

Economic Conditions

In order to maintain a high quality of life in any community, the economic conditions must meet the needs and goals of the local population. Not only is it healthy to maintain a diversified and growing economy, it is also important to ensure that local economic development strategies reflect the conditions of the local and regional population, business climate and infrastructure.

In 2009, the Town of Enfield faces significant economic and financial obstacles. Industries, such as finance and insurance, long held as the backbone of the Town and larger metropolitan area, have declined. Recent years have seen several major corporations downsize or relocate, leaving Enfield with rising unemployment and poverty rates as well as an expanding surplus of vacant industrial and commercial space. Meanwhile, the struggle between conservation and development continues as the local agriculture community shrinks and pressure exists for development. Enfield is poised to take appropriate measures to reorganize and find new ways to grow the economy.

The Economic Conditions Chapter provides an assessment of the existing economy of the Town of Enfield and the Hartford Capitol region. This analysis is used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the local economy and provide a foundation upon which economic policy can be created to shape the future of Enfield.

Regional Economic Conditions

The Town of Enfield is located within the Metro Hartford capitol region, 18 miles north of the City of Hartford. Hartford has long been regarded as the “Insurance Capital of the United States,” featuring a heavy concentration of insurance and financial corporations, headquartered throughout the region. Additional major employment sectors include defense, utilities, industrial manufacturing, health services and transportation.²⁶

Similar to Enfield, the entire metropolitan region faces significant economic and financial hurdles. According to a 2008 study, Connecticut was ranked as the fourth most expensive state for doing business.²⁷ The area’s stature as the “Insurance Capitol” is declining. As of 2009, Des Moines, IA had the highest percentage of insurance employment of any city. The region has also seen its traditional labor industries, including manufacturing, decline in recent years as many companies such as Lego have shipped production out of the country.

The Hartford area is located in the southern half of the two-state “knowledge corridor” stretching between Hartford and Springfield, MA along Interstate 91. The Town of Enfield has a very central location within the Knowledge Corridor, 18 miles north of Hartford and 8 miles south of Springfield. This corridor is home to 32 college and universities, including Asnuntuck Community College in Enfield and has a high concentration of “knowledge-based jobs,” such as finance, insurance and education.²⁸

²⁶ Metro Hartford Alliance. 2005. Metro Hartford Regional Assessment. p. 2-8, 71-77.

²⁷ CNBC. 2008. America’s Top States for Doing Business. <<http://www.cnbc.com/id/25501954>>

²⁸ The Hartford-Springfield Economic Partnership. 2009. The Knowledge Corridor. <<http://www.hartfordspringfield.com/>>

Planning within the Hartford Capitol region as well as the Town of Enfield is focused around the idea of “achieving balance between conservation and development.” According to the Town of Enfield Economic Development Department, this is the most significant challenge: spurring economic development while also preserving the high community character, environment and quality of life in Connecticut.²⁹ The POCD for the Capitol Region, drafted in 2003, identifies the priorities for regional planning for the Hartford Metropolitan area. The plan has set a series of five economic goals for the region. These goals, aimed to reposition the Hartford metro for economic growth are:

- Revitalize Hartford as the economic, residential, entertainment and cultural center of the Connecticut Capitol region.
- Coordinate and promote regional land use, infrastructure and fiscal policies for economic development.
- Increase the recognition of a regional identity.
- Maintain a focus on workforce development.
- Support and improve regional business development strategies and efforts.³⁰

For each of these goals, the plan has recommended policies for achievement at the local municipal levels. A 2008 update to this plan features several major themes supporting redevelopment and revitalization of established areas that have gone underutilized, respecting and preserving existing community character and natural resources.³¹ The region intends to diversify its economy to become less heavily dependent upon the finance and insurance industries targeting health care, education, arts and entertainment as major growth sectors. Serving as the headquarters for several of the area’s largest companies, The Town of Enfield will play a significant role in the future of the Hartford Region.

Municipal Health & Stability

The Town of Enfield operates under a council-manager form of government. Legislative power and development of policy responsibilities reside with the Town Council, which is comprised of 11 members of which one is designated Mayor. The Council is also charged with adopting a budget each fiscal year. The Town Manager carries out policy and ordinances and oversees the day-to-day operations of the Town and the appointments of various department heads.

During the 2008-2009 fiscal year, the Town government has faced significant economic challenges, reflective of current local, state and national industry trends. Enfield has had to strongly consider the ongoing national economic recession in its own financial budgeting. Unemployment has sharply increased since 2007 and several major companies have closed, downsized or relocated, reducing the Town’s taxable income base. According to the Enfield finance department, October 2008 saw an overall drop in the Town’s grand list, which is the basis for taxation, including real estate and motor vehicles. A significant portion of this trend is due to vacated commercial space within the Town. It is anticipated that 2009 will see an additional drop resulting from more recent closures, such as Westvaco Corp, a manufacturer of paper and print products.³² This overall economic strain has caused the Town to forecast

²⁹ Warren, Raymond. Director, Town of Enfield Economic Development Department. April 7, 2009. Personal Interview.

³⁰ State of Connecticut. 2008. Plan of Conservation and Development for the Capitol Region.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Nenni, A. Lynn. Director, Town of Enfield Finance Department. June 1, 2009. Personal Interview.

decreases in both taxes as well as interest earnings, which have dropped due to the struggling stock market, resulting in an overall budget revenue shortfall.³³ Consequently, Enfield has been forced to take action to stabilize its financial standing. Negotiations have taken place with the local unions, most of which have agreed to concessions including a temporary wage freeze.³⁴ The Town has also enacted additional stoppages on new hiring and has frozen spending for capital improvement projects, allowing projects to be funded to the maximum extent possible given revenue allocations. It is anticipated that these actions will allow the Town to sustain itself in present conditions as the economy corrects itself.³⁵

Despite struggles within the local economy, the 2008-2009 fiscal health of the Town government is still characterized as good, however with caution. During the 2007-2008 fiscal year, Enfield saw increases in its total net assets from the previous year, as well as a year-end budgetary surplus, in which revenues exceeded expenses by \$1,141. However, this is a significant decrease from the previous year in which the surplus was \$7,648. The Town also took on a greater outstanding debt of \$38,500 in 2008, compared with \$22,500 in 2007. Enfield maintains an “AA” bond rating from Standard and Poor’s, which is the second highest level and characterizes it as a high quality, high grade borrower. Similarly, Moody’s has given the Town an AA3 bond rating, which carries a similar “high quality borrower” association.³⁶ The government’s relative good health should enable Enfield to endure its present economic hardship to prepare for a more prosperous future.

Fiscal Year	Total Project Budgets
2003	\$29.9 Million
2004	\$45.6 Million
2005	\$66.8 Million
2006	\$49.2 Million
2007	\$39.8 Million
2008	\$32.3 Million
2009*	\$20.5 Million
*Note: Through March, 2009 (75% of Fiscal Year)	
Source: Town of Enfield Economic Development Department	

Development Activity

Development in the Town of Enfield has slowed considerably. According to the Town’s Economic Development Department, there are no major development projects underway in 2009, but rather a collection of smaller projects, dominated by building improvements, renovations and small expansions, rather than new construction.

