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New England
planning consensus community

TOLLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

TOLLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Adopted by Economic Development Commission – October 5, 2011

Table of Contents

A. Purpose.....	3
B. Role of Economic Development in Tolland.....	4
C. Visions of Future Economic Development	9
D. Strategies for Tolland Economic Development Action Plan	11
E. Zoning Strategies for Future Economic Development	17
F. Tolland Economic Development Action Plan Implementation Matrix	21

A. Purpose

The Town of Tolland initiated an economic development effort in 2001 with the preparation of the 2002 Tolland Economic Development Action Plan (TEDAP). This was followed by other planning efforts such as the 2007 Citizen Survey, the 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development and the Tolland Village Area Plan.

The TEDAP was a guide for many successful economic development activities, including the installation of public sewers along Route 195, successful commercial development within that area, additional development within the Tolland Business Park, and an enhanced relationship and cooperation with the University of Connecticut to facilitate business expansion in Tolland. In addition, and perhaps most importantly, it resulted in programmatic changes as to how the Town dealt with the business community.

By almost any measure, the 2002 TEDAP was successful. However, the world is a very different place in 2011 than it was in 2001, and national economic conditions have changed dramatically. Municipal leaders decided that it was an appropriate time to review and assess the almost ten year old strategy. The Economic Development Commission, with the aid of staff and a consultant reviewed the strategies to determine; (1) which strategies have been implemented; (2) which have not been implemented; (3) If the strategy was not implemented, why was it not implemented. Is the recommendation still valid, or should it be changed? and (4) Are there any strategies which should be considered to incorporate in the Tolland Economic Development Action Plan?

We also considered the attitude of the citizens as expressed in the two most recent surveys. The results of this effort are included within the 2011 Tolland Economic Development Action Plan.

Within the context of promoting economic growth, we all need to understand that the nation, state and all of the communities within Connecticut are facing challenges unique to our lifetime. However, given these challenges, the Town of Tolland has performed relatively well, with relatively high median incomes, low incidences of social and economic dysfunction, and a relatively favorable tax burden. However, within this overall difficult economic environment, the Town does have economic challenges which need to be addressed.

This updated strategy is an effort by the Economic Development Commission to continue to promote the economic growth of Tolland, in a manner consistent with the overall growth and development policies of the Town. As part of this process, we reviewed the recommendations of the 2002 Tolland Economic Development Action Plan, evaluated which have been implemented, and discussed the merits of those which have not been implemented with staff and the Economic Development Commission. In addition, we have formulated amended or additional recommendations which will enable the Town of Tolland to meet the contemporary economic challenges.

As with the earlier plan, the key to success is the anticipation of issues and trends, a general consensus on strategies, and a coordination of activities amongst the various town boards, commissions and staff.

B. Role of Economic Development in Tolland

Efforts to promote economic development in Tolland should be designed to achieve the objectives described below. When implementing the Tolland Economic Development Action Plan, all the stakeholders need to be aware of the opportunity costs of each decision. In particular, there is a limited supply of land and the decision to place the land in one use may prevent it from being used for another purpose.

1. Fiscal Stability of the Town

Connecticut municipalities have traditionally derived most of their revenue from local property taxes, especially suburban communities such as Tolland. This has increased with the difficult fiscal situation of the State in recent years, and decreased availability of Federal and State grants. Municipalities cannot rely on the State to significantly support municipal services. This situation is not anticipated to improve for the municipalities in the foreseeable future. Therefore, it is increasingly important for communities like Tolland to optimize the amount of property tax revenue received in relation to costs incurred.

Studies of municipalities in Connecticut have indicated that single-family detached housing has a net negative impact upon municipal finances, due primarily to the generation of school-aged children. Undeveloped land, agricultural land, and open space generally have a small positive impact, since these land uses demand few services.

Residential uses that do not house school-aged children produce a positive fiscal impact for the municipality. For example, multi-family rental complexes consisting of one and two bedroom units generally produce a net positive fiscal benefit to the Town, as they usually house few children, although the specific characteristics of the development have a significant impact on the specific fiscal impact. Similarly, age restricted housing, or housing exclusively for people aged 55 or more, has a positive fiscal impact upon the Town. Similar residential institutional uses, such as nursing homes also generate a positive fiscal impact.

