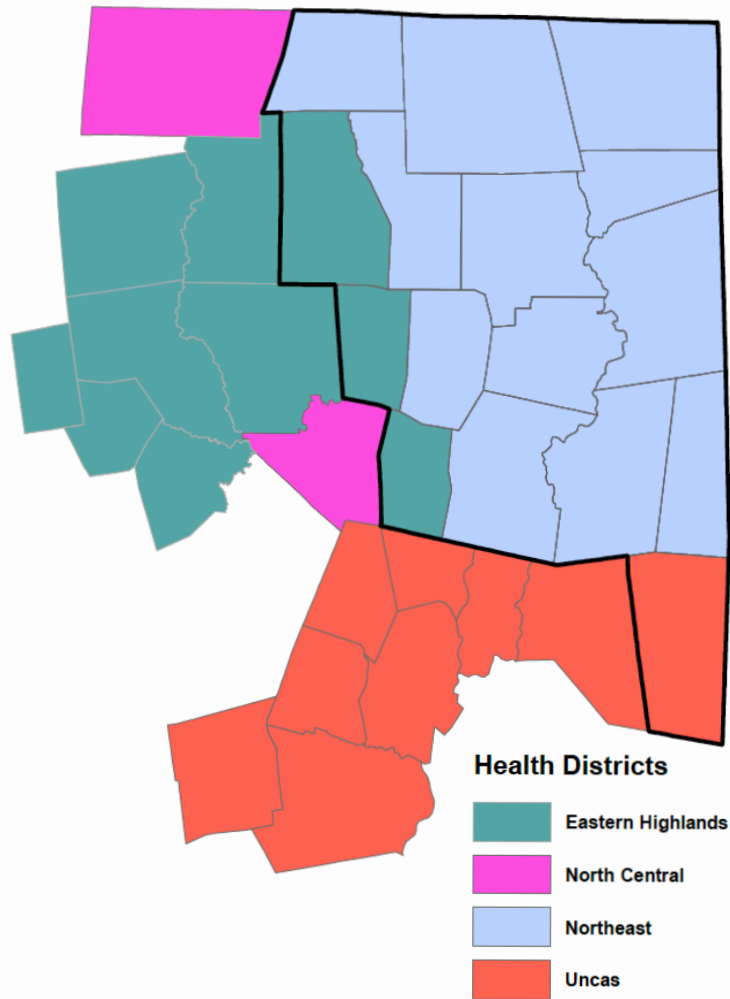
A study of TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) Recipients reveal that other factors directly impact a person's ability to meet the program requirements; physical and mental health problems, drug and alcohol problems, children's health, domestic violence, low education level, limited english proficiency and learning disabilities. Recipients with such barriers are less likely to secure employment than non recipients. The prevalence of each barrier varied, but all had a significant impact on their ability to comply with program requirements. "Some of the highest factors were no high school diploma or GED (31.45%), no car or drivers license (47.1%) and major depressive disorder (25.4%)".²²

Underemployed individuals make up the significant portion of residents. Many of these individuals are holding multiple part-time positions. This also presents a challenge due to part time work schedules not being consistent. The scheduled work days for individuals can change weekly and makes obtaining other employment, scheduling appointments, and errands very difficult especially for persons without personal transportation.

Even with some of the changes made at the state level, many employers, especially those not based in CT, still ask the criminal record question on their job application. The negative stigmas associated with persons with criminal records completely handicaps their chance of being a productive member of society. If the true reason for arrests and incarcerations is to ensure people do not re-offend, then the background process undermines the desire to keep people out of judicial system and jails.

Most critical are the long-term unemployed and those with low education levels and skill sets, a goal and objective from the previous four decades of regional economic development plans. The number of long term and underemployed persons still remain high, above the state average in the towns of Brooklyn -7.1%, Killingly -7.9% , Plainfield - 8.3%, Putnam - 7.5% and Sterling -8.5% . According US Census data 35.2% of residents with less than a high school diploma and 45.8% of

²² www.bbpp.org



residents with only a high school diploma are not currently in the labor force.²³ A recent survey of conducted by DataHaven found that many residents, especially those with less educational attainment, individuals with a high school diploma or less and those with some college, rated the ability to obtain suitable employment poorly at 27% and 41% respectively.²⁴

The new rural location for the American Job Center, EastConn and Alternative to Incarceration Center (just over 2 miles from the previous location) requires access to a vehicle or use of public transportation. The closing of the Goodwill Career Center and the relocation of the American Job Center may further impact access to services. This needs to be closely evaluated to see if location is impacting access. Continued collaboration with the local educational institutions, chambers of commerce, the Labor Department, and the Workforce Investment Board, municipal leaders and non-profit community should continue with an expanded needs assessment for both employers and those looking for work is needed. Where gaps are identified programming and funding proposals should be submitted for support on the local, state and federal level.

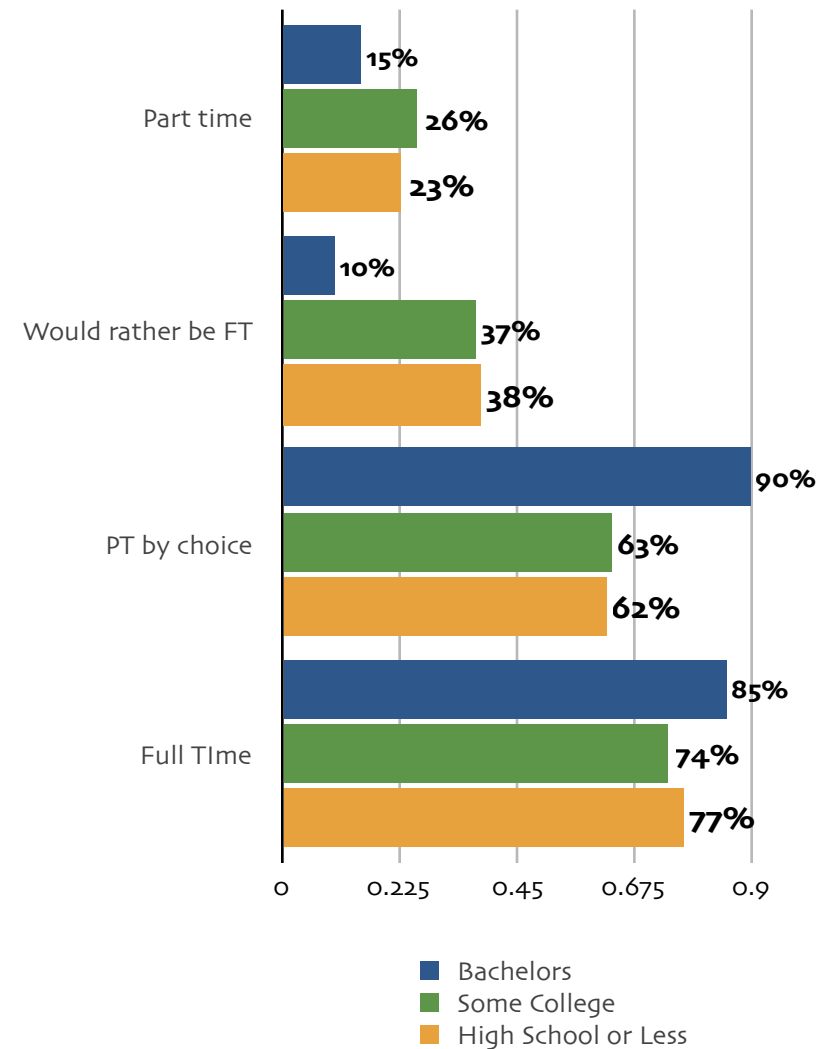
The state consolidation of the Workforce Investment Boards in 2002 had some unintended consequences for the region. Since that time major focus has been placed on the southern part of their 41 town region with the (Sub Base, Electric Board, Pfizer and the two casinos), Foxwoods and Mohegan - both of which don't provide a similar level of employment in terms of wages that were lost in the region when we started directing individuals to employment opportunities at those locations. Additionally, the representation to EWIB from the NECCOG Region is limited to four individuals in comparison to 20 individuals in the Southern Region.

In March of 2016, Department of Labor Commissioner, Scott Jackson, released a report to address the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), which replaced the former Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA). In this plan; "Workforce development boards, in partnership with workforce, economic

²³ factfinder.census.gov

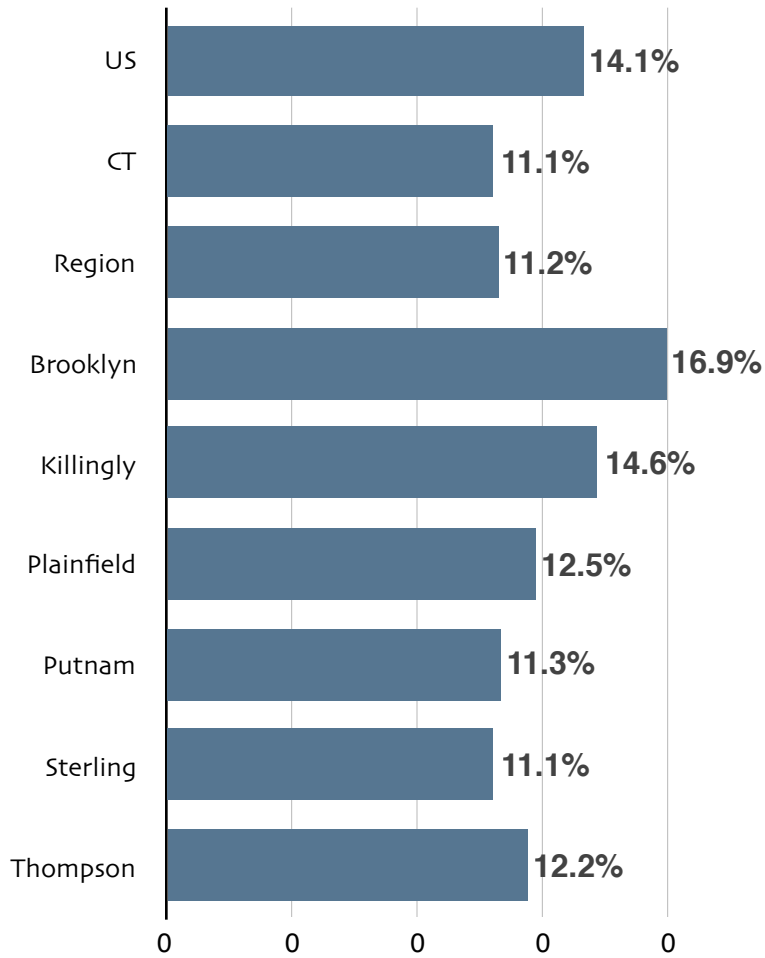
²⁴ ctdatahaven.org

Education and Work



Source: <https://factfinder.census.gov>

**Percentage of Persons without a
 HS Diploma**



Source: <https://factfinder.census.gov>

development, education, and social service organizations, align education and training investments to regional civic and economic growth strategies, the workforce system must be ingrained in the ecosystem of the regional economy,²⁵

A review, based on results, of existing programs, participation numbers, successful program completion and secured employment would be useful in determining whether programs are offering short and long terms gains for individuals utilizing the services offered (evaluating employment retention, transferrable skill attainment and ability to seek new opportunities without outside assistance in the future).

For Consideration:

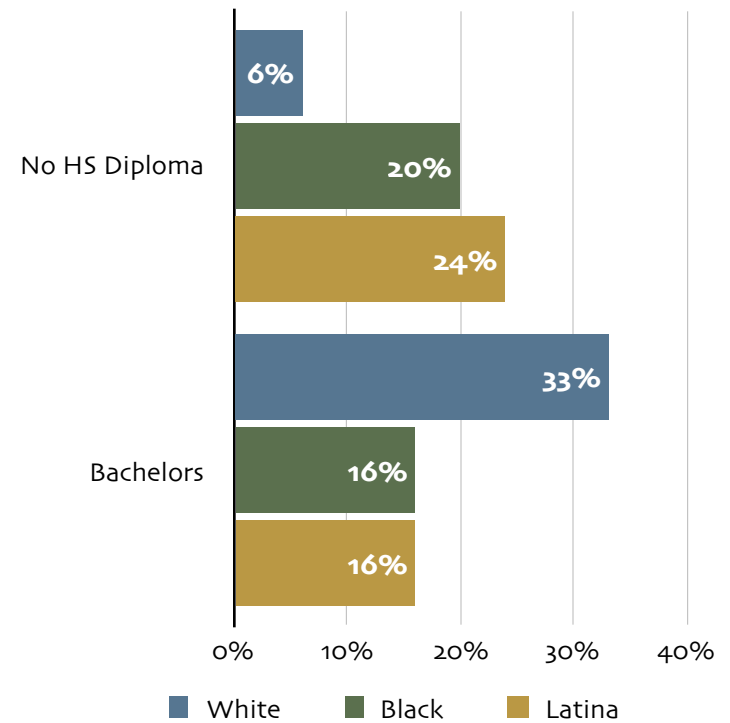
- ▶ *All stakeholders need to be involved in addressing the needs of the region with respect to education and job training*
- ▶ *Working more collaboratively with the business, community, labor and business organizations, like EWIB, DOL and Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance to determine what skills employers need and then designing programs around those needs are essential to helping companies fill jobs locally, but in assisting residents obtain quality employment*
- ▶ *An emphasis on strengthening the local and regional development organizations; better utilization of the ECDC and the Chambers of Commerce, educational organizations, and social services; developing a diverse economy to provide quality employment for workers; enhance educational and workforce readiness and job training opportunities*
- ▶ *Establishing school-to-work partnerships with local businesses, and expanding workforce programs targeting the long-term unemployed should be pursued*

²⁵ https://www.cga.ct.gov/app/related/20160317_Informational%20Forum%20on%20Workforce%20Investment%20Boards%20-%20March%2017,%202016/Commissioner%20Scott%20Jackson%20Department%20of%20Labor.pdf

- ▶ *Expansion of the educational service training offered by the two tech schools for adult learners*
- ▶ *Establishing more robust partnerships with Ellis, QVCC, the University of Connecticut (UConn) and Eastern Connecticut State University (ECSU) will be invaluable in helping individuals continue their education and training. Both universities have part time and non-degree/certificate programs.*
- ▶ *Outreach should also be re-evaluated, as well as how to reach out to persons looking for employment, education, and vocational opportunities.*
- ▶ *Another critical obstacle for this looking for work in the pre-employment background screening, which can prevent many individuals from not only receiving an interview, but will also preclude them, most likely from ever getting a job offer.*

Every Dollar spent on Pre-School Education Yields in \$8.60 Return!

Women and Education



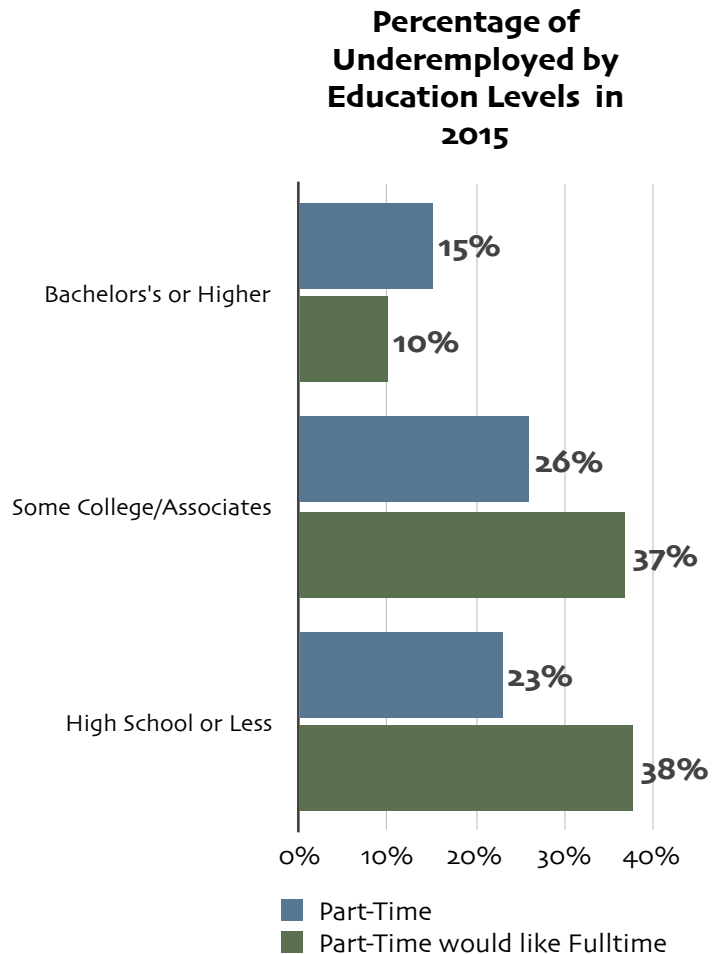
Source: <https://factfinder.census.gov>

The Human Element

When discussing Economic Development it is really important to not neglect the most important component, human capital. "If your people love their work and the environment you have created, they will treat customers better, innovate, and continuously improve your business."²⁶

According to Forbes Magazine the top 5 reasons companies are profitable and employees are happy are:

- 1) *Pay fairly. At the end of the day, it's about the pay. Yes, many employees love their work, love their jobs, love their colleagues, but the bottom line is they are there to earn a living. Smart leaders pay people well. This is non-negotiable.*
- 2) *Deliver awesome benefits. Whether it's a good health plan, childcare, transportation, a fitness center or free lunch on Fridays, benefits make people's lives easier and better. They feel appreciated and cared for, which leads to increased loyalty and a willing to go the extra mile.*
- 3) *Keep an open leadership door -- and an open mind. Numerous studies have shown that when management is approachable and responsive, employee engagement soars. People spend a big chunk of their lives at work, and when they feel voiceless their frustration grows. Actively solicit feedback via social media and old-fashioned management by walking around.*
- 4) *Share the profits. When employees share in the good times, their investment in the company grows and they will be far more likely to work hard -- and to dig deep during the not-so-good times...This is just plain smart leadership.*
- 5) *Make your workplace fun. No, I don't mean cheesy balloon-a-thons and annoying rah-rah rallies. This is about encouraging people to bring their personalities, quirks and passions to work. This leads to an increasingly seamless work/life mesh, a sense that people can really be themselves at work. Games, laughter, fun are great stress relievers, they renew and refresh us, and build very real bonds between employees.*²⁷



Source: <https://factfinder.census.gov>

²⁶<https://www.forbes.com/sites/joshbersin/2014/04/10/its-time-to-rethink-the-employee-engagement-issue/#7178f2796cf3>

²⁷<https://www.forbes.com/sites/meghanbiro/2014/01/19/happy-employees-hefty-profits/#461bdc1f221a>

Employees who are not only paid well and provided good benefits, but are also respected and appreciated will always increase customer service satisfaction and in turn profit margins. Much evidence exists that happy employees lead to better performance and higher profits. In 2014 companies listed in the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For profits increased by an average of 22.2 percent. The Bureau of Labor Statistics indicated that these same companies added new employees at rate that was *five times higher* than the national average.²⁸

Many complaints about the companies with the lowest employee satisfaction ratings concern the lack of three leading drivers:

- culture and values
- career opportunities
- trust in senior leadership

In addition many employees at the worst companies to work for also cite poor work-life balance, low pay, and poor leadership as major reasons for their discontent.²⁹

The central focus of the CEDS is improved quality of life for all residents of the region. Access to quality housing, sustainable employment, a living wage, affordable and local access to health care, asthma rates, lead exposure, affordable healthy foods access, recreational activities all have a direct impact on life quality; educational attainment rates, health care outcomes, life expectancies, substance and child abuse, domestic violence rates, premature births, teen pregnancy rates, pre-natal care, and low birth weights.

