



# **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY REPORT**

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## I. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to guide the citizens of Mansfield to develop strategies and specific actions to enhance the local economy, increase employment opportunities for local residents, and strengthen the local tax base. The first section of the report provides information on the economic structure and trends in the Mansfield economy and the characteristics of the town's workforce to provide a context for decision-making. The second section articulates a set of values and goals to guide the development of strategies, based on the interests and needs expressed by participants in the Mansfield Tomorrow planning process as well as the current economic strengths and challenges identified through the research. The third section proposes a set of strategies and specific action steps designed to reflect the values and achieve the goals developed through the planning process.

## II. The Role of Economic Development

As a starting point, it may be useful to define what we mean by economic development.

- Most fundamentally, economic development is about maintaining and expanding a community's "traded sector." The traded sector consists of economic sectors that export their products to businesses and consumers outside the community, thus importing income and increasing local employment and wealth. The income from the traded sector circulates within the community, creating demand for goods and services in the "sheltered sector," those economic sectors that primarily serve local residents such as retail and consumer services.
- For some communities, expanding the "sheltered sector" is considered an important aspect of economic development. Sheltered sector businesses such as supermarkets and pharmacies, local attorneys, physicians and accountants, and automotive repair shops and hair salons, provide goods and services primarily to people who live and work in the community. While the sheltered sector typically relies on income from the traded sector for its development, local impediments to the growth of the sheltered sector such as a lack of suitable land and buildings or the absence of critical infrastructure must be addressed to ensure that the sheltered sector grows to its full potential. Addressing these impediments can increase employment and provide residents convenient access to a wider array of goods and services.
- For some communities, economic development is also a way to expand and diversify their tax base. Commercial, industrial, agricultural and forest properties are typically net generators of tax revenue. Retention and expansion of these land

uses provide revenue to reduce the residential property tax burden while maintaining quality public services which, in addition to enhancing quality of life, can be an important factor in attracting additional business activity.

The relative importance of these three dimensions of economic development to a particular community can vary depending on its economic situation and the economic aspirations of community residents. This in turn will shape the community's approach to economic development.

### III. The Mansfield Economy

Before establishing goals and strategies for economic development, it is important to understand the community's current economic situation and take into account what residents consider their most pressing economic development needs

#### A. OVERVIEW

The Mansfield economy relies heavily on state government (i.e., UConn), with over half of total town employment. Other major economic sectors include health care and social assistance, and accommodation and food services. These three sectors also experienced the greatest growth between 2001 and 2011. Table 1 below shows the relative size of the town's economic sectors in 2011 as measured by wage and salary employment, their growth between 2001 and 2011 and, their average wages.<sup>1,2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Data for proprietors' employment or more detailed breakdowns of sector employment are not available at the municipal level.

<sup>2</sup> Selected economic sectors in this table and subsequent tables and charts are described in more detail in Appendix A.

**Table 1: Mansfield Wage and Salary Employment by Industry, 2011**

	Employment	% of Total Employment	Change	Percent Change	Avg. Annual Wage
	2011	2011	2001-11	2001-11	2011
<b>Total - All Industries</b>	<b>11,077</b>		<b>820</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>\$49,637</b>
<b>Total Private</b>	<b>4,031</b>	<b>36.4%</b>	332	9.0%	
Construction	103	0.9%	-78	-42.9%	\$57,954
Manufacturing	35	0.3%	-33	-48.9%	\$44,480
Wholesale Trade	45	0.4%	39	611.8%	\$89,278
Retail Trade	587	5.3%	0	0.0%	\$22,477
Transportation and Warehousing	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
Information	46	0.4%	*	*	\$25,132
Finance and Insurance	90	0.8%	-11	-10.7%	\$44,812
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	73	0.7%	-16	-17.6%	\$31,455
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	272	2.5%	1	0.2%	\$68,516
Administrative & Support and Waste Management & Remediation Services	25	0.2%	0	-1.3%	\$30,635
Educational Services	*	*	*	*	*
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,134	10.2%	255	29.1%	\$42,410
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	*	*	*	*	*
Accommodation and Food Services	1,139	10.3%	246	27.5%	\$19,442
Other Services (except Public Administration)	312	2.8%	12	3.9%	\$43,662
<b>Total Government</b>	<b>7,046</b>	<b>63.6%</b>	488	7.4%	<b>\$58,140</b>
Federal Government	48	0.4%	14	39.5%	\$62,374
State Government	6,228	56.2%	501	8.7%	\$59,699
Local/Municipal Government	769	6.9%	-27	-3.3%	\$45,253

\*Data suppressed for confidentiality purposes  
 Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, U.S. Department of Labor

Mansfield is performing relatively well in terms of employment growth, and unemployment compared to regional and state averages. Average annual wages, while exceeding the regional average, still lag the state average. (See Table 2)

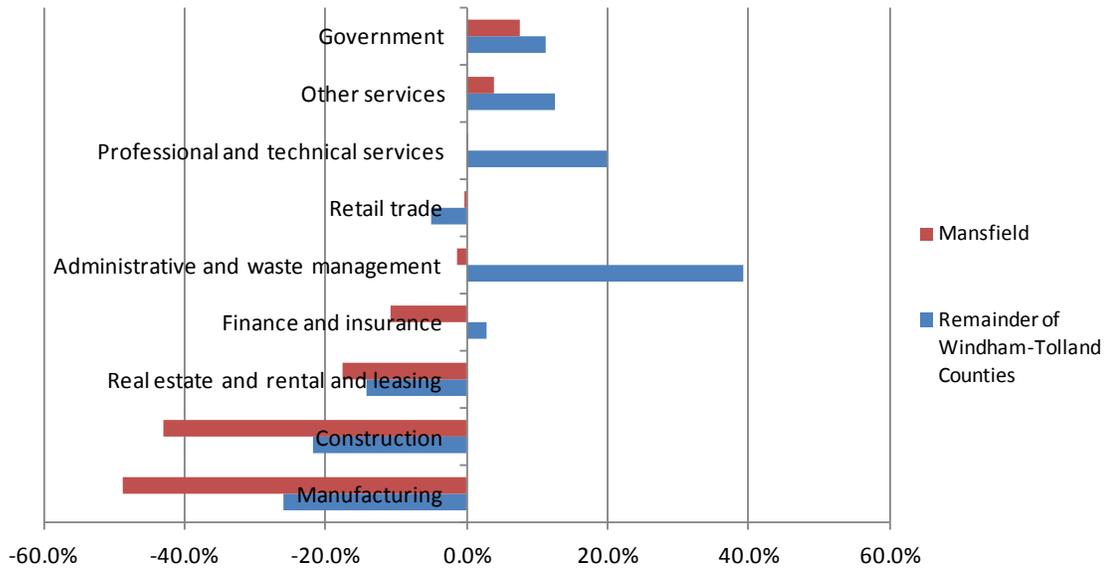
<b>Table 2: Comparative Economic Indicators: Mansfield, the Region, and Connecticut</b>			
	<b>Mansfield</b>	<b>Remainder of Windham &amp; Tolland Counties</b>	<b>Statewide</b>
% Employment Growth 2001-2011	8.0%	2.4%	-3.2%
Unemployment Rate 2011	7.5%	8.5%	8.8%
Average Wage 2011	\$49,637	\$40,180	\$61,110
Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages and Local Area Unemployment Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor			

Data comparing employment growth at the regional and local levels suggests that Mansfield may have an opportunity to capture more of the regional growth in certain industries, notably professional and technical services and administrative and waste management services. Professional and technical services include legal, accounting, architecture, design, engineering, computer-related, and research and development services, among others. Administrative and waste management services include office administrative services, employment placement agencies, business services, security services, and building services, among others. “Other services” include automotive, consumer product repair, laundry, and personal care services, among others.<sup>3</sup> (See Chart 1)

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<sup>3</sup> Data on sub-sectors is not available at the municipal level.

**Chart 1: Industry Growth Rates, 2001-11: Mansfield vs. Remainder of Windham-Tolland Region**



Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Data on employment relative to population for major industries oriented heavily to local consumers indicates that Mansfield is capturing more than its share of food services, health care, and other services employment, but less than its share of retail employment. The level of retail activity has grown somewhat with the completion of Storrs Center, although a large share of the new businesses are in food services.