Industrial and office uses generally produce the greatest net fiscal benefit to the municipality. For industrial uses, this is largely due to the value of the equipment used in the industrial process, and the minimal amount of municipal services required. There are ongoing changes which may change the methods in which municipalities assess and tax personal equipment for industrial use. However, this is not expected to significantly alter the net positive impact of industrial development.

The situation is similar for office uses, although the buildings tend to be of a higher value, particularly with multi-story buildings. Retail uses tend to have lower per-acre fiscal benefits to the municipality than either industrial or office uses. This is due to the fact that the buildings are generally not of a very high value of construction, large parking demands limit the amount of building that can be constructed on a parcel of land, retail uses tends to have little associated personal property and retail uses also require a certain degree of municipal services, such as public safety, road maintenance, etc.

Therefore, the Town should pursue economic growth that maximizes its fiscal benefit, with the recognition that some forms of economic growth have a greater fiscal benefit than others. This is needed as 81% of the grand list of Tolland is residential real estate, higher than most other Towns in the State. Additional revenue producing development is needed to help towards the stabilization of taxes on homeowners, and provide sufficient revenue for education and other municipal services demanded by the residents.

2. Provide Employment to Town Residents

Commercial and industrial growth generates employment, although the type and amount of employment generated varies greatly depending upon the type of industrial and commercial growth. Office and certain types of industrial development tend to generate the highest paying employment, while retail development tends to produce a larger number of lower paying and part time employment. Of course, there is great variation within each of these categories, dependent upon the specific nature of the development and the businesses occupying the development.

Employment growth should produce the following benefits to the Town:

- **Financial Security.** The provision of a range of local employment opportunities enhances the financial security of the Town residents and their families.
- **Opportunities for Children.** Increased employment opportunities in Tolland would enable children who grew up in Tolland to stay here and raise their families in Town. This serves to contribute to the strength of the family unit.
- **Diversity of Opportunity.** Employment should be provided that is consistent with the diverse range of employment skills and education of the residents of the Town, to enable the residents to fully utilize their abilities.
- **Secondary Economic Benefits.** Provide secondary economic benefits, as wages earned in Town-by-Town residents tend to be "re-circulated" throughout the Town, into the form of purchase of local goods and services.
- **Minimize travel of residents.** Currently many residents commute into Hartford and surrounding communities. Long commutation has negative environmental impacts, through the

consumption of energy used to commute, production of air pollutants from automobiles and increased need to construct or expand the regional highway network. These impacts would be minimized if more people were able to work in greater proximity to their home.

- **Community Spirit.** People that work or own businesses in the same community that they live in tend to have a greater sense of community.

3. Provide Goods and Services to Residents

- **Convenience.** The lives of people can be more pleasant when they are able to spend less time doing all the errands necessary in everyday life. Therefore, the local availability of goods and services would offer a greater convenience to Tolland residents.
- **Sense of Community.** The provision of these goods and services also serves to enhance the sense of community, as it provides an opportunity for residents to meet informally and "run into" each other. These informal social interactions are very important to enhance the "sense of community."
- **Reduction of Travel.** The provision of goods and services locally also serve to reduce the required need of travel. This has environmental benefits as well as a significant convenience to residents.
- **Community Livability.** Convenient access to goods and services enhance the livability of a community. Time is becoming a precious commodity for many families, and convenient opportunities to access regular commercial goods and services reduce the amount of time needed for these activities.

4. Community Character

This relates to the other goals of the Town Plan, as the character of the community is the total of a multitude of interests and components. This is perhaps the most subjective of the goals, as everyone has a slightly different sense of what encompasses community character. However, economic growth has the potential to improve and strengthen community character in the following ways:

- **Consistency with Community Identity.** The 2007 Citizen's Survey asked the question; "Ten years from today, how would you want to describe the characteristics of Tolland?" The responses were somewhat mixed, but when compared with the response to the question concerning their current description of Tolland, there was a shift in that one-quarter of the residents wished to have Tolland become a "New England Village." Over three-fifths of the respondents viewed Tolland's future as a rural or suburban community. The 2009 Town Plan of Conservation and Development includes a goal to; "Promote Development Patterns that Create a "Sense of Place." Therefore, economic development should be instrumental in the creation of a sense of place.

