

2017

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Southeastern Connecticut



Executive Summary

Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region

Executive Summary

The Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (seCTer) is a non-profit, public-private regional economic development agency serving the 20 towns, two boroughs and two Native American Tribal Nations of Southeastern Connecticut. seCTer's mission is to promote and preserve the region's attractiveness, to encourage new businesses, and to assist and to nurture existing and expanding local enterprises. seCTer is the agency responsible for developing and implementing the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Southeastern CT Economic Development District in close partnership/coordination with the Southeastern CT Council of Governments and other regional organizations.

The purpose of the CEDS is to provide direction and focus as well as a framework from which to proceed and to which local plans can align to gain validity and strength to help facilitate implementation. The CEDS provides possible strategies to develop the flexibility needed to adapt to both macro- and micro-economic conditions and to fully utilize the region's unique advantages to maximize our economic opportunity for its residents.

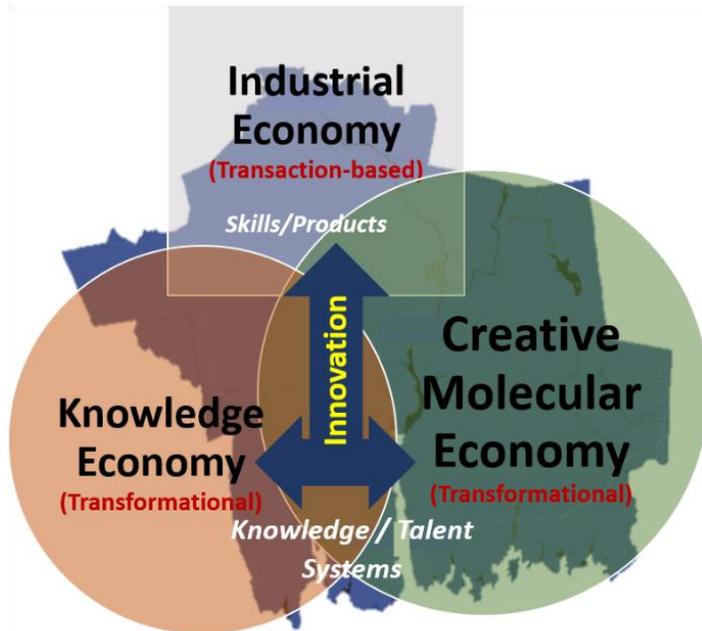
Stakeholders have expressed a need for a more coordinated and collaborative approach to achieve common goals and efficiencies necessary for all towns, businesses, and organizations within SECT to thrive. This CEDS reflects this cry for coordination and collaboration. Previous CEDS focused heavily on municipal and business 'tactical' projects without fully articulating any *regional* strategy that they contributed to. This CEDS presents a regional strategic plan that reflects the collective input, desire, and recognition of the need to nurture and create a diverse, inclusive economy for Southeastern Connecticut.



The 2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy contains five sections conforming to the Economic Development Administration's Guidelines for drafting a CEDS.

Section 1: The New Normal

The first section provides an overview of the global economic trends since the adoption of the previous CEDS and how this impacts the role of Economic Development Organizations/professionals and the strategies we develop. This section also provides an overview of our assets on which to build, and major activity since the last CEDS in some of the key sectors.



In the period following the adoption of the region's first CEDS in 2004, Southeastern Connecticut (SECT) witnessed deep structural changes in the global economy that have and will continue to impact and transform the local economy. The transaction-based economy has evolved into a transformational, knowledge-based economy that recognizes continual innovation supported by open networks and complex systems as its foundational elements. The skills, mindset, and structures needed to support the waning, transaction-based economy lose their relevancy as we transition to the "New Creative Molecular Economy," and can even be detrimental as we attempt to adapt and evolve. The goal of restoring pre-recession conditions is impossible because there is a dynamic, new structure and a new set of assumptions in place that at times change without clear motive. We must instead innovatively *reenergize* and *repurpose* the static, institutional systems in order to move beyond the status quo.

Generating the political will to achieve this will be one of our biggest challenges.

We will be also be challenged by our inability to predict outcomes in this New Economy, and will need to continually develop systems that allow us to *adapt* to them. The reality

of this new, disruptive, global economy must illuminate an *undisputed* path away from isolated towns competing for recognition and resources toward regionalism, where the critical mass *vital* to compete in the global marketplace is provided and strengthened by a regional identity/unity.

