



COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY
Volume 1

SEPTEMBER 2009

One Coast, One Future
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
Table of Contents

Volume 1

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Introduction and Regional Context.....	1
Goals, Recommendations and Action Steps.....	16
Goal 1: Governance	16
Goal 2: Development that is Sustainable	28
Goal 3: Holistic Approach to Transportation and Infrastructure Investment	33
Goal 4: Workforce Development and Education Investment	41
Goal 5: Improve Business Environment and Economic Development Climate	49

Volume 2

Appendices

CEDS Projects	Appendix A
Regional Benchmarking.....	Appendix B
One Coast Steering Committee Membership	Appendix C
Meeting Materials: List of Dates, Attendance, Minutes	Appendix D
Sample Matrix of Next Steps.....	Appendix E
Economic Development Data & Information (EDDI)	Appendix F
Site Selector Analysis	Appendix G
Demographic and Economic Trends.....	Appendix H
I. Key Findings: Demographic and Economic Trends	H1
II. The Defined Region	H4
III. Demographic Analysis	H8
IV. Housing.....	H29
V. Labor Force	H34
VI. Business Profile and Commercial/Industrial Real Estate Overview.....	H45
VII. Employment and Industry Cluster Trends	H51

Introduction and Regional Context

What is One Coast, One Future?

One Coast, One Future is a consortium of 14 communities in lower Fairfield County whose study funding was acquired by former Congress member Christopher Shays under the leadership of the Bridgeport Regional Business Council and The Business Council of Fairfield County in cooperation with the Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce. Located in Coastal Fairfield County Connecticut, One Coast, One Future is a regional initiative formed in 2005. Its mission is to promote vibrant economic growth in the region by linking the social and economic advantages offered by the three urban centers and surrounding towns.

One Coast, One Future seeks to spark new and renewed growth through cooperative, location-appropriate efforts. The goal is to stimulate economic growth, job creation and individual economic opportunity by linking the lower Fairfield County region's business centers in a new and stronger alliance for their mutual benefit. Fourteen towns are included in One Coast, One Future (One Coast Region):

- Bridgeport
- Darien
- Easton
- Fairfield
- Greenwich
- Monroe
- New Canaan
- Norwalk
- Stamford
- Stratford
- Trumbull
- Weston
- Westport
- Wilton

What is Economic Development?

Many people perceive economic development as industrial parks and big business recruitment. In fact economic development encompasses any effort that promotes economic growth and opportunity for all residents as well as improvements in the quality of life of an area. Definitions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Conscious institutional changes aimed at promoting economic growth

- Typically measured in income and job growth but also includes improvements in human development, education, health, choice and environmental sustainability
- A program, group of policies or activities that seek to improve the economic well being and quality of life of a community¹

In a time of expensive energy for transportation and home heating, in a region with important coastal and estuarine resources and the worst traffic congestion in the state, economic development takes on these broader definitions. All of these issues extend beyond individual town boundaries and many beyond state and other political borders. In fact a meaningful economic development strategy must be one component of a more comprehensive approach to regional planning that addresses the physical, human capital, economic, ecological and social needs of the area.

What is a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy?

According to the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) which oversees the development of these strategies:

A comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) is designed to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies. The CEDS should analyze the regional economy and serve as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives, developing and implementing a regional plan of action, and identifying investment priorities and funding sources. A CEDS integrates a region's human and physical capital planning in the service of economic development. Integrated economic development planning provides the flexibility to adapt to global economic conditions and fully utilize the region's unique advantages to maximize economic opportunity for its residents by attracting the private investment that creates jobs for the region's residents. A CEDS must be the result of a continuing economic development planning process developed with broad-based and diverse public and private sector participation, and must set forth the goals and objectives necessary to solve the economic development problems of the region and clearly define the metrics of success.²

The CEDS uses the analysis of economic data, information about the current economic situation in the One Coast Region and beyond, and input from various stakeholders to establish regional goals, to develop a plan of action and to create benchmarks to evaluate achievements. The CEDS is the document that guides the implementation of actions and goals to grow the regional economy. The CEDS also provides the federal

¹ <http://www.merit.unu.edu/publications/rmpdf/2005/rm2005-021.pdf>

² http://www.eda.gov/ImageCache/EDAPublic/documents/pdfdocs2006/cedsflyer081706_2epdf/v1/cedsflyer081706.pdf

Economic Development Administration, and other potential funders, with a list of prioritized capital projects that, if implemented, would further the goals of the CEDS. The EDA never funds 100% of project costs, but often funds infrastructure portions of private projects – parts of a project that do not provide a financial return to the private investor, and may make the difference on whether a project gets built.

There are six EDA Program Categories as illustrated in the following table that has been reproduced from *the Economic Development Administration Fiscal Year 2007 Annual Report*.

Statement of Appropriations, Fiscal Year 2007 (\$000)

EDA PROGRAM CATEGORY	APPROPRIATIONS FISCAL YEAR 2007
Public Works and Economic Development Assistance	\$158,089
Economic Adjustment Assistance	\$44,154
Economic Development Planning Assistance	\$27,000
Technical Assistance	\$8,203
Research and Evaluation	\$481
Trade Adjustment Assistance for Firms	\$12,814
Economic Development Assistance Program Subtotal	\$250,741
Salaries and Expenses	\$29,882
TOTAL	\$280,623

In 2007, there was one project award in Connecticut, in the University Center Economic Development Program area, which is part of the Technical Assistance category to the University of Connecticut Tech-Knowledge Portal (TKP) for \$65,000. The TKP promotes technology-based economic development in the state by supporting companies and entrepreneurs interested in accessing university technology available for licensing through the tech transfer office and by helping to integrate that technology into plans. The TKP also works with established companies that want to access university capabilities, build new business units or launch new tech-based products.

Projects submitted as a part of this CEDS can be found in Appendix A of this document.

As the lead organizations in the One Coast, One Future Consortium, the Bridgeport Regional Business Council, the Fairfield County Business Council and the Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce have directed the development of this CEDS. A Steering Committee broadly representative of the Region was assembled to guide the

development and adoption of the CEDS. The Connecticut Economic Resource Center, Inc. (CERC) was retained to gather and analyze data, and draft recommendations and action steps included in the CEDS.

Why is an Economic Development Strategy Needed?

The region is not running on all cylinders. The underperformance of Bridgeport and Stratford and the limited opportunities available to many of the Region's urban residents represent a growing competitive weakness in the midst of the well-known affluence of other One Coast communities. The narrow range of housing options and lack of affordability have driven young professionals to other areas or out of the state entirely. The current demographics demonstrate a daunting condition of increasing amounts of dependent individuals with fewer and fewer workers to rely upon. Congestion on roadways is unpredictable and relentless, becoming more pronounced at the gateways to the area as workers seek more affordable abodes beyond the One Coast - resulting in a notable decline in the Region's attractiveness.

Growth can be harnessed and channeled to locations that are closer to places of employment and in neighborhoods that are less reliant on the automobile. City, town and village centers linked with a rail and bus network nearly unrivaled in North America can be the jumping off point for decades of prosperity in an age of carbon constraint and volatile energy prices as other regions around the nation struggle to maintain their economies.

Connectivity, education, housing and quality of life are central to the future economic vitality of the Region. In addition, a dynamic healthy region is one that involves and requires growth. While anecdotally residents complain of over-population as evidenced by congestion etc., the data referenced in this CEDS (Sections IV-VIII of Appendix H) points to very slow population growth, very slow growth in establishments and declining employment relative to the U.S. The Region is losing a larger relative share of young professionals, and immigrants, often at a lower skill level, are helping to fill in some gaps for needed workers. One of the reasons why the young professionals are leaving is housing affordability, which is a serious issue area-wide for many current and potential residents. There needs to be some discussion about the balance between growth needed to keep

the region vibrant and economically healthy in a manner that does not compromise quality of life.

Can we develop a meaningful strategy with so much uncertainty in our current economic climate?

What is the role of an economic development strategy in the 21st Century? What form should the plan take considering the incredible volatility and uncertainty in financial markets? Will the current financial and global uncertainties fundamentally undermine sectors of the economy and cause a structural shift in the One Coast Region's underlying economic strengths and weaknesses?

In 2008, the one-two-three punch of housing bubble collapse, global financial meltdown and an unprecedented spike in energy prices resulted in a rethinking of how our local and national future may look within the context of a global economy. These new realities have just begun to be incorporated into a broad restructuring of how regions plan and make investments to position themselves for sustainable prosperity in the 21st Century. Coupled with an increasing awareness of the potentially severe impacts of climate change, economic development is also being redefined in an age of carbon constraint.

As seen in the next figure, the One Coast Region has the greatest exposure to the collapse in financial services compared to 25 metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) selected in this exercise. The One Coast Region has double the dependency on employment; almost three times the dependency of GDP (value-added); and three and a half times the reliance on wages of any of these regions, including New York City. Depending on how the financial services debacle plays out, this region is extremely vulnerable to any downsizing in this sector. For additional comparisons between the Region and the 25 selected MSAs, please see Appendix B.

One Coast Exposure to the Finance and Insurance Sector

Geography Description	Absolutes 2007				Selected Metrics						Employee wages relative to US
	Emp	GDP2k	Wages	Wage/Emp	Emp	GDP2k	Wages	Emp	GDP2k	Wages	
United States	6,147	\$961	\$526,226	\$85,604	4%	8%	8%				
					Ind. Share in Region			Ind. Concentration			
Akron, OH	10	\$1,577	\$552	\$52,651	3.1%	6.7%	4.1%	0.71	0.80	0.49	62%
Albany area, NY	21	\$4,472	\$1,406	\$67,777	4.6%	11.5%	7.0%	1.06	1.38	0.85	79%
Austin-Round Rock, TX	31	\$3,414	\$2,087	\$66,492	4.1%	5.1%	5.5%	0.95	0.61	0.67	78%
Baltimore-Towson, MD	59	\$7,306	\$5,010	\$85,323	4.3%	6.8%	7.5%	1.01	0.82	0.91	100%
Boston area, MA-NH	153	\$29,904	\$19,792	\$129,287	6.2%	12.5%	13.1%	1.44	1.50	1.59	151%
Bridgeport-Stamford	41	\$14,000	\$10,410	\$255,042	9.1%	24.9%	29.0%	2.12	2.99	3.50	298%
Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	27	\$6,548	\$1,654	\$62,146	4.8%	13.4%	7.5%	1.12	1.60	0.90	73%
Chicago area, IL-IN-WI	257	\$40,449	\$25,702	\$100,003	5.6%	10.3%	10.7%	1.30	1.23	1.30	117%
Denver-Aurora, CO	72	\$8,026	\$5,699	\$78,931	5.7%	7.3%	8.7%	1.34	0.87	1.05	92%
Des Moines area, IA	47	\$5,811	\$3,092	\$65,513	14.3%	24.2%	21.8%	3.33	2.90	2.63	77%
Hartford-area, CT	65	\$13,368	\$7,006	\$107,745	10.2%	20.0%	19.7%	2.39	2.40	2.38	126%
Jacksonville, FL	49	\$5,770	\$3,337	\$68,040	7.4%	12.6%	11.8%	1.73	1.51	1.43	79%
Manchester-Nashua, NH	13	\$1,797	\$1,014	\$78,876	6.1%	10.1%	9.9%	1.43	1.22	1.19	92%
Minneapolis-St. Paul area, MN-WI	110	\$15,942	\$9,791	\$88,944	6.0%	10.9%	10.6%	1.40	1.30	1.28	104%
New Haven-Milford, CT	14	\$2,854	\$917	\$65,818	3.6%	7.4%	4.8%	0.85	0.89	0.58	77%
New York City area, NY-NJ-PA	601	\$191,107	\$126,816	\$211,010	6.9%	19.6%	22.1%	1.62	2.35	2.67	246%
Providence area, RI-MA	34	\$5,485	\$1,964	\$57,590	4.6%	9.7%	6.4%	1.08	1.16	0.78	67%
Raleigh-Cary, NC	17	\$4,350	\$1,103	\$63,952	3.3%	10.3%	4.8%	0.77	1.23	0.58	75%
Salt Lake City, UT	41	\$5,724	\$2,251	\$55,529	6.2%	12.1%	8.4%	1.46	1.46	1.01	65%
San Jose area, CA	22	\$3,640	\$2,317	\$106,254	2.3%	3.3%	3.0%	0.55	0.39	0.37	124%
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	70	\$9,484	\$5,828	\$83,840	3.8%	5.8%	5.9%	0.90	0.69	0.72	98%
Trenton-Ewing, NJ	15	\$2,944	\$1,208	\$80,221	6.3%	13.7%	9.2%	1.47	1.65	1.12	94%
Virginia Beach area, VA-NC	25	\$3,835	\$1,485	\$59,592	2.8%	5.8%	4.1%	0.65	0.69	0.50	70%
Washington DC area, DC-VA-MD-WV	104	\$16,376	\$9,328	\$89,658	3.4%	5.6%	4.9%	0.79	0.67	0.59	105%
Winston-Salem, NC	11	\$3,108	\$866	\$77,922	4.9%	16.7%	9.6%	1.15	2.00	1.16	91%