Through the first eight months of the 2008-2009 fiscal year, there were \$20.5 million in projects taking place. Extrapolated to continue at the same rate, the full 2009 fiscal year would see \$27.3 million in building activity. This would be the lowest level of development in six years.³⁷

Proposed Enfield Intermodal Rail Station

A proposed new commuter line extending from New Haven, CT to Springfield, MA, including a stop in Enfield, presents a tremendous economic opportunity. This station will expand the ability for residents of Enfield to commute to Connecticut’s major cities for employment

³³ Town of Enfield. 2008. Comprehensive Annual Financial Report: Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2008. p. iv-vii, 1-10.

³⁴ Nenni, A. Lynn. Director, Town of Enfield Finance Department. June 1, 2009. Personal Interview.

³⁵ Town of Enfield. 2008. Comprehensive Annual Financial Report: Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2008. p. iv-vii, 1-10.

³⁶ Town of Enfield. 2008. Comprehensive Annual Financial Report: Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2008. p. iv-vii, 1-10.

³⁷ Warren, Raymond. Director, Town of Enfield Economic Development Department. April 7, 2009. Personal Interview.

opportunities. It also strengthens connections to a larger labor market that potentially new employers in Enfield can consider. Additionally, the station provides the Town opportunity to expand its own tourism industry. A new station would be constructed as a part of the proposal in the Thompsonville historic district. This is a neighborhood filled with historic character, containing structures of several important architectural styles. The neighborhood features good pedestrian access and connectivity to the neighboring Enfield Street Historic District.³⁸ Future tourism has the potential to focus around this area as a regional historic urban neighborhood attraction, drawing visitors from along the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Commuter Rail line.

Labor Force, Employment & Educational Characteristics

Labor Force

The labor force is composed of all residents 16 years and older who are employed or actively seeking employment. An examination of the labor force in the Town of Enfield and the greater Hartford labor market area (LMA) outlines the present unemployment trends. It also indicates the availability of workers for prospective employers who are considering relocation or expansion within the town.

The Town of Enfield, as well as the entire Hartford labor market area, has seen significant growth in unemployment rates since the year 2000. Between 2000 and 2007, the town experienced a gradual increase in unemployment rates from 2.3% in 2000 to 4.7% in 2007. However, in 2008, the unemployment rate increased by 21% to 5.7%. Through 2009, the rise in unemployment was even more dramatic, jumping an additional 40% over the year to 7.8%. Overall, during the ten-year period from 2000 to 2009, the unemployment rate for the Town of Enfield rose by 240%. The strain on the entire Hartford Labor Market has been slightly more significant, reaching a 7.9% unemployment rate by 2009.

Year	Town of Enfield		Hartford Labor Market Area	
	Labor Force	Unemployment (%)	Labor Force	Unemployment (%)
2000	22,856	2.3	546,054	2.3
2001	23,255	3.0	551,600	3.2
2002	23,429	4.4	556,361	4.5
2003	23,581	5.7	560,261	5.7
2004	23,449	5.2	560,233	5.2
2005	23,526	4.8	570,875	5.0
2006	23,756	4.7	575,620	4.5
2007	23,755	4.7	581,065	4.7
2008	24,017	5.7	591,376	5.8
2009*	23,903	7.8	591,804	7.9

*Note: Through April, 2009

Source: Connecticut Department of Labor: labor market information.

Industry

As indicated in the table that follows, in 2000, the primary employment sectors for the Town of Enfield were manufacturing (17.08%), retail trade (12.54%), health care and social assistance (10.77%), and finance and insurance (10.72%). These industries were also among the predominant employers for the Hartford MSA. While estimated data for the 2005-2007 period

³⁸ Connecticut Department of Transportation. 2004. New Haven Hartford Springfield Commuter Rail Implementation Study. Chapter 4: Service Implementation Plan. p. 4-1-4-13

is not available for the Town of Enfield, the statistics for the Hartford MSA show health care and social assistance as a field that is growing, increasing from 13.02% of the workforce to 14.24%. Conversely, fields significantly dropping in employment between 2000 and the 2005-2007 period are agriculture, forestry fishing and hunting (0.47% to 0.28%), finance and insurance (10.94% to 9.92%) and manufacturing (14.40% to 12.47%). It is significant to note that the loss of employment in the finance and insurance industries, considered to be the signature industries for the Hartford area, was 10% during the study period. These trends for the Hartford MSA may be significant indicators for employment trends also occurring within the Town of Enfield.

Table 23 Industry Statistics for Enfield

Industry	Percent of Labor Force (%)		
	Town of Enfield	Hartford MSA	
	2000	2000	2005-2007 Estimate
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	0.30	0.47	0.28
Mining	0.01	0.04	0.03
Construction	5.35	5.43	5.99
Manufacturing	17.08	14.40	12.47
Wholesale trade	5.72	3.22	3.14
Retail trade	12.54	10.89	10.73
Transportation and warehousing	5.58	2.98	3.27
Utilities	0.99	1.07	0.79
Information	1.75	2.59	2.45
Finance and insurance	10.72	10.94	9.92
Real estate and rental and leasing	1.50	1.57	1.69
Professional, scientific, and technical services	4.01	5.83	6.13
Management of companies and enterprises	0.03	0.03	0.09
Administrative & support & waste management services	2.15	2.87	3.51
Educational services	6.43	9.51	9.49
Health care and social assistance	10.77	13.02	14.24
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	0.97	1.45	1.74
Accommodation and food services	5.37	4.65	5.31
Other services, except public administration	3.70	4.22	4.20
Public administration	5.03	4.82	4.52

Source: US Census Bureau. P49 Sex by Industry for the Employed Civilian Population 16+ years. Census 2000 Summary File 3. B24030 Sex by Industry for the Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over. 2005-2007 American Community survey 3-Year Estimates

Occupations

In 2000, the predominant occupations for the Town of Enfield were office and administrative support occupations (19.78%), professional occupations (17.91%), management, business and financial occupations (13.63%) and sales occupations (11.84%). These occupations also have the highest concentration of workers for the Hartford MSA. While the metropolitan area saw most occupations remain relatively stable or experience moderate growth, significant drops were witnessed in production, installation, maintenance and repair industries. This is reflective of

trends of many of the area’s “blue collar” jobs moving to other parts of the United States or out of the Country.³⁹

Table 24 Occupation Statistics for Enfield

Occupation	Percent of Labor Force (%)		
	Town of Enfield	Hartford MSA	
	2000	2000	2005-2007 Estimate
Management, business, and financial occupations	13.63	15.54	15.47
Professional and related occupations	17.91	23.59	23.79
Healthcare support occupations	2.14	2.51	2.78
Protective service occupations	2.25	1.83	1.97
Food preparation and serving related occupations	4.28	4.17	4.61
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	1.79	2.71	3.30
Personal care and service occupations	3.02	2.69	2.79
Sales and related occupations	11.84	10.77	11.40
Office and administrative support occupations	19.78	16.21	15.24
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	0.22	0.24	0.10
Construction and extraction occupations	4.15	4.22	4.67
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	4.60	3.22	3.05
Production occupations	8.37	7.91	6.39
Transportation and material moving occupations	6.01	4.40	4.44

Source: US Census Bureau. P50 Sex by Occupation for the Employed Civilian Population 16+ years. Census 2000 Summary File 3. B24010 Sex by Occupation for the Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over. 2005-2007 American Community survey 3-Year Estimates

Income

Two primary measures of income, per capita and median household, are used to assess the wealth in a community. Per capita income is total personal income within a municipality, divided by the total population. Therefore, per capita is a good indicator of the total wealth of the community. Median household income, however, better reflects the distribution of income because it identifies the level at which there are an equal number of households with higher income as there are with lower income.