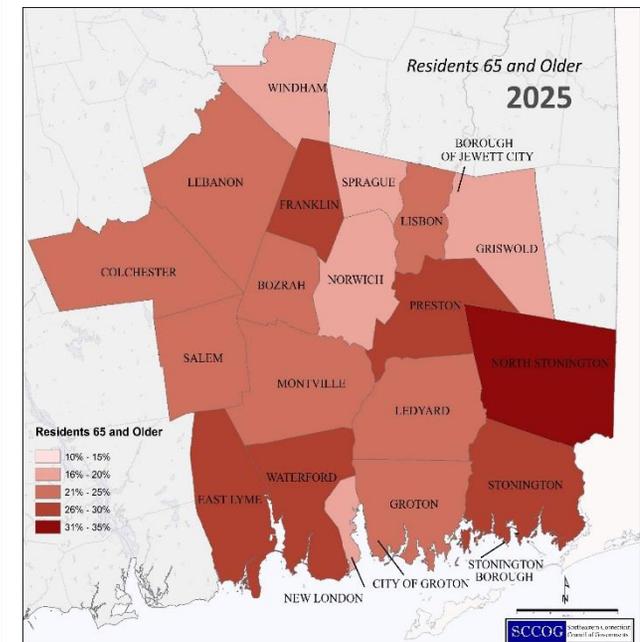
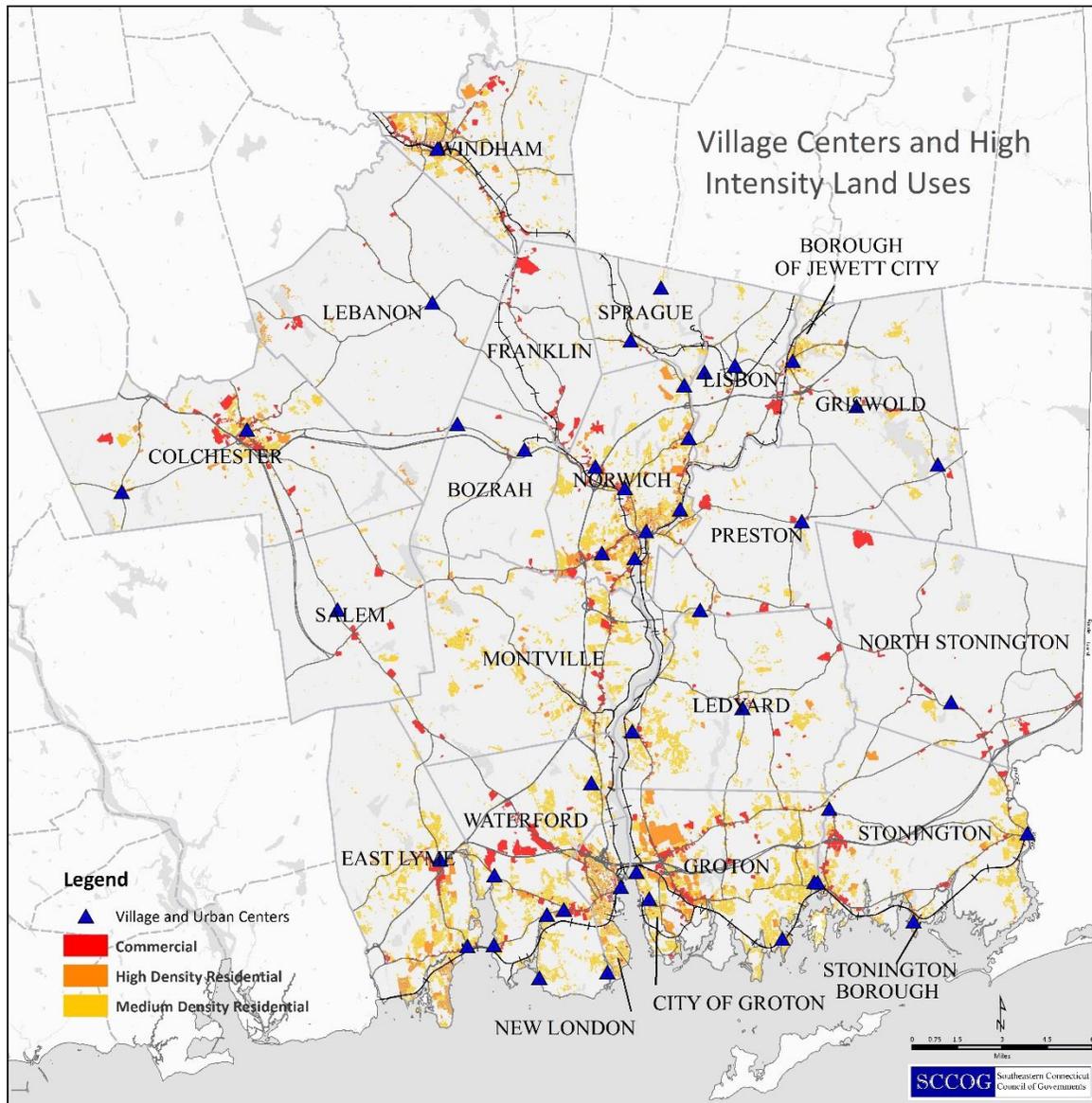
Section 2: Regional Profile

Section 2 provides a highlight of the regional demographic and economic data analysis provided by Camoin Associates that helped frame the development of strategies, goals, and objectives of this CEDS. The full analysis, which is provided as an appendix to the CEDS, contains a series of profiles containing key data for the region overall and, where noted, for its constituent municipalities. In addition to Camoin Associates, the Southeastern CT Council of Governments provided significant demographic and land-use data for each of the towns in the region.