- **Utilization of Limited Commercial and Industrial Land.** Only three percent of the land area of Tolland is zoned for commercial and industrial use. The Plan of Conservation and Development does not call for any significant expansion of commercial and industrial lands. Therefore, the land that is currently available should be utilized in the most efficient manner possible, in achieving the maximum benefit to the community in an economical manner. The ability to promote the more efficient utilization of commercial and industrial properties has been enhanced over the past decade through the installation of sanitary sewers through important commercial areas, as well as enhanced storm water disposal techniques.
- **Local Shopping – Informal Meetings.** As stated previously, local shopping offers residents the opportunity to meet each other informally, which enhances interpersonal relationships within the community.
- **University of Connecticut.** Although the University of Connecticut is not within the Town of Tolland, its proximity makes it an important factor in the community. Many Tolland residents work for UCONN, and many Tolland businesses have ties to the University.

The University of Connecticut is also a major destination. The basketball games at the Gampel Pavilion draw several hundred thousand fans each year. UCONN also hosts many professional and academic conferences and symposiums. In addition, there are hundreds of thousands visits by prospective students, their families, and families of students. Most of these visitors pass through Tolland.

However, UCONN offers more significant long-term benefits to the region, including the Town of Tolland. The development of the UCONN Technology Park will offer a location for the start-up and growth of University linked industries. The first building is underway which will offer an enhanced facility for research, innovation; and business development and incubation.

- **Visual Impression of the Community.** The impressions of a community are usually defined by its commercial center, views along its main roads and the principal entrances into the community, its gateways. Economic development must serve to improve this impression. The primary "gateway" to Tolland is the Route 195 interchange of Interstate 84.
- **Definition of a Community.** In a similar manner, the business center often defines a community, for better or worse. Economic development should strengthen the center and commercial corridor of the Town.
- **Strengthen Families.** Families are the important building block of the community, and economic development can help to strengthen families. By providing employment closer to home, it can increase the amount of time that working parents can spend with their families. Working close to home also makes it easier for parents to attend school events during the day. In addition, economic development should increase the opportunities for working parents to

obtain part-time employment or some other alternative employment arrangement, such as working out of one's home.

- ***Vibrancy of the Community.*** Employment and business opportunities close to home may create a more vibrant community, as a greater amount of the efforts and energy of the residents are focused on the community. Residents would increase their stakeholder roles, as not only residents, as they would be employees or businesspeople within the community as well.
- ***Security.*** As the numbers of working couples have increased in the nation, there has been concern about the security of the "empty" residential areas left behind during the day. Increased work opportunities within the Town could help address that problem.
- ***Businesses as Citizens.*** Local businesses have benefited their communities in many ways. They often sponsor activities such as little league teams and charitable events, support high school athletics, and contribute their goods or services to community fundraising efforts. Communities that have experienced declines in their local business communities have experienced losses in these important community functions. Tolland has not been immune from this trend, as regional and national retailers have found Tolland an attractive location. Economic development efforts in Tolland should support and strengthen locally owned businesses.

5. *Efficient Utilization of infrastructure*

The Town has made significant investments in infrastructure, such as roads and sewer capacity. This infrastructure may be used to facilitate economic development. Therefore, the Town should utilize existing infrastructure, without overburdening its capacity.

- Most of the road infrastructure within the Town should not require major improvements to accommodate economic growth. However, the potential economic development along Route 195 is likely to require significant improvements to that road, particularly to accommodate access and improve capacity at intersections.

A new Route 195 Corridor Study is needed to plan for the transportation needs of the region between the University of Connecticut and Interstate 84. The anticipated growth of the University along with anticipated population and economic growth of this area will increase the traffic along this road. A comprehensive plan for the corridor is more efficient than a project by project analysis.

- The expansion of the sewer collection facilities has enabled the Town to better utilize some of its allotted capacity of the Vernon Wastewater Treatment Plant to encourage economic

development. The further expansion of this sewer service will further enhance economic development efforts. The town has approximately 80% of its capacity within the system remaining to support additional use of the system.

C. Visions of Future Economic Development

The 2007 Citizen's Survey asked respondents whether they agree or disagree with a range of statements concerning economic development in the Town. The following comments were ones which in which a majority of respondents indicated either "strongly agree" or "agree," with an indication of that percentage.