Source: Moody's Economy.com

(Emp=Employment; GDP2k=gross domestic product, \$1000s, 2000 dollars; Wages (\$1000s))

Because of the current unprecedented downturn and the meltdown of many financial companies, the dynamics are not fully understandable in this unique economic climate. It is difficult to talk with any certainty about major components of the Region's economic future, particularly about industry structure and growth, and workforce issues. It is estimated that the New York metro area could lose 100,000 jobs in the financial and related industries between 2007 and 2012 while Connecticut, particularly Fairfield County, could lose up to 6,000 jobs, which is a 10 percent decline and a loss of approximately \$1.2 billion in wages.³ In total, between 2007 and 2012, New York metro area could lose almost 250,000 jobs, with another 15,000 in losses in Fairfield and New Haven counties.⁴ However, the federal stimulus package could mitigate some of these losses by helping to fix the banking system, spur employment and restore consumer and investor confidence.

³ November 21, 2008 Workshop, Federal Reserve Bank of New York, "Impact of Current Financial Restructuring on the Tri-State Economy" (calculated by Kevin Jack, Principal Economist, New York State Department of Labor)

⁴ November 21, 2008 Workshop, Federal Reserve Bank of New York, "Impact of Current Financial Restructuring on the Tri-State Economy" (calculated by Kevin Jack, Principal Economist, New York State Department of Labor)

On February 17, 2009 President Obama signed the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act into law. The new law could provide between \$2 and \$2.9 billion in assistance to the state of Connecticut. The regional planning agencies and metropolitan planning organizations in the One Coast Region have responded to state and federal requests for “shovel ready” projects that could be funded through the stimulus package. There also is \$150 million in the Act for the federal EDA. Fifty million dollars is for the “sudden and severe economic distress” program, made available to communities that have seen tremendous economic dislocations. One Coast should review eligibility for these programs and be prepared to apply for assistance. Fifty million dollars is also made available to “federally recognized economic development commissions”. Connecticut has no such organizations, and the One Coast region should explore options of becoming an Economic Development District if that meets this new statutory definition.

In addition to the larger uncertainties, issues face the One Coast Region, particularly around governance and infrastructure, and need to be addressed. This CEDS provides guidance on how the Region can address many of those issues, and recommends a framework within which the Region can address the broader issues going forward.

Why Do We Need a Regional Strategy? What Links One Coast Towns to Each Other?

Each of the 14 municipalities in the One Coast Region possesses its own character and history with resources that are utilized by community residents as well as those from the larger region. These resources strengthen the ties of the municipalities in the One Coast Region. No municipality in the Region is an island; each contributes a number of attributes to the whole.

The One Coast Region contains all or portions of four rail lines that link its major population and job centers to one another and to the metropolitan core, supported by a robust system of bus routes. Transportation assets and commuting patterns along the major highway thoroughfares of I-95, the Merritt Parkway and Route 1; and the Amtrak and MetroNorth rail lines link the One Coast municipalities. The two regional transportation planning agencies have economic linkages that bind them together: in

2000, 30,400 commuters from the Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency⁵ (GBRPA) region commuted to the South Western Regional Planning Agency⁶ (SWRPA) while 8,500 SWRPA residents commuted to the GBRPA.⁷ This entire network is punctuated by walkable city and town centers collectively containing tens of miles of sidewalks.

The 14 municipalities of the Region contain among them over two dozen neighborhood centers with unique identities, character and charm. It is these main streets and village shops with traditional New England character and architecture that define this Region to the outside world, foster the local economies, and are built around the civic spaces, cultural and religious institutions that form the foundation of the residents' social lives. There are also stretches of road in the One Coast Region that could be defined as 'Anywhere USA' – placeless concentrations of national retail, automobile domination and cacophonous design – that in many places across the country (and even the state of Connecticut) are not the exception but rather the norm.

Long Island Sound forms the Region's southern border; it is a series of sandy beaches interspersed between natural harbors and coves providing a range of recreational and commercial opportunities. The Sound also offers interesting transit alternatives for the future in addition to the operating ferry to Long Island and the maritime traffic that flows through Bridgeport, the Region's only deep water port. Recent reductions in lobster and oyster populations have had a significant impact on commercial fishing and are illustrative of the impacts that require more careful stewardship of natural resources.

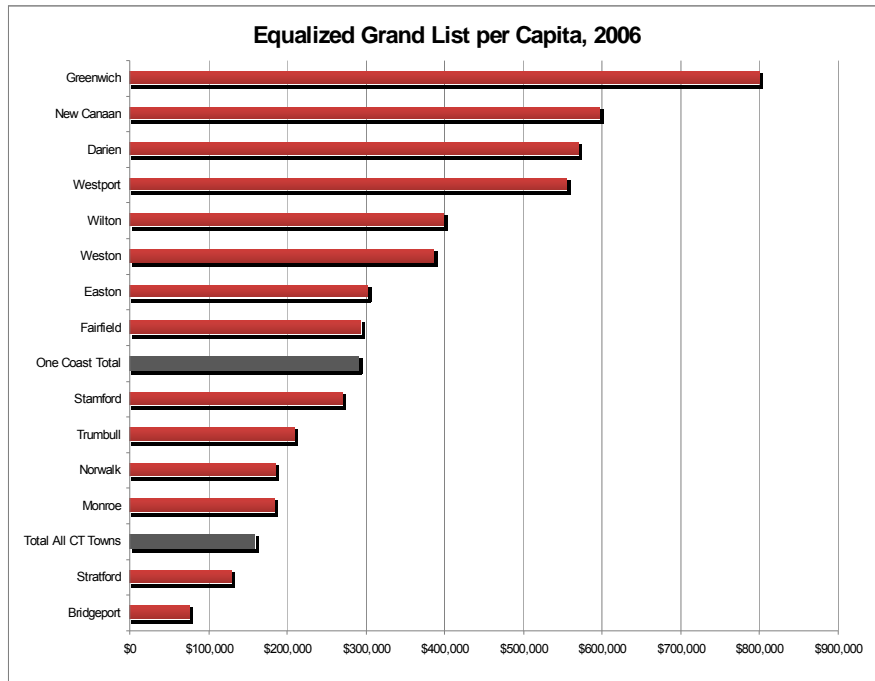
Resources that positively affect quality of life abound in the One Coast Region. Even though a resource is located in one municipality, residents from a larger region benefit from it. These attributes include, but are not limited to, colleges and universities, hospitals, media outlets, public parks, golf courses, public beaches, museums, art galleries and theaters.

⁵ Bridgeport, Fairfield and Stratford, Easton, Monroe and Trumbull

⁶ Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, Norwalk, Stamford, Weston, Westport and Wilton

⁷ U.S. Census, Census 2000

Overall economic similarities bind the Region together, even though some municipalities are thriving while others are dealing with little or no growth. One indicator of this disparity is the amount of resources different towns have to afford public services. Since towns rely so heavily on property tax, the amount of taxable property in each town determines to a large degree the amount of resources available to pay for public services. The following chart indicates the difference in equalized grand list per capita for the 14 One Coast municipalities.⁸



As a whole, the One Coast Region is home to a number of corporate headquarters and relies on particular industries for growth, with financial services chief among these.

In addition, the One Coast Region relies on the economy of New York City and its surrounding metropolitan area, which presents opportunities and challenges for transportation planning and economic development strategies.

Each of the 14 municipalities of the One Coast Region also faces unique challenges, requiring action at levels beyond its individual borders in order to be successful. No municipality can succeed individually, but relies on attributes of a broader region to maintain and improve its unique quality of life.

⁸ Source: CT Office of Policy and Management

The One Coast Region is also home to considerable economic distress. One underlying reason for a regional CEDS is the recognition that the region includes towns that suffer from serious economic dislocations. Bridgeport, and to a lesser extent Stratford, exhibit these dislocations, as seen in the data sections of this report. In addition, the Region does not house a prominent research institution, which is important for technology transfer and spillovers into new businesses and innovations. The impacts of these issues are not isolated to individual towns; research has shown that they can negatively impact through spillovers that affect the economic performance of an entire region.

All of these issues affect the One Coast Region's economic growth. By having residents of municipalities think of themselves as part of a larger region, strategies and solutions may be developed at the appropriate economic scale for each task. These are the ties that bind the One Coast Region together that require collective action – to maintain those defining assets and fix the liabilities that are limiting sustainable economic success.

How Can the Region Implement a CEDS?

This 21st Century approach to more systemic strategies requires a different government decision-making structure, or *civic infrastructure*, to address the more complex and interrelated problems and opportunities. Civic infrastructure is the sum of relationships between individuals and institutions including government, education, business and non-profit organizations that allows decisions to be made and implemented in the best interest of the whole community. An important goal of good civic infrastructure is to ensure that public decisions are fair and balanced across the spectrum of a region's residents and municipalities

Strong civic infrastructure can make the difference between a successful strategy and a series of unrelated independent actions that do not move the regional economy forward.

This CEDS recommends the creation of new public-private partnerships in order to take actions at the appropriate regional scale so those actions can be effective in improving the Region's overall economic performance.

How Does the CEDS Relate to Other Regional Planning Activities (Plans of Conservation and Development, Transportation Investment Plans, Workforce Development Planning)?

This CEDS is the first regional economic development strategy created for the 14 towns included in One Coast Region. As described above, economic development, land use, transportation and workforce development are inter-related. As a result, the CEDS must be informed by other planning efforts, and vice versa. That is why the plans of conservation and development prepared by the Southwest Regional Planning Agency and the Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency have been reviewed in the preparation of this CEDS. That is also why representatives of these organizations and the regional workforce board (Workplace, Inc) have been included in the CEDS steering Committee. As noted in the EDA's CEDS definition, the "CEDS integrates a region's human and physical capital planning in the service of economic development."⁹

What Can We Control and What Can We Affect?

An important point to keep in mind in developing a regional economic development strategy is what is under control and what is not. The challenge for any region is to understand its unique role in the state, national and global economies, and in setting strategic directions, to understand what is within the power of the region to affect and what is not.

A CEDS should be *implementable* with goals and action steps that are achievable within the five-year life of the CEDS. Yet, there are overriding issues that impact a region's ability to achieve better economic performance, and to ignore them would be to miss important "levers" that affect economic growth. Environment, energy, healthcare, taxation – these are some of the issues that will require action by individuals and institutions beyond the One Coast Region.