Individuals and families going through employment and financial troubles are more likely to have issues with substance abuse issues, domestic and child abuse issues and are more likely have been arrested and reoffend.

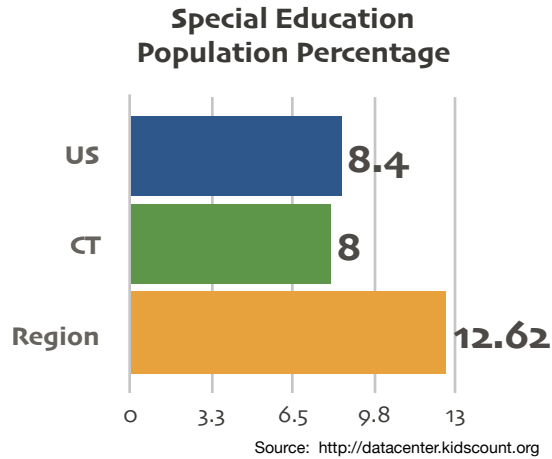
²⁸<https://www.forbes.com/sites/meghanbiro/2014/01/19/happy-employees-hefty-profits/#7c87bf2b221a>

²⁹https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/worst-companies-to-work-for_us_575b26b0e4b0e39a28ada793

During the 2006-07 school year, approximately 32 percent of Connecticut students aged 14 and older living with serious mental health conditions who receive special education services dropped out of high school.

Fewer than half (48%) of poor children are ready for school at age five, compared to 75% of children from families with moderate and high income, a 27% point gap.

Children growing up in poor neighborhoods or from lower-income families may hear up to 30 million fewer words than their more privileged counterparts.



The average annual cost to educate a student in CT is \$13,427.

The average cost to incarcerate a person in CT is \$50,000.

Employees who are struggling to make ends meet, manage the costs of housing, healthcare, child care and transportation issues, along with a job that may not be full-time that pays poorly and provides little support, incentives or opportunities to move up will lead to less productive and profitable work places. The region must be committed to encouraging employers to provide a living wage, employment incentives and additional advancement opportunities for their employees.

Only 74% of students in CT attend a Pre-K Program.

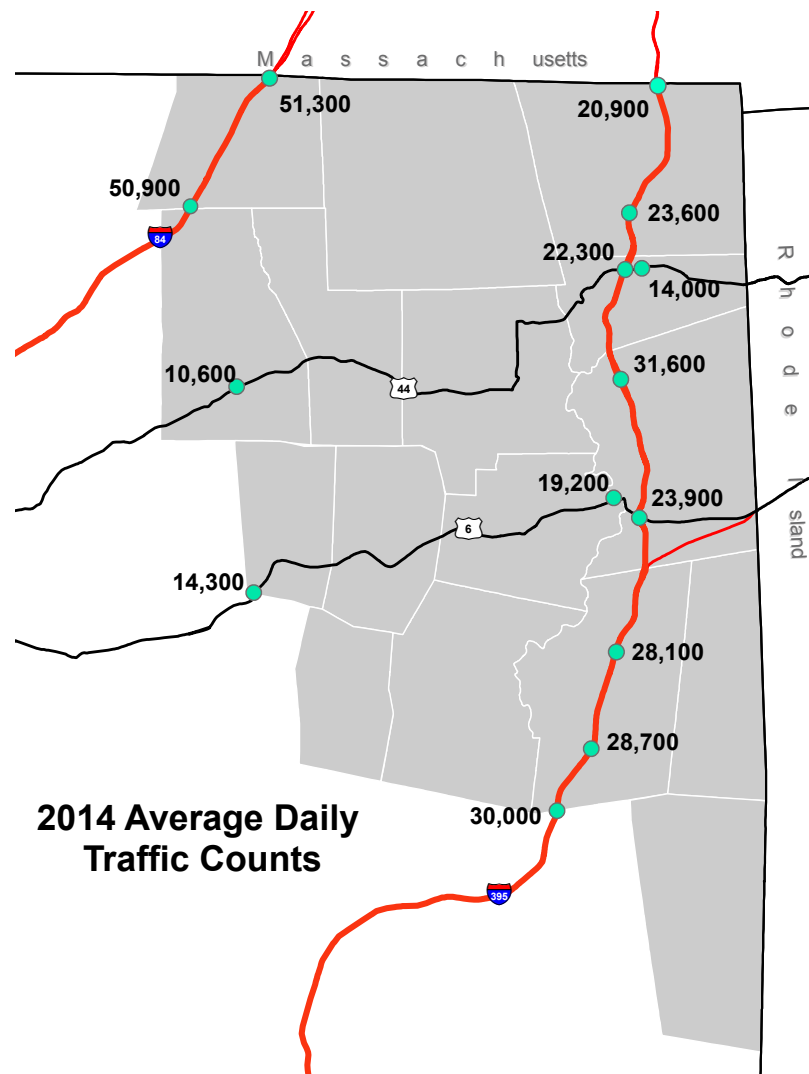
For Consideration:

- ▶ *In order to make a positive impact on economic development in the region it is imperative that we recruit and retain businesses both large and small that possess a commitment to employee satisfaction and companies that support full-time, benefitted employment with living wages and the fringe benefits.*
- ▶ *The region needs to provide training opportunities for residents in the region to obtain these jobs and should be encouraging new and current businesses to look within the region for promising and competent employees.*
- ▶ *There is very misguided perception about underemployed and unemployed persons in the region and work should be done to empower individuals to obtain sustainable employment and encourage employers to do the same with job training programs and apprenticeships.*

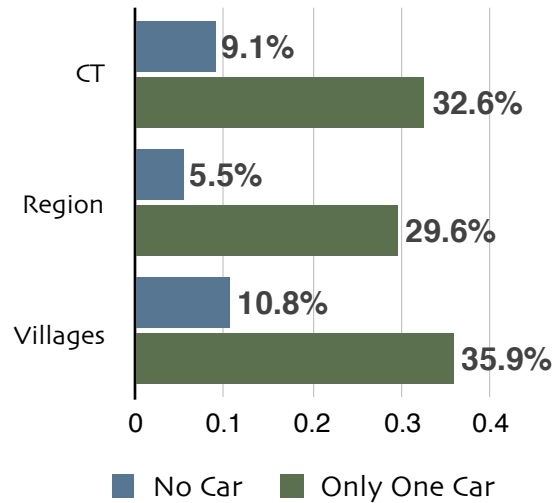
Transportation

The region's transportation system includes roads, bus, rail, air and trails. The transportation system is a mature one - meaning that there are not large undeveloped areas for the system to expand. The road system, except for new subdivisions or larger commercial development, will likely remain in its current configuration. Roadway usage (Average Daily Traffic) is the one element that does and will change. Public bus and commercial bus operations are currently limited (in the case of commercial options, do not exist at all) and have significant potential for improved service options. Air transport within the region is limited to single engine aircraft, primarily devoted to pleasure flights. Proximity to commercial air transport is quite good, with TF Green less than 45 minutes away, Logan and Bradley slightly over an hour and to JFK and LaGuardia less than three hours.

Three public transit systems provide transportation: Southeast Area Transit District (SEAT), Northeastern Connecticut Transit District (NECTD), and 51 Region Transit District (WRTD). The Northeastern Connecticut Transit District and the Windham Region Transit District (WRTD) provide public transportation in the region. Northeast Transit provides deviated fixed route service to the towns of Killingly, Brooklyn, Putnam, and Thompson; Monday through Sunday. A deviated-fixed route service is a hybrid of fixed-route and demand response service. With this type of service, a bus stops at fixed points and keeps to a timetable but can deviate its course between two stops to go to a specific location. NECTD has also coordinated their service with WRTD with a stop in Brooklyn, CT to provide two daily round trip shuttles to connect riders to the two fixed route services provided by WRTD. This allows customers to connect to the Storrs/Willimantic service, the University of Connecticut in Storrs, and the areas in Willimantic and/or The Willimantic City Bus, which provides east-west service within Willimantic. This service was the first interregional connection in over a decade. However, WRTD provides no evening or Sunday service.

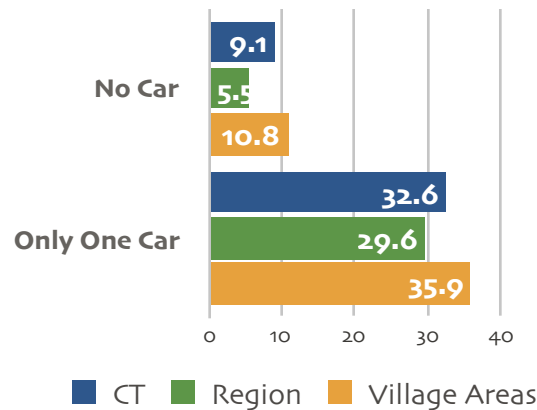


Access to Transportation



Source: <https://factfinder.census.gov>

Vehicles Available Per Rental Household (2015)



Source: <https://factfinder.census.gov>

Dial-a-Ride service is also available for the towns of Pomfret, Eastford, Hampton, Woodstock, Plainfield, Brooklyn, and Killingly. WRTD also provides Dial-A-Ride demand responsive service throughout the ten-town Windham Region between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. weekdays. While Dial-A-Ride service is open to the public, priority is given to elderly and disabled residents. The Dial-A-Ride Services provides mileage reimbursement (through the Municipal Grant Program) to volunteer drivers and also provide reimbursement for wellness trips.

Each of these districts is statutorily sanctioned and receives funding from local, state and federal governments. The SEAT service covers the town of Voluntown though no transit is provided; the NECTD services covers the towns of Brooklyn, Canterbury, Eastford, Killingly, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Sterling, Thompson, Union, and Woodstock; and the WRTD services cover the towns of Ashford, Chaplin, Hampton and Scotland. Both the SEAT and WRTD towns receive dial-a-ride services. The NECTD towns receive dial-a-ride (for elderly and disabled persons) and deviated-fixed route services (Brooklyn, Killingly, Putnam and Thompson).

The Southeast Area Transit District (SEAT) operates a continuous and coordinated transit system that meets the transportation needs of the residents and businesses in Southeast Connecticut, taking the economic challenges of riders into consideration. There is currently no connection between NECTD and SEAT. The Eastern Connecticut Transportation Consortium (ECTC) provides additional service throughout Eastern Connecticut; Senior Transportation, Rides for Jobs and Medical Transportation. They also fund the Eastern Connecticut Travel Voucher Program, which provides subsidized taxi, livery or wheelchair accessible rides for eligible individuals, and the Eastern Connecticut Mobility Project to maximize transportation resources through collaboration with transit districts and human services organizations. Both programs are funded through New Freedom.

The Northeastern Connecticut Transit District's (NECTD) recently issued a survey to transit riders. This survey revealed a third of transit riders use the NECTD Transit Bus to get to their place of employment. A staggering 80.3% of respondents do not have access to a vehicle to meet their various transportation needs. Transportation challenges also impact students attending the local community colleges.

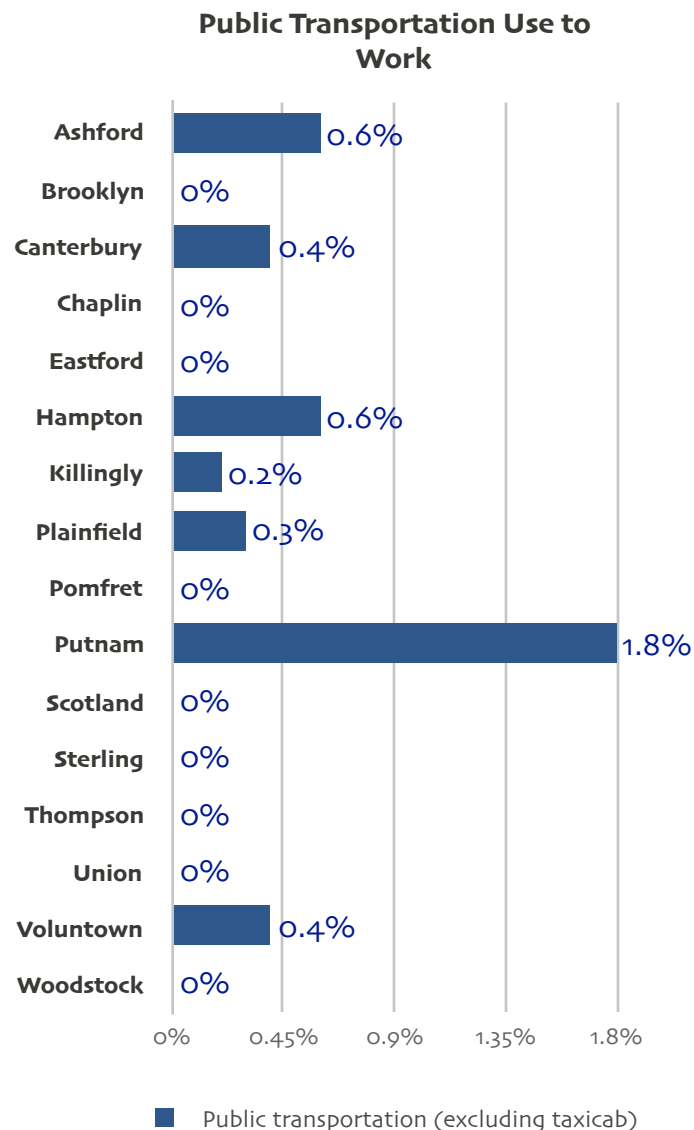
Limited interregional public transportation - Just 2 runs daily between Windham and Brooklyn and Limited Public Transportation within the region - no service from 6:00 pm to 7:00 am

The Willimantic/Danielson connector currently only runs twice day and does not accommodate the large number of students taking classes and completing their degree at QVCC. The limited number of classes offered at the satellite campus in Willimantic, along with many juggling families and employment and the majority of classes being offered at only the Danielson Campus (the only NEASC accredited location) exacerbates the problem along with the limited transportation schedule. The regions should be conducting more research into employment, education and social

services offerings are programs to evaluate the real need for expanded transportation options.

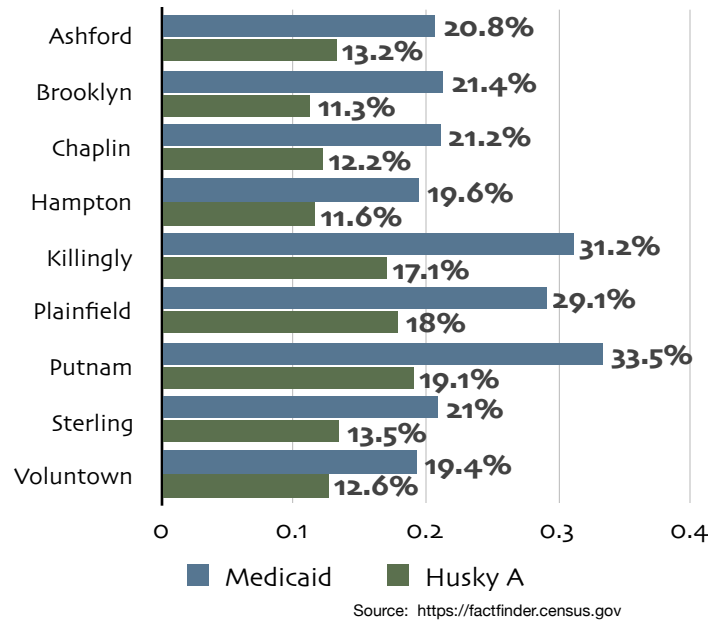
Peter Pan Bus Lines traverse the region along Route 6 and Route 44 connecting the cities of Boston, Providence, and Hartford, but there is currently has no scheduled stops in the region. At the request of the Killingly Town Council, from the business community, commercial bus service was moved from Killingly to Brooklyn (across from the Brooklyn Jail). The stop was eliminated completely shortly after the location change. Arrow provides commuter bus service between Willimantic and Hartford. The lack of commercial bus service has caused considerable hardships for persons attempting to travel both inside and outside region or individuals looking to visit the region.

The region’s rail lines are Providence, and Worcester Railroad (P&W) located in Worcester, and owned by Genesee & Wyoming. This line is used daily by numerous local businesses and as a link to other areas and rail lines, making the P&W line a significant element in the region’s economy. Presently, there is no passenger rail service in the Region - except for an occasional event excursion activity. Passenger service has not been available within Northeastern Connecticut since it was discontinued in 1971. Attempts have been made to re-establish a passenger rail service. NECCOG co-sponsored several “excursion” type rail trips in

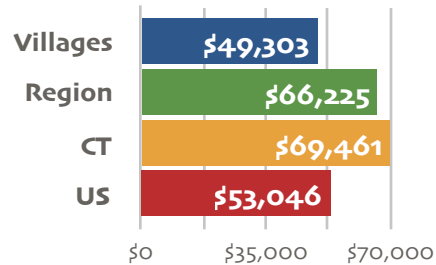


Source: <https://factfinder.census.gov>

Medicaid & Husky A Coverage 2015



Median Household Income



the late 1990's and has held discussions about reclaiming the east-west linkages to Hartford. However, to date no additional progress has been made on this issue.

For Consideration:

- ▶ *The region hasn't adequately addressed some of the fundamental transportation challenges: access for all incomes, intra and inter/state-regional connections,*
- ▶ *More collaboration is needed with the CT DOT and other transit districts to establish inter-regional transportation, both in and out of state, in addition to expanding more ride share services.*

Fiscal Condition

As is typical throughout New England, the region's member towns' revenue is derived primarily from property taxes and used to provide educational and municipal services to residents. Property taxes in Connecticut are calculated by the assessed value of real property, buildings, and taxable items on property or owned by a property owner, such as motor vehicles. Each town sets "mill rates", rates at which taxes are applied to assessments, which are typically uniform across an entire town. Residential properties in town are assessed at 70% of the value and residents pay the mill rate percentage per \$1,000 of that assessed value. However, separate parts of a town may have differing mill rates, and service districts, such as areas served by police or utilities, or boroughs, may have additional taxes. On average, for the 2011-2012 fiscal year, 70.6% of all municipal revenue in Connecticut was through local property taxes.

Property taxes are an integral part of the overall state tax structure.