- Tolland should encourage and attract more businesses along Routes 30 and 74 in the vicinity of the Tolland Business Park. (89%)
- The town should diversify the tax base by encouraging non-residential development within areas best suited for such usage. (82%)
- Tolland should encourage non-retail development such as high-tech research and development facilities. (79%)
- Tolland should encourage the development of additional restaurants in the area of Route 195. (76%)
- Tolland should encourage and attract more businesses to Route 195. (75%)
- Tolland needs commercially developed family fitness/sport facilities. (54%)
- Tolland should allow businesses with a drive-thru for food service. (50%)

To further these goals, the Town should work to maintain its current business base and expand, where possible, its economic base by attracting and encouraging the following businesses or businesses that fall within the stated parameters.

1. Retention of local businesses shall be of the highest priority.
2. Businesses to serve local residents, particularly with convenience and neighborhood-oriented goods and services.
3. Industrial, research and development and other businesses that can take advantage of the intellectual assets of the University of Connecticut and cooperate with academic departments in product development and production.
4. Information based industries and those that utilize intellectual capital.
5. Businesses that employ Tolland residents.
6. Businesses that have personnel needs that match the skills and needs of Tolland residents.

7. Small scale manufacturing and related uses, especially those high value manufacturers in emerging industries and product lines.
8. Mixed-use development within a village like setting developed in accordance with new urbanism principles. These developments would be pedestrian oriented, and include other uses such as offices and limited residential.
9. Small-scale specialty retail uses, including those that attract customers from a regional area.
10. Businesses that capitalize on the local historical and cultural resources of the community.
11. Restaurants, Full Service.
10. Travel-oriented businesses that can capitalize on Tolland's location as an entrance to the University of Connecticut, and interchange of Interstate 84, through the development of commercial infrastructure to support the needs of visitors.
12. Home based businesses, which can be encouraged by the provision of shared services, such as administrative services, conference and meeting rooms; etc.
13. Alternative housing options which meet the needs of Tolland residents and would be positive factors for the grand list.
14. Medical services.
15. Economic development with aesthetic characteristics that reflect local heritage.
16. Locally-owned businesses.

On the other hand, the following businesses and economic development types would not further the economic development goals of the Town:

1. Large "big-box" retail uses that have a primary market area encompassing an area much larger than the Town of Tolland.
2. Uses that generate large volumes of traffic, that is beyond the capacity of the local road network.
3. Large-scale commercial strip.

D. Strategies for Tolland Economic Development Action Plan

The Tolland Stakeholders Committee defined its perception of the role of economic development in the Town in 2002 and developed a vision for the future of the Town economy. Much progress has occurred since 2002. Many of the original recommendations have been implemented and resulted in economic growth. The 2002 document was reviewed by the Economic Development Commission in the formulation of this updated strategy. Their analysis included the review of plans and studies completed since 2002, including the 2009 Plan of Conservation and Development, the 2007 Citizens Survey and the Tolland Village Area Plan.

The purpose of this revised document is to recommend updated actions steps for consideration that will lead the Town toward the desired future economic vision. The Tolland Economic Development Commission recommends that Tolland Economic Development Action Plan be endorsed as guidelines for use by the Town Council, Economic Development Commission, and Planning and Zoning Commission. The responsibilities for carrying out specific actions (and the projected cost of each action) are defined in the attached revised Implementation Plan.

1. General Recommendations

The general recommendations section contains recommendations pertaining to implementing a framework for the Town to facilitate the achievement of its economic development goals. One aspect of this framework involves planning and regulatory changes. Its zoning and related regulatory powers are a powerful tool to both encourage desired development and discourage uses that are not desirable in certain areas based on the Commission's vision for the Town's future. The planning and zoning regulations and practices have been significantly revised since 2002 to promote and encourage appropriate economic growth. Some additional measures are recommended to increase this progress, as well as implementation of ongoing planning efforts. The second major category of general recommendations involves putting the staff and financial resources in place to implement the Action Plan.

- 1.1 Forward the report of the Economic Development Commission to the Town Council, Planning and Zoning Commission and other relevant Town Commissions for endorsement of the amended Economic Development Action Plan.
- 1.2 The Economic Development Action Plan should be reviewed and updated periodically, at least once every five years, in recognition of changing economic conditions and policies.
- 1.3 Implement recommended zoning changes (attached) to support the strategic vision.
- 1.4 Continue to utilize the Geographic Information System resources of the Town to analyze and present economic development opportunities.