The current economic crisis provides opportunities that require the issues to be looked at differently and recognize that there may be solutions that might not have been considered in different economic times. It requires that all levels are looked at and keeps all options on the table. It makes this work all the more important.

⁹http://www.eda.gov/ImageCache/EDAPublic/documents/pdfdocs2006/cedsflyer081706_2epdf/v1/cedsflyer081706.pdf

Statewide Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Under provisions of PA 07-239 the state Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) is tasked with creating a state economic development strategy. This strategy is slated to be completed and transmitted to the Legislature no later than June 30, 2009. The One Coast Region wants to make sure that its regional strategy is consistent with the state directions. As the consultant to the development of this CEDS, CERC has maintained communications with DECD as its strategy is being developed, and a representative from the department serves on the Steering Committee. The committee tasked with implementing the CEDS (CEDS Implementation Committee) should review the final statewide strategy when it is completed and adjust priorities accordingly.

Various Taxation Issues

Municipalities are limited on the sources of revenues they may use to pay for local government operations by the State of Connecticut. This fact establishes tensions between the state and municipalities over revenue generation and unfunded mandates.

In Connecticut, the tax structure is critical in the economic development arena. The state controls what taxes may be levied by municipalities, and intergovernmental transfers from the state can make up a significant percentage of town budgets. This is particularly true of urban centers that have large percentages of education costs reimbursed by the state.

According to a report prepared by Robert Tannenwald of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston for the National League of Cities, "Local and state governments' capacities to create opportunities for, and support, their residents, are undermined by systemic, structural, and cyclical changes – systemic changes in the global economy, structural imbalances in annual budgets and in the funding streams that flow (or do not flow) between levels of government and cyclical changes in economic conditions."¹⁰ If that was true when written in 2004, it is even truer today. That is why in these difficult economic times, the State should review all sources of revenue used to fund governmental activities at the state and local levels. The goal should be a balanced tax system that does not overly rely on one tax source.

¹⁰ <http://www.nlc.org/ASSETS/B6B2EEFE90149599F3937A21214790C/rmpstatelocalrevrpt04.pdf>

Connecticut relies more than any other state on the property tax to fund education. While the property tax is a stable revenue source compared to other types, the singular reliance on it to fund municipal activities in Connecticut impacts growth patterns, and in turn the quality of life of communities.

Citizens across Connecticut, including the One Coast Region, are expressing concerns about the State's growth patterns. Despite the fact that Connecticut has seen little job growth since the late 1980s, people believe that the physical growth patterns (the built environment) has negatively impacted quality of life. It is widely believed that growth patterns have been caused in part by the system of local taxation and over-reliance on property taxes. Connecticut relies more heavily on the property tax to fund local government than all but one other state in the U.S.

This over-reliance on property tax sets up inter-town competition for grand list growth. Many towns agree that increased tax revenue from the non-residential tax base is the primary objective of their economic development efforts. This single-minded pursuit of grand list growth ignores other important components of economic planning: is the workforce present, will the transportation infrastructure support the development, are there alternative locations more suited to the type of development being proposed?

As a sign of progress on this subject, in 2000 the legislature enacted enabling legislation that allows for two or more municipalities to share property tax revenue from a specific development project. In the greater Bridgeport area, for example, the towns of Trumbull and Monroe and the City of Bridgeport are negotiating the sharing of tax revenue that will be generated from a Monroe development project. The fact that the project would require a sanitary sewer connection enables these towns to seek out a tax sharing arrangement since Monroe does not currently have sanitary sewers and the filtration plants are in Bridgeport.

While these tax issues are beyond the One Coast Region's ability to change alone, they impact the ability to grow the economy. The State needs to address the over-reliance on property tax and the impact it has on towns' growth patterns.

Vision for the One Coast Region:

The One Coast Region will have vibrant businesses providing jobs for a broad range of citizens in communities that recognize their connectivity and grow sustainably, respecting natural assets.

Mission of the One Coast Region CEDS:

The mission of the One Coast Region CEDS is to provide goals and action steps for the 14-municipality region to grow sustainably and provide employment for its residents while acting on issues in control of the Region and advocating where change is necessary beyond the borders.

Measures of improving economic performance include:

- Grow private sector jobs;
- Improve academic performance (particularly in the urban public schools) so that a certain percent of students achieve mastery on Connecticut Mastery Tests (CMTs);
- Reduce unemployment levels;
- Provide training opportunities for displaced workers;
- Increase the number of young professionals; and
- Invest in transportation and other infrastructure.

The potential outcomes from this CEDS project include:

- A planning process structured to collectively address challenges and harness shared assets based on triple bottom line (social, environmental and economic) assessments for decision-making;
- A range of quality housing and commercial development options (including responsible growth initiatives and transit-oriented development opportunities) sited and designed in a way that minimize traffic and fiscal impacts on the communities; adding development where infrastructure exists, adaptive reuse of vacant facilities, and remediation of brownfields;
- Transportation choices (motorized and non-motorized) that enable increased mobility between home, work, retail and leisure activities without causing productivity-draining congestion or a rise in greenhouse gas emissions;
- Improved air and water quality;

- Open spaces, sensitive lands (historic, cultural, farm lands, scenic vistas) and water resources that are ecologically intact, accessible and meet the recreational needs of all ages and social groups; and
- Homes, offices, civic buildings, a transportation system and energy infrastructures that lower the Region's energy costs, reduce susceptibility to price and supply volatility, and focus on opportunities for using advanced technologies and alternative energy sources.

The CEDS is designed to look at a five-year time horizon. The goal of this report is to develop a list of goals and action steps that are attainable within this time frame. There are many issues that can be dealt with now, needing just the commitment, a reasonable level of resources and an organization to implement. Others are longer term and more difficult to accomplish, yet must be pursued.

I. Goals, Recommendations and Action Steps

The goals, and accompanying recommendations and action steps, are divided into five issue areas:

- **Governance**
- **Sustainability**
- **Transportation and Infrastructure**
- **Workforce Development**
- **Business Environment**

GOAL 1: Governance – *Develop strategic partnerships possessing the appropriate authority, at the right scale, to affect change and ensure accountability.*

Regional Economic Development Planning

Underlying the concept of a *Regional* Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is the idea of a *region*. Connecticut's regional planning efforts have concentrated on the areas of transportation and land use. A number of efforts also encompass regional purchasing by member municipalities, workforce development and more recently, homeland security. But regional economic development planning has not received the same level of attention in Connecticut as nationally. Though, ironically according to a recent Legislative Program Review and Investigation (PRI) report, the Connecticut Development Commission (CDC) was given responsibility for defining the planning regions and authorized to promote and assist with the formation of local and regional planning agencies and provide technical assistance to towns and regional areas regarding their functions.

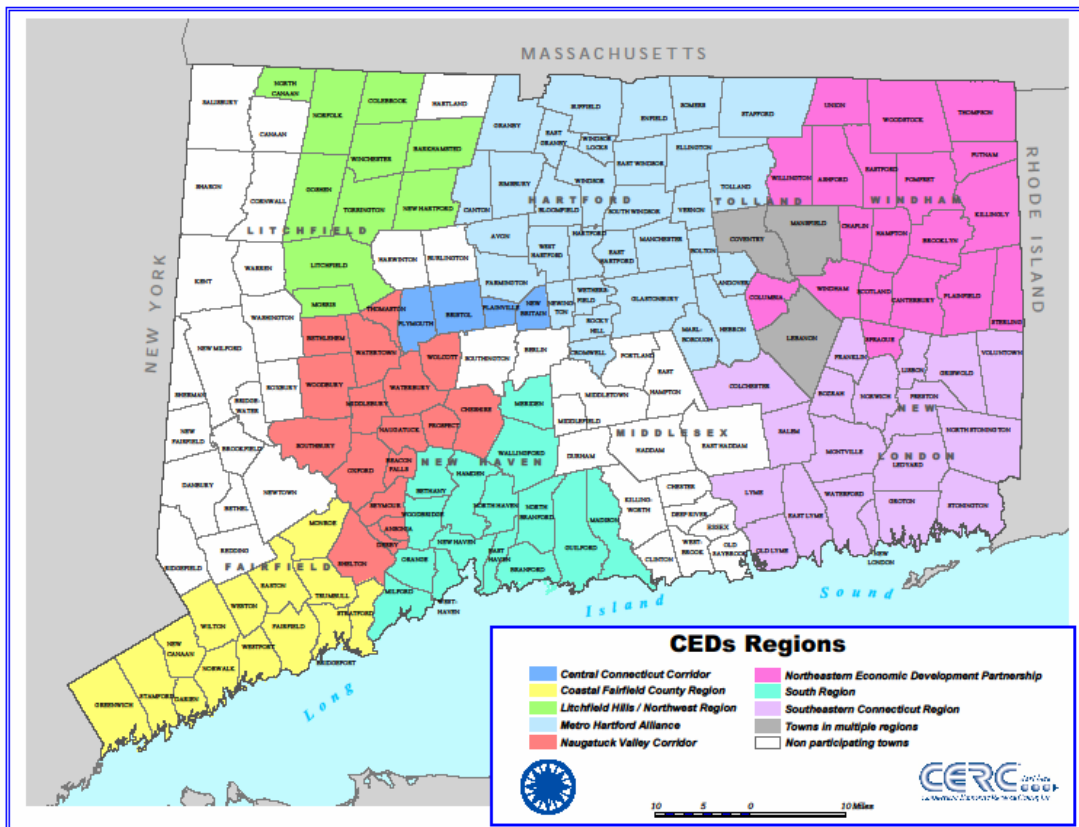
In establishing regional agencies the CDC was to evaluate “logical *economic* and planning regions” (emphasis added). Until recently, the economic aspects seem to have been largely lost in the intervening years.¹¹

Similar to the federal Department of Transportation's role in establishing and funding Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), the U.S. Economic Development

¹¹ http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/pridata/Studies/RPO_Final_Report.htm

Administration (EDA) has designated over 300 Economic Development Districts (EDDs) across the country. Connecticut is one of only 3 states (the others being Rhode Island and Delaware) that do not have any designated EDDs. In an effort to bring Connecticut's activities in line with other states, about five years ago the EDA encouraged seven regions in the state to conduct CEDS. An EDA-approved CEDS is a prerequisite to being designated an EDD. The regions in Connecticut with CEDS are shown in the map below.

CEDS Regions in Connecticut



In the One Coast Region, this CEDS is being sponsored by the two regional business and economic development organizations, the Bridgeport Regional Business Council (BRBC) and the Business Council of Fairfield County (BCFC), joined by the Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce. Considering the subject matter of a CEDS, and the federal regulations governing their development, these organizations are necessarily organized as public-private partnerships, with a Steering Committee that is broadly

representative of the region (see Appendix C for One Coast Region Steering Committee membership and Appendix D for Steering Committee meeting notes).

Land Use and Transportation Planning

The following definitions and history are excerpted from the Legislature's Program Review and Investigation Committee report on regional planning:

Regional Planning Organizations are statutorily authorized regional entities voluntarily established by the municipalities located within the 15 state-defined planning regions. There are three types: Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs), Regional Councils of Elected Officials (RCEOs), and Regional Councils of Governments (RCOGs).

The primary statutory responsibilities of all three types of RPOs are the same. However, with the exception of transportation planning, which already has a regional focus, and a few state-mandated responsibilities related to conservation and development planning, most of the activities performed by each RPO are at the direction of their member towns.

The boundaries of the regions that the current 15 RPOs represent were developed by the state in the 1950s, based on an examination of a variety of factors and consultation with officials in the various regions.

