WELCOME TO THE CEDS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

March 29, 2023

Welcome to the CEDS Oversight Committee

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Purpose & Process

- Conduct Outreach
- Represent the Region with Informed Data
- Create Vision, Goals & Objectives
- Shape the Future

Surveys completed so far

- Kick-off survey (147)
- Oversight Committee Survey (11)
- Apprenticeships in NE CT (4)

What is our Vision?

Dictionary

Definitions from Oxford Languages · Learn more

vi·sion

noun

1. the faculty or state of being able to see.
   "she had defective vision"

   Similar: eyesight | sight | power of sight | faculty of sight | ability to see

2. the ability to think about or plan the future with imagination or wisdom.
   "the organization had lost its vision and direction"

   Similar: imagination | creativity | creative power | inventiveness | innovation

verb **RARE**

imagine.
"we visioned a small lawn surrounded with a perfect tangle of trees"

Our DRAFT Vision

Northeastern Connecticut is welcoming to new economic development and is committed to building the strength and resiliency of the community through enhancing what’s here and creating avenues for new opportunity.

Focus of CEDS

- Infrastructure
- Transportation
- Land Use & Permitting Process
- Housing
- Capital for New Business
- Business Assistance
- Tourism
- Education
- Healthcare & Mental Health
- Childcare

Up-to-Date Infrastructure

"Many manufacturing companies have expressed this is a reason they do not settle in the region. Poor access to highways but potholes and narrow roads elsewhere. Makes it difficult on vehicles and creates costly repairs."

-Committee Survey comment

"There is a need for better, more reliable broadband options at a reasonable price."

-Regional Survey comment

Public water access	Opportunity
Sewers/wastewater treatment	Opportunity/Weakness
Condition of roads	Opportunity
Electricity	Opportunity
Natural gas	Opportunity
Highspeed broadband	Weakness

TRANSPORTATION

"Current rail infrastructure could be an ongoing opportunity- although its been discussed for many years and nothing changes."

-Committee Survey comment

"Access to public transportation and housing go hand in hand. If you don't have public transportation, it makes it harder for residents to get to a job. I would say that public transportation must come first, because there would be no point in producing affordable housing if someone could not travel between home and work."

- Ashford Kickoff Meeting

I. Transfer of manufactured goods

- Strength

II. For small business purposes

- Strength/Weakness/Opportunity

III. Accessibility to the public

- Weakness

IV. Utilization of other platforms i.e., Uber or Lyft

- Opportunity

"Without a car a person is very limited in this region. Public transportation does not have enough stops or times to make it readily available."

-Committee Survey

PREDICTABLE AND EFFICIENT LAND USE PERMITTING PROCESS

I. Wetlands permits

- Strength

II. Planning commission applications

- Weakness

III. Zoning permits

- Weakness

IV. Building permits

- Opportunity

"Changing local zoning regulations is going to have to align with what our current environment can maintain and withstand, whether that be infrastructure, sewer, etc."

-Kathleen Krider, Access Community Action Agency

CAPITAL STRUCTURE FOR DEVELOPERS/ ENTREPRENEURS

I. Working capital

Opportunity

II. Equity capital

Opportunity

III. Debt capital

Opportunity

"We have supportive local banks."

-Committee Survey comment

"Some small businesses would disagree because they are startups or have no credit, but working capital is available."

-Committee Survey comment

HOUSING STOCK

I. Small housing units for singles and retirees
- **Weakness**

II. Availability of affordable renter options
- **Weakness**

III. Availability of single-family options
- **Weakness**

IV. Availability of multi-family options
- **Weakness**

V. Overall quality of existing housing stock
- **Weakness**

"Diversity of new housing stock options is greatly needed along with a housing feasibility study for lending institutions to refer to in making lending decisions."

-Regional Survey comment

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

"There could be more collaboration between groups to strengthen the clusters. However, many rely on funding and that makes them competitive under the surface."

-Committee Survey comment

"Brooklyn has a reputation of being unfriendly to new businesses. I would like someone to put together a guidance document for starting a new business in our town."

-Regional Survey comment

I. Educational resources

- **Opportunity**

II. Regional Business Associations

- **Strength**

III. Emphasis on regional innovation clusters i.e., agriculture/agritourism, manufacturing and technology

- **Opportunity**

IV. Resources specifically for small businesses

- **Weakness**

V. Resources for women and minority entrepreneurs

- **Weakness**

TOURISM

I. Heritage/ historical	**Strength**
II. Creative	**Opportunity**
III. Scenic beauty and recreation	**Strength**

"Encourage tourism by bringing back train service to Putnam! I'd love to hop on a train to Boston or Mystic/New London."

-Regional Survey comment

"Last Green Valley is a remarkable organization that we are so lucky to have. They have been able to share our beauty with guests."

-Committee Survey comment

"Most of the cultural and art assets fund themselves with events and we still have not recovered from people's fear of attending events. So many of our artists and art groups have closed or reduce hours because they cannot raise dollars. There are less quality art events because the events need the attendees to cover costs-and costs have gone way up."

-Committee Survey Comment

EDUCATION

I. Alignment of high school curriculum with employer/college needs

Opportunity

II. Workforce alignment and preparation, i.e., pipeline initiatives

Opportunity

III. Training opportunities to keep skills up-to-date

Opportunity

"Employment conditions for young professionals also depends on the economy- five years ago students may not have had easier access to jobs as they do now, making it more difficult to choose a line of work. The MPI could provide students with an established career pathway, which they could continue at QVCC or Three Rivers, both post-secondary institutions that provide manufacturing training."

-Carol LaBelle, Sr. Director of Programs and Special Projects at EWIB

HEALTHCARE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

I. Youth prevention programs	II. Equitable access through schools/employers	III. Adult mental health support
• **Weakness**	• **Weakness**	• **Opportunity**

"The current waiting time for an annual physical is 10 months to a year. There is a shortage of health care professionals in the region, especially mental health. If you can only get an appointment with your psychologist every 6 weeks, it will not be effective. Medicaid pays so poorly that most providers are not taking that insurance. The most in need, with the least ability to pay are being left out. Employers cannot afford to provide healthcare any longer because plans are too expensive, the state requires too many "services to be covered" and there are no longer any discounts for being healthy."

-Committee Survey comment

CHILDCARE

I. Affordability

- **Weakness**

II. Safety

- **Strength**

III. Consistent/reliable access

- **Weakness/Opportunity**

"We help people determine the reason for their challenging work history… Access to adequate childcare and transportation services are major issues that contribute to a person's ability to retain their job…I'd like to think that if we had the capacity to bring these concepts into some of our bigger or second chance employers, we could better support them through dealing with employees who may be facing barriers to being good workers."

-Kathleen Krider, Access Agency

Thank you for attending today's CEDS Oversight Committee meeting!

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Please stay tuned for upcoming meetings!