- 1.5 The Economic Development Commission along with the Town Council shall have the responsibility for promoting economic development of the Town, with staff assistance from the Town Manager, Town Planner and other appropriate town staff.
- 1.6 It should be recognized that economic development is most effective on a regional level. This is evident in Tolland, as much of the economic activity is influenced by actions of the University of Connecticut, as well as those of nearby larger communities. Therefore, there should be some efforts made to coordinate economic development with neighboring communities.

2. Marketing

The marketing section of the TEDAP sets forth a list of specific actions the Town should take and to promote itself to attract desired development. It does not recommend direct solicitation of companies from surrounding communities. Instead, the marketing approach involves continuing to create a higher profile and awareness of the Town's development opportunities, marketing to real estate brokers as an intermediary group, and direct solicitation of businesses and developers to attract certain identified businesses such as retail businesses in categories not currently represented in the Town or high technology businesses that have a locational affinity for Tolland based on its proximity to the University of Connecticut.

- 2.1 Consideration should be given to the establishment of a marketing budget and plan.
- 2.2 Continue to position the Town to encourage economic development in accordance with its assets, ongoing strategic initiatives and plans.
- 2.2 Continue to support private sector efforts to market key economic development parcels and projects.
- 2.3 Utilize the development concept plan for the Tolland Village Area to work with property owners and market these sites.
- 2.4 Continue to upgrade and improve the economic development content on the town web site.
- 2.5 Continue to maintain a database on available commercial real estate and contacts with commercial property owners.
- 2.6 Continue to monitor and participate in State Economic Development efforts as they evolve.

3. *Infrastructure*

A key determinant of the density of future commercial and industrial development is the availability of public sewer and water service to development sites. The infrastructure to support economic development in Tolland has been significantly improved during recent years, including the extension of utility service to key commercial properties, and improvements to Route 195. Some additional infrastructure improvement will continue to aid the economic growth of the Town, while preserving the community character and environmental characteristics of the Town.

- 3.1 Encourage the establishment of a multi-modal transportation center within the proposed Tolland Village Area project to provide residents there, as well as residents throughout Tolland of an alternative mass transit option for commutation to Hartford, East Hartford, UConn and other regional employment destinations.
- 3.2 Work with the State and potential developers to improve Route 195 as needed to accommodate future economic growth.

4. *Business Retention and Start - Ups*

The backbone of any municipal economic development program is an organized effort to retain existing businesses and to help them grow within the community. The action recommendations for business retention list the basic steps needed to accomplish this objective.

- 4.1 Continue to conduct regular business retention visits and communicate with major businesses on a regular basis by phone, mail or email.
- 4.2 Maintain the database of business contacts.
- 4.3 Town staff, as directed by the Town Manager, and supported by the Economic Development Commission should act as an ombudsman to assist local businesses to resolve problems with Town government. The Economic Development Commission encourages flexibility in the application of regulations in these difficult economic times.
- 4.4 Hold periodic meetings with local businesses on themes including business appreciation, information and networking.
- 4.5 The Tolland Economic and Community Development Corporation, in cooperation with the Economic Development Commission should continue its forums with new and start-up businesses, to determine their specific needs and how the group or the Town may be of assistance in fostering their growth. The TECDC may consider holding a focus group of new and/or start-up businesses to discuss their issues, and ways in which their challenges

may be approached, whether it be through a change in approach by the entrepreneur, or a special capital infusion which may be possible in conjunction with established state or federal programs.

- 4.6** There are a large number of Tolland residents working out of their homes as independent businesses either independently, or with a limited number of part-time employees. These businesses represent a major and growing component of the economy, throughout the State and the nation. However, they are especially important in Tolland, with its high number of highly educated professional workforce, who are ideally suited to engage in these types of enterprises. At the very least, these businesses provide an important source of revenue to individuals within in the Town. However, a certain percentage of these businesses are anticipated to grow beyond a home office and rent or purchase space, resulting in a taxable entity to the town.

These home based businesses should be considered and treated as an important future contributor of the Town's economic base.

5. UCONN Gateway

One of Tolland's key locational advantages is its proximity to the University of Connecticut and its position at the main highway connection to the University. The UCONN Gateway action steps are designed to strengthen the connection between Tolland and the University of Connecticut. The specific objective is to help Tolland attract businesses that can benefit from a location near the University.