The Town of Enfield median household income in 1999 was \$52,810. It has been estimated to significantly increase by 31% to \$69,360 for the period of 2005 to 2007. This increase is larger than experienced by the Hartford MSA as a whole, which saw a growth in median household income of 25% from \$52,188 in 1999 to \$64,989 for the 2005-2007 period. A similar trend is reflected in the per capita incomes for both Enfield and the Hartford MSA. Additionally, while Enfield has experienced significant growth in both median household and per capita incomes, it has also had a significant increase in its poverty rate. In 1999, 3.98% of Enfield households had incomes below the poverty level. This rate increased 81% between 2000 and the 2005-2007 period. According to the Town of Enfield Economic Development Department, the

³⁹ Warren, Raymond. Director, Town of Enfield Economic Development Department. April 7, 2009. Personal Interview.

unemployment trends represent the major companies that have either left town or moved significant portions of their operations. An example of this is Lego Building Corp, who was the top employer in Enfield in 1998, with more than 1,000 local employees. Ten years later, in 2008, Lego is now the sixth largest employer with less than 400 employees, a result of moving its production facility to Mexico.⁴⁰

Table 25 Income Statistics for Enfield

Income	Percent of Labor Force (%)			
	Town of Enfield		Hartford MSA	
	2000	2005-2007 Estimate	2000	2005-2007 Estimate
Less than \$25,000	17.78	13.01	22.16	18.28
\$25,000 to \$49,999	28.92	20.26	25.45	20.33
\$50,000 to \$74,999	27.05	22.57	21.22	18.15
\$75,000 to \$99,999	14.90	20.64	13.78	15.53
\$100,000 to \$124,999	6.38	12.57	7.69	9.87
\$125,000 to \$149,999	2.19	4.25	3.76	6.38
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1.98	4.81	3.09	6.16
\$200,000 or more	0.79	1.88	2.84	5.28
Median Household Income	\$52,810	\$69,360	\$52,188	\$64,989
Per Capita Income	\$21,967	\$27,538	\$25,874	\$32,358
Income below poverty level	3.98%	7.21%	8.38%	8.72%

Source: US Census Bureau. P52 Household Income in 1999. P53 Median Household Income in 1999. P82 Per Capita Income in 1999. P87 Poverty Status in 1999 by Age. Census 2000 Summary File 3. B19001 Household Income. B19013 Median Household Income. B19301 Per Capita Income. B17001 Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months by Sex by Age. 2005-2007 American Community survey 3-Year Estimates

Educational Attainment

As the Town of Enfield continues to transition its job base away from labor oriented employment to more office- and white-collar based industries, education levels become increasingly important because more employers are looking for a well trained workforce when deciding where to expand. The population of the Town of Enfield has historically lagged behind the Hartford metropolitan area, as a whole, in educational achievement. In 2000, 26.52% of Enfield residents held a college degree, compared to 36.84% of all people in the metro. An additional 21.54% of Enfield residents have attended some college, but left with no degree in hand and 35.84% have graduated high school, but no further.

Education levels, however, are showing significant signs of increasing for the Town of Enfield, according to 2005-2007 estimates. The amount of residents who hold a college degree, have increased to 31.42% and significantly fewer students end their education prior to graduating high school. This trend is consistent with the entire Hartford metropolitan area in which the percentage of the population with college degrees is significantly on the rise. These statistics

⁴⁰ Warren, Raymond. Director, Town of Enfield Economic Development Department. April 7, 2009. Personal Interview.

represent positive indicators for employers looking to locate or expand within areas that have a well educated workforce.

Table 26 Education Statistics for Enfield				
Level of Education Completed	Percent of Labor Force (%)			
	Town of Enfield		Hartford MSA	
	2000	2005-2007 Estimate	2000	2005-2007 Estimate
No schooling completed	0.41	0.15	0.86	0.58
8th grade or less completed	3.77	3.16	5.00	4.17
Some high school (no degree)	11.93	8.36	10.57	7.57
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	35.84	35.55	29.01	29.40
Some college (no degree)	21.54	21.35	17.72	17.36
Associate's degree	8.32	9.00	7.05	7.87
Bachelor's degree	12.09	14.70	17.65	18.95
Master's degree	4.66	6.75	8.67	10.10
Professional school degree	1.10	0.79	2.35	2.67
Doctorate degree	0.35	0.20	1.12	1.32
Any college degree	26.52	31.42	36.84	40.92

Source: US Census Bureau. P37 Sex by Educational Attainment for the Population 25+. Census 2000 Summary File 3. B15002 Sex by Educational Attainment for the Population 25 years and over. 2005-2007 American Community survey 3-Year Estimates

Town Assets & Issues

Thompsonville Revitalization Strategy

In 1992, the Town of Enfield commissioned the Thompsonville Revitalization Strategy as a means to identify and focus efforts to rejuvenate the historic Thompsonville central business district. The plan included an intensive investigation into the Thompsonville neighborhood, analyzing existing conditions, projected demand and identifying new opportunities for growth. Based upon this analysis, the plan made recommendations for enhancements and new development in the Village.

The final document included a series of recommendations broken down into two categories: specific site uses and district-wide initiatives. The specific site uses are a set of development recommendations targeted for key areas of the Village to improve infrastructure, building stock, green space and aesthetics. They include the establishment of gateway features, improving access and accommodations for bicycles, pedestrians and automobiles, the development of new mixed-use structures and streetscape improvements. Included with the plan are a set of graphic representations, illustrating the recommended developments throughout the Village and visualizing the style and density in which the developments should occur.