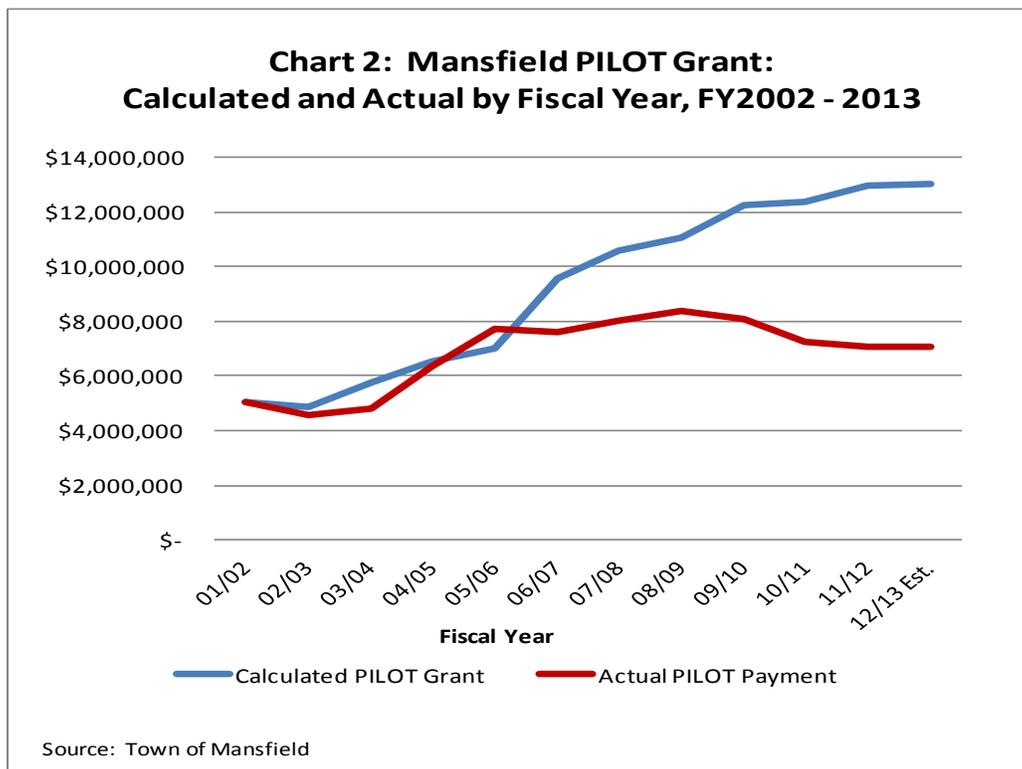
**Table 3: Concentrations of Local Consumer Services: Mansfield vs. Rest of Region (jobs/1,000 Population)**

	Mansfield	Remainder of Tolland & Windham Counties
Retail	22.2	35.7
Accommodation & Food Services	43.0	21.7
Health Care & Social Assistance	42.8	18.1
Other Services	11.8	9.5

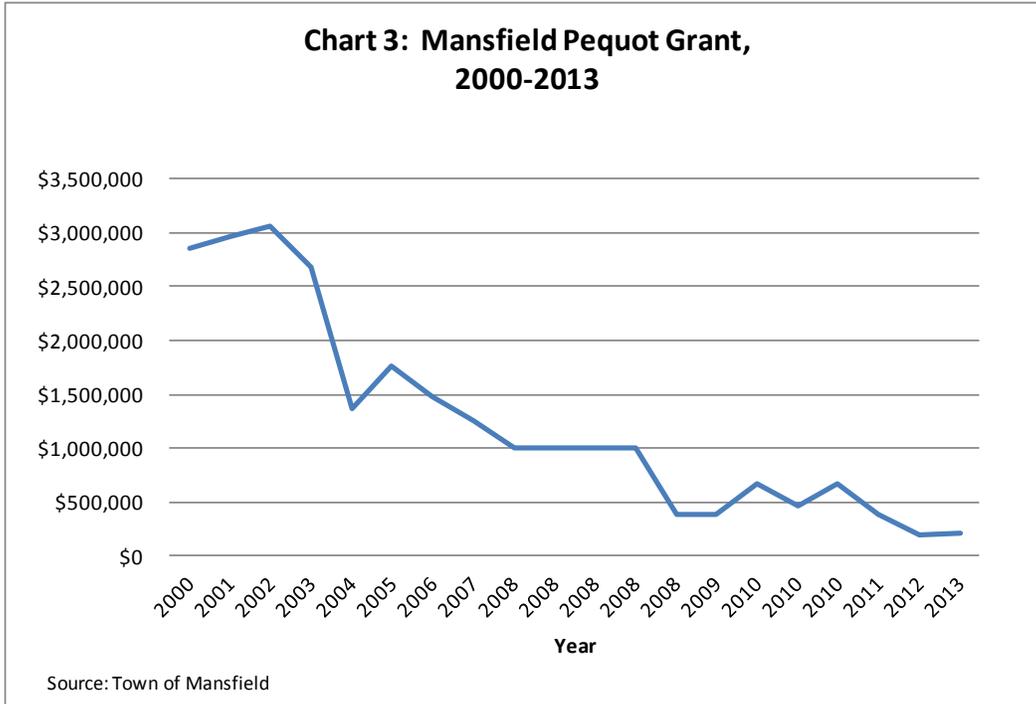
Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, U.S. Department of Labor; U.S. Census Bureau

## B. FISCAL IMPLICATIONS OF MANSFIELD'S ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

The key role played by UConn in Mansfield's economy has significant impacts not only on the nature of employment and business activity, but on local tax revenue. The tax-exempt status of UConn and other state-owned property makes the town heavily dependent on state aid for local revenue. Intergovernmental transfers accounted for 40.5% of the Town's revenues in FY 2011, more than double the average of 18.8% for Connecticut municipalities in the 10,000-30,000 population range.<sup>4</sup> The largest source of intergovernmental transfers, the state's Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) for state-owned properties is based on an effective tax rate that is about one-quarter of that paid by private property owners. While UConn provides some on-campus public services such as water and sewer and campus police that reduce the town's costs, this is unlikely to fully compensate for the lower effective tax rate paid on UConn property. Moreover, major sources of state aid, including PILOT payments and Pequot Grants, have been flat or declining in recent years. (See Charts 2 and 3) Pequot Grants are unrestricted grants to municipalities from the proceeds of a state fund based on casino gaming revenue.



<sup>4</sup> Source: Connecticut Office of Policy and Management



Declines in state aid create greater dependence on local revenues to maintain local public services. The ability to expand commercial and industrial land uses and tax revenues can, in turn, reduce pressures to increase property tax rates with the attendant burden on residential taxpayers. Municipal tax studies have shown that commercial and industrial properties, along with agricultural land and open space, generate significantly more revenue than the cost of municipal services they require, whereas residential properties, especially single family houses, generate costs in excess of revenues.<sup>5</sup>

Grand list data for Mansfield indicate that, while the share of assessed property value comprised of commercial and industrial property is about average relative to other Connecticut communities in the 10,000 to 30,000 population range, the assessed value per capita is very low. Because the overall cost of municipal services generally rises in proportion to population, this indicates that the cost of services absorbed by commercial and industrial property taxes in Mansfield is also relatively low. It also suggests that commercial and industrial property

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, *Planning for Agriculture: A Guide for Connecticut Municipalities, 2012 Edition*. The report cites data from nine Connecticut communities with populations ranging from 5,000 to 25,000 that show commercial and industrial properties costing municipalities a median of \$0.27 in services per \$1.00 in tax revenues compared to costs of \$1.09 for residential properties. It also cites national data showing a median of \$0.29 in for commercial and industrial properties versus \$1.16 for residential properties. The data also show similar variations between agricultural land/open space and residential property.

development in Mansfield could be significantly increased without leading to excessive development relative to other communities of its size.

The data does not include the increase in assessed commercial and industrial property values resulting from the Storrs Center development and, in fact, the *Storrs Center Fiscal Impact Study* completed in October 2012 projects that the addition of Storrs Center to the Grand List will increase assessed commercial and industrial property values very significantly – by about 50 percent in 2014. However, even with this increase, Mansfield will still remain on the low end of comparably-sized communities in assessed commercial and industrial property values per capita.