- *41.9 percent of all taxes paid in the state are property taxes.*
- *As creatures of the state, towns can only tax when the state empowers them to do so - which it does mainly through the property tax.*

Housing and Child care are the Two Largest expenses in the region.

- Property taxes are an important part of the overall state tax structure - as analysts (Ernst and Young, ITEP, David Osborne, DRS Tax Incidence Study) all recognize.
- The greatest share of all the taxes paid by business are property taxes (31.6 percent).

Connecticut spent just \$170 per capita on mental health agency services in 2006, or \$591.6 million. This was just 2.6 percent of total state spending that year.

A "balanced state tax structure" requires correcting inherent flaws in the property tax system. There are two main flaws with property taxes in Connecticut: vertical and horizontal inequity.

1. Vertical inequity: property taxes are regressive:

- The 90 percent of CT taxpayers with the lowest incomes pay two to seven times higher effective property tax rates - property taxes as a share of income - than the 10 percent of taxpayers with the highest income.
- For non-elderly households, property taxes as a share of family income for the bottom 95 percent are two to four times higher than for taxpayers in the top 5 percent.

•High property taxes make housing less affordable and discourage both renters and homeowners with low current income (retirees, young professionals) from staying in or relocating to high property tax towns - and the state.

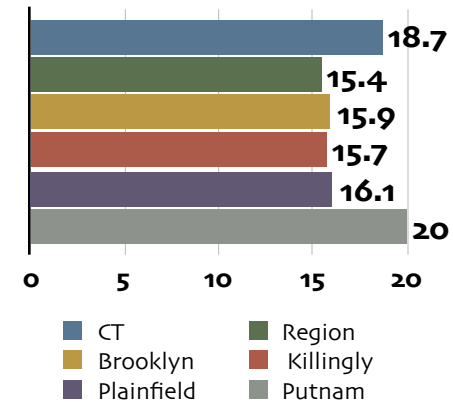
2. Horizontal inequity: There are significant disparities among similarly situated taxpayers:

- Owners of property with the same fair market value pay vastly different property taxes based on town in which they live.
- Taxpayers in different towns receive very different levels of public services for the same amount of taxes paid.
- Great differences in funding for public schools produce vast educational inequities between children in richer and poorer towns.
- High property taxes drive businesses to lower property tax towns, where additional infrastructure often must be built increasing long-term overall costs.

In 2015 7 of 10 Domestic Violence Victims were women

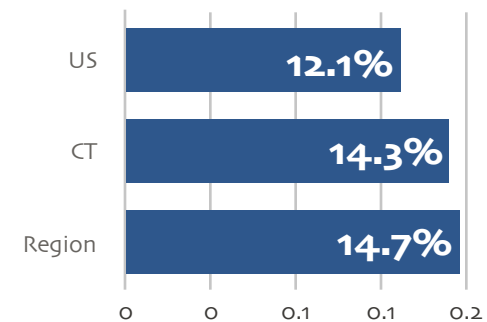
90% of single parent household are headed by a mother.

Child Abuse/Neglect Rates per 1,000



Source: <http://www.ct.gov/dot>

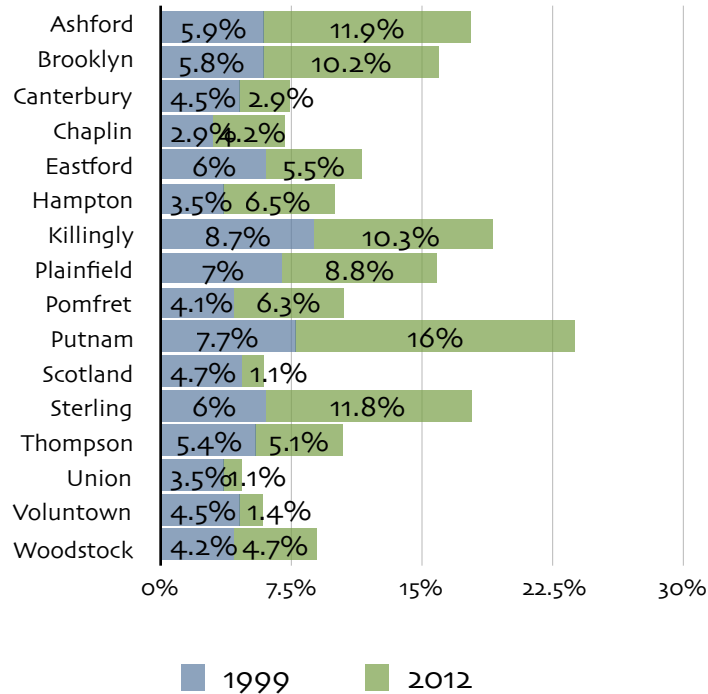
Percentage of Elderly Living Below the Poverty Line



Source: <https://factfinder.census.gov>

- High property taxes induce companies to move jobs away from cities - key to economic growth -where infrastructure already exists and where cross-fertilization of ideas maximizes innovation (because of the synergy of knowledge workers in an urban agglomeration economy).
- Disparate property taxes reinforce regressivity, since low-income households are overwhelmingly located in high property tax towns³⁰.

Poverty Rate Change



Source: <https://factfinder.census.gov>

Due to relatively small populations, towns in northeastern Connecticut are challenged to provide the same level of services as Connecticut’s larger towns and cities. “The property tax is the chief revenue source for most municipalities, with 71 percent, on average, coming from property taxpayers. The second-largest source of funding is state grants. Using those funds, cities and towns provide a wide array of services...”³¹ (Elementary and secondary education expenses are mostly by state and federal funding, less than half of educational expenditures are funded through local property taxes).

There are many concerns in the region about property taxes and the high burden it places on property owners. However, it is also important to look at mill rates as they relates to the rest of Connecticut. The CT Office of Policy and Management annually creates a list of both equalized municipal Mill Rates and Grand Lists, so towns can examine their rates in comparison with other towns. When examining the equalized grand list 9 of the 16 towns in the region had mill rates in the bottom half of the 169 towns while 7 have one’s in the top 50%. When the equalized mill rates formulated by OPM are produced it is revealed that when comparing all mill rates equally much the equalized rate is lower than the rate set by each town.

As defined by OPM the Equalized Mill Rate, or the Effective Tax Rate, is calculated by dividing the adjusted tax levy, as presented in the municipality’s Tax Collector’s Report, by the Equalized Net Grand List.³² The mill rate is the rate of taxation levied on property subject to taxation under Connecticut General Statutes. One mill

³⁰ 1,000 Friends of Connecticut property Tax Briefing Paper, 2017

³¹ <https://ctmirror.org/2016/09/12/municipalities-say-cts-property-tax-system-is-unsustainable/>

³² http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/igp/munfinsr/fi_2011-15_edition_as_of_1-11-17.pdf

is equal to 1/1000 of a dollar. For example, a tax rate of 20 mills is equivalent to \$20.00 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

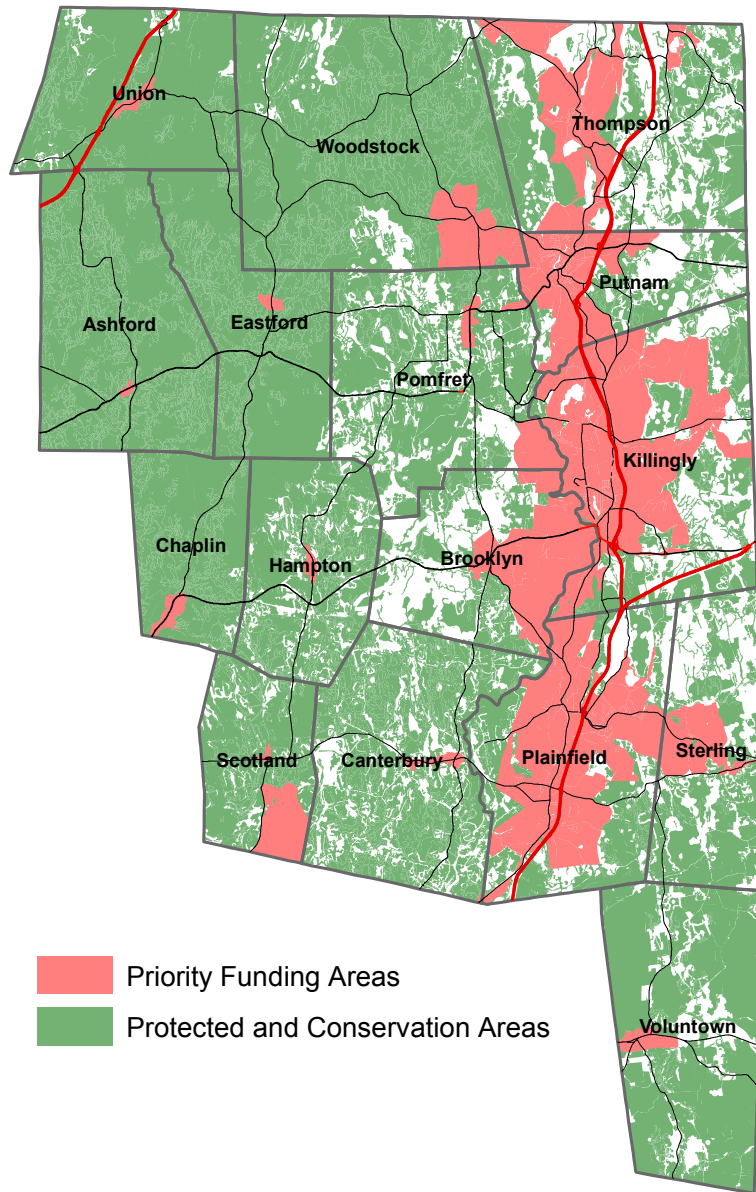
One Factor that is often overlooked when discussing the costs of doing business for both town and school districts is revenue. Most revenues significantly offset the costs passed on to the residential tax base. If revenue streams from the state are examined, it illustrates a better picture of how much funding falls directly to local property taxes. Total education and municipal spending for 2015 was \$293,027,275 with \$119,075,431 in revenues coming from the state of Connecticut, which accounts for approximately 41% of town revenues. The remaining 59% comes directly from property taxes (residential, commercial, and motor vehicles).

Land use in the region is dominated by lands zoned for residential or agricultural use; with lands set aside for commercial or industrial use being limited. "Land use largely determines the revenues and expenditures of municipal governments. Different land uses—including residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and open space—generate different amounts of revenue because they are taxed at different rates and are responsible for different amounts of intergovernmental aid. They also demand different expenditures for municipal services ranging from public education, police protection, roads, and other forms of infrastructure. When land uses change, therefore, the balance of municipal revenues and expenditures changes as well." It is noteworthy to understand that different land use types require different levels of services or costs by a town. On balance for each dollar in taxes received on residential properties it takes in excess of a dollar to provide town-based services and for each dollar received from open space, agriculture and commercial properties it takes less than a dollar to provide town based services. The American Farmland Trust, which developed the methodology for cost of community services, has consistently demonstrated that residential development costs significantly outweigh other types of development.

Reevaluating the way municipal and education services are funded are critical to sustainability of towns and the state. Minimum acre requirements prevent individuals and families from purchasing or building in certain towns. There is a misconception that new families will significantly increase school enrollment and in turn costs. However, most families are having fewer children and are awaiting

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

- ◆ The total number of individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Connecticut decreased from 28,806 in 2014 to 26,648 in 2015, a 7.5% change. 13,323 families received TANF in 2015, decreasing 7.9% from 2014.²⁰
- ◆ From 2013 to 2014, for every 100 of families living in poverty in Connecticut, 32 received TANF benefits.²¹
- ◆ \$470,463,547 was spent in 2014 on TANF assistance in Connecticut, including 18% on basic assistance, 1% on child care, 0% on transportation, and 81% on non-assistance.
- ◆ \$29,152,092 was spent in 2014 on WIC (the Special Supplement Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children) in Connecticut, serving 52,561 participants.²³
- ◆ In 2014, Connecticut distributed \$239,004,703 in child support funds, decreasing 1.4% from 2013.²⁴
- ◆ 300,000 children in Connecticut lived in households with a high housing burden in 2013, where more than 30% of monthly income is spent on housing costs.
- ◆ 3.9% of households in Connecticut were food insecure on average from 2012 to 2014, meaning that the family experienced difficulty providing enough food due to lack of resources at some point during the year.²⁷



longer to start a family. The towns must get creative and explore revenue sharing options, consolidation of town and educational services as populations across the state continue to decline.

Connecticut, in its planning process, has established “Priority Funding Areas” for investments. Priority Funding Areas are classified by Census Blocks that meet any one or more of the following criteria:

- Designation as an Urban Area or Urban Cluster in the 2010 Census.
- Within a 1/2 mile buffer surrounding existing or planned mass-transit stations (rail/busway)
- Contain existing or planned sewer service from an adopted Wastewater Facility Plan
- Contain existing or planned water service from an adopted Public Drinking Water Supply Plan

Within the region are multiple locations of fiscal distress as defined by the state and the federal government. Unfortunately, the locations of distress are, in most cases, longstanding. This plan is first and foremost a strategy to change that circumstance.

For Consideration:

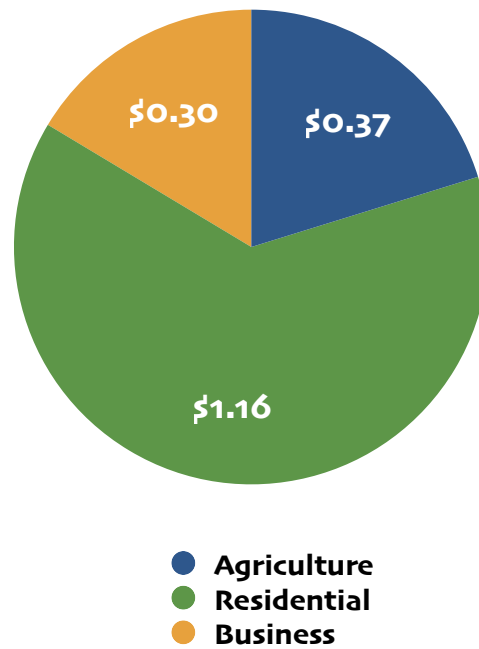
▶ *In order to continue to grow the residential tax list, allowing for more starter homes to be built is essential to attract young professionals and their families.*

▶ *On the opposite side of the spectrum, elderly residents are struggling with housing and its associated costs.*

▶ *Many elderly residents would like to age in place, but that is not always possible.*

- ▶ *Reevaluating the antiquated and outdated zoning policies to allow accessories dwelling and in-law apartments could help elderly residents stay in their home and provide housing for related family members as well.*

Cost of Services for Each Tax Dollar Taken In



Source: American Farmland Trust

Summary

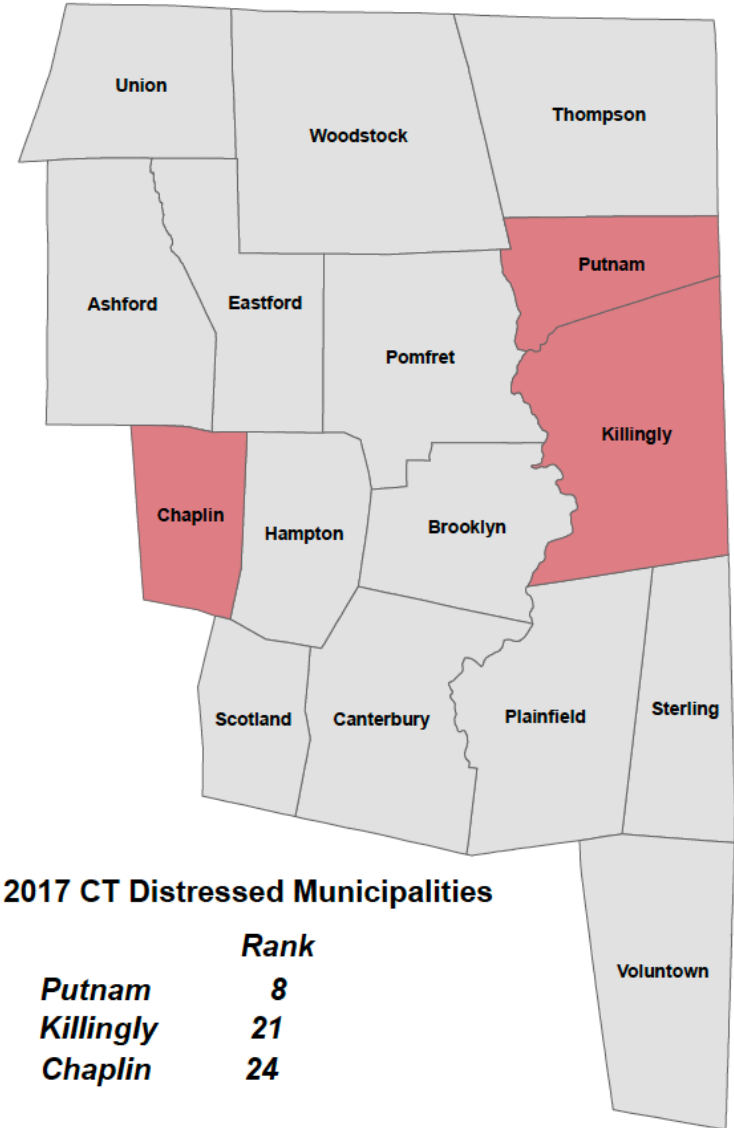
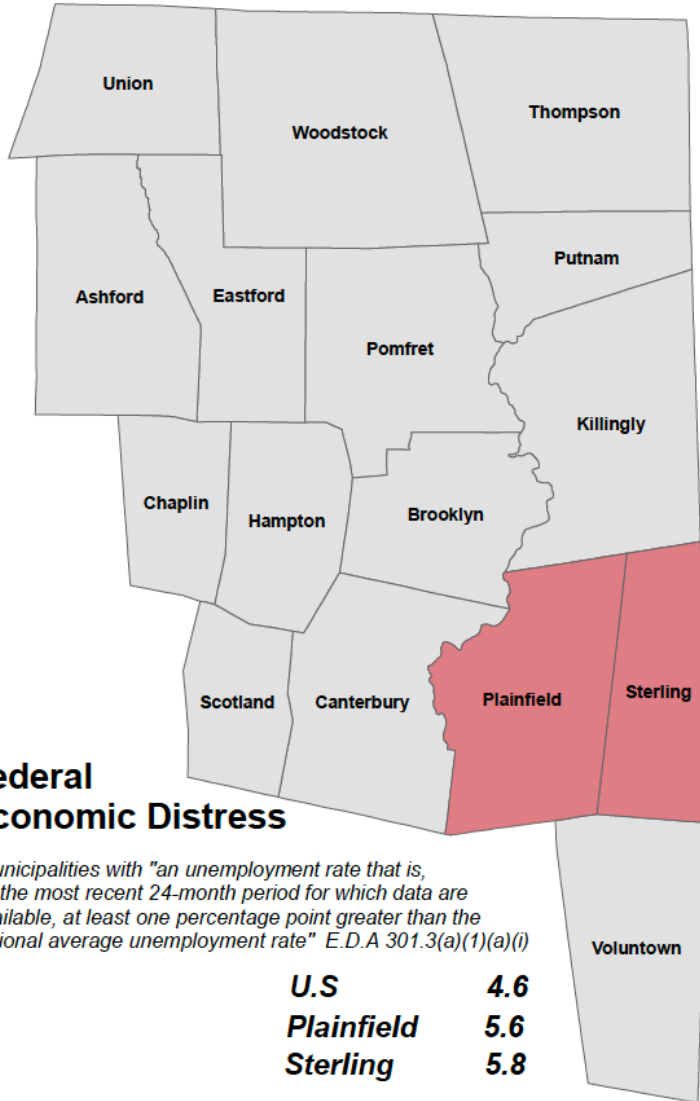
Town	Mill Rate	Equalized Mill Rate	State Rank
Ashford	32.36	25.58	38
Brooklyn	26.34	16.77	132
Canterbury	24.5	16.89	129
Chaplin	35.05	24.72	26
Eastford	25.11	17.8	120
Hampton	28.5	20.74	69
Killingly	27.31	20.27	76
Plainfield	29.05	19.45	90
Pomfret	25.43	17.20	125
Putnam	17.04	11.73	158
Scotland	38.68	24.55	27
Sterling	31.6	21.39	56
Thompson	26.06	16.87	130
Union	30.27	20.27	77
Voluntown	28.06	17.23	123
Woodstock	24.04	15.72	141
CT	Avg: 18.8	Median: 19.86	
Source: CT Office of Policy and Management			