In conjunction with the specific site uses, the Revitalization Strategy also suggests initiatives to be implemented to support the recommended development. The initiatives focus on economic viability of businesses within the Village, encouraging organization, promotion, local investment, adaptive reuse and financial assistance. Among the primary recommendations is

the creation of a district-wide economic development organization to prioritize, focus and support all revitalization efforts.⁴¹

Since the drafting of the Thompsonville Revitalization Strategy in 1992, the plan has remained largely dormant. Very few of the recommendations have reached implementation and many of the same issues remain in the Village. However, it can be noted that the recent support by the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Commuter Rail Project to build a new station in Enfield can be attributed to the presence of the Thompsonville Revitalization Strategy, which showed that the Town already had a plan for a station and redevelopment around it.⁴²

Recognizing the relative lack of movement on the 1992 Strategy, an update to the Thompsonville Revitalization Strategy was released in 2001, which evaluates the previous version and provides new recommendations more reflective of current conditions. The plan suggests a comprehensive approach, including, again, the establishment of a community development corporation (CDC) to act as the “main street manager,” facilitating revitalization efforts. Those efforts would be centered on the following issues:

- Enhancing the retail mix
- Creating civic attractions
- Promoting a walkable business district
- Quality parking
- Urban design
- Housing reinvestment
- Image enhancement

These issues are all referred to under the umbrella of the suggested community development corporation, which will focus upon problem solving, facilitating cooperation between government, developers, merchants and property owners. The CDC will ensure that all Thompsonville projects, developments, initiatives and other efforts are completed in the best interest of the Village. The organization will serve as a mediating agent between the entities involved. Recently, efforts have been made by the Town of Enfield Economic Development Department to re-activate the dormant Enfield Community Development Corporation, which existed prior to the 1992 and 2001 revitalization plans. The organization granted housing loans until 1992 and as of July 2009, it still has approximately \$200,000 in the bank. An accountant has been hired to bring the organization up to date with the Internal Revenue Service. Future recommendations will include changes to the board and bylaws so that the organization can be revitalized and take on a new role in the economic development of Thompsonville.⁴³

Unlike the 1992 Strategy, which was focused upon business and economic development, making recommendations for major retail and infrastructure investments, the 2001 plan identifies home ownership and residential improvements as the main priority. It argues that the Village cannot support the amount of business growth suggested in the previous plan. Stabilizing the residential market locally is the most important initiative for revitalizing the Village. Business development should then be tailored to accommodating that residential market. The plan states that 25-40 percent of Thompsonville residents do not own automobiles, so it is important to ensure that new retail has the ability to serve the daily needs of the Town, within a walkable

⁴¹ Town of Enfield. 1992. Thompsonville Revitalization Strategy. p. 44-64.

⁴² Alsbaugh, Roger. July 22, 2009. Personal Interview.

⁴³ Warren, Raymond. Director, Town of Enfield Economic Development Department. July 28, 2009. Personal Interview.

distance. The plan also recommends the addition of a farmer's market and a flea market, to appeal to the diverse interests and incomes of residents. Since the plan was drafted in 2001, a Farmer's Market has been established on the Enfield Town Green at the intersection of Enfield and Elm Streets. As a civic attraction to complement the Town Hall and the Lamagna Center, a community theatre is suggested, possibly within the former Strand Theatre, which has been vacated since the early 1990's. Additional recommendations in the Thompsonville Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy include improvements to the current housing stock as well as the built environment. It is foreseen that these enhancements will increase density and strengthen the vibrancy of the Village, supporting the local business and enhancing the quality of life of Thompsonville.⁴⁴

Asnuntuck Community College

The Town of Enfield is home to Asnuntuck Community College. The college offers associates degrees in 20 individual liberal arts and science programs. Additionally, the Asnuntuck Community College provides the Enfield population with the opportunity to earn official certificates in 31 fields.⁴⁵ The College had a Spring 2009 enrollment of 1,600 students on its main campus in addition to 150 inmate students. Of these students, 48% are full time, a three percent increase from 2008. Of the total enrollment, 81% are from the immediate region, which includes Enfield and seven neighboring Connecticut municipalities. Overall, 88% of the students are from the State of Connecticut, with the remaining twelve percent commuting from Massachusetts.⁴⁶ The college has a transfer agreement with the University of Connecticut for psychology majors in which credits are guaranteed to be valid at UConn.⁴⁷

The Plan for Conservation and Development for the Capital Region prioritizes partnerships with local colleges for workforce development as a recommendation for regional economic development.⁴⁸ In addition to providing educational services to the local population, Asnuntuck Community College also has a significant economic impact on the region. It is a major priority of the College to partner with area industry and businesses. The college specifically cites a goal to "serve as a critical economic development and lifelong learning resource to business, social service and community constituents."⁴⁹ An economic contribution study, completed in May 2008, cites a total benefit of \$172.8 million to the regional economy. This figure is comprised from a number of factors. College operations spending represents an impact of \$10.8 million. This includes the earnings of the faculty and staff, as well as operating and capital expenditures incurred by the college. Students who commute to the College from outside the region are estimated to spend \$28,100, annually, in the local economy. Finally, past students who have earned credits and degrees at Asnuntuck earn \$162 million more, combined annually, than they would have without their education at the College.⁵⁰

North School Enterprises

The North School Enterprises is a small business incubator located at 51 College Street in Thompsonville. Located in an historic school building that was later converted to office space, the facility offers affordable amenities for start-up businesses including: low lease rates, a digital

⁴⁴ Abeles, Phillips, Preiss & Shapiro, Inc. 2001. Thompsonville Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy. p. 14-

⁴⁵ Asnuntuck Community College. 2009. <<http://www.acc.commnet.edu/academicprograms/index.htm>>

⁴⁶ Asnuntuck Community College: Office of Institutional Research. 2009. Spring 2009 Enrollment Brief.

⁴⁷ Asnuntuck Community College. 2009. <<http://www.acc.commnet.edu/academicprograms/index.htm>>

⁴⁸ State of Connecticut. 2008. Plan of Conservation and Development for the Capitol Region.

⁴⁹ Asnuntuck Community College. 2009. System Priority Matrix.

⁵⁰ Robison, M. Henry & Christophersen, Kjell A. 2008. The Economic Contribution of Asnuntuck Community College: Executive Summary. p. 1-5.

copier, conference room, security, internet access, a lounge/kitchen and networking opportunities. The overall intention of this incubator is to provide new businesses with minimal start up costs by offering facilities that are shared with other start-up entities. As businesses establish themselves and develop their revenue streams, they are then able to move out of the incubator space and into their own space, providing opportunity for another new business to take its place in the incubator.⁵¹ The property is privately owned and has been underutilized since its inception.

Major Employers

The Town of Enfield has a diverse private sector employment base, anchored by corporate headquarters, financial companies and production and distribution operations. This diversity is an indicator of economic stability within the Town of Enfield. There are also several large employers in neighboring communities that serve as major sources for jobs

Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company is the largest employer within the Town of Enfield, located at 100 Bright Meadow Blvd. Employing 1,900, the company's Enfield location is host site for MassMutual Trust Company, C.M. Life Insurance Company and MML Bay State Life Insurance Company, all subsidiaries of Massachusetts Mutual life Insurance. The company's strong presence in Enfield is a part of the Hartford region's strength as a center for the insurance and financial industries.

Hallmark Cards has one of its two National distribution centers in the Town of Enfield, located at 25 Bacon Road. This center employs approximately 800 workers. It is the remaining facility in the Town of Enfield, following a consolidation effort by Hallmark Cards in 2007, which closed a second distribution facility in the town. This closure was the result of continuing national trends that have seen sales for the greeting cards manufacturer decline.⁵²

Precision Camera markets itself as the "world's largest camera repair facility." Located at 3 Anginna Dr. in the Town of Enfield, the facility employs 500 people and represents the third largest employer in the town.

CUNO Incorporated is a leader in the manufacturing of filtration systems and employs 400 people in the Town of Enfield. Founded in 1912, Connecticut serves as the headquarters for CUNO, located at 400 Research Pkwy. in Meriden, CT.

Retail Brand Alliance, founded in 2001, is headquartered at 100 Phoenix Ave. in the Town of Enfield. The parent company for clothing giant Brooks Brothers, Retail Brand Alliance operates retail apparel stores in mall-locations for men and women. The company employs approximately 400 people in Enfield.

Lego Systems Incorporated, a Dutch corporation, has had a United States Headquarters location in Enfield at 555 Taylor Road since 1975. The company employs nearly 400 workers at this location in administration, marketing and retail sales. The Enfield Lego campus also formerly housed production and distribution operations; however, those jobs have been moved to other locations worldwide.

The Connecticut Department of Corrections runs the Enfield Correctional Institution at 289 Shaker Road. This is a medium-security facility constructed in 1960 and employing more than 300 workers.

⁵¹ North School Enterprises. 2009. < <http://www.ct.gov/doag/cwp/view.asp?a=3260&q=398982://enfield-ct.gov/content/91/160/788/2706.aspx>>

⁵² <http://www.journalinquirer.com/articles/2009/03/23/business/doc49c7c890901cc404248564.txt>

Martin-Brower has a major distribution facility in Enfield, employing 250 people. The company is the world’s largest distributor of food products to McDonald’s. The facility is located at 191 Moody Road in the town.

Specialized Technology Resources, Inc. (STR) is located between the banks of the Scantic River and hazard Avenue in the Scitico section of Enfield. STR was founded in 1944 by two of the world's most prominent polymer scientists. Over the years, STR has expanded and evolved into two core businesses – Solar Encapsulants Manufacturing and Quality Assurance Services. STR employs 186 people in Enfield and another 90 in Somers.

Table 27 shows the major employers in the Town of Enfield, their employment and their respective shares of the total employment within the town.

Table 27 Town of Enfield Major Employers (2008)			
Company	Nature of Business	Employees	Percent of Total Employment in Enfield (%)
Massachusetts Mutual Insurance	Insurance	1,900	8.70
Hallmark Cards, Inc.	Greeting Cards	803	3.68
Precision Camera	Camera Repair	500	2.29
CUNO Inc.	Water Filters	400	1.83
Retail Brand Alliance	Retail	400	1.83
Lego Building Corp.	Plastic Games & Toys	394	1.80
CT. Dept. of Corrections	Detention Facilities	311	1.42
Martin Brower	Transportation	250	1.15
STR	Quality Assurance	186	0.86
Source: Town of Enfield Economic Development Department			

Industrial & Commercial Vacancies

Among the major concerns held by local economic development officials is the increasing inventory of vacant commercial and industrial spaces in the town. As noted throughout this chapter, several major companies have closed or downsized locations in Enfield, leaving the inventory of commercial and industrial space with an unhealthy surplus. An estimated 2 million square feet of space has become available as the result of four recent downsizings/closures at Lego Building Corp., Hallmark Cards, Inc., Casual Corner retail and Westvaco Corp. Finding productive reuses of these vacant spaces is a top priority for local economic development.⁵³

Agriculture

A primary goal for planning within Connecticut municipalities is finding a balance between economic development and conservation of the land. In Enfield, this is particularly important in regards to agricultural development and the ability of farming to remain a viable industry in the face of development pressures. Trends throughout Connecticut, as well as the entire nation,

⁵³ Warren, Raymond. Director, Town of Enfield Economic Development Department. April 7, 2009. Personal Interview.

have seen farmland continuously developed into residential subdivisions, sprawling office parks and other forms of the built environment. In the Capitol Region, much of the farmland is at risk for future development. Sustaining farmland use maintains valuable open space and preserves rural aesthetics.⁵⁴

Hartford County has seen a significant portion of its agricultural economy shrink since the 1990s. From 2000 to the three year census period of 2005-2007, it is estimated that Hartford County lost nearly 15% of its agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting jobs. This is a decrease of nearly 50 jobs every year. The table below illustrates these trends.

Table 28 Agriculture Employment for Hartford County (2000-2007)

Industry	2000	2005-2007 Estimate	Percent Change
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting employees	1,957	1,671	-14.6%

Source: US Census Bureau. P49 Sex by Industry for the Employed Civilian Population 16+ years. Census 2000 Summary File 3. B24030 Sex by Industry for the Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over. 2005-2007 American Community survey 3-Year Estimates

In addition to employment, the physical presence and productive values of agriculture in the County have also experienced decline, indicating the struggling nature of the industry, as well as the low relative values of the land compared to potential profits of sale for new development. During the period from 1997 to 2007, Hartford County has actually seen its quantity of farms increase by more than one quarter, from 627 to 790. However, at the same time, the average farm size has decreased by 19%, indicating that the likely cause for the majority of the growth in numbers of farms is land being divided and handed down or parceled off for sale. The total acreage of farmland also saw an increase, but at a more moderate rate of just over one percent during the period, which included an initial reduction of 2,730 acres between 1997 and 2002. Farm production has also felt significant decline. From 1997 to 2007, total production for all farms in the County fell by 7.5% and due to the increase in the quantity of farms, the average farm produced 26.6% less in 2007 than 1997.

Table 29 Agriculture Land & Production for Hartford County (1997-2007)

Category	1997	2002	2007	Percent Change
Number of Farms	627	724	790	26.0%
Farmland (acres)	52,922	50,192	53,504	1.1%
Average Farm Size (acres)	84	69	68	-19.0%
Market Value of Production*	\$144,424,000	\$145,406,000	\$133,582,000	-7.5%
Average Production Per Farm*	\$230,340	\$200,838	\$169,091	-26.6%

*Note: Adjusted for inflation to 2007 Dollars

Source: 2007 Census of Agriculture. County Profile: Hartford, Connecticut.

<http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online_Highlights/County_Profiles/Connecticut/cp09003.pdf>

⁵⁴ Capitol Region Council of Governments. 2007. Regulating the Farm: Improving Agriculture's Viability in the Capitol Region. p. 2-8

Distribution of Agriculture

An analysis of farm activities provides information for what types of agriculture are important to the area. Hartford County (735 square miles) accounts for 15% of the total land mass of the State of Connecticut (4,845 square miles).⁵⁵ Similarly, the County has 16% of all farms and 13% of the total farmland in the State.⁵⁶ According to the 2007 United States Department of Agriculture Census, each livestock and poultry farming as well as crop farming continue to play important roles in the local agriculture industry. Cattle and layers (egg-laying chickens) each exist on more than 14% of Hartford County farms; however each is less prominent when compared to State rates, where nearly 25% of farms have cattle and 17% of farms have layers. The only animal-related farming that is more prominent in Hartford County than across the State of Connecticut is for hogs and pigs.

