



# Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

## Economic Development Work Group

Tuesday, April 17, 2018

5:00 p.m.

Main Meeting Room, Town Hall, 933 Hopmeadow Street

## SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

### Call to Order

- 1) Discussion on Past Economic Development Initiatives
  - a. Economic Development Task Force Report, November 2015
  - b. Economic Implementation and Marketing Action Study (Fairweather Report), October 2013
  - c. Memorandum from Simsbury Economic Development Commission, re: New Economic Development Commission, August 10, 2017
- 2) Discussion on Economic Development Commission Ordinance
- 3) Regular Meeting Schedule
- 4) Next Steps

### Adjournment



TOWN OF SIMSBURY  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

*Final Report*

November, 2015

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### **5. Process Group**

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- b. Work Product & Recommendations
- c. Next Steps
- d. Source Documents

### **6. Concluding Recommendation**

## EDTF MEMBERS

### EDTF Chair

Nancy Haase

### Marketing

Jeff Dornenburg, *Chair*

Kris Barnett

Carolyn Bligh

Rich Correia

Diane Nash

Charmaine Seavy

### Process

Wayne Cobleigh, *Chair*

Kevin Crimmins

Bill Ethier

Lou George

Ron Jodice

### Programs

Debra Bernard, *Chair*

Jackie Battos

Holly Beum

Chris Kelly

Robert Kulakowski

Linda Schofield

### Staff

Thomas Cooke, *Director of Administrative Services*

Sarah Nielsen, *Executive Director, Simsbury Main Street Partnership*

Hiram Peck, *Former Director of Community Planning and Development*

### Partial Term Members

Lisa Heavner, Christopher Meile, Derek Peterson, Eric Strayer

## MISSION STATEMENT

To examine the current status of economic development efforts in Simsbury and to provide specific insight and recommendations as to how to better coordinate all desirable economic development activities among all offices, boards, commissions and departments of the Town and all available entities outside the Town Hall.

## GOALS

**MARKETING:** Identify and review existing marketing pieces; speak with development community on marketing gaps; create action plan/budget for new/ revised marketing pieces. Look for ways the Economic Development Commission can strengthen and promote the Simsbury brand.

**PROCESS:** Evaluate the process from initial interest of a developer through completion of a successful project as well as staff/organizational roles; identify barriers to success as well as solutions to fix them.

**PROGRAMS:** Review all existing programs both locally and nationally that are used as a catalyst for economic development and identify those that would best fit Simsbury (tax incentives, abatements, infrastructure, etc.).

## CORE IDEA – The Foundation of the Brand

*Simsbury is a high value community. Quality of life is a chief attraction for people looking to move to Simsbury and a key reason current citizens stay – as well as our strongest asset for retaining and attracting businesses.*

## MARKETING GROUP

Jeff Dornenburg, *Chair*

## MARKETING GROUP GOALS

*Find ways to create and promote a fresh, competitive brand that reflects the vibrancy and quality of life in Simsbury – for the purpose of attracting and retaining businesses and residents.*

## TACTICS

### 1. Website

Simsbury's website, typically the first contact point, needs to compete with the best. Simsbury's website is the public face of the town. The new website will:

- improve navigation and ease of use
- present a more contemporary look
- focus on clarity and transparency
- make more information available online  
(current town website tends to drive to a phone call)

### 2. Create a library of new, high quality photos for ongoing use by the Town

- For immediate use on the redesigned Town website, the committee hired a professional photographer to photograph a specific list of Simsbury sites.
- To create an ongoing, sustainable library of photos, the Economic Development Commission will conduct an annual photo contest. As a condition of entry in the contest, all winning photos will release usage rights to the Town of Simsbury for web and other ongoing promotional use.

### 3. Refreshing the brand

Create unified look and message that ties in with the new website.

## WORK PRODUCT

Reviewed best practices in other municipal websites.

Nashville, TN



Cupertino, CA



San Diego, CA



Marlborough, MA

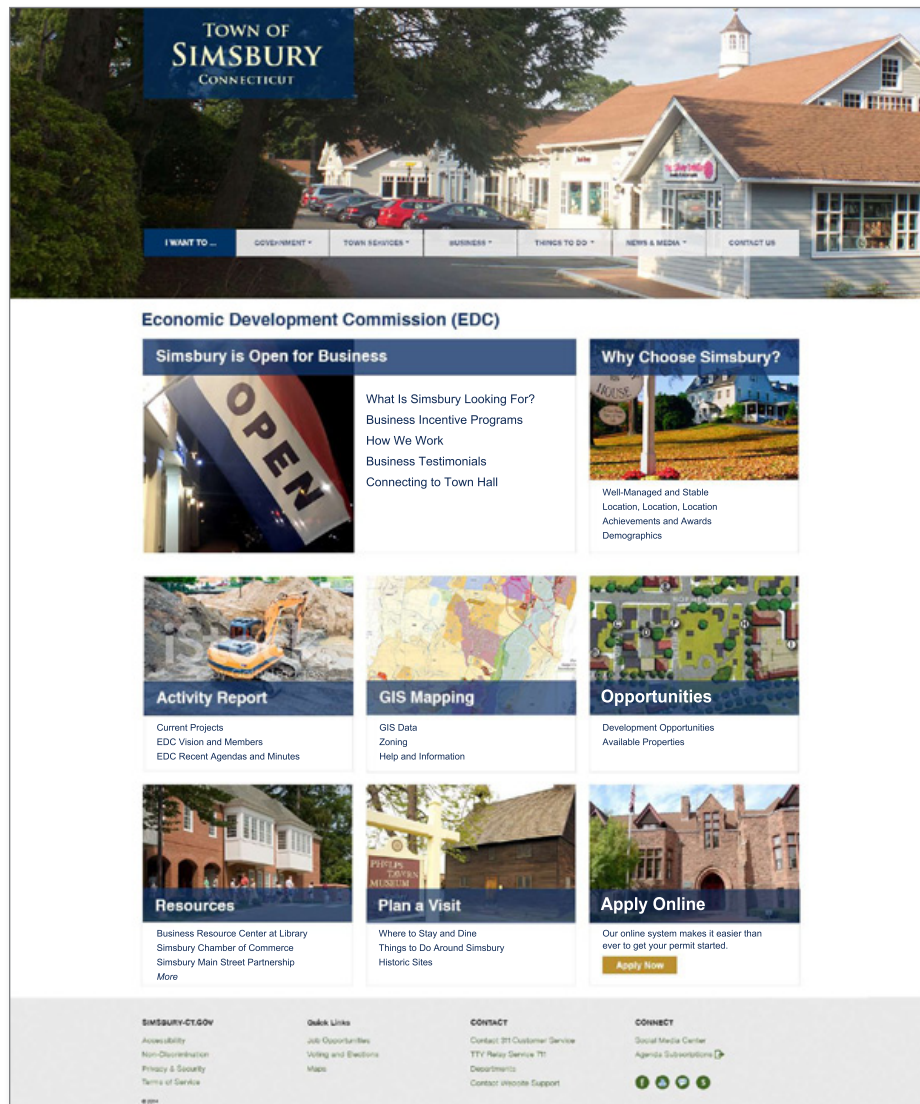





## WORK PRODUCT

Found a way to apply best practices and stay within extremely modest budget.

NEW EDC Webpage




## NEW Town Website Home Page



# TOWN OF SIMSBURY CONNECTICUT


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**Simsbury FARMERS' MARKET**  
*Buy CT Local • Buy CT Fresh*

**At the Green  
in Simsmore Square**  
540 Hopmeadow St, Simsbury

Open every Thursday  
through September 10, 2015  
3:00 - 6:00 PM




Meet First Selectman Lisa Heautier


Welcome to the Town of Simsbury website. Our goal is to provide you with easy access to up-to-date information about our town.

[Visit Lisa's page >](#)


### How can we help you?




Our Schools




Recreation




Library



GIS



Online Payments



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### August

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

[See All Events >](#)

### Town Calendar

[Board of Selectmen](#)  
January 26, 2015 - 7:00pm

[Planning Commission](#)  
January 27, 2015 - 7:00pm

[Historic Preservation Committee](#)  
January 29, 2015 - 4:00pm

[See All Events >](#)


### Simsbury News

[News Item 1](#)  
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing ...

[News Item 2](#)  
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[News Item 3](#)  
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Maecenas a risus justo ...

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Town of Simsbury CT, 933 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury CT 06070 PH: (860) 956-3200 FAX: (860) 956-3206

[Employee Login](#)

## CURRENT BRANDING DEVELOPED FOR SIMSBURY MAIN STREET PARTNERSHIP

“The Simsbury Main Street Partnership has already done some great work creating the ‘Simsbury Brand.’ Continue to build this brand...”

– Town of Simsbury, CT Economic Implementation & Marketing Action Study  
*Fairweather Consulting, October 2013*

Examples of old materials that will be updated to coordinate with the new Town website. These materials are currently out of date and out of stock.



## MARKETING GROUP NEXT STEPS

### **Website (ongoing)**

- Create new and simplified, customer-friendly content

### **Manage annual photo contest (ongoing)**

- Create a catalog of fresh web images
- Keep Economic Development Commission in the forefront of the Town brand

### **Refresh Branding (December 2015)**

- Re-work brand material created for Simsbury Main Street Partnership to fit color and messaging of the new town website. Brand materials and revised graphic standards will be available to use by the town as it chooses.

## PROGRAMS GROUP

Debra Bernard, *Chair*

## PROGRAMS GROUP GOALS

### **1. Economic Development Project Evaluation and Discussion Guide**

Develop a comprehensive roadmap by which to evaluate incoming projects for future development.

- Provides common language
- A consistent evaluation tool
- Transparency of expectations

### **2. Business Incentive Policy**

Enhance and improve incentives for high quality development consistent with town plan.

- Predictability as a competitive advantage
- Clarity and transparency
- Streamline and coordinate

**Economic Development Commission  
Project Evaluation & Discussion Guide**

**Project Name and File number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Owner/Developer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Contact Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

This Project Evaluation Discussion Guide is meant as an internal document to be used by the EDC to review new projects. The EDC may recommend applicants provide a one page summary that speaks to the questions below, describing the project overall. This summary can include information regarding anticipated benefits such as: jobs created and/or retained, housing units constructed, businesses relocated, anticipated usage (commercial, residential, retail, historic, civic, recreation). Alternative energy sources applied and historic or open space goals achieved will all be considered.

*The Guide serves as a framework to help objectively review the project based upon its economic contribution to the Town of Simsbury as well as compliance with the POCD, town ordinances and guidelines. Ranking is on a 1-5 scale with 5 being the highest. Ideally, this guideline provides a way to summarize the EDC members' thoughts for a possible letter of support by the EDC Chairperson.*

**I. ECONOMIC**

A. Does the project increase the Municipal Grand list (provide net real property tax revenue)?

Lowest					Highest	N/A	Comment
1	2	3	4	5		_____	

A1. What are the additional expenses that are required for this development? \_\_\_\_\_

B. Does this project add, or encourage retention, to the job base?

Lowest					Highest	N/A	Comment
1	2	3	4	5		_____	

B1 Number of jobs \_\_\_\_\_ Permanent \_\_\_\_\_

B2 Quality/level of jobs \_\_\_\_\_

C. How does this site contribute to the Civic and Recreational aspects of Simsbury?

Lowest					Highest	N/A	Comment
1	2	3	4	5		_____	

D. Does this development create a new viable business or commercial environment?

Lowest					Highest	N/A	Comment
1	2	3	4	5		_____	

E. What is the impact on traffic, public safety, and education?

Lowest					Highest	N/A	Comment
1	2	3	4	5		_____	

F. Is the infrastructure in place for the proposed development, or will it require water or sewer expansion to accommodate it?

Lowest					Highest	N/A	Comment
1	2	3	4	5		_____	

G. How would this project impact abutting and/or property values?

Lowest					Highest	N/A
1	2	3	4	5		

Comment

## II. DESIGN

H. Reflects the overarching guidelines contained in other studies which have been done and adopted by the relevant Board or Commission (for example: the June, 2010 charrette; the Weatogue area study; the Fairweather Marketing document; and the Rte. 10/202 Corridor study).

Lowest					Highest	N/A
1	2	3	4	5		

Comment

I. If there is a historic element, then does the project work to preserve this historic building, site or monument?

Lowest					Highest	N/A
1	2	3	4	5		

Comment

J. Is the project walkable (or walkable within) and promote living or viability of the town center or village centers (West Simsbury, Weatogue, Tariffville or North Village)?

Lowest					Highest	N/A
1	2	3	4	5		

Comment

K. Will open space or recreational lands be positively impacted?

Lowest					Highest	N/A
1	2	3	4	5		

Comment

L. How does the project promote smart growth, sustainability and resiliency?

Lowest					Highest	N/A
1	2	3	4	5		

Comment

M. How energy efficient and/or environmentally sensitive is this project?

Lowest					Highest	N/A
1	2	3	4	5		

Comment

M1. Will you pursue: ☐ LEED certification ☐ Green Globes ☐ NGBS What level? \_\_\_\_\_

## III. COMPLIANCE

N. Consistent with the adopted Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).

Lowest					Highest	N/A
1	2	3	4	5		

Comment

O. Consistent with the adopted Guidelines for Community Design.

Lowest					Highest	N/A
1	2	3	4	5		

Comment

P. Comply with the established and adopted principles of Low Impact Development (LID).

Lowest					Highest	N/A
1	2	3	4	5		

Comment



## **Glossary of Terms for the Economic Development Project Evaluation and Discussion Guide**

**Civic Aspects:** Those aspects of a project which have a public benefit component.

**Recreational Aspects:** Aspects of a project which provide or compliment either active or passive recreation use.

**Town Center Charrette 2010:** Town Center study which established the current form-based (zoning) code.

**Weatogue Area Study:** A planning study (not complete in 2015) which examines land use and potential in Weatogue from Route 185 to Powder Forest Drive.

**Fairweather Marketing Study:** A comprehensive marketing study of which this was Phase 1. Recommends establishment of Simsbury as a high quality development town.

**Rte. 10/202 Corridor Study:** DOT/CRCOG/Town Traffic corridor study which planned for the ultimate build out of Hopmeadow Street maintaining 2 lanes to the extent possible.

**Historic Preservation:** The desired goal of preserving the historic, built character of Simsbury whenever/wherever feasible.

**Walkable:** Planning or construction which facilitates pedestrian connections between and among a variety of destinations.

**Open Space:** A space, whether large or small, which provides the feeling to the observer of a tranquil, picturesque experience, typically with a calming effect.

**Smart Growth:** Development which typically contains components of social, environmental and economic benefit concurrently.

**Sustainability:** The potential for a development to continue to contribute to the long term viability of the community in as many of the aspects of smart growth as possible.

**Resiliency:** The ability for a situation or development to recover based on its degree of sustainability. A higher level of sustainability in that long term recovery is built into its design.

**Energy Efficient:** A development or design which has been organized so as to take into account ways to conserve energy in its long and short term operation.

**Environmentally Sensitive:** A development or plan which specifically considers its potential impact on the land, water and air resources of the area and the community.

**LEED Certification:** Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design is one of several commercial certification programs aimed at energy conservation aspects of development.

**Green Globes:** A commercial building certificate program aimed at high-quality energy efficient design and construction.

**GBS:** National Green Building Standard is a program designed for taring residential green construction.

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**Statement of Purpose  
for the  
Simsbury Business Incentive Program**

In an ongoing effort to attract, retain and expand local businesses, the Town of Simsbury has adopted an incentive and abatement program. Created in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes 12-65b and 12-65h, the program allows the Town to enter into written agreements with owners and/or lessees of certain real property where targeted businesses are located or could be properly located in accordance with adopted plans in certain locations in Simsbury.

The decision to approve a request for tax abatement or any benefit described in this Policy is within the sole and exclusive discretion of the Simsbury Board of Selectmen. The filing of an application under this Policy or any recommendation of the Business development Committee or any other Town Agency is not binding on the Board of Selectmen and creates no rights for the applicant or any obligation for the Town.

*This Business Incentive Program is completely separate from the statutorily required local land use approval process.*

**ADOPTED 6/22/15**  
**Resolution Regarding the Establishment of a**  
**Business Development Incentive Policy**  
**("the Policy")**

**WHEREAS**, The Board of Selectmen of the Town of Simsbury seeks to encourage the growth and expansion of resident businesses as well as the initial location of specific types of businesses within the Town of Simsbury; and

**WHEREAS**, to help accomplish this goal the Town of Simsbury, acting through its Board of Selectmen, hereby establishes a process to take advantage of available economic development incentives as found permissible by the Connecticut General Statutes, and

**WHEREAS**, the Town may offer qualified applicants temporary tax abatement pursuant to CGS § 12-65b. and § 12-65h., and

**WHEREAS**, the Town may also offer applicants other incentives as included herein if the proposed new development or expanded existing development are deemed to be in the best interests of the Town as described in this Policy, and

**WHEREAS**, the Town acting through the Business Development Committee (BDC) will review specific business development incentives on a case-by-case basis and will base the decision to grant any incentives to any specific project applicant on the requirements of this adopted policy and the overall best interests of the Town based on the required application materials, and

**WHEREAS**, in the event of unusual or extraordinary circumstances presented in writing by the applicant, the Business Development Committee may recommend to the Board of Selectmen approval of the waiver, if requested in writing by the applicant, of any requirement contained in the Policy so long as the development is found to be consistent with the stated goals and objectives of Simsbury's adopted economic development plans.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the following program of incentives is hereby adopted and shall be implemented as indicated hereafter:

### **THE TYPES OF BUSINESSES or INDUSTRIES TARGETED BY THIS POLICY:**

The Business Development Incentive Policy Program will be used to target the following types of high quality businesses that generate substantial tax revenue to the Town of Simsbury:

1. Corporate headquarters and satellite offices
2. Retail uses
3. Campus-style office development
4. Research and development and high technology and information technology facilities, especially those which are environmentally sustainable.
5. Manufacturing facilities as defined in Chapter 588 of CGS. (CGS 12-81, Subdivision 72 defines mfg. facilities.)
6. Existing Simsbury business expansion as defined in §12-65b(b). including office use, retail use, permanent residential use, transient residential use, manufacturing use, warehouse, storage or distribution use , structured multilevel parking use necessary possibly in connection with a mass transit system, information technology, recreation facilities, transportation facilities, or mixed- use development as defined in Section 8-13m. In order to be eligible the business use must be consistent with the list of types of businesses or industries targeted by this Policy (on Page 3).
7. Mixed Use Development which contains at least 25% of its floor area designated for commercial use if combined with a specific plan for the timely, acceptable, sequential development of the entire site and located in the Simsbury Town Center Code area, and existing area zoned for business use, an approved Planned Area Development (PAD) Zone or in an established Village District.
8. New or existing recreational or entertainment businesses which are in keeping with an adopted goal or plan.

### **The Town is interested in attracting sustainable businesses which will:**

1. Generate additional tax revenue through real estate and/or personal property taxes
2. Provide lasting employment opportunities.
3. Provide high quality goods and services
4. Improve the aesthetics of the community or a particular area of the community so designated for such development.
5. Occupy, use and/or preserve a historic site.
6. Provide desirable recreational and entertainment opportunities.

**The following types of enterprises shall receive priority in consideration for recommendation for abatement or incentives as outlined in this policy:**

1. Those within targeted locations as identified in this Policy, the current Comprehensive Plan or adopted Economic Development Plan.
2. Those proposing a project that forwards a stated goal or objective which will bring about a substantial, positive impact on the Grand List.
  - a. For new businesses a substantial impact will be defined as contributing at least an additional one and one-half (1.5) million dollars in real estate value to the grand list.
  - b. For those businesses that are expanding and meet the above criteria as defined and contributing a minimum *increase* of one (1) million dollars in real estate value to the grand list or an *increase* of 50% of the current real estate value, whichever is greater.

**TAX ABATEMENT SCHEDULE\***

<b>Minimum Investment</b>	<b>Period of Abatement Not More than</b>
<b>(1) Not less than \$3 Million</b>	<b>7 years</b>
<b>(2) \$500,000 - \$2,999,999</b>	<b>2 years</b>
<b>(3) Equal to 50% of the increase in the assessment</b>	<b>3 years</b>
<b>(4) For retail businesses: To be set by Ordinance</b>	<b>To be set by Ordinance</b>

\* Maximum abatement possible, may not be granted for all applications. Percentage abatement applies to the increase in assessment. (example: 50%/40%/30%)

\* Varies based on specifics of application and determination of positive contribution to town.

**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE GUIDELINES:**

**Overview and Background:**

- A. The objective of offering a tax abatement or business development incentive as stated in the Purpose above is to encourage the attraction or expansion of specific types of businesses through the establishment of a public/private partnership, which results in growth expansion consistent with the Town of Simsbury's adopted plans, codes or regulations.
- B. Any proposed abatements or incentives are subject to final approval by the Board of Selectmen after referral to the BOS by the Business Development Committee.
- C. The Board of Selectman, in adopting these incentive guidelines hereby establishes the following objectives consistent with adopted plans and sound economic growth.

The project must:

1. Provide a clear benefit to the Town as determined by:
  - a. Staff review of application facts and completeness, based on program policy, objectives and guidelines, and
  - b. Recommendation of the Business Development Committee, and
  - c. Approval of the Board of Selectmen.
2. Create substantial, long term tax base growth.
3. Provide stimulation of the local economic conditions for existing businesses, and the development of future related or unrelated industry groups.
4. Accomplish community goals as stated in the current Comprehensive Plan, Plan of Conservation and Development or adopted economic development plan.
5. Must have a solid financial base and growth potential as determined by the Director of Finance.
6. Have parent or subsidiaries of businesses which are the subject of or connected to such applications which must have a satisfactory record of environmental compliance as may be documented, or not, by Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP).

