

Connecticut Metropolitan Council of Governments

Commission on Economic Competitiveness

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September 27, 2016

Room 2A – Legislative Office Building



METROCOG

Connecticut Metropolitan Council of Governments

TODAY'S PRESENTATION



About MetroCOG

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Economic Competitiveness in the Greater Bridgeport Region

Challenges to Economic Competitiveness

Connecticut's Strengths

ABOUT US

MetroCOG is a robust, multi-disciplined organization



City of Bridgeport; Towns of Easton, Fairfield, Monroe, Stratford & Trumbull

Chief Elected Officials of each municipality serve on MetroCOG's Board of Directors.

Federally Designated Transportation Planning Organization (MPO).

Provide a range of services to the six member municipalities – Transportation, Land Use, Conservation & Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning; GIS & Mapping, Grant Writing and Project Management.

CONSOLIDATION & REDESIGNATION

Between 2011 & 2013, COGs were required to analyze their structure and boundaries.

Early/Mid 2013: GBRC petitions the State for a merger with the South Western Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA), as it is identified as the most rational approach for transportation, conservation, economic development and emergency management.

September 9, 2013: SWRPA votes to merge with the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials (HVCEO) to form one entity - the Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG). SWRPA and HVCEO do not support a merger with GBRC.

October 1, 2013: OPM issues “*Analysis of the Boundaries of Logical Planning Regions*” with preliminary recommendations for designations and redesignations. Scenario A of the Status Report identifies a consolidation of GBRC, SWRPA and HVCEO.

October 24, 2013: After reviewing Scenario A, the GBRC unanimously votes to support the consolidation with the South Western and Housatonic Valley planning regions.

“You should know that this office believes that the optimal region serving Western Connecticut should also include the current Greater Bridgeport planning region as well because of the strong ties in matters affecting transportation, the environment, housing patterns, commuting patterns, and the local perceptions of social and historical and cultural ties.”

December 6, 2013 letter from
OPM Secretary Benjamin Barnes regarding the
HVCEO/SWRPA merger to WestCOG.

ONE COAST, ONE FUTURE CEDS

A 2005-2010 partnership between the South Western & Greater Bridgeport Regions



2005: the Bridgeport Regional Business Council & the Business Council of Fairfield County partnered to develop the *“One Coast, One Future Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.”*

September, 2010: *“One Coast, One Future”* is approved by DECD & OPM.

December, 2010: the Governor designates the Coastal Fairfield County EDD. However, the CEDS never receives US EDA approval, & was therefore not designated as a Federal EDD.

September, 2015: the CEDS expires.

ALIGNING REDDS WITH COG BOUNDARIES

Process for the next Regional Economic Development District



The Coastal Fairfield Economic Development District is still active, but neither a Board of Directors nor by-laws exist.

Recently passed legislation requires for REDD and COG boundaries to correspond. Only nine REDDs are allowed.

For MetroCOG to be designated as an EDD the current Coastal Fairfield County EDD will need to be reconfigured or abolished, as it does not align with MetroCOG's boundaries.

Once MetroCOG is established as a REDD, we will be eligible for US EDA Planning & Local Technical Assistance Program funds (FY 2016-2019).

METROCOG'S CEDS

Identify a process & approach most rational for future economic development

- Overview of Region
- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
- Current & Future Demographic & Economic Statistics
- Current & Future Economic Trends
- Jobs & Housing Analysis
- Land Use/Zoning Analysis
- Market/Economic Analysis
- Economic Feasibility
- Business Attraction, Recruitment & Retention



Action Plan:

Identify Immediate, Short & Long Terms Goals/Priority Projects.

Marketing

Financing Mechanisms

Implementation Schedule

Performance Measures

ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

Regional Benefits



Legacy of Innovation and Manufacturing.

323,000 Residents over 144 square miles (densest region in the state).

A talented, dedicated, educated, driven and diverse workforce.

Higher Education: University of Bridgeport, Fairfield University, Sacred Heart University and Housatonic Community College.

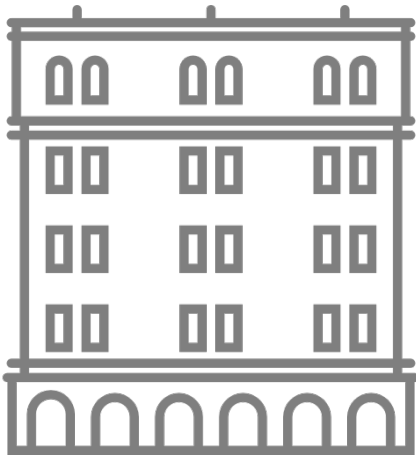
Affordable housing, walkable neighborhoods and an accessible waterfront.

Transportation: Interstate 95, Route 8/25, Merritt Parkway; Greater Bridgeport Transit; Metro-North/Northeast Corridor Rail; Bridgeport - Port Jefferson Ferry; Sikorsky Airport; Multi-Modal Trails

BUILD ON LOCAL STRENGTHS

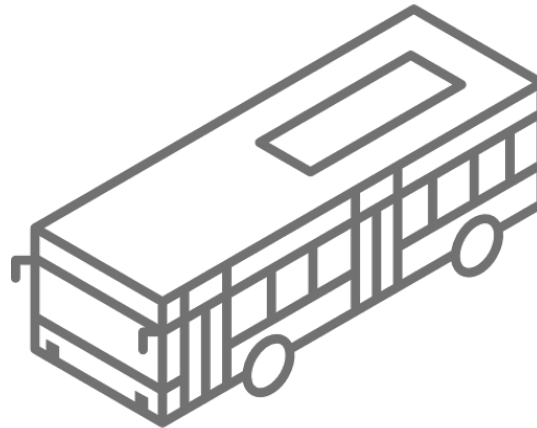
Identify our strengths

Existing Businesses



Help local companies grow and be competitive by assisting them with new technology and access to capital.

Transit



Investments in bus and rail support cities and town centers, with the added benefit of reducing congestion.

Affordable Space



Business incubators, start-ups and entrepreneurs are attracted to low cost, commercial and industrial flex space.

REDEVELOPMENT

Realize opportunities for a more efficient regulatory process.

Large, complex redevelopment projects are time sensitive and require coordination across federal, state and local agencies.

A slow regulatory process has been cited as an impediment to redevelopment.

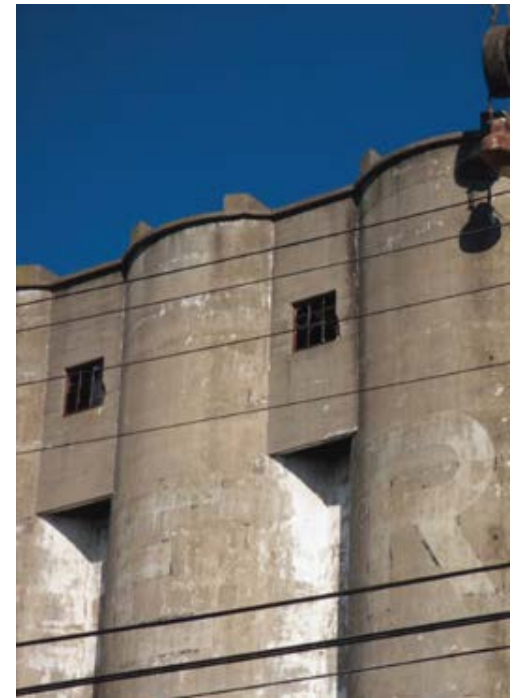
Access to economic data and statewide communication about development opportunities can be improved.

A more proactive process and committed resources at the state level would reduce project delays.

Any large redevelopment project that's ready to go should receive priority treatment.

State provision of Site Selector for local Economic Development Departments and a forum to share leads on development opportunities.

MetroCOG recognizes the importance and value of ESRI's Business Analyst Online by providing logins to the Region's Economic Development Directors.



BUILDINGS & INFRASTRUCTURE

Assist all communities with attracting investment.

Transport people, services and goods through Fairfield County is a logistical challenge for many businesses.

Reuse of older, physically obsolete buildings in urban areas with continuing brownfields challenges is often expensive and complicated, which reduces investor interest.

The infrastructure in suburbs, including corporate campuses, needs to be improved to attract and retain businesses, families and entrepreneurs.



Help transit-friendly cities attract investment by renovating or demolishing older buildings.

Support suburbs by investing in walkability and infrastructure upgrades.

State and federal brownfields programs have remediated sites throughout the Greater Bridgeport area & Connecticut.

SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

Program Rich but Service Challenged



Many assistance programs spread out over multiple agencies.

Small businesses have trouble finding the right program.

Currently a confusing process that's difficult to navigate.

A concierge-like framework to navigating programs – from general inquiries to the final agreement.

Understand which programs are working.

Comprehensively assess all business assistance programs throughout the state and their impact before any new programs are introduced.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

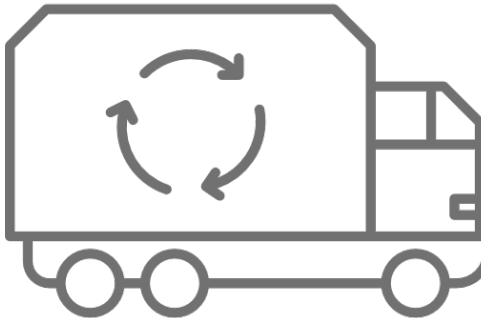
How can we improve?

Energy



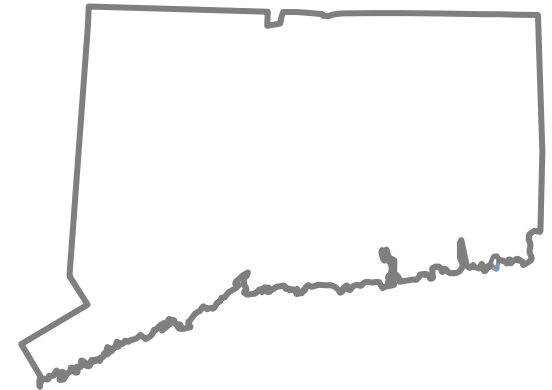
Connecticut is a high cost state, including energy. Many businesses struggle with their energy costs. Help create formulas and programs to reduce or control the cost of energy

Regional Services



Local property taxes can be reduced through consolidation of redundant services. Identify areas with similar issues, resources and services and consolidate where it makes sense.

State Identity



Connecticut has great schools, an excellent quality of life and lots of talent – but needs a well-crafted, campaign to communicate this message.

INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

Educational attainment throughout the state supports a robust and innovative technology sector



In the State Tech & Science index, Connecticut ranked second in the number of science, engineering, and health post-doctorates awarded and second in ACT scores. The state ranked third place in Human Capital Investment.

The State of Connecticut is consistently ranked in the top ten states for innovation & technology

#4, Bloomberg Business' Most Innovative in US (States)

#8, Information Technology & Innovation Foundation's New State Economy Index

#9, Brookings' Advanced Industries

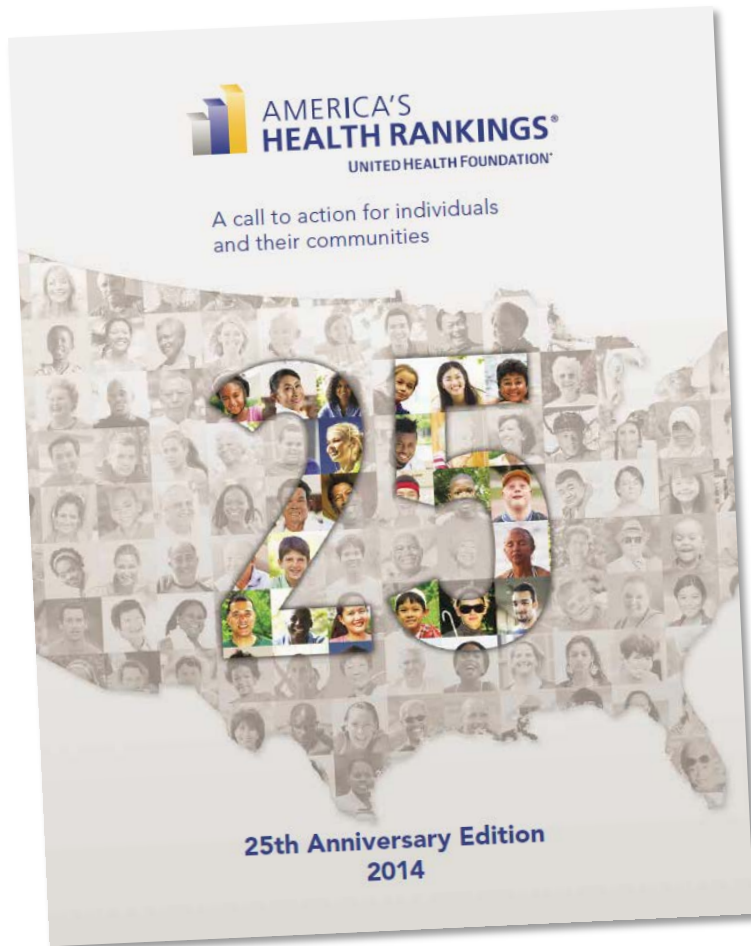
#9, Milken Institute's State Tech & Science Index

“Connecticut excels in traded services, aided by a highly educated workforce, high levels of foreign direct investment, and excellent broadband infrastructure. The state also enjoys robust R&D investment and high scores in inventor patents and fast-growing firms.”

- Information Technology & Innovation Foundation's New State Economy Index

HEALTH

The United Health Foundation ranked Connecticut as the 4th healthiest state in the nation



4th lowest smoking rate (15.5%)

3rd lowest rate of occupational fatalities (2.8%)

8th lowest rate of obesity (24.9%)

8th lowest rate of poor physical health days (3.4%)

Connecticut was ranked #1 by the Measure of America for Human Development.

“Annually in the United States, \$96 billion in direct medical expenses and \$97 billion in lost productivity are attributed to smoking.”

“Poor physical health not only indicates current health status, but it also predicts future health and future medical care.”

- United Health Foundation's America's Health Rankings, 2014



Thank You

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