Socio-economic Trends and Highlights

SECT is characterized as primarily rural and suburban, with pockets of more dense and diverse populations in four urban centers: Windham, Norwich, New London and Groton. The population growth is very low, and the existing population, like many other regions, is aging. SECT has

an educated workforce and pockets of wealth, but the education and income disparities are great between the towns. Despite numerous transportation, cultural, and natural assets and an enviable proximity to major US and Canadian markets, the region is not thriving. The urban centers in particular need to be repurposed and revitalized in order that they can become more attractive to the young new talent needed to spark innovation and investment.



SECT was late entering the Great Recession, and has been slow to recover. Economists do point to key indicators of recovery, but full job recovery to pre-recession numbers is unlikely due to the significant structural change in the economy itself. The challenges that remain are centered on finding ways to effectively build on the region’s strengths and existing economic drivers, to enhance the skills of the workforce to accommodate industry demand, and to make use of existing but outdated buildings and contaminated sites, in order to build a new economic future for the region.

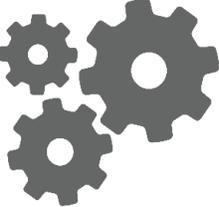
Indicators of Economic Recovery Include

- October 2016, CT unemployment rate dropped to 5.1% from its peak of 9.2% in October 2010. The unemployment rate for SECT also dropped from its peak of 9.6% in November 2011, to 6% in 2015 for the seCTer region (new configuration).
- The State housing market began to recover in 2012, slowed in 2014, and showed improvement again in 2015 and 2016. The positive trend is expected to continue. In SECT, single-family home sales increased 15% and median single-family home prices increased 2% through June 2015. In 2014, there was an increase of 421 housing units - up from the 141 unit low in 2008, but still well below the peak of 1,268 in 2004.
- More than 1,600 companies benefitted from the State’s campaign to strengthen the Small Business Express Program (SBEP). As of mid-November 2016, the State had provided more than \$260 million in loans and grants with an associated expected 6,616 in job creation and 18,202 retained.
- \$60M invested in the Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation Fund (MIF) to support the growth, innovation and progress of Connecticut’s advanced manufacturing sector. To date, approximately \$25 million has been allocated and matched by \$26 million of private investment.

Camoin Associates examined the following clusters to determine the Primary and Secondary Industry Clusters for SECT.

Past, Present, and Projected Industry Jobs								
Cluster	2011 Jobs	2016 Jobs	2021 Jobs	2011 - 2016 Change	2011 -2016 % Change	2016 - 2021 Change	2016 -2021 % Change	GRP
Tourism	25,609	27,430	28,003	1,821	7%	573	2%	\$1,032,095,450
Healthcare Services	20,256	20,846	22,397	590	3%	1,551	7%	\$1,217,181,099
Defense	17,524	19,319	19,877	1,795	10%	558	3%	\$2,232,344,853
Energy and Environment	6,059	5,513	5,090	(546)	(9%)	(423)	(8%)	\$1,323,743,124
Bioscience	4,014	2,994	2,033	(1,020)	(25%)	(961)	(32%)	\$1,244,529,655
Agriculture, Fishing, and Food Production	1,963	2,144	2,204	181	9%	60	3%	\$174,925,626
Creative	2,103	1,928	1,727	(175)	(8%)	(201)	(10%)	\$112,972,887
Advanced Manufacturing	2,052	1,917	1,883	(135)	(7%)	(34)	(2%)	\$239,246,665
Maritime	371	422	366	51	14%	(56)	(13%)	\$48,172,442
seCTer Region	148,747	146,184	146,417	(2,563)	(2%)	233	0%	\$14,504,598,891
Connecticut	1,797,758	1,868,407	1,906,851	70,649	4%	38,444	2%	\$243,910,568,213
U.S.	145,672,48	158,866,95	166,098,86	13,194,472	9%	7,231,907	5%	\$16,751,927,728,21
Source: EMSI								

The three primary industry clusters identified in the region confirm the existence of both the old and the new economic paradigms, making the transition to the New Economy potentially less disruptive than in areas without a surviving, strong industrial base. Many regional organizations are exploring collaborative strategies to support innovation related to the primary and also the other historically important clusters found in SECT. In partnership with legacy industries and the region’s educational institutions, the Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board’s efforts to create strong career pathways for these primary industries are also well underway.