<b>Table 4: Measures of Fiscal Capacity Derived from Commercial/Industrial Tax Base: Mansfield vs. Other Connecticut Communities Population 10,000-30,000, FY2011</b>		
	<b>C/I Assessed Value as Percent of Total Grand List</b>	<b>C/I Assessed Value Per Capita</b>
Mansfield	13.2%	\$4,879
Mansfield Rank	29 of 66	58 of 66
Median	12.4%	\$13,193
Range	1.1% - 40.9%	\$2,822 - \$48,042
Source: Connecticut Office of Policy and Management		

### **C. WORKFORCE**

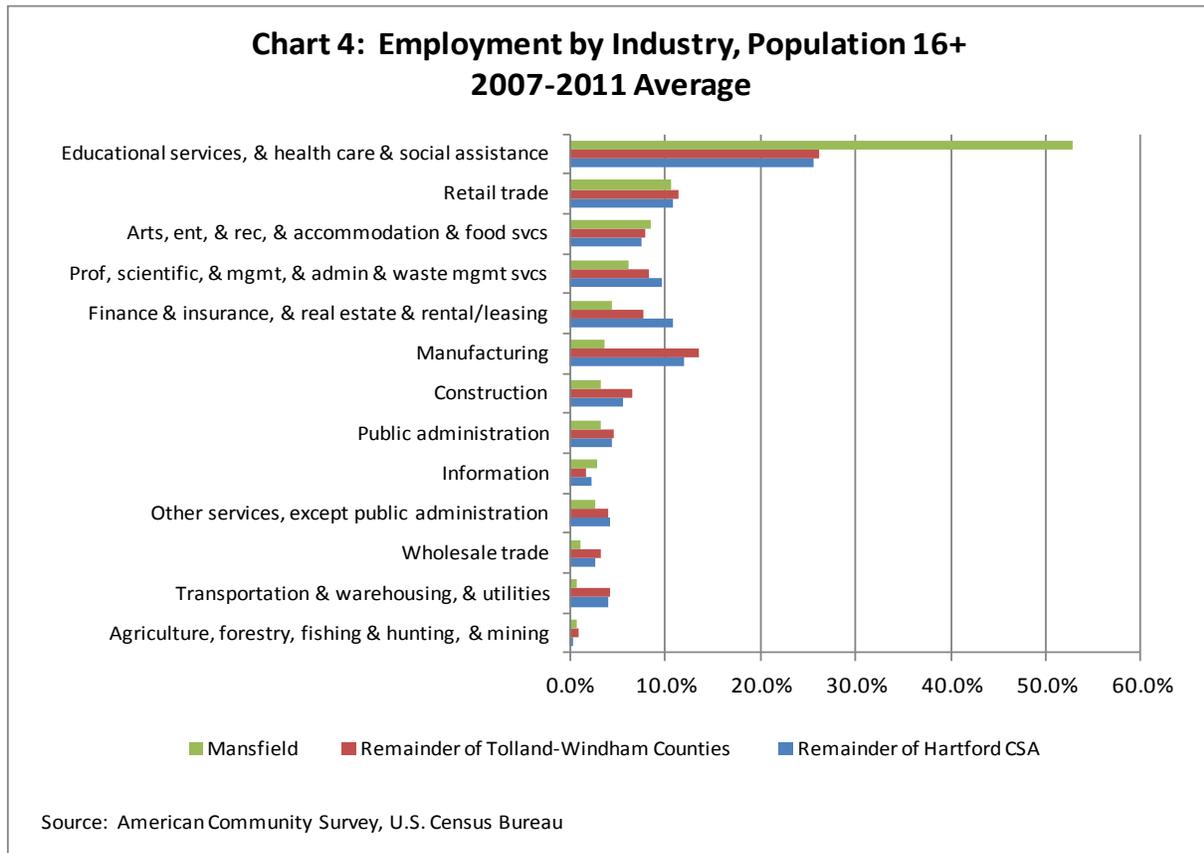
Understanding the skills and employment status of Mansfield’s working residents can be important in determining what kinds of businesses and economic sectors the town is best positioned to attract as well as which of these are a good match for the employment needs of residents. In this regard, it is important to distinguish the characteristics of jobs in Mansfield, which are described above, from the characteristics of the town’s workforce. Many employed residents of Mansfield work in other communities and conversely, many of Mansfield’s workers live elsewhere.<sup>6</sup>

Not surprisingly, a very high proportion of Mansfield residents are employed in the education and health services sectors, given the large numbers of local jobs in these sectors, particularly

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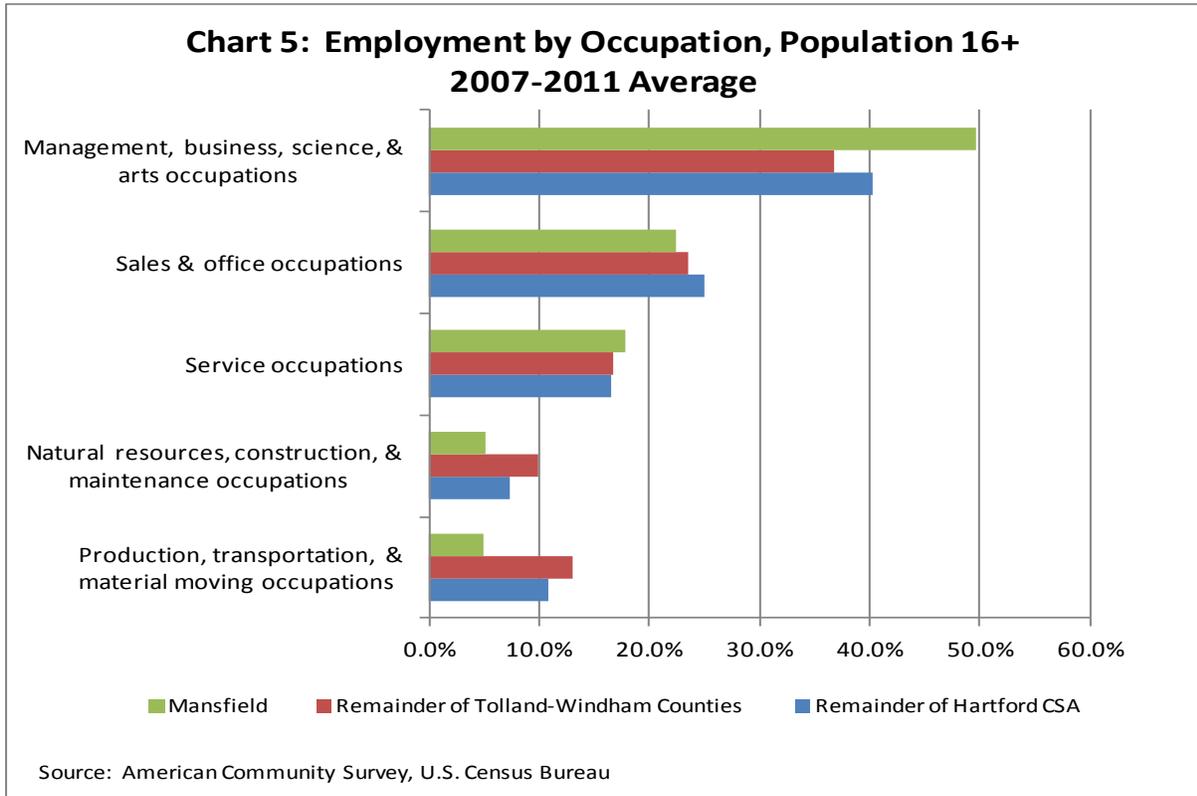
<sup>6</sup> According to data from the 2000 U.S. Census, 44 percent of working Mansfield residents worked in other communities whereas 42 percent of workers employed in Mansfield lived elsewhere. Data from the 2010 Census was not available at the time this report was completed.

education. Over half of the town’s working residents work in these sectors, a much higher proportion than in the rest of the Tolland-Windham region or the larger Hartford Consolidated Statistical Area (CSA). The retail trade and the combined arts, entertainment and recreation, and accommodation and food services sectors are next in importance (employing about 11% and 8% of residents respectively) and employ approximately the same proportion of residents as the region and the CSA. Small proportions of residents are employed in other industries, both in absolute terms, and in most cases, relative to the region and CSA. (See Chart 4)