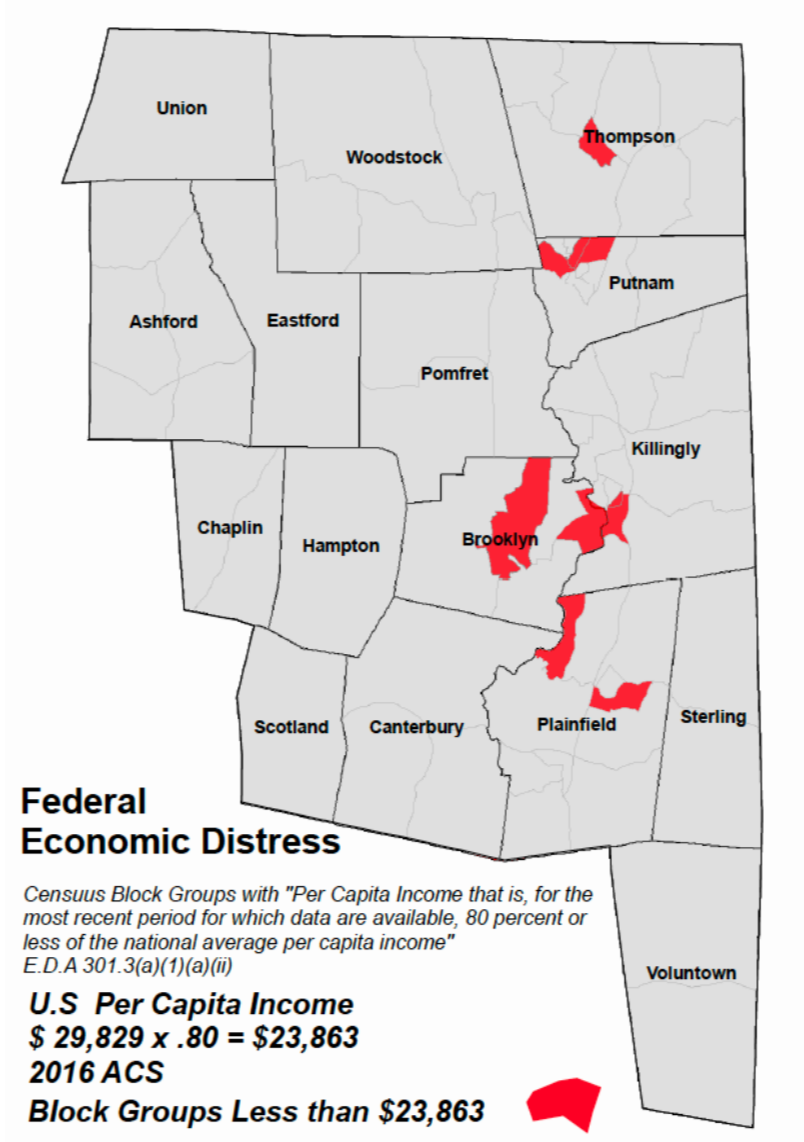
Northeastern Connecticut is a special place, having tremendous natural resources and a location that makes it accessible to some of the finest cultural and recreation destinations in New England. The region, economically, is home to many successes. The region also has many economic challenges, most of which have been longstanding and unresolved. Unemployment, underemployment, inadequate wages, unacceptable drop-out rates, poverty, and lack of affordable housing continue to challenge the region, as they have for more than forty years. To overcome these challenges, it is imperative that the Region address, in a sustained manner, the issues that have held the Region back from realizing its full potential

To attract and retain employees, it is necessary to examine the make-up and quality of housing stock, most of which was built pre-1970. Focusing on walkable communities, more diversified housing options, and neighborhoods, will attract younger residents and allow residents to age in place, or at least remain in their current communities. Examine housing and zoning codes, to ensure not only enforcement, but also find out whether restrictive zoning is excluding population groups we are trying to attract and retain. Expanding the opportunities of individuals to access loan funding, such as small cities and community development block grants, will allow homeowners and landlords to make much needed cosmetic and safety repairs to their property. Model programs being run in municipalities such as Coventry, Manchester and South Windsor will serve as a guide for how to address more properties and, in turn, help more residents live in quality and safe housing.

To promote smart and diverse economic development in the region, it is imperative that we address some of the long-standing challenges and obstacles that have brought us here. It is important to address the educational attainment and skill level gap affecting a high percentage of our potential workforce. Better collaboration is needed between our primary schools, technical schools, local colleges, and the department of labor. We need a more detailed assessment of the needs of the workforce and then to coordinate with our education and job programs to

Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023





provide the resources that can help people acquire the skills and tools needed to enter the workforce and obtain a meaningful, stable, and better job.

Three SWOT Analysis

Based on previous iterations of the region's CEDS and a new round of public discussions, the following SWOT elements were identified:

- Identify individuals and organizations that can assist projects with “risk capital” for buy-ins in companies that require special financing to launch or expand product lines and capacity.
- Encourage farmers in the region to make this area a leader in the supply of organic/local farm products, produce, crops, meat, and dairy. Work to bring a greater percent of food profits back to the farmer.
- Pursue funding to remediate and prepare former industrial sites for re-use. Assist local governments with any Planning/Zoning changes necessary to redevelop vacant industrial site
- Diversify, stabilize, and strengthen the regional economy with business retention, development, and expansion

Strengths:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| ▶ Rural Character | ▶ Educational Resources |
| ▶ Location | ▶ Freight Railroad |
| ▶ Access to Interstate 84 and 395 | ▶ Relative Affordability |
| ▶ Recreational and Cultural Opportunities | ▶ Low Crimes Rates |

A major draw of the region is not only its **location** to major cities like Worcester, Providence and Boston, but also the quintessential **rural New England charm** that attracts both tourists and people looking to relocate from busy cities. With easy access to **Interstates 84 and 395**, traveling out of the region for worker leisure is pretty simple. Access to the **Freight**

“A SWOT analysis of the regional economy should answer the question, “Where are we now?” by using the relevant data and background information to help identify the critical internal and external factors that speak to the region’s unique assets and competitive positioning. The SWOT is a strategic planning tool used by organizations to ensure that there is a clear objective informed by a comprehensive understanding of a region’s capabilities and capacity. A SWOT analysis identifies the region’s competitive advantages—those indigenous assets that make the region special or competitive in the national and global economies—juxtaposed against those internal or external factors that can keep a region from realizing its potential. Determining and analyzing what the region already possesses that could be leveraged better to build the capacity for growth, including competitive cultural, economic, technological, intellectual, and physical assets, is critical to developing the strategic direction and implementation plan to promote regional economic vitality. Leveraging assets refers to using the activities and engagement of business, government leaders and other stakeholders to maximize the economic potential of a region.”

“In addition, the SWOT analysis should consider economic resiliency. Specifically, what factors and/or elements are in place (or need to be put in place) to ensure the long-term success, viability, and durability of the regional economy?”

“SWOT analysis elements are commonly understood in the following terms:

- Strengths are a region’s relative competitive advantages (e.g., industry supply chains and clusters, extensive port, rail, and broadband assets, specialized workforce skills, higher education levels, collaboration among stakeholders) and often are internal in nature;
- Weaknesses are a region’s relative competitive disadvantages (e.g., a risk-averse or change-resistant regional culture), also often internal in nature;
- Opportunities are chances or occasions for regional improvement or progress (e.g., expansion of a biosciences research lab in the region), often external in nature; and
- Threats are chances or occasions for negative impacts on the region or regional decline (e.g., several companies in the region considering moving to lower-cost areas of the state), also often are external in nature.”

Economic Development Administration
<https://www.eda.gov/ceds/content/swot-analysis.htm>

Railroad is a major attractor for businesses that move significant amount of product or materials. The **relative affordability** also entices many to live, work and relax here. The region is also a very safe place to live. The region has **low crime rates** when compared to the state average and is much lower when examining violent crime rates.

With many **recreational and cultural options**, you can always find something fun, entertaining or educational to do. The region offers hiking trails that connect to the East Cost Greenway, kayaking fresh water rivers and lakes, as well as wine tastings at a local vineyards. The region's rural character offers argi-tourism opportunities and historical homesteads for those looking to navigate corn mazes and tour homes of important historical figures like Prudence Crandall.

Agriculture in the region has definitely changed over the last 300 years, but its important role and monetary impact on the region remains. From traditional agriculture, dairy farms to locally produced restaurant products. Local produce supplies not only residents, but also many of our local businesses like 85 Main, Heirloom Food Company and Grill 37, there are plenty of options if you want to know exactly where your meal came from.

One often overlooked asset in the the region is the extensive **educational options**, for both **K-12 and higher education**. With numerous private and public school options for primary education, this region is wonderful for expansive and diverse educational offerings, there are many options to fit the needs of each family and student. While the region has two exceptional community college offering **Associates Degree** at an extremely affordable cost, QVCC and Three Rivers offer other benefits including guaranteed admittance to any CT State School with 3.0 or higher GPA as well as most graduates obtaining their associates degree debt free.

Once an associates degree is completed at the QVCC you have at least **40 colleges and universities** within 30 miles from the region.

Weaknesses

- ▶ Poverty
- ▶ Housing Affordability and Quality
- ▶ Educational Attainment
- ▶ High Unemployment
- ▶ Reluctance s to hire individuals from within the region
- ▶ Lack of full-time living wage benefitted employment
- ▶ Inconsistent Economic Development Practices
- ▶ Coordination with Other Regions
- ▶ Individuals without Transportation
- ▶ Land Use Rules
- ▶ Low Pride (opinion) about the Region
- ▶ Short and Term Planning
- ▶ Incomplete Job Training Opportunities

Multi-generational **poverty** has been an on-going issue in this region for the greater part of four decades. These rates in the region have historically rivaled the rates of urban areas. And the general **prejudice against those living in poverty** is great. The loss of manufacturing jobs that started in the 1970' s was devastating for the region, but was not fully addressed. There was **little in the way of resources to re-train or re-educate** the individuals who lost good paying jobs. High paid jobs were replaced with low skill, low paying jobs and a large majority of those workers fell into poverty and have not recovered. Consequences and adverse effects of this transition include high housing costs, healthcare costs, inconsistent work schedules, and inability to afford transportation.

Home owners and renters are paying more than 30% of their income on housing alone. This impacts residents of all ages across the region. It has become increasingly difficult for retirees and the elderly to remain in their current housing. This does not include any of the related costs, electricity, heating, property taxes, insurance, etc. Purchasing a home is extremely challenging for young people and new families while older residents looking to age in place are struggling. This due in part to restrictive and out of date zoning, minimum lot size, square footage requirements, and limited diverse housing options.

The low **educational attainment** in the region is a challenge that needs to be creatively addressed. **Expanding and diversifying the programs** run by EWIB, Access, Easton and QVCC in a more accessible way is critical and will help residents complete **degree, certificate and job training programs** and empower them to

pursue better opportunities in the region. Collaborating with both employers and employees to develop much needed **job training programs** and apprenticeship programs will equip the region with the desired high-skilled work force the region's employers are currently recruiting from in the mid-west. Working with the Department of Labor to **leverage apprentice funding** for individuals to gain the needed skills and experience to help them be successful will be extremely beneficial.

As jobs left the region for other countries ,with lower costs, the region the **employment composition and the qualifications needs** have changed drastically - good paying jobs now require more comprehensive math and critical thinking skills. Previously individuals in the region could secure a **full-time, benefitted, well paying position with no high school diploma**. Manual labor and manufacturing jobs no longer exist as they were once known. Most of the former manufacturing employees with **limited education and skill sets** were referred to low paying retail and impersonal casino jobs paying half of what they were previously making. Most low wage jobs in the region are only **part-time and do not carry any benefits**.

Workforce agencies were proactive or extremely focused on this issue. **Not enough was done to assist displaced workers**. This was a detriment to the employees, but to our businesses, causing them to search elsewhere for employees. When local employers lose faith in our workforce it creates **negative stigmas associated with residents seeking employment**, having a significant impact on the region's workforce and employment.

The **lack of coordination** across the region when it comes to **transportation, workforce development, economic development planning, land use regulations** all lead to a **lack of personal pride and clout** in the region. When all efforts are not working together - the region will not move forward. Addressing the shortcomings with thoughtful and long term solutions to the region's challenges are imperative.

Opportunities

- ▶ Education Resources
- ▶ Tourism
- ▶ Historic Landmarks and Downtowns
- ▶ Infrastructure
- ▶ Coordinated Economic Development
- ▶ Regionalism
- ▶ Production Agriculture
- ▶ Land Available for Development
- ▶ Home Based Occupations
- ▶ Connectivity of Trails

Leveraging all the existing education options for residents is critical. More collaboration is needed, especially with border institutions like Nichols College, ECSU and UConn. These three schools border the region and present a great opportunity for strong partnerships. Continuing to **promote our diverse K-12 options** will also be critical along with support for our regions schools not only in funding, but also in advocacy. Promoting the value of a quality elementary and secondary education is vital to the success of the region. Attaining the goal of having more students completing high school and postsecondary degrees will only strengthen the region.

The region was built on **agriculture** and has a rich history of traditional farming. Today we can also tout our successful niche agriculture, organic, and farm to table ventures. Northeastern CT is also home to many **historical villages**, landmarks and nationally known and recognized **natural resources** like the **Route 169 National Scenic By-Way, The Quinebaug/Shetucket Corridor (The Last Green Valley)**. We can better capitalize on some of these well known landmarks and some not so well known. The first school to educate African American women is located in Canterbury, the Prudence Crandall House, the first patent issued to a woman was a resident of Killingly, and one of the most famous jewelers in the world was born in Killingly, Charles Lewis Tiffany, who the founded Tiffany & Co. in 1837.

Having a strong focus on **infrastructure** will greatly benefit the region, by **restoring our historic mill villages**, making communities more walkable with sidewalks and safe roadways, we can attract and retain young people and retirees looking to downsize, offering all the amenities they need within walking distance. Continued improvement to **roadways, trails and signage** will encourage the more the 2.5 million persons who drive through the region annually to stop and contribute to the local economy.

Developing a more robust **IT infrastructure** will be critical for the most vulnerable in the region, as more and more resources are being primarily offered electronically. Providing a more comprehensive and affordable **technology resources** will benefit the region greatly.

Threats

- ▶ Internal Perceptions of the Region
- ▶ Aging Populations
- ▶ Concentrated Poverty
- ▶ Educational Attainment
- ▶ Crumbling Foundations
- ▶ Low Community/Civic Engagement
- ▶ High Unemployment
- ▶ Flight of Well-Educated Citizens
- ▶ Transportation Connectivity
- ▶ Heavy reliance of the Property Tax

The regions **internal opinion** of itself speaks volumes - when municipal leaders do not take pride in the successes and work of the town - the region loses. Visitors to the region do not see things through the same lens and it would be beneficial to not only acknowledge the regions challenges, but celebrate and promote its accomplishments.

The region and states **reliance on property taxes** to fund both educational and municipal service is negatively impacting many towns in the region. To further burden towns is the yet to be quantified impact of **crumbling foundations**. Most of the region is impacted, but the numbers are currently under-reported due to the time and cost limitations associated with this issue. Towns tax rolls are also impacted due to the reduction on property values once a residence or business is known to have a crumbling foundation.

The challenges of **low educational attainment and high unemployment rates** create a disconnect between the people in need of services and the person making the decisions - a **lack of pride** becomes apparent. When a large swath of the population feels forgotten about there is a significant **decrease in civic, community or education activities** that are offered. Limited access to beneficial services in and out of the region and a perceived **lack of commitment from our leaders** are threats to our overall success.