Primary Clusters	Key Facts	What This Means for Regional Growth Strategies
 <p>DEFENSE & ADVANCED MANUFACTURING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Defense (Military + Shipbuilding): 13% of regional employment ▪ Advanced Manufacturing: 1% of regional employment Largest industries: military, ship building ▪ Smaller advanced manufacturing industries: metalworking, wire manufacturing, machinery ▪ Average earnings per worker: Defense \$92,000; Advanced Manuf. \$80,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strong growth, expected to continue ▪ Defense and advanced manufacturing should be considered as integral ▪ Focus on workforce development for new growth and replacement of retiring workers ▪ Enhance quality of place, including land use, housing, and transportation ▪ Maintain strong communication with employers and Federal representatives
 <p>TOURISM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 28% of regional employment (including gaming industry) ▪ +1,800 jobs (+7%) since 2011 ▪ Largest industries: restaurants, retail, hotels, museums ▪ Average earnings per worker: \$26,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Significant share of jobs, historically and projected ▪ Well-known tourist destination ▪ Continued investment to maintain and expand assets and infrastructure ▪ Increased transportation and pedestrian options ▪ Increased wages and quality of service ▪ Comprehensive marketing of region ▪ Coordination with agriculture and fishing industries ▪ Revitalization of downtowns and village centers, enhance quality of place ▪ Build on growth in marine-related tourism
 <p>HEALTHCARE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 14% of regional employment ▪ +590 jobs (+3%) since 2011 ▪ Largest industries: hospitals, nursing care facilities, offices of physicians, social services ▪ Average earnings per worker: \$57,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Significant share of jobs ▪ Seize new opportunities created by industry consolidations and re-alignments ▪ Workforce training, recruitment, and retention ▪ “Healthy Region initiative” – leverage region-wide, holistic initiative around health, workforce, economy, community, food/agriculture

The historically significant, supporting clusters identified are:

Primary Clusters	What This Means for Regional Growth Strategies
<p>BIOSCIENCE - on its own and related to healthcare industries; as part of entrepreneur ecosystem; and in efforts to sustain and build high-wage, high-talent businesses, employment, and entrepreneurs.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Small, niche cluster with historical strength but recent declines - 2% of regional employment -1,000 jobs (-25%) since 2011 ▪ Avery Point, CURE, small network of individuals committed to success of the cluster are important assets to build on ▪ Improve quality of life infrastructure and amenities to attract and retain talent ▪ Develop synergies with growing health care cluster
<p>AGRICULTURE, FISHING, AND FOOD PRODUCTION - as it relates to quality of place (land, open space, cultural heritage), tourism (local food), a healthy region (healthcare initiatives), and efforts to develop and support small businesses and entrepreneurs.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Small, but important to region for creating opportunities for local businesses and entrepreneurs, maintaining open space, providing local goods, supporting quality of life - 1% of regional employment; +180 jobs (+9%) since 2011 ▪ Initiatives to strengthen and connect ag-related industries to regional economic growth strategies – local sustainability, food culture, visitation, tourism ▪ Focus on supporting small farms and producers ▪ Provide technical assistance to communities on land use strategies ▪ Marketing and education to increase local demand ▪ Tie into regional health initiatives
<p>MARITIME (excluding defense ship building) - as it relates to tourism plus its connection to food (aquaculture) and manufacturing (boat building and related marine manufacturing).</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Very small cluster - <1% of regional employment ▪ Important to tourism-related economy ▪ Considered with respect to tourism cluster and marine-related manufacturing and food production

Section 3: Summary of Public Input

seCTer, in partnership with many local and regional organizations, stakeholders, and economic development professionals, conducted a number of events in the region to provide ample opportunity for all residents and stakeholders to provide their valuable input to inform and strengthen the strategies developed for the CEDS. Section 3 provides a summary of this public input. The full text of the input gathered is provided as an Appendix to the full CEDS. The priority challenges and opportunities identified by the stakeholders who participated in the numerous public input events formed the basis of the broad goals and objectives outlined in Section 4.

A common theme emerged in all the different discussions. In order to remain competitive/relevant and to maintain any vibrancy in our communities, we need to attract and retain young professionals, innovative entrepreneurs, and affluent retirees by aggressively marketing our assets, and investing in programs and infrastructure that create or facilitate connections to economic, social and recreational opportunities here in SECT. The primary barriers identified were a lack of coordination and operative networks or collaboration between organizations (governmental, nonprofit, private) and a lack of integrated and streamlined systems (transportation, education/career pathways, regulatory), both resulting in damaging inefficiencies and in competition for increasingly scarce resources. The fiscal instability and uncertainty at all levels of government, and locally in the form of lower incomes and less profit, have dramatically diminished the social and financial capital available to invest in the infrastructure, institutions, organizations, programs and projects designed to strengthen the communities in SECT and facilitate prosperity and growth.