- 5.1** The Tolland Economic and Community Development Corporation should continue to work with the UCONN contact group in the pursuit of establishments of linkages which will result in the establishment of UCONN inspired start-up businesses within Tolland, especially in conjunction with the development of the UCONN Technology Park.
- 5.2** The Tolland Economic and Community Development Corporation should continue to work to bridge the needs of local entrepreneurs and property owners / developers to promote the growth of new and small businesses in the community. This should emphasize those new businesses growing out of UCONN, with appropriate linkages to the resources of UCONN.

6. Development Process

One determinate of the success of a town in attracting development is the perception in the development community that it is development friendly. The development process recommendations attempt to make information on the Town's permitting process clear and easy to obtain. Early consultations with Town staff and can help the prospective developer judge early on whether its

project is likely to receive Town approvals and the standards that must be met to obtain such approvals.

The Town has significantly improved its development review process to include extensive consultation with potential developers. This process has resulted in several important economic development projects, and should be continued.

- 6.1 Continue to improve development permitting and zoning process to make it more internet based and applicant friendly.
- 6.2 Continue to invite developers and companies planning on building in Tolland to participate in a coordinated predevelopment meeting with Town Departments. Departments involved would include, planning, building, fire marshal, wetlands officer and engineering as needed.

7. Continue to Leverage Public Investments or Partnerships for Economic Development Projects

Commercial and industrial properties should be viewed by the community as an asset. As described in the vision statement, these properties contribute net tax revenue to support Town services and they also help define the Town's image as a desirable place to live and work. The town image correlates back to market value of both commercial and residential properties. With the view of commercial and industrial property as an asset, and a limited one at that, it makes sense for the Town to continue its recent practice in investments which promote or leverage economic growth which advance the goals and policies of the Town. Generally, this investment has been in infrastructure, to enable economic growth. However, it could also take the form of direct economic investment in properties, in preparation of it for commercial or industrial development.

- 7.1 Continue to invest in utility and road extensions to support economic development projects if the future tax increment to the Town will justify the Town investment.
- 7.2 Work with property owners to coordinate the development of their properties, along with municipally owned properties. The Town could also take the initiative to provide necessary infrastructure work to enhance their development potential
- 7.3 The Town has worked with key property owners to assist in the preparation of concept plans for their property and to assist in the marketing of the property for sale for uses desired by the Town. This is a means to actively intervene in the development process without actually acquiring property. This practice should be continued where appropriate, particularly in the promotion of the Tolland Village Area plan.

8. Aesthetic Improvements

The aesthetic qualities of commercial industrial areas of Tolland are particularly important because these areas are at the highway gateways to the Town. The Commission has identified that aesthetic improvements in the gateway areas are desirable. Landscape requirements have been implemented which have increased the aesthetic qualities of the commercial and industrial areas.

- 8.1** The Planning and Zoning commission should continue to enforce landscape requirements in conjunction with new development and street improvements.
- 8.2** Explore tools to provide incentives for façade and esthetic improvements to existing commercial structures.

E. Zoning Strategies for Future Economic Development

1. General Zoning Recommendations

- 1.1 ***Incentives for Lot Consolidation.*** The zoning regulations should contain incentives for commercial property owners to consolidate or jointly develop adjacent properties. These incentives can include increased permitted coverage, and reduced setbacks. The incentives for coordinated development of adjacent properties should be retained and evaluated as appropriate. In addition, side yard setbacks should not apply when adjacent properties are developed under a comprehensive site plan.
- 1.2 ***Access Management.*** A proliferation of curb cuts along Route 195 would be unsightly and it would detract from the traffic carrying capacity of the road. The zoning regulations should include additional access management for all properties along Route 195. The zoning regulations already limit the driveway entrances for commercial and industrial zones. The regulations could also require provisions for future shared access. In addition, groups of properties can be investigated to determine where the most appropriate access point would be, with regulatory and other provisions to ensure that this occurs. Zoning incentives can be offered for shared driveway access, similar to those recommended for lot consolidation.
- 1.3 ***Upgrade of Older Commercial Properties.*** The zoning regulations should include provisions and incentives to upgrade older commercial properties. In some situations, these properties are nonconforming, which makes any improvements or redevelopment in accordance with the zoning regulations difficult. The zoning regulations should continue to permit the Planning and Zoning Commission to waive or alter setback, parking or coverage requirements, by Special Permit, if they believe that it would result in an upgrade of the property and greater conformance with the intent of the regulations.
- 1.4 ***Incentives for Smaller Scale Retail.*** Where feasible, the zoning regulations should contain incentives for smaller scale retail uses, such as additional floor areas where uses are relatively small.