Regional Strengths

- ▶ **Rural Character**
- ▶ **Low Crimes Rates**
- ▶ **Relative Affordability**
- ▶ **Location:**
- ▶ **Access to Interstate 84 and 395**
- ▶ **Freight Railroad**
- ▶ **Recreational and Cultural Opportunities**
- ▶ **Educational Resources**

Regional Opportunities

- ▶ **Education Resources**
- ▶ **Tourism**
- ▶ **Historic Landmarks and Downtowns**
- ▶ **Connectivity of Trails Infrastructure**
- ▶ **Regionalism**
- ▶ **Infrastructure**
- ▶ **Coordinated Economic Development**
- ▶ **Production Agriculture**
- ▶ **Land Available for Development**
- ▶ **Rural Based Businesses**

Regional Weaknesses

- ▶ **Poverty**
- ▶ **Individuals without Transportation**
- ▶ **Housing Affordability and Quality**
- ▶ **Lack of full-time living wage benefitted employment**
- ▶ **High Unemployment**
- ▶ **Incomplete Job Training Opportunities**
- ▶ **Reluctance s to hire individuals from within the region**
- ▶ **Educational Attainment**
- ▶ **Short and Term Planning**
- ▶ **Land Use Rules**
- ▶ **Low Pride (opinion) about the Region**

Regional Threats

- ▶ **Internal Perceptions of the Region**
- ▶ **Flight of Well-Educated Citizens**
- ▶ **Low Community/Civic Engagement**
- ▶ **Aging Populations**
- ▶ **Concentrated Poverty**
- ▶ **High Unemployment**
- ▶ **Educational Attainment**
- ▶ **Heavy reliance of the Property Tax**
- ▶ **Crumbling Foundations**
- ▶ **Transportation Connectivity**

Page Left Blank Intentionally

Four **Strategic Plan**

1. Strengths

Item	Objective	Actions	Partners
Rural Character	Protect and enhance the regions rural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that each town and the region has in place a current Plan of Conservation and Development that contains specific elements that protect the rural character (1-2 years) 	NECCOG, OPM, MUN
	Limit public investment in the Rural Area, such as roads, schools, and the extension of sewer services to discourage development in the Rural Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inventory open space, historic sites and other cultural resources using GIS data base format able to be publicly viewed and utilized when making land use decisions. (2-3 years) Develop model design guidelines and regulations that protect rural character and protect against conflicts with other land uses that may adversely impact rural character (1-2 years) 	NECCOG, MUN NECCOG
	Preserve, protect, and promote significant rural historic resources in the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote agricultural enterprises as a component of the region’s economic development program. (1-2 years) Review the region’s regulatory environment to minimize potential barriers to agriculture and farms (1-2 years) 	NECCOG, LGV, EDC, DECD, AGC NECCOG, AGC, PZC
	Regional approach to Open Space acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct Build-Out Analysis for each member town as part of the Regional POCD (2-3 years) Promote context sensitive development through educational workshops (Ongoing) 	NECCOG NECCOG

1. Strengths

Item	Objective	Actions	Partners
Location	<p>Capitalize on proximity to major cities such as Boston, Worcester, Providence, Hartford and New York</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market the region as a place to visit, live and work in proximity to the larger cities. (Ongoing) 	<p>NECCOG, LGV, NECC, ECC, WCC</p>
	<p>Opportunities for development at access points to the region's two interstate highways</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use traffic counts and interstate access to encourage business development and visits to the region (Ongoing) Review and amend local regulations to allow a variety of mixed uses near access points to existing transportation nodes (2-3 Years) 	<p>NECCOG</p> <p>PZC, NECCOG</p>
Freight Railroad	<p>Increase service to un-served or under-served communities, businesses and shippers in the region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase businesses using the rail line for freight transport and recruit businesses with rail line access (Ongoing) Identify areas within each community where the use of freight lines and intermodal transfer stations would be possible and insure that local regulations do not prohibit those opportunities. (3-5 Years) 	<p>EDC, NECCOG, DECD, P&W</p>
	<p>Intermodal freight facilities between rail and truck</p>		<p>PZC, NECCOG, EDC</p>

1. Strengths

Item	Objective	Actions	Partners
Relative Affordability	Stimulate home sales by advertising housing affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize realtor and travel business to promote the affordability of homes in the region (Ongoing) 	NECC, ECC, WCC
	Facilitate construction of _____ single family homes for working class families from 2018 - 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reserve portions of town-owned land in higher opportunity areas for construction of mixed income and affordable developments (3-5 Years) Provide zoning incentives that promote both affordable and market-rate development such as graduated density bonus to help with parcel assembly and enhanced density bonuses to promote higher affordable housing production (3-5 Years) 	MUN PZC, NECCOG
	Expanded funding sources -- local, regional, state, federal, private - to support housing goals and strategies to increase affordable housing units and choice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and update searchable inventories of sites available for residential development (3-5 Years) 	PZC, NECCOG
	Support adoption of local land-use plans and policies that welcome new housing and assure that conforming projects get permits and get built.		
Educational Resources	Maintain the high quality of the region's public educational resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase adult education opportunities at Ellis, Windham and QVCC (3-5 Years) 	QVCC, DOE, EASTCONN
	Increase availability of early childhood educational programs in low income neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create More job training and Certification Programs for in demand fields (3-5 Years) Review early childhood intervention programs, day care etc. for expansion and development (3-5 Years) 	QVCC, DOE, DOL, EASTCONN NECCOG

1. Strengths

Item	Objective	Actions	Partners
Recreation and Cultural Activities	Diverse recreational opportunities that include not only physical but cultural, musical and artistic activities for all age groups and abilities.	• Increase the utilization of CT tourism destinations in the region and social media. (1-2 Years)	NECCOG, MUN, LGV
		• Make town website mobile ready (1-2 Years)	MUN
		• Promote connectivity of parks and trails from existing neighborhoods and High Density Areas (Ongoing)	NECCOG, DEEP, MUN
		• Increase cultural opportunities and outreach to underserved demographic groups in the community, such as youth, elderly, and minorities. (Ongoing)	DECD, LGV, MUN
		• Encourage partnerships between businesses, volunteers, private collectors, and non-profits to enhance arts and culture in the community (Ongoing)	DECD, LGV, MUN

2. Weaknesses

Item	Objective	Actions	Partners
Transportation	Robust public transportation choices both within and out of the region.	• Create increased capacity between Windham Transit and NECTD (3-5 Years)	NECTD, WRTD, DOT
	Support the local bus transportation system as an economic development and public health/human resource strategy	• Implement Plainfield service (1-3 Years)	NECTD, DOT
		• Create connections to SEAT, WRTA and RIPTA (3-5 Years)	SEAT, NECTD, WRTA, DOT, RIPTA
	Walkable communities.	• Develop an after-hours service (Lyft/Uber Model) with certified drivers and vehicles through NECTD (3-5 Years)	NECTD, WRTD, DOT
	Municipalities that are able to maintain existing transportation infrastructure in a cost effective and efficient manner	• Provide a sidewalk maintenance and development plan for all communities that creates a network connecting community centers to economic development nodes. (3-5 Years)	NECCOG, MUN
		• Provide education on best management practices for roads and drainage	NECCOG, DOT

2. Weaknesses

Item	Objective	Actions	Partners
Transportation	<p>Robust public transportation choices both within and out of the region. Support the local bus transportation system as an economic development and public health/human resource strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create increased capacity between Windham Transit and NECTD (3-5 Years) • Implement Plainfield service (1-3 Years) • Create connections to SEAT, WRTA and RIPTA (3-5 Years) 	<p>NECTD, WRTD, DOT NECTD, DOT</p>
	Walkable communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an after-hours service (Lyft/Uber Model) with certified drivers and vehicles through NECTD (3-5 Years) 	<p>SEAT, NECTD, WRTA, DOT, RIPTA NECTD, WRTD, DOT</p>
	Municipalities that are able to maintain existing transportation infrastructure in a cost effective and efficient manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a sidewalk maintenance and development plan for all communities that creates a network connecting community centers to economic development nodes. (3-5 Years) • Provide education on best management practices for roads and drainage infrastructure (Ongoing) • Increase the use of State and Federal programs for maintenance of roads and bridges (Ongoing) 	<p>NECCOG, MUN NECCOG, DOT NECCOG, DOT</p>

2. Weaknesses

Item	Objective	Actions	Partners
Housing	Attractive, safe and affordable housing available for all incomes and household types.	• Enforcement of building codes, fire codes and zoning regulations as it pertains to housing (Ongoing)	PZC, MUN
		• Uniformity between health departments in following the guidelines prescribed by the state of CT (2-3 Years)	NDDH, UHD, EHHD, DPH, NCDH
		• Evaluate the housing needs of the region through development of a Regional housing Plan. (1-3 Years)	NECCOG
		• Promote home ownership and owner occupied rentals (Ongoing)	NECCOG, DOH
		• Expand Small City and CDBG money to all residents that qualify (spattered application) (2-3 Years)	MUN, DOH, DECD, NECCOG
		• Review local land use regulations and ordinances and remove barriers to the creation of diverse housing options at all income levels	PZC, NECCOG

2. Weaknesses

Item	Objective	Actions	Partners
Employment	Full time living wage benefitted employment opportunities in a variety of industries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the \$15 dollar minimum wage at the state and federal level (Ongoing) Support pay equity for women and minorities (Ongoing) Support FMLA (Family and Medical Leave) as a formal policy position through NECCOG (Ongoing) 	NECCOG, USSEN/CON, CTSEN/REP "" ""
	Post graduate and secondary education opportunities that increase high school graduation rates and certificate completion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand access to GED, Advanced Manufacturing and Certificate Programs by 50% (2-3 Years) 	QVCC, DOE, MUN
	Workforce Development Programs and opportunities that insure employment for the regions labor force.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Technical School to provide their programs to adult learners (post-graduates) (2-3 Years) Provide educational and job training programs for residents in the region to fill in demand positions (Ongoing) Complete a needs assessment and develop programs to address the gaps between the skills businesses need and what training would assist individuals acquire those skills (2-3 Years) Work with DOL, EWIB and EASTCONN to develop new programs and expand access to existing programs (Ongoing) Create mobile/satellite office for Access, DOL, NECCOG, TEEG, TVCCA and United Services for employment and job training in high needs areas - within walking distance for residents (1-3 Years) Have a rapid response team in place to address displacement of a large number of employees due to the loss of a major employer Increase Adult Education/GED opportunities (2-3 Years) Develop post graduate and certificate programs for high demand fields (i.e. Truck Drivers) (3-5 Years) Promote a diversity of opportunities to complete educational programs; day, night, weekend and online (Ongoing) 	DOE, EASTCONN DOL, QVCC, EASTCONN, EWIB DOL, EWIB, QVCC, EASTCONN DOL, EWIB, EASTCONN ACCESS, DOL, NECCOG, TEEG, TVCCA, US, MUN DOL, EWIB, ACCESS, TVCCA, NECCOG QVCC, DOE, EASTCONN ""

2. Weaknesses

Item	Objective	Actions	Partners
Planning	Comprehensive planning effort between State, Regional and Local partners regarding Economic Development and the associated elements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider local POCD's and other regional plan in completing CEDS, Regional POCD and Transportation Plan (Ongoing) Review existing land use regulations and ordinances for barriers to responsible economic growth and development. 	<p>NECCOG</p> <p>NECCOG,PZC</p>

3. Opportunities

Item	Objective	Actions	Partners
Tourism	<p>A destination of recreational activities and historical features that contributes to the regions economy</p> <p>Revitalized and Restored Historic Buildings</p> <p>Trail connectivity between municipalities and economic nodes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize CT Visit and Social Media to promote events, historic landmarks, persons and events. (Ongoing) Fully implement the Route 169 National Scenic By-Way Plan (Ongoing) Use brownfield and main street money to renovate downtowns. (Ongoing) Educate local municipalities and private stakeholders on opportunities for Preservation and rehabilitation grants from State of CT and other preservation programs. (Ongoing) Increase the use of Mixed Use Development (live/work) regulations where appropriate (Ongoing) Develop Regional Trail Plan that looks at closing gaps along the East Coast Greenway and promoting recreational trails as an element of economic development plans. (1-3 Years) 	<p>NECCOG ,LGV, MUN</p> <p>NECCOG, LGV, MUN, DOT MUN, DECD, DEEP CCT, NECCOG</p> <p>PZC, NECCOG</p> <p>NECCOG,DOT</p>
Technology	Technological Infrastructure necessary to be competitive in a global market.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist all towns in becoming fiber ready by 2020 (1-2 Years) Increase the use of renewable energy sources and efficiency of public facilities (Ongoing) Expand the use of social media applications in promotional and marketing strategies. (1-3 Years) 	<p>NECCOG MUN, DEEP</p> <p>NECCOG, EDC, ECC, WCC, NECC</p>

3. Opportunities			
Item	Objective	Actions	Partners
Regionalism	Increase collaboration between towns and the COG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop regional programs to provide more service at a reduced cost to towns (Ongoing) • Pursue legislative changes to enhance regionalism, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modify Section 4-124p of the General Statutes to enable regional councils of governments to borrow funds in the same manner that municipalities regional education resource centers and regional transit districts are permitted to do - Create new law that would minimize the issues related to labor contracts and related matter when public services are merged and/or consolidated - Modify Section 32-326/327/328 regarding the Regional Economic Development Act - Amend Sections 4-66g, 4-66h, 4-66m, 32-329, 8-387 and other discretionary grants currently only available to municipalities. - Support the federal recognition of regional councils of governments as county equivalents for the state of Connecticut - Recommend that the General Assembly establish a new select committee on region-based shared services to promote and facilitate the implementation of initiatives by groups of municipalities, by boards of education and councils of government - Modify Section 8-384 to enable regional housing councils to be a subset of regional councils of governments - Modify Section 8-3 to change the appointing authority for ZEOs from zoning commissions to the town itself - Amend Section 29-260 regarding the appointment of a building official - Amend Section 29-297 regarding the appointment and/or replacement of a local fire marshal 	<p>NECCOG, EASTCONN</p> <p>NECCOG, CTSEN, CTREP</p>
Land Available for Development	Easy accessibility to information on commercial and developable lands for businesses looking to locate in the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a data base and web ready application of available commercial and developable lands in the region that includes contact information (2-3 Years) 	NECCOG, EDC, MUN

3. Opportunities			
Item	Objective	Actions	Partners
Rural Based Businesses	Expansion of small rural and home based businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine zoning regulation for home based occupations (2-3 Years) • Implement regulations that make creation and expansion of small businesses less cumbersome (2-3 Years) • Develop a guidebook for all regulatory processes for opening or expanding a business (3-5 Years) 	PZC, NECCOG PZC, NECCOG PZC, NECCOG, EDC
4. Threats			
Item	Objective	Actions	Partners
Regional Perceptions and Low Community/ Civic Engagement	Strong community involvement at both regional and local levels within Boards and Commissions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower citizens to be involved through targeted community forums (Ongoing) • Increase outreach to groups by attending and communication with Social Service and Non-Profits (Ongoing) • Targeted recruitment of citizens with expertise that would benefit boards and commissions. (Ongoing) • Incentives to participation on local or regional boards or commissions (Ongoing) • Regionalization or merging of municipal required boards and commissions. (3-5 Years) 	NECCOG, DOL, EASTCONN, US, TVCCA, TEEG NECCOG MUN MUN, NECCOG MUN, NECCOG
Aging Population and flight of young educated professionals	Region that is more attractive to young people and families while providing services for aging residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase housing opportunities for aging individuals; assisting living, ancillary dwelling and in-law apartments. (3-5 Years) • Create more affordable housing for seniors (3-5 Years) • Examine the property tax structure for elderly residents (1-3 Years) • Create more housing choices for young professionals (Ongoing) • Increase and promote the community opportunities for residents to live and work in the region (Ongoing) 	MUN, PZC, NECCOG MUN, PZC, NECCOG, DOH NECCOG, MUN MUN, DOH MUN, DOH, DECD

4. Threats			
Item	Objective	Actions	Partners
Concentrated Poverty	Revitalized historic mill villages that contribute employment and housing opportunities to the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host education and job training programs in areas where poverty and unemployment is high (Ongoing) • Educate residents of the services available and assist them in navigating the services (Ongoing) • Establish a regional housing authority to monitor housing conditions and educate persons on their housing rights (2-3 Years) 	<p>DOL, EWIB, QVCC, Eastconn, Ellis Tech</p> <p>DOL, Eastconn, NECCOG</p> <p>NECCOG, MUN</p>
Property Tax	Decrease the municipal reliance on property taxes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate more equitable ways to provide educational and municipal services (3-5 Years) • Support plans that reduce the property tax burden (Ongoing) 	<p>NECCOG, MUN, DOE, OPM</p> <p>NECCOG, OPM</p>
Crumbling Foundations	Program that will assist homeowners and municipalities in navigating the process for identification, mitigation and replacement of crumbling foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate home owners on their options as it pertains to this issue (Ongoing) • Seek-out more cost effective ways to test foundations (1-2 Years) • Support changing the legislative timeline for the amount of time home owners have to address the issue (1-2 Years) • Support increasing both state and federal funding for testing and repairs (1-2 Years) • Support FEMA recognizing this as a natural disaster (Ongoing) • Assist towns in developing ways to offset the residential tax decreases associated with this issue (Ongoing) 	<p>NECCOG, OPM, Towns</p> <p>NECCOG, OPM</p> <p>NECCOG, OPM, CTREP, CTSEN</p> <p>NECCOG, OPM, CTREP/SEN, US REP/SEN</p> <p>NECCOG, OPM, CTREP/SEN, US REP/SEN</p> <p>NECCOG OPM</p>

4. Threats			
Item	Objective	Actions	Partners
Transportation Connectivity	A connected public transportation network that allows mobility between work and home both inside and outside the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop connections with other transit districts; SEAT, WRTA, RIPTA and WRTD (1-3 years) • NECTD to provide after hour service (1-2 Years) • Expand Senior/Disable Service (1-2 Years) • Implement Veterans Transportation Services (1-2 Years) 	<p>SEAT, NECTD, WRTD, WRTA, DOT and RIPTA NECTD, DOT</p> <p>NECTD, DOT, TVCCA NECTD, DOT</p>

Five

Performance Measures

Performance measures for 2018-2023 CEDS are essential to ensure that we are moving forward in addressing the long standing and embedded needs of the region. The ratings for performance measures will be ranked on a 1-5 point scale with 5 being the highest point amount given. Both the regional and village changes will be evaluated.

Performance Measures:

- ▶ Number of Jobs Created
- ▶ Full Time Positions
- ▶ Part-Time Positions
- ▶ Number of Job Retained
- ▶ Amount of Private Investment
- ▶ Amount of Public Sector Investment
- ▶ Number of Investments
- ▶ Types of Investments
- ▶ Changes in Educational Attainment
- ▶ Changes in Job Training Programs
- ▶ Average Wages

Number of Jobs Created and Number of Jobs Retained:

Jobs created and retained will be the critical metric in these performance measures, as employment is one the most critical pieces of economic development for the region. A region can be drastically affected by job loss, as seen in the manufacturing decline of the 1970-1990's and during the recession of 2008/2009. The village areas and many towns are still struggling with this decade's long issue of high unemployment and consequently the region must focus on job creation and retention as its top priority. This is the strongest measure of economic success and implementation of this plan.

Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

Both job retention and creation can be calculated and analyzed through many reporting sources, including the CT Dept. of Labor, the US Census Bureau and other social and municipal service organizations who can provide information directly and more quickly to NECCOG for review.

Full-Time and Part-Time Employment:

While there are numerous employment opportunities in the region, there are two significant gaps. The large amount of part-time and non-benefited employment presents a very unique challenge to many individuals looking for work or entry into the work force. Most employment is part time and does not help employees meet their monetary obligations; such as paying bills, rent, gas money or the ability to save money. This issue is further exacerbated by the fact that the part-time jobs usually do not offer or carry health insurance. With rising costs of health care premiums and no coverage, having the funds to pay for care, preventative or illness related is practically impossible.

There will be an annual review of Full-Time and Part-Time employment that can be filtered through the Dept. of Labor, the US Census Bureau statistics, the Chambers of Commerce, Local Business Associations and through the businesses directly, most likely in the format of a survey.

Full-time employment with benefits will be rated higher than full-time employment with no or limited benefits and part-time employment will receive the lowest rating.