In Connecticut, the state Office of Policy and Management has the authority to establish the boundaries of RPOs. For federally mandated transportation planning purposes, 11 of the RPOs have been designated as Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). This means:

- they are located in urbanized areas that meet federal population criteria based on population and density measures;
- ConnDOT and transit operators work cooperatively with them on devising and guiding projects; and
- they have veto authority over projects proposed by ConnDOT for inclusion in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which is a list of projects the state expects to fund during a five-year period with federal money as well as regionally significant projects that could affect air quality.¹²

The need to address certain public policy issues on a regional versus a town basis has been recognized in Connecticut since the 1950s when the state legislature authorized the creation of regional planning agencies. In recent years, there has been growing interest nationally and in Connecticut in expanding efforts to plan and act on a regional basis. There are two major reasons: recognition that land use planning needs to occur in a more methodical and integrated manner in order to preserve the character of the state and reduce sprawl, and a realization that service sharing arrangements can achieve cost

¹² http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/pridata/Studies/RPO_Final_Report.htm#P772_94041#P772_94041

savings. Although most municipalities in Connecticut have embraced the use of regional entities for some purposes, there is less support for state-imposed joint efforts.

Other State Policy Efforts Impacting Regional Land Use, Transportation and Economic Development Planning

- *Transportation Strategy Board*

The Transportation Strategy Board (TSB) was created by Public Act 01-5 to develop a transportation strategy for the State of Connecticut.¹³ The act lists the items to be considered by the Board in the development of the strategy, including the following:

- 1) The strategic concerns associated with the movement of people and goods ...
- 3) the relationship of such concerns and options to sustainable economic growth, environmental quality, urban development, open space, open space preservation, access to employment by residents of the state and public safety;
- 4) that transportation is a cornerstone of the state's economic vitality and overall quality of life and therefore inextricably linked to other key policies that deal with the state's future including, but not limited to, land use planning, environmental quality, urban vitality and access to quality jobs and services for the state's residents.¹⁴

These policy goals have received widespread acceptance in Connecticut, yet the TSB has not yet met its potential with regard to their integration. The TSB legislation also established five regional Transportation Investment Areas (TIAs) designed to provide the TSB with regional inputs on important transportation investments in different areas of the state. This construct was established to ensure input and consistency between regional and statewide transportation planning efforts.

- *Executive Order 15*

A further emphasis on integrated planning across the issues of transportation, land use and economic development came with the issuance of Executive Order (E.O.) 15 on Responsible Growth by Governor Rell in October, 2006. That E.O. included the following responsibility for the OPM Office of Responsible Growth:

Chairing an Interagency Steering Council, consisting of the Commissioners of the Department of Economic and Community Development, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Agriculture, Department of Transportation and the Department of Public Health as well as the Executive Directors of the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority and the Connecticut

¹³ http://www.crcog.org/publications/TransportationDocs/TIA/I-91TIA_InitialPlan2001.pdf

¹⁴ <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2008/sup/chap242a.htm>

Development Authority, to coordinate policy development and capital planning in an effort to efficiently utilize state expertise and financial resources.¹⁵

All these and a number of other efforts have created an atmosphere where cross-disciplinary planning efforts at the state level, and consistency with regional and local efforts, is a desired outcome. The challenges for the One Coast municipalities must be considered in this context.

Challenges and Recommendations for the One Coast Region

Different regions of the state have chosen different models in their approaches to transportation, land use and economic development planning. Even for land use and transportation purposes, the PRI report concluded that flexibility was key, and that current cooperative efforts should be encouraged:

the program review committee believes it is appropriate to allow some additional time to pass to see if the results of those efforts are successful. Consequently, instead of recommending a single regional model, the committee is proposing a series of revisions that modify elements of the Regional Planning Organizations, the role of OPM in regional efforts, and the use of state funding as a means of increasing regional activities.¹⁶

Regional approaches and resources require cooperation from a variety of organizations. Flexibility is also important because different strategies will involve different geographies involving various stakeholders. Collaboration between the regional planning agencies and the business and institutional leaders of the Region would be a good start at having the leadership necessary to carry the strategies into implementation. The CEDS Steering Committee provides the framework for this collaboration. Some recommendations will require cross-border cooperation with New York; and greater outreach to these stakeholders is necessary. Matching the scale of activity with the desired outcomes is important. Sometimes a municipality will be able to act on a strategy while at times a larger regional subset will need to be called upon.

The One Coast Region CEDS is the first effort to produce a comprehensive economic development strategy for this 14-municipality area (though the City of Bridgeport currently has a city-wide CEDS that will be replaced by the regional CEDS). Resources permitting, federal funding would be made available to regions with approved CEDS for annual updates and implementation of the CEDS if they were successful in becoming

¹⁵ <http://www.ct.gov/governorrell/cwp/view.asp?a=1719&q=320908>

¹⁶ http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/pridata/Studies/RPO_Final_Report.htm#P772_94041#P772_94041

designated Economic Development Districts by the federal Department of Commerce's, Economic Development Administration.

Objective 1: Develop a public private collaborative organization and provide it with the authority to implement a regional economic development strategy

Strong civic infrastructure can make the difference between a successful strategy and a series of unrelated independent actions that do not move the regional economy forward. Considering the planning and business organizations and structures that currently exist in the Region, and the good work already done, it is recommended to build on that structure to implement the CEDS rather than waste civic energy rebuilding the system at this time. As noted, economic development planning is best performed by a public-private partnership – both because economic development represents the nexus between public and private sector interests and because EDA rules require it. The public sector sees economic activity as contributing to jobs and tax revenues and therefore, to the quality of life in a town or region. Private businesses have choices in where to locate and develop their businesses, and therefore a good economic development plan is the marriage between these public and private motivations. This being said, development of such a plan requires dialogue between business and government leaders. The existing leadership organizations must ensure this happens. The economic health of a region is a public sector function, with private sector involvement, that would include general business organizations and selected industries. With the early development of the Council of Elected Officials in the Bridgeport area, it would be an opportune time to advance this as a public sector development initiative with private sector involvement.

The Bridgeport Regional Business Council (BRBC), the Business Council of Fairfield County (BCFC) and the Greater Norwalk Chamber, along with many members of the CEDS Steering Committee, are broadly representative of private sector interests, and SWRPA and the GBRPA, along with state congressmen, are broadly representative of the public sector. While the One Coast Region does not have an existing economic development organization at the regional level, there also seems to be little desire to create new organizations, so implementation should be led by a coalition of the existing public and private groups. Strategic economic development activities are best housed in an organization with existing business promotion and economic development responsibilities. While this would be a collaborative public-private undertaking, the

Region needs to decide which organization should lead the activities. Membership of the recommended CEDS Implementation Committee (the committee that will implement CEDS recommendations) must have sufficient stature and credibility to carry out the goals and proposed action steps of the strategy. The Implementation Committee will also assign responsibilities for carrying out the actions steps (see Appendix E for a sample matrix of next steps).

Looking at other regions in the state that have adopted CEDS, different models have certain strengths and weaknesses. In south central Connecticut, the Regional Growth Partnership (RGP) has developed and implemented a CEDS for seven years. RGP is an independent non-profit economic development corporation. Recently restructured, the Board of the RGP includes chief elected officials chosen by the South Central Council of Governments (COG), and business leaders chosen by the Regional Leadership Council. In Northeastern Connecticut, two COGs came together to develop the CEDS, and there is a Northeastern Economic Alliance that at various times has worked to implement sections of the CEDS, but the COGs remain the driving force.

What is increasingly critical is that the implementing organization includes private and public sector leadership in the Region. The current effort of the state DECD to develop a statewide economic strategy will emphasize regional planning as an important element of their future activities. The Office of Policy and Management (OPM) and DECD have recently begun a collaboration to bring CEDS and Plans of Conservation and Development (C&D) into alignment. An eventual goal may be to have all towns in the state be part of a CEDS region and have some better alignment with existing RPOs.

Even in the absence of a new organization, there will be the need to bring resources to the table to help administer the CEDS. Steering Committee discussions have looked at private and public funding options. On the public side, OPM and the state Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) currently support RPAs and MPOs in their land use and transportation planning activities. If the private sector business groups are to take on a role in economic development planning through a public-private collaboration with the associated RPOs (which would achieve alignment with transportation and land use planning), they would expect that the state DECD or the federal EDA would provide some planning and staffing funds. The state is currently developing a regional economic

development initiative that could provide resources. The federal EDA has traditionally funded Economic Development Districts (EDDs) at the \$50,000 to \$75,000 level annually to update and administer comprehensive strategies.

In a public private partnership, funding would also be sought from regional companies that are stakeholders and beneficiaries of the economic development planning efforts. In the Hartford region, the CEDS is housed at the MetroHartford Alliance which is the Chamber of Commerce and economic development agency for the region. In New Haven the Regional Leadership Council allocates a large percentage of the members' dues to supporting the RGP.

Based upon the feedback from the One Coast Steering Committee, the following table illustrates a **possible** structure for a CEDS Implementation Committee.

Organization, Agency, Municipality	Appointed By	Total
One representative from each of the 14 municipalities	Municipal CEO	14
Municipal representatives – (can be a mix of public officials and representatives from private business and labor)	One of 3 Representative Regional Business Organizations*	7
One representative from The Work Place Inc.	The Work Place Inc.	1
One representative from the South Western Regional Planning Agency	The South Western Regional Planning Agency	1
One representative from the Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency	The Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency	1
One representative from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development	Commissioner, DECD	1
Total		25

* Bridgeport Regional Business Council, Business Council of Fairfield County and the Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce

** Bridgeport, Stamford, and Norwalk

In making appointments to the Implementation Committee, the appointing authority should be aware of the need to provide racial, ethnic and sectoral balance. This should include industry sectors and community and labor representation.

Action Steps:

1. Convene a representative group to design, build and fund a public-private partnership to implement the CEDS – the CEDS Implementation Committee. The organization should have a Board

including representatives appointed by the three sponsoring business organizations and the two regional planning organizations (as seen in the figure above). The Implementation Committee would meet on a quarterly basis, and may appoint a smaller working group that meets on a regular basis (such as the suggested Regional Economic Development Council – see page 49) and an executive committee of not more than 15 to provide guidance on implementing the CEDS (short-term).

2. Pursue state and federal funding options for the One Coast Region including federal stimulus opportunities (short-term).
3. Create, as necessary, collaborative efforts within the Region with specific assignments for implementation of each action item in the CEDS. Examples include workforce [Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) and One Coast regions], transportation (multi-state region), business development (statewide structure), marketing (One Coast Region) (long-term).
4. Create, as necessary, subject matter task groups between the region and other groups with specific assignments (see transportation recommendations for example) (long-term).
5. Implement other recommendations in the business climate section regarding a regional economic development council and regional level economic development activities (short-term).

Objective 2: Provide coordination and consistency between the transportation, land use and economic development strategic planning efforts among the 14 municipalities and the existing planning agencies.

The larger region actually has consonance with economic realities, and planning around economic growth at a scale where economic activity actually occurs is critical to the success of the Region's municipalities.

The One Coast Region is currently served by two RPOs organized as regional planning agencies and that have affiliated MPOs for transportation planning that cover roughly the same geography, although the Greater Bridgeport MPO also includes four Valley RPO municipalities. Member municipalities are represented on the RPA by municipal

planning officials and business leaders, while the chief elected officials of the regions sit as the members of the MPO. The two current RPOs in the One Coast Region work well and often cross reference each others' planning efforts. The RPOs currently are not charged with or funded to undertake economic development planning. Therefore, neither takes a comprehensive look at its region's economy nor operates at an appropriate scale to do comprehensive economic development planning. They also lack a critical piece that is necessary to economic development planning: private sector participation.

As the State looks at the boundaries of the state's planning areas, economic growth must be considered on an equal footing with land use planning and transportation issues.

Currently, economic development is missing from the regional planning model that exists in Connecticut and consequently in the One Coast Region. Economic development activity, by its nature, occurs at the intersection of public and private activity. In the greater New Haven area, for a number of years, the chief elected officials and the business leadership have met once a year before the beginning of the state legislative session. An agenda is jointly prepared by the staffs of the RPO, the regional Chamber of Commerce and the RGP. A typical agenda would include an economic update on the region and the state and discussion of one to three critical economic issues facing the region. This meeting allows the stakeholders the opportunity to have a dialogue about critical issues and agree on priorities. The One Coast Region should adopt a similar model for government-business dialogue.

Action Step:

1. Annually there should be joint meetings between SWRPA and GBRPA with representatives of the CEDS Implementation Committee, business associations, and business and other institutional leaders to review progress in achieving goals and objectives of the CEDS and integration of land use, transportation planning and economic development (short-term).

The BRBC, the BCFC and other private sector stakeholders should meet with leadership of SWRPA and the GBRPA to establish the structure for implementation of the action steps and bring a proposal to the Steering Committee.

Objective 3: Build on the current communications between Chief Elected Officials in the One Coast Region.

Comments from the leadership of SWRPA and the GBRPA in developing this CEDS indicate that there is good cooperation among chief elected officials in the two planning agencies. This CEDS recommends that the Region build on and augment this cooperative effort in the economic development arena. Since OPM is tasked with realigning planning regions in 2010, it should take into consideration the economic realities of the State and use economic alignment in establishing new planning regions.

Action Steps

1. Implement recommendations of the Legislative PRI Committee as codified in PA 08-182 to have quarterly meetings between the CEOs and RPAs, which are already occurring (short-term).
2. The CEDS Implementation Committee should encourage OPM to include economic markets as appropriate metrics in defining planning region boundaries (mid-term).

Objective 4: Perform public functions at an appropriate scale to efficiently use public resources.

Relative to municipal jurisdictions elsewhere in the U.S., Connecticut's municipalities do not optimize economies of scale. The current financial crisis provides both opportunity and motive to make expenditures of public resources as efficient as possible. Other areas of Connecticut, and regions across the country, perform functions at a scale that maximizes the use of taxpayer dollars. The trick is to increase efficiency while maintaining appropriate local control, and that goal is reachable.

Objective 5: Ensure coordination and consistency between regional and state economic development efforts.

The state DECD is currently engaged in developing a comprehensive strategy for the state of Connecticut. As a small state, with no county government, it is imperative that

the regional CEDS and the State's plans are consistent with each other. This is true from a strategic perspective and because the state will be an important funding partner in implementing the One Coast CEDS. As the project consultant, The Connecticut Economic Resource Center, Inc. (CERC) has been communicating regularly with DECD about progress in developing the statewide strategy. As progress continues on the statewide plan, the One Coast Region should engage the State on regional priorities to ensure consistency and common priorities. DECD should be a continuing partner in implementation. DECD is represented on the Steering Committee, and that representation should continue to ensure coordination with the objectives of the State CEDS.

Action Steps:

1. Review CEDS goals against goals in forthcoming state economic development strategy (short-term).
2. Establish formal linkages between regional and state programs and coordinate allocation of resources (short-term).

GOAL 2: Development that is Sustainable – *Achieve appropriate levels of sustainable growth in economic activity while recognizing the importance of key natural resources and appropriate community development.*

The One Coast Region's connection to the coast and its historic and cultural attractions enhance the quality of life, although actions need to be taken to preserve these resources. The Regional Plan Association is already studying the carbon footprint of a subset of One Coast municipalities, and additional work should be performed throughout the Region. Establishing regional goals for emissions and energy use seems like a tall order, but nevertheless discussions about these ideas hold merit. Preservation and the appropriate use of Long Island Sound is a cause that the One Coast Region could affect. Other issues that may benefit from regional cooperation include development of regional standards and building codes, form-based land use regulations and transfer of development rights. Workforce, housing and smart growth policies also promote sustainability because enabling workers to also live in the area they work would have large benefits for the Region.

The value of Long Island Sound, numerically reflected in real estate values and commercial and recreational activities also has significant intrinsic value as a treasured natural resource in the One Coast region, earning it the distinction as "Estuary of National Significance" by Congress in 1987. However, emerging issues, better research and changing environmental trends have created a new context for planning for the future of Long Island Sound and its watershed. Without understanding the changes wrought by climate change - sea level rise, stronger coastal storms and warmer water – and how to respond to them, we cannot effectively protect the ecological integrity of the Sound. In addition, recent experience with applications to site energy facilities in the Sound has demonstrated how controversial this issue is. Yet, these critically important concerns were not included in the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan adopted in 1994 by the Long Island Sound Study.

In addition, such an approach must also incorporate planning for the entire watershed of Long Island Sound, since the health of the Sound depends on the health of the rivers and streams flowing into it. Focus must be kept on the basics by reviewing progress toward the already-existing goals of a sewage-free Sound by 2020 and restoration of

healthy levels of oxygen to the “dead zone” (area of low oxygen incapable of supporting marine life) in Long Island Sound by 2014.

Like the approach recently adopted for Chesapeake Bay, the region needs a clear and transparent description of the community’s vision for Long Island Sound. Such a vision should rally the public, assist the Congressional delegation in funding requests, provide state agencies with administrative efficiencies, establish the clear objectives needed to hold government decision makers accountable, and invite previously unengaged partners to the table. The ultimate goal is a united community rallied around a vision that combines new, measurable goals with the strategies and accountability thresholds needed to secure a healthy future for Long Island Sound and those who depend upon it.

In supporting sustainability, the State of Connecticut under Governor Jodi Rell has adopted a Responsible Growth Initiative. As mentioned before, outlined in Executive Order 15 (October 2006) the Responsible Growth Initiative recognizes that growth is necessary but must be consistent with other goals of the State concerning land use, transportation and quality of life in Connecticut’s communities. Growth patterns in Connecticut over the past 30 years have resulted in congestion on the roadways and development of land at a pace inconsistent with population growth. This pattern of growth has meant almost constant tie-ups on the two main roads in the One Coast Region. Lack of adequate investment in alternative transportation has limited the effectiveness of rail as an alternative mode, though more people ride the rails to work in this area than in any other part of Connecticut.

It is clear from the CEDS examination of the One Coast Region, and the dialogue with the Steering Committee, that growth must be managed to balance the need for economic activity with the desire to protect important natural assets. It is impossible to build a meaningful and successful comprehensive strategy for the One Coast Region economy without looking at issues of sustainability. Is the development being proposed consistent with maintaining and preserving important natural assets?

Objective 1: Ensure adequate supply and use of energy to accommodate appropriate growth.

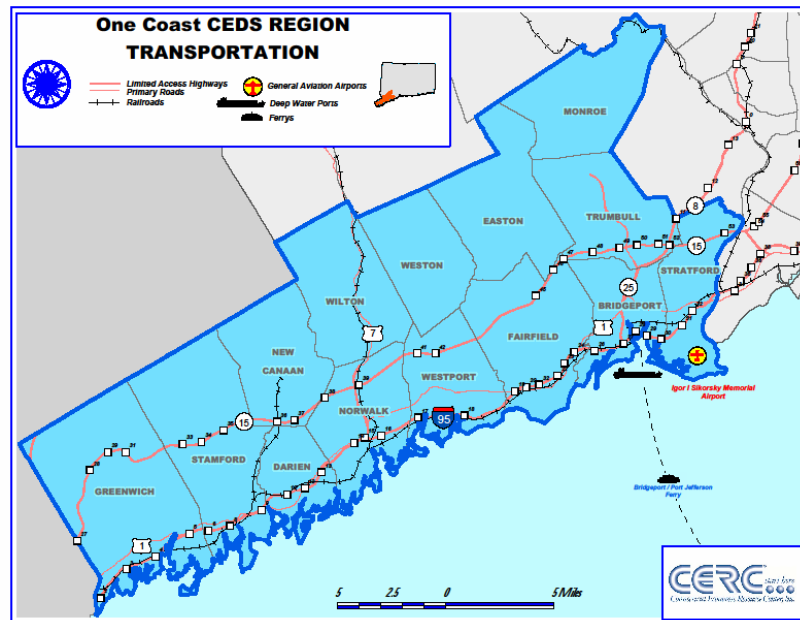
Action Step:

1. Through the CEDS Implementation Group, create an energy actions working group to coordinate with existing efforts to oversee tasks that may include examining and implementing alternative generation programs, encouraging the use of conservation programs, considering ways that municipalities can support a low carbon footprint lifestyle, and encouraging the development of an integrated statewide energy policy (long-term).

Objective 2: Develop where adequate infrastructure, particularly transportation investments, are already in place.

There already is much energy being devoted to transit-oriented development (TOD) in the region. Both SWRPA and the GBRPA have emphasized TOD in their current plans.

However, these land use plans usually do not put sufficient emphasis on planning for economic growth, and the implication of economic growth on infrastructure and environment. Where will new commercial investment and jobs be located in the region?



What are the implications of location on infrastructure and land uses?

Action Steps

1. Review TOD recommendations included in the current plans of conservation and development (C&D) while considering energy improvements in mixed-use downtowns with renewable generation including methane harvesting from wastewater treatment and landfills, wind, solar, fuel cell, geothermal, and combined heat and power (short- and mid-term).

2. Encourage implementation of town-identified TOD opportunities through joint state and federal funding (short-term).
3. Create a range of housing options to lessen the affordability gap and so to allow young professionals and working-class families to work and live in the same area while older residents enjoy their established quality of life (mid-term; implement as projects move forward).
4. Consider renewable energy power plants for rail stations (mid-term).

Objective 3: Protect and appropriately use natural and coastal resources.

Sustain an awareness of the Long Island Sound, not just from the environmental preservation perspective, but more holistic, and embrace the Sound as a quality of life amenity tied to economics and tourism.

Action Steps

1. Assess the impact of rising sea levels on properties and infrastructure, and the economic sustainability of the municipalities (short-term).
2. Encourage the State to develop a green port strategy for its three deep water ports (one is being developed for Bridgeport by the Port Authority) (short-term).

Objective 4: Remove emphasis on grand list growth as driver of development.

There is a growing recognition that the state's system of taxation encourages sprawl and results in land use decisions that are not consistent with the State's emphasis on responsible growth. Since approximately 69 percent of local revenues in Connecticut come from the property tax,¹⁷ municipalities are constantly looking for new development to grow the grand list. This in turn allows communities to maintain lower mill rates for residents. This works when land is plentiful and the population and the economy are growing. However, once municipalities are substantially developed, there are limited options to deal with growing demands for services. As a result, property taxes rise.

As already mentioned, the geographically small Connecticut towns do not reflect the reality of economic activity. Suburban communities do not include the same type of economic activity as cities and the comparatively higher home values result in higher tax revenues. The disparity is striking. In Greenwich the equalized net grand list per capita

¹⁷ Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, fiscal year 2006

(ENGL/PC) was \$793,746 compared to Bridgeport's \$73,061. The equalized mill rate in Greenwich was 4.72 and in Bridgeport was 19.93.¹⁸ Since towns rely so much on property tax, the ENGL is a measure of what a town can afford in services for its residents. While there certainly are other differences between municipalities, a community with a low ENGL/PC starts in a disadvantaged position compared to its neighbors.

Why does this matter to the Region? Economic activity is regional, and most public investments serve a regional population. Therefore, it benefits all regional residents if the system of raising revenues and spending public dollars is as efficient as possible.

Action Steps

1. Starting with the existing Plans of Conservation and Development, identify target areas for development and conservation that could be subject to incentive programs (short-term).
2. Consider completing a regional build out analysis – Expand work currently being done by the tri-state Regional Plan Association and/or OPM to all 14 communities –to maximize zoning opportunities (short-term).
3. Consider transfer of development rights – the exchange of zoning privileges from areas with low population needs, such as farmland, to areas of high population needs, such as downtown areas – to promote open space and historic places while allowing more densely populated areas to experience growth. Typically, such development includes a mix of uses such as different housing types, and commercial and retail uses to supplement existing downtowns (long-term; implement as projects move forward).

¹⁸ Ibid.

GOAL 3: Holistic Approach to Transportation and Infrastructure Investment

Planning – *Systematically coordinate projects and planning for an integrated transportation system that promotes the efficient movement of people and goods within and through the One Coast Region.* To recap the earlier description of transportation planning in Connecticut, included in a PRI report:

For federally mandated transportation planning purposes, 11 of the RPOs have been designated as Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). This means:

- they are located in urbanized areas that meet federal population criteria based on population and density measures;
- ConnDOT and transit operators work cooperatively with them on devising and guiding projects; and
- they have veto authority over projects proposed by ConnDOT for inclusion in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which is a list of projects the state expects to fund during a five-year period with federal money as well as regionally significant projects that could affect air quality.¹⁹

Therefore, the recommendations concerning transportation infrastructure included in this CEDS are consistent with the activities of the MPOs.

People seldom live, work, shop and relax in the same place. In order to preserve a vibrant economy, people must be able to move easily between the points that are important to them. In addition to people, the efficient movement of goods (raw materials and finished products) is a critical need for a region. The transportation network is a combination of road, bus, rail, trails, bike lanes, sidewalks, marine and air-based systems.

In addition to the transportation network, electrical transmission systems and pipelines are essential components to a healthy region. The electrical transmission system makes it possible to quickly move energy from one location to another where it is in demand. Pipelines play the role of transporting liquids and gasses from one point to another in uninterrupted amounts. Even though the electrical and pipeline infrastructure can be discussed in the transportation system, for purposes of this strategy they are included in the sustainability section. Broadband is also an important infrastructure to consider especially as it contributes to the ease of information flow among people and businesses. The focus of this issue is featured in the workforce section of the goals.

¹⁹ http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/pridata/Studies/RPO_Final_Report.htm#P772_94041#P772_94041

It is important to view the transportation *system* in the One Coast Region as an integration of many functions rather than as individual modes. For instance, focus should be given to upgrading all trains to encourage increased ridership rather than particular routes or trains. Coordination among initiatives is also a key by including rail, highway, ferry and bus systems into overall plans. Changing commuting patterns may warrant a closer look at light transit in Stamford or shuttle services in other cities. Adequate parking for those who use public transit and increased bicycle access are ways to reduce traffic congestion and lower carbon emissions.

Another way to reduce traffic congestion at peak commuting times is to rethink how and when people work and where people live. Transportation Oriented Development (TOD) projects are in planning or development around the region and should be encouraged. Telecommuting is becoming a more integrated business practice in order to reduce travel congestion and overhead costs. In the One Coast Region, increased telecommuting will have positive effects.

The One Coast Region would also benefit from coordinated transportation planning with its New York neighbors. Connecticut is underrepresented in organizations like the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) that make critical decisions about capital investment, equipment and scheduling that impact Connecticut commuters.

Objective 1: Facilitate greater communication with New York and New Jersey regarding common interests and cross-state planning and collaborate with various regional entities.

Connecticut, New York and New Jersey share transportation networks that move people and goods throughout the New York metro region. Additional communication and coordination among the states and respective metro New York MPOs would prioritize investments and create a more holistic approach to planning. The New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) covers the city plus Long Island and the lower Hudson Valley (Westchester, Rockland and Putnam counties,) which includes the City of White Plains. As WIRED would say, White Plains with Stamford, Norwalk and Bridgeport, are the big city economic engines of the lower Hudson Valley/Fairfield region. The Northern Jersey Transportation Planning Authority is the MPO of the

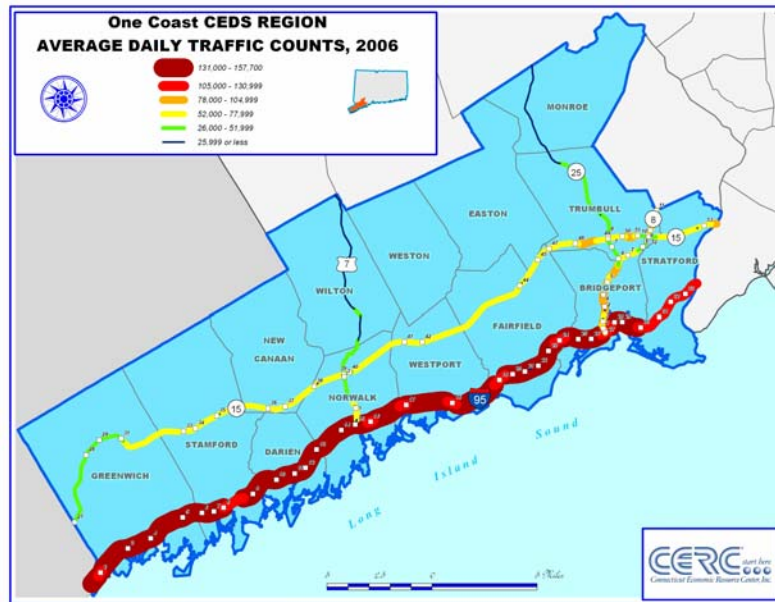
northern part of New Jersey and is comprised of 13 counties plus the cities of Newark and Jersey City. It covers an area with a population of about 6.5 million. The relative sizes of these organizations need to be considered when thinking about coordinating with the MPOs.

Action Steps

1. Continue efforts of advocating to the commissioner of transportation and to the Governor that the state would benefit from communicating through formal processes, primarily with Connecticut representation on the MTA and Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. Governor Rell and her predecessors have tried to acquire a presence on the MTA or MetroNorth Boards to no avail, for legislative action in Albany would be required. However, the Commuter Council does interact with MetroNorth on a monthly basis (short-term).
2. Continue to have the tri-state MPOs work on shared priorities – as a result of a Memorandum of Understanding, an initial meeting was held on 9/24/08 with Connecticut, New York and New Jersey planning organizations, and it is expected that future meetings and collaborations will take place. Shared priorities and interests may include congestion pricing (for freight and overall traffic), MetroNorth, and freight movements (ongoing).
3. Continue to facilitate planning among a collaborative of MPOs in the Region (already looking at Route 7 improvements and bus rapid transit on Route 1) (ongoing).
4. Study the use of higher speed rail for inter-city commuter options (that is being facilitated through a Regional Plan Association initiative) that would better connect metro agglomerations (Springfield, Hartford, Stamford, etc.) (long-term).
5. Explore having a CT-NY operating agreement about MetroNorth to allow Connecticut to make suggestions pertaining to rider options and schedules (mid-term).

Objective 2: Improve the capacity of traveling options for the efficient movement of commuters.

Traffic has increased dramatically on the highways throughout the One Coast Region. Providing greater efficiency on highways and other modes of transportation would move people more quickly to where they want to go, which would



only enhance the image of the Region. Addressing concerns of flight paths in lower Fairfield County would also improve the quality of life of residents.

Action Steps

1. Look at the capacity of I-95 in creative ways (use of breakdown lanes or moveable lanes during rush hours, reduction of interchanges, lane continuity (providing additional lanes between closely spaced interchanges and at bottlenecks), congestion pricing, improved egress and ingress points, incentives for commuters to share a ride to work including employer-based rideshare, truck only toll lanes) by analyzing the costs and impacts of alternate uses (short-term).
2. Look at Route 1, I-95, the Merritt Parkway, rail, and bus as a system. Make improvements to connections between MetroNorth stations to shuttle/bus to employment destinations (mid-term).
3. Respond to the changing nature of working situations with increased telecommuting, alternate work weeks and flexible hour options (short-term).
4. Study the possible consolidation of transit districts in a way that local service needs are not diminished or harmed to determine if such action would facilitate regional planning. Note: such an action would have to involve and be approved by the Regional MPOs (long-term).

- In the short term, efforts should be implemented that allow the districts to better coordinate services or expand services/routes that are more seamless and cross district boundaries. This may include long distance routes (such as the Coastal Link and future BRT service) and electronic/uni-fare collection systems that allow users to transfer between districts without having to pay another fare.

Objective 3: Create incentives for freight to move through the Region during off-peak hours, thereby increasing capacity for commuters.

Moving raw materials, finished products and wastes into and out of the One Coast Region as efficiently as possible improves economic competitiveness. Providing incentives for freight to move through at times when commuters are not traveling (off peak) will improve congestion as well.

The efficient movement of freight is a difficult issue to address and resolve; options are few and the underlying problems are trucks are more efficient and less expensive than other modes. Also the opportunities for using other modes are limited – rail freight is limited due to conflicts with commuter rail, limited capacity on the lines, several key bottlenecks and overhead clearance issues.

Sikorsky Airport is an important transportation asset in the Region, from a freight and commuter perspective. A number of roadblocks prevent improvements that could enhance airport functionality. Airport ownership by one municipality while being located in another, its development restrictions due to strong neighborhood and political opposition to improvement, its safety issues and the Federal Aviation Administration mandate for safety improvement, all contribute to the uncertainty of the airport's future and its potential economic impact.

Action Steps

1. Assess the use of differential or congestion pricing (state study of congestion pricing is ongoing) to reduce traffic during rush hours (short-term; affected by state policies).

2. Consider creative uses of existing infrastructure to move freight and commuters more efficiently (example: the use of the median of I-95 as a dedicated truck line) (long-term).
3. Examine planning examples around the country in terms of freight mobility and intermodal corridor connectivity (how to connect highways with ports, terminals and other transportation avenues) to see what can be applied to the One Coast Region (short-term).
4. Encourage and support the development of a freight tunnel connection under NYC harbor between Brooklyn and Jersey City (mid-term).
5. Establish a working group to resolve issues related to the regional airport to enable better economic utilization of the asset (mid-term).

Objective 4: Enhance connections to New Haven and Meriden, and northern connections to Danbury and Waterbury so that people can move more easily between home and work.

Commutation patterns show that the connections between the One Coast Region with greater New Haven, Danbury and Waterbury have increased between 1990 and 2000. Improving the transportation networks between these areas will promote further connections, leading to increased economic competitiveness because labor pools from further away can more easily work in the One Coast Region.

Action Steps

1. Consider locations for transit-supporting densities that would increase the number of transportation modes that would be viable (mid-term; implement as projects move forward).
2. Conduct feasibility study of upgrading rail lines (electrification, signalization, tracks to support fast rail) or implementing rapid bus lines and estimate the number of people who would support these transportation modes (short-term; presently being studied).
3. Improve Routes 7 and 8 so that additional north-south transportation networks would be a more viable option for commuters (long-term; affected by DOT decisions).
4. Increase access and capacity, and decrease cost, of parking at rail stations to increase in-state train use because high cost parking at the

New Haven line stations is a disincentive for those living and working within the state, especially for those whose employer subsidizes or provides free parking at the job site. New York bound commuters are willing to pay the high parking cost because it is still much cheaper than parking costs in New York. (long-term).

Objective 5: Utilize ports and waterways to ease a percentage of the goods and people moving through the Region on the highways and trains.

Finding creative ways to move through the Region without the use of the highways relieves highway congestion and air pollution, allows for the incorporation of green technologies¹, and reduces costs by moving people and goods more efficiently.

Action Steps

1. Operate a Feeder Barge system that initially would move approximately 440 containers of freight per day, per barge (of the 15,000 moved by trucks) that is consistent with the Federal Marine Highway Initiative. The Port of Bridgeport will be a participating port in the Planned Inland Distribution Network developed by the Port Authority of New York/New Jersey (short-term). Note: There is a strategy already in place and adopted by the State and the TSB, with the Bridgeport Port Authority in charge of development.
2. Continue and improve the Water Street Dock and Terminal to handle a greater percentage of commuters and travelers. The site has a number of advantages including “access, zoning, land use and water transport use consistency, utility service, site potential for expansion, the availability of existing deepwater facilities and proximity to the Bridgeport Harbor Federal Navigation Channel, lack of significant coastal resources in the immediate vicinity, and compatibility with Bridgeport’s rail and bus network and the adjacent intermodal transportation facility.”² (short-term)
3. Implement the recommendations from the recently completed long-term planning study for high speed ferry service between Bridgeport, Stamford and downtown/midtown Manhattan, providing a passenger-only commuter alternative that removes vehicles from Interstate 95 and other traffic arteries.

¹ such as potential use of wind and solar power, shore/land power sources for vessels and trucks

² Bridgeport Port Authority, Ferry Executive Summary, 2008

Two feasibility reports were completed recently, and both find that there would be viable service opportunities without a required subsidy.²²

Preliminary service routes will require at least two vessels sailing during peak commuter hours, offering business class amenities and capacity for up to 350 passengers (long-term).

4. Continue to support measures and incentives that will eliminate barriers to short sea shipping, specifically the modification to the Harbor Maintenance Tax (ongoing).
5. Incorporate green technologies and practices in both waterfront construction activities and in day-to-day operations of port and maritime businesses (short-term).
6. Encourage harbor-dredging activities along the coastal region to improve the economic and recreational use of the harbors (long-term).

Current and new port/maritime uses/users must be reviewed and approved by the Area Security Management Committee (ASMC). Overseen by the United States Coast Guard, the Captain of the Port of Long Island Sound and its ASMC consider coastal security a critical factor in assuring security and safety in water transportation pathways for people and goods, and essential for encouraging the use of ports and waterways to ease highway congestion.

Discussions with high-speed ferry operators can be driven by the Bridgeport Port Authority and the City of Stamford. The City of Stamford and the Bridgeport Port Authority have accumulated federal Department of Transportation funds for dredging, bulkheads, service buildings and parking. The water-side effort including attainment of vessels will be the responsibility of the operator.

²² TPA Design Group, *Market Feasibility Analysis of a Bridgeport-Based High Speed Ferry Service*, November 2006; Urbitran Associates, Inc., *Stamford Ferry Feasibility Study*, April 2008.

GOAL 4: Workforce Development and Education Investment – *Create an environment that fosters educational success and lifelong learning for all students and residents using partnerships between schools and business.*

Workforce and education issues are dependent on the people in a region. Businesses need workers to perform a variety of tasks in occupational categories including but not limited to technical, administrative, maintenance and managerial. Businesses also need a range of skill levels, from the fresh graduate ready to tackle a first job to the seasoned manager with decades of experience in the field. People in the workforce who are willing and able to assume the tasks are necessary ingredients for the success of business.

However, it requires more than just people for businesses to prosper; the skills of the people need to fit the needs of the employers. The skills are developed throughout a student's schooling, and workers can gain additional skills for further advancement through lifelong learning. Having a region with an educational system that produces enough graduates with a range of skill levels based on talents that match the needs of the area companies produces a mutually beneficial outcome for the employer and employee.

For example, it has been documented that there is a shortage of health care professionals and an increasing need in the Region. There are a record number of boomers entering peak health care consumption years coupled with a growing 65+ population that consumes three times per capita the amount in health care consumed by those under 65. This sector is also a major source of employment – 15 percent of all jobs in One Coast Region – with over 45,000 workers at 3,000 health sector firms. Nationally, 1.6 million jobs were added to this sector from 2001-06 while the rest of the economy was flat. Regionally there was a 1.2 percent increase in health care jobs from 2002-05 while non-health related jobs dropped 1.2 percent. To further add to the demand side, over 2,000 candidates were turned away from nursing programs from 2004-06 due to faculty shortages. Connecticut is projected to have second greatest decline in its nurse supply from 2000-20. The One Coast Region faces potential shortage of 5,000 registered nurses (RNs) by 2020. This as an economic

competitiveness issue since boomers with expendable health care dollars will choose to reside where they can get premium health care.²³

Success in post-secondary education is tied to success at critical milestones in a child's education. In September 2008 Governor Rell and the Kellogg Foundation hosted a summit to look at the transition between pre-k and kindergarten programs. At various times in the past few years the Connecticut Departments of Education and Higher Education have analyzed the transition from high school to college. The two commissioners will soon convene a new P-20 Council to again examine these transitional issues. It is clear that goals should be established at critical points in an individual's educational journey based on desired outcomes. These goals should include improved performance on standardized tests in all communities, and concentrating on erasing the achievement gap between urban and suburban school systems. The goals should also include increasing the number of students graduating at the associate's and bachelor's degree levels, and improving the timetable for achieving these credentials.

With the difficulty of attracting and retaining young professionals, the One Coast Region would benefit from thinking and acting as a whole. These adverse trends could be exacerbated by the current economic uncertainties and lay offs in the financial services industry, where available jobs and training opportunities will be important. It is imperative to build on the efforts already developed by the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) initiative. It is crucial to engage area businesses in the process so that workforce needs match the skills of new workers. With an Education Compact, build goals at key milestones (birth-3, preK, 3rd grade, high school, 2-year degree, 4-year degree, lifelong learning). When setting goals, it will be important to keep in mind the education attainment disparity between the region's urban centers and other One Coast Region towns.

Another component will be to address the effects that immigration has on the One Coast Region. Foreign-born populations comprise an increasing share of the total population and it is in the One Coast Region's best interest to recognize the contributions of the immigrants to the Region's economy.

²³ Business Council of Fairfield County, *Health Care Industry Cluster Study*, Dec 2006

Investments in education and the workforce are critical for a region to be successful. While the One Coast Region has a number of programs and successful outcomes in place, there is always room for improvement.

Objective 1: Connect workforce development with education achievement.

In order for employees to be successful in a company, their skills need to match the requirements of the company. The matching should occur for recent graduates as well as incumbent workers.

Action Steps

1. Implement training and skills development for existing workers to promote lifelong learning (mid-term).
2. Build on Talent for Growth CT-NY WIRED²⁴ goals (ongoing):
 - a. Link education, workforce, economic development partners and regional employers for a regional talent development system.
 - b. Create a pipeline of skilled workers to support targeted industries that are core and innovation-intensive in the region.
 - c. Establish mobility and connectivity for workers and employers by leveraging infrastructure initiatives (i.e. look for ways to increase worker productivity through telecommuting, providing for more efficient modes of transportation for commuters, or improving telecommunication while continuing to advocate for existing initiatives).
 - d. Grow a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Objective 2: Attract and retain young professionals in the Region.

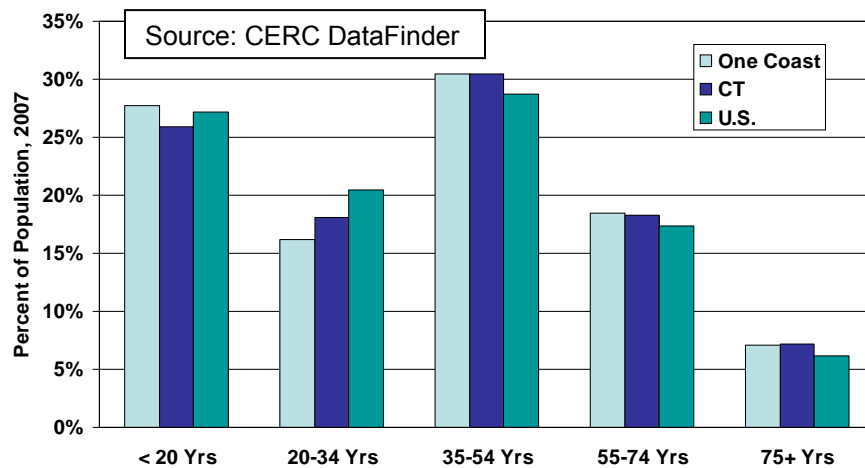
The One Coast Region had a lower share of people ages 20-34 years (16 percent of total population in 2007) relative to Connecticut (18 percent) and the U.S. (21 percent). And the One Coast share has decreased from the 2000 level of 18 percent. With a

²⁴ Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development: The Southwestern Connecticut region was selected to receive one of 39 WIRED grants nationwide. The region, “Talent for Growth CT-NY (T4G CT-NY)”, includes Westchester and Putnam Counties, NY.

smaller share of this age group, there are fewer young professionals starting jobs and establishing roots in the area, which can adversely affect the economy.

Action Steps

1. Establish partnerships with area higher education institutions and employers so that recent graduates know about job opportunities (short-term).
2. Create a young professionals group with opportunities to network, socialize and discuss the strengths and challenges of living in the region (short-term).
3. Explore best practices/programs for connecting students with area internship opportunities, including using the internhere.com web site (short-term).
4. Create a range of housing options and vibrant communities so that young professionals and working-class families can work and live in the same area (also included in the sustainability section) (mid-term).

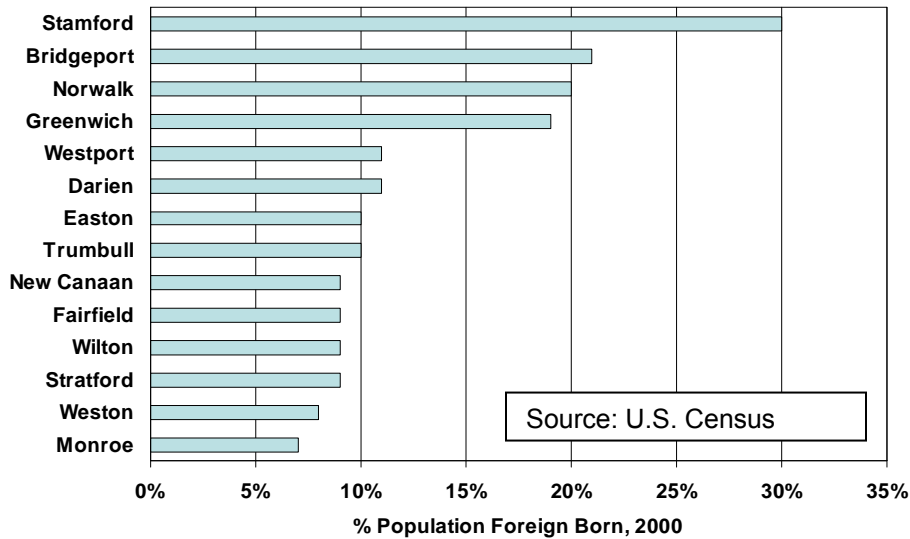


Objective 3: Assess and address the effects of immigration.

Between 2000 and 2007, positive net international migration into Fairfield County helped to offset the net negative internal migration out of the area. Since the labor market in the Region is already tight, immigrants provide a way to grow the workforce and skill levels.

Action Steps

1. Create a welcoming atmosphere for immigrants who are supplying the labor needed by area employers (mid-term).
2. Focus on English literacy programs for upward mobility since on average, the immigrants in the Region have lower educational attainment levels than native born residents (long-term; affected by state policies).²⁵



Objective 4: Close the education achievement gap.