2. Neighborhood Commercial Zone Route 195 – Transformation into High Technology Corridor Zone

- 2.1 *Vision – Intent.*** To accommodate attractive general business development in the form of a Technology Campus, encompassing information based industries with linkages to the University of Connecticut as recommended in the Plan of Conservation and Development. These uses may include some supportive retail uses. Although the zone, as currently configured, is primarily a small-scale retail zone, the emphasis should be shifted to larger non-retail uses.
- 2.2 *Limitation on Retail.*** The population of Tolland can only support a certain amount of retail uses, and there is the desire to create a more "village like" configuration of uses. Therefore, it would make sense to concentrate the retail uses in the Tolland Village Area and Gateway Design District.
- 2.3 *Additional Business Uses.*** Additional larger scale non-retail uses, information based industries, could be compatible with the nearby residential areas, maintain the general rural character, and be able to take advantage of any spin-off economic activity from the University of Connecticut. The zoning regulations should be revised to permit more types of these uses, which may include some warehousing and light manufacturing. These uses can be permitted subject to very strict design controls. An additional advantage of these uses is that they generate less traffic than retail uses.
- 2.4 *Increase Minimum Lot Size.*** The minimum lot size should be increase from one acre to two acres, as one-acre lots are difficult to develop in a rural setting, with adequate design standards. Pre-existing lots that are less than two acres can be grandfathered to permit their development.
- 2.5 *Expansion of NCZ.*** Consideration should be given to expand the resulting High Technology Corridor zone into certain vacant properties adjacent to the current zone.
- 2.7 *Restriction of Uses.*** There should be consideration of more stringent regulations of automobile oriented uses within this zone, to ensure compatibility with the technology corridor characteristics.

3. Neighborhood Commercial Zone – Hartford Turnpike and Tolland Stage Road

The Plan of Conservation and Development identifies this area as an opportunity for the creation of a walk-able node. It recommends that it include neighborhood type business, small offices and other village-scale commercial uses east of Sand Hill road. The western area is likely to retain its residential character.

4. Tolland Village Area

A great deal of effort and resources has gone into planning for the redevelopment of an area along Route 195, north of the Interstate 84 interchange. Some of the land involved within the planning effort is publicly owned, and therefore within the total control of the Town. Another section of the land, located along Interstate 84 east of Route 195, was recently transferred to the town for incorporation within uses deemed appropriate by the Town. Therefore, much of the land area within the Tolland Village Area Plan is within direct control of the Town, but successful complete implementation would require the cooperation of certain adjacent landowners.

The comprehensive plan for this area calls for a pedestrian-oriented mixed use development, which would incorporate the mix of uses into a walk-able village setting. The Planning and Zoning Commission recently approved an amendment to the zoning regulations which would permit this type of development. This sets the stage for this forward thinking development pattern. However, to be fully successful, the Town needs to act in an affirmative manner, which is likely to include the following:

1. Cooperation with the owners of other properties included within the discussion area to achieve a mutual agreement for cooperative marketing and potential development of these properties in a unified planned manner, consistent with the Tolland Village Area Plan.
2. Active marketing of town owned lands to developers for development in accordance with this planned concept, with assurances of support from the Town Council.

5. Gateway Design District

The area on the south side of the Interstate 84 interchange has experienced the development of a major retail center which serves the Town and adjacent areas with many basic services. In addition, it is an area which has the capacity to serve some of the retail and hospitality facilities which can serve travelers to the University of Connecticut. Although there are few vacant development opportunities within this area, a period of economic resurgence and increased demand may result in greater investment interest in this area, in the form of additions or redevelopment of certain properties. These opportunities are particularly evident due to the increased development capacity due to the availability of sanitary sewers.

Therefore, relatively intensive commercial development should be permitted within this area, as long as the requirements for storm-water drainage are met. Development should include the installation of a comprehensive pedestrian circulation system which links the uses within the area, as well as provides a linear pedestrian circulation system along Route 195.