Amount of Private Sector Investment:

Critical to the region's growth is new private sector investment which supports employment growth. Even though new private sector data is not readily available for review or filtered for analysis, new job creating numbers can assist in determining new private investments. Despite the difficulty in tracking this information there is significant benefit in keeping data on the amounts and types of private investments.

Amount of Public Sector Investment:

Public funding is critical to economic development and it is important that we leverage the needs of the region to apply for state and federal funding. With some of the major challenges in the region, the access to funding opportunities are

Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

greater. Having four federally distressed areas in the region will allow us to apply for additional funding that other regions will not be eligible for. It is imperative that all funding sources are investigated and that applications are completed.

Tracking results will be completed through state and federal funding sources, as well as through NECCOG, the US Census Bureau, the US Dept. of Commerce, Economic Development, USDA and CT DECD, as appropriate. Data recording of funding and expenditures of these funds will also be compiled so that tracking of projects, programs and administrative tasks can be evaluated.

Number and Types of Investments:

Again, while identifying and tracking new investments and the types of investments may be challenging, it might be useful to review the diversification of each specific investment. Currently the largest employment groups are education/health, trades/transportation/utilities, manufacturing, and hospitality services.

Page Left Blank Intentionally

Appendix A

Evaluation Framework and Measures Priority System for Ranking Projects

The following section lays out an evaluation strategy to ensure accountability for the achievement of the goals identified in this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The goal of this section is to set up a realistic annual measurement and evaluation of plan implementation. This evaluation will include two components: 1) an evaluation of progress towards goals and objectives and 2) evaluation of action plan (actions and projects) implementation.

After the approval of this CEDS, The Northeastern Connecticut Economic Partnership will produce Annual Reports that will include an evaluation section effectively grading the activities of the past year relative to the CEDS goals and objectives established in this 5- Year Plan. The evaluation section includes both quantitative and qualitative measures.

This action plan evaluation component will summarize the status and actual performance of economic development activities on an annual basis as reported by the CEDS Committee. To facilitate the annual evaluation of activities and projects for inclusion in the CEDS report, each project and action item will be assessed using an Activity Update & Evaluation. To determine the overall status of each action item, the following hierarchy will be used:

Status Category:

- On Course

Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

- Making Substantial Progress
- Re-evaluated and Revised; New Initiative
- Increased Focus Needed
- On Hold; Will be Re-evaluated

This evaluation process is an incentive for groups to implement the activities listed in the CEDS and stimulate changes and refinements to the plan on an ongoing basis. Most importantly, the evaluation component is meant to encourage coordination and partnerships between stakeholders in both the short and long term.

Project requests will be evaluated and scored based on the following metric:

Employment (45 points)	
Short Term Jobs (i.e. Construction Jobs)	
0-25 jobs	1
25-100	3
100+	5
Long Term Jobs (Direct Jobs)	
0-25	2
25-50	4
50-100	6
100-250	8
250+	10
Sub-Total	

Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

Implementation of Project (5 points)	
0-2 years	5
3-5 years	3
5+ years	1
Sub-Total	
Average Salary; including benefit costs, per position created (15 points)	
Top Quartile of average earnings	15
Second Quartile of average earnings	10
Third Quartile of average earnings	5
Bottom Quartile of average earnings	0
Sub-Total	
Percentage of Persons from the Region to be Hired (10 points)	
0-25%	1
25-50%	3
50-75%	5
75-100%	10
Sub- Total	
Socio-Economic Factors (20 points) Per capita income of census tract where project is to be located	

Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

Less than 50% of the state average	20
51-60% of state average	15
61-80% of state average	10
81% or more of state average	0
Sub-total	
Applicant must provide documentation supporting job creation and payroll projections, up to 50% penalty for not providing documentation for job creation	
Yes, documentation is provided	
No, documentation is not provided	
Deduction up to 50%	
Sub-Total	
If project is not located in a census tract at less than 50% of state average – applicant must present a plan to recruit residents from census tracts where per capita income is less than 50% the state average	
0-25% recruitment	1
25-50% recruitment	3
50-75% recruitment	5
75-100%	10

Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

Project includes education and training of likely employees (10 points)	
Applicant presents a transportation plan for residents of low income census tracts, income is less than 50% the state average of per capita income (5 points)	
The development is in a distressed community (5 points)	
Section 1 Total:	
IF 50 POINTS HAS NOT BEEN OBTAINED – DO NOT CONTINUE	
Measure	
Housing Projects	
Number of Units (5 Points)	
10% affordable	1
15% affordable	3
25% affordable	5
50% affordable	10
Sub-Total:	
Area Median Income (10 Points)	
At or below 30% AMI	1
At or below 30% AMI	3
At or below 50% AMI	5

Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

At or Below 80% AMI	10
Sub-Total:	
Public and Private Partnerships (10Points)	
Local, State or Federal	2
Non-Profit Partnership	4
Private Partnership	4
Sub-Total:	
Length of Affordability (10 Points)	
0-15 Years	1
15-30 Years	3
30-50 Years	5
Permeant	10
Sub-Total:	
Score	
IF 30 POINTS HAS NOT BEEN OBTAINED – DO NOT CONTINUE	
Economic Development/Feasibility (15 points)	
Local Regulatory Approval	2
Regional Approval	2
State Approval	2

Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

Federal approval	2
Local Support (Political)	4
Tax Abatements	3
Sub-Total:	
Environmental Factors (40 points)	
Project results in remediation of a brownfield site and/or rehabilitation of a historic building or structure	10
Project reduces the consumption of natural resources or reduces existing waste in the production of goods and services	10
Adheres to goals of the state Plan of Conservation and Development	5
Project results in the use of or revitalization of an existing building not a brownfield or mill	5
Project contributes to meeting a specific state or local environmental objective	4
Project conserves water	1
Project conserved energy	1
Project mitigates air pollution	1
Project mitigates water pollution	1
Project mitigates solid waste	1
Project uses renewable energies	1

Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

Sub-Total	
Funds Committed (10 points)	
Private	4
Federal	2
State	2
Local	2
Sub-Total	
Regional Municipal Aspects (20 points)	
Project partners two or more entities together, all contributing matching funds	10
Essential project studies, permits and approvals	5
All approvals and permits obtained, approval obtained from other agencies that require no permit	5
Applicant has applied, but has yet to receive and obtain needed permits/approval	4
Essential project studies have been completed, but permits and approval are not in	3
Sub-Total	
Total	

Appendix B

Projects and Initiatives

During the CEDS planning process of 2007, the Northeastern Connecticut Economic Partnership solicited municipalities and nonprofit organizations to submit regionally significant economic development projects for the 2007 Project Listing. In response, over thirty projects were submitted for consideration.

The Northeastern Connecticut Economic Partnership will now evaluate all projects seeking funding through this CEDS must meet the minimum requirements in the Evaluation Framework and Measures Priority System for Ranking Projects. The questions listed below served as a framework of criteria to assist in categorizing the projects.

1. Is there a strong local commitment to the project?
2. What is the status of the project?
3. How many full-time jobs will be created/retained because of the project?
4. Which CEDS objectives will be addressed upon the completion of the project?
5. Which EDA Investment Goals will be addressed upon the completion of the project?

There are no projects listed at this time. All project requests will be evaluated using the framework listed in Appendix A.

Page Left Blank Intentionally

Appendix C

Outreach

The Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (NECCOG) has a strong commitment to informing and seeking the advice of the region's residents in planning and the other programs and projects provided by NECCOG. NECCOG's public participation policy is designed to ensure opportunities for the public to express its views and to become active participants in the decision-making process.

NECCOG to ensure public involvement. In its public participation process, NECCOG is committed to:

- ▶ Ensuring that the level and quality of service provided by NECCOG is done in a nondiscriminatory manner;
- ▶ Providing timely information about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, other interested parties and segments of the community affected by economic plans, programs and projects.
- ▶ Providing reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of the Comprehensive Economic Development Plan and related projects - as well as open meetings.
- ▶ Giving adequate public notice of public participation activities and allow time for public review and comment at key decision points.
- ▶ Assuring that every effort will be made to prevent discrimination through the impacts of its programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations.
- ▶ Providing meaningful access to services for persons with Limited English Proficiency.

**Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023**

- ▶ Soliciting the needs of those under-served by systems, including but not limited to the disadvantaged, minorities, elderly, persons with disabilities, limited English proficiency, and low-income households. and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment.

- ▶ Ensure that the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 are met and that appropriate actions are taken during all phases of public involvement to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act - regardless of whether those programs and activities are federally funded or not federally funded.

NECCOG believes that public input into its operations and planning is fundamental to our mission and makes our services better. NECCOG's policies are intended to provide a two-way process of information and idea-sharing with the public, businesses, non-profits and directly affected communities and the region at large.

- ▶ Raise the level of understanding of the organization's services throughout the region by: Seeking out under-involved populations within the region, including minority, low income, senior citizen and immobile populations and holding public meetings at sites convenient to potentially affected citizens and promoting meetings in a manner appropriate to the population groups from which feedback is desired.

- ▶ Maintain contact with "interested parties" and key stakeholders. Such a list will include: Elected Officials & Local Government Staff; Transportation Agencies (public, non-profit, private); Local Media; Civic & Special Interest Groups; Social service transportation providers; Private Providers of Transportation; Representatives of Users of Public Transportation, Pedestrians, and Bicycle; Representatives of the Elderly, Disabled and Minorities.

- ▶ Keeping the public informed on a continuous basis, using a variety of written and graphic techniques. Post all meeting notices at town halls, in accordance with FOIA; Make all publications and work products available electronically to the public via the NECCOG web site (NECCOG.org) and at the NECCOG offices; Web site will be compliant with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act for

Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

disabled users; Web site shall be updated and maintained to provide the most current and accurate information available and Staff will be available during working hours to provide information and after hours at the request of community interest groups with reasonable notice. Notices will also be posted at town libraries, NECCOG buses, senior centers and other public places as deemed appropriate.

Strategic Partners for Economic Development

The following list of organizations and agencies represents identified partners for economic development for the Northeastern Connecticut CEDS program:

ACCESS Agency

The ACCESS Agency is a nonprofit Community Action Agency (CAA) whose mission to create the conditions that empowers individuals and families in the communities they serve to overcome the barriers that impair their ability to prosper. ACCESS has been working with the low-income population of Eastern Connecticut since 1965. A variety of programs are available free of charge to qualifying participants including programs that provide food, heat, energy, housing assistance, job and life skills training, transportation, small-business counseling, mentoring, and much more.

EASTCONN

EASTCONN, one of six Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) in Connecticut, has been serving the educational and training needs of schools, organizations, and individuals of all ages in Northeastern Connecticut since 1980. The mission of EASTCONN is to work in partnership with schools and communities to develop, provide, and support cost-effective education and training opportunities for learners.

Eastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce

The Eastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce works with local business and community leaders to create forward-thinking regional coalitions, build a positive business climate to meet current and future needs of our members, support balanced economic development and growth and actively works to strengthen our region as a great place to live, work and play.

Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board

The Eastern Workforce Investment Board (EWIB) covers among the largest geographical area in Connecticut and contains 41 municipalities, a total population of more than 412,000, and serves a labor force of more than 220,000. The Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board, or EWIB, oversees a network of workforce related programs and agencies funded by a variety of state and federal sources including four (4) regional CTWorks-East One-Stop Career Centers located in Danielson, Willimantic, Norwich, and New London.

The Connecticut Department of Labor

The Connecticut Department of Labor is located in the Danielson section of Killingly and serves to assist the unemployed and under employed in the region. The Department is committed to protecting and promoting the interests of Connecticut workers. In order to accomplish this in an ever-changing environment, we assist workers and employers to become competitive in the global economy. We take a comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of workers and employers, and the other agencies that serve them. We ensure the supply of high-quality integrated services that serve the needs of our customers.

Staffing/Temp. Agencies

There are approximately 10 staffing agencies in the region. They offer temporary and part time employment opportunities to persons in the area. They work with many of the warehousing companies to help them recruit and hire temporary help during busy times of the year. This takes the burden of the local companies HR Departments for hiring and evaluations. In most instances the requirements for these agencies set higher productivity standards and most temporary employees are not picked up by the company, thus reducing their time, costs and overhead.

United Services

United Service provides assistance to individuals with behavioral and mental health issues. It provides vocational and employment services to help adults recovering from severe and prolonged psychiatric illness, individuals on the autism spectrum and young adults.

Northeastern Connecticut Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

The staff works in partnership with local employers to help them find the employees they need. Staff also work with clients to improve not only the vocational skills necessary for employment but also the social skills necessary for them to interview well and land and keep a job.

The CT Department Economic and Community Development:

The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) is the State's lead agency for the development and implementation of policies, strategies and programs all of which are designed to enhance Connecticut's communities and business and housing environments. The Department of Economic and Community Development develops and implements strategies to attract and retain businesses and jobs, revitalize neighborhoods and communities, ensure quality housing and foster appropriate development in Connecticut's towns and cities.

Generations Family Health Center, Inc.

Generations Family Health Center provides quality, compassionate and professional health care that is affordable, easily accessible and without discrimination to all members of the communities they serve. Generations Family Health Center has locations in Putnam, Willimantic, Danielson, and Norwich. In addition, a mobile dental van provides dental care to children at local schools, day care centers, Head Starts, community centers and libraries. In 2005, total medical and dental visits at Generations exceeded 44,000.

Northeast Connecticut Chamber of Commerce

The Northeast Connecticut Chamber of Commerce serves the area as a nonprofit professional organization whose mission is to promote the increased profitability of area businesses through a strong economy. With a membership of nearly 400 businesses, the Northeastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce is committed to the concept that there is enormous strength in unity and great benefit to be gained in the exchange of information and ideas.

Eastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce:

The Eastern Connecticut Chamber is a collaborative of business and community leaders dedicated to securing and enhancing the economic vitality of eastern Connecticut. It

Northeastern Connecticut Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

seeks to create; forward-thinking regional coalitions, build a positive business climate to meet current and future needs of our members, support balanced economic development and growth, actively works to strengthen our region as a great place to live, work and play.

Chamber of Commerce Inc. Windham Region:

The Chamber's mission is to help businesses be more successful. We promote, showcase, post pictures, etc of at least 50 members each month in our " Community Link" Newsletter to promote businesses in the Windham Region.

Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments:

The Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (NECCOG) is guided by 16 chief elected officials representing the towns of Ashford, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Eastford, Hampton, Killingly, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, , Scotland, Sterling, Thompson, Voluntown, Union, and Woodstock. The towns collaborate on a wide range of projects to benefit them individually and the region as a whole.

The Last Green Valley. Inc.

A culmination of years of grassroots initiative, The Last Green Valley is a private, nonprofit, 501(c) (3) corporation. It is designated by Congress as the management entity for the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor. This relatively undeveloped rural island in the midst of the most urbanized region in the nation makes it a resource of local, regional, and national importance. Public Act 09-221 enacted by the Connecticut General Assembly designated the Last Green Valley as a Connecticut Heritage Area.

Quinebaug Valley Community College

Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC) is a comprehensive public two-year college, supported by the State of Connecticut and governed by the Board of Trustees of Community-Technical Colleges. QVCC's service region is Windham County in the northeastern corner of the state - with two campuses located in Killingly and Willimantic. QVCC has developed comprehensive degree and certificate programs to be responsive to the needs of the residents of the area it serves. QVCC also has a

Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

strong and growing program of continuing education and community service activities. The College also functions to a large extent as a community center, opening its library and many events to the general public. Training for local business is also a major activity.

Senior Resources

Connecticut's Area Agencies on Aging are private, nonprofit organizations that serve the needs of older persons as a focal point and resource center for information, program development, and advocacy. Senior Resources serves 56 towns in Eastern Connecticut.

Thames Valley Council for Community Action

The Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. is a private, nonprofit corporation that has been providing social services to the region's economically and otherwise disadvantaged citizens of New London County for over 40 years. With 28 programs currently reaching approximately 24,000 eligible clients annually, TVCCA is well recognized as a community leader in advocating for and meeting the needs of the region's poor.

During the development of the CEDS and in reviewing drafts of the CEDS NECCOG held meetings with the following stakeholders to review the plan:

- ▶ Municipal Economic Development Professionals (Economic Development Directors and Planners)
- ▶ Economic Development Chairs and EDC Members
- ▶ Northeastern Connecticut, Windham and Eastern Connecticut Chambers of Commerce
- ▶ Connecticut Department of Labor
- ▶ Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board (EWIB)
- ▶ Non-profits/social services groups
- ▶ Individual meetings with Mayors, Select Persons and Town Managers/Administrators

Stakeholders that received the plan for review included:

Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

- ▶ The Last Green Valley, Inc.
- ▶ Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut
 - Tony Guglielmo
 - Heather Summers
- ▶ Day Kimball Hospital
- ▶ Library Directors
- ▶ Harvard H. Ellis Technical High School
- ▶ Access Agency/Access Homeless Shelter
- ▶ United Services
- ▶ Heirloom Food Company
- ▶ Westminster Tool
- ▶ The Connecticut Department of Corrections
- ▶ Congressman Joseph Courtney
- ▶ United States Senator Christopher Murphy
- ▶ United States Senator Richard Blumenthal
- ▶ Norwich Human Services
- ▶ Partnership for Strong Communities
- ▶ Eastconn
- ▶ Generations Family Health Center
- ▶ TVCCA (Thames Valley Council for Community Action)
- ▶ NECASA (Northeast Communities Against Substance Abuse)
- ▶ TEEG (Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group)
- ▶ QVCC (Quinebaug Valley Community College)
- ▶ Residents from the Region
- ▶ State Senators:
 - Mae Flexer - 29th District
- ▶ State Representatives:
 - Daniel Rovero - 50th District
 - Anne Dauphinais - 44th District
 - Doug Dubitsky
 - Kevin Skulczyck
 - Pat Boyd
 - Sam Belsito

Appendix D

Review

The following groups and individuals were provided the document for review, edits and recommendations:

- ▶ The Last Green Valley, Inc.
- ▶ Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut
- ▶ Day Kimball Hospital
- ▶ Library Directors
- ▶ Harvard H. Ellis Technical High School
- ▶ Access Agency/Access Homeless Shelter
- ▶ United Services
- ▶ Heirloom Food Company
- ▶ Westminster Tool
- ▶ The Connecticut Department of Corrections
- ▶ Congressman Joseph Courtney
- ▶ United States Senator Christopher Murphy
- ▶ United States Senator Richard Blumenthal
- ▶ Norwich Human Services
- ▶ Partnership for Strong Communities
- ▶ Eastconn
- ▶ Generations Family Health Center
- ▶ TVCCA (Thames Valley Council for Community Action)
- ▶ NECASA (Northeast Communities Against Substance Abuse)
- ▶ TEEG (Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group)
- ▶ QVCC (Quinebaug Valley Community College)
- ▶ Residents from the Region
- ▶ State Senators:
 - Mae Flexer - 29th District

- Tony Guglielmo - 35th District
- Heather Summers - 18th District

▶ State Representatives:

- Daniel Rovero - 50th District
- Anne Dauphinais - 44th District
- Doug Dubitsky - 47th District
- Kevin Skulczyck - 45th District
- Patrick Boyd - 50th District
- Sam Belsito - 53rd District

Appendix E

Strategic Partners

Strategic Partners for Economic Development

The following list of organizations and agencies represents identified partners for economic development for the Northeastern Connecticut CEDS program:

ACCESS Agency

The ACCESS Agency is a nonprofit Community Action Agency (CAA) whose mission to create the conditions that empowers individuals and families in the communities they serve to overcome the barriers that impair their ability to prosper. ACCESS has been working with the low-income population of Eastern Connecticut since 1965. A variety of programs are available free of charge to qualifying participants including programs that provide food, heat, energy, housing assistance, job and life skills training, transportation, small-business counseling, mentoring, and much more.