Section 4: Strategic Direction/Action Plan

The CEDS strategy Committee reviewed the public input and developed a high-level Regional Vision and two primary Shared Objectives. Next the Committee distilled the opportunities identified and prioritized during the SWOT and Focus Groups into four broad categories from which to develop Goals and Objectives. These were mapped out to include some possible Inputs and Actions, intended to serve as a starting point for stakeholders organize around. As Transportation, Education and Workforce overlapped all four categories, the committee created separate goals for each.

There are 3 concurrent Actions taking place in the CEDS for which seCTer will be responsible:

[Action 1: Getting stakeholders aligned behind one regional vision, and one regional identity - and understanding the benefit of operating as one united region.](#)

VISION

The Southeastern CT Economic Development District identifies with and benefits from operating as one united region.

SHARED OUTCOME 1

Activate and resource a consortium of existing stakeholders who have a vested interest in broad-based prosperity and who are motivated by the economic advantages of regional alignment and cooperation.

SHARED OUTCOME 2

Create a more resilient, inclusive and evolving, vibrant economy by focusing on innovation, competency, connectivity, flexibility, preparedness, diversity, collaboration, and sustainability.

This will lead to greater efficiency and less overlap of services and competition for resources. In the global economy, the region is the economic unit. By promoting the assets of the entire region, we can achieve greater economies of scale which increases our competitiveness. Regional alignment and messaging will help us change the story of SECT and attract investment.

Action 2: Creating the culture of collaboration, building capacity, and developing new systems and strengthening networks necessary to compete in the new highly connected economy.

Based on the public input received, the following broad goals were identified. From these broad goals, several broad objectives and suggested actions and inputs were outlined as a starting point for discussion and action.

<p>GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES</p> <p>Achieve greater regional efficiency and sustainable fiscal stability.</p>	<p>RESILIENCE AND READINESS</p> <p>Build the capacity, systems and networks necessary to successfully and continuously adapt to future disruptions in the economy and create and support a more resilient economy.</p>	<p>COMPETITIVENESS AND INNOVATION</p> <p>Reposition SECT Region as one Innovation Economy</p>	<p>QUALITY OF LIFE</p> <p>Ensure that every resident, existing and prospective business owner, employee, and visitor to SECT palpably feels our <i>Quality of Life</i> rooted in a strong <i>Sense of Place</i>, by recognizing, strengthening, and promoting our enviable regional assets, so that civic pride takes firm root.</p>
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As the regional economic development agency, seCTer will facilitate cross-sector collaborations to get the teams started on developing formal strategies related to these goals, and will develop the mechanisms needed to collect data and report on the implementation actions taken. seCTer will serve as the data repository and will report on CEDS progress and regional activity several times throughout the year.

Action 3: Developing strategies that will lead to the creation of a more vibrant economy.

The CEDS Strategy committee – with feedback from many area stakeholders - identified certain components believed to be indicative of a vibrant economy. These components are identified in the CEDS as the four broad Regional Indices - found in Section 5. Each Index has several related sub-indices with metrics that will serve as indicators that we can monitor. Metrics were chosen based on relevancy, the availability of data, and ease of collecting and monitoring the data given current staff and technical resources available.

The Indices and sub-indices chosen were

Livability [Health & Wellbeing; Affordability; and Access & Mobility]

Competitiveness [Workforce; Business Climate; Fiscal Health/Sustainability; Specialized Services & Incentives; and Population Growth & Density]



Resiliency [Industry Diversification; Disaster Preparedness; Adaptability; and Innovation]

Quality of Life [Social/Cultural; Economic; and Environmental]

In addition to the inputs and actions identified, the indices will also provide a framework around which self-selecting coalitions can develop strategies and provides an organized way to evaluate the success (or failure) of the strategies developed.

The following is the outline of the Goals and Objectives for the 2017 CEDS. Education, Workforce Development, and Transportation were identified as cross-cutting themes for all goals, but have been also given singular attention as provided below.



Governance Systems and Structures

BROAD GOAL 1: Achieve Greater Regional Efficiency and Sustainable Fiscal Stability.

- 1A Create a culture of collaboration and coordination to increase regional efficiencies and reduce competition for resources.
- 1B Reduce barriers/uncertainty for developers to attract development and facilitate investment in the region.
- 1C Build social capital - "cultivate" community leaders.
- 1D Have a greater presence in Hartford to better influence decisions impacting SECT and ensure equity of opportunity for SECT.