The permitted uses within this zone should be re-evaluated to assure that they are consistent with the development of a contemporary commercial center. Certain uses currently permitted within the Gateway Design District should be eliminated, such as excavation. The Planning and Zoning Commission should consider evaluating the regulations to assure that they permit and encourage the development of village like development, with mixed uses and a pedestrian scale and orientation.

6. Commercial Industrial Zone - Hartford Turnpike near Vernon Town Line

This is a small area which is almost fully developed, primarily consisting of small light-industrial and commercial uses. The area is almost fully developed and there is not a great deal of potential change likely to occur. The remaining issue here is the presence of older residential buildings on small lots. The Planning and Zoning Commission should consider potential incentives to encourage the consolidation of these lots to facilitate functional commercial and industrial development.

7. Tolland Business Park

Several lots in the Tolland Business Park have been developed within the past decade, with three lots remaining. Each of the lots present a certain challenge to their development, which increases costs. The high development costs reduce the actual value of the parcels so that marketing through conventional commercial real estate methods is not feasible.

Therefore, the Town needs to continue to be flexible in the way that it markets and prices the lots, and the use of appropriate incentives.

F. Tolland Economic Development Action Plan Implementation Matrix

	Task	Implementation Authority
	Strategies for TEDAP	
1.	General Recommendations	
1.1	Forward report to Town Council PZC and other relevant Town Commissions	Economic Development Commission Town Council Planning and Zoning Commission
1.2	Review and Update TEDAP at least once every five years	Economic Development Commission
1.3	Explore and Implement Zoning Changes	Planning and Zoning Commission
1.4	Continue to Utilize GIS system	Staff
1.5	Responsibility for Economic Development	Economic Development Commission, Town Council, Planning and Zoning Commission
1.6	Regional Cooperation	Economic Development Commission, Town Council, Planning and Zoning Commission
2.	Marketing	
2.1	Positioning of Town	Economic Development Commission
2.2	Support Private Sector Marketing Efforts	Economic Development Commission, Staff
2.3	Work w/ Property Owners in Tolland Village Area	Staff, Economic Development Commission
2.4	Continue to Upgrade Town Web Site	Staff, Economic Development Commission
2.5	Maintain Database	Staff
2.6	Work with State DECD	Economic Development Commission, Staff
3.	Infrastructure	
3.1	Encourage Establishment of Multi-Modal Transportation within Tolland Village Area	Economic Development Commission, Staff
3.2	Work with State & Potential Developers	Economic Development Commission, Staff
4.	Business Retention & Start – Ups	
4.1	Regular Business Retention visits	Economic Development Commission, Staff
4.2	Maintain Business Database	Economic Development Commission, Staff
4.3	Ombudsmen	Town Staff, as directed by Town Manager
4.4	Periodic Meetings with Town Businesses	Economic Development Commission
4.5	Continue Forum for new and start-up businesses	Tolland Community Economic Development Corporation Economic Development Commission
4.6	Provide support for home based businesses as appropriate	Economic Development Commission
5.	UConn Gateway	
5.1	Continue to work w/ UConn group for linkages	Tolland Economic and Community Development Corporation
5.2	Bridge the needs of local entrepreneurs and property owners to promote new and small businesses	Tolland Economic and Community Development Corporation Economic Development Commission
6.	Development Process	
6.1	Continue to improve development review process	Planning and Zoning Commission Staff
6.2	Continue to invite developers/companies to participate in	Town Staff

	predevelopment meetings.	
7	Continue to Leverage Private Investment and Partnerships	
7.1	Continue Municipal Investment in Utility Infrastructure	Town Council
7.2	Work with Property Owners in the development of their properties	Economic Development Commission Staff Planning and Zoning Commission
7.3	Preparation of Concept Plans	Staff Town Council
8.	Aesthetic Improvements	Economic Development Commission Town Council Planning and Zoning Commission
	Zoning Strategies	
1.	General Zoning	Planning and Zoning Commission
2.	Neighborhood Commercial Zone Route 195/Tech Corridor	Planning and Zoning Commission
3.	Neighborhood Commercial Zone – Hartford Turnpike & Tolland Stage Road	Planning and Zoning Commission
4.	Tolland Village Area	Town Council Town Manager and Staff Planning and Zoning Commission
5.	Gateway Design District	Planning and Zoning Commission
6.	Commercial and Industrial Zone Hartford Turnpike	Planning and Zoning Commission
7.	Tolland Business Park	Town Council, Economic Development Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission