

4/19/2017 MINUTES

**WESTERN CT ECONOMIC
ADVISORY GROUP**

Held at the Comstock Community Center
180 School Rd, Wilton, CT 06897

MEMBERS

Eugene Schreiner	Fairfield County Bank
Valeria Bisceglia	Small Business Development Center
Joe Ercolano	Small Business Development Center
Hal Kurfehs	Coldwell Banker Commercial
Virginia DeCristoforo	Innovation Center

ALSO ATTENDING

Paul Settlemeyer, Greenwich Economic Advancement Committee; WestCOG staff Elizabeth Esposito and Will Kenny.

WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 PM by Associate Planner, Elizabeth Esposito.

DISCUSSION

The data collection phase of the CEDS is now complete. The group will now focus on creating the Strategic Action Plan for the Region. The group spent the first hour discussing what the broad goals for the Region should be based on the data collected. In the second hour, they focused on objectives and actions the Region could take to complete those goals. An outline of their work was created and is attached. Members not in attendance can give their input to Elizabeth.

Feedback to the first Draft must be submitted to Elizabeth by April 28th.

This outline will continue to be refined in the coming meetings.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Next Meeting: Will be decided with a Doodle Poll. More details will be posted on the WestCOG website.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Strategic Action Plan Outline for Economic Development in Western Connecticut

FIRST DRAFT

GOALS DO NOT APPEAR IN ORDER OF PRORITIZATION

- Goal
 - Objective
 - Project

- Encourage Interregional Cooperation
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- Improve and Maintain Transportation and Public infrastructure
 - Expand the availability of Fiber internet access
 - Update the electric grid
 - Support and advocate for transportation /mass transit improvements that increase connectivity and reduce travel time
 - Advocate for improvement to the Region’s major transportation spines I-95, I-84, Route 7, and Rail lines
 - Create a Freight Plan
 - Implement Transit Oriented Development Plans
 - Improve CT Transit
 - Create A Tax Increment Financing District to fund improvements to the Danbury Branch Line

- Improve Business Climate
 - Improve knowledge of business resources
 - Create/ identify a Best Practices Guide for municipalities and Chambers of Commerce for communicating resource availability
 - Leverage existing resources
 - Create a Regional Main Street Program
 - Engage in legislative advocacy at the State level to improve the business climate
 - Encourage Business Support and Recruitment
 - Improve “customer” experience for business owners in every municipality
 - Conduct a review of municipal zoning and suggest efficiencies
 - Create and support Makerspaces, business incubators, and other business support resources in every community

- Cultivate Conditions to Support and Diverse Workforce (with special consideration to young professionals)
 - Recruit and retain young professionals
 - Partner with Young Energetic Solutions to identify effective policies and initiatives
 - Advocate for “Learn Here, Live Here” initiatives
 - Create a diversity of housing that all sectors of the workforce can afford
 - Partner with the Partnership for Strong Communities to identify effective policies and initiatives
 - Create a housing inventory and analysis
 - Recruit and support industry focused college and university programs relevant to the Region’s major industries on existing campuses

- Make the Region More Resilient to the Impacts of Climate Change
 - Study the economic impacts of coastal and riverine flooding
 - Create a response and recovery guide for businesses

- Create an Entity to Implement the Strategic Action Plan and Maintain the CEDS
 - Pursue Economic Development District status for the Region upon approval of the CEDS

- Forge a Positive Identity for the Region
 - Create a Strategic Communications Plan
 - Lead a campaign to pursue awards and recognition
 - Improve online presence of the Region by encouraging registration on various websites, (e.g. Google Maps, Yelp, etc.) and creating workshops to teach businesses how to do it.