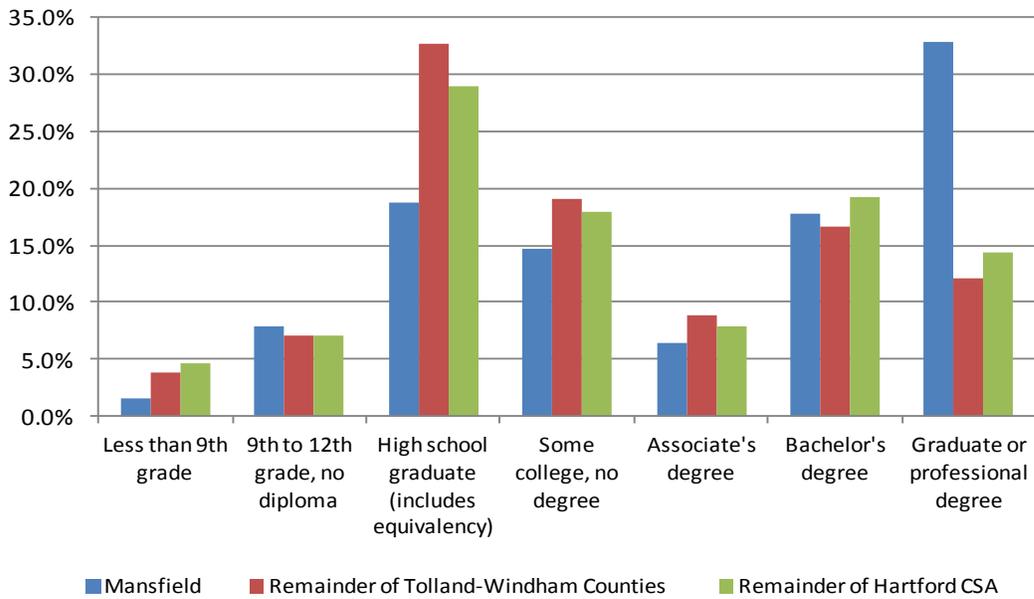


Half of Mansfield’s working residents are employed in generally higher-paying management, business, science, and arts occupations, a considerably higher proportion than at the regional and CSA levels. Fewer, but still considerable numbers, are also employed in sales and office occupations, and in service occupations, in roughly the same proportions as at the regional and CSA levels. Residents working in these occupations are likely to include UConn students working in retail sales and food service occupations. Very few residents are employed in blue collar occupations such as construction, production, and transportation. (See Chart 5)

Consistent with high levels of employment in highly-skilled occupations, Mansfield residents are also highly educated. This is particularly evident in the percentage of residents over 25 with graduate or professional degrees. One-third hold such degrees, more than double that at the regional or CSA level. The town’s highly-educated workforce can provide a considerable advantage in attracting businesses seeking highly-skilled workers. (See Chart 6)



**Chart 6: Education Levels, Population Age 25+  
2007-2011 Average**



Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

The high educational and skill levels of Mansfield residents contribute to relatively high family incomes and low family poverty rates.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 5: Family Economic Status, 2007-2011 Average**

	Mansfield	Tolland County	Windham County	Hartford CSA
Median Family Income	\$90,518	\$80,333	\$72,060	\$83,214
Mean Family Income	\$111,101	\$93,033	\$81,664	\$102,093
Family Poverty Rate	5.1%	3.5%	8.5%	8.5%

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

<sup>7</sup> While household data is often used as a broader indicator of resident economic status, family data is used here to exclude the considerable number of student households, which would skew data downward and likely result in misleading comparisons to regional and CSA data.

As noted earlier, Mansfield has a relatively low unemployment rate. However, unemployment rates vary significantly depending on educational levels. While the town residents without a high school diploma make up a relatively small proportion of the working age population (ages 25-64), they suffer disproportionately from high unemployment. Those with only a high school diploma are also somewhat more likely than average to be unemployed. This suggests the need for additional low- to middle-skill jobs and training opportunities to meet the employment needs of these residents (See Table 6)

<b>Table 6: Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment, Mansfield Residents Age 25-64: 2007-2011 Average</b>		
<b>Level of Education</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	<b>% of Population 25-64</b>
Less than high school graduate	43.2%	7.3%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	8.2%	39.7%
Some college or associate's degree	3.0%	
Bachelor's degree or higher	1.2%	53.0%
Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau		

**D. KEY ECONOMIC SECTORS**

Mansfield has a number of established economic sectors that should be sustained and potentially expanded. These include higher education, food and beverage services, health care, and agriculture.

**Higher Education/UConn.** Higher education is Mansfield’s leading “traded sector” by a wide margin, and is less a sector than a single dominant institution, the University of Connecticut. With its over 22,000 students and over 5,000 faculty and staff, UConn draws income into the community and creates jobs directly through multiple sources, notably student tuition, on-campus room and board, and state and federal funding directly to the university and individual students. Additional direct spending by students and visitors on off-campus housing, retail, food services, entertainment and recreation, and other local goods and services brings significant additional income to the town economy. And direct income to the university is further circulated within the community through spending by the university, administration, faculty and staff on local goods and services. Other indirect sources of income and jobs are businesses that are operated by university faculty, including a considerable number of small consulting businesses, and businesses that have been established locally to commercialize university research. UConn is currently conducting an economic impact study of the university

and its effect on the economy of Mansfield, as well as the state. It will be completed in March 2014.

Direct employment at UConn has increased over the past decade. State government employment in Mansfield, primarily accounted for by UConn, increased by about 500 between 2001 and 2011. The average state government wage in 2011 was almost \$60,000, significantly more than for most other economic sectors within the town.

**Food and Beverage Services.** The accommodation and food services sector employed 1,139 wage and salary workers in 2011. It can be considered partly traded and partly sheltered since spending is partly by visitors to Mansfield and partly by local residents. Most of the employment is in food and drinking places – Mansfield has only a small number of lodging establishments, including two hotels and a handful of bed and breakfasts. The relatively high proportion of jobs to local population in this sector likely reflects strong demand for food and beverage services among the large student population (see Table 3 above).

Employment in this sector increased by about 250 between 2001 and 2011, or over 25 percent. The quality of jobs, however, is very low with average wages of under \$20,000 in 2011, lower than in any other economic sector for which data is available. Many of these jobs are part-time, which accounts in part for the low wage levels.

**Health Care and Social Assistance.** This sector employed 1,134 wage and salary workers in 2011. It can also be considered partly traded and partly sheltered since some of the larger health care organizations such as Natchaug Hospital, VNA East and large specialty practices serve a regional population while some smaller practices primarily serve a local population. The relatively high proportion of jobs to local population in this sector indicates that a significant portion of clients are from outside the community.

Employment in this sector increased by about 250 between 2001 and 2011, or almost 30 percent. The average wage in 2011 was about \$42,000, somewhat below the overall average wage for jobs in Mansfield.

**Agriculture.** While not a major economic driver in terms of income or jobs, agriculture remains an important part of the Mansfield economy. Agriculture (farm and forest) is the largest land use, provides residents with locally-grown food products, creates opportunities for value-added food processing businesses, and supports farm and forest-based tourism. Interior forest tracts occupy approximately 40 percent of the Town. According to the most recent agricultural census in 2007, the Town had 19 farms on approximately 3,000 of farmland. Preserving and expanding the agricultural economy can help to maintain a diversified local economy, contribute to lower property taxes, and preserve the Town's rural character—potentially a major attraction for prospective businesses and employees.

## E. POTENTIAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

**Research and Technology.** The State of Connecticut economic development strategy includes a focus on UConn as a driver of 21<sup>st</sup> century economy prosperity. Major planned investments by the state in UConn over the next 10-20 years promise to significantly affect the Mansfield economy.

- *Next Generation Connecticut.* Announced early in 2013, this initiative introduced by Governor Malloy envisions expenditures of up to \$2 billion on new educational and research facilities, primarily in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), hiring 259 new faculty (200 in STEM disciplines), and increased enrollment of 5,000 students at the Storrs Campus. The initiative promises to expand the level of research, technology commercialization and new enterprise development at the Storrs Campus, which could spur increased demand for R&D, office, and light manufacturing space in Mansfield. The increase in students and faculty could also generate growth in other economic sectors including retail, accommodation and food services, and other consumer services.
- *UConn Tech Park.* The Tech Park, as currently envisioned, will involve the build-out of up to 900,000 square feet over a 10-20 year timeframe. The first phase of the Park, a 115,000 square foot Innovation Partnership Building (IPB) will be completed in 2016. The building will be designed to accommodate university/industry partnerships with a focus on advanced manufacturing. It will also contain 25,000 square feet of incubator space. One role of the IPB is as an anchor for the Technology Park to attract private technology-driven companies. Most of the other buildings are expected to be privately developed and to house corporate research facilities, emerging technology firms, and possibly federal labs. While Tech Park land is expected to remain state property, these private facilities are envisioned to be equipment-intensive and thus to generate a high level of property taxes to Mansfield on the improvements (buildings and equipment). Another facility similar to the Innovation Partnership Building, but privately-developed, may also be constructed in the future. Park planning has incorporated a strong environmental dimension, with emphasis on preservation and enhancement of open space and sustainable building design.