Hartford County plays a much more prominent role in the State’s crop agriculture. More than one quarter (190 farms) of the State’s vegetable farms is in Hartford County. Similarly, nearly 28% of State farms that harvest corn for grain are in Hartford County. Perhaps most significant, the County, and notably the Town of Enfield, have a major concentration of Tobacco farms. Of Connecticut’s 76 tobacco farms, 93% (71 farms) are located in Hartford County. The neighboring town of Windsor is home to the Luddy/Taylor Connecticut Valley Tobacco Museum and the Enfield Conservation Commission has identified Tobacco as one of the major local agricultural industries with opportunities for growth as an agro-tourism destination.⁵⁷ The following tables display the individual distribution of each type of farming activity for Hartford County, as well as a comparison for what percentage of each type of farm in the State is located in Hartford County:

Table 30 Livestock and Poultry Farms in Connecticut and Hartford County (2007)

Livestock and Poultry	Connecticut		Hartford County		
	Number of Farms	Percent of Farms (%)	Number of Farms	Percent of Farms (%)	Percent of Farms in State (%)
Cattle and calves	1210	24.61	114	14.43	9.42
Beef Cows	754	15.34	63	7.97	8.36
Milk Cows	269	5.47	24	3.04	8.92
Hogs and Pigs	244	4.96	40	5.06	16.39
Sheep and Lambs	399	8.12	46	5.82	11.53
Layers (chicken)	822	16.72	116	14.68	14.11
Meat-type chickens	72	1.46	9	1.14	12.50

Note: Farm production and acreage is not represented in this table because the United States Department of Agriculture does not provide complete data for acreage and production for each agricultural sector due to confidentiality reasons.

Source: 2007 Census of Agriculture. County Profile: Hartford, Connecticut.
 <http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online_Highlights/County_Profiles/Connecticut/cp09003.pdf>

⁵⁵ United State Census Bureau. 2000. Quickfacts for Hartford County. <<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/09/09003.html>>

⁵⁶ 2007 Census of Agriculture. County Profile: Hartford, Connecticut. <http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online_Highlights/County_Profiles/Connecticut/cp09003.pdf>

⁵⁷ Town of Enfield Conservation Commission. 1999. A Program of Action: Open Space and Farmland Preservation in Enfield. p. 16.

Table 31 Crop Farms in Connecticut and Hartford County (2007)

Crops for harvest	Connecticut		Hartford County		
	Number of Farms	Percent of Farms (%)	Number of Farms	Percent of Farms (%)	Percent of Farms in State (%)
Corn for grain	61	1.24	17	2.15	27.87
Corn for silage	253	5.15	25	3.16	9.88
Wheat for grain	3	0.06	1	0.13	33.33
Oats for grain	2	0.04	1	0.13	50.00
Sorghum for silage	5	0.10	0	0.00	0.00
Soybeans for beans	6	0.12	0	0.00	0.00
Dry edible beans	3	0.06	0	0.00	0.00
Tobacco	76	1.55	71	8.99	93.42
Forage (hay)	2060	41.90	250	31.65	12.14
Vegetables	735	14.95	190	24.05	25.85
Orchards	338	6.88	23	2.91	6.80

Note: Farm production and acreage is not represented in this table because the United States Department of Agriculture does not provide complete data for acreage and production for each agricultural sector due to confidentiality reasons.

Source: 2007 Census of Agriculture. County Profile: Hartford, Connecticut.
http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online_Highlights/County_Profiles/Connecticut/cp09003.pdf

Preserving the Viability of Agriculture

Policy is changing in the State of Connecticut to protect farmland and promote the industry's viability. In July of 2007, the Capitol Region Council of Governments invited local municipalities and farm owners to a consortium designed to evaluate the present regulatory conditions on agriculture and investigate means to improve the industry's viability. Among the major findings was that farms increasingly have to find new, creative ways to preserve their own viability. These include the presence of retail on their farmland with product stands, "you-pick" operations and signage establishment on their property. However, the regulatory practices of the local municipalities are cited as being excessively overbearing or prohibitive to developing retail components on individual farms and use of signs for promotion. Often requirements are deemed unnecessarily exhaustive and permitting fees are cost prohibitive. Additionally, the regulation of signage and farming operations is often inconsistent, creating an ambiguous environment in which farmer's are often not clear about what they allowed to do.⁵⁸

The resulting report from the consortium recommends a series of policy and regulatory actions to preserve farmland and promote economic viability. The report advocates for better education of Town officials about agriculture and the adoption of regional consistency in agriculture representation and regulation. It recommends creating an "agricultural uses" section in all local zoning codes to increase clarity and consistency of zoning requirements for farms across the Capitol region. This section would include clear definitions of farming practices as well as permissible actions. It would also include increased flexibility for farmers, such as release clauses for retail requirements in the event of crop failure. Additionally, the report recommends

⁵⁸ Capitol Region Council of Governments. 2007. Regulating the Farm: Improving Agriculture's Viability in the Capitol Region. p. 3-8

development policy that encourages new development ‘to occur in a way in which the negative effects of farming are mitigated on new neighboring uses, reducing nuisance complaints and preserving the “right to farm.”⁵⁹

The state of Connecticut has also enacted several programs to protect and promote farming. The most prominent and successful tool for protecting productive farming is the Farmland Preservation Program, also known as the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR). This program reduces development upon farmland by allowing the State to purchase agricultural conservation easements from landowners, preserving that land for agricultural use in perpetuity. Farmers are able to receive compensation for their land while continuing to farm, providing a viable alternative to selling land off to private developers.⁶⁰ In 1963, the State enacted Public Act 490 (“Differential Tax Assessment”). This program reduces the tax burden upon farmers and foresters as a means to increase the industry’s viability. Nearly all farms in the Town of Enfield are enrolled in Public Act 490, as the program increases their ability to be competitive through a reduction in costs.

The State of Connecticut also offers a series of Agriculture Viability Grants to provide funding for the farming industry. The three major programs are the Farm Reinvestment Grant, the Farm Transition Grant and the Farm Viability Grant Program for Municipalities. The Farm Reinvestment Grant is funding that is made available for capital enhancement to farms to expand facilities or for diversification-expansion into new production areas. The Farm Transition Grant is a matching funds program that offers 50% rebates for projects performed by Connecticut Farms, agricultural non-profit organizations and farming cooperatives. The program offers grants of up to \$50,000 and requires a match by the grantee. Finally, the Farm Viability Grant Program for Municipalities is a 50% matching grant available to local municipalities, associations of municipalities or regional planning associations. The funding, up to \$50,000, can be used for capital projects, agriculture friendly land use regulations, planning projects or initiatives to support agriculture.⁶¹ As the state continues to develop, Connecticut continues to maintain and create policy and regulations to preserve the future balance between farmland conservation and new development.

Open Space and Farmland Preservation in Enfield

In 1999, the Enfield Conservation Commission, in conjunction with the Capitol Region Council of Governments and the Enfield planning and community development department, drafted A Program of Action: Open Space and Farmland Preservation in Enfield. The document was created to provide information and recommendations for the management of open space and protection of the viability of farmland in the Town of Enfield. It serves to represent the local interests and efforts for preserving the farming industry.

Among the major goals of the plan is to preserve farming and prime agricultural lands as an industry and open space amenity. Several policies are recommended for the Town to adopt in order to achieve this goal:

- Evaluate existing agriculture land preservation programs and ways to support them.
- Improve the viability of farming in Enfield by implementing innovative ways to market farm products.
- Identify farms of special significance for priority protection/possible Town venture.

⁵⁹ Capitol Region Council of Governments. 2007. Regulating the Farm: Improving Agriculture’s Viability in the Capitol Region. p. 9-14

⁶⁰ Working Lands Alliance. 2005. A Mid-Decade Look at Connecticut’s Agricultural Lands. p. 2-4

⁶¹ Connecticut Department of Agriculture. 2009. <<http://www.ct.gov/doag/cwp/view.asp?a=3260&q=398982>>

- Investigate opportunities for coordination with North Central Connecticut Tourism District.

The report recognizes the State's Farmland Preservation Program as the most valuable tool for promoting farmland viability and continuing to preserve the industry. At the writing of the report, five farms in Enfield had participated in the program, preserving 761 acres of farmland for the future. This program provides a permanent and effective means to maintain farmland and aids farm viability by providing farmers with immediate capital dollars. However, local criticism emphasizes that the program does not address all critical parcels, especially those of smaller acreage. The Enfield Conservation Commission proposes the establishment of a Municipal Preservation Fund, to serve as a local complement to the state program.⁶² The focus of this program would be on smaller, yet critical pieces of land to preserve the agricultural landscape.

In conjunction with the farmland preservation programs, the commission would like to enact local changes for the programs to be utilized more effectively. A major hurdle to farms qualifying for the programs is their location within industrial zones. Industrial zones are considered to be highly likely for new development; therefore, there is an unwillingness to allow any of those lands, including farmlands, to gain a permanent preservation status. The commission would like to see agriculture locally recognized as an industry that is viable and economically sustainable. Doing so would enable farmlands located in industrial zones to be eligible for the Farmland Preservation Program.⁶³

The Commission also recommends initiatives to promote agriculture in Enfield. They cite numerous ways to promote agriculture tourism, following a growing trend across Connecticut. The report suggests making changes to land use regulations that would allow appropriate development or expansion of uses on farms, including bed & breakfasts, roadside stands, small retail and farming museums.⁶⁴ By developing the tourism and retail elements for local agriculture, Enfield farmers will have greater access to economic revenues, less susceptibility to economic and environmental changes and more opportunities for the land to continue to be viable for future generations.

Retail

The Town of Enfield is a significant retail hub for the Hartford Capitol Region. In 2000, the retail industry was the second largest employer in the town, with more than 12.5% of residents. The major factor is the presence of the Enfield Square Mall, located at 90 Elm Street (Route 220). The mall sits on a 93 acre site, features 800,000 square feet of space and 80 retailers. The mall's location in proximity to the I-91 interchange allows it to serve the Capitol Region population.⁶⁵ Located near the mall, Freshwater Stateline Plaza is another major shopping center, featuring over 400,000 square feet of commercial space and 14 retail units. This plaza is dominated by major big-box retailers.⁶⁶ Additional major retail centers in the town include Freshwater Common, Enfield Common, Elm Plaza, the Stop and Shop Plaza and the Brookside

⁶² Town of Enfield Conservation Commission. 1999. A Program of Action: Open Space and Farmland Preservation in Enfield. p. 5, 15-16, 34-35.

⁶³ Alsbough, Roger. July 22, 2009. Personal Interview.

⁶⁴ Town of Enfield Conservation Commission. 1999. A Program of Action: Open Space and Farmland Preservation in Enfield. p. 16.

⁶⁵ Centro Properties Group. 2009. Enfield Square Mall Listing. <http://www.centroprop.com/PropertyProfile_long.asp?ProjectID=PCTENFLD1>

⁶⁶ Centro Properties Group. 2009. Freshwater Stateline Plaza Listing. <http://www.centroprop.com/PropertyProfile_short.asp?ProjectID=PCTFWSTL1>

Plaza. These are all located in close proximity to the Enfield Square Mall and I-91. Additional smaller retail, including locally owned shops, is concentrated within the villages of Thompsonville and Hazardville.

Tourism

Tourism plays a significant role in the Connecticut economy; however, its role in the present Enfield economy is much more limited. Enfield is located within the River Valley tourism region of Connecticut, which is centered along the Connecticut River, extending from the Long Island Sound, north, into Massachusetts. In the state of Connecticut, tourism is directly responsible for more than 110,000 jobs and generates nearly \$9 billion in revenue throughout the State, annually. Additionally, the industry generates \$87 billion in hotel tax revenue and an additional \$1.3 billion in federal, state and local taxes are directly attributed to tourism, each year.⁶⁷ Within the River Valley in 2006, \$162 million in revenues were projected for accommodations in the region. This was the second highest regional projection in the state. Forty two percent of visitors cited leisure as the purpose of their visit, while 28% were in the region for business.⁶⁸ The River Valley cites outdoor recreation, historic towns and the presence of a major metropolitan area as the primary draw for the tourist industry.

Economic Development Initiatives & Organizations

Efforts to stimulate the economy, besides the Town of Enfield Economic Development Department, often occur on a regional level for the Metro Hartford Area. Following are the most significant organizations and initiatives for economic development in the region serving Enfield.

Metro Hartford Alliance

The leading agency for economic development in the Hartford Capitol Region is the Metro Hartford Alliance. This organization is comprised of 1,000 businesses, institutions, municipalities, non-profit organizations and government leaders from throughout the region. The mission of the organization “is to compete aggressively and successfully for jobs, talent and capital for the Hartford region and to ensure that the Hartford Region is a premier place for all people to life, work, play and raise a family.”⁶⁹

North Central Connecticut Chamber of Commerce (NCCCC)

The North Central Connecticut Chamber of commerce is an organization whose mission is to provide benefit for its north central Connecticut area member companies by increasing their general prosperity and profitability. The NCCCC functions in a leadership role, supplying representation of the business community through advocacy to local and state government, development opportunities, and membership services. Among the Chamber’s services offered are advertising opportunities, networking functions, group insurance and special events.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Tourism Fact Sheet from CCEA.

⁶⁸ Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis, University of Connecticut. 2006. The Economic Impact of the Arts, Film, History and Tourism Industries in Connecticut. p. 223-229.

⁶⁹ Metro Hartford Alliance. 2009. < <http://www.metrohartford.com/>>

⁷⁰ North Central Connecticut Chamber of Commerce. 2009. <<http://www.ncccc.org/>>

The Knowledge Corridor

The Hartford-Springfield Economic Partnership - The Town of Enfield is located within the two-state “Knowledge Corridor.” This is a designated area, stretching between the cities of Hartford, CT and Springfield, MA. Featuring a total population of more than 1.7 million, the Knowledge Corridor has been recognized for its high concentration of colleges and universities (29) with more than 100,000 students. Already home to nearly 1 million employees and 40,000 companies, the designation is utilized by the Hartford-Springfield Economic Partnership to promote the region as an ideal location for economic development and corporate expansion.⁷¹ The Town of Enfield is positioned in the center of the corridor, approximately equidistant between each of the anchor cities.