EASTCONN

EASTCONN, one of six Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) in Connecticut, has been serving the educational and training needs of schools, organizations, and individuals of all ages in Northeastern Connecticut since 1980. The mission of EASTCONN is to work in partnership with schools and communities to develop, provide, and support cost-effective education and training opportunities for learners.

Eastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce

The Eastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce works with local business and community leaders to create forward-thinking regional coalitions, build a positive business climate to meet current and future needs of our members, support balanced

economic development and growth and actively works to strengthen our region as a great place to live, work and play.

Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board

The Eastern Workforce Investment Board (EWIB) covers among the largest geographical area in Connecticut and contains 41 municipalities, a total population of more than 412,000, and serves a labor force of more than 220,000. The Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board, or EWIB, oversees a network of workforce related programs and agencies funded by a variety of state and federal sources including four (4) regional CTWorks-East One-Stop Career Centers located in Danielson, Willimantic, Norwich, and New London.

The Connecticut Department of Labor

The Connecticut Department of Labor is located in the Danielson section of Killingly and serves to assist the unemployed and under employed in the region. The Department is committed to protecting and promoting the interests of Connecticut workers. In order to accomplish this in an ever-changing environment, we assist workers and employers to become competitive in the global economy. We take a comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of workers and employers, and the other agencies that serve them. We ensure the supply of high-quality integrated services that serve the needs of our customers.

Staffing/Temp. Agencies

There are approximately 10 staffing agencies in the region. They offer temporary and part time employment opportunities to persons in the area. They work with many of the warehousing companies to help them recruit and hire temporary help during busy times of the year. This takes the burden of the local companies HR Departments for hiring and evaluations. In most instances the requirements for these agencies set higher productivity standards and most temporary employees are not picked up by the company, thus reducing their time, costs and overhead.

United Services

Northeastern Connecticut
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

United Service provides assistance to individuals with behavioral and mental health issues. It provides vocational and employment services to help adults recovering from severe and prolonged psychiatric illness, individuals on the autism spectrum and young adults.

The staff works in partnership with local employers to help them find the employees they need. Staff also work with clients to improve not only the vocational skills necessary for employment but also the social skills necessary for them to interview well and land and keep a job.

The CT Department Economic and Community Development:

The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) is the State's lead agency for the development and implementation of policies, strategies and programs all of which are designed to enhance Connecticut's communities and business and housing environments. The Department of Economic and Community Development develops and implements strategies to attract and retain businesses and jobs, revitalize neighborhoods and communities, ensure quality housing and foster appropriate development in Connecticut's towns and cities.

Generations Family Health Center, Inc.

Generations Family Health Center provides quality, compassionate and professional health care that is affordable, easily accessible and without discrimination to all members of the communities they serve. Generations Family Health Center has locations in Putnam, Willimantic, Danielson, and Norwich. In addition, a mobile dental van provides dental care to children at local schools, day care centers, Head Starts, community centers and libraries. In 2005, total medical and dental visits at Generations exceeded 44,000.

Northeast Connecticut Chamber of Commerce

The Northeast Connecticut Chamber of Commerce serves the area as a nonprofit professional organization whose mission is to promote the increased profitability of area businesses through a strong economy. With a membership of nearly 400 businesses, the Northeastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce is committed to the concept that

there is enormous strength in unity and great benefit to be gained in the exchange of information and ideas.

Eastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce:

The Eastern Connecticut Chamber is a collaborative of business and community leaders dedicated to securing and enhancing the economic vitality of eastern Connecticut. It seeks to create; forward-thinking regional coalitions, build a positive business climate to meet current and future needs of our members, support balanced economic development and growth, actively works to strengthen our region as a great place to live, work and play.

Chamber of Commerce Inc. Windham Region:

The Chamber's mission is to help businesses be more successful. We promote, showcase, post pictures, etc of at least 50 members each month in our " Community Link" Newsletter to promote businesses in the Windham Region.

Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments:

The Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (NECCOG) is guided by 11 chief elected officials representing the towns of Ashford, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Eastford, Killingly, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Sterling, Thompson, Woodstock, and Union. The towns collaborate on a wide range of projects to benefit them individually and the region as a whole.

The Last Green Valley. Inc.

A culmination of years of grassroots initiative, The Last Green Valley is a private, nonprofit, 501(c) (3) corporation. It is designated by Congress as the management entity for the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor. This relatively undeveloped rural island in the midst of the most urbanized region in the nation makes it a resource of local, regional, and national importance. Public Act 09-221 enacted by the Connecticut General Assembly designated the Last Green Valley as a Connecticut Heritage Area.

Quinebaug Valley Community College

Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC) is a comprehensive public two-year college, supported by the State of Connecticut and governed by the Board of Trustees of Community-Technical Colleges. QVCC's service region is Windham County in the northeastern corner of the state - with two campuses located in Killingly and Willimantic. QVCC has developed comprehensive degree and certificate programs to be responsive to the needs of the residents of the area it serves. QVCC also has a strong and growing program of continuing education and community service activities. The College also functions to a large extent as a community center, opening its library and many events to the general public. Training for local business is also a major activity.

Senior Resources

Connecticut's Area Agencies on Aging are private, nonprofit organizations that serve the needs of older persons as a focal point and resource center for information, program development, and advocacy. Senior Resources serves 56 towns in Eastern Connecticut.

Thames Valley Council for Community Action

The Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. is a private, nonprofit corporation that has been providing social services to the region's economically and otherwise disadvantaged citizens of New London County for over 40 years. With 28 programs currently reaching approximately 24,000 eligible clients annually, TVCCA is well recognized as a community leader in advocating for and meeting the needs of the region's poor.

Key Partners:

NECCOG Northeastern CT Council of Governments
MUN Municipalities

NECTD	Northeast CT Transit District
WRTD	Windham Regional Transit District
SEAT	Southeast Transit District
WRTA	Worcester Regional Transit Authority
RIPTA	RI Public Transit Authority
DOT	CT Department of Transportation
DOE	CT Department of Education
DEEP	CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
DECD	CT Department of Economic and Community Development
DOH	CT Department of Housing
EASTCONN	EASTCONN
US	United Services
QVCC	Quinebaug Valley Community College
DOE	CT Department of Education
LGV	Last Green Valley
PZC	Planning and Zoning Commissions
AGC	Agricultural Commissions
EDC	Economic Development Commission (Director)
CTREP	CT State Representatives
CTSEN	CT State Senator
USCON	US Congressmen
USSEN	US Senator
ECC	Eastern Chamber of Commerce
NECC	Northeast Chamber of Commerce
WCC	Windham Chamber of Commerce
NDDH	Northeast District Department of Health
EHHD	Eastern Highlands Health District
UHD	Uncas Health District
NCDH	North Central District Health Department
TVCCA	Thames Valley Council for Community Action
TEEG	Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group
OPM	CT Office of Policy and Management

DOL CT Department of Labor
EWIB Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board

Page Left Blank intentionally

Appendix F

Public Notices and Public Hearings

During the development of the CEDS and in reviewing drafts of the CEDS NECCOG held meetings with the following stakeholders to review the plan:

Public Hearings - CEDS Overview and Timeline Review:

- ▶ March 15, 2017
- ▶ March 22, 2017
- ▶ March 24, 2017

Final Plan Review

- ▶ November 1, 2017: TVCCA, QVCC, CT Dept. of Corrections, TEEG, NECASA, Access Agency, Generations Family Health Center, Harvard H. Ellis Technical High School
- ▶ November 3, 2017: Community Foundation of Eastern CT
- ▶ November 16, 2017: Lee-Ann Gomes, Director of Human Services - City of Norwich
- ▶ December 4, 2017: Non-profits/social services groups
- ▶ December 11, 2017: Congressman Courtney, Senators Blumenthal and Murphy
- ▶ January 23, 2018: Economic Development Chairs and EDC Members
- ▶ January 25, 2018: Municipal Economic Development Professionals (Economic Development Directors and Planners)
- ▶ January 25, 2018: Northeastern Connecticut, Windham and Eastern Connecticut Chambers of Commerce
- ▶ January 25, 2018: Connecticut Department of Labor
- ▶ January 25, 2018: Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board (EWIB)
- ▶ January 25, 2018: Individual meetings with Mayors, Select

- Persons and Town Managers/
Administrators
- ▶ February 12, 2018: Lois Bruinooge, Last Green Valley
 - ▶ February 21, 2018: DayKimball Hospital
 - ▶ March 19, 2018: Final Review for all stakeholders

Appendix G

Stakeholder Comments and Incorporation

The following groups and individuals submitted feedback. Their comments are attached along with comments on how their feedback was incorporated into the plan. Comments and feedback was also received through phone conversations and individual meetings, those are also listed below along with their inclusion in this plan.

Meeting Minutes for Plan Review:

- ▶ November 1, 2017: Non-Profits
- ▶ January 23, 2018: EDC Commissions
- ▶ January 25, 2018: Economic Development Directors
- ▶ January 25, 2018: Department of Labor, EWIB, Chambers of Commerce and Adult Education

Written Comments:

- ▶ US Senator Christopher Murphy, Emily Boushee Outreach Assistant
- ▶ Day Kimball Hospital, Amanda Miller and Laura Dunn
- ▶ Access Agency, Davis Shadbegian
- ▶ Connecticut Department of Corrections, Tomest Maskell
- ▶ Town Planner of Woodstock Connecticut, Delia Fey
- ▶ Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board, Virginia Sampietro
- ▶ Town Planner of Thompson, Mary Ann Chinatti

Other Feedback and Comments (Verbally submitted):

- ▶ Norwich Human Services, Lee-Ann Gomes
- ▶ Thompson Residents, Tyra Penn and Wally Holder
- ▶ Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, Lillian Rhodes - December 5th 2017
- ▶ Westminster Tool, Kylee Carbone
- ▶ Generations Family Health Center, Arvind Shaw

Senator Christopher Murphy Office Comments:

I think it's great you placed a lot of focus on quality of life issues. When I conferred with Evan, he said the EDA wants to see a good economic development picture that's rooted in quality of life, cultural assets, wage increases, etc.

I think the focus put on the manufacturing pipeline and partnership with QVCC is great, but I think it might also be good to discuss the benefits of this pipeline for not only students looking for employment, but for small manufacturers looking for a skilled workforce. Electric Boat ramping up sub production is not only good news for those who may be interested in commuting from the Quiet Corner to Groton, but it's also good news for the supply chain. I commonly hear that local manufacturers are desperately in need of skilled workers. You may want to confer with the Eastern Advanced Manufacturing (EAMA) alliance on this topic.

I know it was mentioned that small farms are becoming less viable, but since they are still an employer in the region, it's a big part of the region's history & identity, and "farm to table" is popular, would you want to add a little about what it might take to help some of these operations a little bit? Increasingly farms are using alternative fuel sources to cut down on

energy costs (solar, biofuel) and farmers markets can help farmers bring goods directly to a consumer. Maybe helping draw more people to farmers markets and programs to help farmers decrease energy costs could be mentioned. ---Just a thought.

Emily Boushee

Outreach Assistant

U.S. Senator Chris Murphy

120 Huyshope Avenue, Suite 401

Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Day Kimball Hospital Comments:

Day Kimball Healthcare (DKH) remains an independent, non-profit community hospital and health system, though it become an official “Community Partner” of Yale New Haven Health (YNHH) in April of 2017. This partnership is not a merger and DKH retains complete autonomy and independence. However, the partnership does open avenues for DKH to partner with YNHH as it chooses on business and clinical endeavors that will serve to enhance business operations and provide enhanced services within DKH’s own service area. Two examples of this thus far is DKH’s participation in YNHH’s purchasing network, which has allowed DKH to save over a half-million dollars in the last year on the purchase of required materials and supplies, thanks to YNHH’s large network and more robust purchasing power. On the clinical side, in December 2017 DKH partnered with YNHH to provide tele-ICU services, which provides remote monitoring of intensive care patients at Day

Kimball Hospital by critical care and intensivist physicians at Yale during overnight hours, working in partnership with on-site hospitalist physicians at Day Kimball. The volume of intensive care patients at any community hospital makes it economically unfeasible for small hospitals to staff an overnight critical care physician. However, this program provides the same level of care that a patient would receive at Yale right within our community. This arrangement is allowing Day Kimball to keep more critically ill patients at Day Kimball Hospital and close to home, where friends and family can more easily visit and support them, rather than having to transfer these patients to larger tertiary care centers. On average, Day Kimball Hospital is now able to keep one additional patient per day, with a projection of approximately 400 patients per year who can now receive top-notch intensive care right within their own community hospital. The partnerships that Day Kimball has established with Yale and with other tertiary care centers like UMass Memorial Medical Center (for heart attack and stroke care) and Women and Infant's Hospital (for maternity and neonatal care) is allowing patients to receive the highest level of care close to home, while also allowing the community hospital to retain local control over how healthcare is provided in the region.

Laura Dunn

Director of Marketing and Communications

(860) 963-6598 | ladunn@daykimball.org

Access Agency Comments:

That is a very extensive report, one that was put together really well. I do not see anything I can give you input on. if you have specific questions about what Access is doing, I will gladly research it for you though.
Thanks again

David Shadbegian
Director of Homelessness Prevention
Emergency Shelter
The Access Community Action Agency
51 Reynolds Street
Danielson, CT 06239
email: david.shadbegian@accessagency.org
phone: 860-774-4977 ext. 3505

CT Dept. of Correction Comments:

I just scanned the final draft and it looks great! It is a comprehensive and informative document. I think it really highlights the region and gets to the heart of what is in it.

Thank you and have a great day!

Tom

Tomest Maskell
Correctional Counselor Supervisor
Connecticut Department of Correction
Offender Reentry Services Unit
(860) 692-7737

Woodstock Town Planner, Delia Fey Comments

1. I see the population projections for the area towns but on the ground, it seems hard to believe it will happen. I am sure I am just out of the loop on the net growth occurring in these towns.

2. Maybe there is no data to show it yet but this area of CT seems to have gotten much more racially diverse over the past 5 years. I am interested to see the results of the next census.
3. Pg. 18 "Towns in northeastern Connecticut, except for Eastford, have adopted zoning regulations. Towns regulate land use through subdivision, wetlands and watercourses regulations and local ordinances. Land use regulations allow towns to properly manage development, and the local tax base, in consistency with the local guidelines."

Why does it mention zoning on one sentence and then in the next sentence states towns regulate land use through a short list but leaves zoning out of the list?

Certainly, subdivision and wetlands regulations have an impact on the development and can effectively result in complicating development (by this I mean that they don't usually deny it but sometimes add complex requirements in order to approve it). Zoning either allows a specified use or it doesn't or has a process that effectively discourages certain uses. Zoning often limits development and therefore doesn't just shape the development but slows it down or in some cases prevents it altogether). You could say "In addition to zoning, towns also regulate land use through subdivision, wetlands and watercourse regulations and local ordinances." Or you could just add "zoning" before ordinances in your original sentence.

1. Pages 23 -24 mention Putnam as an Antiques destination but so many of the antiques stores have closed that I would hesitate to call it that anymore and would not characterize it anymore as antiques having a significant share of the economy in downtown Putnam. Downtown Putnam is now known as a destination for restaurants.
2. Pg. 25 "Unfortunately, many of the existing industrial parks are partially filled and mostly empty," This is very confusing. Do you mean they are built but most of the buildings are vacant?
3. Was it an error to have such close text repeated in the following excerpts? Pg. 25, middle paragraph says "These are referred to as "brownfields," which are environmentally contaminated properties, often previously used for commercial or

industrial purposes, and are typically a burden to towns. As a result, there are also many

vacant or underutilized mill structures with potential for new economic use. These types of properties have been avoided by developers because of costs and bureaucracy associated with reclaiming and cleaning the land. The Connecticut Brownfields Redevelopment Authority (CBRA) lists six brownfields sites in its online Brownfields Inventory located in the region, two in Killingly, two in Plainfield, one in Putnam, and one in Sterling."

And in the last paragraph which goes on to pg 26 says:

"These "brownfields", contaminated real property, often previously used for commercial or industrial purposes, are typically a burden to local government and have historically been avoided by developers because of costs and bureaucracy associated with reclaiming and cleaning the land. The Connecticut Brownfields Redevelopment Authority (CBRA) lists six brownfield sits in its online Brownfields Inventory, two in Killingly, two in Plainfield, one in Putnam, and one in Sterling."

1. What does "chooses" mean in the following sentence? Pg. 27. "The partnership does open avenues for DKH to partner with YNHH as it chooses on business and clinical endeavors that will serve to enhance business operations and provide enhanced services within DKH's own service area.
2. Pg 28-the bar graph has a title of "Poverty Rates 1999 and 2015" but the legend indicates the data is for 1999 and 2012.
3. Pgs. 29-30 have two paragraphs about distressed communities that seem to contradict each other. Perhaps it should be rearranged to say that 'although XYZ towns do not meet the federal criteria for a distressed community, they do meet state criteria for such designation...'
4. In the discussion of agriculture, I did not see a mention of 2 huge challenges facing. most farms today, such as who will succeed the current generation of farmers? So many of the farmers do not have adult children interested in taking on the family business after the current farmers age out.

5. Another huge challenge is the impact of the town regulations on the ability of the farmers to obtain financing. It may not be true for all the towns as it is in Woodstock because each town has different regulations, but the current Woodstock Subdivision Regulations have a negative impact on both the securing of loans with the land as collateral and the amount of money paid in PDR agreements due to the high open space requirement. The current regulation requires 50% of the non-wetland/watercourse land to be put into open space. This has a multi-faceted impact on the value of land including depressing the value of raw land and elevating the value of existing homes due to the disincentive to develop new lots via subdivision, according to two qualified appraisers from

Pioneer Farm Credit. Also, according to some lifelong farmers, some PDR transfers have shown that Woodstock Subdivision Regulations have impacted some PDRs resulting in lower per acre payments than comparable land in nearby towns. If this continues then it is one more disincentive for people to stay in or to go into farming as a way of life as well as effecting property values for residential land.

1. Some of the charts such as the "Per Capita and Median Income" chart on pg. 32, do not indicate the year the data refers to.
2. Re: Pg. 42 "Connecticut there is currently no mandatory testing of school children."