While the nature, scale and timing of the Park's construction remain undetermined at this time, its completion has the potential to result in significant business development, job creation, and local property tax revenues over time. In the shorter run, the graduation of firms from the new incubator could increase the number of second stage firms desiring to expand within Mansfield as they seek to maintain proximity to UConn facilities and relationships with UConn researchers.

In addition to these initiatives, UConn and the State of Connecticut have greatly expanded resources to support technology commercialization and entrepreneurship. UConn's Office of Economic Development operates four programs specifically aimed at promoting technology-based economic development related to UConn's research strengths.

- *The Technology Exchange Portal (TEP)* provides an entry point for companies seeking to access the expertise of UConn faculty and researchers. TEP can link companies to resources including faculty experts, university scientific research, specialized equipment, incubation space and services, technical assistance, intellectual property, and product development resources.
- *The Technology Partnerships and Licensing Group* manages the intellectual property created at the university in life and physical sciences. It identifies and evaluates technologies and coordinates and manages licensing and other agreements with companies seeking to commercialize university inventions.
- *UConn Ventures* is a for-profit subsidiary of the UConn Foundation. Its mission is to create new business startups based on innovative technologies developed by faculty and staff. It focuses on identifying university technologies, evaluating markets for potential technologies, creating business plans with companies, soliciting early stage venture capital, and recruiting business management for startups with which it works.
- *The Technology Incubation Program (TIP)* is charged with accelerating the successful establishment and development of entrepreneurial companies. The program provides wet and dry lab space and office space to small, startup technology-based companies. It also provides an array of support resources and services through relationships with various university departments, schools and functions and with government and industry. The incubator on the Storrs Campus is located in the Bio Science complex and is 3,250 square feet in size.

The State of Connecticut's new CTNext Initiative has designated four hubs throughout the state in its effort to develop an "innovation ecosystem." One of these hubs, INNOVATION East, is located in Storrs. It is now in the process of developing a menu of services including accelerator programs for startups to rapidly transform concepts to reality, co-working space to promote collaboration among entrepreneurs, incubation space with wet- and dry-lab space, industry expertise, business networking opportunities, and direct support from mentors and business service providers.

Connecticut Innovations is another important source of support for startup and early stage companies. CI provides a variety of financing and technical assistance tools, including SBIR matching grants, the TechStart Accelerator Program, the Seed Investment Fund, ELI Whitney

Fund early stage venture capital funding, the Clean Tech Fund, and the BioScience Facilities Fund, which finances wet lab and related space.

Mansfield already has a small base of R&D and technology firms that, while generally small and not highly visible, generate income, tax revenues, and high quality employment, and have the potential to grow. The largest of these is Charles River Laboratories, a 25-employee firm involved in avian vaccine services. Others include: Advanced Optical Tech, Aquatic Network Sensing Technology, a UConn spin-off that develops underwater acoustic communication and networking technology; Biorisis, established by two UConn professors, which is developing a metabolic biosensor with applications to pharmaceutical development; and Agrivida, an agricultural biotechnology company focused on creating renewable, biomass-based alternative fuels.

While the UConn campus provides fertile ground for technology commercialization and entrepreneurship, Mansfield is hampered by a shortage of R&D space and land zoned for R&D facilities as firms grow and look for larger space. Some firms are reported by UConn Economic Development Office staff and town officials to have relocated outside of Mansfield for this reason. Without the development of additional R&D space, Mansfield will continue to lose growing technology firms to other communities.

**Professional and Business Services.** Mansfield has a significant number of small firms (generally four or fewer employees) that provide a wide range of business and professional services in regional or even national markets. These include engineering and architectural services, computer programming and computer systems design, graphic design, environmental consulting, management consulting, and other business services. As shown in Chart 1, these types of businesses (classified under professional and technical services and administrative services) have been growing in the Tolland-Windham region but not in Mansfield. More attention to accommodating the growth needs of these types of firms could yield more business and employment growth within Mansfield.

**Tourism.** Mansfield has a wide variety of tourism attractions that could draw more visitors, particularly from within the southeastern New England market. These include cultural heritage, arts, recreational, and agri-tourism venues and events.

Mansfield has relied primarily on regional organizations to undertake tourism development and marketing. The state-funded regional tourism marketing organization, "Mystic Country," covers 41 cities and towns throughout eastern Connecticut as well as Westerly, Rhode Island. Northeastern Connecticut formerly had its own marketing organization, "The Quiet Corner," but the two districts were combined in a cost-saving measure. With the highest-profile tourism attractions, notably the casinos, Mystic Seaport, and the Long Island Sound coastline,

concentrated in the southeast, the northeast suffers from a less intensive focus than was the case when it had its own marketing organization.

The Last Green Valley, a 35-town National Heritage Corridor in northeast Connecticut and south-central Massachusetts that promotes heritage and natural resource tourism as part of its mission, has partly compensated for the limited focus on northeast Connecticut by “Mystic Country.” The organization’s extensive website provides much more detailed information about visitor attractions and accommodations in the region, describes the history and natural character of the region in a way that enhances its appeal to potential visitors, and has laid out driving, walking, biking, and paddling routes that link the region’s attractions together to provide a more engaging experience.

In addition to these regional organizations, the Windham Region Chamber of Commerce and the Tolland County Chamber of Commerce publish downloadable and printed brochures that provide extensive listings of tourism venues and events, lodging, restaurants and other visitor information. However, the chambers have not been actively involved in tourism development strategies or focused marketing initiatives.

Expanding tourism in Mansfield could strengthen the town’s economy and, in particular, create more activity during the quiet summer months when UConn is not in full session. This is likely to require more intensive local efforts to highlight the town’s attractions within the regional tourism market that could include the development of themed trails, tourism packages, and special events, and working with other towns in the region to provide a more diverse and appealing visitor experience. It may also require further development of local visitor infrastructure (e.g., inns, bed and breakfasts, and campgrounds) that could help to attract more visitors to Mansfield and increase their spending while here.

***Retail and Consumer Services.*** Data indicate that Mansfield has a relatively small retail sector. Increases in students and faculty at UConn as well as the ability to realize the growth opportunities described above will increase the base of consumers (i.e., residents, employees, and students), potentially creating greater demand for retail and consumer service businesses. However, because the Mansfield population has typically dropped during the summer, the seasonal nature of the market has made it difficult in the past for some retail and service businesses to survive over the long term. More summer programs on campus, as well as advertising to year round residents, would help support retail, especially in Storrs Center. As UConn upgrades residence halls with air conditioning and other improvements, it is expected that summer programs will expand.

The new Storrs Center has met with considerable initial success in leasing ground floor space to commercial tenants. According to news reports, merchants in Storrs Center experienced an

expected slowdown in business during summer 2013.<sup>8</sup> The experience at Storrs Center with commercial lease and occupancy rates during the next few years will provide one indication of the potential for further expanding retail and consumer services within the town.

## IV. Economic Development Resources

The development of Mansfield's economy is influenced by its economic development resources. These include its human resources, entrepreneurial climate, physical infrastructure, economic institutions, and general quality of life. Effectively utilizing these resources and filling critical resource gaps can support and accelerate economic development efforts.

### A. ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Programs and services available to technology businesses are described in the "Potential Growth Opportunities" section above. Other regional and state programs and services for businesses include the following:

Management of the state's ***Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs)*** was recently transferred from the Connecticut State University system to UConn's Office of Economic Development. The SBDC's central office and one of its regional centers are located at UConn's Storrs campus. SBDCs provide businesses with assistance on a range of business functions, including business plan development, financial planning, loan packing, marketing, employee management, and regulatory compliance. They also provide specialized assistance in government contracting, international trade, and for minority, women and veteran businesses.