Resilience and Readiness

BROAD GOAL 2: Build the capacity, systems and networks necessary to successfully and continuously adapt to future disruptions in the economy and create and support a more resilient economy.

- 2A Create a regional environment that is conducive and supportive of economic mobility.
- 2B Provide access to resources that will facilitate self-reinforcing personal and economic resilience.
- 2C Foster an environment that provides opportunities for cross-sector interaction resulting in proactive strategies to diversify the regional economy.



BROAD GOAL 2R: Engage in collaborative efforts to identify largest regional vulnerabilities and share resources (planning, engineering, and monetary resources) to enhance regional resilience.

- 2RA Identify on a map all businesses located within the key commercial corridor of a town/city and assist each with the creation of a business recovery plan on file. Aim for 25% of these businesses to have a business recovery plan on file by 2020.
- 2RB Advocate for and assist municipalities with areas of significant commercial development to adopt a fast-track permitting ordinance that would enable a 1-2 week turn-around time for permit approvals following a natural disaster.
- 2RC Assist municipalities with areas of significant commercial development to adopt an emergency Business Recovery Plan.
- 2RD Develop a plan to prioritize and move solutions identified in the Resiliency Guidebook forward based on maximum regional impact and/or benefit.
- 2RE Support existing organizations currently engaged in disaster preparedness - resiliency - efforts.
- 2RF Reduce conflicts between the built environment and ecosystem function.



Competitiveness and Innovation

BROAD GOAL 3: Reposition SECT Region as one Innovation Economy by continually transforming our current systems, structures and physical landscapes into those that are highly connected, self-reinforcing and innovative.

- 3A Develop a common set of facts and figures to re-tell the regional story in a way that changes the current perception by highlighting our regional assets and broadcast widely to attract investment.
- 3B Create (utilize) advocacy groups to identify gaps between current and emerging economy; develop strategies; quantify the benefits of investment; and advocate for action.
- 3C Build an *innovative* Regional Innovation Ecosystem.
- 3D Enhance the physical Infrastructure needed to support all aspects of the existing and new economy.



Quality of Life

BROAD GOAL 4: Ensure that every resident, existing and prospective business owner, employee, and visitor to SECT palpably feels our Quality of Life rooted in a strong Sense of Place, by recognizing, strengthening, and promoting our enviable regional assets, so that civic pride takes firm root.

- 4A Enhance the quality of life in our communities by ensuring adequate housing, and access to services and support for individuals, families, and businesses living and operating in the region.
- 4B Develop an outreach process that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders.
- 4C Operate from a shared recognition of the fiscal benefit of regional alignment, creating one Regional Brand that re-energizes local civic pride and stimulates internal and external investment.
- 4D Strengthen and promote our regional cultural, natural, and historic assets.
- 4E Create and improve existing attractions and amenities to attract younger and creative populations essential to a vibrant economy.



Transportation



BROAD GOAL: Identify and work to resolve challenges impacting economic and community development related to each of the five components of the transportation network.

Objective T1: Improve access and mobility across all demographics throughout the region.

Objective T2: Facilitate holistic visitor experience through increased and better coordinated transportation and wayfinding to area attractions.

Objective T3: Continue to advocate for investment in freight rail capacity and facilitate development of abutting parcels.

Workforce Development

GOAL 1: Prioritize investment into growing industry sectors, and prepare to identify other sectors positioned for growth.

- Prioritize the manufacturing and healthcare industries as the two primary catalysts for regional economic growth. Continue to work with other sectors to monitor their demand potential.

GOAL 2: Practice demand-driven workforce development.

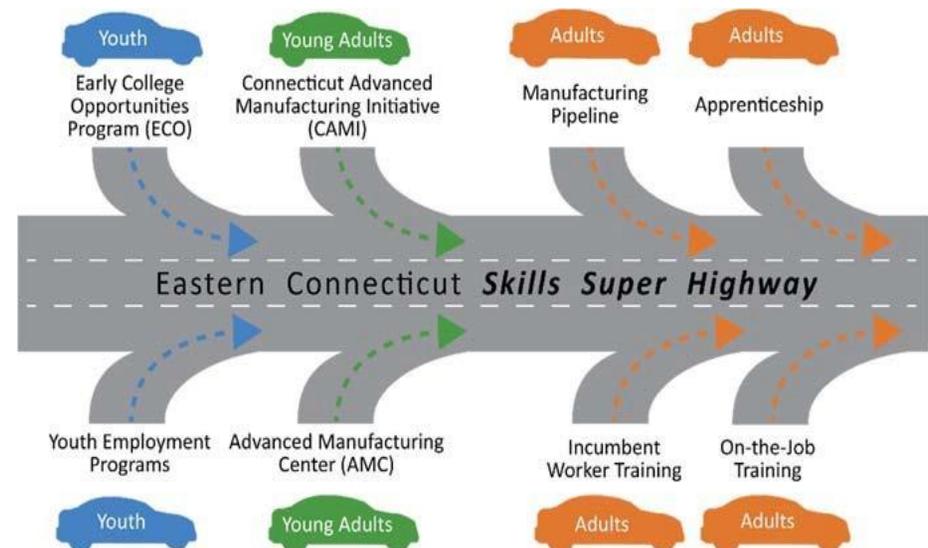
- Increase the supply of workers with in-demand competencies by partnering with industry and education/training providers via comprehensive and targeted training programs, workshops, and other tools.