I don't know about testing school aged children but there are requirements for testing younger children for lead. If you want to get the details, I could ask my children's doctor for the requirements.

1. What is meant by the following sentence found on pg. 48. "Recipients with such barriers are less likely to secure employment than the recipients."
2. Pg. 48 "Some of the highest factors were no high school diploma or ged (31.45%), no car or driver's license (47.1%) and major depressive disorder (25.4%)".²³ "ged" should be GED.
3. Pg. 48 - I understand the difficulty someone with a criminal record could have in getting a new job since they have to disclose their record and that this

could discourage their getting a job but I can also understand the employer who wants to know if the person applying for the job has a good work ethic, if they are reliable, trustworthy and will not commit some sort of crime or cause a problem that puts the employer at risk. How can you blame someone for wanting to have a good level of confidence in the people they hire for the sake of their own livelihoods and the investment they have made in their business? It is a true challenge with two good arguments but how to resolve? I don't know.

4. Pg. 49, If you want to make a statement that the number of children that are not ready for school at age 5 is too high then you should choose a different word than 'fewer' because that makes it seem like it is not all that bad but the rest of your sentence seems to be saying that the number is too high. "Fewer than half (48%) of poor children are ready for school at age five, compared to 75% of children from families with moderate and high income, a 27% point gap."
5. Pg. 49 "Most critical are the long-term unemployed and those with low education levels and skill sets, a goal and objective from the previous four decades of regional economic development plans." What was the goal? Is there a way to make this more of a priority since it is such a challenge?
6. Pg. 51 "Working more collaboratively with the business, community, labor and business organizations, like EW/8, DOL and Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance to determine what skills employers need and then designing programs around those needs are essential to helping companies fill jobs locally, but also in assisting residents obtain quality employment"
 - a. There's no period at the end of this point nor any of the others on this page.
 - b. I recommend adding 'also' after the 'but'.
 - c. Pg 53. The "Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)" inset has what appears to be foot notes at the end of each statement that closely follow the period. This makes it hard to read. The numbers should be in "Superscript".
 - d. Pg 54 "Many complaints about the companies with the lowest employee satisfaction ratings concern the lack of three leading drivers: and values career opportunities trust in senior leadership" Why does the list start with 'and'?
 - e. Pg. 63 I have a few comments relating to this page.

c "Owners of property with the same fair market value pay vastly different property taxes based on town in which they live." This is not a complete sentence and I don't think the meaning of what the sentence is trying to say is clear. Taxes are based on the value of the land which is based on what people are willing to pay to buy the property. All buyers are not the same. All properties as well as all towns are not the same therefore all

buyers will not value properties in different towns as the same. So in the end, it's a given that different properties will be valued differently and therefore charged different amount in taxes. And of course, the mill rate is determined by each town which is a whole different point but it contributes to the different tax rates in different towns.

d The pie chart does not have enough information. I showed the chart to 3 other coworkers and none of us understood the chart. Pie charts should have percentages that equal 100%, this one has dollar amounts but does not indicate how much of the whole pie each piece represents. Is the chart trying to say that Agriculture costs the town \$0.37 for every \$1 of taxes they pay? How can Agriculture use more services than businesses? Businesses need roads maintained, need emergency services, etc. whereas for most of agriculture the town has no involvement or responsibility when the grass and crops grow and the cows roam about. Whatever the message was meant to be, it is not clear with this chart. The chart seems to be more relevant to the text on pg. 65-66. Perhaps it would be easier

to understand if it was on that page.

- a. Pg. 64 "When examining the equalized grand list 9 of the 16 towns in the region had mill rates in the bottom half of the 169 towns while 7 have one's in the top 50%. What does "one's" refer to? Maybe it could be rephrased to say "...while 7 are in the top 50%."
- b. Pg. 64 "When the equalized mill rates formulated by OPM are produced it is revealed that when comparing all mill rates equally much the equalized rate is lower than the rate set by each town." I follow the sentence until I get to "much". Is there a word missing, such as 'of'? It could say "...much of the equalized rate..."

- c. Pg. 66 "Minimum acre requirements prevent individuals and families from purchasing or building in certain towns." It should say minimum 'acreage' not 'minimum acre' because towns don't have a minimum lot size of an acre, they have a minimum size and it could be a portion of an acre or even multiple acres.
- d. Pg. 67 Re: Accessory apartments: It would be great if there could be a regional discussion on what affordable housing means. Accessory apartments could provide affordable housing to the general population; i.e.: affordable to seniors, young graduates out on their own for the first time and single people, not necessarily what counts as officially affordable such as the deed restricted kind of development which is often under a high level of opposition during the application and development phases. These non-deeds restricted individual apartments can often fit into a neighborhood quite seamlessly depending on design and layout. However, in some towns, they limit the use of small apartments on a property with a main dwelling to in-laws related to the owners or occupants and therefore are limiting the potential availability to populations that could benefit which is unfortunate because the owner could benefit as well from rental income which can help to recoup the original investment. Also, there is the unsubstantiated belief that the apartments are initially built for elderly parents and when they move on, the owners don't want to or won't rent them out. Perhaps this is an opportunity for additional affordable housing that would not need additional funding from the government. Perhaps some information to potential landlords on rights and responsibilities could help them if they should consider renting the unit out to allay fears and to encourage them to rent out the unit.
- e. Pg. 68 What are "modeling programs"? How are they going to help? Was it meant to say 'model programs'?
- f. Pg. 68 I would like to recommend additional training for land use commissions to help them understand the impact of the regulations they create and enforce. If they make changes to the regulations without understanding the potential impacts they can affect the local economy in unexpected ways. The training can help boards and commissions to understand the need for updated regulations to meet the needs of the current and future residents and businesses -these are not just residential problems,

they are not just economic development problems because we are all in this together. All people who work need homes, all people who live in homes need to have the means to support themselves, i.e.: (ideally) this means all adults (18 - 65 years+/-) need a job. The CEDS could include this as one of the ways to achieve the updated land use regulations the document mentions.

- g. Pg. 72 "With easy access to Interstates 84 and 395, traveling out of the region for worker leisure is pretty simple." Are you talking about workers i.e.: employed people traveling out of the region for leisure or did you mean to say "for work or leisure"¹¹ ?
- h. Pg. 74 "As jobs left the region for other countries, with lower costs, the region the employment composition and the qualifications needs have changed drastically good paying jobs now require more comprehensive math and critical thinking skills." I recommend deleting "the region the" to make the sentence flow better.
- i. Pg. 77 "Heavy reliance of the Property Tax". Should be ...on the Property Tax" no 'of.
- a. Pg. 77 "Towns tax rolls are also impacted due to the reduction on property values once a residence or business is known to have a crumbling foundation." Should change "in known" to "is known".
- b. Pg. 77 "When a large swath of the population feels forgotten about there is a significant decrease in civic, community or education activities that are offered." Are there fewer activities offered or worsening participation rates? Or both?
- c. Pg. 73 & 78 "Reluctance to hire individuals from within the region" What does this mean? What is the 's' word that is missing?
- d. When it comes to discussion of the problems that plague the young adult population such as low graduation rates, drug addiction, difficulty in finding a job, low motivation to apply for available jobs, that the more educated people leave the area, etc., outreach to this population including starting in high school should be a priority. Ask the people with the problems we are trying to address what they think about the issues.
- e. Why do they think this area has so many people with these struggles?

e What do they think would help to resolve the issues?

In order to create an effective approach, we should consider the perspective of the people experiencing the problems. Also, perhaps the problems can be lessened if the approach starts before the people are independent adults - such as greater assistance with preparing for what life would be like after high school.

- a. Pg. 79 "Inventory open-space, historic sites and other cultural using GIS data base format able to be publicly viewed and utilized when making land use decisions. (2- 3 years)" Cultural sites?
- a. Pg. 81 "Facilitate construction of single-family homes for working class families from 2018 - 2023" What kind of single-family homes? Or was it meant to be a number of single-family homes?

"Provide zoning incentives that promote both affordable and market-rate development such as graduated density bonus to help with parcel assembly and enhanced density bonuses to promote higher affordable housing production (3-5 Years)" Did you mean an increase in affordable housing? I think this might be misunderstood.

"Support adoption of local land-use plans and policies that welcome new housing and assure that conforming projects get permits and get built." I do not know how you can assure the units will be built because that has to do with the market. If the plan is a good one and the units are to be in smart locations for that kind of development then the market will respond. If there is no demand at a price acceptable to the developer then it won't be built.

- a. Pg. 87 "Region that is more attractive to young people and families while providing services for an aging residents." 'Residents' should be changed to 'population'.

Pg. 103 Projects and Initiatives - I thought this CEDS would not have projects? I didn't see a list of projects but I did see the text leading up to it

Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board, Virginia Sampietro - Comments:

The NE/SE COG Elected Officials Workforce Council (*EWIB's CEO Council*) has been working diligently to address workforce development challenges across our 41-town region and has made tremendous strides.

The previous section of the CEDS indicates Quinebaug Valley Community College (*QVCC*) is a key economic development asset for business & students. EWIB & its CEO Council has recently invested \$1.5M in funding student tuitions at QVCC (*largest in NE/CT*).

In December 2017, the CT Dept. of Labor (*CTDOL*) completed its closure of 50% of its American Job Centers (*AJCs*) (*including Danielson*). In an effort to retain a regional presence without state resources, the EWIB CEO Council approved a joint effort by EWIB & EASTCONN to re-open an Affiliate AJC close by. Consequently, computer workshops, Employment & Training services, & Adult Education programs are provided despite minimal funding.

In the last 5-years, EWIB & its CEO Council competitively acquired over \$14 million in federal competitive awards for manufacturing & healthcare training to serve Eastern CT and the programming has received designation as both a state & national “*best practice.*”

Re-evaluation has been completed and EASTCONN, EWIB's competitively procured provider of Employment & Training Services in the N/E extensively uses social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.). Information on workshops & employer recruitments are placed in The Bulletin, Turnpike Buyer, Shopper's Guide, as well as the Village newspapers.

Employment & Training programs such as WIA, WIOA, & Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) targets Disadvantaged Adults (low-income) & unemployed, as well as people on cash assistance. The region has steadily surpassed performance benchmarks and EWIB won four national grants exclusively for the long-term unemployed.

EASTCONN, the Northeast Chamber, CTDOL, QVCC, & EWIB all coordinate regularly to provide seamless services including Business Services, Employment & Training Services, & Adult Education services in the Northeast. The prior

Northeast service location was closed by CTDOL, but re-opened by EWIB & EASTCONN.

The consolidation in 2003 was a decision by the State of Connecticut. The EWIB administrative office location was chosen to be central to the new Eastern region. EWIB is prohibited from providing services, by federal law, and has initiated the opening of an Affiliate AJC in Danielson, despite state closures.

The enrollment limitations of the QVCC full certificate program, EWIB created a short-term, industry-driven manufacturing program and has paid \$500K+ to QVCC to provide 10 classes for 150 students to-date, achieving a 90% placement rate for Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance (EAMA) members.

Thompson Planner Mary Ann Chinatti Comments:

P. 5 – Introduction

P. 7 – Shown on the map

P. 10 – Regional Overview (describes the region which forms CT's northeast corner

P. 11 – Shown on the pie chart

P. 15 – Cites Thompson as one of the towns in the region aggressively seeking economic development

P. 18 – Shown on the map

P. 19 – Shown on the map

P. 20 – Listed as member of Eastern CT Enterprise Corridor

- P. 22 – Shown on the map
- P. 23 – Shown on the bar graph
- P. 24 – Talks about Thompson Speedway as an attraction (1 sentence)
- P. 27 – Shown on bar graph
- P. 27 – N. Grosvenordale, Grosvenordale, Wilsonville included as above 20% unemployment and former mill villages
- P. 28 – N. Grosvenordale, Grosvenordale, Thompson cited as census block group w/poverty rate 24.6%
- P. 28 – Thompson, Grosvenordale, N. Grosvenordale listed as MHI below \$30K
- P. 28 – Thompson income disparity of \$59,884
- P. 31 – Shown on bar graph
- P. 33 – Shown on map
- P. 34 – Shown on graph
- P. 37 – Shown on graph
- P. 40 – Shown on map
- P. 41 – Shown on graph
- P. 41 – Thompson has deviated NE Transit fixed route service
- P. 42 – Thompson – NECTD services – dial-a-ride and deviated fixed route services
- P. 48 – Shown on chart
- P. 49 – Shown on bar graph

P. 11 – WHY is Thompson NOT included in the Worcester Urbanized Area???

P. 13 – Thompson HAS APZ regulations

P. 17 – Why is the River Mill not included?

P. 19 – Why is Thompson Speedway not included in unique events?

P. 20 – Thompson's brownfields are excluded – why??

P. 46 – No Thompson residents have Medicaid & Husky A coverage?

Thompson's agricultural areas/operations not mentioned at all



neccog

January 23, 2018 2:00pm

CEDS Plan Review with Economic Development Commission Members
Minutes

Called to Order: 6:07pm

Attendance:
Dale Demaris
Mike Gatnick
Ray Williams

Item 1:
Review and Discussion on the CEDS

Adjournment:
7:20pm



neccog

January 25, 2018 @ 1pm

CEDS Plan Review with Labor Dept, EWRB, Chambers of Commerce and EastConn

Called to Order: 1:10pm

Attendance:

Lisa Arends
Virginia Sampietro
Maureen Crowley
Suzanne Cimochowski

Item 1:

Review and Discussion on the CEDS

Adjournment:

2:45pm



January 25, 2018 @ 10am
CEDS Plan Review with EDC Professionals
Minutes

Called to Order: 10:05am

Attendance:

Wendy Sears
Melissa Gill
Elsie Bissett
Louis J. Soja, Jr
Delia Fey
Chris Lippke

Item 1:

Review and Discussion on the CEDS

Adjournment:

11:15am



neccog

November 1, 2017 @ 9:30am
CEDS Plan Review with Non-Profits
Minute:

Called to Order: 9:34am

Attendance:
Kathleen Krider
Deb Monahan
Tomert Markell
Arvind Shaw
Kristen Hempel
John Goodman
Anne Diamond
Amanda Miller

Item 1:
Review and Discussion on the CEDS

Adjournment:
11:10am

Page Left Blank Intentionally

Appendix H

Municipal Adoption

Friday, March 23, 2018 Regular NECCOG Meeting Northeastern Connecticut Transit District

Rick Ives, NECCOG Chair opened the meeting at 8:30am.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy - Full draft which had five public meetings, 15-20 individual meetings, and was sent to 70 persons/organizations for review. When approved it goes to OPM and DECD for State approval and then on to EDA for Federal approval.

3. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy - The Director explained that the CEDS document is updated every five years and it is something we've had since 2001. He noted that NECCOG is one of the few, if not the only, region to do this work fully in-house. Once the document is approved it then goes onto to OPM, DECD, the Governor then signs it and then moves on to the Economic Development Administration for federal approval. If approved the region would then become an Economic Development District and that would open us up to some possible Federal dollars.

Mr. Syme moved to accept and Mr. Alberts seconded - passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:28am

Page Left Blank Intentionally

Appendix I

Department of Community and Economic Development Approval



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT
Office of the Secretary

July 12, 2018

John Filchak
Executive Director, Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments
125 Putnam Pike
Dayville, Connecticut 06241

Re: Northeastern Connecticut Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023

Dear Mr. Filchak:

Thank you for submitting the *Northeastern Connecticut Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2018-2023* to the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) for a review of consistency with the State Plan of Conservation and Development (State C&D Plan). I am pleased to inform you that OPM has reviewed the subject comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDs) and hereby issues its approval, in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) Section 32-742(c).

Upon approval of this CEDs by OPM and the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), the Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (NECCOG) may submit the state-approved CEDs to the U.S. Economic Development Administration (USEDA) for its consideration of approval. In accordance with CGS Section 32-743(b), NECCOG may also request USEDAs to designate it as a federal Economic Development District (EDD), since the Governor designated your predecessor organization, the Northeastern Connecticut Economic Partnership (NEEP), as a CT-EDD in 2011.

State agency approval of this CEDs also serves to formally revise the geographic boundaries of the previously designated CT-EDD to align with the boundaries of the Northeastern Connecticut Planning Region, in accordance with CGS Section 32-741. OPM will notify you when it provides USEDAs with a revised map of CT-EDD boundaries, which is standard procedure whenever such boundary changes occur. This helps to ensure that the geographic boundaries of any federally-designated EDDs are consistent with the associated CT-EDDs.

While OPM considers this CEDs to be generally consistent with the State C&D Plan, please note that certain projects emanating from the CEDs may be subject to additional state agency review, under CGS Section 16a-31(a) and CGS Section 16a-35(d), if such projects are supported by state or federal funding.

Going forward, please ensure that both OPM and DECD receive a copy of NECCOG's annual report on progress made in implementing the CEDs, as required by CGS Section 32-742(d).

If you have any questions, please contact Matthew Pafford at (860) 418-6412.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Benjamin Barnes in black ink.

Benjamin Barnes, OPM Secretary

Cc: Catherine Smith, Commissioner, DECD
John Filchak, Executive Director, NECCOG

450 Capitol Avenue • Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1379
www.ct.gov/opm

Page left Blank Intentionally

Appendix J

Department of Community and Economic Development Approval



Catherine H. Smith
Commissioner

Department of Economic and
Community Development

Connecticut
still revolutionary

September 12, 2018

Mr. John Filchak
Executive Director
Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments
125 Putnam Pike
Dayville, CT 06241

Re: Approval of the Northeast CT Council of Governments Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Document

Dear Mr. Filchak:

Thank you for your submittal of May 2018 requesting the State of Connecticut, Department of Economic Development's (DECD) to review, comment and approve the newly updated and revised Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document for 2018-2023 that was prepared by the Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (NECCOG) on behalf of the sixteen municipalities that make up the Northeastern Connecticut Economic Development region.

NECOG is a regional planning agency, established under the Connecticut General Statutes sections 4-124j to 4-124p and 8-31 to 8-37a. As a duly authorize Regional Planning Area/Council of Governments, CRCOG is eligible to serve as the regional economic development planning authority for the region.

The Department of Community and Economic Development has reviewed your new 5-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document for the period 2018-2023, which also includes the additional the towns that may have been added to the NECCOG as a result of Sec. 16a-4 of the C.G.S.

DECD finds the following:

- The CEDS is generally consistent with the statewide comprehensive economic development strategy.
- The region has sufficient size and represents 16 member municipalities.
- There are two municipalities within the region that meet the minimum criteria for unemployment.
- The borders of the NECCOG CEDS Region are coterminous with the regional borders of NECOG.

Page left Blank Intentionally



**Ashford - Brooklyn - Canterbury - Chaplin - Eastford -
Hampton - Killingly - Plainfield - Pomfret - Putnam - Scotland -
Sterling - Thompson - Union - Voluntown - Woodstock**