The ***Northeast Connecticut Economic Alliance*** is a non-profit economic development corporation established to help create and retain jobs in 21 towns of Windham, Tolland, and New London counties. The alliance currently provides business loans from two funds: a Regional Revolving Loan Fund that is devoted to economic development in northeastern Connecticut, and a Small Cities Loan Fund. Loans generally range in size from \$5,000 to \$50,000, and targeted businesses are small to medium in size, having 50 or fewer employees. It also has funding available through the U.S. Department of Agriculture which allows us to help structure larger loan packages in the following towns: Killingly, Mansfield, Plainfield, Putnam, Thompson, and Windham.

At the state level, ***Connecticut Innovations*** (which recently merged with the Connecticut Development Authority) offers financing programs addressing a range of business needs. In addition to the Bioscience Facilities Fund described earlier, these include loans and loan

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<sup>8</sup> "Storrs Center preps for return of students," *The Daily Campus*, August 27, 2013 ([www.dailycampus.com](http://www.dailycampus.com)).

guarantees loans for small and mid-sized businesses, grants, seed financing, venture capital, and loans for early-stage and technology-intensive businesses, and targeted programs providing export financing, loans and loan guarantees for advanced energy projects, and loans for IT companies.

The **Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development** offers two business loan programs, the Small Business Express Program and loans to manufacturers for projects with strong economic development potential. DECD, both directly and through partner organizations, provides technical assistance to businesses on a range of issues, and also works with qualifying businesses to provide state tax incentives.

## **B. CAREER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Workforce development services for jobseekers and employers in Mansfield are provided by the ***Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board***, one of five regional workforce investment boards in Connecticut. WIBs are responsible for providing a range of workforce development services, primarily through their one-stop career centers that seek, to the extent possible, to co-locate workforce development services from a range of federal and state agencies at a single locations. The career center serving Mansfield is located in Willamantic. Services to jobseekers include job search assistance, career counseling, job development and placement, seminars on a wide range of topics, training referrals, and training funds for individuals with high barriers to employment to be used for training by certified training providers. Services to employers include employee recruitment assistance, reimbursement for on-the-job training, and workforce literacy assistance. The WIB also provides services to at-risk and out-of-school youth.

***Windham Technical High School*** is the regional technical school serving Mansfield and 19 other communities. The school serves high school students who seek a combination of traditional academics and training in a trade or technology field. The school offers students training in architectural technology, electrical, automotive technology, electronics, carpentry, health technology, heating, ventilation and air conditioning, manufacturing technology, and culinary arts. It also offers adults training as dental assistants.

***Eastern Connecticut State University***, in addition to its bachelor's and post-graduate degree programs, offers short-term (six months or less) on-site and on-line training in a range of career fields.

***University of Connecticut*** offers a range of adult learning opportunities, both on-site and on-line, through its ***Center for Continuing Studies***. These include a bachelor's of general studies with several potential theme areas, and professional training in fields including computers, environmental science, health, homeland security, insurance, non-profits, and paralegal.

## **C. CULTURE, RECREATION AND TOURISM**

***Mystic Country*** (Eastern Regional Tourism District) is the state's designated marketing organization for eastern Connecticut, operated by the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut. The organization hosts a detailed tourism website, produces and distributes a printed visitors' guide, provides advertising opportunities for tourism businesses, and assists meeting and event planners.

***The Last Green Valley*** is a 35-town National Heritage Corridor in eastern Connecticut and south-central Massachusetts. TLGV hosts an extensive website that includes a calendar of events and an interactive map, publishes guides and maps, and sponsors special events such as the annual Walktober. It also provides co-operative advertising opportunities for its business members

**WindhamARTS** was organized to foster and promote the arts and cultural life of the Windham Region. It has been named by the state as Northeast CT's Designated Regional Service Organization for the arts. In this capacity, it seeks to support the state's creative economy, provide cultural leadership to a broad diversity of regional constituents, develop and sustain industry and cross sector relationships and convene constituents to assess need, provide coordinated marketing, technical assistance, advocacy and other relevant services and programs, and support specific Connecticut Office of the Arts programs and services. The organizations hosts an on-line arts calendar.

## **E. PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND HOUSING**

The quality of public infrastructure to serve businesses and the availability of housing to meet workforce needs are important factors in economic development. In Mansfield, the limited availability of water and sewer service, and their absence in many areas zoned for business development, as well as the limited range of housing choices present potential barriers to future economic development. Physical infrastructure and housing are addressed in detail in other sections of the Mansfield Tomorrow plan.

## **F. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY**

Economic development functions in the ***Town of Mansfield*** are handled by the Town Manager and the Director of Planning and Development. The town does not have a dedicated staff position for economic development. Town staff is assisted by a recently-established Economic Development Commission, whose mission is to conduct research into local economic conditions and trends, make recommendations regarding economic development, and coordinate the activities of and cooperate with organizations the promote economic development

Two chambers of commerce serve Mansfield businesses – the **Windham Regional Chamber of Commerce** and the **Tolland County Chamber of Commerce**. Both chambers provide tourism information and also focus on business networking, advertising and promotional opportunities and legislative affairs. As relatively small chambers, they do not play an extensive role in economic development.

The **Windham Region Council of Governments (WinCOG)** provides planning assistance to local governments in a number of policy areas. In the realm of economic development, WinCOG works with the local communities in its region to develop the region’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) which prioritizes economic development projects and is required to obtain project funding for the U.S. Economic Development Commission. In 2010, WinCOG sponsored the preparation of a “Regional Economic Development Plan” which recommended the establishment of a regional economic development organization. However, WinCOG and its member communities have been unable to raise the funds to establish such an organization.

At the state level, the **Office of Policy and Management** manages the Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP), which funds economic development, community conservation and quality of life projects for localities that are ineligible to receive Urban Action bonds. The Department of Economic and Community Development manages the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, which provides funding and technical support to communities with populations of less than 50,000 for projects that achieve local community and economic development objectives.

## V. Summary of Key Opportunities and Challenges

- **Opportunities**
  - Supporting the retention and expansion of existing firms, with a focus on growth firms in traded sectors, such as research and development, engineering, computer-related, and business and management consulting
  - Capturing technology spin-offs from UConn
  - Attracting companies seeking research partnerships with UConn
  - Promoting additional retail development
  - Attracting companies in regional growth industries
  - Supporting the retention and expansion of existing agricultural businesses
- **Challenges**

- Increasing appropriately zoned sites with necessary infrastructure, such as public water supply, to capture business growth opportunities
- Providing amenities desired by high tech employees
- Streamlining regulatory processes while maintaining sufficient control of business growth
- Reducing reliance on residential tax base and potentially vulnerable state PILOT payments to town government
- Bolstering limited local and regional economic development capacity through increased investments and organizational collaboration
- Balancing development with quality of life concerns

## **VI. Economic Development Action Plan: Options for Consideration**

The following proposed economic development action plan seeks to address economic development opportunities and challenges identified in the analysis, while incorporating the aspirations for economic development reflected in general community discussions as well as views expressed by individual economic development stakeholders in their business, government, and institutional capacities.

### **A. VALUES**

In expressing their vision for Mansfield, community residents have strongly emphasized the importance of maintaining its rural and small town character. At the same time, there is a general recognition of the importance of sustaining a healthy economy that provides quality jobs, goods and services needed by local residents, and tax revenues to support essential public services such as schools. The proposed action plan seeks to maintain a balance between these sometimes competing visions.

- It emphasizes “sustainable development” that meets the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations, and that balances the pursuit of economic prosperity with environmental quality and social equity.
- It focuses on supporting businesses that are already established within the community.
- Where it proposes support for new business development and expansion, the focus is on low-impact, high-value businesses such as research and development, professional and business services, and small-scale production of high-value products, business that generally have a small footprint and limited environmental impacts.

- It prioritizes siting businesses and new development on land that is already developed or zoned for commercial and industrial development.
- It provides for greater flexibility in land use and business regulation that supports entrepreneurship and new business development consistent with the town's existing character.
- It seeks to sustain the community's cultural and natural assets through appropriately focused and scaled tourism activities.
- Its focus with respect to retail and consumer services is on businesses that meet the needs of local residents and workers, or that help to draw visitors with unique offerings that reinforce the town's identity.
- It emphasizes the importance of developing, attracting and retaining a talented workforce to support innovation, job creation, and new business ventures, key to the long-term success of the local economy.
- While addressed primarily in the Mansfield Tomorrow Agriculture Strategy Report, it seeks to preserve and sustain the community's agricultural economy.
- It promotes regional collaboration where working with adjacent communities through regional entities has the potential to achieve economic synergies and shared benefits.

## **B. PROPOSED GOALS**

Drawing from the analysis and the community values articulated above, the following goals for economic development are proposed:

1. Create a stronger entrepreneurial environment that more effectively supports business formation, expansion, and retention consistent with the town's existing character.
2. Diversify and grow the economy with a focus on UConn-related businesses spin-offs and support services, value-added agriculture, recreational, cultural, and heritage tourism, other potential growth sectors, and regional business strengths.
3. Strengthen collaboration between the town and UConn to maximize the local economic benefits of UConn's presence.
4. Expand summertime economic activity to achieve a greater balance with other seasons in order to provide a more stable market for businesses serving local consumers and visitors, and more year-round job opportunities.
5. Increase job opportunities to meet the diverse employment needs of local residents and reduce the level of outbound commuting.
6. Increase the variety of goods and services available within Mansfield to better serve the demands of local residents and visitors.

7. Increase local property tax revenues through additional commercial, industrial, and agricultural property development to the level needed to maintain the quality of public services desired by local residents.
8. Focus commercial and industrial development on land already used or zoned for commercial and industrial uses in order to maximize preservation of open space and agricultural land.
9. Strengthen collaboration with surrounding communities through regional organizations and initiatives that generate mutually desirable economic activity and can more effectively be achieved through regional than local action.
10. Balance efforts to expand Mansfield's economic base with sensitivity to preserving the town's highly-valued quality of life.
11. Ensure that Mansfield has sufficient resources and capacity for economic development through development of its internal capacity as well as collaboration with relevant local, regional, and state entities. [Addressed in strategies?]

### **C. PREPARING FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: A REVIEW OF TOOLS IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOL BOX**

A community's economic development program can utilize a range of tools to achieve its economic development goals. These tools are not applied in isolation, but are typically complementary and synergistic in supporting the overall economic development program.

***Entrepreneurship and small business development.*** A variety of tools can be employed to help small businesses startup and grow. These include entrepreneurial training programs, one-on-one technical assistance, networking and collaboration venues, and various forms of public or quasi-public business financing. In the case of technology-based entrepreneurship, commercialization of university R&D can be a critical catalyst to new enterprise development.

***Business retention and expansion.*** Established businesses face a range of challenges as they seek to retain profitability and pursue expansion opportunities. Many communities have established business retention and expansion programs to support businesses at this stage in their life cycles, focusing particularly on traded sector firms with considerable existing employment or with significant growth potential. These programs typically involve one-to-one outreach, identification of key issues that threaten retention or impede growth, and follow-up to directly resolve these issues or broker needed assistance. Economic gardening, a variant of business retention and expansion programs, involves intensive market and competitive analysis to assist rapidly expanding firms to develop new products and markets.

**Business recruitment.** This is a long-standing approach to economic development that involves using marketing and incentives to induce established firms that may be expanding or building new facilities to locate in a community. Recruitment is typically a state or regional function, particularly in areas with small communities with limited economic development capacity and incentive funding, and is typically targeted to larger firms.

**Workforce development.** Businesses need appropriately trained and skilled workers to provide quality products and services at profitable levels. Education and training institutions need to understand the workforce needs of local employers and work with employers to ensure that their programs are responsive. Workforce development efforts typically take place at the regional level, particularly in rural areas, but local communities can collaborate with employers particularly on career development at the K-12 level.

**Talent attraction and retention.** In an era when the ability to attract skilled professional and technical workers is the key to success of high-value, high-wage, growth businesses, the community environment is a key factor in decisions by these businesses about where to locate. Communities are consequently paying more attention to developing the amenities necessary to attract highly skilled workers who have choices of where to live and work.

**Regulatory assistance.** Businesses newly locating in a community or moving into new space typically need to obtain certain regulatory approvals, particularly when there is a change in use or need to make a physical alteration to the property. The more these regulations and regulatory processes can be made user friendly without compromising community safety and environmental quality, the less they are an impediment to attracting and retaining desirable businesses.

**Real estate and infrastructure development.** As businesses start, expand or relocate in a community, they need appropriate space and infrastructure to meet their facility needs. If a community targets certain kinds of business activity as part of its economic development strategy, it must ensure that its zoning and land use regulation, and its infrastructure investments are aligned with those targets.

In addition to determining the types of economic development tools it will employ in implementing its economic development strategy, a community must also determine its particular role in developing these tools. This is in turn a function of its own resources and capacities, as well as the mission, resources and capacities of other local or regional organizations that can be mobilized as participants. Depending on the circumstances, the local community's role can be as limited a role as providing information and as expansive as directly developing and managing a program. In between these extremes, the community's role can include broker (e.g., matching a business with a service provider), catalyst (e.g., convening

actors to develop a program or resource), partner, or investor. In general, the community wants to adopt the least costly and resource-intensive role necessary to achieve the desired outcome.

#### **D. POTENTIAL STRATEGIES AND ACTION STEPS FOR MANSFIELD**

##### **1) *Create a more supportive environment for existing and new businesses***

- a) Establish a business retention and expansion (BRE) program
  - i) *Activities.* A BRE program typically should include the following components:
    - (1) develop a list of target businesses, based on size, growth potential, and potential for relocation outside of Mansfield;
    - (2) undertake a visitation program, which may include surveys or structured interviews to assess business status and identify outstanding or potential issues;
    - (3) develop mechanisms to address issues identified in visits, either directly or through referral to other organizations; and
    - (4) follow up to ensure that issues are resolved
  - ii) *Staff and other resource requirements.* This is a labor intensive program that involves use of staff time for one-on-one visits or alternatively, the recruitment of volunteers with knowledge of business (e.g., retired business persons). Protocols for visits, tracking and follow-up will have to be developed to ensure that business needs are identified and effectively addressed, and staff and volunteers will have to receive appropriate training to ensure program effectiveness and consistency.
  - iii) *Organizational responsibilities.* No organization currently undertakes these activities, either locally or regionally. The two regional chambers have not done so in the past and do not appear to have the capacity or interest in playing a lead role. Efforts to establish a regional Economic Development Organization (EDO), most recently through WinCOG, have not been successful and are hampered a lack of a sustainable funding source. The Town could establish a local program, but would have to consider how to staff and manage it. The Economic Development Commission could potentially take a role in visitations and/or recruiting additional volunteers from the community. The regional chambers could be involved in helping to recruit volunteers to conduct business visits. Referral and follow-up would require staff time to establish protocols with business assistance organizations, initiate referrals and conduct follow-up.

- b) Make business regulation more user-friendly
  - i) *Actions.* For businesses seeking to relocate or to make changes in existing space:
    - (1) Provide easily accessible and understandable descriptions of required permits and permitting processes through the town website;
    - (2) Coordinate inspection and permitting activities when different departments within town government are involved, and provide a single point of contact to help applicants navigate the process;
    - (3) Enable applicants to track status of permit applications online;
    - (4) Minimize the need for special permits for minor changes in use through revisions to the zoning code.
    - (5) Review nonconforming business properties for any needed zoning or regulatory changes.
    - (6) Review signage regulations to improve user-friendliness.
  - ii) *Staff and other resource requirements.* No significant additional resources required.
  - iii) *Organizational responsibilities.* Relevant town departments, led by Planning and Development.
- c) Provide information on business assistance resources
  - i) *Actions:* Expand business section of town website to include links page with links to local, regional and state business organizations and business assistance programs, organized by type of organization and with brief descriptions.
  - ii) *Staff and other resource requirements.* No significant additional resource required. Periodic review required to ensure that links are up to date and new organizations and programs are added.
  - iii) *Organizational responsibilities:* Planning and Development

## **2) Strengthen business recruitment efforts**

- a) Establish a regional business marketing program
  - i) *Target businesses.* These could include UConn collaborators (e.g., Tech Park prospects), UConn service providers, economic sectors that are strong and growing regionally, agricultural-related businesses, and businesses providing underrepresented consumer goods and services. Initial efforts should focus on

firms that are well-matched with Mansfield's current commercial property inventory; targeting can be broadened as more specialized facilities (e.g., with lab space) are developed.