GOAL 3: Increase efficiencies and service delivery partnerships.

- Support a talent pipeline to fuel the continued growth of the regional manufacturing and healthcare industries by replacing the “labor force attachment” approach necessitated by high volume/lower wage job markets with skill access opportunities and pathways that create opportunity for entry to the middle class.

GOAL 4: Develop a talent warehouse.

- Increase funding for delivery of integrated services through efficiencies and service delivery partnerships.



Education

BROAD GOAL 1: Invest in tools needed to Transition from an educational system designed for the industrial age to a system designed for future business needs -one that focuses on preparedness, competency, design and creativity.

Objective 1: Create an all-inclusive talent supply that meets current and future industry needs.

Objective 2: Increase communication between educational institutions/facilities in the region and explore options for more innovative delivery of programs and educational services.



Section 5: Implementation and Evaluation

Measuring the performance of the strategies and actions identified is a vital step in any planning process. Measuring performance will help ensure that participants in the planning and implementation process are spending their time on high-value activities for which they are accountable (to self, organization, and elected officials), with a quantifiable return on investment (time, talent, capital) that will help justify future investment in the region. Section 5 introduces the Regional Indices and associated sub-indices and metrics that will be monitored and used to determine the efficacy of our strategies. seCTer, with input from its regional partners, will create a set of Economic Indices with associated metrics to facilitate the collection of information that will be utilized in a formal *Annual – State of the Region Report* which will include and assessment of the success of regional initiatives on a broader basis than solely the CEDS objectives. Information will also be used for the required semi-annual EDA CEDS Status reports as well as to modify activities or initiate new activities to meet the goals.

Regional Indices, Sub-Indices and Metrics

Livability



Health & Wellbeing

- % Health Insured
- Crime Rates
- Access to BB Internet
- Availability & Quality of Healthcare Services - Providers per capita
- Morbidity/ Mortality Rates
- Acres open space/ Recreation per capita
- Food Security
- Health & Wellness Facilities



Affordability

- Median and Disposable Income
- Average Wages
- Housing Costs (and % of Income)
- % Home Ownership/Rental
- Housing Type Mix (%)
- Cost of Energy (fuel, electricity, etc.)
- % Living in Poverty
- % Unemployed
- Vacancy Rates and foreclosures
- % Affordable/subsidized Housing



Access and Mobility
(to jobs, housing)

- Rail & Bus Service Availability
- Mode Share %
- Walkability Score
- Ridership on Public Transit/ Senior Transit
- Use of UBER or Rideshare
- Miles of Trails/Bikeways
- Ave. Commute Times/ Distances

Competitiveness



Workforce

- Education Attainment & Occupations
- # and Graduates - Certificate Programs and Incubator Space
- Specialized Programs (e.g. ECO)
- Labor Force Age and Diversity
- Housing type & Availability
- State & Local Investment in WF Dev. programs
- # \$ Quality of Education Institutions/programs
- Student "Input/Export"



Business Climate

- # Permits & Investment Value
- Average Approval time (urban areas)
- Cost of Doing Business
- # New Businesses/Age of Businesses & #Stage 2
- Tax Rates/Mill Rates
- Per capita Lending (\$ from Alt. Lending)
- # EDPs and/or EDOs
- # & SF Incubator/Cowork space & # Graduates
- Available Inventory
- BB Capability & Reliability
- \$ Foreign Investment
- Hotel Occupancy



Fiscal Health/ Sustainability

- Growth Grand List % Breakdown
- # Cost-sharing programs
- Mill Rates
- Bond Rating
- Debt per Capita
- Total VC investment
- Total spent on Capital Improv.
- Growth in # and total \$ of federal and state grants
- Per student Education cost
- Value of EZ and other Special Zones



Specialized Services & Incentives

- Specialized Zones & Incentive Programs
- Free Business Assistance (# clients, hrs counseling)
- #/Type Specialized Services
- SECTen & CURE Activity
- Innovation Ecosystem
- State Investment