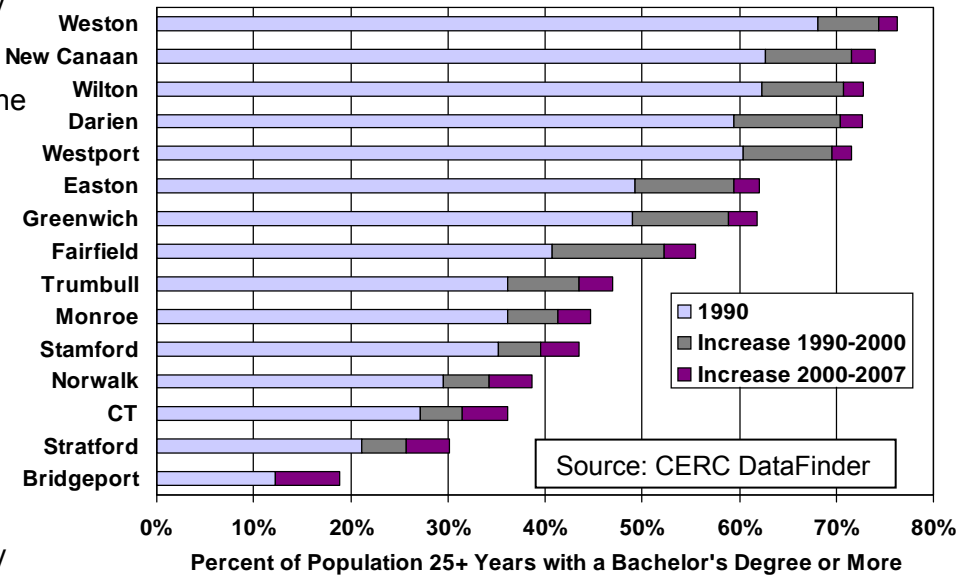
There is attention being paid nation-wide to measuring educational outcomes at critical points in lifelong learning. From infants to toddlers, to pre-school to kindergarten, through standardized testing coming out of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), to entrance exams at institutions of higher education, individual performance and attainment is being evaluated. However, there are disconnects in the system that cause individual and systemic problems. What is being taught in pre-school does not match what kindergarten teachers use to assess incoming children. High school programs do not match the subject matter included in college entrance assessments. These issues need to be addressed if a productive workforce for the One Coast Region is to be developed. While these issues are broader than the region, there is no reason that the communities in the One Coast Region shouldn't develop goals for educational attainment at all levels.

²⁵ Business Council of Fairfield County

The Region is built on knowledge workers, as referenced in the in-depth industry data section. If residents are graduating unprepared to personally compete within a knowledge economy, as suggested in the data, the economic competitiveness of the region is at stake. While there is growing consensus about the importance of a postsecondary education, there is widespread concern that significant barriers get in the way of completing a college degree. To succeed, an individual must:

- aspire toward college;
- be prepared for college;
- have resources to access college; and
- have the capacity to stay in college and complete a degree.

Ensuring that all residents of the One Coast Region understand the importance of postsecondary training, encouraging the youth to pursue such training, and providing both adults and youth with the resources to access postsecondary education are the responsibility of all segments of the society. In addition, a regional compact by all stakeholders on goals for educational attainment from birth through college would promote the benefits of a greater number of residents completing postsecondary education to the economy and the quality of life.



The One Coast Implementation Committee would be the convener of a group to develop the compact, which would include leaders from key employment sectors including the cultural and educational institutions, healthcare, and manufacturing, along with school superintendents, college administrators and faculty, municipal government officials, and representatives of nonprofit organizations. These leaders would first assess the

education and lifelong learning needs of residents in the One Coast Region and identify new opportunities and strategies to better meet those needs.

This process can be modeled after similar efforts in the state of Maine and in Berkshire County in Massachusetts. In the Berkshires, initial meetings focused on the following questions:

- . What are the emerging higher education needs of residents?
- How do we forge more effective business-academic-community alliances?
- . How do we enable an even greater percentage of students to access and complete degrees in higher education or pursue continuous learning?
- What new opportunities for collaboration can be found to create a more seamless offering of higher education services?
- . What can we learn from models from other regions or states?

Following completion of a six-month planning period, the compact develops a set of strategic recommendations focusing on:

- raising the aspirations of residents to view 16 years of education or greater as the accepted educational norm;
- improving access to education, training, and lifelong learning; and
- developing a “social contract” among employers, employees and educational institutions that encourages and promotes learning, earning and civic engagement.

The Berkshire County Compact for Higher Education is still active after five years with a number of initiatives being implemented around the broad theme of providing greater access to higher education for the county’s residents. Their initiatives encourage collaboration by a broad group of stakeholders to achieve this goal. For more information, see the compact’s website at: www.MCLA.edu/compact.

Action Steps

1. Build upon Stamford Achieves and Norwalk Acts programs (short-term).
2. Create a One Coast Compact for Education that involves a broad segment of the region’s leadership in support of efforts to ensure that residents are

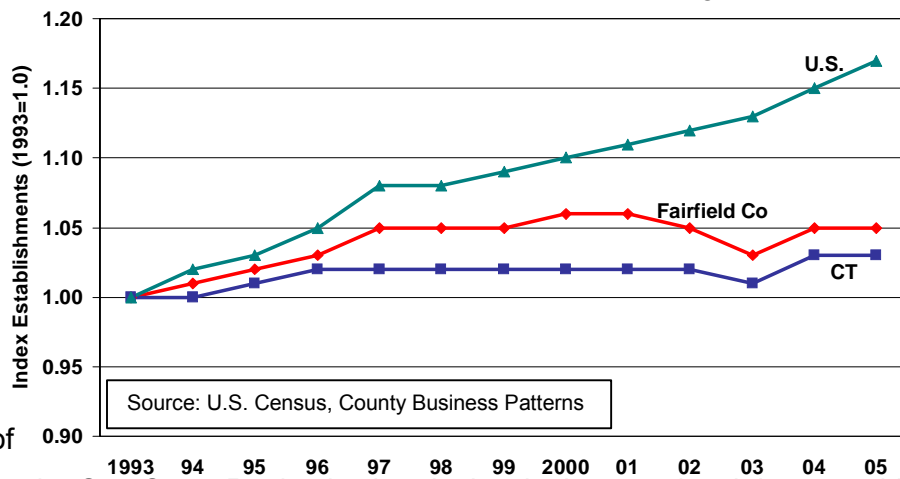
prepared for and able to transition from each level to the next, from pre-K through four years of college (mid-term).

3. In addition to improving K-12 schools through accountability and testing, connect the importance of the schools with parents, caregivers and its potential role of the community (mid-term; Bridgeport already designated a priority community for early childhood programs).
4. Consider increasing the capacity of Housatonic and Norwalk Community Colleges, Fairfield University, Sacred Heart University, University of Bridgeport and UCONN Stamford to meet the needs of employers (mid-term).

GOAL 5: Improve Business Environment and Economic Development Climate – *by coordinating local, regional, state and federal assets.* In addition to the strategic activities of the CEDS Implementation Committee already recommended in Goal #1, this goal recommends creating a Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) to manage and coordinate the day-to-day regional economic development activities. The REDC would be made up of one representative from each of the One Coast municipalities whose primary responsibility is economic development. Depending on the municipality, this member could be an economic development or planning professional, a chamber of commerce representative, or a member of the local economic development commission.

It is especially important for the One Coast Region to have the tools to mount a professional regional economic development effort since establishment growth has been somewhat flat for

the past 10 years and employment has been flat since 2001 (and down from its highs of 1987 and 2000).



As an early goal of the CEDS process, the One Coast Region is already developing a regional demographic profile through the Economic Development Data and Information (EDDI) database for site selectors (see Appendix F for additional information). CERC has also conducted a site selector survey to gather opinions and impressions of the Region. A brownfields database should be developed for the Region and tracking visitations with potential businesses and coordinating with regional and state agencies is also a positive step in making the area more business-friendly. These are all elements of a solid regional economic development effort.

Objective 1: Create a Regional Economic Development Council of economic development professionals or other representatives from each municipality to establish, implement and oversee Regional programs for marketing efforts and

business retention, expansion and attraction, as well as to promote entrepreneurial activity.

As discussed previously, creating this working group through the CEDS Implementation Committee, this regional entity would provide the scale required to allow the Region to compete for business retention, attraction, and entrepreneurial growth on a national and international basis, as well as to provide the advocacy, and in some cases the resources, to implement the recommendations in this CEDS report that are beyond the ability of the individual communities to manage or control. The Council would report regularly to the CEDS Implementation Committee regarding progress made.

Action Steps

1. Find issues of common ground in which the municipalities can collaborate (short-term).
2. Utilize a private-public partnership including DECD representation that has flexibility without strict governance guidelines (short-term).
3. Identify funding for staff and methods for follow-up needed to be pooled together, and perhaps supplement with DECD funds (short-term).

Primary implementers include the CEDS Steering Committee with secondary implementers including the Bridgeport Regional Business Council, The Business Council of Fairfield County, and municipal economic development and/or chambers of commerce staff.

Objective 2: Create the One Coast Regional Economic Development Profile.

Creating an Economic Development Profile for the Region is an important objective as it serves to establish the geographic boundaries for the key demographic and other data points at the scale that site selection consultants and other end users, such as potential entrepreneurs and existing business owners, require to make decisions. Further, it also provides core information from which marketing plans and tactics will evolve. These activities should be coordinated by the REDC. CERC offers free and fee-based products (Economic Development Data and Information (EDDI), SiteFinder, ProgramFinder, Town Profiles, DataFinder) and partners with the state to enhance these efforts. These resources are available to any area that wishes to use them to make themselves more competitive.

Action Steps

1. Develop a 'Regional Brand' and promotional messages/material based on the results of the CEDS study (short-term).
2. Create a regional web-portal to facilitate information flow (short-term).
3. Identify and link to other economic development resources (short-term).

Primary implementers include the One Coast REDC and secondary implementers include the Bridgeport Regional Business Council and The Business Council of Fairfield County.

Objective 3: Develop and implement a Regional retention and expansion program targeting existing businesses and entrepreneurs.

When it comes to the discipline of economic development, states, regions and municipalities can choose from a variety of strategies. Generally speaking, these can be broadly categorized into three categories. They include business attraction strategies, strategies that encourage or foster entrepreneurship, and strategies to retain and expand companies that already exist within their respective precincts.

Eric P. Canada of Blane, Canada Ltd. in Wheaton, Illinois is a nationally recognized authority on business retention and economic development marketing. According to research conducted by Mr. Canada and his firm, existing businesses on average account for 76 percent of new jobs and new capital investment, while 15 percent is attributed to the attraction of new businesses to a region or municipality, and 9 percent is created by businesses involved in entrepreneurship activity. This clearly demonstrates the importance and impacts that effective business retention and expansion programs, or lack thereof, can have on the fiscal stability of a region. When the additional challenges resulting from the recent crisis in the global financial markets are factored in, it is clear that the importance of supporting and retaining existing businesses in the One Coast Region is clearly elevated. See Appendix G for additional information about site selector impressions.

Fortunately for the One Coast Region, the two major electric utility companies that provide service to municipalities in the region, Connecticut Light and Power (CL&P)/

Yankee Gas and The United Illuminating Company (UI) have both secured licenses for the Executive Pulse Business Intelligence /Retention technology software (e-pulse), and are making it available complete with training to economic development entities in their service territories. This provides an incredible opportunity for the Region and its municipal members to greatly enhance the success of their business retention and expansion efforts.

Action Step

1. Utilize e-pulse software to consistently spread the message; coordinate with UI and CL&P (short-term).

Primary implementers include the One Coast REDC and possibly a sub-committee. Secondary implementers include municipalities in the One Coast Region, CL&P/Yankee Gas, and UI.

Objective 4: Develop and implement a Regional marketing campaign geared toward business recruitment and development.

An established REDC that has developed a Regional Economic Development Profile, and implemented an aggressive Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program will have established a solid foundation from which to launch a targeted business recruitment program. At a minimum, companies that are in existing industry clusters and are prominent in the Region should be targeted. A marketing campaign also has the added benefit of promoting the strengths and assets of the Region to existing businesses.

Action Steps:

1. Identify industry / cluster targets (as identified in Appendix H) (short-term).
2. Customize message (short-term).
3. Engage consultant to identify prospects (short-term).
4. Create recruitment team to meet with prospective companies (short-term).

Primary implementers include the One Coast REDC, and possibly a sub-committee. Secondary implementers include the Bridgeport Regional Business Council and The Business Council of Fairfield County.