*ii) Activities.*

- (1) Expand business section of town website to include information typically found on highly regarded small town websites (e.g., community profile, user-friendly information on how to locate a business in Mansfield, available site information, business testimonials links to other useful organizations).
- (2) Continue to pursue efforts for collaborative regional marketing with adjacent towns (e.g., application for funding for shared economic development staff with Tolland and Coventry). If funding for formal collaboration cannot be obtained, Mansfield should work with surrounding communities to develop informal and ad hoc collaboration (e.g., cross-referrals of prospects that are not a good fit with the initial contact community).
- (3) Partner with UConn to coordinate marketing to technology firms aligned with UConn's research strengths, including marketing the Tech Park.
- (4) Conduct outreach to commercial property developers who specialize in aligned with the town's marketing and development objectives (e.g., lab space, multi-tenant space for early stage technology firms, historic property restoration relevant to the Depot Campus).
- (5) Engage with DECD to encourage referrals of firms and site selection consultants seeking a location in Connecticut, consistent with local targeting.
- (6) Organize familiarization tours for businesses, site selectors, and commercial property developers who contact the Town about the possibility of locating or developing commercial property in Mansfield. These could involve town officials, real estate professionals, business leaders, and university representatives, as appropriate.
- (7) Develop a menu of state and local incentives to support desirable property development, subject to negotiation with individual developers. These could include:
  - (a) providing local Tax Increment Financing (TIFs) to finance public improvements associated with desirable development projects,

potentially in conjunction with a state TIF for large scale-development projects through Connecticut Innovations;

- (b) fixing the assessment of private development on state property for up to seven years (see CGS 12-65b);
- (c) offering CDBG funding to reduce the development costs of incubators or other multi-tenant facilities;
- (d) working with developers to obtain brownfields remediation funding when necessary, working through the Connecticut Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development, the state's one-stop resource for such funding
- (e) supporting funding applications to Connecticut Innovations' BioScience Facility Fund.

iii) *Staff and other resource requirements.* Local marketing efforts would require increased staff time on the part of Planning and Development or Town Manager's office. This would be reduced if the regional initiative could obtain state funding. Town officials would have to make policy decisions regarding the use of tax incentives.

iv) *Organizational responsibilities.* Town Manager, Planning and Development

### **3) Increase available commercial and industrial development sites**

- a) Explore with UConn the promotion of public-private partnerships to redevelop underutilized state-owned land (e.g., Depot Campus, Burgin Correctional Institution site) for mixed public and private use
  - i) *Target businesses.* Firms graduating from the existing UConn incubator need small scale R&D and office space, often with special fit-up for wet or dry lab space. Yet demand is currently inadequate to stimulate private developers or property owners to develop space involving the additional costs generated by special fit-up requirements. Efforts are required to capture UConn spin-offs in the short-run and, as spin-offs increase in the longer-run, to demonstrate to private developers and property owners the market for R&D space.
  - ii) *Activities.* Establish a joint town-university working group to explore re-use of the Depot Campus and Burgin Correctional Institution for mixed public and private use. This could be modeled after the successful planning process undertaken by the Mansfield Downtown Partnership.

- iii) *Staff and other resource requirements.* Initially, appointment of working group members from town and university; likely to require site analysis and feasibility studies
- iv) *Organizational responsibilities.* Town Manager, relevant university representatives
- b) Revise zoning map and regulations to: 1) rezone suitable areas for appropriately scaled commercial and industrial development, including additional zoning for R&D; and 2) allowing R&D uses in Business, Planned Business and Professional Office zones with special permits to ensure community health and safety and compatibility with surrounding uses. This is in line with zoning procedures in other small Connecticut communities such as Branford and Farmington, which have experienced growth in R&D businesses. (addressed in more detail elsewhere in the plan)
- c) Extend water and sewer service to commercial/industrial zoned land (addressed elsewhere in the plan)
- d) Market sites to commercial/industrial developers and targeted businesses (part of business marketing initiative described above)

**4) Retain and attract talent needed by technology and other high-skill businesses**

- a) Invest in Mansfield’s education system with cradle to grave programs that help people in Mansfield develop their talents
  - i) *Activities*
    - (1) Explore establishing STEM summer camps
    - (2) Work with UConn to enrich the university’s entrepreneurship program and provide opportunities for high school students
    - (3) Support high quality STEM education in the public schools
- b) Improve quality of life amenities
  - i) *Activities:*
    - (1) Improve walkability/bikeability (addressed elsewhere in the plan)
    - (2) Increase housing choices (addressed elsewhere in the plan)
    - (3) Increase diversity of available consumer goods and services (addressed elsewhere in this section)
- b) Offer a welcoming environment to young professionals, creatives, and entrepreneurs

- i) *Activities:*
  - (1) Organize networking events
  - (2) Promote professional development opportunities through UConn
  - (3) More effectively promote cultural, entertainment, and recreational events (e.g., develop a comprehensive web-based events calendar)
  - (4) Develop more venues and events for showcasing local talent
  - (5) Highlight Mansfield's assets and amenities in UConn alumni publications
  - (6) Recognize accomplishments of residents (e.g., new businesses, professional advancements, honors) through local publications and events
- ii) *Staff and other resource requirements.* Activities can be undertaken by multiple organizations, including the regional chambers of commerce, UConn, WindhamArts, Innovation East, the Connecticut Small Business Development Center, and local media. These activities can be regional as well as local.
- iii) *Organizational responsibilities:* The town's Economic Development Commission should convene key organizations to consider potential activities, develop an agenda, and assess progress. Individual organizations would be responsible for implementing elements of the agenda.

## **5) Support Economic Diversification**

- c) Promote Mansfield as a tourism destination
  - i) *Activities.* Supplement and enhance regional tourism development and marketing activities, with a particular focus on summer tourism:
    - (1) Establish local tourism promotion organization. Other small communities with significant tourism assets have developed their own marketing efforts to supplement regional efforts. A local tourism promotion organization could develop a more effective visitor website, develop visitor packages, organize additional special events, develop theme trails, install wayfinding signage, and operate a visitor information kiosk in Storrs Center. The organization could also consider how to promote the development of additional tourism infrastructure (e.g., more lodging rooms).
    - (2) Collaborate with other towns on the Quiet Corner Committee to develop joint marketing efforts and promote more effective and targeted marketing of northeast Connecticut by Mystic Country.

- (3) Support UConn in developing additional summer adult and youth learning programs, using empty dormitory rooms for lodging. UConn has been expanding summer adult and youth learning programs and is continuing to upgrade residential halls with air conditioning and other enhancements.
  - ii) *Staff and other resource requirements.* Leadership should come from operators of tourism venues, events, and other businesses benefiting from tourism (lodging, food and beverage establishments). The town could play a supportive role, (e.g., writing grant proposals to state or federal funding sources.)
  - iii) *Organizational responsibilities.* Create town tourism promotion organization
- b) Support preservation and expansion of local agriculture
- i) *Activities.* Initiatives to support the development of the agricultural economy will be addressed primarily in another section of the plan. As noted above, agri-tourism activities could be expanded to provide additional income for farmers while encouraging growth in resource-based tourism. Other activities under consideration include developing infrastructure for increased value-added production (e.g., a shared commercial kitchen), increased local distribution of farm products, crop diversification, and refining local regulations to reduce regulatory burdens.
  - c) Focus BRE and business marketing on local and regional growth opportunities (addressed elsewhere in this section)

## **6) Strengthen Local Economic Development Capacity**

- a) Establish Economic Development Director Position within the Office of Planning and Development
  - i) As a whole, these recommendations suggest a significant increase in the Town's economic development activities. Given their extensive other duties, it will be difficult for either the Town Manager or the Director of Planning and Development to play a lead operating role in economic development efforts. Consequently, if practicable, the town should consider creating a half-time Economic Development Director position to assume this role.

## Appendix: Composition of Selected Economic Sectors

The economic sectors listed in some of the charts in this report are defined in the North American Industry Classification System for the purposes of government data collection. While the composition of some of these sectors is self-evident (e.g., retail, manufacturing), the composition of others is less clear. The following sectors are described in greater detail to provide readers with a more thorough understanding of their composition:

**Information:** includes publishing, motion picture and sound recording industries, broadcasting, telecommunications, and data processing, hosting and related services.

**Professional and technical services:** includes legal services, accounting services, architectural and engineering services, specialized design services, computer systems design and related services, management, scientific and technical consulting services, scientific research and development services, and advertising and public relations services

**Administrative and waste services:** includes office administrative services, facilities support services, employment services, business support services, travel arrangement and reservation services, investigation and security services, services to building and dwellings, waste collection, and waste treatment and disposal.

**Other services except public administration:** includes repair and maintenance, personal and laundry services, religious grantmaking, civic, professional and similar organizations, and private household services.