Population Growth & Diversity

- Population Growth
- % Foreign Born
- Millennial Attraction Retention
- Population Age
- Ancestry

Resiliency



Industry Diversification

- # New business
- Age of Business
- # Sole Proprietor vs #Corporate HQ
- Industry Cluster Profile
- Occupation Profile



Disaster Preparedness

- # Emergency Response Progs.
- # Businesses w/ Recovery Plan
- # Towns with Disaster Ordinance in place
- # & length of utility outages
- Land Use Regulations in place to address hazard mitigation
- # Structures in Flood Zone
- \$ Damage from Extreme Weather Events
- # Energy Generation Facilities



Adaptability

- Towns with Flexible Zoning Regs
- SF Flex Space
- SF Available Shovel Ready Sites
- # Collaborative Initiatives and Cost-sharing (Regional & Inter-municipal)



Innovation

- # & SF of incubator space
- # Graduates from Incubators
- # New patents
- # Start-ups and Stage 2
- VC capital
- \$ Angel Investment
- # New partnerships/ collaborations
- YP Memberships

Quality of Life



Social/Cultural

- # Arts and Cultural Establishments/ Attractions & Per capita spending
- Meet-up Attendance
- # Wineries/ Breweries
- #/Ac Recreational Areas/ Facilities
- # Festivals/year
- Volunteerism and Voting Rates
- Population Age and Ancestry
- Minority Civic Engagement
- # Social Groups & Meet-ups
- # & Type of Restaurants & Entertainment Facilities
- Total Retail Sales
- # & Type of Worship Centers



Economic

- # Networking Events
- # PPP and \$ VC Available
- Retail Leakage
- # Member Businesses (Chamber, Bus. Assoc)
- Grand List Growth
- Downtown Vacancy Rates
- Cost of Doing Business
- Unemployment Rate/%
- # Jobs Created
- Incentives Awarded
- Total SF & value New Dev./Investment
- # New or Expanding Businesses
- # Prospective Businesses (CERC)
- # Locally-owned vs Corporate HQ



Environmental

- Air & Water Quality Ratings
- # Hazard Mit. Plans/ efforts
- %/Acres Land Preserved Open Space
- Acres Developed Land
- %/Acres Land Preserved & Active Ag Cropland Value
- Acres (# properties) of Brownfield Remediation
- Miles of Trails
- Participation in C-Pace type programs - \$ Rebates given
- # EV Charging Stations
- # Towns participating in Green Energy Program

Perhaps one of the most important mechanisms needed to implement this plan is coordinated collaboration. seCTer envisions that the role of the Economic Development and Marketing Committee, with dedicated support from seCTer staff, is to facilitate meetings, workshops, and networking events aimed at engaging individuals and organizations in the implementation process. As referenced in Section 4, this implementation process will mirror the Collective Impact Approach, with the goal of facilitating the formation of "teams" or "coalitions" of individuals/organizations that intersect with a particular issue identified in this CEDS (or identified as being an issue that needs attention).

Conclusion

As we navigate the challenges caused by the historic convergence of the three separate and distinct economic development paradigms discussed in Section 1, and embrace a new more inclusive process of developing strategies, it will become clear that collaboration is the key to innovation and growth. This CEDS embodies this inclusivity by recognizing the efforts and expertise of our key regional and state partners and by being the repository of, and aligning with, their plans and goals and principles. SECT is fortunate to have motivated, passionate professionals, residents, stakeholders, and officials who recognize the competitive advantages that our *collective* assets and enviable location provide. They understand the benefit of telling a new story for SECT that highlights these advantages. Appreciating and articulating our strengths and weaknesses from a regional, place-based perspective will provide a much needed context to guide local planning, economic development, and marketing efforts. Likewise, understanding how individual efforts relate to one, shared regional vision will inspire and empower continued action and stakeholder engagement.

Strong legacy institutions and industries have driven the local economy of SECT for decades, resulting in an economy that ebbs and flows with the changes in these businesses. Setting up the systems and networks to support entrepreneurship and innovation, related to both existing and new industries, and practicing cross-sector collaboration will allow a more adaptable, flexible, and nimble economy to form organically in SECT.



Getting all stakeholders aligned behind one regional vision and identity, and understanding the benefit of operating as one united region, is the first step toward creating a more resilient, inclusive, and vibrant economy. Building our capacity through cross-sector collaboration and strengthening networks will lead to the development of innovative strategies that when implemented, will increase our ability to compete in the new highly connected, global economy, and will position Southeastern Connecticut for long-term vibrancy beneficial to all who visit, work or live here.



ⁱ An economy based on the integration of emerging technologies, with creative individuals, small groups and companies organized in interlocking networks, connecting and disconnecting constantly in processes of continuous innovation. (Jim Damicus, Camoin Associates)