**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:**

1. The proposed project is a permitted use, or may be permitted by the Zoning Commission through a process established in the Simsbury Zoning Regulations. If rezoning is required, the abatement/incentive may be conditional.
2. Delinquency in any fees or taxes that have not been waived and that are otherwise due to the Town of Simsbury from the applicant or any related entity shall render the applicant and application ineligible.
3. If the end user of the proposed facility is a lessee, tax benefits must be clearly reflected in the lease as accruing to the Applicant entity for at least the term of the abatement period.
4. Applicant must not be in violation of any law, regulation or agreement with town, state or federal government, notwithstanding any tax lien with governmental forbearance.
5. Applicants must be committed to make a significant investment in new or renovated real property in Simsbury.
6. Applicant's project must provide new employment opportunities or enhancement to the tax base or encourage technological innovation and/or investment and address a goal(s) or objective identified in the Town's adopted plans.
7. A statement is to be provided by the applicant as to the ownership structure of the real property, personal property and operating company including information as to the ownership of any applicable subsidiary companies.
8. There is a firm commitment to remain in the Town beyond the length of the abatement or other incentive period, if applicable.
9. All tax obligations to the Town by the applicant must be current except in the case when the applicant is seeking approval to purchase existing tax liens.

10. The project should meet goals and objectives identified in the adopted Plan of Conservation and Development and the adopted 1995 Economic Development Strategic Plan as it may be amended.
11. An agreement entered into pursuant to this Policy shall not be subject to assignment, transfer, or sale without the written consent of the Simsbury Board of Selectmen.
12. After approval of an application by the Board of Selectmen and approval of a final site plan by the Simsbury Zoning Commission, construction shall commence within twelve (12) months and shall be completed within twenty-four (24) months unless otherwise extended by the Board of Selectmen in its sole discretion.
13. In the event that the applicant, during the period of its participation in this program:
  - a. relocates its business from Simsbury,
  - b. becomes delinquent in taxes or fees,
  - c. closes its operation, or
  - d. declares bankruptcy,

then any tax abatement or incentive benefit enjoyed by the applicant under this program shall be forfeited and the applicant shall be required to pay back all taxes that would have been assessed had the applicant not participated in the program.

14. If benefits were obtained fraudulently, the town may pursue any recourse allowed by law including prosecution and obtaining penalty fees.

#### **TYPES OF ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE:**

**Tax Abatement:** The assessment of the real property and all improvements to be constructed thereon may be reduced for a period of time and under the conditions set forth in the above information chart.

The period of reduced assessment shall commence with the Grand List immediately following the issuance of a final certificate of occupancy for the new or expanded construction and upon the execution of an agreement satisfactory to the Town Attorney that will set the terms and conditions of the abatement/incentive based on the established parameters.

#### **Waiving or Reduction of Any Town Permit Fees for targeted businesses and industries:**

The BDC Committee may recommend to the Board of Selectmen waiver of up to 50% of any Town permit fees or a smaller portion of such fee upon request and determination that such a fee waiver would encourage the development or expansion of quality businesses especially those of the targeted industries. The Board of Selectmen may upon recommendation of the BDC agree to waive a portion up to 50% of the entire fee as it may determine necessary to encourage the desirable development. The development must have been determined to meet the applicable desirable criteria as outlined herein. The Town and the applicant shall enter into an agreement which will set forth the terms and conditions based upon the established guidelines. The agreement shall be approved by the Town Attorney.

### **Infrastructure Rebate Program:**

An applicant who is applying for a complying new or expanded existing business development that meets the criteria herein may also apply for a partial rebate for infrastructure which is located in the public right of way and approved by the appropriate Town Departments, Town Engineer, and the Board of Selectmen for the construction of infrastructure which the Town Engineer determines will serve a valid public purpose, be in the best long term interest of the Town and may also, in certain developments, clearly contribute to the creation of a more walkable, sustainable community. Note that only improvements that are public and are constructed in the public right of way are eligible for any potential rebate. Parking facilities, for example, which are available to the public may be determined to be eligible for this program.

The percentage rebate which may be applied to any given development under this infrastructure rebate program is to be determined and recommended by the Town Engineer. The maximum percentage of rebate is to be 50% of the cost as determined acceptable by the Town Engineer. Certification of actual cost shall be made to the satisfaction of the Town Engineer. The actual approval of the infrastructure rebate including percentage shall be determined by the Board of Selectmen and also be based on available funding.

### **Application Requirements and Procedures:**

1. Applications shall be made to the Director of Planning and Community Development.
2. Applications shall be reviewed by the First Selectman.
3. Applications shall be referred to the Director of Finance.
4. Applications shall contain at least the information specified herein as required by this policy.
5. For purposes of reviewing these Applications, there is established a **Business Development Committee (BDC)**. The Committee shall consist of five (5) members. The First Selectman shall serve as the Chairperson of the Committee. The remaining four (4) members of the Committee shall be appointed by the First Selectman and one member shall be chosen from each of the then existing membership of the Economic Development Commission, the Board of Finance and the Zoning Commission. The remaining member of the Committee shall be chosen at large.
6. The First Selectman shall refer applications that meet the minimum requirements as set forth in this document to the BDC for consideration and recommendation to the Board of Selectmen.
7. Upon receipt of a complete Application the BDC shall report the findings and recommendations of the Committee to the Board of Selectmen for action.



## **APPLICATION PROCEDURE:**

### **STEP 1:**

Applicant submits a written report, application and Economic Development Impact Statement to the Director of Planning, who will then suggest to the BDC, a Business Development Incentive, based on the report, the development's direct and indirect economic and fiscal impacts and compliance with the overall Business Development Policy.

The applicant's request should include at least the following types of information:

1. Specific Assistance Requested and rationale for the request.
  - a. Tax assessment reduction specifics on a year to year basis, estimated as closely as possible.
  - b. Waiving or reduction of any Town permit fee, specifying the amount of requested waiver
  - c. Any infrastructure rebate request specifically the amount of request with all construction details.
2. Description of the project including an estimate of the number of jobs to be created and their wages.
3. Description of the applicant's business including a listing of its officers.
4. Description of the application and its products or services.
5. An estimate of the value of the proposed improvements.
6. An estimate of employment provided, full-time and part-time.
6. An anticipated project construction schedule.
7. Identification of any other public incentives, financial or otherwise, which have been requested and are included in the project financing.
8. A statement of the benefits to the Town for granting an incentive including an estimate of local taxes to be paid on a year to year basis for as long as the requested incentive lasts.
9. All other information requested by the BDC and /or per the Minimum Criteria/Information of this Policy.

### **STEP 2:**

1. The Planning Director shall refer the application to the Business Development Committee (BDC) for review and recommendation to the Board of Selectmen.
2. The BDC shall review and discuss the application. Questions of fact shall be answered by the applicant or the Director of Planning.

### **STEP 3:**

The BDC shall make a recommendation to the BOS on the application.

**STEP 4:**

Upon preliminary approval by the Board of Selectmen and at the direction of the First Selectman, the Planning Director and if applicable, the Town Engineer, will work with the applicant, and the Town Attorney to draft a legal contract that assures that all provisions of the Business Development Incentive program as preliminarily approved by the BOS will be met. Contract details will be on a case by case basis depending on the project specifics.

**STEP 5:**

In order for the incentives to become official, the Board of Selectmen must approve the final Business Development Incentive(s) in contract form by majority vote.

**STEP 6.**

The BOS shall also authorize the First Selectman to sign the proposed contract once approved as to form by the Town Attorney.

Appendix A

**Application Minimum Requirements:**

**Does the application contain:**

YES

NO

<b>Specific assistance requested:</b>		
a. Tax abatment		
b. Reduction of Fees		
c. Infrastructure rebate		
<b>Project Description.</b>		
<b>Description of Business.</b>		
<b>Description of application products &amp; services.</b>		
<b>Est value of proposed improvements.</b>		
<b>Employment to provided (Estimated or Actual).</b>		
a. Full time (by year)		
b. Part time (by year)		
<b>Estimated project relocation or construction schedule.</b>		
<b>Other requested incentives.</b>		
<b>Statement of benefits to Town.</b>		
<b>All other requested info.</b>		

## PROGRAMS GROUP NEXT STEPS

### **1. Economic Development Project Evaluation and Discussion**

#### **Guide/Glossary of Terms**

- Re-present Guide and Glossary of Terms to the Economic Development Commission (EDC) to ensure consistent review of projects.
- Make documents available to developer prior to presenting to the EDC to make certain the transparency of expectations.
- EDC should establish the regular review of the Guide and Glossary, and update as needed.

### **2. The Business Incentive Policy (BIP)**

- Consider appropriate mechanism and level of funding for the infrastructure fund in the 2016/2017 budget.
- Establish a regular review of the policy conducted by Business Development Committee – with continued consideration of state and national programs.
- Develop communications targeting key business publications, both in print and online, such that potential decision makers are aware of the new policy.

# PROCESS GROUPS

Wayne Cobleigh, *Chair*

## PROCESS GROUP GOAL

*Create and sustain an efficient land use permit application process.*

### **Land Use Process:**

1. Consolidate Planning and Zoning Commissions.
2. Optimize sequencing of Board and Commission meetings.

### **Staffing:**

3. Emphasize economic development as a priority and a primary focus of the Town of Simsbury; supplement staffing for building and planning departments; the Economic Development Commission should operate as function of chief executive of town.

### **Commission/Board Members:**

4. Create an orientation and continuous education process for commission members.
5. Emphasize importance qualifying elected or appointed officials.
6. Include clear summary of commission member's voting records.

**Town of Simsbury Economic Development Task Force – Process Working Group Recommendations  
September 8, 2015**

**Members:** Wayne Cobleigh, Kevin Crimmins, Bill Ethier, Louis George, Ron Jodice

**Staff:** Hiram Peck, Sarah Nielsen, Nancy Haase

**Process Working Group Priority Action:** Create and Sustain an Efficient Land Use Permit Application Process

**Preface**

Simsbury competes for economic development against formidable challenges from regional, statewide, national and even global alternatives. Economic development involves both the attraction of new investors into the local economy and the retention of those who already have invested in the Town. Capital flows most readily to the path of least resistance when the rewards are acceptable for the risks of investing that capital. Accordingly, some of the most important things that the Town can do to improve its effectiveness at economic development and its permitting and decision making processes involve the removal of impediments to sound investments in our Town.

The Economic Development Commission is charged, by the Town's Charter, with supporting and encouraging growth of the Town's Grand List. By statute, the adopted plans and regulations including the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) provide documentation of the Town's vision for the types of land uses that it views as desirable. As such these adopted plans and regulations serve as a useful guide to all who have an interest in development regarding the sorts of development that might be considered appropriate and be met with support.

Economic development activity almost invariably includes projects and other plans that require review and approval by the Town's various boards and commissions, especially those focused on land use. Every opportunity to enhance those boards and commissions' reputations for efficiency, preparation and fairness is an opportunity to enhance the Town's competitiveness in economic and community development.

With those ideas as guideposts, this Process Workgroup set out to identify opportunities for improvements, adjustments and enhancements to the process of efficiently bringing forward any project or other initiative related to economic development in Simsbury. All the great branding and marketing work that's been done, from updating the web site to the messaging about what Simsbury has to offer entrepreneurs, employers and job creators, will be wasted if an applicant, i.e., an investor, experiences: A) a difficult, lengthy or confusing process, or B) staff that cannot impress them with service, or C) disrespectful or unprepared commission members who ultimately decide an applicant's future.

Through a lengthy review, evaluation and discussion process, the Group has identified three major areas of focus and a total of six (6) specific recommendations. The areas of focus are listed here, for reference, and the recommendations are presented and discussed in detail below, grouped by area of focus.

- A. Land Use Process, Structure, Sequence of Steps
- B. Staffing, and
- C. Commission Members

**Process Working Group Recommendations**

**A. Land Use Process, Structure, Sequence of Steps:**

1. **Revise the Town Charter to consolidate the Planning Commission and Zoning Commission.** Consolidation will improve the efficiency of communications, eliminate delays caused by referrals to separate commissions, enhance the depth of qualified candidates for elected positions and streamline the land use process as well as improve staff efficiency. Combining Planning & Zoning into one body will help meet investor's expectations for a simplified process with as few steps as possible.

*Next Steps:* Analyze information available from the Connecticut Economic Resources Center regarding which municipalities similar in population to Simsbury have combined Planning and Zoning Commissions and determine whether their results have included improving competitiveness, reducing turnover of members and any other advantages or disadvantages. Benchmark nearby municipalities of Avon, Farmington and Windsor for the impact of establishing a combined Planning and Zoning Commission. Review the Town Charter to assess a call for a Charter revision to establish responsibilities and procedures for Commissions and Boards being evaluated for consolidation.

2. **Optimize the sequencing of Board and Commission meetings to maximize efficiency of the process for applicants.** Where possible, meeting schedules should support a logical flow of the groups whose review is necessary for land use applications. An optimal sequence will avoid unnecessary delays for applicants. Included in the review: the Inland Wetlands Commission, Planning and Zoning Commissions, Economic Development Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Water Pollution Control Authority and Design Review Board. Evaluate the application sequence impact of the Farmington Valley Health Department and Fire District. The Design Review Board meeting at the same hearing as the Zoning Commission is a current example of streamlining in action. Pre-application Review meetings requested by applicants for a complex project is also a method to streamline the application process. Likewise, accommodating requests from applicants for joint hearings or meetings, or both, among two or more boards and commissions could make the application process more efficient for all parties involved.

*Next Steps:* Define optimal sequencing of Town Board and Commission meetings to support efficient movement of projects and applications through the approvals process. To the extent that the current meeting schedules may be inconsistent with that optimal flow, adjust schedules to align with the optimal sequence.

**B. Staffing:**

3. **Emphasize economic development as a priority and a primary focus of the Town of Simsbury:**
  - a. **Supplement the staffing for both the building department and the planning department.** These departments both report current workloads which exceed the capacity of their current staffing to handle with the desired level of efficiency. Presently, each reports that an additional part-time person would be sufficient to balance their workloads. These two new part-time roles could be consolidated into one full-



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time, cross-trained staff position. This staff expansion can be expected to improve customer service to Applicants proposing business expansion projects or new economic development projects.

- b. **The Economic Development Commission should operate as a function of the chief executive officer of the Town.** The chief executive officer should be the primary contact responsible for economic development and for supporting the EDC as it facilitates the economic development process from lead generation to preparation of letters of support to applicants. Presently, the EDC operates primarily with guidance from the Town Planner. This change not only will bring the influence and authority of the chief executive officer to the important function of economic development, it also will create efficiencies for the Town Planner and enable the Town Planner to focus more on community development and planning responsibilities. In addition, it aligns a primary duty for economic development with the chief executive officer. Economic development leadership and staffing decisions will be the responsibility of the chief executive officer. The chief executive officer is also the appropriate level of staff responsibility for directing the implementation of approved Economic Development Task Force recommendations with the overall goal to achieve consistent and excellent customer service for applicants. Simsbury needs to stand out from other municipalities as a Town with excellent service by employees, boards and commissions who are well educated on the permit process and who respect the applicant's interests in efficiency and cost-effectiveness. The chief executive officer should regularly report the status and progress on any economic development initiatives to the Board of Selectmen and the public. The chief executive officer should determine how to effectively balance responsibility and accountability for business retention and economic development growth within the total responsibilities of his or her job. Administrative functions and technical matters can be delegated to the appropriate staff. The chief executive officer answering introductory calls from prospective businesses and directing these prospects as appropriate to the EDC, boards and commissions will reinforce that Simsbury welcomes responsible economic development. The chief executive officer should continue the business visitation program and inform prospective applicants of his or her position on economic development matters on the Town's web site inviting prospective applicants to call with their questions, concerns or compliments. The chief executive officer should maintain a high level of awareness of matters relevant to economic development leadership and seek opportunities to make presentations on economic development to prospective real estate developers and corporate siting professionals.

*Next Steps:* Plan accordingly for staffing requests in the annual budget approval process.

**C. Commission Members:**

4. **Create an orientation and continuous education process and access to tools and resources to enable Commissioners and Board members to be knowledgeable in their roles and responsibilities and well-prepared. In all endeavors, professions and trades, continuous learning is essential to achieving excellence and adapting to changes.** Actively oriented members will differentiate Simsbury and allow us to better compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as an equitable and efficient place for community development, business

**Town of Simsbury Economic Development Task Force – Process Working Group Recommendations  
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retention and growth. Budgeting for reimbursement and funding of orientation and continuous education out of pocket and travel expenses by the Town for elected and appointed board and commission members will be an investment that reinforces the Town's values of educational excellence, our reputation for responsible land use. The investment in the education of appointed and elected officials also benefits the Town financially by reducing the potential for litigation for claims and losses due to negligence, errors and omissions in processing land use permit applications.

**The primary areas identified for orientation include:**

- a) Robert's Rules for conducting meetings, voting and recording of minutes and the role of the chairman and public participation.
- b) Freedom of Information Act Statutes.
- c) The current land use process including CGS 8-7(d) and any changes to the regulatory process.
- d) Civics with an emphasis on federal, state and local government land use regulations and how the State judicial branch of government functions in an appeal of a permit application decision.
- e) The land use applicant's responsibilities, their use of experts and their basic property rights.
- f) A general understanding of the real estate development process, including an overview of project financing, other approval timelines, the importance for the applicant of meeting the market, and how delays can cause proposals to fail.
- g) An understanding of the importance of a commissioner's civic duties, including maintaining monthly meetings throughout the year.

Orientation and continuous education can be conducted on dates when meetings are scheduled to efficiently complete the orientation (including land use commissions, Town Staff, EDC, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Water Pollution Control Authority).

**Orientation and continuous education resources are available to Simsbury to invest in our Boards and Commissioners, as follows:**

The State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management Report dated January 13, 2006, "**Land Use Training and Education Available to Members of Local Land Use Agencies**" (in Accordance With Section 85 of Public Act No. 05-3) summarizes a series of ad hoc orientation opportunities available in Connecticut. Orientation resources are available from the University of Connecticut (available in 2015 free of charge and locally with technology that allows for answering test questions real time and anonymously as a class), Connecticut Bar Association, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, Connecticut Main Street Center, Connecticut Association of Inland Wetland Commissioners, The American Planning Association, The Connecticut Economic Development Association, The International Council of Shopping Centers University and others. The Connecticut Partnership for Balanced Growth, a 501(c)(4) nonprofit, can offer orientation on the land developers' perspective when selecting property to develop and the process developers go through to develop a land use application through public hearings and implementation.

**Benefits of a proactive orientation and continuous education program:**

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- a) Reduce costs to the Town and time invested by the Town staff, Town Attorney, Commissioners and Chairpersons, applicants and the public by having fewer and more productive hearings and meetings resulting from better prepared Commissioners.
- b) Enable Commissioners to better prepare themselves for carrying out their responsibilities at each meeting and interaction with Applicants.
- c) Reduce exposure to litigation risks to the Town due to errors or omissions in following the administrative hearing process, state law or Town regulations.
- d) Improve the applicant's and public's confidence and trust in the integrity of the land use permit process for the benefit of the community.
- e) Optimize opportunities to grow the Town's Grand List.
- f) Enhance compliance with Section 85 of Public Act No. 05-3 and a complimentary component to the state planning requirements established under Public Act No. 05-205. These Acts strive to enhance the role of Municipal Plans of Conservation and Development, and to improve the vertical integration of such plans with their regional plan and the State Plan of Conservation and Development. Further efforts to improve the statewide coordination of land use orientation programs for local land use agencies will have a commensurate positive benefit on the quality and effectiveness of municipal plans of conservation and development.
- g) Written guidance materials and videos would help prepare elected officials prior to nomination (see recommendation 5 below) through orientation or onboarding and annually thereafter during their term. The orientation would supplement the nomination's vetting process and enhance the responsibilities of political parties and Commissioners.

*Next Steps:* Recommend specific alternatives for orientation and continuous education programs and options for funding by the Town for program fees and travel expenses by commissioners and board members.

- 5. **Emphasize the importance of the process for qualifying elected or appointed officials.** Remind the Town's political party committees and other appointing authorities of the importance of the roles and responsibilities of land use commission members and the level of commitment, knowledge and education needed for commission members. Outline the tools and resources for orientation available to nominees from the very beginning of the "onboarding" process.
- 6. **Include a clear summary of the Commissioners' voting record as part of recording the minutes of meetings consistent with Roberts Rules of Order.** This will make the voting records of the land use commissioners fully transparent to voters. To facilitate this objective, the meeting clerk should conduct a roll call of every vote taken regarding delay, approval or denial of a permit application and include each member's roll call vote in the meeting minutes consistent with Robert's Rules of Order using an Excel form that accurately tallies attendance and the voting records. Each commission would then have a continuously updated record of each such recorded roll call vote. Thus, a complete voting record for board and commission members would be readily available for reference by any interested person. This group recommends the format attached as a simple, standard method for the recording of roll call votes by any and all Town of Simsbury boards and commissions.

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**Benefits of a more transparent roll call voting record:**

1. Improve accountability of elected and officials to voters and those responsible for nominations or appointments of commission members for their full term of public service.
2. Simsbury gains a competitive advantage in attracting applications for responsible economic development consistent with our Town's stated vision and plans, and in compliance with applicable land use laws.
3. Clarity and transparency reinforces our brand because permit process efficiency, accountability and continuous improvement are built into our land use process.

*Next Steps:* Review the Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised 10<sup>th</sup> Edition regarding roll call votes and the July 1, 2009 memorandum by Hiram Peck to Mary Glassman regarding Land Use Commission, Board and Agency Meeting Minutes. Develop a user friendly, Excel spreadsheet standard template form for use on roll call votes by all boards and commissions that addresses seated and recused commissioners and board members. Adoption of the vote recording policy, the criteria for which votes should be roll call votes and standard format for reporting roll call votes will need to be reviewed and addressed by the Board of Selectmen.

**Town of Simsbury Economic Development Task Force – Process Working Group Recommendations  
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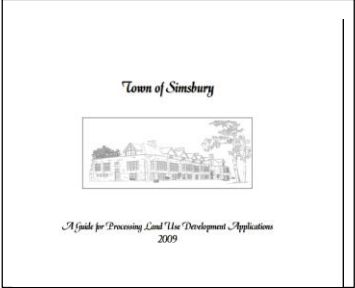
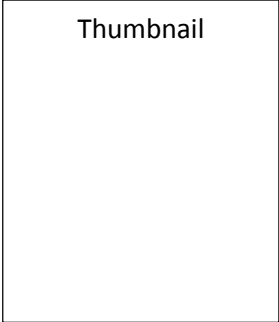
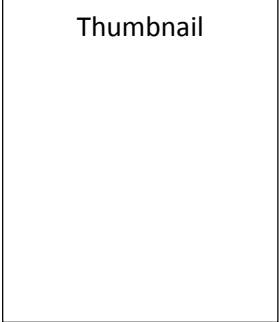
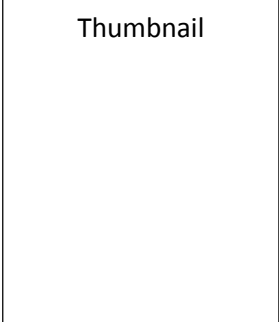
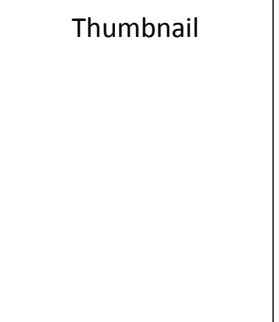
**Resources Reviewed and Discussed by the Process Group**

1. **An Economic Implementation & Marketing Action Study** (Fairweather Consulting and Peter Mathieu & Associates): Shift-Share Analysis on page 7 shows need for improving local competitiveness to attract positive industry mix and positive local share to overcome lack of highway access and leverage proximity to airport. Opportunities exist in niche manufacturing, Jackson lab support services, specialty retail, tourism, hospitality, recreation, and mixed use developments (page 11). This study noted Simsbury's positive economic development asset as "capacity for expedited approvals" based on Planned Area Development of Simsbury Center Code effective April 15, 2011 (Page 21) and high quality of life in the Knowledge Corridor region. The report also noted "a model planning and approval process" as a factor for "real potential for high-end, innovation-driven development." (page 24) The report indicated the community inherently seeks to continuously improve everything, [as examples]: regulations, Main Street."
2. **A Guide for Processing Land Use Development Applications 2009** (25 pages), Notice of Meetings for Regular, Special and Emergency Meetings (1 page).
3. **Draft May 12, 2014 Application Flow Charts** Pages 59-63 outlining Pre-Submittal Process and Formal Submittal Process.
4. **Town of Simsbury Organizational Chart revised March 27, 2014**
5. **Economic Development Strategic Action Plan (Pages 50-105) approved by EDC on 12/4/95** with 4 initiatives including a Goal **"to develop public/private partnerships and advocate a process for continuous improvement and create a better atmosphere for economic development to take place."** (Page 55). "It is recommended that the Board of Selectmen issue a mandate (Executive Order) to instill the continuous improvement process in the operations of the Town of Simsbury." **Strategy 1:** Create and implement an internal "customer-service oriented" operations plan developed by Town officials and employees, that focuses on improving customer satisfaction and on providing user-friendly, **streamlined processes in support of economic development activities."** (Page 56)
6. **Report of the Joint Committee on Economic Development, Report to the Economic Development Commission, September 2001 (Pages 5- 6) Summary of Recommendations "Training : Provision that the Town find relevant training for all volunteers serving on boards and commissions** combining presentations whenever applicable. In turn, volunteers will provide information to staff regarding perspectives on the [land use permit] approval process.
7. **Charter of the Town of Simsbury Section 610 Economic Development Commission (terms and appointment) and Section 7-136 (a) through (d) of the Connecticut General Statutes regarding Municipal Economic Development Commissions.** Simsbury has flexibility to reduce term limits to less than 5 years to attract EDC members and can **annually** appropriate for the EDC purposes a sum not exceeding one-twentieth of one percent of the last-completed grand list of taxable property.

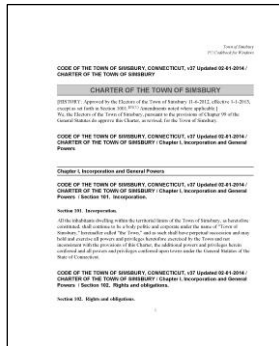
**Town of Simsbury Economic Development Task Force – Process Working Group Recommendations  
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8. **Report on Land Use Training and Education Available to Members of Local Land Use Agencies by State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management dated January 13, 2006.** This report recommends:
  - a. Support land use education through strengthening of existing efforts, rather than creating or mandating new programs or entities.
  - b. Support and strengthen the Land Use Education Partnership as the best vehicle for “basic training” of local land use officials.
  - c. Regional Planning Organizations should continue to work with their member municipalities to ensure that the Partnership training is conducted for new commission members at appropriate intervals throughout the year.
9. Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised In Brief and Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised 10<sup>th</sup> Edition p. 405 l. 13 to p. 407 l.3. on roll call voting procedures.
10. Appendix A : Summary of Statutory Procedural Requirements pages 124-127
11. Town of Simsbury Zoning Commission Rules of Procedure Revision 5/18/2011
12. Summary of 2014 Survey by Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and State of Connecticut data of Municipalities in Connecticut with combined and separate Planning and Zoning Commissions by Commission Size, by Population, by Elected vs. Appointed Commissioners
13. Memo from Hiram Peck to Nancy Haase on Orientation activities for Board and Commission members dated August 11, 2015.

## Process Group Recommendation Resource Reviewed and Discussed

<p><b>1. An Economic Implementation &amp; Marketing Action Study</b></p>  <p><a href="http://www.simsbury-ct.gov/sites/simsburyct/files/file/file/simsburyeconomicimplementationmarketingactiondraft10052013.pdf">http://www.simsbury-ct.gov/sites/simsburyct/files/file/file/simsburyeconomicimplementationmarketingactiondraft10052013.pdf</a></p>	<p><b>2. A Guide for Processing Land Use Development Applications 2009</b></p>  <p>[NOT ON WEBSITE]</p>
<p><b>3. Draft May 12, 2014 Application Flow Charts</b></p>  <p>[NOT ON WEBSITE]</p>	<p><b>4. Town of Simsbury Organizational Chart</b></p>  <p>[NOT ON WEBSITE]</p>
<p><b>5. Economic Development Strategic Action Plan (1995)</b></p>  <p>[NOT ON WEBSITE]</p>	<p><b>6. Report of the Joint Committee on Economic Development (2001)</b></p>  <p>[NOT ON WEBSITE]</p>

## 7. Charter of the Town of Simsbury



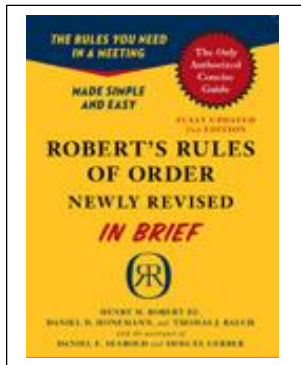
[http://www.simsbury-ct.gov/sites/simsburyct/files/file/file/simsbury\\_to\\_wn\\_charter.pdf](http://www.simsbury-ct.gov/sites/simsburyct/files/file/file/simsbury_to_wn_charter.pdf)

## 8. Report on Land Use Training and Education (2006)

Thumbnail

[NOT ON WEBSITE]

## 9. Robert's Rules of Order



<http://robertsrules.com/>

## 10. Appendix A: Summary of Statutory Procedural Requirements

Thumbnail

[NOT ON WEBSITE]

## 11. Town of Simsbury Zoning Commission Rules of Procedure

Thumbnail

[NOT ON WEBSITE]

## 12. Summary of CCM and State of CT Planning and Zoning Commissions

Thumbnail

[NOT ON WEBSITE]



**13. Memo from on Orientation Activities**

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[NOT ON WEBSITE]

## PROGRAMS GROUP NEXT STEPS

### **Land Use Process:**

- Combining Planning and Zoning commissions requires charter revision. Analyze whether similar communities with combined commission have benchmarked improved competitiveness and other advantages or disadvantages.
- Define optimal sequencing of board and commission meetings; adjust meeting schedules to align with optimal sequence.

### **Staffing:**

- Plan accordingly for staffing requests in the annual budget approval process to support the economic development function.

### **Commission/Board Members:**

- Recommend specific alternatives orientation and continuous education programs and options for funding by the town. Outline tools and resources for orientation available to nominees from the very beginning of the “onboarding” process.
- Town should approve simple, standard method for recording roll call votes at Simsbury board and commission meetings (excel spreadsheet attached to report).

[illegible]

	Member One	Member Two	Member Three	Member Four	Member Five	Member Six	Member Seven	Member Eight	Member Nine	Alternate One	Alternate Two	Alternate Three
aye	2	3	2	1	2	1	1	2	0	1	0	0
nay	1	0	1	2	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0
abstain	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
seated	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	0	1	0	0
present	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	1
absent	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2

## CONCLUDING RECOMMENDATION

The Economic Development Commission develop three Implementation Subcommittees – Marketing, Programs and Process – to continue to facilitate the Economic Development Task Force recommendations.

Where it is the recommendations of the Process Group that the important function of economic development be under the authority of the chief executive officer, these subcommittees will take ownership of appropriate recommendations under the supervision of the chief executive officer's office.



*Town of Simsbury, CT  
Economic Implementation &  
Marketing Action Study*

*prepared by*

**FAIRWEATHER  
CONSULTING**  
SPECIALISTS IN STRATEGIC CHANGE

*with*



**PETE MATHIEU  
& ASSOCIATES**

*October, 2013*

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## Introduction: A Community Committed to Quality Development

Simsbury's history is typical of a rural community that has become increasingly suburbanized in the post-War era. Much of the agriculture and many of the mills that were the community's economic mainstays gradually gave way to waves of residential development as highways improved the connections to Hartford and the cities beyond, and people sought the unmatched rural quality of life Simsbury had to offer.

Businesses also made their way to Simsbury, as the Hartford and Chubb moved into the community to join "native grown" enterprises such as Ensign-Bickford. In the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Simsbury is an affluent, attractive community with historic community centers in Tarrifville, Weatlogue and West Simsbury.

Despite the community's success and prosperity, places like Simsbury are put at risk by the very things that make them so attractive. Steady residential development and low-density highway-oriented commercial growth combine to gradually transform these beautiful once-rural communities into faceless suburbs. Their original charms lost, such communities face a future of gradually declining population, with a limited tax base and constrained prospects for local employment.

That is not the fate that awaits Simsbury. Almost 20 years ago, the Town completed an Economic Development Strategic plan setting a course for a sustainable, prosperous future. By 2007, its Plan of Conservation and Development was adopted, setting a course for the future development of Simsbury. At such a point most towns consider the work done. And therein lies the danger. But for Simsbury it was just the beginning.

By 2012 the Town had held a community-wide dialogue about the future of the Town Center, adopted an award-winning form-based code for that area, and completed major design work on the Route 10/Hopmeadow Street corridor and updated the community's design guidelines (including revisiting portions of the Town Center code). Clearly this is a community committed to preserving its rural, small-town character while also seeking new opportunities to strengthen its tax base and provide jobs for the future.

The Economic Implementation and Marketing Study is the next step in the process. With a strong land-use and design framework in place, Simsbury is seeking catalytic effort that will bring new economic activity into town in ways that will support existing businesses and further strengthen the exceptional character of the town. The Study is intended to engage the business community and others in a process aimed at strengthening the Town Center with an action agenda and marketing tools that will attract new businesses in to the community while assisting existing enterprises.

This analysis provides an overview of the economic conditions facing Simsbury. The information contained herein is presented in a series of figures and tables, each of which is accompanied by an analysis that draws out trends and data points of potential significance. These tables and figures, along with their analyses, are organized in three groups: “The New England Economy,” “Simsbury in the Context of Connecticut’s Economy,” and “Key Sectors.”

“The New England Economy” examines the economic activity index for each state in the New England region as well as that of the United States as a whole. “Simsbury in the Context of Connecticut’s Economy” examines how Simsbury and Hartford County measure against counties throughout the State as well as Connecticut as a whole. “Key Sectors” reveals a breadth of information about the key economic sectors in Simsbury compared to the United States, Connecticut and Hartford County.

### The Planning Process

The process to create this report involved a variety of different methods of information gathering and analysis. It began with an analysis of the economic and demographic trends for Simsbury, Hartford County, the other counties in Connecticut, as well as the State, New England and the United States. Following the analysis a series of interviews were conducted with various individuals involved in development and economic activity in the Simsbury area. A list of those interviewed is included in the appendix. In addition to the interviews, on May 9, 2013, a public meeting was held to gather input and insight for the Marketing Action plan. For those unable to attend the meeting the exercises from the meeting were made available through an online survey. In general, when asked about Simsbury’s weaknesses and threats, the respondents listed disadvantages associated with Connecticut’s overall business climate (high costs, taxes, regulations) as well as a concern that the Town may be focused too much on Simsbury Center at the expense of other hamlets in Town. When asked to identify strengths or opportunities, respondents focused on the proximity to Hartford’s Bradley Airport, high quality of life, the affluent residential base in town, and Simsbury’s strong reputation as a place to live. . A full summary of the meeting is found in the appendices to this report.

The material gleaned from data analysis, stakeholder information and perceptions, and community comments has been synthesized in to the finding and recommendations compiled at the end of this report.

## Economic & Demographic Analysis

### The New England Economy

New England has experienced a great deal of economic change since the 1970s, largely in response to trends away from the sectors that have been the backbone of its economy for centuries. New England’s famed competitiveness has traditionally been centered on its manufacturing industries, which stood out against the background of farm-based work that fueled other regions in the US. Beginning in the 1970s,



manufacturing jobs have been moving out of New England and into the nation's southern and western regions. Global manufacturers have also been providing aggressive and innovative competition at accelerating rates. The number of manufacturing jobs in New England has fallen by roughly half since the mid-1980s; manufacturing employment nationally has also been decreasing rapidly<sup>1</sup>. Manufacturing jobs provided high wages for workers without a higher education; employment that pays comparably typically requires a post-high school education<sup>2</sup>.

With manufacturing on the decline, New England has shifted its focus to knowledge-intensive labor such as that found in the computing and technology industries. Its many prominent universities have provided the basis for new firms to spring up, although retention rates for non-native college graduates is relatively low. A major concern in New England is its aging population. The median age for each New England state is above the national average, and attracting young people is a top priority; New England as a whole has a small fraction of residents under the age of eighteen<sup>3</sup>. A large population of the elderly is seen as a drawback on the basis of both potential labor shortages and increased demand of state services. With that in mind, the total "dependency ratio" of people too old and too young to work to people of working age is lower in New England than in most of the US<sup>4</sup>.

New England contains a number of cities with poverty levels over twenty-five percent: Providence, Lawrence, Springfield and Hartford. However, for the last twenty-five years up until now, New England has had the highest income of any region in the country and lower rates of unemployment: it is not on a decline. Its economic success has hinged largely on its ability to adapt to change.

Figure 1 looks at the economic activity index for the US and all six New England states from 1992 to 2013. It shows a general upward trend for US and all state,s with all currently on the rise after experiencing a significant decrease in 2008 – the beginning of the current recession. Connecticut is doing slightly better than the US average, although the two shows strikingly similar patterns: of all the New England states, Connecticut's economic activity most resembles that of the US. The increasing importance of finance, a major sector in Connecticut, contributed to similarities. Among all the New England states, New Hampshire has had the most successful economy, followed by Massachusetts. Maine, Rhode Island, Vermont and Connecticut are more closely clustered around the US average. Until 2008, all states were above or equal to the US; in that year, Vermont and Maine fell below, and the numbers from 2013, show Vermont, Maine and Rhode Island as below the US average.

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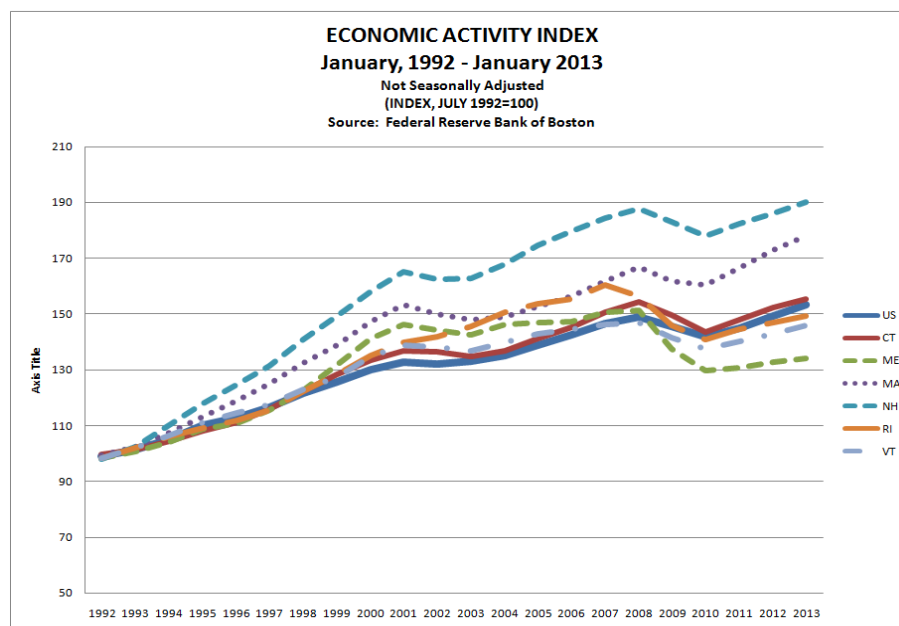
<sup>1</sup> Lynn E. Browne, "New England Transformed," Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, p. 17

<sup>2</sup> "New England Transformed," p 18.

<sup>3</sup> "New England Transformed," p 14.

<sup>4</sup> "New England Transformed," p 19.

Figure 1.



## Simsbury in the Context of Connecticut's Economy

### Commuting Patterns

Figure 2 summarizes commuting patterns of Simsbury residents, commuting patterns of those employed in Simsbury, and top ten work destinations for Simsbury residents. The data show that a relatively low percent of employed Simsbury residents (16.8%) work in Simsbury; the remaining 83.2% work elsewhere. Of these other work destinations, Hartford has the single largest share (18 %) of Simsbury residents. 56.6% of Simsbury workers are employed outside of the top ten work destinations, which include Simsbury itself.

Figure 2: Commuting Patterns for Simsbury Residents and Workers

#### Simsbury Residents' Commuting

In-Area Labor Force Efficiency (All Private Jobs)

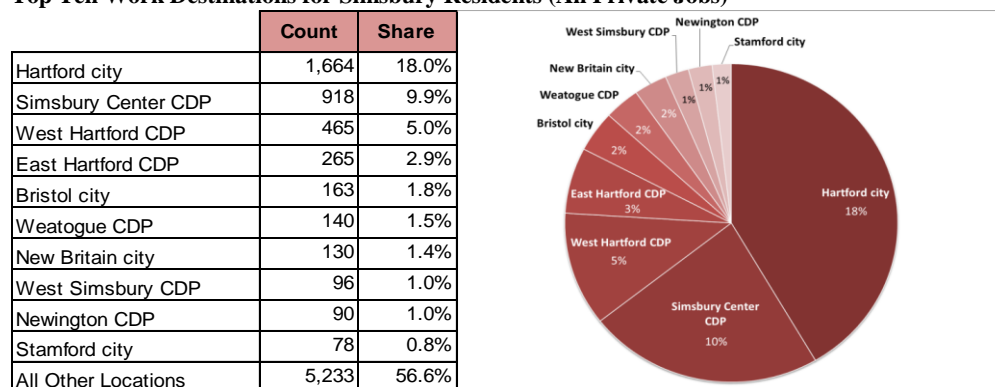
	2010	
	Count	Share
Living in Simsbury	9,242	100.0%
Living and Employed in Simsbury	1,551	16.8%
Living in Simsbury but Employed Outside	7,691	83.2%

#### Simsbury Workers' Commuting Patterns

In-Area Employment Efficiency (All Private Jobs)

	2010	
	Count	Share
Employed in Simsbury	9,271	100.0%
Employed and Living in Simsbury	1,551	16.7%
Employed in Simsbury but Living Outside	7,720	83.3%

## Top Ten Work Destinations for Simsbury Residents (All Private Jobs)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies

## Income Levels

Table 1 ranks the top fifty Connecticut cities with highest median income (from highest – Darien – to fiftieth, Bethany). Includes median income by household, its place in the national ranking for median

**Table 1: Top Fifty CT Cities by Median Income**

#	Location (# Zip Codes)	Population	Avg. Income/H/hold	National Rank	#	Location (# Zip Codes)	Population	Avg. Income/H/hold	National Rank
1	Darien, Connecticut (1)	19,607	\$146,755.00	#23	26	New Fairfield, Connecticut (1)	13,951	\$84,375.00	#438
2	Weston, Connecticut (1)	10,037	\$146,697.00	#24	27	East Lyme, Connecticut (1)	5,966	\$83,462.00	#451
3	New Canaan, Connecticut (1)	19,402	\$141,592.00	#28	28	Simsbury, Connecticut (1)	14,346	\$82,943.00	#462
4	Wilton, Connecticut (1)	17,637	\$141,428.00	#29	29	North Canton, Connecticut (1)	1,013	\$82,910.00	#465
5	Old Greenwich, Connecticut (1)	7,092	\$126,247.00	#57	30	Brookfield, Connecticut (1)	16,111	\$82,838.00	#471
6	Easton, Connecticut (1)	7,272	\$125,557.00	#60	31	Burlington, Connecticut (1)	8,216	\$82,106.00	#498
7	Westport, Connecticut (1)	25,807	\$120,036.00	#71	32	Killingworth, Connecticut (1)	6,018	\$80,805.00	#539
8	Riverside, Connecticut (1)	7,724	\$116,894.00	#86	33	Gaylordsville, Connecticut (1)	1,000	\$80,677.00	#544
9	West Simsbury, Connecticut (1)	4,187	\$107,326.00	#118	34	Cheshire, Connecticut (1)	28,570	\$80,494.00	#554
10	Ridgefield, Connecticut (1)	23,686	\$107,229.00	#119	35	Bridgewater, Connecticut (1)	1,831	\$80,420.00	#562
11	Redding, Connecticut (1)	8,223	\$104,369.00	#143	36	Marlborough, Connecticut (1)	5,709	\$80,265.00	#571
12	Woodbridge, Connecticut (1)	8,983	\$102,121.00	#165	37	Trumbull, Connecticut (1)	34,267	\$79,446.00	#603
13	Greenwich, Connecticut (2)	39,719	\$100,958.00	#175	38	Orange, Connecticut (1)	13,233	\$79,365.00	#608
14	Canton Center, Connecticut (1)	419	\$100,845.00	#177	39	Washington Depot, Connecticut (1)	986	\$78,881.00	#629
15	North Granby, Connecticut (1)	2,308	\$95,347.00	#239	40	Weatogue, Connecticut (1)	3,330	\$78,354.00	#649
16	South Glastonbury, Connecticut (1)	4,848	\$94,416.00	#250	41	Glastonbury, Connecticut (1)	27,028	\$77,991.00	#663
17	Cos Cob, Connecticut (1)	6,751	\$94,066.00	#257	42	Hebron, Connecticut (1)	5,264	\$77,794.00	#669
18	Newtown, Connecticut (1)	14,709	\$91,126.00	#299	43	Durham, Connecticut (1)	6,627	\$77,639.00	#673
19	Avon, Connecticut (1)	16,090	\$90,369.00	#309	44	Tolland, Connecticut (1)	13,151	\$77,332.00	#679
20	Sandy Hook, Connecticut (1)	10,322	\$88,483.00	#346	45	Oxford, Connecticut (1)	9,823	\$77,126.00	#683
21	Madison, Connecticut (1)	17,858	\$87,497.00	#373	46	Guilford, Connecticut (1)	21,366	\$76,745.00	#706
22	Roxbury, Connecticut (1)	2,058	\$86,960.00	#384	47	Granby, Connecticut (1)	7,394	\$76,130.00	#734
23	West Granby, Connecticut (1)	717	\$85,790.00	#410	48	Higganum, Connecticut (1)	4,745	\$75,566.00	#761
24	Haddam, Connecticut (1)	2,096	\$85,000.00	#426	49	Sherman, Connecticut (1)	3,939	\$75,426.00	#773
25	Monroe, Connecticut (1)	19,247	\$85,000.00	#427	50	Bethany, Connecticut (1)	5,040	\$74,898.00	#803

Source: ZIPAtlas.com

income, and population of each city. Simsbury is 28<sup>th</sup> highest in the state and 462<sup>nd</sup> in the country, with a median income of \$82,943. Its population is 14,346. West Simsbury is ninth in the state and 118<sup>th</sup> in the country, with a median income of \$107,326. Its population is 4,187.

### Employment Trends and Location Quotient Analysis

Table 2 looks at annual average employment by various sectors for all counties in Connecticut. Hartford, along with all other counties listed, experienced a decrease in overall employment between 2007 and 2011. In Hartford, sectors that underwent an employment increase despite this trend are as follows: management of companies and enterprises (9.28%), healthcare and social assistance (10.06%), arts, entertainment and recreation (1.17%), accommodation and food services (1.81%), and educational services, which experienced the biggest increase in employment (11.90%). This is generally concurrent with trends displayed in other counties – especially with regards to education, which only experienced a loss in Windham County and had gains over 10% in Litchfield, New Haven and Middlesex. Manufacturing, a key sector for Simsbury, was down by 10.74%. Fairfield County, on the other hand, saw a modest 0.9% increase in manufacturing employment. All counties experienced a decrease in manufacturing, Hartford's second largest sector (with a total of 53,577 workers). Only New London, down by 9.17%, sustained a smaller loss than Hartford. Hartford's largest sector (and the other key sector for Simsbury), finance and insurance (totaling 54,949 workers), was down by 4.48%. Only Tolland and New London bore smaller losses in the financial and insurance sector. It is notable that a relatively small percent of Tolland and New London counties' employed residents were in finance to begin with.

Table 3 displays location quotients for the data on Table 2. Location quotients are calculated to compare employment in a certain industries between each county in Connecticut, and the state as a whole. A "location quotient" is calculated as the percent of employment in a specific industry in an individual county divided by the percent of employment in that industry statewide. A location quotient above 1.0 implies that an industry's employment or output exceeds local demand and thus has net exports and brings wealth into the region. A location quotient below 1.0 suggests that an industry is not meeting local demand and the region thus depends on goods and services imported into the area.

Table 2: Change in Annual Average Employment by County, 2007-2011

**ANNUAL AVERAGE EMPLOYMENT & LOCATION QUOTIENT, 2011**

NAICS Code	Industry	Fairfield County 2011 Loc. Quo.	Hartford County 2011 Loc. Quo.	Litchfield County 2011 Loc. Quo.	Middlesex County 2011 Loc. Quo.
	<b>County Total</b>	<b>403,196 1.00</b>	<b>487,169 1.00</b>	<b>59,580 1.00</b>	<b>64,554 1.00</b>
	<b>Total Private</b>	<b>358,040 1.04</b>	<b>417,831 1.01</b>	<b>51,472 1.01</b>	<b>53,840 0.98</b>
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	312 0.25	1,331 0.88	294 1.59 *	NA
21	Mining	40 NA	86 0.53 *	NA *	NA
22	Utilities	1,652 1.07	1,140 0.61	159 0.70	299 1.21
23	Construction	11,320 0.88	14,220 0.91	3,316 1.74	2,568 1.25
31-33	Manufacturing	37,433 0.90	53,577 1.07	9,032 1.47	9,346 1.40
42	Wholesale trade	13,986 0.88	19,238 1.00	1,604 0.68	2,117 0.83
44-45	Retail trade	48,337 1.07	48,030 0.88	8,069 1.21	8,042 1.11
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	8,496 0.86	13,793 1.15	1,743 1.19	1,080 0.68
51	Information	10,353 1.32	10,615 1.12	647 0.56	650 0.52
52	Finance and insurance	37,229 1.30	54,949 1.59	1,253 0.30	1,648 0.36
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	5,117 1.09	5,626 1.00	327 0.47	481 0.64
54	Professional and technical services	28,512 1.30	26,571 1.00	1,521 0.47	2,451 0.70
55	Management of companies and enterprises	12,723 1.78	8,654 1.00	836 0.79	414 0.36
56	Administrative and waste management	22,414 1.11	23,479 0.96	2,594 0.87	2,335 0.72
61	Educational services	10,183 0.74	10,821 0.65	2,304 1.14	1,975 0.90
62	Health care and social assistance	57,697 0.92	73,216 0.97	9,253 1.00	10,834 1.08
71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	8,578 1.44	5,792 0.80	1,414 1.60	1,102 1.15
72	Accommodation and food services	26,708 0.94	31,397 0.92	4,603 1.10	5,648 1.25
81	Other services, except public administration	16,834 1.18	15,255 0.88	2,426 1.15	2,369 1.03
99	Nonclassifiable establishments	116 NA	43 0.45	* NA	* NA

NAICS Code	Industry	New Haven County 2011 Loc. Quo.	New London County 2011 Loc. Quo.	Tolland County 2011 Loc. Quo.	Windham County 2011 Loc. Quo.
	<b>County Total</b>	<b>348,985 1.00</b>	<b>123,703 1.00</b>	<b>40,234 1.00</b>	<b>37,661 1.00</b>
	<b>Total Private</b>	<b>300,474 1.01</b>	<b>88,797 0.84</b>	<b>26,967 0.79</b>	<b>30,206 0.94</b>
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	758 0.70	1,201 3.12	398 3.18	218 1.86
21	Mining	* NA	55 1.32	38 2.81	* NA
22	Utilities	1,132 0.85	* NA	* NA	197 1.37
23	Construction	11,831 1.06	3,560 0.90	1,574 1.22	904 0.75
31-33	Manufacturing	33,266 0.92	14,247 1.12	3,027 0.73	5,926 1.53
42	Wholesale trade	14,328 1.04	2,729 0.56	727 0.46	814 0.55
44-45	Retail trade	40,723 1.04	13,905 1.01	4,501 1.00	4,799 1.14
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	7,451 0.87	3,323 1.09	917 0.93	1,888 2.04
51	Information	6,025 0.89	1,261 0.52	436 0.56	321 0.44
52	Finance and insurance	10,978 0.44	1,911 0.22	645 0.23	581 0.22
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	4,838 1.20	889 0.62	346 0.74	162 0.37
54	Professional and technical services	15,267 0.80	5,537 0.82	1,479 0.67	853 0.42
55	Management of companies and enterprises	4,000 0.65	657 0.30	* NA	288 0.43
56	Administrative and waste management	17,364 0.99	2,453 0.40	1,202 0.60	1,329 0.70
61	Educational services	24,852 2.10	2,417 0.58	343 0.25	693 0.54
62	Health care and social assistance	66,128 1.22	16,587 0.86	5,545 0.89	6,844 1.17
71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	3,699 0.71	1,747 0.95	560 0.94	192 0.34
72	Accommodation and food services	24,832 1.01	11,547 1.33	3,427 1.21	3,014 1.14
81	Other services, except public administration	12,786 1.03	3,278 0.75	1,519 1.06	1,110 0.83
99	Nonclassifiable establishments	* NA	* NA	* NA	* NA

Source: US Department of Labor, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

Generally, a location quotient above 1.0 indicates that the industry occupies a strong position in the region and may have the potential to grow there. An industry with a location quotient below 1.0 has less potential for growth. Of note is that finance and insurance has a 1.57 location quotient, meaning that it employs 57% more of its workers in finance than the state average. Manufacturing displays a 1.07 location quotient: not nearly as significant as finance, but an indication of its relative importance to the Hartford area. Note also that, while Hartford County's manufacturing location quotient substantially trails Fairfield, Litchfield Middlesex and Windham counties, the size of Hartford County's manufacturing sector is many times the size of that sector in each of those counties. After manufacturing, the next highest location quotient belongs to Transportation & Warehousing. Note also that Professional & Technical Services are concentrated in Hartford County as the same density as Connecticut as a whole (i.e., a location quotient of 1.0), the sector accounts for 25,000 jobs in the County, a much higher level than any other in the State.



Table 3: Location Quotients by Sector for Connecticut Counties

NAICS Code	Industry	Fairfield County		Hartford County		Litchfield County		Middlesex County	
		2011	Loc. Quo.	2011	Loc. Quo.	2011	Loc. Quo.	2011	Loc. Quo.
	<b>County Total</b>	59,580	1.00	487,169	1.00	59,580	1.00	64,554	1.00
	<b>Total Private</b>	51,472	1.01	417,831	1.01	51,472	1.01	53,840	0.98
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	294	1.59	1,331	0.88	294	1.59 *		NA
21	Mining	*	NA	86	0.53 *		NA *		NA
22	Utilities	159	0.70	1,140	0.61	159	0.70	299	1.21
23	Construction	3,316	1.74	14,220	0.91	3,316	1.74	2,568	1.25
31-33	Manufacturing	9,032	1.47	53,577	1.07	9,032	1.47	9,346	1.40
42	Wholesale trade	1,604	0.68	19,238	1.00	1,604	0.68	2,117	0.83
44-45	Retail trade	8,069	1.21	48,030	0.88	8,069	1.21	8,042	1.11
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	1,743	1.19	13,793	1.15	1,743	1.19	1,080	0.68
51	Information	647	0.56	10,615	1.12	647	0.56	650	0.52
52	Finance and insurance	1,253	0.30	54,949	1.59	1,253	0.30	1,648	0.36
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	327	0.47	5,626	1.00	327	0.47	481	0.64
54	Professional and technical services	1,521	0.47	26,571	1.00	1,521	0.47	2,451	0.70
55	Management of companies and enterprises	836	0.79	8,654	1.00	836	0.79	414	0.36
56	Administrative and waste management	2,594	0.87	23,479	0.96	2,594	0.87	2,335	0.72
61	Educational services	2,304	1.14	10,821	0.65	2,304	1.14	1,975	0.90
62	Health care and social assistance	9,253	1.00	73,216	0.97	9,253	1.00	10,834	1.08
71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	1,414	1.60	5,792	0.80	1,414	1.60	1,102	1.15
72	Accommodation and food services	4,603	1.10	31,397	0.92	4,603	1.10	5,648	1.25
81	Other services, except public administration	2,426	1.15	15,255	0.88	2,426	1.15	2,369	1.03
99	Nonclassifiable establishments	*	NA	43	0.45	*	NA	*	NA

NAICS Code	Industry	New Haven County		New London County		Tolland County		Windham County	
		2011	Loc. Quo.	2011	Loc. Quo.	2011	Loc. Quo.	2011	Loc. Quo.
	<b>County Total</b>	348,985	1.00	123,703	1.00	40,234	1.00	37,661	1.00
	<b>Total Private</b>	300,474	1.01	88,797	0.84	26,967	0.79	30,206	0.94
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	758	0.70	1,201	3.12	398	3.18	218	1.86
21	Mining	*	NA	55	1.32	38	2.81	*	NA
22	Utilities	1,132	0.85	*	NA	*	NA	197	1.37
23	Construction	11,831	1.06	3,560	0.90	1,574	1.22	904	0.75
31-33	Manufacturing	33,266	0.92	14,247	1.12	3,027	0.73	5,926	1.53
42	Wholesale trade	14,328	1.04	2,729	0.56	727	0.46	814	0.55
44-45	Retail trade	40,723	1.04	13,905	1.01	4,501	1.00	4,799	1.14
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	7,451	0.87	3,323	1.09	917	0.93	1,888	2.04
51	Information	6,025	0.89	1,261	0.52	436	0.56	321	0.44
52	Finance and insurance	10,978	0.44	1,911	0.22	645	0.23	581	0.22
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	4,838	1.20	889	0.62	346	0.74	162	0.37
54	Professional and technical services	15,267	0.80	5,537	0.82	1,479	0.67	853	0.42
55	Management of companies and enterprises	4,000	0.65	657	0.30	* #VALUE!		288	0.43
56	Administrative and waste management	17,364	0.99	2,453	0.40	1,202	0.60	1,329	0.70
61	Educational services	24,852	2.10	2,417	0.58	343	0.25	693	0.54
62	Health care and social assistance	66,128	1.22	16,587	0.86	5,545	0.89	6,844	1.17
71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	3,699	0.71	1,747	0.95	560	0.94	192	0.34
72	Accommodation and food services	24,832	1.01	11,547	1.33	3,427	1.21	3,014	1.14
81	Other services, except public administration	12,786	1.03	3,278	0.75	1,519	1.06	1,110	0.83
99	Nonclassifiable establishments	*	NA	*	NA	*	NA	*	NA

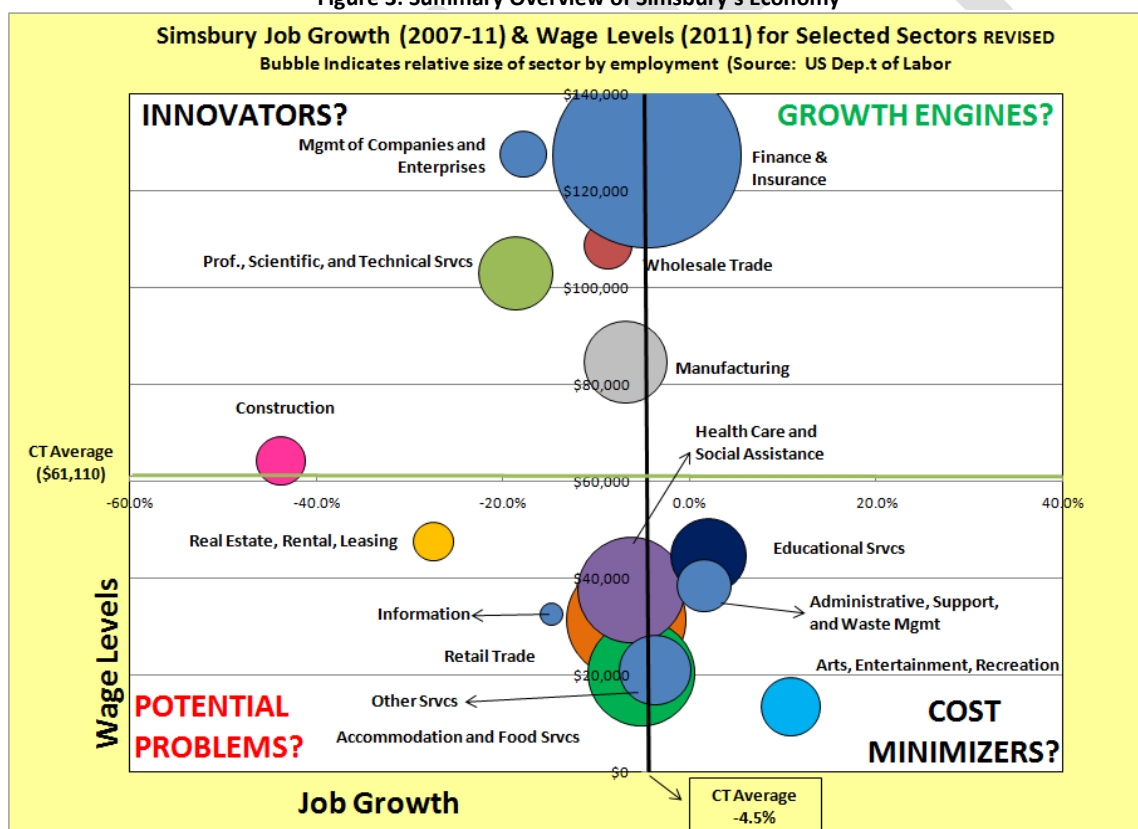
Source: US Department of Labor, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

## Overview of Key Sectors

### Assessing Simsbury's Competitiveness

Figure 3 provides an overview of the structure of Simsbury's economy. Major sectors in the economy are indicated by circles, with each circle sized according to the size of employment in that sector. In turn each sector is arrayed along two axes. The vertical axis shows the average annual wages for each sector in 2011. The horizontal axis shows the percentage change in employment for each sector from 2007 to 2011. In addition, the green line on the horizontal axis shows the average Connecticut wage rate for 2011. The black horizontal line delineates the overall Statewide employment growth. The figure can be viewed in terms of four quadrants providing an overview of the potential for sectors in each of those quadrants. This graph is intended to provide a very preliminary indication of the relative strengths of each of the industries in Simsbury. The quadrants are categorized as follows:

Figure 3: Summary Overview of Simsbury's Economy



Source: Compiled by Fairweather Consulting from US Department of Labor Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages data.

**Innovators:** the upper left-hand quadrant identifies sectors with relatively high wages and shrinking



employment. These are sectors that could be using technology to improve productivity to boost wages while eliminating jobs.

**Potential Problems:** the lower left-hand quadrant identifies sectors with relatively low wages and shrinking employment. These are sectors that could be suffering from a lack of competitiveness and are thereby losing employment and they lose business to competitors.

**Cost Minimizers:** the lower right-hand quadrant shows sectors with relatively low wages and above-average employment growth. These are sectors that could be competing for new business by controlling costs (including wages) to sustain a competitive advantage.

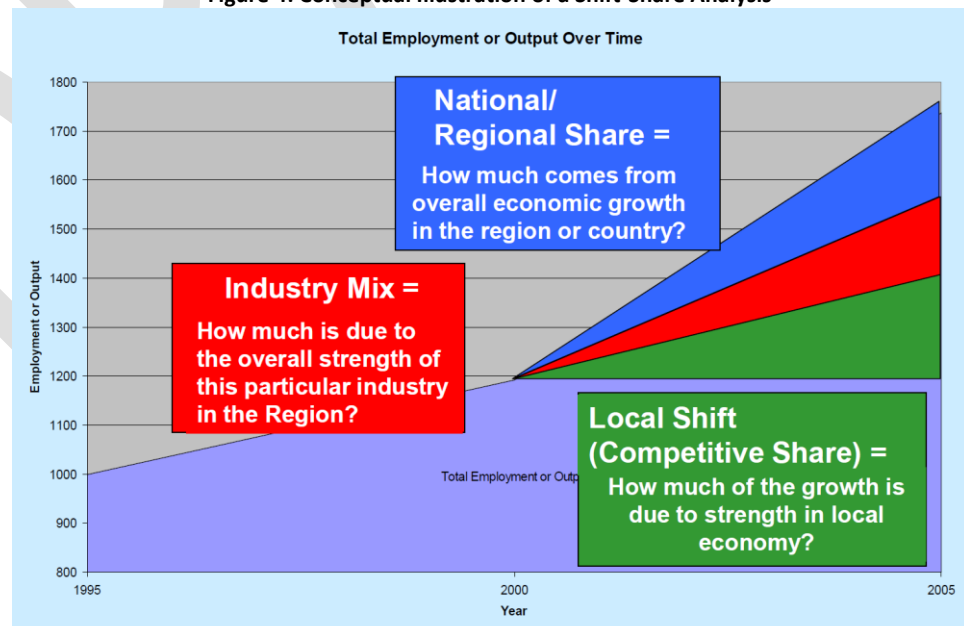
**Growth Engines:** the upper right-hand quadrant shows sectors with both relatively high wages and above-average employment growth. Sectors in this quadrant could be important sources of high-wage job growth in the future.

As expected, Finance & Insurance is a large, high-wage sector in Simsbury. But it is also worth noting that both Manufacturing and Professional & Technical Services are also high wage sectors. While the employment declines in these latter two sectors are never welcome, those declines may indicate that firms in those sectors are experiencing innovative increases in productivity which may make them more competitive in the long term.

### Shift-Share Analysis

Figure 4 presents an illustration of shift-share analysis. A “shift-share analysis” compares changes in job growth in a local area with changes in a larger economy in which the area is located to isolate the factors driving the local changes. Shift-share analysis isolates the share of overall growth in the County that can be attributed to the overall growth in the United States economy (the “Regional Share”/ blue wedge). Next, the analysis isolates the share of overall growth in the County due

Figure 4: Conceptual Illustration of a Shift-Share Analysis



to growth in that particular industry cluster in the US economy (“Industry Mix”/ red wedge). Finally, the analysis identifies the share of overall growth due to a particular strength in the County economy itself (“Local Shift”/green wedge). First, the shift/share analysis was used to compare growth in Hartford County to growth in the United States.

Table 4 presents a shift-share analysis for the US vs. Hartford County from 2001-2011. During that time period, industries in Hartford County which were relatively strong nationally included Leisure &

Table 4: Shift-Share Analysis by Sector, U.S. vs. Hartford County, 2001-2011

Sector	National Growth Component, Percent	National Growth Component, Jobs	Industrial Mix Component, Percent	Industrial Mix Component, Jobs	Competitive Share Component, Percent	Competitive Share Component, Jobs
Manufacturing	-0.2	-104	-28.4	-19,148	7.9	5,347
Information	-0.2	-19	-24.3	-2,993	18.8	2,319
Leisure and Hospitality	-0.2	-51	12.3	4,097	4.5	1,488
Natural Resources and Mining	-0.2	-3	10.9	196	-32.2	-581
Construction	-0.2	-30	-18.8	-3,672	-3.1	-613
Public Administration	-0.2	-38	4.2	1,034	-4.4	-1,072
Education and Health Services	-0.2	-158	19.5	20,018	-1.2	-1,265
Other Services	-0.2	-25	6.0	986	-12.8	-2,101
Professional and Business Services	-0.2	-90	6.0	3,517	-4.2	-2,455
Financial Activities	-0.2	-101	-3.2	-2,126	-4.2	-2,734
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	-0.2	-147	-3.7	-3,559	-6.3	-6,058
		-766		-1,650		-7,725

Source: Compiled via the website <http://www.georgiastats.uga.edu/ssshare1.html>

Hospitality (a positive “Industry Mix” factor of 12.3 percent), Education & Health Services (19.5%), Professional and Technical Services (6.0%) and Other Services (also a positive 6.0 percent). With the exception of Natural Resources & Mining (which has a small presence in Hartford County, all other industries had a negative industry mix (i.e., nationally, job growth in that sector lagged behind the overall economy). Note that in Table 4, Manufacturing, Information, and Leisure & Hospitality all had positive “Competitive Shares” (meaning the industry in Hartford County grew faster than that industry did nationally).

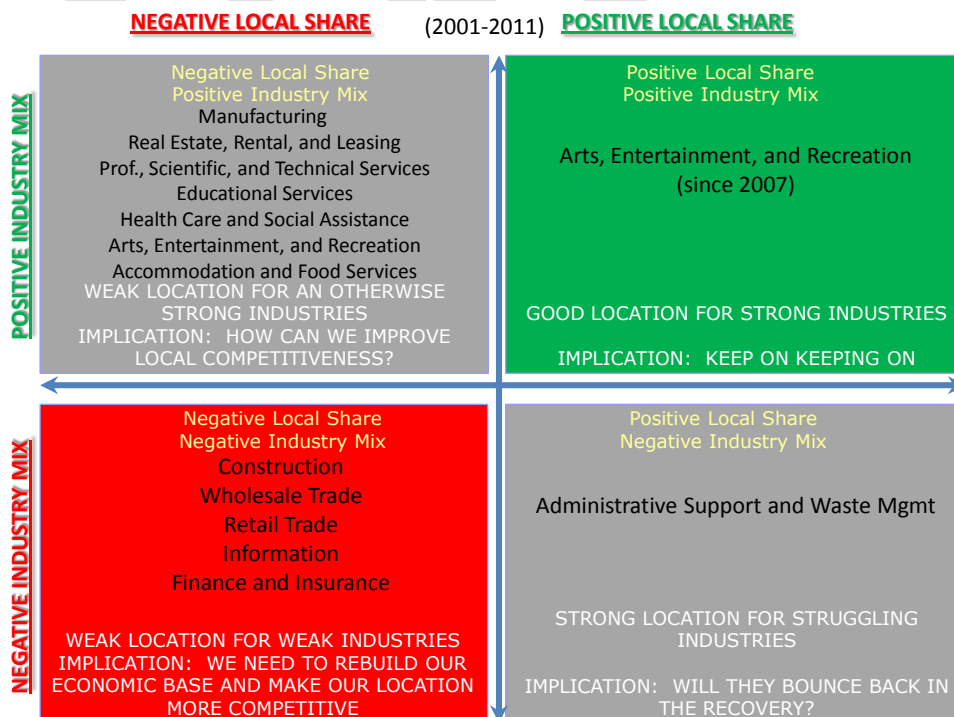
Table 5: Shift-Share Analysis by sector, Simsbury vs. Hartford County 2001-2011

Sector	County Growth Component, Percent	County Growth Component, Jobs	Industrial Mix Component, Percent	Industrial Mix Component, Jobs	Competitive Share Component, Percent	Competitive Share Component, Jobs
Construction	-0.03	-8.69	-0.20	-65.44	-0.20	-64.37
Manufacturing	-0.03	-17.53	-0.18	-117.60	0.01	9.13
Wholesale Trade	-0.03	-6.07	-0.06	-14.53	-0.12	-27.65
Retail Trade	-0.03	-36.67	-0.03	-42.81	-0.13	-184.19
Information	-0.03	-1.29	-0.04	-1.75	-0.07	-3.54
Finance and Insurance	-0.03	-102.89	-0.06	-223.48	-0.20	-768.22
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	-0.03	-3.93	0.05	7.74	-0.22	-31.98
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	-0.03	-18.50	0.02	14.87	-0.39	-269.29
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	-0.03	-5.44	-0.03	-5.47	0.14	27.67
Educational Services	-0.03	-11.11	0.37	154.99	-0.27	-112.71
Health Care and Social Assistance	-0.03	-28.27	0.24	258.62	-0.38	-400.77
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	-0.03	-7.29	0.07	18.76	-0.05	-13.64
Accommodation and Food Services	-0.03	-20.55	0.23	175.42	-0.04	-29.04
Other Services (except Public Administration)	-0.03	-4.78	-0.04	-7.68	1.26	224.63
		<b>-273.02</b>		<b>151.63</b>		<b>-1643.95</b>

Source: compiled by Fairweather Consulting from US Department of Labor, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages data.

Table 5 displays a shift-share analysis for 2001-2011 for using Hartford County as the regional economy and the Town of Simsbury as the local focus of the analysis. Note that manufacturing and various services are local strengths (i.e., job growth in those sectors in Simsbury were greater than in Hartford County). Not surprisingly, given the weakness in the regional financial services sector, Finance &

Figure 5: Summary Results of Shift-Share Analysis



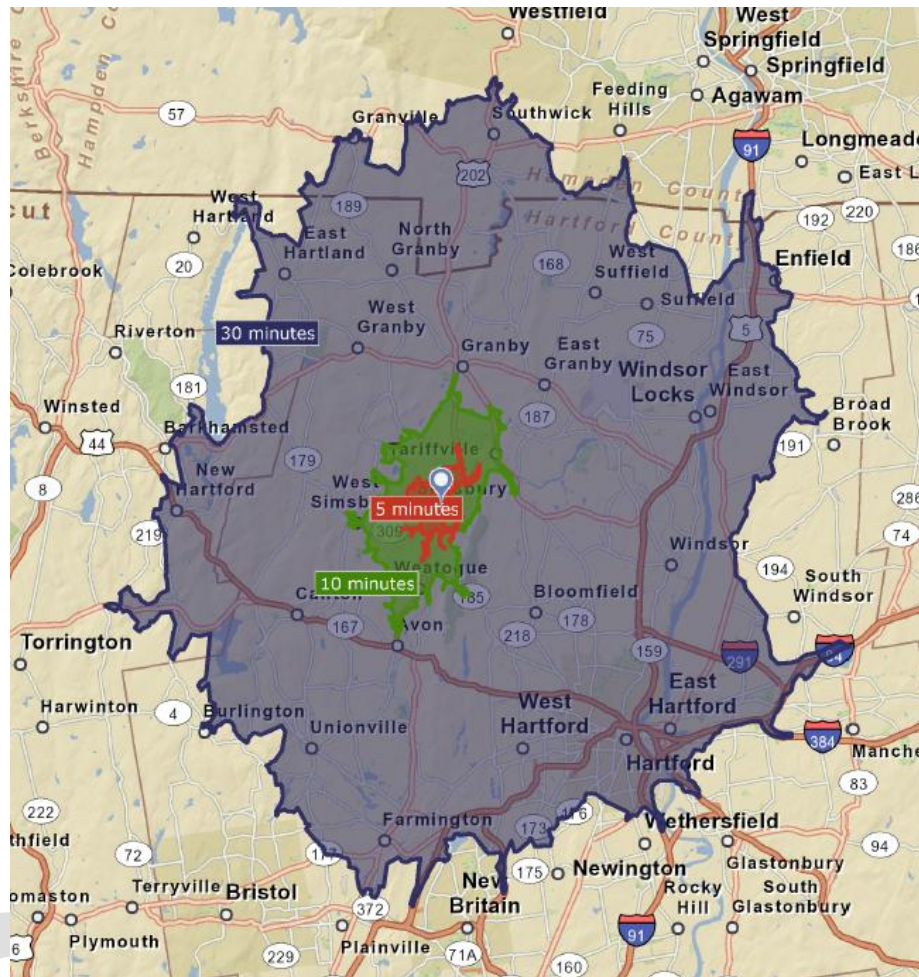
insurance in Simsbury trailed growth in that sector for Hartford County. The same was true for Health Care & social assistance. But note that for almost every sector, each of the three factors was below 1 percent in either a positive or negative direction. This suggests that employment trends in Simsbury closely follow the trends for Hartford County.

Figure 5 provides the summary results of a shift-share analysis broken into quadrants that identify sectors by four grouped descriptors. Local shares are on the horizontal axis and industry mixes are on the vertical; they are then split into “negative” and “positive” categories. Sectors fall into either the positive local share and industry mix (in green); negative local share and industry mix (in red); negative local share/positive industry mix, or positive local share/negative industry mix, the latter two of which are represented in gray. The analysis suggests that potential opportunities can be found in the “green” quadrant (which features Arts, Entertainment & Recreation) highlighting industries that are relatively strong nationally and for which Simsbury has a strong competitive component. The other opportunities are found in the gray quadrants, particularly in the upper left of the diagram. These are sectors with a positive industry mix, but negative local (or competitive) share. It may be possible to improve Simsbury’s competitiveness for these industries and thereby move them into the “green” quadrant.

### Leakage/Surplus Analysis

A “leakage/surplus analysis” compares the *amount of spending* in a designated area with the *amount of selling* that also takes place in that area. Where (A) represents the *estimated spending by area residents* (how much are local residents spending for each type of good or service in a specified drive time?) and (B) represents the *estimated sales by area retailers* (what portion of sales of each good or service do local establishments make within a specified drive time?), if (A) is less than (B), there is *surplus*, meaning money is coming into the area; if (A) is greater than (B), there is *leakage*, and money is leaving the area. This data is from within three geographical areas: the circumference of a five-minute drive from Simsbury Center, that of a ten-minute drive from Simsbury Center, and that of a thirty-minute drive. This is presented on a map and offers a sense of the geographic scope. The five-minute drive is illustrated in red, the ten-minute drive in green, and the thirty-minute drive in blue.

Figure 6: Drive Times from Simsbury Center.



The red zone represents a five-minute drive from Simsbury Center; the green within a ten minute drive, and the blue within a thirty-minute drive.

Source: ESRI Business Analyst Online.

Figure 6 depicts the areas encompassed in three “drive times” from Simsbury Center: five minutes (in red), ten minutes (in green), and thirty minutes (in dark blue). The five-minute drive time may be thought of as the very local/pedestrian market for Simsbury Center. The ten-minute drive time represents the “convenience market” of consumers living nearby the Center. The thirty-minute drive time is the overall regional retail market including the larger, big box centers adjacent to Hartford.

Table 6 breaks down leakage/surplus information by drive time into categories for thirty-one retail sectors and provides data for each about surplus and leakage by drive time. It also offers the number of potential new retail stores for each sector. The dollar amount of leakage for each sector/drive time is given; surpluses are represented simply as “surplus.”



The fact that Simsbury has many instances of “surplus” at the 5- and 10-minute drive times speaks to the Town’s importance as a regional retail center, attracting customers from out of town for such businesses as restaurants, groceries and specialty food stores. This no doubt reflects the success of Simsbury’s Main Street Partnership. It also suggests that this is strength that the Town can build upon to enhance its economy.

The retail sectors that display surpluses in all three drive times are: automobile dealers, grocery stores, specialty food stores, alcoholic beverage retailers, jewelry, luggage, and leather goods stores, florists, and full-service restaurants. The greatest number of surpluses is in the thirty-minute drive time, where only ten of the thirty-one retail sectors display leakages. These are as follows: other motor vehicle dealers (e.g., not automobile), building material and supplies dealers, lawn and garden equipment and supply stores, gasoline stations, other general merchandise stores, used merchandise stores, electronic shopping and mail-order houses, vending machine operators, special food services, and drinking places that serve alcoholic beverages.

Certain leakages that appear to be local business opportunities for Simsbury may not turn out to be such. This is due in part to the fact the thirty-minute drive time extends to the Hartford Metro area, which includes many other shopping areas. Since consumers tend to travel greater distances to purchase high-price, durable items (such as appliances, electronics, furniture and automobiles), only stores of this type would be competing in that thirty-minute drive time market. Thus what appears to be a substantial opportunity at the five- or ten-minute drive time may never materialize given that the actual market extends over thirty minutes away, where there is already substantial competition from existing stores. In such businesses as clothing, online competition also diminishes the apparent opportunity associated with leakages at the five, ten, and even thirty-minute drive time. Increasingly, shoppers for clothing and other items are meeting their needs online, so the leakage may be diverted to an online merchandiser and not reflect any real opportunities for local business. This may dramatically reduce the opportunities associated with for some of the leakages at the five and ten minute drive times.

Consequently, the Town's business opportunities might instead be found in enterprises that offer niche products and shopping experiences. Boutique stores and one-of-a-kind dining establishments offer consumers something that can't be replicated online or in large business centers. This could be a major attraction for both Simsbury residents and those who live outside the town.

**Table 6: Leakage/Surplus for Drive Times by Retail Sector.**

Retail Sectors:	Leakage for 5-minute drive time	Potential # of New Stores	Leakage for 10-minute drive time	Potential # of New Stores	Leakage for 30-minute drive time	Potential # of New Stores
Automobile Dealers	<b>SURPLUS</b>		<b>SURPLUS</b>		<b>SURPLUS</b>	
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	\$632,246	0.33**	\$4,256,042	2.20 **	\$1,462,012	0.75
Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	\$297,206	1.06	\$1,776,626	2.78	<b>SURPLUS</b>	
Furniture Stores	\$839,674	0.89*	\$2,875,698	3.05	<b>SURPLUS</b>	
Home Furnishings Stores	\$22,845	0.06	\$1,479,826	6.34	<b>SURPLUS</b>	
Electronics & Appliance Stores	\$141,700	0.30	\$2,848,255	5.49	<b>SURPLUS</b>	
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	\$573,442	3.03	\$7,731,132	50.20	\$11,479,538	13.46
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	<b>SURPLUS</b>		\$418,676	5.95	\$8,476,191	80.69
Grocery Stores	<b>SURPLUS</b>		<b>SURPLUS</b>		<b>SURPLUS</b>	
Specialty Food Stores	<b>SURPLUS</b>		<b>SURPLUS</b>		<b>SURPLUS</b>	
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	<b>SURPLUS</b>		<b>SURPLUS</b>		<b>SURPLUS</b>	
Health & Personal Care Stores	<b>SURPLUS</b>		\$6,425,550	4.65	<b>SURPLUS</b>	
Gasoline Stations	<b>SURPLUS</b>		\$6,769,708	1.82	\$211,455,733	60.21
Clothing Stores	\$1,456,695	10.62	\$6,874,129	16.95	<b>SURPLUS</b>	
Shoe Stores	<b>SURPLUS</b>		\$579,134	1.87	<b>SURPLUS</b>	
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	<b>SURPLUS</b>		<b>SURPLUS</b>		<b>SURPLUS</b>	
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stores	<b>SURPLUS</b>		\$207,325	1.05	<b>SURPLUS</b>	
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	\$155,036	0.15**	\$893,919	0.89**	<b>SURPLUS</b>	
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.	\$1,412,773	0.30*	\$4,331,402	0.92	<b>SURPLUS</b>	
Other General Merchandise Stores	<b>SURPLUS</b>		\$9,963,088	5.82	\$13,869,549	3.19
Florists	<b>SURPLUS</b>		<b>SURPLUS</b>		<b>SURPLUS</b>	
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	<b>SURPLUS</b>		\$324,677	2.52	<b>SURPLUS</b>	
Used Merchandise Stores	<b>SURPLUS</b>		<b>SURPLUS</b>		\$9,726,953	50.43
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	<b>SURPLUS</b>		\$937,884	6.98	<b>SURPLUS</b>	
Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses	\$1,036,671	0.10**	\$6,665,415	0.67**	\$64,726,487	6.51
Vending Machine Operators	\$198,090	0.24**	\$1,250,564	1.51**	\$18,781,328	22.61
Direct Selling Establishments	\$608,079	0.14*	<b>SURPLUS</b>		<b>SURPLUS</b>	
Full-Service Restaurants	<b>SURPLUS</b>		<b>SURPLUS</b>		<b>SURPLUS</b>	
Limited-Service Eating Places	<b>SURPLUS</b>		\$14,063,582	26.08	<b>SURPLUS</b>	
Special Food Services	<b>SURPLUS</b>		<b>SURPLUS</b>		\$17,857,583	31.19
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	\$59,636	0.27**	\$369,489	1.65**	\$181,110	0.81

Source: ESRI Business Analyst Online, 2010 Estimates

\* No stores in this sector within specified drive time. Estimated new stores calculated using data from the 15-minute drive time.

\*\* No stores in this sector within specified drive time. Estimated new stores calculated using data from the 20-minute drive time.

Source: ESRI Business Analyst Online.

## Preliminary Conclusions from the Analysis

Simsbury is a high-value and a high-amenity locality, with an affluent, well educated population. As the analysis has indicated, the Town and region have some modest but real strength in such sectors and manufacturing and services. These opportunities are consistent with Statewide economic development policies. Table 7 summarizes the major target industries as identified for Connecticut by the Department of Economic & Community Development. Simsbury has the potential to take advantage of activity targeted for advanced manufacturing (and possibly bioscience and green technologies) to build its local economic base. In addition, the analysis shows that hospitality & tourism enterprises (which in Simsbury include performing arts, dining, outdoor recreation and sports, and weddings) are all possible opportunities for the Town.

Table 7: Industries Targeted by the State of Connecticut.	
Insurance and Financial Services	Bioscience
With some of the top insurance and financial service companies here, Connecticut's financial service industry is well positioned to rebound from the economic downturn. For example, CIGNA, the first company to take part in Governor Malloy's First Five program, announced last year that Bloomfield would be its new corporate home. Greater Hartford, still the insurance capital, is already home to Aetna's headquarters and is a center of operations for Amsterdam-based ING Group. RBS and UBS are based in Fairfield County, which also happens to be the epicenter of the hedge fund industry.	Bioscience presents a tremendous opportunity for expansion. Alexion Pharmaceuticals, another First Five participant, sees the potential. That's why it announced New Haven will be the site of its new global headquarters in 2015. Other international companies, like Boehringer Ingelheim continue to grow, while Pfizer, U.S. Surgical and Bristol-Meyers Squibb all maintain a significant presence in the state. This sector ties into some of the world's finest universities that call our state home, such as Yale and the University of Connecticut.
Aerospace and Advanced Manufacturing	Green Technologies
Aerospace and advanced manufacturing are both well-established growing sectors in Connecticut. Industry, government and academia are working together to promote the more than 1,000 companies in the supply chain that support the industry leaders here in the state, such as United Technologies, Sikorsky, Pratt & Whitney and Kaman. This high-tech manufacturing requires a highly-skilled and educated workforce that only Connecticut can provide.	Connecticut's continued leadership in clean and renewable energy sources places it in the enviable position of being at the center of job growth in the new energy economy. Development of a robust, clean, advanced energy sector presents tremendous economic growth opportunities.
Source: Department of Economic and Community Development Annual Report, 2011-2012	



## Assessment & Recommendations

This section provides an overall assessment of Simsbury's strategic position, based upon the economic analysis, community outreach and site visitations conducted by the project team. The assessment is followed by a recommended action plan to realize the opportunities associated with the Town's strategic economic position.

## Key Sectors

There are three key sectors that present the primary opportunities for economic growth in Simsbury. While the targets here are not meant to be pursued to the exclusion of any other opportunities, they are intended to serve as the central foci for Simsbury's economic development and marketing efforts. These targets are:

- **Niche Manufacturing and Sophisticated Support Services** have growth potential throughout the city. Phonon Corporation is a good example of the type of niche manufacturing that is well suited to the area. Phonon creates a unique and highly technical product that relies on a skilled workforce and high quality infrastructure. As there are fewer and fewer major manufacturing relocations and expansions every year, it is important to focus on these niche manufacturers most likely to flourish in Simsbury. Companies like this also require specialized support services nearby, such as engineering firms or industry-specific repair/ supply shops. With entities like Jackson Labs coming to the area, the demand for these support services will grow.
- **Specialty Retail:** Simsbury also has potential to grow its specialty retail industry in the coming years. Specialty retail creates a richer experience for the shopper, whether in added services, higher quality items, and/or an informed staff. For example, a pet store may offer grooming services, organic products, or in-store training classes.
- **Tourism/Hospitality/Recreation:** There are a wide variety of outdoor activities available in Simsbury – four state parks, several bike trails, local farms, and hiking areas for all levels. Simsbury could also expand tourism activities related to the Hartford Symphony's summer residence and making the town's numerous community events known to a larger public audience.

**The Role of Mixed Use Development:** In addition to these industry targets, Simsbury should pursue a mixed use development approach in the locations to host the target industries. Clearly, specialty retail and tourism/hospitality/recreation lend themselves to collocation in a single development combined with ancillary residential uses. But there may also be opportunities to incorporate technology-based manufacturing and support services into mixed use settings, providing the manufacturers in question are compatible in terms of noise, traffic generation and related factors.

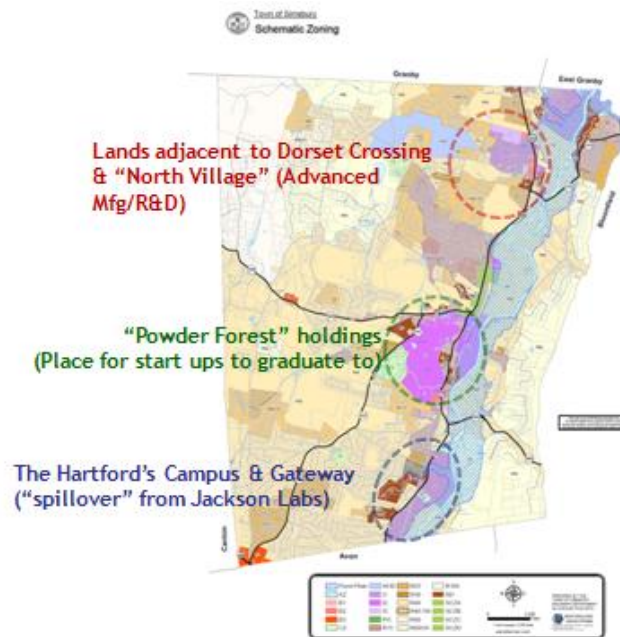
## Site Analysis

There are three main areas in Simsbury that are ideal for “bigger footprint” industrial and office uses. As The lands adjacent to Dorset Crossing and North Village, noted in Figure 7 in red, are well suited for Advanced Manufacturing and Research and Development. The green area includes the Powder Forest holdings, which could be a great area for start-ups to graduate to as they grow and develop. Finally, The Hartford’s Campus and Gateway, outlined in blue, can be used as “spillover” space for Jackson Labs.

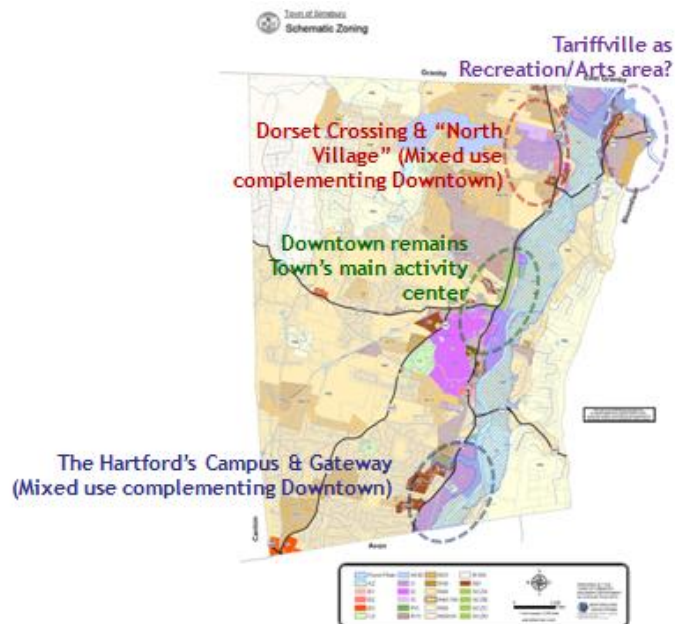
The key sites for Retail/Mixed Use/ Hospitality/Recreation identified in Figure 8 include the Downtown (green) which will remain the town’s main activity center. Dorset Crossing and “North Village”(red) and The Hartford’s Campus and Gateway (Blue) would be good mixed-use areas that could act as a complement to Downtown.

Tariffville, noted here in purple, has growth potential as a recreation/arts area. The unique built environment in the hamlet coupled with the opportunities for outdoor water sports (e.g., kayaking and fishing) present a distinct opportunity to create an arts/recreation enclave that may prove attractive to (and more affordable for) younger people.

**Figure 7:**  
**Key Sites for bigger-footprint industrial/office uses.**



**Figure 8:**  
**Key Sites for retail/mixed use/hospitality/recreation.**



## Economic Development Assets

Simsbury has several assets that will help bolster economic development. Simsbury has a strong economic base; the median household income ranges from \$90,000- \$200,000 throughout the area. Simsbury is home to a highly educated workforce - 66% of all Simsbury residents hold a Bachelor's Degree or higher. There are also many innovative companies already located in Simsbury, which can help attract more innovation to the area.

Simsbury does have limited access to the highway, which could prevent some national firms from relocating to the area. However, Simsbury is only 14 miles from Bradley International Airport. Additionally, Simsbury enjoys good broadband connectivity and fiber wire line availability in its main development areas. Although the cost of labor, taxes, and energy in Simsbury are comparable with those in the rest of the northeast, the cost of doing business in Simsbury is higher than in other areas of the country. However, Simsbury is benefitting from and/or stands to benefit from an active regional branding effort known as New England's Knowledge Corridor. There are also opportunities for businesses to take advantage of expedited approvals within the Town center. Such a regulatory system could be extended to other areas of Town as well. Lastly, Simsbury is consistently ranked as one of the best places to live in the country. With a wide variety of recreational and cultural activities, combined with excellent public schools, Simsbury has much to offer new residents and their families.

## Strategic Assessment

This section provides an overall assessment of Simsbury as an economic development location. It outlines the strategic approach the Town should use in its efforts to compete for new jobs and investment. It begins by describing Simsbury's position in the economic development market and, based upon that, defines the "core idea" that should inform Simsbury's economic development marketing efforts.

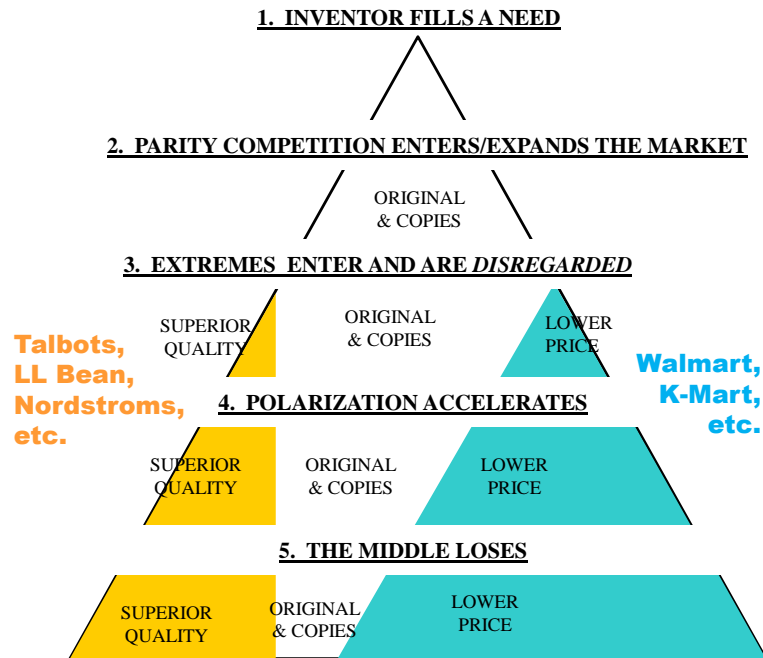
## Market Polarization

One way to understand the nature of competition for economic development by location is to view it through the lens of the market polarization model. This model was developed by A.H. Pete Mathieu as a means for helping clients understand what they need to do to compete in any market. The essential tenet of the model, as captured in Figure 9, is that, as markets mature, they polarize among competitors offering either superior quality or lower price. Those competitors in middle of the market have difficulty offering either, and consequently end up losing substantial market share.

Figure 9:

**The Market Polarization Model**

©Pete Mathieu & Associates



As markets mature, they polarize between superior quality and lower price. The middle offers neither and loses.

***Retail Polarization***

Retail has undergone market polarization over the last 30 years. For example, approximately 100 years ago, Sears, JC Penney and Montgomery Ward were major national competitors in the general merchandise market. They remained industry leaders throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. However, during the 1970s, the retail market began to polarize. Premium firms like Talbots and L.L. Bean entered the national market (followed shortly thereafter by Nordstrom's and others). At the same time, K-mart and Wal-Mart began serious expansion as "big box" operations offering low-cost products and discounted merchandise. In short, as Mathieu's model predicts, the market polarized between superior quality and lower price. The industry leaders found themselves "stuck in the middle" and lost to the extremes.

***The Move Toward "Experience-Based" Retail***

The "low cost" end of the pyramid features the big box discounters like K-mart, Wal-mart and various dollar/discount stores. The superior quality offerings are changing the shape and size of retail location.

For example, research conducted by the International Council of Shopping Centers found that baby boomers (i.e., those born between 1945 and 1965) are the least likely to visit a generic mall and that,

when they do, they spend less time there during each visit than teens or the elderly<sup>5</sup>. This suggests that retailing and retail development opportunities in the future will be based upon niches and the replacement of obsolete formats and concepts<sup>6</sup>.

Table 8 provides an overview of the trend toward “experience-based retail” as the model for premium retail locations. These trends don’t simply apply to the baby boomers either. New generations of Gen Xs

**Table 8: The Transition to “Experience-based” Retail**

The Retail Transition	
From 	To
Location	Access/popularity
Generalists	Specialists
Times when we do	Moments when we might
Store as a warehouse	Store as showroom/theater
Store as transaction point	Store as an information point
Retailer power	Consumer/broker/distributor power
Convenience	Relationship and trust
Value for money	Value for time coupled with value for money
Source: Excerpted and adapted from Yvonne Court, <i>Future of Retail Property—Online Retailing: The Impact of Click on Brick</i> . (London: British Council of Shopping Centres, 2006).	

and Ys are shifting their views of shopping centers as well. As a result, retail locations will have to adapt and change to meet the needs of younger shoppers who, “...aren’t interested in just shopping, they want to be entertained.”<sup>7</sup>.

Thus, the United States approaches a momentous demographic event as the two biggest consumer cohorts, the Baby Boom generation and their children are both moving into a new life phase: Boomers into retirement, Gen Ys into full adulthood. The affect on the retail experience has been and will be profound. As summarized by Anita Kramer in *Retail Development*, the 2008 publication by the Urban Land Institute: “Centers will become the ‘third place’ in people’s lives, and customers will shop when they go out rather than go out to shop.”<sup>8</sup>

### *Polarization in Industrial Development*

Market polarization also occurs among economic development locations. In the same way, a community can seek to position itself as a premium location for business, offering high value in terms of

<sup>5</sup> Field, Katherine, “Beckoning Boomers,” *Chain Store Age*, November 2005, pp. 39-40.

<sup>6</sup> Gruen, Aaron N, “Demographics and Retail,” *Urban Land*, January, 2008, pp. 116-118.

<sup>7</sup> Johnson, Ben, “Baby Boom Nation,” *National Real Estate Investor*, May 2008, p. 53.

<sup>8</sup> Kramer, Anita et al., *Retail Development*, Urban Land Institute, 2009, p. 427.



access to markets, workforce, infrastructure and/or quality of life. On the other side of the spectrum, a community can seek to be a low-cost location, offering low-cost real estate and labor to entice business.

For example, Kingston, New York was once a major site for the computer industry. As the market for computer production matured, places like the Research Triangle and Silicon Valley became premium locations in terms of the available R&D support, workforce and quality of life they offered. Taiwan and other locations in the Far East became low-cost locations. In the end, Kingston was unable to offer either high-end amenities or low costs in the marketplace for computer manufacturers, and lost. In the mid-1980s, IBM employed over 7,500 workers at its Kingston facility. By 1993, the entire facility was closed.

Communities often cannot control the costs associated with their location. Any community in the Northeast is likely to be a high-cost location compared to the Southern states. On the other hand, a community in the Northeast that is located adjacent to a major metropolitan area will still be a high-cost location nationally, but can serve as a low-cost location vis-à-vis the inner core of the metropolitan area.

### *Simsbury's Strategic Position*

Simsbury is a high value, high amenity community that is currently utilized primarily as a bedroom community. It has enough amenities and talent to compete for high-value-added enterprise such as aerospace/advanced manufacturing, insurance/financial services, dining, outdoor recreation and sports, and weddings.

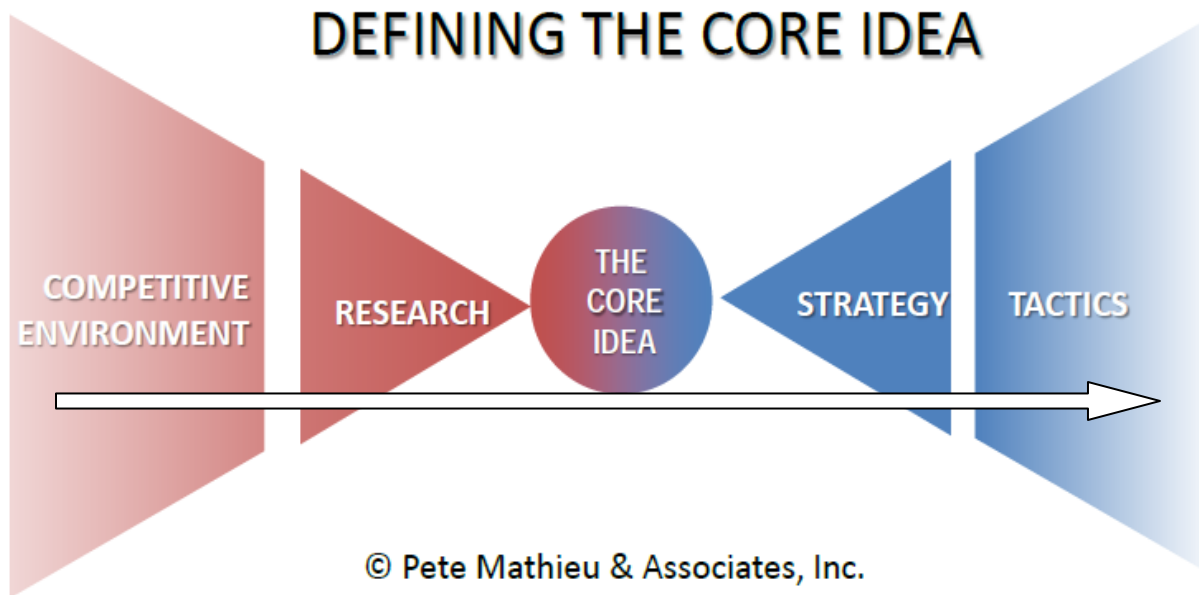
### *Real Potential for High-End, Innovation –driven Development*

Simsbury is home to a true advanced manufacturing cluster in the Herman Drive Area, which has local buyer-supplier linkages and which already has secured connections with the University of Connecticut's Engineering School. Jackson Lab's Genomic Medicine facility is slated to open in Farmington in 2014 and could help drive demand for sophisticated support services. While highway access is limited, Simsbury has ready access to Bradley Airport (only twenty minutes from Herman Drive). Simsbury offers a high quality of life to its residents, particularly in the areas of culture, outdoor entertainment, and top-notch public schools. Consequently, the Town is well positioned to serve as premium location for high-value-added economic development.

### *The Core Idea*

The primary function of the strategic plan is to develop a theme or core idea that completely and persuasively captures the competitive advantages Simsbury enjoys or can enjoy to create jobs and wealth in the community. As illustrated in Figure 10, the core idea of a strategy must integrate the nature of market opportunities, the extent and nature of competition for business and define the key initiatives that Simsbury must take to attract and hold its customers in spite of the actions and efforts of competing locations. The core idea contains the unique and inherent truth about Simsbury that needs to be effectively communicated to the intended audiences of this strategic plan.

Figure 10:



The core idea defines the basis by which Simsbury will compete for economic activity. It brings together disparate considerations into a single approach for developing and managing the Town's economic development assets. The core idea answers the following questions:

**What are we selling?** Is Simsbury selling a simple combination of amenities and sites? What are they? Or is it selling an all-encompassing experience to its intended customers, and what is that experience? This is Simsbury's persuasive theme, and it is described in the Core Idea section of this report.

**To whom are we selling?** Who are the target market segments that we expect to patronize the Simsbury's cultural heritage tourism offerings? The answer to this question was developed based on the Market Analysis conducted as part of this report.

**Why are we selling?** What about Simsbury will benefit our intended customers? If it is separate sites and amenities Simsbury is selling, why would our intended customers think this mix is better than those offered by our competitors? If it is an experience or experiences Simsbury is selling, why would our intended customers find that experience compelling? This question was considered in light of target market research and is discussed in the Core Idea section.

**Where are we selling?** How are we getting the word out to our intended customers? How do we position our offerings so that our intended customers are exposed to these offerings on a regular basis?

**How are we selling?** How do Simsbury's economic development assets deliver the benefits its intended customers want? This question involves determining how Simsbury's assets will be appropriately "packaged" to best appeal to their target audience.

**Against whom are we selling?** Who are the primary regional competitors from whom our intended customers can get the goods, services and/or experiences similar to those offered by Simsbury? What can Simsbury offer that its competitors cannot offer?

### The Elements of Simsbury's Core Idea

Based upon our analysis of economic trends, Simsbury's assets and the economic development opportunities before the Town, we believe Simsbury should position itself as a premium location for high-value-added activities in manufacturing and related services, specialty retail and tourism/cultural activities. Our analysis has shown that:

#### Simsbury is ideally suited to excel in the Digital/Innovation economy where:

- The future depends on digital growth and innovation
- Education (STEM) is the key to that success and growth
- Entrepreneurial "start-ups" and small innovative companies will be the source of ideas and growth
- Capital & Digital Industry will follow locating near "incubation centers"
- "Working from home" (or out of your garage) may become the norm
- Quality of Life becomes a competitive advantage for recruiting and training the high skill workers that will drive economic growth

#### Simsbury is ideally suited to excel in the Digital/Innovation economy because Simsbury:

- **Is in the geographic center of the KNOWLEDGE CORRIDOR.** The Knowledge Corridor is a section of Southern New England, including Hartford and Springfield. With 1.6 million residents, 80 communities, and a rich variety of businesses and universities, Massachusetts and Connecticut as well as several regional economic development organizations have invested substantial resources in developing the Knowledge Corridor brand for the Springfield/Hartford corridor. Simsbury's central location in this corridor positions the Town to leverage this branding effort for its own benefit.
- **Has a government and community committed to smart growth**
  - Simsbury has been proactive in creating a business-friendly regulatory environment to support sustainable economic development.
- **Has Broadband and ready airport access.**
  - Connectivity by air and fiber is key for innovation-based economies. Simsbury is within 14 miles of Bradley International Airport and the Town's major development sites are served by fiber capable of download speeds of 100mbps or more.
- **Has a core group of advanced manufacturing firms.**
  - In addition to Dyno Nobel, Simsbury hosts a number of innovative manufacturing firms, many with ties to the defense and aerospace sector. Phonon manufactures custom Surface



Acoustic Wave (SAW) components and modules for defense and space. Specialty Saw Inc. is a full service destination for saw blades with services ranging from sharpening to design and sales. There are several other firms with this type of scope in the Simsbury area, leaving it well poised to foster further innovation.

- **Has appropriately attractive upscale, active quality of life.**
  - Simsbury is widely recognized for its high quality of life. It was recently named by *Money* Magazine as the 50<sup>th</sup> best place to live in the United States. Its combination of outdoor recreation opportunities, cultural attractions with its agricultural, small town charm contribute to its strength in this regard.
- **Has a highly educated & talented workforce.**
  - 66% of Simsbury's adult residents hold a Bachelor's Degree. 87% of Simsbury residents have some college experience or more.
- **Has excellent schools including advanced STEM HS classes.**
  - In addition to their excellent academic reputation, Simsbury schools participate in Project Lead the Way, which uses student directed, activities based curriculum, developed by industry experts to ensure that students have both the knowledge and real-life skills to compete in a changing economy. Approximately 4700 schools nationwide participate in the program.

Simsbury's core idea is founded on the unique and inherent truth that distinguishes it from Connecticut and the rest of New England.

### **Simsbury's Core Idea:**

### **Intersection of Innovation and Nature**

Simsbury has a unique combination of an innovative local economy and a small town/rural quality of life. This is the essential message to be transmitted to businesses, but it can be varied to appeal to different audiences. For example: "innovation & creativity" or "innovation & culture" for arts and culture-related enterprises; "innovation & recreation" for outdoor recreation/tourism-related enterprises.

Another way to state the "core idea" more specifically:

#### **Historic Simsbury**

*-it's citizens, businesses, and government are inherently located and equipped in resources, attitudes, and quality of life to become the Model Community for the Knowledge Corridor in the Age of Digital Innovation.*

This core idea provides the following answers to the key questions in the model:

Question	Response
<b>WHAT</b> are we selling?	Simsbury as a location for technology-based businesses; specialty retail and tourism that also offers exceptional recreational and cultural amenities
<b>WHO</b> are we selling?	Businesses interested in locating/expanding in the Hartford Metro area and employees looking for a high-quality of life.
<b>WHY</b> are we selling	Simsbury can support technology-based businesses. It is a center for experience-based, specialty retail. It provides a variety of tourism and outdoor recreation-related opportunities.
<b>WHERE</b> are we selling?	In and around the Hartford Metro area.
<b>HOW</b> are we selling?	Outreach to businesses, residents and tourists. Social media campaign to target businesses.
<b>AGAINST WHOM</b> are we selling?	Other communities in the Hartford Metro area.

### Action Plan

This report is intended to foster consistent and focused activity that will promote economic development in the Town of Simsbury. This section details the actions required to mobilize the Town's resources in support of the core idea defined herein. The actions are organized for each of the target industries identified for Simsbury. The section will conclude with a description of the overall marketing approach recommended to support this strategy.

### Target Industry: Advanced Manufacturing/Technology

Simsbury should focus its efforts on optimizing growth in advanced manufacturing and technology. First, the focus should be on its existing companies, ensuring that they are well-served to continue to grow. Second, the Town should market itself to smaller tech companies seeking to locate or expand in the Hartford area. Simsbury can present distinct advantages to firms seeking a superior for technology-led development who can afford to do business in the Northeast.

#### Recommended Actions:

- A Business Retention and Expansion Program should be created in the Town which would involve regular visits by a Town representative (e.g., members of the Economic Development Commission) to businesses in the manufacturing and technology related sectors.
- Simsbury should develop a marketing/public relations campaign focused on the Greater Hartford area that clearly outlines the advantages of Simsbury as a location for small and start-up technology-based manufacturers and services.
- The Town 's Economic Development Commission should seek to build relationships with regional entities that are already defining and developing the area – i.e., the Metro-Hartford Alliance, the Knowledge Corridor, the Department of Economic and Community Development, the University of Connecticut (including their engineering

school and the medical school's new Jackson Labs facility and the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology to keep these entities informed about opportunities in Simsbury and to better understand the resources and assistance they may be able to provide to Simsbury's businesses, particularly the manufacturing sector.

- The Town Planning and Zoning Commission should create an expedited approval process for targeted growth areas, such as North Village and Powder Forest in the same way such a process was created for Simsbury Center.

### **Target Industry: Tourism/Recreation/Culture**

Simsbury has many of the “raw materials” needed to grow and expand tourism, recreation, and culture – especially in the areas of active recreation, weddings and events, and cultural activities.

#### ***Recommended Actions:***

- The Simsbury Main Street program should continue to create and develop “event packages” for niche interests including, skating/hockey, weddings, water based recreation (kayaking/fishing), biking/hiking, and concert/cultural events.
- Simsbury should explore the potential of the Tariffville area as a hub for outdoor recreation and related activities. This could involve the following activities:
  - Continue to promote outdoor recreation activities such as kayaking and fishing in the Tariffville area.
  - Consider the possibility of creating an artist relocation program focused on the Tariffville hamlet. Such programs provide incentives for artists to create “live/work” spaces with studios to foster arts-related venues in the area.
- The Town may wish to leverage the growing market for elite and “travel” sports by encouraging the creation of facilities like ice sheets, fieldhouses, etc. that can serve the needs of elite athletes similar to the role the Skating Center plays for elite skaters. The “North Village” area may be the best-suited location for these initiatives.

### **Target Industry: Specialty Retail/Services**

The Simsbury Main Street Partnership has already done some great work creating the “Simsbury Brand”. Continue to build this brand and incorporate the North Village and Southern Gateway areas into the branding initiative.

#### ***Recommended Actions:***

- Retail and tourism-related businesses are currently served well by the Main Street Partnership. Those activities should be encouraged and expanded if possible.
- The Town should convene a Charette for “North Village” similar to the one it held for Simsbury Center. The process should culminate with appropriate zoning/preapprovals

put in place by the Town to foster development in that area that is high quality in design, while complementing the activity in Simsbury Center.

- The Planning and Zoning Commission should continue to promote mixed use development with apartments and other residences collocated with commercial activity in centers/hamlets, including Simsbury Center, Weatogue, “North Village”, etc.

### Recommended Marketing Approach

Simsbury should develop both an internal and an external Marketing Program with a focus on Simsbury and the Greater Hartford area.

The marketing program should be geared towards small to mid-size innovation based manufacturers and service, in addition to developers, tourists/visitors, and residents.

The media used should be of varied formats – social media /video and word of mouth with collateral material. Word of mouth efforts should focus on contact with the regional economic development community and realtors, as well as BR & E visits with current employers

Both the internal and external marketing programs should focus on the same core message:

- The Simsbury community inherently seeks to continually improve in all of its aspects
- It is home to innovative enterprises
- It's setting allows people to exercise their innovative instincts in a natural setting
  - Outdoor recreation
  - Culture
- It has superior Schools & Workforce
- It has created a business-friendly & effective regulatory environment

## Implementation Schedule

The following is a suggested schedule for implementing the study recommendations. The schedule identifies the action to be taken by industry target, the organization to take lead responsibility and suggests a schedule for implementation.

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE						
TARGET INDUSTRY: ADVANCED MANUFACTURING/TECHNOLOGY						
ACTION	LEAD ORGANIZATION /PARTNERS	TIMING				
		YEAR ONE		YEAR TWO		YEAR THREE
Create business retention & expansion program for advanced manufacturing/ technology firms	Economic Development Commission	■				
Marketing/public relations campaign for Greater Hartford area	Town/Main Street Partnership	■				
Build relationships with regional economic development entities	Economic Development Commission		■			
Create expedited approvals process for North Village and Powder Forest	Town Planning & Zoning Commission			■		

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE							
TARGET INDUSTRY: TOURISM/RECREATION CULTURE							
ACTION	LEAD ORGANIZATION /PARTNERS	TIMING					
		YEAR ONE		YEAR TWO		YEAR THREE	
Continue to create and develop “event packages” for niche interests	Main Street Partnership						
Explore positioning Tariffville as hub for arts and outdoor recreation	Economic Development Commission/Planning & Zoning Commission						
Encourage creation of facilities for elite athletes	Economic Development Commission						

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE							
TARGET INDUSTRY: SPECIALTY RETAIL/SERVICES							
ACTION	LEAD ORGANIZATION /PARTNERS	TIMING					
		YEAR ONE		YEAR TWO		YEAR THREE	
Continue the work of the Main Street Partnership	Main Street Partnership/Town						
Convene a “North Village” Charette & develop zoning proposals	Planning & Zoning Commission/Main Street Partnership						
Promote mixed use development in Simsbury Center, Weatogue, “North Village” and other hamlets	Planning & Zoning Commission/Main Street Partnership						

## Appendices

### Sources

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## Stakeholders' Session

May 9, 2013

6:00PM to 8:00PM

### Attendees (24):

Tony Drapelick, <i>DRB</i>	Debra Bernard, <i>Bernard Partnership</i>
Rich Correia, <i>Commercial Realty</i>	Betty Fiora, <i>Property owner</i>
Pam Lacko, <i>Smart Clicks</i>	Bob Kevorkian, <i>Simsbury Pharmacy</i>
Christophe Traficante, <i>The Dancers Studio</i>	Marlene Jung, <i>Weatogue Property</i>
Lisa Heavner, <i>Board of Selectmen</i>	Bill D, <i>RJ's Wine and Spirits</i>
Ed Pabich, <i>Zone Comm</i>	Rick Wagner, <i>Simsbury North</i>
Derek Peterson, <i>EDC/Zoning</i>	Kevin Crimmins, <i>Simsbury EDC</i>
Gus Jasminski, <i>Ensign-Bickford</i>	Nancy Haase, <i>Board of Selectmen</i>
Louis George, <i>EDC</i>	Ben C.
Liz Banco, <i>Tourism Committee</i>	Steve Mitchell, <i>Mitchell Auto Group</i>
Mary Glassman, <i>Board of Selectman</i>	Tom Evans
Steven Antonio, <i>Antonio's</i>	Andy Andreo, <i>Andy's Center Shops</i>

### Agenda:

Introductions
Goals of the Market Study
An Overview of Key Sectors
Exercises:
Development Opportunities
Business-Specific SWOT Analysis
Wrap Up & Next Steps

The meeting started with a brief introduction by Mary Glassman explaining that the purpose of the meeting was to get public input on what the community wants Simsbury to be in the next 5 to 10 years and to try to assess ways in which Simsbury can attract the best businesses. Hiram Peck, Simsbury's Director of Planning & Development, added that this Marketing Action Study was the next step in a series of studies initiated for the purposes of planning the best development strategy for Simsbury. This was the first stakeholder outreach meeting for this study.

Peter Fairweather started the presentation by going through the agenda. He noted that the data presented at this meeting was not necessarily being presented as concrete fact, as data alone does not

always show the whole picture, but was preliminarily being used to gage a reaction from the people in attendance. “What else do we need to know about Simsbury?” he asked.

Before presenting the data analysis he explained Pete Mathieu’s Core Idea Model which would be used in the later stages of the Marketing Action Study. The idea behind the model is that a product, service, experience, or place must be marketing using the truth about that certain product, service, etc. Many try to market based on what they wish they could be, but the goal here will be to ensure that Simsbury will market itself competitively based upon its existing assets and unique qualities.

Peter then presented the project schedule and the study’s website which will be a key component of the study and will be used to engage the Simsbury community ([www.simsburystrategy.com](http://www.simsburystrategy.com)).

The first analysis presented was an overview of Simsbury’s key sectors in a diagram which compared on job growth in Simsbury between 2007 and 2011 and wage levels in 2011 in Simsbury to the same data for Connecticut as a whole. Manufacturing; Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; Wholesale Trade; and Management of Companies and Enterprises were categorized as possible “innovators.” Average salaries in these sectors are higher than average wages in Connecticut as a whole but employment growth is either the same or lower, potentially suggesting that these industries have higher productivity rates. Sectors that were highlighted as potentially problematic included Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing; and Information, for having both low average salaries and employment growth lower than that of the average overall growth in Connecticut.

Next was an overview of the results of a shift-share analysis. The results suggested that Simsbury has done poorly in supporting the following industries between 2001 and 2011 relative to the Hartford MSA: Real Estate, Rental and Leasing; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Educational Services; Health Care and Social Assistance; and Accommodation and Food Services. Simsbury was successful in supporting growth in the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation Industry between 2007 and 2011, as suggested by its positive “local share.”

Attendees suggested that the analysis be revisited to include a comparison of Simsbury to Connecticut as a whole because, in choosing what types of industries would do well in Simsbury, it would be valuable first to see which industries are doing well or poorly in the State of Connecticut. It was also suggested that Fairfield County be used as a potential benchmark in the study. Looking at both regional opportunities for growth as well as statewide opportunities were both agreed would both be beneficial.

In discussing the industries that seem to do well in Simsbury as well as the industries that perform poorly, it was noted that one huge constraint to business retention and attraction in Simsbury is limited transportation access. With no highway close by it has been difficult to attract larger retailers.

Next was an overview of a leakage/surplus analysis which roughly estimated the extent to which certain sectors bring outside money into Simsbury (called a surplus) and which sectors leak dollars outside of Simsbury (people driving outside of the area to shop for those goods or services). It was found that full-service restaurants have a surplus at the 5, 10, and 15 minute drive times, indicating that people come

from outside the region to eat in Simsbury. The attendees remarked that Simsbury is somewhat of a “culinary destination” with a few high end restaurants that seem to bring a lot of visitors in. This presents an opportunity for Simsbury to capture the market of people coming in to eat by introducing them to other local businesses and services. It was suggested that it would be worth talking to local restaurateurs about their clients.

As mentioned above in the shift-share analysis, the results indicated that the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation sector was doing well in Simsbury since 2007. Soccer and other sporting events are another big draw for people to come into Simsbury, thus there is an opportunity to capture this market as well. Another opportunity that was discussed involved improving promotion and marketing for the Simsbury Symphony which currently only draws local residents.

The discussion then turned back to Simsbury’s retail opportunities and the current constraints Simsbury faces in trying to attract new retailers. First, it was noted by one attendee that generally it is held that at least 13% of a town’s population needs to be in the downtown in order to sustain downtown businesses. Simsbury only has 1% of its population in the Center (or downtown). It was suggested that zoning regulations be amended to allow for more condo-like residences downtown which would build up the critical mass needed to sustain and attract new downtown businesses. Another suggestion was to introduce public transportation which could easily bring more people into the downtown area to shop. The East Coast Greenway rail trail passing through Simsbury as well as the 500 parking spots near the trail were noted as great assets to the community. With further development and integration of the rail trail with the downtown, this recreational asset could spur a greater flow of people in and out of the downtown.

“Big box” retail was discussed at length, specifically with respect to the type of large footprint retailers that Simsbury would like to attract, if any. To many, smaller boutique shops were considered more along the lines of what Simsbury would like to promote, as the idea of having a big box retailer was met with a bit of hesitation. There are, however, some bigger retailers that would be considered if they fit in with Simsbury’s existing assets and needs. A Cabela’s, for example, was suggested might fit in Simsbury because fishing is a huge recreational activity in the town. Possible problems with attracting larger footprint stores, which were mentioned throughout the meeting, included limited access to highways and a small “rooftop” count.

Next, Peter instructed the group to do the first exercise of the meeting which asked each attendees to describe what the best opportunities for development/redevelopment are and where they are in Simsbury. The following table summarizes the results of this exercise.

What are the best opportunities for development/redevelopment?	Where are they?
The wedding business- ancillary businesses	

What are the best opportunities for development/redevelopment?	Where are they?
Unique boutiques, high quality niche retail	Village Center, Weatogue
Downtown residences- Heads in Beds, Feet on the Street	Downtown
Universities, Colleges	The Hartford
Multifamily apartments, Residential Condos	Back of Eno Hall, Iron Horse, downtown, back end of Andy's, along the Rail Trail
Mixed Use	Southern Gateway, Wagner properties
Small industrial facility	Herman Drive Industrial Park
Allow for additional residences and retail stores	Downtown
Specialty shops	West Street
Senior center, Teen center, sports complex	
Allow film industry into the Valley	
Executives starting business from house and expanding business to town	Residential
Wolcott Airport development	Wolcott Airport
Development of a recreational lifestyle	
Additional arts facilities	
Health Care Research (i.e. Jackson Labs), University Labs	North End of Rt. 10, Herman Drive, The Hartford- Community College
Retail around Outdoor Activities: Simsbury Farms, Hiking, Biking, Fishing, Canoeing, White Water Tours	Center of Town
Boating: boat house, rentals	Town Center
Retail sports complex (bikes, tackle, hiking gear/clothing)	Near existing boat house and hike trail
Hotel	Next to Old Mill

What are the best opportunities for development/redevelopment?	Where are they?
Tourism attracting NY visitors for weekend visits	
A “medium box” retail store to create traffic flow into Simsbury	Rt. 10
An alternative to traffic through the Center of Town	
Create a “go to” destination such as Cabela’s, a movie theater, or an indoor concert hall	
Retail Stores focused on Wellness and Exercise (i.e. Lu Lu Lemon)	
Need to take advantage of Performing Arts Center	Iron Horse

Of the development opportunities listed above a few were brought up for discussion. Several attendees suggested establishing a community college, university, or research facility in Simsbury. The Hartford Insurance Company site was agreed might be an appropriate site for a such a facility.

Other opportunities centered upon capitalizing on Simsbury’s recreational assets (the rail trail and Farmington River) to create a sports complex, and/or retail stores that catered to fishing, hiking, and biking.

Next, Peter asked participants to describe Simsbury’s biggest constraints to development and/or redevelopment. The results are summarized in the following table.

What are the biggest constraints to development/redevelopment?	
Public sentiment	The lack of access (via roadways and highways)
Zoning regulations	Traffic on Rt 10 and Rt 85
Reputation of being a difficult town to develop in	High taxes

High energy costs	High labor costs
Lack of residents living downtown	Uncertainty
Time it takes to develop/redevelop	Size of parcels
Downtown owners have to be open to work with each other for the greater good	Lack of affordable lodging options

Among the top constraints mentioned was the lack of access to and from Simsbury via highways. With only one main roadway, the infrastructure capacity to support more downtown retail is somewhat limited. Traffic was foreseen would be a problematic consequence of further development downtown.

Another constraint to development that was discussed is Simsbury's reputation for not being easily developable. One attendee remarked that Simsbury has a unique culture and as a community it is important for them to synch the type of consumer in Simsbury with the type of retail.

Lack of affordable housing was also noted was a constraint in terms of Simsbury developing its tourism. Peter suggested that there might be an opportunity for such lodging in Tariffville, which has a slightly different culture than that of the Center of Simsbury and is closer to highways. Each of Simsbury's villages have a distinct characteristic, which presents an opportunity for Simsbury to optimize the diversity of development opportunities in each.

The final exercise asked participants to complete a SWOT analysis for Simsbury by detailing the specific strengths and weaknesses that enable or prevent the success of businesses in Simsbury and the opportunities and threats facing businesses in Simsbury.

**STRENGTHS:**

- Proximity to airport
- Professional education close to Simsbury
- High income levels
- Reputation of community
- High quality of life (safe, secure, good schools, great recreational opportunities)
- New zoning and PAD allow mixed use and residential development
- Close-knit, locally-minded community (customer loyalty)
- East Coast Greenway Trail

### WEAKNESSES:

- Inability to capture target market to the South
- Town letting the Northern Village Area (North Simsbury) to fall into disrepair and neglect
- Town's infatuation with, and only with the Center of town when most residents don't live as near to the center of town as they do to one of the other "village" centers
- The Franchise Laws for Connecticut
- Need to grow more in the North
- Distance from highway (lack of transportation access)
- High taxes
- Lots of landowners have owned property for years without any real incentive to sell (causes "long jam" resales)
- High labor costs
- Restrictive zoning
- Bad reputation of resistance to development
- Retail rates
- Lack of access to young pool of educated employees. (Young people want to go to cities)

### OPPORTUNITIES:

- High net worth investment in commercial real estate
- Live/work complexes
- Capitalize on success of local restaurants (establish more restaurants, live music or the like)
- More diversity on North End
- Creating a sports complex

### THREATS:

- The overabundance of restaurants creates the image that one is always going out of business to reflect demand. As soon as that happens a new one opens.
- Most of the auto manufacturers want to be on Rt 44
- Governor changing laws to hurt our businesses
- High taxes and energy costs (high costs of doing business)
- Commercial corridors like Rt 44 that allow strip development that is easy and relatively cheap to build
- Lack of residences downtown
- Low car count
- An outside ownership group acquires large real estate and they don't know or care about Simsbury
- 

Note: At the end of this report a SWOT analysis is presented by type of industry of the respondents.

Before the meeting ended, Peter asked whether the group had any other thoughts or comments to contribute. One attendee asked whether attracting a small manufacturing firm would be desirable for Simsbury. An aerospace manufacturing firm has been successful in Simsbury, for example. What usually draws manufacturers such as that to an area is proximity to other such manufacturers (UTC Aerospace Systems in Windsor Locks, CT) and a high quality of life and high quality talent in the area, so it was suggested it could be a possibility. A potential site for such a facility could be the Herman Drive site, as suggested by one attendee. It would however improvements infrastructure and transportation access.

Peter concluded the meeting by thanking those who had attended and participating in the discussion.

On the following pages contains the responses to the SWOT analysis for each of the types of businesses that responded. NOTE: These tables contain the 10 responses from the on-line version of the SWOT analysis that was made available to residents and businesses. There were a total of 21 responses both at the meeting and on-line.

**Professional/Technical Services (2 respondents)**

<b>STRENGTHS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Good population of costumers who do my advertising for me. Close knit- People tend to buy locally.</li><li>• Nice community Availability of space Professional community</li></ul>	<b>WEAKNESSES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High taxes</li><li>• Development/residential</li><li>• Location-proximity to highways Taxes Slow economic development Weak infrastructure</li></ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New businesses would provide me new clients</li><li>• Better planning &amp; strategic development</li><li>• None unless we bring bigger corporate business here</li></ul>	<b>THREATS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Other towns have lower taxes, cost base and barriers to entry Corporations moving to business parks in other towns</li></ul>



**Real Estate (7 respondents)**

<p><b>STRENGTHS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reputation of community</li> <li>• Simsbury's schools</li> <li>• Barrier of entry</li> <li>• Proximity to airport</li> <li>• Lifestyle choice: safe, secure, good schools, great recreation</li> <li>• Income level</li> <li>• High community profile and economic wellness</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distance from highway</li> <li>• Access to young pool of educated employees (potential workforce). Young people want to go to cities.</li> <li>• High taxes, labor, zoning</li> <li>• Bad reputation of resistance to development</li> <li>• an uncohesive look to the businesses along Hopmeadow/Route 10/202</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New development opportunities</li> <li>• Opportunities are what I hear in this room/ what works, and fits</li> <li>• High net worth investment in commercial real estate</li> <li>• Live-work complexes</li> <li>• More people</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need always to be competing regionally</li> <li>• High taxes, cost of electricity</li> <li>• An outside ownership group acquires large real estate and they don't know or care about Simsbury</li> <li>• Cost to do business (taxes)</li> <li>• The South/Overseas</li> <li>• Need car count, Need more residences in downtown</li> <li>• Increasing taxes and fees for utility connections</li> </ul>

**Restaurant/Food Service (1 respondent)**

<p><b>STRENGTHS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family and strong ties to the community. Disposable income ability so residents become "regulars" visiting weekly</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inability to capture target market to the South. Town letting the Norther Village Area (North Simsbury) to fall into disrepair and neglect. Town's infatuation with, and only with, the Center of town when most residents don't live as near to the Center of Town as they do to one of the other "village" centers</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding on our existing product line. I don't think there is any opportunity to the bike route being capitalized upon. We see a very small amount of traffic but the majority just travel by or stop to picnic. This is always what happens with visitors to our sports fields. They come,</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The overabundance of restaurants creates the image (and fact) that one is always going out of business to reflect demand. As soon as that happens a new one opens.</li> </ul>

they play, they leave... without spending a nickel in our town.	
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**Retail (4 respondents)**

<p><b>STRENGTHS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban Science has defined the FV (Farmington Valley) as the largest growth opportunity for Jeep.</li> <li>• Residents have money &amp; like to shop locally. Town keeps roads clear in winter. Rt 10 is a major corridor.</li> <li>• the customer base - very diverse</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Franchise laws for Connecticut- we have a mountain, and the Connecticut River and 30 mins away.</li> <li>• North of town center is rather ignored, but boy do we have to follow the rules &amp; ask Mommy for permission. Of course, Mommy knows best, so maybe (often) Mommy says, I'm sorry,</li> <li>• confusing development, traffic</li> <li>• strict zoning rules, from signage to parking. Need a lot more free downtown parking to make Simsbury more attractive for more customers and businesses. Remove one way streets.</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If we were to acquire the Jeep Franchise we would likely employ 10-15 more people, and retail 150-200 Jeeps/year.</li> <li>• education, commercial office park, tourists special events</li> <li>• Nothing really. It seems that small businesses are or are not successful due to their own marketing and business plan - the town doesn't help small businesses improve - if anything its the B2B community directly that does that.</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most of the auto manufactures want to be on Rt 44. Rt 44 is the King of Retail in the Farmington Valley</li> <li>• Everyone chases the money. Over development &amp; loss of green space will change people's attitude towards the area, &amp; they will start treating the area like a mall to shop at as a target,</li> <li>• empty Hartford Life campus</li> <li>• Many other business owners we talk to have an issue that many in town government don't really know about our businesses: our trials, our struggles, our dreams for our businesses, etc. I don't think it wise to pay consultants to find this out. Make it MANDATORY to have members of the BOS, BOF and EDC visit every business every 1-2 years, just to check in, hear their voice, etc. Chamber doesn't represent all businesses, even landlords don't know what their tenants really want/need.</li> </ul>

**Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (1 respondent)**

<b>STRENGTHS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>80% of grants come from existing businesses</li> </ul>	<b>WEAKNESSES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rental rates</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b>	<b>THREATS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Common" goals of community</li> <li>Rental rates</li> </ul>

**Financial Services** (1 respondent)

<b>STRENGTHS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Great schools for employees children</li> <li>Highly educated workforce</li> <li>Proximity to necessary support services (e.g. Staples, shipping, legal)</li> <li>Proximity to "lifestyle" services for employees (e.g. places to go for lunch/coffee)</li> <li>Location clients enjoy visiting</li> <li>Proximity to an airport</li> </ul>	<b>WEAKNESSES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primary weakness is lack of a "business community" in town. Simsbury is home to many successful business leaders, some running their own companies, others executives at large firms,</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b> <p>I think the biggest opportunity lies with addressing the weakness I cited; fostering a dialogue and sense of community among business leaders. There are 2 significant potential benefits here; 1) more brainpower and resources around economic development; 2) by bringing together business leaders in town for the broader purpose of improving Simsbury's competitive position vis-a-vis economic development/attracting new businesses to town, existing businesses will "discover" each other and generate new business opportunities among themselves.</p>	<b>THREATS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My business is in the start-up phase. Given the nature of the business I am building, it would certainly make more sense to do it in/near a major start-up city (e.g. SF, NY, Boston, Austin, Boulder). I haven't made that move yet because I'd prefer not move my family and I think I can make it work here. That said, living in Simsbury is a bit like living in a bubble. There are positives to that to be sure, but we really need to extend beyond our backyards in terms of influences and ideas. If we do not get creative about our future, businesses will leave for 1 of 2 destinations; 1) havens of innovation and creativity, or 2) cheaper locales.</li> </ul>

**Personal Services** (1 respondent)

<b>STRENGTHS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>proximity to clientele</li> </ul>	<b>WEAKNESSES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the tax burden placed on business expensive to live/work</li> </ul>
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<b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b>	<b>THREATS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• difficult to get labor - no good public trans.</li> </ul>
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**Education** (1 respondent)

<b>STRENGTHS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• central downtown area, good range of services/products, attractive and well maintained facilities, supportive market base - affluent educated consumers, semi-business friendly government and policies, many high quality hospitality related businesses; active vibrant volunteer base; proximity to Hartford, Boston and New York, and airport</li> </ul>	<b>WEAKNESSES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• distance from major highways, taxes, diversity of population, aging population,</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b> Great public schools! Economic environment in broad sense.	<b>THREATS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• general weakness/issue: Bd of Selectmen form of government - lack of town manager, professional staff to run town. Despite good intentions and experience of elected officials, this form of government is outdated and backwards, detrimental..</li> </ul>

**Nonprofit** (1 respondent)

<b>STRENGTHS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active business community, Town amenities, resident volunteerism and resident feedback</li> </ul>	<b>WEAKNESSES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak economy, over regulations, taxes = less money for non-profit business,</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b> Less taxes, regulations, more robust economy	<b>THREATS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None apparent</li> </ul>

**Other (not specified) (2 respondents)**

<p><b>STRENGTHS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tight community. Customer loyalty.</li> <li>• New zoning in town Center and Planned Area Development (PAD) allow and encourage mixed use and especially residential development of various parcels. More residents will, I believe, create new retail opportunities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dead on North. Need more Northern growth. Town stops here at Simsbury Bank.</li> <li>• Lots of landowners own property for many years and have no real incentive to sell. Causes a "long jam" re sales.</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More diversity on North End. Sports complex.</li> <li>• Great town; lots of good schools (public and private \$\$\$). That's where all the weekend diners come from. Even more restaurants choices would also do very well if they were excellent and had some neat "hook" (scenery or music or the like). We need to do a solid analysis of how certain development would eventually increase property values.</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governor changing laws to hurt our businesses.</li> <li>• Commercial corridors like Rt 44 that allow strip development that is easy and relatively cheap to build.</li> </ul>

**STAKEHOLDERS THOUGHTS ON BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES RECEIVED VIA EMAIL:**

- \* Best opportunities for development are Downtown and on IronHorse, the whole northend-it's a challenge up there but has potential, the entire southern gateway (probably the most potential)-but big challenges with neighbors and slow-go development folks, and the Hartford property (very difficult to judge)
- \* I have said where the location is
- \* constraints are: the folks who don't want to see the area grow, government regs, and \$.
- \* I would have loved to be in Simsbury with our Asset Management, insurance and Benefits business. But I couldn't find A space and bought the building we are in.
- \* Simsbury is just a bit to far out of the way, further for workers to drive, not on a main thoroughfare and could create a traffic issue if it were any larger
- \* Not sure about this one (new sources of income).
- \* Again, it's just a bit to far and harder to explain to clients as to how to get there. Avon is kind of perfect for us in that regard. Straight shot to Hartford, major street (44) and closer to 84 for trips to the east or west.

I am sorry that I missed the workshops earlier this month, but I have been thinking lots for a long time about businesses for Simsbury.

Just this week, I compiled a list of the top ten things in Simsbury to send to the state tourism people to try and encourage Governor Malloy to make Simsbury a stop on his summer Tourism Tour.

And it got me thinking about what Simsbury lacks. As you will see from the attached list, we have amazing things but we don't advertise them, we don't help people find things in town and we DON'T have enough things like little unique stores to poke around in that would encourage outsiders to stick around once they have come for a concert, the quilt shop or dinner or music downtown.

Now I know that clothing stores, art galleries, antique stores and tea shops have already failed here. BUT I think because it was because they weren't unique enough and people could not find them.

But I think we should play off a store that is a HUGE success like Sew Inspired in Fiddler's Green. And the successful music scene at Maple Tree and Iron Frog's music scene.

Those are the areas I think we need to develop more: Music and Art/antiques/creative areas.

Music downtown –both Maple Tree and Iron Frog constantly have music. How about encouraging a music/old book store to open in Fiddler's Green. I just heard John Dankosky broadcast LIVE from such a store in New London. And I thought we could poach the old books store from Canton and find someone who is interested in selling vinyl records – Vinyl I am told is the latest thing.

I also met a developer in New London at the state Tourism Conference who has an upscale art gallery. Check it out at [www.firehousesquare.com](http://www.firehousesquare.com).

So how about an art gallery at Fiddler's Green. ART would be an enormous draw – witness Art Walk last year. We actually have an amazing group of artists in town like Vincente Garcia who did the amazing bike sculpture. His studio in town is amazing. Or Susan Prentice who was commissioned by the Hillstead Museum to create a touchable painting.

You will say that Art's Exclusive failed. It was a wonderful gallery but it wasn't centrally located. If it, or another consignment art gallery were in one of our other downtown spaces, I think it would work.

And the other issue is SIGNAGE. People can't find anything here. Even the Bridge of Flowers. It has a lovely little sign, but it is written in script and is not legible by drivers or even bikers.

A couple of additional things. The things I am talking about are seed business that will not make money initially and probably cannot afford the rents at Fiddler's. I think to encourage these

businesses, we would have to give Fiddler's Green a tax break to allow them to discount rent for artists, antiques, old books and record store type businesses.

Also, people complain that there is not enough parking at Fiddler's Green. Why can't people be encouraged to park at the bank lot across the street. Who owns that? Can't we put a sign there. Or another sign that shows people they can park a bit farther down in Iron Horse Boulevard Parking. Simsburytown Shops has a similar problem at lunch with pizza, Metro Bis and pizza pickups.

Of course, I haven't mentioned the river or the biking which are also great draws to town, but I know others have had that covered.

And finally, one small request. Do you have a relationship with Peaberry's and Fitzgerald's. Can you do something about encouraging Peaberry's to work with Fitzgerald's bakery. Peaberry's is in a great location and does great things, but their bakery stuff is sub par and that shouldn't be because they have a wonderful bakery right next door.

Dominique Avery

Member- Simsbury Tourism Committees

#### **SIMSBURY TOP TEN HIGHLIGHTS**

**Settled in 1670, long before the revolution!**

**Still revolutionary!**

#### **1. The Old Drake Hill Flower Bridge our #1 town jewel!**

After the town saved a 19<sup>th</sup> century one-way metal truss bridge when it built a modern bridge over the Farmington River, volunteers had the idea of decorating it with gardens, flower boxes and hanging baskets. Since its founding in 1996 it has become the go-to place for picnickers, bikers, walkers, a yoga class, and even weddings & formal dinners

#### **2. Cell Phone Tour and Simsbury Historical Society**

Like many Connecticut towns we have a Historical Society but ours is a **special collection of 16 antique buildings** and **gardens** on a two-acre site right in the center of town. The **cell phone walking tour** is of 11 historic buildings on Hopmeadow Street, our main street .

The tour includes the recently restored **Eno Memorial Hall** which is on the National Register of Historic Places - a stunning classical revival building with a beautiful cupola clock tower which has



been used as a courthouse, city hall, an auditorium, and as government offices and is still in active use today.

3. **Bike Friendly Community and Free Bike Program**

Simsbury is the only town in Connecticut that has received the Bike Friendly designation and we are one of very few towns to offer town residents and visitors free bikes for two-day rentals

4. **Whitewater Kayaking -Tariffville Gorge in Simsbury**

Again this year the Gorge was the site of the Whitewater Triple Crown New England Championships in April. And in **July** the Gorge will host the North American Junior Olympics Festival East and the Whitewater Triple Crown

5. **Simsbury Performing Arts Complex**

The location of the **Talcott Mountain Festival with the Hartford Symphony AND** a this year, the **Summer Concerts at Simsbury Meadows with Harry Connick, Emmylou Harris and Peter Frampton**

6. **Simsbury Free Library – the Simsbury Genealogical and Research Library**

A quiet place in the center of town for research in a historic building where you can visit the office of the **Simsbury native who “invented” the first traffic light** - the “Father of Traffic Regulation and Trans-portion Engineering.”

7. **The Pinchot Sycamore**, the largest tree in Connecticut

8. **Talcott Mountain and The Heublein Tower**

9. Simsbury was where **Dr. Martin Luther King first learned about racial integration when he worked here for two summers picking tobacco**. Simsbury students have produced a documentary on his time here and have begun fundraising to create a permanent memorial.

10. Acres of **Open Space** and miles of **Hiking Trails**, the best **Fall Foliage** in the state without the crowds, **Historic Farms** featuring **Eggs & Petting Zoo (Flamig) Organic Vegetables, (Hall Farm), famous Homemade Ice Cream and Grass Fed Beef (Tulmeadow) and a farm and winery (Rosedale)**. In addition Simsbury is a great place to dine with **Top-rated Restaurants** like The Mill at 2 T, Metro Bis, Abigail's, Red Stone Pub and Millwright's.



### Some Random Thoughts:

Wealthy parents splurge on their kids in at least two areas~ Sports and Music. Both categories can be served by specialty shops rather than large chains.

#### SPORTS

Equipment and clothing or uniforms. Private year round lessons and vacation camps Biking MUSIC  
All music instruments including piano. Lessons and vacation camps linked to Regional music schools

#### RIVER RELATED

Fishing and boating equipment and lessons

#### ANNUAL FLY IN continues to grow

Does promoting village retail detract from a more central center of gravity?

Big negative is taxes. How about an incentive program for new businesses?

Need to overcome reputation among developers that Simsbury is a tough Town. Some recent actions suggest we still don't get it.

Call received from a person who was a professional fly tying person for many years. Now retired. He was concerned that some people thought the Farmington River in Simsbury would be recommended as a fly fishing paradise. He said this was simply not the case and did not want folks to think it was. Instead he suggested we focus more on providing inns and hotel rooms for vacationers who could go fly fish in other areas that were "much better".

August 10, 2017

## MEMORANDUM

From: Simsbury Economic Development Commission

To: Simsbury Board of Selectmen

Attention: Lisa Heavner and Sean Askham

Earlier this year the current Economic Development Commission (EDC) was asked by two members of the Simsbury Board of Selectmen ... Lisa Heavner and Sean Askham ... to prepare a recommendation pertaining to the establishment of a New Economic Development Commission (NEDC) in 2018 as required by the revised Town Charter.

The purpose of this memorandum is to summarize the current EDC's recommendations regarding the establishment of a NEDC by the Board of Selectmen that will be elected in November 2017 and seated shortly thereafter. This document contains 4 sections as follows:

- A. NEDC Duties and Responsibilities
- B. NEDC Plan of Organization and Operation
- C. NEDC Resource Requirements
- D. Suggested Economic Development Strategies

Sections A. and B. in this report are responsive to the task given to the EDC by Ms. Heavner and Mr. Askham. The EDC has decided to supplement the task by adding Sections C. and D. We feel that Section C. regarding NEDC Resource Requirements is especially important given the scope of duties and responsibilities that are being proposed.

### **SECTION A. ... PROPOSED NEDC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The EDC's proposals for NEDC duties and responsibilities are informed by the following: (a) state statute regarding the establishment of Economic Development Commissions in the State of Connecticut (Title 7; Chapter 97; Section 7-136); (b) a review of the Plan of Conservation and Development currently being prepared by town staff and the Planning Commission; and (c) the opinions of various members of the current Economic Development Commission as discussed in its meetings to date in 2017.

Our proposals with regard to NEDC duties and responsibilities are as follows:

1. Prepare a strategic plan for economic development in collaboration with the Board of Selectmen and other Boards and Commissions, and present it to the Board of Selectmen as soon as possible ... hopefully by mid-2018. This plan should provide strategic guidelines for economic development that is feasible and desirable for Simsbury. (mandated by the 2017 POCD)
2. Conduct economic development research to analyze economic conditions in and around Simsbury; and to assess economic resources that may be available to support new development as well as existing businesses in the town. (required by statute)

3. Co-ordinate and co-operate with organizations such as Main Street Partnership, Simsbury Historical Society, Simsbury Chamber of Commerce and Farmington Valley Visitors Association. (required by statute)
4. Make recommendations, consistent with the NEDC strategic plan, to officials and agencies in Simsbury, including the Town Manager, Board of Selectmen, Planning Commission, Tourism Committee, Design Review Board and Zoning Commission regarding actions intended to improve the town's economic condition. (required by statute)
5. Review new economic development projects with other boards and commissions, and advocate at local and state levels for strategically desirable projects that have potential to expand the town's grand list. (historical precedent)
6. Endeavor to assist and support economic developers in their attempts to initiate economic development projects in Simsbury. (historical precedent)
7. Co-operate with the Town Manager, staff groups and Main Street Partnership in the preparation and submission of grant applications that can support economic development activity. (seen as desirable by the current EDC)
8. Prepare and present an annual report of the NEDC's activities and recommendations to the Board of Selectmen; the Planning Commission and any other boards, committees and commissions that have an interest in economic development. (required by statute)

## **SECTION B. ... NEDC PLAN OF ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION**

In order to develop recommendations regarding the organization of the NEDC, the current EDC conducted research regarding practices being utilized by towns in Connecticut that are similar in size and demographic make up to Simsbury. The EDC also used the experience of long serving current and former members of the existing EDC.

These recommendations are as follows:

### **Number of Members**

We propose that there should be 7 members appointed by the Board of Selectmen to the NEDC. This recommendation is based on a review of EDC membership practices throughout Connecticut. Most towns similar to Simsbury have decided to have EDCs with between 5 and 7 members.

We suggest the higher number of 7 for the following reasons: (a) in order to take into account the possibility of meeting absences; (b) to provide opportunities for diversity in the membership; and (c) to ensure that there are enough members to do the work of the NEDC.

### **Term of Office**

We suggest a 4 year term of office for members of the NEDC which would be consistent with terms for the majority of commissions in Simsbury. It may be difficult to recruit members for terms longer than 4 years, while shorter terms would not provide enough experience for new members to get up to speed.

### Meeting Frequency

We suggest that the NEDC should meet 2 times monthly rather than the current EDC practice of meeting one time per month. This increase in number of meetings will allow the members more time to accomplish the work needed to fulfill the NEDC's more extensive list of duties and responsibilities.

### Member Qualifications and Characteristics

We recommend that the members of the NEDC should have some or all of the following characteristics:

- Multiple years of business experience in small, medium and/or large organizations
- At least 5 years of residency in Simsbury
- Personal flexibility to attend weekday meetings in early morning or early evening
- At least one member of the Simsbury Chamber of Commerce
- At least one active member of the Main Street Partnership, preferably an officer of that group
- Willingness to accept special project responsibilities in addition to meeting attendance
- Previous experience in Planning and/or Zoning Boards and Commissions
- Multiple members who do not work full time
- At least one person with previous experience as chair of a board or commission

### Political Affiliation of Members

We would urge the new Board of Selectmen to populate the NEDC with a politically balanced group of members. Specifically, we would suggest ... 2 Republicans; 2 Democrats; and 3 unaffiliated.

### The Economic Development Role of the Town Manager and the First Selectperson

The job descriptions of the Town Manager and the First Selectperson are still under review by the Board of Selectmen, so we do not know if either of those positions will have codified responsibility for economic development activities. We do however propose the following ...

1. That the Town Manager job description should include specific language relating to economic development. At minimum we believe that the Town Manager should have a responsibility to assist the NEDC in its work, and be available to interact with developers who may want to do business in Simsbury, and with existing business owners in town.
2. That the First Selectperson's job description should include specific language relating to interaction and outreach with current and prospective new business owners and to support their efforts to maintain and strengthen their businesses in Simsbury.

### The Role of the Main Street Partnership and FVVA

We strongly recommend that the NEDC should continue to have a close working relationship with the Simsbury Main Street Partnership and the Farmington Valley Visitors Association. This should involve active communications from time to time. However, we propose that the current practice of having the SMSP and FVVA doing monthly status reports should be changed to brief bi-monthly reports. This will result in more time for the NEDC to deal with its expanded duties and responsibilities.

## **SECTION C. ... NEDC RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS**

We are unable to be specific about the resources required for the NEDC to do its work, but in general we believe the NEDC will need dedicated resources above and beyond its membership. This is because the duties and responsibilities that have been proposed for the NEDC are extensive and well beyond the capabilities of the commission itself, given that most of its members will have full time jobs and family responsibilities as well.

To give a perspective on this, here is a summary of the duties and responsibilities proposed by the EDC for the NEDC, most of which are mandated by state statute on by the new Plan of Conservation and Development ... see Section A. above for more details:

1. Prepare a Strategic Plan in collaboration with other boards and commissions
2. Conduct Economic Development Research needed to inform a Strategic Plan
3. Co-ordinate Activities of, and co-operate with, other relevant boards and commissions
4. Make recommendations for economic development
5. Review assist and support new economic development projects
6. Advocate for relevant economic development issues at the local and state level
7. Participate with state and regional agencies to foster economic development in Simsbury
8. Prepare and present an annual report of the EDC's activities and recommendations

Accordingly, it seems clear that the current financial and human resources available to the current EDC will be inadequate for the NEDC, since the responsibilities of the NEDC are significantly greater in number and complexity than the responsibilities of the previous Economic Development Commissions. And so, we suggest that the new Board of Selectmen should consider providing the following resources for the NECD during the first year of its existence ...

1. A staff person (0.25 FTE) dedicated to the work of the NECD.
2. Budget for an Economic Development consultant to assist in development of a strategic plan.
3. Continuation of funds earmarked to support the Simsbury Main Street Partnership

## **SECTION D. ... SUGGESTED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

The EDC was not asked to provide suggestions regarding economic development strategies, but we do feel strongly that a set of agreed upon strategies must be in place to guide innovative work on economic development. These or other strategies should be codified in the Simsbury Economic Development Strategic Plan mentioned in Section A. above. To the best of our knowledge neither the Board of Selectmen nor previous Economic Development Commissions have ever developed a strategic plan for economic development. It is long past time to do so ... and in fact this task is mandated by the new Plan for Conservation and Development.

And so ... the current EDC takes this opportunity to suggest several strategic directions for economic development in Simsbury. They are as follows:

1. Ensure that dedicated human and financial resources are provided to the NEDC. If Simsbury wishes to accelerate its economic development activity and seriously build the Grand List, we believe that dedicated human and financial resources must be provided. Volunteer resources are unlikely to produce an improvement in economic development in the town.

2. Give top priority to the development of an Economic Development Strategic Plan. To our knowledge this has never been done and would provide a necessary framework for Economic Development activity. Ideally, this would be done using the services of an experienced strategic planning consultant. But if adequate financial resources are not available to fund a consultant, then at least 2 of the members of the NEDC should have experience with strategic planning and be willing to assist the town in developing a plan using volunteer resources.
3. Study Economic Development Success Models in Towns Similar to Simsbury. This can be done with the assistance of the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) and perhaps through the use of specialized consultants and/or volunteer members of the NEDC
4. Focus on "Target Sectors" consistent with the Economic Development Strategic Plan. Preparation of this plan should be a top priority of the NEDC, and it should include a detailed section on types of economic development make the most sense for The Town of Simsbury, and which are preferred target sectors based on input from Citizens at Large, Boards & Commissions, The Chamber of Commerce and The Main Street Partnership.
5. Take note of Economic Development Guidance embedded in the new POCD. The new Plan of Conservation and Development includes two important relevant tasks as follows: (a) Seek grants that will support economic development efforts; and (b) Participate with state and regional economic development agencies to foster economic development in Simsbury.
6. Ensure that the NEDC is tasked with the responsibility to report on an annual basis to the Board of Selectmen. This will increase the probability that the NEDC will be action oriented with a sense of responsibility to produce tangible economic development results.

This concludes our report. We assume this will be passed along to the new Board of Selectmen that will be elected in November for their consideration when they establish and populate the NEDC.

Submitted by:

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Kristen C. Barnett  
Chair – Simsbury Economic Development Commission  
On Behalf of the Commissioners:

David C. Balboni  
Mark H. Brady  
Jay Devivo  
Maura Ann Fitzgerald-Mocchie  
Thomas E. Frank  
Evelyn M. Golden  
David M. Moore