Financial Business Incentives

The economic development strategies for the Town of Enfield include financial business development incentives to assist in drawing new companies to the area and aid existing enterprises expand. There are state-wide incentives for business relocation or expansion for communities throughout the State of Connecticut.

Business Funding Sources

Similar to neighboring New England States, Connecticut suffers from a prohibitive tax environment for new and expanding businesses. According to a 2008 study by the national Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council, Connecticut’s tax environment for businesses ranks it 33rd in the United States. While this result is ahead of several of neighboring states, such as New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Maine, it still compares unfavorably with the rest of the United States.⁷² As a means of compensation for a financially difficult business climate many financial resources and statewide tax incentives have been developed to foster new business growth throughout the state.

Metro Hartford Alliance offers a number of programs and incentives to local employers including:

MetroHartford Growth Fund – a revolving loan program, funded by a State of Connecticut Grant, providing below-market-rate financing for new and expanding companies in the Capitol region. Designed to provide gap-financing, the fund identifies the following “growth clusters” as eligible for funding:

- Manufacturing
- Financial services
- Health care
- Information technology
- Distribution
- Tourism/entertainment
- Environmental protection
- The funding can be utilized for the following activities:

⁷¹ Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts. 2009.

<http://www.westernmassedc.com/Data__Demographics/knowledgecorridor/>

⁷² Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council. 2008. Business Tax Index 2008. p. 2-15.

- Land acquisition
- Expansion
- Building rehabilitation & construction
- Site remediation & preparation
- Utility upgrades
- Roadway improvements
- Machinery and equipment purchase
- Workforce development training

A company has the ability to borrow up to \$20,000 in funding for each new, full-time permanent job that is created over a three-year period, with a total cap of \$350,000 for the loan. The established term limit is up to 10 years, for an interest rate at or below prime. Penalties are administered if promises for job creation are not met and/or the business leaves Connecticut within 10 years.⁷³

Additional financial incentive programs are available from various agencies in the State of Connecticut including:

The Eli Whitney Fund – an investment fund targeting high-technology entrepreneurs with capital finance for sectors that provide the greatest potential for economic growth. Investments typically range from \$500,000 to \$2 million.

Connecticut BioSeed Fund – provides seed capital for young Connecticut biotech companies to sustain them until they can secure a lead investor. Investments are up to \$500,000 and eligibility is based upon ranked criteria that include track records and potentials of the company.

The Connecticut Clean Energy Fund – managed by Connecticut Innovations, this fund was created to promote the production and use of clean energy in Connecticut. Projects may be located anywhere, but must benefit ratepayers in Connecticut.

Next Generation Ventures LLC – a joint venture between The Phoenix Companies, Inc. and Connecticut Innovations, this program offers seed capital and professional management to entrepreneurial high-tech companies in Connecticut. The fund's total financial resources are \$15 million.

Community Economic Development Fund – created to revitalize distressed neighborhoods in Connecticut, the fund provides access to capital and technical assistance for small business, as well as support for community economic development initiatives. Loan limits vary according to their category and purpose but are generally for up to \$250,000.⁷⁴

Statewide Business Incentives

Many of the existing funding opportunities that exist are for small or newer businesses in Connecticut. There are also many tax incentives that are available for both new business as well as established corporations interested in growing within the State of Connecticut.

The most common development tax incentive utilized by local economic development initiatives is State of Connecticut property tax abatements. Any project that adds more than \$3 million in

⁷³ Metro Hartford Alliance. 2009. < <http://www.metrohartford.com/>>

⁷⁴ Metro Hartford Alliance. 2009.

<http://www.metrohartford.com/businessresourcesdetail.aspx?id=70&ekmense1=75ede4bd_16_0_70_3>

new real estate value can be eligible for a seven year property tax abatement in which assessed valuations are gradually increased to over the term. Projects valued at less than \$3 million typically receive a three year, 50% reduction in their assessed value.

Additional State tax incentives include:⁷⁵

- Credit of up to 60% of the Connecticut's state income tax for companies that hire at least 10 new employees for a minimum of a 12-month period.
- \$1,500 per worker credit to companies that hire workers who were let go by a previous Connecticut employer as a result of corporate restructuring, within the last 12 months.
- Various credits for company research, design expenditures or grants awarded for research & design.
- 5-10% credit for investments in fixed and/or human capital.
- Tax exemptions for insurance corporations
- 100% corporate sales tax exemptions on the following:
 - Machinery utilized for manufacturing of finished projects
 - Computer and data processing services
 - Calibration and compliance services related to personnel training offered by colleges
 - Alternative fuel technology
 - Safety apparel
 - Aircraft
 - Website maintenance

The Town of Enfield also offers tax abatement programs for new capital investments as allowed by State Statute.

⁷⁵ Department of Economic and Community Development, State of Connecticut. 2009.
<<http://www.ct.gov/ecd/cwp/view.asp?A=1097&Q=253522>>

Findings

The economy in the Town of Enfield must be developed to provide residents, businesses and institutions with ample opportunities for financial stability and growth. Following are findings on the economic conditions:

- Unemployment rates have increased significantly to 7.8% in 2009.
- Several major employers have closed, downsized or moved operations in Enfield since 2000, including Lego, Westvaco, Phoenix Insurance and Hallmark.
- Nearly 2 million square feet of industrial and commercial space is vacated in the town due to corporate relocations, downsizings and closures.
- The insurance industry, like the Hartford Metro and led by Massachusetts Mutual, continues to be a major industry, however it is experiencing decline.
- Poverty levels rose significantly since 2000.
- Median household income in Enfield has grown by more than 30% since 2000, outpacing the growth for the entire Hartford Metro area.
- The Town government has had to take protective actions with wage, hiring and spending freezes to ensure cost certainty during a declining economy.
- The proposed New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Commuter Rail line, including a new station in Enfield, provides an opportunity for enhancing the Town's regional tourism profile.
- The existing Thompsonville Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (1992, updated 2001) has been mostly unimplemented.
- In 2009, efforts have begun to resurrect the Enfield Community Development Corporation to serve as a CDC for the revitalization of the Village of Thompsonville.
- Asnuntuck Community College is a major asset, providing affordable education, workforce development and support for the local business community.
- The agriculture industry in the Town of Enfield is in significant decline, however measures have been recommended to preserve farmland and promote the industry's viability.
- Tobacco is a major agricultural product in the Town of Enfield with potential for growth in agro-tourism.
- The Town of Enfield labor force is becoming increasingly well educated.
- Metro-Hartford Alliance serves as the primary regional economic development agency, partnering with local municipalities on development projects.
- Enfield has a central location within the "Knowledge Corridor," a regional economic development promotion initiative stretching from Hartford to Springfield Massachusetts, where there is a high concentration of college institutions and "knowledge-based" jobs.